

Country Guidance: Somalia



Country Guidance: Somalia

Common analysis and guidance note

October 2025



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List of abbreviations and glossary

Term	Definition
4.5 power-sharing formula	A power-sharing formula under which key positions in the state and parliamentary seats are allocated on a proportional basis across the 4 major clans and 0.5 to minorities
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AMISOM	Africom Union Mission in Somalia
<i>Amniyat</i>	The intelligence unit of Al-Shabaab
ASWJ	Ahiu Sunna Wal-Jama'ah
ATMIS	African Transitional Mission in Somalia
CJEU	Court of Justice of the European Union
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
COI	Country of origin information
<i>Darwish</i>	State level: armed forces/militias/paramilitary/special police • <i>Darwish</i> (Federal Police): Paramilitary unit of the Somali • Police Force distinct from the state level unofficial <i>Darwish</i>
<i>Diya</i>	Payment of compensation (see also <i>mag</i>)
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EU	European Union



Term	Definition
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
<i>Hudud</i>	Crimes that are ‘against the rights of God’ under Islamic religious law (plural of <i>haad</i>)
ID	Identification documentation
IDPs	Internally Displaced Person(s)
IED	Improvised explosive device
IPA	Internal protection alternative
ISS	Islamic State in Somalia
Jaish al-hisba or Hisbah	Armed force that Al-Shabaab uses as both police and a morality enforcement force
Jilib	The group below which the community assumes the payment of ‘the blood price’
LGBTIQ	LGBTIQ people are persons: • who are attracted to others of their own gender (lesbian, gay) or any gender (bisexual); • whose gender identity and/or expression does not correspond to the sex they were assigned at birth (trans, non-binary); • who are born with sex characteristics that do not fit the typical definition of male or female (intersex); and • whose identity does not fit into a binary classification of sexuality and/or gender (queer).





Term	Definition
Ma'awiisley	A local clan militia, also referred to as Macawiisley, Macawiisleey, Macawisley, named after the sarong, a common piece of clothing
Mag	Payment of compensation (see also <i>diya</i>)
Mooryaan	Somali for bandits
Mukhtar	Local community leader
NIS	National Intelligence Service
NISA	National Intelligence and Security Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PMPF	Puntland Maritime Police Force
PSF	Puntland Security Force
QD (Qualification Directive)	Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted.
QR (Qualification Regulation)	Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.
Sharia	The religious law of Islam, Islamic canonical law





Term	Definition
SNA	Somalia National Army
SPF	Somalia Police Force
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
US	United States of America
<i>Xeer</i>	Customary (clan) law
<i>Zakat</i>	The annual religious obligation to pay a specific percentage of a person's wealth to the poor



Introduction

The country guidance documents provide country-specific common analysis and guidance in relation to the assessment criteria established in the recast Qualification Directive (QD) ⁽¹⁾ and in the Qualification Regulation (QR) ⁽²⁾, which will repeal the QD with its entry into application on 1 July 2026. They are developed by the EUAA together with a network of senior-level policy officials from EU+ countries and represent their joint assessment of the situation in main countries of origin, in accordance with current EU legislation and jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). The European Commission and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also provide valuable input in this process.

The aim of the country guidance documents is to assist decision-makers and policy-makers in their daily work and to foster convergence in the assessment of applications for international protection and the type of protection granted in the context of the Common European Asylum System.

The development, review and update of country guidance is regulated under [Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation](#) ⁽³⁾.



In accordance with Article 11(3) of EUAA Regulation, Member States have the obligation to take into account the common analysis and guidance notes when examining applications for international protection, without prejudice to their competence to decide on individual applications.



For more details on the process of producing country guidance documents and the exact role of stakeholders involved, see 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: Methodology](#), November 2024'.

This document encompasses the development, review and update of country guidance and regulates the work of the EUAA Country Guidance Network and all related processes.

- (1) Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast).
- (2) Regulation (EU) 2024/1347 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection and for the content of the protection granted, amending Council Directive 2003/109/EC and repealing Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.
- (3) Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010.



This common analysis is based on country of origin information (COI) covering the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025. Additional information on major legislative, security and humanitarian developments covering the period from 1 April to 31 July 2025 has also been reflected. Each section of the country guidance documents also clearly states the timing of its last update.

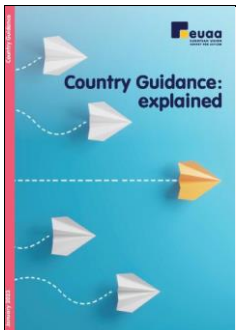
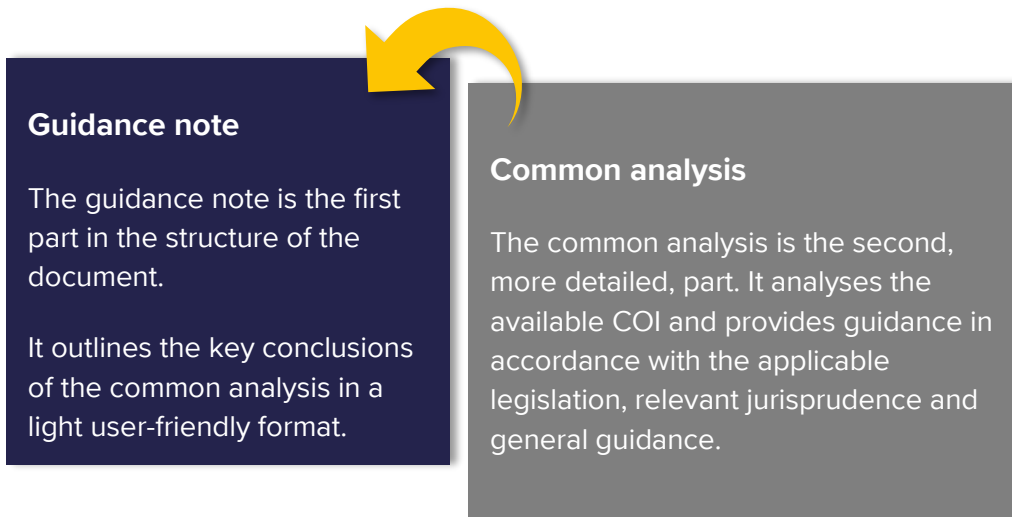
The analysis and guidance within this document should be considered valid as long as current events and developments in the country fall within the trends and patterns described within the COI on which the assessment at hand is based on.

The analysis and guidance provided within this document are not exhaustive.



Common analysis, guidance note and methodological approach

The country guidance document consists of two components: the guidance note and the common analysis. These two parts focus on the situation in the country of origin and provide analysis and guidance on the assessment of relevant international protection needs.



The cover of the document 'Country Guidance: explained' features a blue background with several white paper airplanes flying towards the right. The EUAA logo is in the top right corner.

The Country Guidance documents should be read in conjunction with the separate document 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: Explained](#), February 2025'.

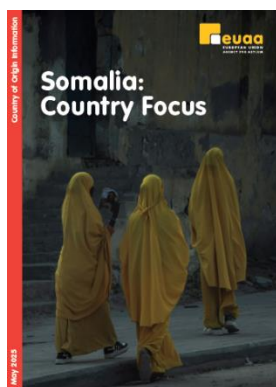
This document outlines the general guidance relied upon in this analysis, as well as the methodological framework, approach and indicators used to assess the different elements of qualification for international protection.



Scope of this update

The current version of the guidance updates and supersedes the 'EUAA, [Country Guidance: Somalia](#)', August 2023. A new approach regarding the incorporation of COI in the legal analysis has been adopted in this document and all sections of the document have been updated and restructured to reflect this approach.

This update is mainly based on the following recent COI:



[Country Focus 2025](#)

EUAA COI Report: Somalia – Country Focus (May 2025)

Available in [PDF](#) and [online](#).

[Security 2025](#)

EUAA COI Report: Somalia – Security Situation (May 2025)

Available in [PDF](#) and [online](#).

[COI Update 2025](#)

EUAA COI Query Response: Major legislative, security and humanitarian developments (August 2025)

Available in [PDF](#)

The following relevant EUAA COI report and query have also been used:

- [AS Deserters 2023](#), EUAA COI report: 'Somalia – Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab' (February 2023)
- [COI Query FGM/C 2023](#), EUAA COI Query: 'Somalia: Forms and prevalence of repeated FGM/C' (17 May 2023)

[Annex: Country of origin information references](#) provides further details and links to all COI documents used as a basis for the analysis within this document. References within this document are to the respective sections of these COI documents.



To access EUAA COI reports, visit <https://euaa.europa.eu/coi-publications>.





Guidance note

Last update: October 2025

The current version of the document supersedes the one issued in August 2023.

The guidance note on Somalia is produced by the EUAA together with EU+ countries⁽⁴⁾ in accordance with Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation⁽⁵⁾. It is based on and summarises the conclusions of the comprehensive common analysis. The aim of the guidance note and the common analysis is to assist EU+ countries in the examination of applications for international protection, thereby fostering convergence of asylum practices and decisions across the EU.

The guidance note is part of the 'Country Guidance: Somalia' and should be read in conjunction with the common analysis.

In Somalia, a wide range of groups and individuals can be considered as actors of persecution or serious harm, including State and non-State actors, such as the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) forces, Federal Member States (FMS) forces and Somaliland forces, Al-Shabaab, clans and clan militias, Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) and other non-state armed groups. Members of the extended family and community can also be perpetrators of human rights violations. See [Actors of persecution or serious harm](#).

Among the most commonly encountered profiles of applicants for international protection, the following would be **highly likely to qualify for refugee status**, irrespective of the specific region of origin:

- [Journalists and other media workers](#) seen as critical of actors particularly active in an area or in control of a specific area
- [Individuals \(perceived as\) contravening social or religious laws/tenets in Al-Shabaab controlled areas](#)
- [Individuals \(perceived as\) apostates, converts, proselytisers or blasphemers outside Al-Shabaab controlled areas](#)
- [Persons with diverse SOGIESC](#)
- [Girls who have not undergone FGM/C](#)
- [Single women and female heads of households](#) without support from the extended family or clan

(4) The assessment and guidance reflect the conclusions of the EUAA Country Guidance Network, which consists of EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. The guidance note has been endorsed by the EUAA Management Board.

(5) Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010.





Furthermore, the following profiles **in South-Central Somalia only** would also **highly likely qualify for refugee status**:

- Prominent and high-ranking [federal and state officials](#)
- [Members of the federal and state armed forces](#)
- [Electoral delegates](#)
- [Civilians perceived as 'spies' by Al-Shabaab](#)
- [Deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab](#)
- [Individuals refusing to pay 'taxes' to Al-Shabaab](#)
- [Humanitarian workers](#)
- [Women who have left Al-Shabaab](#)

For these profiles **in Puntland**, an assessment of **risk-impacting circumstances** which may affect the probability of granting refugee status is required. The same profiles **in Somaliland would likely not qualify for refugee status**.

Further guidance is provided on the **risk-impacting circumstances** which may affect the probability of granting refugee status for the following profiles, irrespective of the specific region of origin:

- [Persons fearing forced recruitment by Al-Shabaab](#)
- [Journalists and other media workers](#) (other than those seen as critical of actors particularly active in an area or in control of a specific area)
- [Individuals \(perceived as\) contravening other social or religious laws/tenets outside Al-Shabaab controlled areas](#) (other than apostates, converts, proselytisers or blasphemers)
- [Individuals involved in clan disputes](#)
- [Persons belonging to low status occupational minorities](#)
- [Persons belonging to ethnic minorities](#)
- [Persons belonging to groups specialised in Islamic services](#)
- [Persons belonging to clans which can be considered minority groups in local contexts](#)
- [Individuals in mixed marriages](#)
- Women and girls in relation to [child marriage and forced marriage](#) or [other forms of GBV](#)
- [Women who have not undergone FGM/C](#) as well as [Women and girls who have undergone FGM/C](#)
- [Single women and female heads of households](#) with support from the extended family or clan
- [Children](#)





- [Persons living with disabilities and/or with severe medical issues](#)

The treatment faced by [Somalis who have resided for a long time in neighbouring countries or other countries in the region](#) would in general not amount to persecution. However, belonging to this profile might be a risk-enhancing factor for other profiles.

If an applicant is not considered eligible for refugee status, case officers should proceed to consider the granting of **subsidiary protection**.

If there is a reasonable degree of likelihood of death penalty or execution, and no nexus to a reason for persecution can be substantiated, subsidiary protection under [Article 15\(a\) QD/QR](#) shall be granted. Death sentences continued to be imposed and carried out both by state authorities and Al-Shabaab courts.

[Article 15\(b\) QD/QR](#) relating to the risk of torture, or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, may be applicable in certain cases. For example, in Somalia prison conditions, corporal punishments or forced evictions may reach the threshold of serious harm.

With regard to subsidiary protection under [Article 15\(c\) QD/QR](#), the guidance provides an assessment per administrative region as per following:

- There are **no areas in Somalia** where the degree of **indiscriminate violence** reaches such an **exceptionally high level** that substantial grounds are shown for believing that a civilian, returned to the relevant area, would, **solely on account of their presence there**, face a real risk of being subject to the serious threat referred to in Article 15(c) QD/QR.
- **Indiscriminate violence** in situations of armed conflict reaches a **high level** in the regions of **Lower Juba, Bay, Lower Shabelle, Benadir/Mogadishu, Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, Mudug, Galgaduud**. Accordingly, **a lower level of individual elements** is required to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to the area, would face a real risk of serious harm.
- In the regions of **Gedo, Middle Juba, Bakool, Bari, Sool, Sanaag**, **indiscriminate violence** is taking place, however **not at a high level**. Accordingly, **a higher level of individual elements** is required to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to the area, would face a real risk of serious harm.
- In the regions of **Awdal, Nugal, Wogoyi Galbeed, Togdheer**, it is considered that there is **no real risk** of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

The international protection needs of Somali applicants are further compounded by the general lack of protection in the country. Neither the Somali state nor Al-Shabaab or clans can be considered actors of protection fulfilling the requirements of Article 7 QD/QR. On the other hand, the authorities of Somaliland, in areas under their control, may be considered able and willing to provide protection for some categories of applicants. See [Actors of protection](#).

In relation to [internal protection alternative](#) (IPA), it is assessed that given the security situation and living conditions, IPA in Mogadishu might be applicable only in exceptional cases. IPA in





Garowe and Hargeisa may be applicable depending on the profile and individual circumstances of the applicant. It is further highlighted that clan affiliation is a crucial element to consider for IPA in all three cities.

Finally, [exclusion](#) considerations may be relevant in a number of cases concerning applicants from Somalia, such as members of the FGS and FMS forces and deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab.





Common analysis





1. General remarks

1.1. The structure of the Somali governance

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security Situation 2025, 1.1](#); [COI Update 2025, 1](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Somalia is a Federal State composed of two levels of government: the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS), which include both state and local governments. FMS also have their own constitutions and armed forces.

South-Central Somalia includes the following FMS: Jubbaland, South-West, Benadir, Hirshabelle and Galmudug. Mudug region is divided between Galmudug and Puntland, with Galmudug controlling the southern half of the region.

Puntland was established on 1 August 1998 as an autonomous state within the Somali Federal State. As of March 2024, it stopped recognising the FGS. Relations between the FGS and Puntland have remained strained until 31 July 2025. Following the refusal of Puntland in March 2025 to participate in the National Dialogue conference, Puntland and Jubbaland exhibited a joint stance of 'no forward movement on elections or constitutional reform', and therefore a constitutional crisis appeared imminent in Somalia.

Somaliland declared its independence in 1991 while the civil war was occurring in the rest of Somalia. Somaliland remains internationally unrecognised.

In terms of territorial control and influence, some areas of Sool and Sanaag regions and the area of Ayn (Togdheer region) are contested between Somaliland and Puntland. In the Sool and Sanaag regions, the FGS recognised Sool Sanaag Cayn-Khatumo (SSC-K) as a new administrative entity in October 2023. In April 2025, the FGS officially recognised SSC-K as a federal member state, declaring its territories part of Somalia and not 'disputed areas'. For a depiction of the territorial control and influence in Somalia (South-Central Somalia, Somaliland, Puntland) see [Map: areas of control and influence](#).

1.2. The role of clans in Somalia

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.4](#), [1.5](#); [Actors 2021, 1](#), [2](#), [3.2](#), [3](#), [3.2](#); [Targeting 2021, 4](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.





Group belonging is important in Somalia. Layered in all aspects of life, the clan is both a tool for identification and a way of life. Clans define the relationship between people and belonging to a strong clan matters in terms of access to the job market, resources, political influence, justice, and security.

Somalis are roughly divided in five large clan families: the Dir, the Isaaq, the Darood, the Hawiye and the Rahanweyn. Large segments of the Somali population are considered as minorities, either in local context or in Somalia in general, due to living amongst larger clans or due to their occupational status. Somalis are traditionally attached to a territory where their kin are more numerous. Until today, most Somalis still rely on support from patrilineal clan relatives.

Clans often compete against each other, as well as against other actors. However, they also find alliances with other clans or actors. Those fluid relationships are influencing the power balance in the local context. Clan militias are also important actors of political life across Somalia.

Under the customary clan law, the *xeer* system, clan elders act as mediators, arbiters and judges, playing a central role in the resolution of local and intra-clan disputes. It is estimated that 80 % of all civil and criminal cases in Somalia are settled through the *xeer* system which in 2014 was adopted by the Ministry of Justice as a supplementary approach to justice, renaming it as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

Therefore, clan affiliation can be both a factor of support and of risk, varying by region and local power dynamics. For more information on the clan composition of the regions in Somalia, see EUAA COI report: [Security Situation 2025](#).





2. Actors of persecution or serious harm



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see 'EUAA, ['Actors of persecution or serious harm'](#) in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

The individual assessment of international protection needs should take into account the presence and activity of different actors in the applicant's home area and the situation in the areas the applicant would need to travel through in order to reach their home area.

In Somalia, a wide range of different groups and individuals can be considered as actors of persecution or serious harm. A crucial aspect of the Somali context is that the boundaries of membership for all the groups constantly shift. Most individuals playing a role in the security situation are simultaneously members, to varying degrees, of multiple groups that compete against each other.

The following sections highlight the main actors of persecution and serious harm in Somalia as well as their areas of control/ activity, in a non-exhaustive manner.

2.1. Map: areas of control and influence

Last update: October 2025

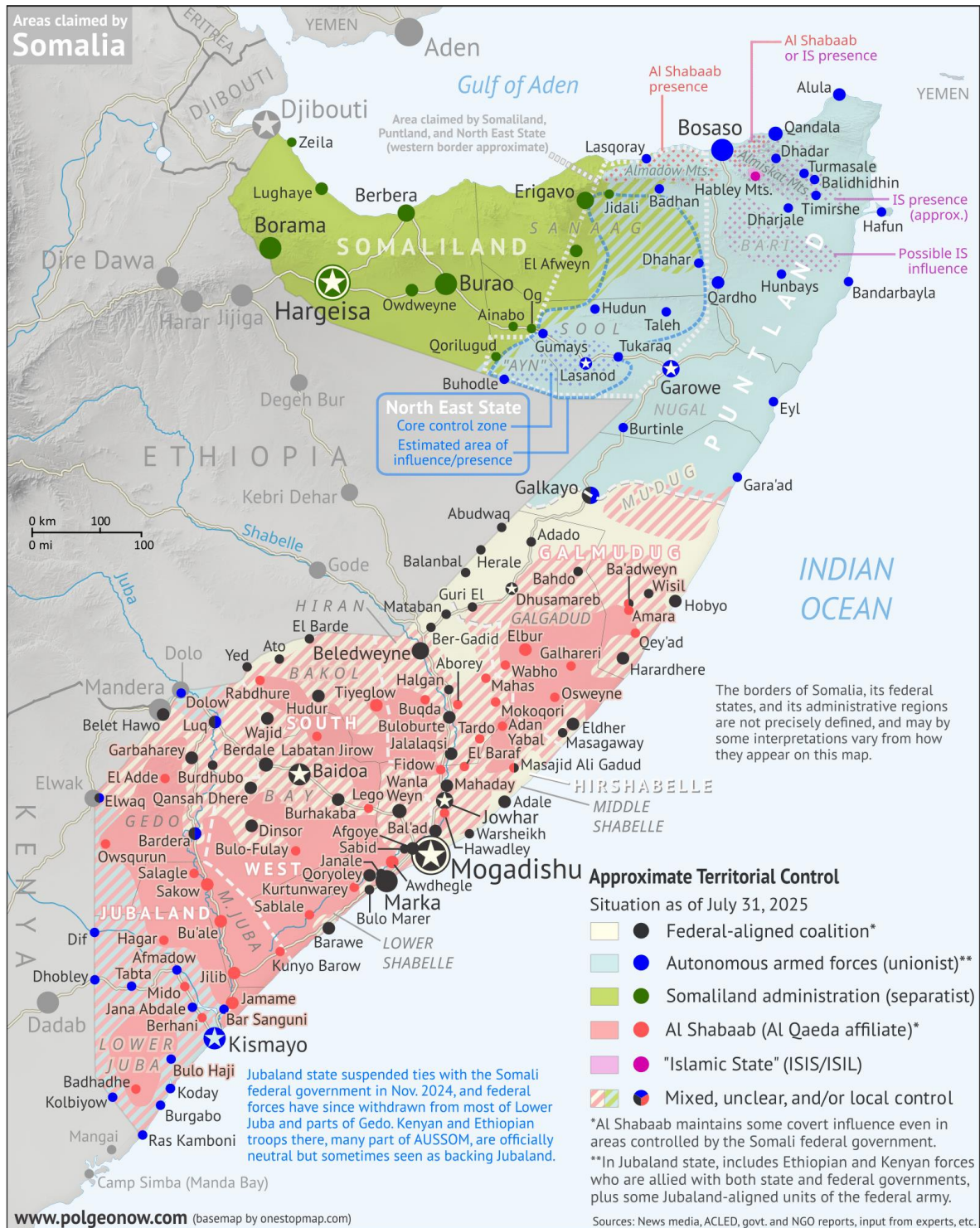
The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2](#); [COI Update 2025, 1, 2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

As of March 2025, Somalia remained deeply fragmented in terms of territorial control. Al-Shabaab controlled vast areas of South-Central Somalia and maintained influence across key routes and towns, including areas near Mogadishu. The group also retained presence in northern Somalia despite government offensives. Al-Shabaab has reversed many earlier losses and continued launching coordinated attacks, destabilising contested regions and encircling Mogadishu. Additionally, in Sool and Sanaag regions, the SSC-Khatumo administration was declared in early 2023 and recognised officially by the FGS in April 2025. In March 2024, Puntland ceased recognition of the FGS and launched a counter- ISS campaign in Bari region. In November 2024, Jubbaland suspended ties with the FGS following a political dispute and has since asserted autonomous control over parts of Gedo.

The approximate areas of control and influence of the main actors are outlined in the map below. This map presents an indication and cannot be seen as an absolute representation of the situation in terms of spatial or temporal accuracy. The depictions on this map do not imply any opinion on the part of the EUAA concerning the legal status or effective control over any territory in the country.



Figure 1. Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, 31 July 2025 by Political Geography Now (<https://www.polgeonow.com/>).



Please note: The depictions on the above map do not imply any opinion whatsoever on the part of EUAA concerning legal status or effective control over any country, territory, city, or area. Every effort is made to ensure this map is free of errors, but there is no guarantee that the map or its features are either spatially or temporally accurate or fit for a particular use.



For more information on territorial control and/or presence of the actors of persecution or serious harm listed below, please refer to [4.3.3.b\) Assessment of indiscriminate violence per region](#).

2.2. State actors

2.2.1. Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) forces

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2.1, 1.7](#); [Security 2025, 1.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.6](#); [Actors 2021, 2.2, 2.4, 2.4.5](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The **FGS armed forces** include the Somali National Army (SNA), the Special Forces (notably Gorgor and Danab), the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA), the Somali Police Force (SPF) and the Prison Forces.

While the FGS had regained significant territory since 2010, recent developments show a reversal of some gains. After a successful joint offensive against Al-Shabaab beginning in August 2022, particularly in Hiraan and Middle Shabelle, the group regained territory in 2024-2025, launching a major counter-offensive that pushed close to Mogadishu. Though government operations have become more strategic and coordinated, FGS forces still struggle to hold recaptured areas, often lacking stabilisation and administrative capacity. See also [Map: areas of control and influence](#) above.

FGS armed forces reportedly committed a wide range of human rights violations, to which they were associated in varying degrees, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detentions, sexual violence as well as grave violations against children.

2.2.2. Federal Member States (FMS) forces and Somaliland forces

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2.1, 1.7](#); [Security 2025, 1.1, 1.2.3, 1.3, 1.4.3, 1.6, 2.1, 2.1.1, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8](#); [Actors 2021, 7](#); [COI Update 2025, 1](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The **FMS security forces** include *Darwish* (state level paramilitary/militia) and police forces, under each FMS administration, namely: Jubbaland, South-West, Benadir Regional Administration [BRA]-Mogadishu, Hirshabelle, Galmudug. Puntland security forces comprise the State Police (PSP), the Darwish or 'Special police', the Intelligence and Security Agency (PISA) and the Maritime Police (PMP). The Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF) also operates in Puntland. Additionally, SSC-Khatumo, which was recognised as a federal member state in April 2025, has its own security forces, estimated at 8 000, mostly from the Dhulbahante clan.





Somaliland security forces comprise the National Intelligence Service (NIS), which relies on formal and informal intelligence networks and includes army and police intelligence officers; the Somaliland Police (6 000 officers) the Somaliland National Armed Forces (between 8 000 and 15 000 soldiers), and the Somali Coast Guard.

On territorial control and influence of FMS forces and Somaliland forces, see also [map](#) above.

FMS security forces in Somalia have been implicated in human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, torture, extrajudicial killings, and sexual violence. Reports also cite child recruitment, attacks on schools and hospitals, and disruption of humanitarian aid. Journalists, human rights defenders, and terrorism suspects were frequently targeted. While South-West State Police have shown improved conduct under international oversight, abuses persist among Darwish units across states. Notably, serious violations occurred during conflicts in Galmudug, Jubbaland, Puntland, and Somaliland, including the 2023–2024 clashes in Laas Caanood. Furthermore, in the reference period, a trend of limiting civil liberties in **Somaliland**, including through an increasing number of arrests of journalists was reported.

2.3. Non-State actors

2.3.1. Al-Shabaab

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.1.1, 1.2, 1.3.1, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10](#); [Security 2025, 1.1, 1.2.2, 1.4.1](#); [Actors 2021, 4](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Al-Shabaab is an Islamist Salafi-jihadist armed group and designated Al-Qaeda affiliate seeking to establish a ‘Greater Somalia’ under strict Islamic rule. It is structured with a military wing (Jabahaat), an intelligence wing (*Amniyat*) and administrative networks. Relatively recent estimates indicate that Al-Shabaab had between 7 000 and 12 000 fighters at the end of 2023, however Al-Shabaab’s true strength remains unknown, as the group continually refills the losses by forced recruitment or by deals with clans. The group remains the most potent security threat in Somalia, controlling large rural areas in South-Central Somalia, especially in Hiraan, Galgaduud, and southern regions and maintained influence across key routes and towns, including areas near Mogadishu. Jilib town serves as its de facto headquarters. Al-Shabaab has limited presence in Somaliland and northern Puntland. See also [map](#) above.

Human rights violations committed by the group are extensive. The group maintains military capabilities despite counter-insurgency efforts. It uses improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombings, ambushes, and complex attacks targeting government, African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), civilians, and infrastructure across southern and central Somalia. The group exploits clan dynamics and uses clan grievances and loyalty for recruitment and leverage, while publicly claiming Islam transcends clan divisions. Al-Shabaab continues widespread recruitment of children and is responsible for abductions, executions, and sexual violence. It also enforces a strict interpretation of Sharia through the *Hisbah*, its





morality police, imposing punishments such as flogging, amputations, and executions, operating also mobile courts enforcing the Sharia. Furthermore, Al-Shabaab sustains its operations by extracting revenue through coercive taxation, forced seizure of resources, and the strategic restriction of humanitarian assistance.

2.3.2. Clans and clan militias

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), [1.5.](#), [Security 2025](#), [1.2.3.](#); [Actors 2021](#), 3.2.1., 3.4., 3.6.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Clan rivalries and competition over political power, land, and resources remain key sources of conflict across Somalia. Violence often stems from revenge killings, unresolved grievances, or competition for representation. Clan militias, numbering over 100, are self-organised and often act with impunity. Clashes between and within clans are frequent, leading to high numbers of casualties and displacement. The **Macawisley militia**, originally Hawadle-led, was reportedly operating in the Lower Shabelle region and their number was estimated at between 8 000 and 10 000 members across Hirshabelle and Galmudug, as of September 2023. Similar forms of clan based, self-organised and self-styled protection forces against Al-Shabaab were also set-up in Gedo, Hirshabelle, Middle Shabelle, and in Galmudug at different times in recent years. **Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'ah (ASWJ)**, the multi-clan (Ayr, Dir and Marehan clans) armed Sufi group, re-emerged in Galmudug in 2021, clashing sporadically with the SNA and the Galmudug State's forces.

Clan militias have committed grave human rights violations, including killings, torture, sexual violence, abductions, and attacks on civilian infrastructure, also engaging in arms trafficking. Child recruitment by clan-based militias has also been documented.

Violations of human rights have also taken place under the xeer system.

2.3.3. Other non-State actors

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [Country Focus 2025](#), [1.10.](#); [Security 2025](#), [1.2.3.](#), [1.3.](#), [1.5.](#), [2.2.3.](#), [2.6.2.](#); [Actors 2021](#), 6.; [COI Update 2025](#), 2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The **Islamic State in Somalia (ISS)**, formed in 2015 and aligned with IS since 2017, operates primarily in Puntland. Recent estimates place its strength between 600 and 1 600 fighters, about half of whom are foreign nationals, including from Ethiopia, Tanzania, North Africa, Yemen, and Sudan. The group has established operational bases in four districts of Bari but controls no population centres. ISS lost ground to Puntland forces during operations in 2024-2025. By the end of July 2025, in the context of the Hilaac offensive only a few scattered ISS



fighters remained in the area. (See also [map](#) above). It has also become a significant logistical and financial hub for the global IS network, funding operations through extortion, taxation, and gold mining. ISS has been involved in numerous attacks, including suicide bombings and IEDs, and has caused civilian casualties. Its activities have led to business closures and hospital shutdowns in Bossaso due to extortion. The group is also substantially involved in arms trafficking.

In March 2022 the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) transitioned into the **ATMIS**, with a mandate to continue supporting Somali security institutions and combating Al-Shabaab. In January 2025, ATMIS was replaced by the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) with 12 626 authorised personnel, including 1 040 police, contributed by Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, and Egypt. By 25 April 2025, the Kampala Summit called for increasing AUSSOM troops by at least 8 000 to address Somalia's security challenges, but the mission still faces significant funding shortfalls, despite officially starting on 1 July 2025. While human rights compliance reportedly improved, concerns remained: ATMIS forces were implicated in civilian deaths in Lower Shabelle in July 2024, and other incidents involving crossfire and mortars caused civilian harm.

As of May 2022, the U.S. redeployed 450–500 troops to Somalia under **United States Africa Command (AFRICOM)** to support Somali and African Union forces, primarily against Al-Shabaab and ISS. AFRICOM also trains Danab special forces and provides operational support. Between April 2023 and March 2025, AFRICOM conducted 62 air and drone strikes, reportedly killing 381 people, including civilians. Independent sources reported fewer strikes. While no direct human rights violations were attributed to U.S. forces during this period, concerns about civilian casualties persist. The U.S. military role remains significant amid Somalia's security challenges and ongoing counter-terrorism efforts.

Besides the actors mentioned above, the (extended) **family and community members** can be actors of persecution or serious harm, such as in the case of domestic violence, violence against persons with diverse SOGIESC, forced and child marriage, female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C), etc. FGM/C practitioners, including traditional circumcisers and healthcare professionals, are another potential example of non-State actors of persecution or serious harm.

Human rights violations are also committed by **criminal groups**, such as forced labour and sex trafficking by networks of smuggling and trafficking in human beings, or violent criminal acts committed by youth gangs, notably in Mogadishu.



For further information on human rights violations committed by different State and non-State actors and their relevance as potential exclusion grounds, see [7. Exclusion](#).



3. Refugee status

This chapter provides analysis and guidance on the potential international protection needs of selected profiles of applicants. These profiles were selected based on their relevance in the caseload of EU Member States.

The list of profiles addressed in this chapter is non-exhaustive and the fact that a certain profile is included or not is without prejudice to the determination of their protection needs. Furthermore, the order of listed profiles does not reflect any ranking of the potential level of risk of persecution.

While the conclusions under this common analysis provide general guidance, the protection needs of each applicant should be **examined individually**. The non-exhaustive lists of examples with regard to sub-profiles at a differentiated risk and to circumstances, which would normally increase or decrease the risk, are to be taken into account in light of all circumstances in the individual case.

The considerations under each profile should, furthermore, be viewed without prejudice to the credibility assessment of the applicant's claims. This common analysis deals solely with issues of risk analysis and qualification.

For each profile, the guidance responds to the following questions:

Step 1: Do the reported acts qualify as persecution?
This part provides examples of acts reported to be committed against individuals belonging to the profile as well as guidance on whether such acts would reach the level of persecution according to Article 9 QD/QR.
Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?
This part assesses how likely it is for applicants within the profile to have a well-founded fear of persecution. Further guidance is provided with regard to the circumstances which should be taken into account in the individual assessment, addressing also how they would impact the risk.
Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?
This part provides guidance on whether in case of established well-founded fear of persecution, this would be connected to a reason falling within the provision of Article 10 QD/QR (nexus).

Relevant COI is also included in the analysis to substantiate the assessment provided. Links to the relevant EUAA COI reports and/or queries are also added.



For more guidance on how to read the following subsections, see 'EUAA, [Refugee status](#)' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.





3.1. Persons associated with the government of Somalia and/or international actors

3.1.1. Federal and state officials

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.6., 1.6.1;](#) [Targeting 2021, 6.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

This sub-profile refers to staff of the FGS and FMS and Somaliland administrations and focuses on their **risk of persecution by Al-Shabaab**.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which federal and state officials could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, Al-Shabaab has been reported to conduct targeted IEDs and mortar attacks, killings by shooting or use of suicide bombers against them.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

In South-Central Somalia, a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated for prominent and high-ranking federal and state officials, as they were targeted during the reference period on several occasions.

The targeting of **lower-level officials** in **South-Central Somalia** appears to lack a consistent pattern, nevertheless the assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Nature of duties and visibility:** Al-Shabaab has targeted different categories of federal and state officials, including government officials, district and deputy commissioners, tax collectors, employees of government institutions. Family members of these officials have also been targeted. Officials with visibility through the exercise of their duties, such as tax collectors, may have a higher risk.
- **Frequented locations and places:** Individuals frequenting places where attacks are mostly recorded (e.g., hotels, cafes and restaurants where other state officials are present) may have a higher risk. The same applies to officials frequently travelling in convoys.
- **Home area and Al-Shabaab operational capacity:** In areas bordering contested areas or in contested areas between Al-Shabaab and FGS and FMS, federal and state officials may have a higher risk.

In **Puntland**, Al-Shabaab has lower operational capacity, nevertheless in the case of federal and state officials the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood to face persecution **should take into account risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:



- **Nature of duties and visibility:** Al-Shabaab's intelligence service has the ability to track and find individuals. Especially, individuals with visibility through the exercise of their duties may have a higher risk. For example, in 2020 Al-Shabaab carried out attacks killing the governor of Mudug region in Galkayo and the governor of Nugal in Garowe.
- **Home area and Al-Shabaab operational capacity:** Al-Shabaab has stronger presence in the northern parts of Puntland (see [map](#)).

In **Somaliland**, Al-Shabaab has very limited operational capacity and in the reference period no incidents against federal and state officials were reported. Therefore, **a well-founded fear of persecution** for state and federal state officials in Somaliland **would in general not be substantiated**.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion** and/or **political opinion**, as Al-Shabaab considers people associated with the Somali government to be infidels and/or as their political enemies.

3.1.2. Members of the federal and state armed forces

Last update: October 2025

This sub-profile refers to members of the FGS and FMS armed forces, as well as to Somaliland armed forces and focuses on their risk of persecution by Al-Shabaab.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.6.3.](#); [Targeting 2021, 6.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

While certain risks are inherent to armed forces' duties and activities, acts to which members of federal and state forces could be exposed, with regard to the risks outside the performance of their duties, are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, Al-Shabaab has carried out targeted assassinations and attacks, involving mostly shootings, IEDs and suicide bombings against them, including against officers of lower unspecified rank and regular soldiers.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

In **South-Central Somalia**, **a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated** for members of the federal and state armed forces as they were targeted during the reference period on several occasions. SNA members have been a primary target for Al-Shabaab. More specifically, in different incidents in 2023, 2024 and 2025, SNA members have been targeted with IEDs planted by Al-Shabaab.

In **Puntland**, Al-Shabaab has lower operational capacity, nevertheless in the case of members of the federal and state armed forces the individual assessment of whether there is a

reasonable degree of likelihood to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Nature of duties and visibility:** Individuals with visibility through the exercise of their duties may have a higher risk.
- **Home area and Al-Shabaab operational capacity:** Al-Shabaab has stronger presence in the northern parts of Puntland (see [map](#)). For example, in January 2024 an attack with an IED at a tea kiosk/khat chewing point in Bossaso was reported.

In **Somaliland**, Al-Shabaab has very limited operational capacity and in the reference period no incidents against members of the federal and state armed forces were reported. Therefore, **a well-founded fear of persecution** for members of the federal and state armed forces in Somaliland **would in general not be substantiated**.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion** and/or **political opinion**, as Al-Shabaab considers military personnel as part of the Somali government and therefore infidels and/or as their political enemies.



Exclusion considerations are relevant to this profile, as members of the FGS and FMS armed forces may have been involved in excludable acts. See [7. Exclusion](#).

3.1.3. Electoral delegates

Last update: October 2025

This sub-profile refers to electoral delegates, meaning those individuals in Somalia, mostly elders, who are the persons responsible to select members of the federal and state legislatures on behalf of their communities in indirect elections, and focuses on their risk of persecution by Al-Shabaab.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.6.2.](#); [Targeting 2021, 6.4.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which individuals under this profile could be exposed, are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, Al-Shabaab has carried out killings by shooting and 'issued warnings' to elders who were potential participants in the polls as delegates.



Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

In **South-Central Somalia**, a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be **substantiated** for electoral delegates, given the operational capacity of Al-Shabaab as well as their prominent profile. Al-Shabaab considers the participation in any election as a crime against Islam and has targeted electoral delegates, both in pre-election and post-election periods, with most instances taking place in South-Central Somalia in the reference period and involving shooting of electoral delegates coming from various corners of the country.

In **Puntland**, Al-Shabaab has lower operational capacity, with stronger presence in the northern parts (see [map](#)). Therefore, the home area of the applicant should be taken into account as a risk-impacting circumstance.

In **Somaliland**, Al-Shabaab has very limited operational capacity and in the reference period no incidents against electoral delegates were reported. Therefore, a **well-founded fear of persecution** for electoral delegates in **Somaliland would in general not be substantiated**.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion** and/or **political opinion**, as Al-Shabaab views the participation in any election as a crime against Islam and/or electoral delegates as their political enemies.

3.1.4. Civilians perceived as ‘spies’ by Al-Shabaab

Last update: October 2025

This sub-profile refers to civilians accused by Al-Shabaab of spying for the government, for ATMIS/AUSSOM or other international actors and/ or for FMS forces or administrations.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.6.4.; [Targeting 2021](#), 6.3.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which civilians perceived as ‘spies’ by Al-Shabaab could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. Al-Shabaab considers ‘spying’ for the government (or foreign powers) as a crime punishable by death. Civilians and businesspeople suspected of spying for different actors, such as the government, international actors, including the US forces, regional and federal security forces, and regional and federal intelligence agencies, were targeted and executed, mostly with public executions, as warning examples, and on various occasions abducted.



Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

In **South-Central Somalia**, a **well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated** in the case of civilians perceived as ‘spies’ as they were targeted and executed on various occasions during the reference period. As reported in 2021, the level of proof before executions was reportedly quite low and no access to a lawyer was allowed.

In **Puntland**, Al-Shabaab has lower operational capacity, with stronger presence in the northern parts (see map). Therefore, the home area of the applicant should be taken into account as a risk-impacting circumstance.

In **Somaliland**, Al-Shabaab has very limited operational capacity and in the reference period no incidents against civilians perceived as ‘spies’ were reported. Therefore, **a well-founded fear of persecution** for civilians perceived as ‘spies’ in **Somaliland would in general not be substantiated**.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion** and/or **political opinion**. Al-Shabaab perceives individuals of this profile as supporters or collaborators of its political opponents and, by extension, infidels.

3.2. Persons fearing forced recruitment by Al-Shabaab

Last update: October 2025

This profile refers to adult males fearing recruitment by Al-Shabaab against their will. This profile also contains information on individuals refusing to be recruited or provide recruits to Al-Shabaab.

In the case of Al-Shabaab, recruitment takes place for a wide range of purposes, such as fighting, providing administrative support, collecting taxes, expanding outreach, intelligence gathering, etc.

Women hold various roles in Al-Shabaab such as combatants, spies, recruiters, fundraisers, cooks, tailors, cleaners, religious teachers/preachers, zakat (religious tax) collectors, nurses, storing weapons, hiding assassins and/or weapons after attacks, helping with money laundering, assisting also in terror-related activities. In addition, they are involved in the recruitment and brainwash of potential new members. The use of female suicide bombers was reported as rare. Women are commonly recruited by Al-Shabaab through marriage, therefore for more information, see [3.11.4. Child marriage and forced marriage](#). For child recruitment by Al-Shabaab, see [3.12.2. Child recruitment by Al-Shabaab](#). For deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab see [3.3. Deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab](#)



The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.1.](#), [1.1.1.\(a\)](#); [Targeting 2021, 1.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The distinction between voluntary and forced recruitment is not clear-cut. People join Al-Shabaab for a mixture of reasons, such as financial hardship, social discontent, religious indoctrination, military pressure and threats, grievances directed at the government, the international community, or rival clans, as well as coercion and fear of repercussions from Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab recruits both from majority and minority clans.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Forced recruitment amounts to persecution. Al-Shabaab's means of forcible recruitment included abduction, Islamic school recruitment or via clan elders.

Acts to which individuals refusing forced recruitment could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would also amount to persecution. More specifically, those who rejected the group's authority were forced to flee areas under its control to ensure their safety. Individuals who refused recruitment have been threatened and labelled as infidels who reject Islam and the Sharia law, and, in some cases, they have been killed to set a warning for others in the community. Furthermore, according to older sources, refusal to join Al-Shabaab or to surrender recruits could lead to retaliatory attacks on local communities by the group.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Age:** The recruited persons are usually between 11 and 25 years old, or even younger. Elders could get also recruited, if they practice a profession, which Al-Shabaab finds useful for the group's needs.
- **Home area and the control or influence of Al-Shabaab:** Recruitment is more easily facilitated in areas where Al-Shabaab has established control over a substantial period of time, mostly in South-Central Somalia areas (in Middle and Lower Shabelle, Middle and Lower Jubba, Bay, Bakool, Hirshabelle and Galmudug). IDPs residing in the outer districts of Mogadishu, where Al-Shabaab has strong influence, are frequently recruited by the group. In areas outside the group's direct control, such as Puntland, the risk of recruitment will be generally lower but personal circumstances and the presence of Al-Shabaab in northern parts (map) are still to be taken into account (see also other bullet points). In Somaliland, in general the risk would not be substantiated. Recruitment outside Al-Shabaab's control areas frequently involves aspects of coercion.
- **(Prior) profession(s) and/or socio-economic status:** Al-Shabaab has a particular interest in medical professionals and persons with social influence, like university and school teachers, especially in Mogadishu, as well as across South-Central Somalia and therefore offers them considerable incentives to join the group. Individuals with low socio-economic status may be pressured by their families to join Al-Shabaab.



Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

While the risk of forced recruitment as such may not generally imply a nexus to a reason for persecution, the consequences of refusal could lead to persecution which is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion** and/or **political opinion**, as those who refuse recruitment are labelled by Al-Shabaab as infidels who reject Islam and Sharia law.

3.3. Deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab

Last update: October 2025

This profile refers to men, having deserted or defected from Al-Shabaab, as well as to boys who had been actively involved in the group, especially as fighters.

For the situation of women and girls having left Al-Shabaab, see 3.13.4. [Women and girls who have left Al-Shabaab](#).

In the context of leaving Al-Shabaab, the following terminology is used:



Deserter: a man leaving Al-Shabaab without Al-Shabaab's permission.

Defector: a man who has left Al-Shabaab without Al-Shabaab's permission and then has reported to the Somali authorities

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.1.1.; [Targeting 2021](#), 1.2.; [AS Deserters 2023](#), 1.1., 1.2.1., 1.2.3., 1.2.4., 2.1.1., 2.1.3., 2.1.4., 2.2.4., 2.3.2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Several factors influence the decision to leave Al-Shabaab. Control over territory affects escape options, as liberated areas offer more chances to desert. Social networks, especially clans, play a crucial role in facilitating safe disengagement, often more than the government programs. While formal defection processes exist, most leave informally due to fear or lack of awareness. The government is actively encouraging defection from Al-Shabaab, however in the absence of an amnesty law, presidential declarations have become the main tool for granting amnesty.

Government authorities distinguish between '**high-value**' and '**low-value**' defectors. '**High-value**' defectors are Al-Shabaab commanders or clan elders and warlords, who can make many of their followers also leave. '**Low-value**' defectors are further sorted out into '**high-risk**' defectors and '**low-risk**' defectors.

'**High risk**' defectors are those who are considered commanders of some sort and had been engaged in the making of explosives, or who had killed someone. '**Low risk**' defectors are generally considered those 'foot soldiers, porters, mechanics and the like', who reportedly



received amnesty from prosecution. Those who had fundraised, preached *jihād*, or provided logistical support could be classified as either **low-risk** or **high-risk** defectors.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Criminal prosecution in itself does not amount to persecution. ‘High-risk’ defectors are often sentenced to death and execution. Death penalty and execution amounts to persecution. The arrest and detention of children allegedly associated with Al-Shabaab by the **authorities** in South-Central Somalia and in Puntland is a recurring measure. Coercive treatment and in some cases use of torture have been reported, with children being prosecuted as adults, notably in Puntland and with sentences ranging from some years to life imprisonment.

Other acts to which deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab could be exposed by **Al-Shabaab** are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, Al-Shabaab punishes defection potentially by death. In the past, a number of disengaged fighters have received death threats, even in rehabilitation centres. Family members are also targeted - wives have been executed, threatened, or forced into ‘wife inheritance’, and relatives may be extorted for compensation.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be also considered. More specifically, **communities** often stigmatise former Al-Shabaab members, seeing them as security risks, leading to social isolation and challenges regarding finding work and making a living. Children might face displacement, separation from families, and marginalisation, often ending up in IDP camps or on the streets. Being a child is to be taken into account in the assessment of whether an act reaches the threshold of persecution.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

In **South-Central Somalia**, a well-founded fear of persecution by the group would in general **be substantiated** in the case of deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab. Leaving Al-Shabaab is generally not accepted, desertion is seen as an infringement of the jihadist ideology and the group would seek to punish the deserters it can reach in order to provide a ‘shocking example’ for others who might be considering desertion.

In **Puntland**, Al-Shabaab has lower operational capacity with stronger presence in the northern parts (see [map](#)). Therefore, the home area of the applicant should be taken into account as a risk-impacting circumstance.

In **Somaliland**, Al-Shabaab has very limited operational capacity and therefore, a well-founded fear of persecution by the group for deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab in **Somaliland** would in general not be substantiated.

The National Defectors Programme cannot guarantee security for individuals who disengage, with Al-Shabaab often continuing to threaten its former members long after their exit. Additionally, well-founded fear of persecution by the **government** may be substantiated, particularly for ‘high-risk’ defectors, in **South-Central Somalia** and **Puntland**.



There is no information about the treatment of deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab by the government or the community in **Somaliland**.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion** and/or **political opinion**, as desertion and defection is seen by Al-Shabaab as an infringement of the jihadist ideology. Political opinion may also be the nexus in case of persecution by the government.



Exclusion considerations are particularly relevant to this profile, as deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab may have been involved in excludable acts. See [7. Exclusion](#).

3.4. Individuals refusing to pay ‘taxes’ to Al-Shabaab

Last update: October 2025

The term ‘taxes’ in this context includes checkpoint taxes, extortion, religious ‘taxes’, protection money and forced contributions. Al-Shabaab relies on different sources of revenue, such as checkpoints, forced charitable tax (*zakat*), direct extortion of business, taxation of imports into ports or farm produce, kidnappings for ransom, livestock selling, water and irrigation resources, vehicles registration fees, operating licences fee, local tax imposed based on need, as well as property and business ventures.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.10.1.; [Security 2025](#), 1.7.; [Actors 2021](#), 4.3.2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which individuals refusing to pay ‘taxes’ to Al-Shabaab could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, Al-Shabaab’s retaliation for refusing to ‘pay’ taxes or for paying taxes to others, included attacks with IEDs, and suicide attacks, harassment and gender-based violence against women in checkpoints, as well as abductions, including for defying the regional tax collection, shooting and killing over tax extortion disputes.

The taxation system through coercion or ‘taxtortion’ that the group employs is sustained through intimidation and threats over business continuity and personal safety, with violence employed against those who fail to comply. Despite the formal ban on women’s work or businesses, both women and men are required to pay taxes to the group. Women who cannot afford to pay taxes are sometimes told to hand over their children.



Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

In **South-Central Somalia**, a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be **substantiated** in the case of individuals refusing to pay 'taxes' to Al-Shabaab, as they were targeted during the reference period on several occasions. More specifically, threats and punishments are core parts of Al-Shabaab enforcement tactics and in different incidents in 2023 and 2024, the group retaliated against people resisting tax collection.

In **Puntland**, Al-Shabaab has lower operational capacity, with stronger presence in the northern parts (see [map](#)). Therefore, the home area of the applicant should be taken into account as a risk-impacting circumstance. For example, two incidents of killings over tax extortion disputes were reported in 2023 and 2024 in Bossaso (Bari).

In **Somaliland**, Al-Shabaab has very limited operational capacity and in the reference period no incidents against individuals refusing to pay 'taxes' were reported. Therefore, **a well-founded fear of persecution** for individuals refusing to pay 'taxes' to Al-Shabaab in **Somaliland would in general not be substantiated**.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where a well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this may be for reasons of **religion** and/or **political opinion**. Al-Shabaab would perceive refusal to pay 'taxes' as support for the Somali government or foreign forces with the targeted individual being perceived as an infidel or political opponent of the group.

3.5. Humanitarian workers

Last update: October 2025

This profile refers to employees of humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies and focuses on their risk of persecution by Al-Shabaab

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.6.4.; [Security 2025](#), 1.6., 2.1.1., 2.2.2., 2.4., 2.7.1.; [Targeting 2021](#), 6.4.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which humanitarian workers could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, humanitarian workers have been subjected to life threats, physical violence, abductions, arbitrary arrests, attacks with IEDs, and killings mainly by Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab is highly suspicious of espionage (see also [3.1.4. Civilians perceived as 'spies' by Al-Shabaab](#)) and religious proselytism (see also [3.7. Individuals \(perceived as\) contravening social or religious laws/tenets](#)). NGOs accused of spying or seeking to convert individuals to Christianity are especially targeted. Al-Shabaab allows limited humanitarian work only under strict control, and non-compliance with its rules can result in



serious threats or attacks. Humanitarian workers have been also affected as collateral damage in the context of the armed conflict in Somalia.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

In **South-Central Somalia**, a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be **substantiated** in the case of humanitarian workers, in view of, the ban on the operation of most international NGOs and the strict vetting of the activities of Somali and local NGOs or CSOs in Al-Shabaab-controlled areas, the high suspicions on espionage, as well as the overall Al-Shabaab's pervasive presence in South-Central Somalia.

In **Puntland**, Al-Shabaab has lower operational capacity, with stronger presence in the northern parts (see [map](#)). Therefore, the home area of the applicant should be taken into account as a risk-impacting circumstance.

In **Somaliland**, Al-Shabaab has very limited operational capacity and in the reference period no incidents against humanitarian workers were reported. Therefore, **a well-founded fear of persecution** for humanitarian workers in **Somaliland** would in general not be substantiated.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion** and/or **political opinion**, as being a humanitarian worker would be perceived by Al-Shabaab as promoting foreign religious agendas or opposing their ideological and political views.

3.6. Journalists and other media workers

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.7.; [Security 2025](#), 1.6.; [Targeting 2021](#), 7.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

As of September 2024, media freedom in Somalia remains deeply concerning. Journalists continue to face harassment and threats by both the Somali government and Al-Shabaab. Somalia ranked third on the 2024 Global Impunity Index by the Committee to Protect Journalists, highlighting the high rate of unsolved journalist killings. Despite efforts such as the National Action Plan and the appointment of a special prosecutor, progress has been limited due to ongoing impunity, restrictive legislation, and political interference.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which journalists could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, journalists have been subjected to arbitrary arrests, detentions, beatings, torture and physical abuse by state actors and government-aligned militias all over Somalia, FGS, Somaliland and Puntland authorities. Incidents of killings,

physical violence and harassment by Al-Shabaab were also reported in Al-Shabaab-controlled areas as well as in Mogadishu. Raids of media houses have also led to violence against media workers and arbitrary detention.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that journalists and media workers could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be also considered. More specifically, self-censorship is widely spread in Somalia, including in South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland, as well as Al-Shabaab-controlled areas. Self-censorship was usually caused by acts of systematic threats, intimidation, harassment, raids on media houses, destruction and confiscation of equipment, freezing of media outlet accounts, fines, legal restriction using vague provisions in law (e.g., the practice of making reference to the Penal Code to criminalise journalists' activities was reported), banning coverage of politically sensitive issues etc.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated in the case of journalists and media workers seen as critical of an actor particularly active in a specific area or in control of a specific area. Journalists or media workers involved in reporting on government misconduct, corruption, or security failures, covering politically sensitive topics (e.g., Al-Shabaab attacks), or practicing independent journalism in Al-Shabaab-controlled areas are particularly targeted in Somalia.

In the case of **other journalists and other media workers**, the individual assessment should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances** such as:

- **Gender:** A high number of sexual and gender-based violence against female journalists were reported mainly due to their work on issues that are perceived as 'controversial' and as disruptive to traditional gender norms by working outside the home.
- **Visibility of activities and public profile:** Illustrative incidents included the killing of a prominent and award-winning female journalist, the killing of the Somali Cable Television's director by Al-Shabaab, and the announcing of criminal charges against the Somali Journalists Syndicate organisation and its leadership by the FGS.
- **Home area and reach of the actors they report on:** Journalists critical of an actor in areas outside Al Shabaab's control or where the actor has limited operational capacity would face a lower risk.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion**, as journalists and other media workers would be perceived by different actors as critical of their policies, security failures, or as promoting views contrary to prevailing political ideologies and being a threat to public order and national security.

In the case of targeting by Al-Shabaab, persecution of this profile may also be for reasons of **religion**, as journalists and other media workers may be perceived by Al-Shabaab as critical to prevailing religious ideologies and being a threat to religious norms.

3.7. Individuals (perceived as) contravening social or religious laws/tenets

3.7.1. Individuals (perceived as) contravening Sharia law in Al-Shabaab controlled areas

Last update: October 2025

This sub-profile refers to individuals (perceived as) contravening Islamic laws, including apostates, converts, blasphemers and individuals (perceived) as having committed *hudud* crimes, in Al-Shabaab controlled areas. Members of religious minorities are also included. For an overview of Al-Shabaab controlled areas see [2.3.1. Al-Shabaab](#) under section [2. Actors of persecution or serious harm](#).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.3.; [Actors 2021](#), 2.3.; [Targeting 2021](#), 3.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

A wide range of behaviours may be perceived by Al-Shabaab as contravening Islamic laws, such as illicit sexual relations (*zina*, see also [persons with diverse SOGIESC](#)), stealing and robbery, consumption of alcohol, drugs, blasphemy, apostasy, and conversion to non-Muslim faiths, smoking, being influenced by foreign values in acts, behaviour, social relations or appearance, etc. In Al-Shabaab controlled areas, men are not allowed to have a fluffy haircut, wear trousers, have a moustache or shave their beard, while women cannot wear a bra because perceived as a Western creation. Also, people travelling to Al-Shabaab controlled areas have to abide by these rules.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which individuals (perceived as) contravening Islamic laws could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. Al-Shabaab imposes a 'harsh' interpretation of Islamic law with *hudud* punishments for adultery and illicit sexual relations (*zina*), theft and highway robbery, alcohol consumption, and apostasy. The group's armed morality police force, *jaish al-hisba*, also enforced compliance and punished individuals failing to adhere to the imposed rules. Punishments imposed by Al-Shabaab through its own courts include detentions, public beatings, abductions, amputations and executions. Arrest and detention, often exposing civilians to torture and beatings were also reported.

Non-Muslim faiths and converts from Islam and blasphemy are sanctioned with execution and death. Social sanctioning and attacks against converts were also reported.

Theft falls under the *hudud* category of *hiraba* and is harshly punished by amputations.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated in the case of individuals perceived by Al-Shabaab as contravening Islamic laws **in areas under its control in South-Central Somalia** as they are widely targeted by the group.

With regard to **areas outside of the control of the group**, including in South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland, see [3.7.2. Individuals \(perceived as\) contravening religious \(and customary\) tenets outside Al-Shabaab controlled areas](#).

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Persecution for an applicant under this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion** as Al-Shabaab perceives such behaviours as crimes committed ‘against the rights of God’, labelling the individual as an apostate.

In the case of persons perceived by Al-Shabaab as influenced by foreign values in their acts, behaviour, social relations and appearance, persecution may also be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**, based on their common background which cannot be changed (the perceived act or behaviour) and/or a shared characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that they should not be forced to renounce it (opposition to cultural, social or religious norms and the unwillingness to comply with them) and the distinct identity that these individuals may have in the Somali society.

3.7.2. Individuals (perceived as) contravening religious (and customary) tenets outside Al-Shabaab controlled areas

Last update: October 2025

This sub-profile focuses on individuals (perceived as) contravening Islamic and customary tenets, including apostates, converts, blasphemers, individuals belonging to religious minorities or (perceived) having committed *hudud* crimes and other individuals perceived as contravening moral norms, in areas outside the control of Al-Shabaab.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.3.2.; [Actors 2021](#), 2.3.; [Targeting 2021](#), 3.2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which individuals (perceived as) contravening social or religious laws/tenets outside Al-Shabaab controlled areas could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, under Sharia law, corporal punishment, such as stoning, amputation or flogging, is lawful as a sentence for crime, except possibly in Somaliland. Sharia law prescribes corporal punishments for theft, unless justified by need or



hunger, however ‘minor’ crimes of theft or stealing are usually taken care of by family elders. Nevertheless, corporal punishments by Sharia courts, outside Al-Shabaab controlled areas, are rarely enforced.

Prosecution for acts which are not considered criminal according to international standards (e.g. adultery) would also amount to persecution. Adultery in Somalia is punished with imprisonment up to two years under the Penal Code, however, adjudication is usually referred to elders or family members. Somalia de facto maintains the death penalty for apostasy. Conversion from Islam to another religion is prohibited and sanctioned with imprisonment up to two years and is socially unacceptable. In Puntland and in Somaliland conversion from Islam is explicitly prohibited by the constitution. Somaliland courts have imposed imprisonment penalties for alleged conversion from Islam to Christianity, apostasy and blasphemy. Suspicion of conversion is punished with imprisonment, harassment and intimidation, including death threats by members of their community. Open worship or religious gatherings of non-Islamic religious groups (including Christians, Shia Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, and those not affiliated with any religion) can result in violent reprisals, forced divorces, or even execution by extremist groups. Also, the consumption and trading the leaves of the khat plant, which are chewed by Somalis for the stimulatory effects, is forbidden and punished.

Al-Shabaab’s moral policing extends well beyond their controlled areas and the group has targeted individuals in areas outside their control, and in contested areas, including with abductions, attacks, tortures and killings.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that individuals (perceived as) contravening social or religious laws/tenets outside Al-Shabaab-controlled areas could be subjected to, such as restrictions to freedom of religion, and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

In the case of (those perceived as) apostates, converts, proselytisers or blasphemers, in general, a well-founded fear of persecution would be substantiated in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland, given the criminalisation of such acts and the severity of the punishments.

In the case of individuals (perceived as) contravening other social or religious laws/tenets areas outside Al-Shabaab controlled areas, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Belonging to a religious minority:** Religious minorities such as Christians and individuals not belonging to any religion or being perceived or suspected as converts from Islam, would have a higher risk of persecution.
- **Nature and visibility of the act:** The nature of the specific norm transgressed and the (perceived) gravity and potential repetitiveness of such transgression could impact the risk. For example, adultery may be perceived as a more serious offence compared to

consuming khat. Furthermore, the public character of the activity may put an applicant at a higher risk (e.g. trading khat compared to consuming).

- **Home area and operational capacity of Al-Shabaab:** Al-Shabaab sanctioned offences in areas outside their control, notably in Lower Shabelle, Bay and Lower Juba. Given Al-Shabaab's limited operational capacity in Somaliland, individuals contravening other social norms would be at a lower risk.

It should be highlighted that no applicant under this profile can reasonably be expected to abstain from their religious practices in order to avoid persecution⁽⁶⁾.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion**. In some cases, persecution may be also substantiated for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**. For example, where the individual is seen as transgressing moral norms due to either past behaviour which cannot be changed or because they hold beliefs or characteristics fundamental to their identity or conscience. They may also be considered to have a distinct identity in Somalia, as they may be viewed as being different from the surrounding society (e.g. stigmatisation).

A thorough individual assessment should take place as to whether the particular characteristic or belief is fundamental to the identity or conscience of the applicant.

3.8. Individuals involved in clan disputes

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 1.5., 1.5.1](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Clan conflicts can be triggered by various reasons, including access to resources, competition over land, access to jobs and markets, political competition, insults and breach of women's or other vulnerable persons' protection status. Clan conflicts can be settled through traditional reconciliation mechanisms based on customary law. Inter-clan conflicts and rivalries have substantially increased across Somalia during the past two years (March 2023 - March 2025).

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which individuals involved in clan disputes could be exposed are of such severe nature, that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, incidents reported included clashes, various forms of clan related violence, as well as 'revenge killings' in the context of *diya* or *mag* (blood compensation). Additionally, women can play a very specific role in peace-making between lineages of clans. In order to stabilise a peace agreement between groups,

⁽⁶⁾ CJEU, *Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel v X and Y and Z v Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel*, joined cases C-199/12 to C-201/12 judgment of 7 November 2013, operative part (Court's ruling), [CURIA - Documents](#).

sometimes one or several unmarried girls from the family of the killer(s) are given by the elders for marriage to the injured group. In the reference period, women were directly targeted in the context of acts of clan revenge on several occasions. Perceived acts of humiliation deriving from clan conflicts or linked to any other triggers of feud/conflict can result in revenge killings.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for individuals involved in clan disputes **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Gender and age:** Men have a higher risk, as they are mostly the ones directly involved in clan (or lineage, or family) conflicts. Individuals between 15 and 40 years old are mostly those directly involved in clan (or lineage, or family) conflicts. Children and men around 15 and 25 years old would typically be mobilised by elders to form lineage or clan militias, engage in attacks or put up defence positions. Women, children and elderly are traditionally referred to as 'sacrosanct' in clan conflicts. However, they can still be incidental victims of attacks or subject to direct acts of targeting or indiscriminate violence.
- **Being considered a priority target:** Perceived perpetrator of humiliation would be at higher risk. Men of the immediate patrilineal kin of a person who killed another person are priority targets, but depending on the social standing of the killed person, also others from the patrilineal kin-group of the killer, who hold a similarly high social status, can become priority targets.
- **Clan affiliation:** Clan status and power determine the level of 'blood compensation' or revenge, with victims of minority or marginalised clans 'worthing' less in comparison to powerful clans. As a result, members of marginalised clans are more vulnerable to violence, as their clans may lack the influence or capacity to seek justice or retaliation, reducing the deterrent effect for potential perpetrators. Furthermore, if majority groups clash with minority groups, it is more likely that women are harmed by majority clan militias, as a display of superiority.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

In case of inter-clan disputes, where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, it may be for reasons of **race/nationality**. Alternatively, clan members involved in intra-clan disputes may also have a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**, based on their common background that cannot be changed (i.e. being a member of a clan under the threat of clan revenge) and due to the fact that clans are known and have a distinct identity in the surrounding society.



3.9. Persons belonging to minorities

Somali society includes both majority and minority groups. Many members of minority groups speak languages or dialects different from standard Somali. Clan affiliation remains essential for access to protection, resources, and justice, which puts minority groups at a disadvantage.

While systematic targeting of minorities was most severe in the early 1990s, some still face disproportionate violence and discrimination, in varying degrees. Lacking strong militias, they are vulnerable to abuses, often carried out by majority clan members or militias, sometimes with tacit approval from authorities. Resentment over abuses made minority clans more vulnerable to recruitment by Al-Shabaab. For more information see profile [3.2. Persons fearing forced recruitment by Al-Shabaab](#).

3.9.1. Persons belonging to low status occupational minorities

Last update: October 2025

This sub-profile refers to persons who belong to low status occupational minorities. These minorities include the Gabooye (Madhibaan and Muse Diriye sub-groups), the Yibir, the Tumul, the Galgale, the Gahayle, the Yahar, the Ugaadhyahan/Ugaaryahan, the Hawle and the Hawrasame.

For the Galgale, the Gahayle and the Yahar there was no available information on their treatment in the reference period.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.4., 1.4.1.; [Targeting 2021](#), 4.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Low-status occupational groups in Somalia, are traditionally engaged in crafts like barbering, blacksmithing, and healing. They face widespread discrimination and social exclusion. For the geographical distribution of low-status occupational minorities in Somalia, see [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.4.1.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which individuals belonging to low status occupational minorities could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, members of the Gabooye experience violations, including physical assaults and abuse. Sexual abuse and violence against women and girls belonging to minority groups have been also reported.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that low status occupational minorities could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. More specifically, members of these groups are discriminated by other Somalis and regarded as ‘unclean’ by dominant clans and they experience limited access to education, healthcare, employment, and justice. **Gabooye** lack access to formal education, healthcare and economic resources, are largely politically excluded and intermarriages between them



and members of majority groups are shunned. **Yibir** have limited to no access to education and healthcare and are often exposed to abuse, exploitation, suffering also from extreme poverty. **Madhiban** experience marginalisation due to their engagement in traditional practices and spiritual services. Lucrative businesses belonging to Tumul have been taken over by dominant groups. The smaller groups of the **Ugaadhyahan/Ugaaryahan**, the **Hawle** and the **Hawrasame** are also marginalised and harassed (e.g., insulted or side-lined when competing for jobs; bullied out of their properties).

Intermarriage with majority clans is rare, and state institutions offer little protection, especially in southern Somalia and Somaliland. For more information on individuals in mixed marriages, see sub-profile [3.9.5 Individuals in mixed marriages](#).

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for members of low status occupational minorities, **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Gender:** Women and girls belonging to minority groups are at a higher risk of sexual abuse and violence. Furthermore, group belonging in combination with gender-based discrimination influences access to education.
- **Home area and local clan dynamics:** Gabooye have problems with access to health care and education, especially in rural settings. They also experience violations, especially in Somaliland and southern Somalia. Only in Puntland, occupational minorities, such as the Gabooye, enjoy more rights and are in a slightly better position vis-à-vis majority group members. Yibir in rural areas are often exposed to abuse, exploitation and suffer from extreme poverty. Only in Puntland, are Tumul in a somewhat stronger position.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, for an applicant under this profile, this may be for reasons of **race/nationality** and/or **membership of a particular social group**, based on an innate characteristic or common background which cannot be changed (the family they are born into/their inherited occupational status) and distinct identity in Somalia, as they are perceived as different in the Somali society (in relation to stigmatisation by society).

In the case of occupational groups engaged in spiritual services, persecution may also be for reasons of **religion**, as these activities carry considerable stigma in the Sunni Islamic Somali society.

3.9.2. Persons belonging to ethnic minorities

Last update: October 2025

This sub-profile refers to the Somali Bantu/Jareer, including the Shiidle clan, and Bajuni.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.4., 1.4.2., 1.4.3.\(a\), 1.4.5.](#); [Targeting 2021, 4.2., 4.5.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

With historical roots in slavery, coastal trade, or urban settlements, ethnic minorities in Somalia -including the Bantu/Jareer and Bajuni communities- represent some of the country's most marginalised populations. These ethnic minority groups mostly reside in South-Central Somalia.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which individuals belonging to ethnic minorities could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, sexual abuse and violence against women and girls belonging to minority groups have been reported. Bantu/Jareer women enter in forced marriages with Al-Shabaab fighters that are described as sexual and domestic slavery. Cases of abductions, torture and killings of Bantu/Jareer by uniformed Somali police or armed groups that the Somali government was unwilling or unable to control were reported.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that ethnic minorities could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. More specifically, members of these groups are discriminated by other Somalis. **Bantu/Jareer** face systematic exclusion, stigma, social segregation, denial of rights, and low social, economic and political status. They have no access to influential positions and are generally disproportionately vulnerable to conflict-driven displacement. They often lack the land rights and resources enjoyed by more dominant clans. They still face land grabs and forced displacement due to lack of political influence. Their children experience significantly lower school enrolment rates. Furthermore, intermarriages with members of majority clans are generally not accepted. In Al-Shabaab-controlled areas, they face extortion by the extremist militia. Also, **Bajuni** face systematic exclusion, stigma, social segregation, denial of rights, and low social, economic and political status. Bajuni population is being exploited by Somali businessmen. They lack access to influential positions and face limited opportunities to seek justice in case of conflicts over land or property. Furthermore, **Shiidle** have faced social exclusion and discrimination within Somali society.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for ethnic minorities, **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **The specific minority group that the applicant belongs to:** Differences are observed in the treatment of ethnic minority groups and the severity of violations against them. Bantu/Jareer, apart from discriminatory treatment, have been subjected also to serious human rights violations which would amount to persecution as such, whereas Bajuni seem to face mostly discriminatory treatment.

- **Gender:** Women and girls belonging to minority groups are at a higher risk of sexual abuse and violence. In IDP camps, Bantu/Jareer women lack (clan) protection. Furthermore, group-belonging in combination with gender-based discrimination influences access to education.
- **Home area and local clan dynamics:** Bantu/Jareer face extortion by the extremist militia in Al-Shabaab-controlled areas. Also, Bajuni enjoy higher levels of healthcare access in urban settings.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **race/nationality**, as these groups are distinct ethnic groups.

3.9.3. Persons belonging to groups specialised in Islamic services

Last update: October 2025

This sub-profile refers to persons who belong to minority groups specialised in Islamic services. These minorities include the Ashraf (Hassan and Hussein sub-groups) and the Sheikhal (Jasira, Gendershe, Loboge, and Aw Qutub sub-groups).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.4., 1.4.4., 1.4.5.](#); [Targeting 2021, 4.3.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which groups specialised in Islamic services could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, Ashraf and Sheikhal occasionally face human rights abuses due to their non-major-clan origins. Sexual abuse and violence against women and girls belonging to minority groups have been also reported.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that individuals belonging to groups specialised in Islamic services could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. More specifically, the situation of **Ashraf** has been characterised by their structural marginalisation as a minority group in southern Somalia. Members of majority clans have taken advantage of them and rarely face serious consequences. In recent years they gained some political and economic influence in southern Somalia again. They also have access to education. Some Asharaf and Sheikhal engage successfully in businesses. Still, members of both groups (**Ashraf and Sheikhal**) occasionally face discrimination due to their non-major-clan origins. Although intermarriage between majority and minority groups such as Asharaf and Sheikhal is accepted, it is typically the case that women come from the minority group while men belong to the majority group.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for groups specialised in Islamic services, **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **The specific minority group to which the applicant belongs:** Although in the Somali parliament, three seats are reserved for the Sheikhal clan through the Hawiye clan family, the Gendershe and Jasira Sheikhal sub-groups face marginalisation, while Loboge and Aw Qutub sub-groups acquire a more ambiguous position. Some Ashraf and Sheikhal engage successfully in businesses, including large-scale businesses in Mogadishu.
- **Gender:** Women and girls belonging to minority groups are at a higher risk of sexual abuse and violence. Furthermore, their group belonging in combination with gender-based discrimination influences access to education. Regarding intermarriage, women from Ashraf minority may marry members of majority groups, due to the highly religious prestige the Ashraf hold among other Somalis.
- **Home area and local clan dynamics:** Ashraf living in and around Baidoa have a slightly more protected position compared to other areas. The Aw Qutub Sheikhal sub-group had suffered some discrimination or harassment in Somaliland from the dominant Isaaq clan, being suspected of disloyalty to the Somaliland state after 1991.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile this is highly likely to be for reasons of **race/nationality**. Furthermore, persecution of groups specialised in Islamic services may also be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**, based on an innate characteristic or common background which cannot be changed (the family they are born into/their inherited religious status) and distinct identity in Somalia, as they are perceived as different in the Somali society.

3.9.4. Persons belonging to clans which can be considered minority groups in local contexts

Last update: October 2025

This sub-profile refers to persons who belong to groups that are seen as the majority under one context and as a minority under another context. These groups include the a) Rahanweyn clan family divided into the sub-clans Digil and Merifle, each being divided into various sub-clans as the Tunni, the Begedi and the Geledi (Rahanweyn/Digil) and Eyle (Rahanweyn/Merifle) and b) the Benadiri group in local context.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.4., 1.4.3.(b), 1.4.3.(c); [Targeting 2021](#), 4.4.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which clans which can be considered minority groups in local contexts could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, sexual abuse and violence against women and girls belonging to minority groups have been reported.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that clans which can be considered minority groups in local contexts could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. Although the **Rahanweyn** are counted among the majority groups, they are often subject to discrimination by more powerful groups when found displaced into other clan-based areas. **Eyle** face socio-political marginalisation, while parts of **Tunni**, **Begedi** and **Geledi** are described as having a weak position, partly due to ambiguous reception of their belonging or due to local circumstances. **Tunni** face discrimination based on clan politics.

In addition, they are disproportionately vulnerable to conflict-driven displacement. In the past, **Benadiri** were reportedly forced to pay bribes and subjected to extortion by members of majority clans. Nowadays, members of the Benadiri groups face socio-political exclusion.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for persons belonging to clans which can be considered minority groups in local contexts, **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Home area in relation to the specific minority group to which they belong:** Local circumstances cause these groups to be considered minorities in some areas, while in other areas they do not hold a minority position. Differences are also observed in the treatment of different minority groups and the severity of violations against them. In more recent years, direct security threats against the Benadiri have not been reported. Furthermore, intermarriage between Benadiri and other Somali clans is not restricted. In urban settings, especially in Mogadishu, Benadiri can get access to education. They also have gained some access to government institutions.
- **Local clan dynamics:** Although the Rahanweyn are counted among the majority groups, they are often subject to discrimination by more powerful groups when they have been displaced into other clan-based areas.
- **Status as 'noble', 'commoner':** Within Rahanweyn group *boon* (commoners) are subject to prejudice, social exclusion and some exploitation as cheap labour force by *bilis* (nobles) who claim a purer patrilineal descent.
- **Gender:** Women and girls belonging to minority groups are at a higher risk of sexual abuse and violence. Furthermore, group-belonging in combination with gender-based discrimination influences access to education.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **race/nationality**. Persecution of minority groups in local contexts may also be for reasons of **membership of particular social group**, based on an innate characteristic or common background which cannot be changed (the family they are born into) and distinct identity, as they may be perceived as different in the local context.

3.9.5. Individuals in mixed marriages

Last update: October 2025

This profile refers to both partners involved in mixed marriages. It does not refer to children born under these marriages or members of the extended family.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.4.5.](#); [Targeting 2021, 4.5.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which individuals in mixed marriages could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, intermarriage between majority and some minority groups is not accepted and may for some clans create violent conflicts between the families involved. For example, if a man from the Gabooye or Somali Bantu/Jareer marries a woman from a majority clan, this typically produces major conflict. Normally, the family of the woman rejects such a marriage. Her relatives can even threaten or attack the (prospective) husband and/or his family.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that individuals in mixed marriages could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. More specifically, if a man from a dominant clan marries a Gabooye or Somali Bantu/Jareer woman, his own family may disapprove, and his children will likely be insulted.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for individuals in mixed marriages, **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Gender:** It is most problematic if a man belonging to a minority group marries a woman from a majority group. According to the patrilineal logic of belonging, the children from this marriage would then belong to the minority group, which the relatives of the mother would see as a 'downgrade'. The family of a man coming from a dominant clan would disapprove the intermarriage with a woman from a minority clan.
- **Specific minority group to which the applicant belongs:** Intermarriage between majority and minority groups like Ashraf, Sheikhal and most Benadiri groups is

accepted, while it is generally not accepted if the minority group is Gabooye and Somali Bantu/Jareer, Madhibaan, Muse Diriye, Tumul, Yibir, Yahar, Eyle. Rahanweyn and members of other majority groups do intermarry. Majeerteen and Gabooye (especially Madhibaan) do not normally intermarry in Puntland.

- **Home area and local clan dynamics:** In Al-Shabaab-controlled areas, intermarriages between majority and minority groups happen more frequently. Majority group members in Mogadishu and surroundings marry especially women from Benadiri groups. Particularly in the north, in Somaliland, marriages between occupational minorities and majority groups happen rarely, especially if the man comes from a minority group. Majeerteen and Gabooye (especially Madhibaan) do not normally intermarry in Puntland.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **race/nationality**. Persecution of individuals in mixed marriages may also be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**, based on a common background which cannot be changed (entering in a mixed marriage) and distinct identity in Somalia, as they are perceived as different in the Somali society.

3.10. Persons with diverse SOGIESC

Last update: October 2025

This profile refers to persons who are perceived as not conforming to state, religious and/or social norms because of their sexual orientation (SO) and/or gender identity and expression (GIE), and sex characteristics (SC), including the treatment of lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or trans-gender, intersex and queer, also commonly referred to as LGBTIQ+ persons.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.8.](#); [Targeting 2021, 8.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which persons with diverse SOGIESC could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, state-sanctioned acts include penalisation of same-sex relationships and enforcement of the relevant provisions with penalties including imprisonment from three months to three years, or even eight years in Somaliland. Discrimination and other forms of bias-motivated crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity is not prohibited or prosecuted. Although the death penalty for homosexuality is not possible under Somali criminal law, a strict interpretation of Sharia law can legitimise its use.

Socially, any behavior deviating from the heterosexual norm is considered a sin and an 'illness' to be cured by incarceration of the 'ill' individual in 'correction' facilities, where beatings, starvation and rape were reported. Persons with diverse SOGIESC were subjected to



stigmatisation, exclusion, harassment, even killings. In addition, LGBTIQ persons cannot access healthcare services for issues connected to their sexual life.

Al-Shabaab courts have issued and executed death sentences for homosexuality in the recent past.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated in the case of persons with diverse SOGIESC, in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland, given the criminalisation of same-sex relationships, the severity of punishments and the pervasive social stigma.

It has to be noted that an applicant cannot be expected to conceal their sexual orientation⁽⁷⁾ or gender identity to avoid persecution.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Persecution of individuals under this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**, based on the shared characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to the identity of the applicant, that they should not be forced to renounce it as well as their distinct identity in Somalia. Persecution of individuals under this profile may also be for reasons of **religion**, since in matters that are not governed by any legislative text, the courts apply the Sharia.

3.11. Women and girls

It should be noted that the different forms of violence against women (above 18 years old) and girls (below 18 years old) in Somalia are often significantly interlinked. In such cases, the following subsections should be read in conjunction.

3.11.1. Gender-based violence (GBV)

Last update: October 2025

This profile refers to women and girls at risk of GBV. For more specific forms of GBV see sub-profiles below [3.11.2. Female genital mutilation or cutting \(FGM/C\)](#) and [3.11.4. Child marriage and forced marriage](#).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2.1.](#); [Targeting 2021, 2.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

(7) CJEU Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel v X and Y and Z, joined cases C-199/12 to C-201/12 judgment of 7 November 2013, X and Y and Z, paras. 70-76,

<https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=144215&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=7670158>



Gender equality and women's empowerment remain among the most significant challenges in Somalia. Somalia's hybrid legal system -comprising of formal, Sharia, and xeer (clan-based) laws- further restricts women's access to justice. Under the xeer system, women are not considered as responsible individuals and require a male guardian, such as a husband, father, brother, or uncle, to access traditional justice mechanisms.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which women and girls could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, women and girls in Somalia have reportedly been subjected to rape, sometimes combined with homicide and with lack of accountability for the perpetrators, harmful traditional practices, domestic violence (including intimate partner violence) and conflict-related violence -particularly rapes and gang rapes. Besides family members, unidentified perpetrators, Al-Shabaab fighters and state actors are mentioned as actors of sexual violence. Sexual slavery and abductions by Al-Shabaab have been also reported.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that women and girls could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. Women generally face institutionalised legal, judicial, social, and economic discrimination. More specifically, victims of GBV in Somalia face significant barriers in accessing services, due to a combination of limited availability, restricted access, stigma, and fear of reprisals from perpetrators, family members, and the broader community. Access to justice is further constrained by systemic delays, and perpetrators are rarely held accountable, largely due to a weak rule of law and prevailing discriminatory social and cultural norms. Women and girls were further impacted by lack of access to protective shelter and adequate specialised services for GBV. Moreover, a consistent pattern of online attacks, including 'gendered disinformation' and hate speech, has been reported both in mainstream and social media against women with a presence in public and political life.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for women and girls, **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Age:** Young adult women and underage girls are among the most vulnerable targets of GBV. In the first half of 2024, over 500 cases of sexual violence against children were reported. UNICEF noted that 70% of cases of GBV involved individuals under the age of 18. In Somaliland, the 2020 law on Rape, Fornication and Other Related Offences does not provide any details on the legal age of a minor.
- **Home area and actor in control of the area:** Women run a higher risk of conflict-related sexual violence in conflict affected areas, in South-Central Somalia. However, it is noted that GBV is pervasive and widespread in the whole of Somalia and domestic violence is described as rampant.

- **Visibility of profile:** Women in public and political roles in Somalia, elected officials, activists, leaders, and journalists have been targeted due their public profile.
- **Being from a displaced or nomadic community:** Women from displaced communities and/or from weak clans are more likely to experience SGBV. Girls and women with disabilities also face a heightened risk of SGBV. Vulnerability to GBV increases due to multiple displacements, difficult living conditions and overcrowded IDP camps.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where a well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, in relation to GBV, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**⁽⁸⁾. For example, survivors of sexual violence may be subjected to persecution because of their common background (past sexual abuse) and their distinct identity in Somalia (stigmatisation by their communities and families due to perceived dishonour associated with sexual violence). Additionally, persecution of women in public roles, may also be for reasons of political opinion. In case of targeting by Al-Shabaab religion may also be a relevant ground.

3.11.2. Female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C)

3.11.2.a. Women and girls who have not undergone FGM/C

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2.2.](#); [FGM/C 2023, 1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

FGM/C remains nearly universal in Somalia, with a 99.2% prevalence rate among women as of 2020, and no significant change reported in recent years. The most common and severe form practiced is the Pharaonic (WHO Type III), though there is a noted shift among some communities toward the less severe Sunna (depending on the exact form performed can correspond to Type I, Type II or Type III).

Despite the constitutional ban, Somalia lacks national legislation criminalizing FGM/C. In 2024, Galmudug became the first state to outlaw all forms of FGM/C, though enforcement remains limited.

FGM/C is widely seen as essential for social acceptance, marriage prospects, and religious compliance, with over 70% of women intending their daughters to undergo the practice. The primary factors driving the continuation of FGM/C include tradition, religious beliefs, social acceptance, financial incentives, and the perception that the practice protects girls. It is primarily performed by traditional practitioners and increasingly by medical professionals. One

⁽⁸⁾ CJEU, *WS v Intervyuirasht organ na Darzhavna agentsia za bezhantsite pri Ministerskia savet*, case C-621/21, Judgment of 16 January 2024, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=281302&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=r%20eq&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=1717409>



source indicated that women and girls returning from Europe are usually pressured to undergo FGM/C.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

FGM/C amounts to persecution.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

A well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated in the case of girls who have not undergone FGM/C in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland, as in Somalia, FGM/C is a widespread and deeply rooted practice, predominantly carried out on underage girls.

For a woman in Somalia, not to have been subjected to FGM/C is very exceptional. The circumstances under which the applicant had managed to avoid being subjected to FGM/C should be given due consideration.

In the exceptional case that a **woman has not undergone FGM/C**, the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood, to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Age:** While approximately 99 % of women in Somalia had undergone FGM/C, the majority had undergone FGM/C between the ages 5-9. Old(er) women may have a lower risk to be subjected to FGM/C.
- **Marital status:** FGM/C is commonly performed before marriage, as it is linked to notions of premarital virginity and purity, creating therefore strong societal pressure on families to have their daughters undergo the practice to improve their marriage prospects.
- **Tradition and the views of family on the practice:** Women originating from families/communities with more traditional views would be exposed to a higher risk. Stigma and social isolation for themselves, their daughters and their families occurred for women who were not circumcised. Over 70 % of Somali women aged 15-49 years old believe that FGM/C is a religious requirement. Traditionally mothers and occasionally grandmothers are in control of the decision whether their daughters would undergo FGM/C. Fathers play a secondary role.
- **Home area:** Awareness regarding FGM/C was specifically reported as low among pastoralist communities.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**, due to the innate characteristic and/or common background which cannot be changed (not being subjected to FGM/C) and their distinct identity in Somalia. Persecution of this profile may also be for reasons of **religion**, since FGM/C is broadly regarded as a religious requirement.





3.11.2.b. Women and girls who have undergone FGM/C

Last update: October 2025

This profile refers to women and girls who have already undergone FGM/C and focuses on the risk to be subjected to FGM/C again.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2.2.](#); [FGM/C 2023, 1., 2., 2.1., 2.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Women who underwent infibulation (type III) can be re-infibulated, such as after de-infibulation and childbirth, premarital relation/sexual intercourse or rape to 'restore the honour', or after a divorce. Women who underwent a milder form of FGM/C (type I or type II) can be subjected, in some cases, to an infibulation (type III).

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

FGM/C amounts to persecution.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

There is diverging information regarding the prevalence of different forms of repeated FGM/C. Nevertheless, the following considerations can be highlighted and the individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for women and girls who have been subjected to FGM/C to undergo FGM/C again **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- Age and marital status:** Some sources indicated that de-infibulation and re-infibulation are very common and part of the childbirth process. In rural settings, after giving birth, women may be re-infibulated by a midwife. This procedure is performed as part of the midwife's routine to carry out deliveries from start to finish. However, if the midwife either refuses to carry out the re-infibulation or does not perform the procedure, it may be performed by a traditional cutter. Other sources reported that re-infibulation becomes less relevant once a woman has been pregnant, or is already married and no longer a virgin. Some women have opposed to their re-infibulation, some have not explicitly consented, others have been pressured and others have 'voluntarily' been re-infibulated for the sake of their husbands. Therefore, women of older age are less likely to undergo FGM/C again. De-infibulation and re-infibulation may be more likely for women who are young enough to give birth. Women seeking remarriage may choose to be re-infibulated.
- Other (family) perceptions and traditions:** Women could be re-infibulated when the initial infibulation is considered not been done 'properly'. Furthermore, parents of victims of rape often force their daughter to undergo re-infibulation so as to restore her honour and protect her marital status. The same could apply to unmarried women who



have had premarital relationships or in the case of women or girls whose infibulation was damaged due to an accident. Therefore, women who have lost their virginity pre-marriage, have a higher risk of being subjected to FGM/C again.

- **Type of FGM/C experienced:** women who are infibulated may have a higher risk to be defibulated and re-infibulated, depending also on their age and marital status. Regarding women who had previously undergone Sunni circumcision, one source indicated that they are not usually (re-)infibulated, however they might be pressured to do it. It has been reported that girls who had undergone the Sunni type of FGM/C were insulted as ‘unclean’ and incapable of controlling their sexual desires. The treatment of other women in the family can provide insight into how the family perceives and practises FGM/C.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, for an applicant under this profile, this may be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**. For example, they may be subjected to persecution for refusing to be subjected to FGM/C again (fundamental belief), or because of a common background which cannot be changed (e.g. victims of rape) and their distinct identity is seen as impure in the surrounding society. Persecution of this profile may also be for reasons of **religion**, since FGM/C is broadly regarded as a religious requirement.

3.11.3. Women and girls who have left Al-Shabaab

Last update: October 2025

This profile refers to women and girls who had been wives of Al-Shabaab members or who were actively engaged in the group’s activities and who have left Al-Shabaab.

For the treatment of adult males and boys who had been actively involved in the group, especially as fighters, who desert or defect, see [3.3. Deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab](#). The present subsection should be read in conjunction with the subsection mentioned above.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), [1.2.1.](#); [AS Deserters 2023](#), [1.2.5.](#), [2.2.1.](#), [2.2.2.](#), [2.2.4.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which women and girls who have left **Al-Shabaab** could be exposed by the group are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, once they have left the group, going back to Al-Shabaab territory is not an option for women, who would ‘most probably face execution as traitors’. Women from minority clans face execution and imprisonment, as well as certain forms of physical violence, including sexual violence and torture. Women reportedly face challenges in their new location, such as sexual exploitation.



Furthermore, women and girls may have a well-founded fear of persecution by the **community** and the **government** in individual cases. Former female members of Al-Shabaab could get 'raided' by government security forces as well as stigmatised and excluded from the community, being highly vulnerable to extreme poverty.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that women and girls could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. Poverty, stigma and mistrust from the hosting community or the family circle, and fear of Al-Shabaab have been also reported. Rehabilitation centres for women formerly associated with Al-Shabaab have closed. Being a child is to be taken into account in the assessment on whether an act reaches the threshold of persecution.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

In South-Central Somalia well-founded fear of persecution by Al-Shabaab would in general be substantiated in the case of women and girls who have left the group.

In **Puntland**, Al-Shabaab has lower operational capacity with stronger presence in the northern parts (see [map](#)). Therefore, the home area of the applicant should be taken into account as a risk-impacting circumstance.

In **Somaliland**, Al-Shabaab has very limited operational capacity. Therefore, a well-founded fear of persecution for women and girls who have left Al-Shabaab in **Somaliland would in general not be substantiated**.

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for women and girls to face persecution by the **community** and the **government**, in South-Central Somalia and Puntland should take into account risk-impacting circumstances, such as:

- **Past role in Al-Shabaab:** The risk may be higher for women and girls who had voluntarily joined Al-Shabaab and depending on the prominence of the roles they had within the group.
- **Clan affiliation and protection:** The vulnerability of women and girls depends highly on the level of family or clan support they can rely upon. Women coming from minority clans (e.g. Bantu/Jareer) or who are displaced without access to clan protection reportedly end up without any protection and resources.
- **Displacement situation:** The integration of women and girls largely depends on the locations to which they settle, with displacement significantly increasing their vulnerability.
- **Participation in a rehabilitation programme:** Women and girls who have successfully completed the government's rehabilitation programmes and receive a 'non-criminal certificate' from the Criminal Investigation Department run a lower risk. As of 2022 information, due to lack of funding, women residing in Mogadishu do not have access to any form of rehabilitation programme.

There is no information about the treatment of women who have left Al-Shabaab by the government or the community in Somaliland.



Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, persecution of this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion** and/or **religion**, as leaving Al-Shabaab would be considered as opposition to its political and/or ideological stance. Persecution of women who have left Al-Shabaab marriages may also be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group** based on their common background which cannot be changed (past marriage to an Al-Shabaab member) and distinct identity in Somalia (in relation to stigmatisation).



Exclusion considerations are relevant to this profile, as women who have left Al-Shabaab may have been involved in excludable acts, particularly those that joined voluntarily and were actively engaged in the group's activities. See [7. Exclusion](#).

3.11.4. Child marriage and forced marriage

Last update: October 2025

This profile assesses the risk of women and girls in relation to forced marriage by multiple actors. Since Al-Shabaab most commonly recruits women and girls through marriage, this profile also covers such cases.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2.1](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Forced and child marriage are amongst the most common forms of GBV in Somalia.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Forced and child marriage amount to persecution. As of 2024, Al-Shabaab remains the perpetrator with the highest recorded incidents of forced marriage. The practice of early marriage continues to be pervasive as in the Somali society in general, one's date of birth is not viewed as a decisive criterion for when a person is considered an adult, with puberty being the marker of adulthood. The 2020 'Sexual Intercourse Related Crimes Bill' allows parents to marry off their children once they reach puberty, which could be as young as 10 years old. Forced marriage is also prevalent among persons with disabilities.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that women and girls could be subjected to by the community, such as social stigma as a result of refusing a forced marriage, and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for women and girls under this profile to face persecution **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Prevalence of the practice in the home area and control or influence of Al-Shabaab:** Child marriage is widespread in Somalia. Early and forced marriage in Somalia reaches approximately 45 %. Girls originating from nomadic and rural communities are particularly affected.

Specifically in relation to Al-Shabaab, marriage is more likely in areas where Al-Shabaab has established control over a substantial period of time, mostly in South-Central Somalia. The group can demand support from local families, who regard supporting Al-Shabaab as 'normal'. In areas outside the Al-Shabaab's direct control, such as Puntland, the risk of forced marriage to members of the group will be generally lower but personal circumstances and the presence of Al-Shabaab in northern parts (see [map](#)) are still to be taken into account (see also other bullet points). In Somaliland, in general the risk of forced marriage to Al-Shabaab would not be substantiated. Recruitment/marriage outside Al-Shabaab's control areas frequently involves aspects of coercion.

- **Age:** Regarding early marriage, some girls marry before the age of 15. In traditional pastoralist communities, early marriage is common, with girls often marrying as young as 12 or 13. Also, young women and teenagers between the ages of 11 - 25 are at higher risk to be forcibly married to Al-Shabaab members.
- **Clan and family traditions:** Forced and early marriage is more common for girls and women coming from minority groups, such as Bantu/Jareer, Gabooye and Eyle clans. Furthermore, girls and women who belong to the Bantu/Jareer clan have a higher risk to be forcibly recruited by Al-Shabaab than other clans; union to Al-Shabaab fighters has been described in their case as sexual and domestic slavery. Additionally, women are involved in blood compensation (*diya*) under the *xeer* system, as well as under the practice of 'wife inheritance' or the widower's right to marry a deceased wife's sister. [See also Individuals involved in clan disputes.](#)

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Persecution of this profile may be for reasons of **religion**, as early marriage is perceived to be both a cultural and a religious requirement, and/or for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**. For example, refusal to enter into a marriage may result in persecution for reasons of membership of a particular social group in relation to a common background which cannot be changed (refusal to marry) and/or a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce it (the right to choose whom to marry) and their distinct identity in Somalia (e.g. stigmatisation). In the case of Bantu/Jareer women, persecution may also be for reasons of **race/nationality**.

3.11.5. Single women and female heads of households

Last update: October 2025

This sub-profile refers to single women (e.g. divorced women, unmarried women, widows) and female heads of households. Girls can also fall in this sub-profile.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.1., 1.2., 1.3.](#); [Targeting 2021, 2.5.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which single women and female heads of households could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, displaced single women in Somalia face significant risks of GBV and sexual exploitation.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that single women and female heads of households could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. Instances of stigmatisation in case of pregnancies without marriage have been reported. Although there is no immediate stigma around getting divorced, the attitudes of local communities towards divorced women may differ. A woman still needs to obtain her own clan's consent for a divorce as well as to cite the specific reasons behind it. However, remarriage after divorce is common. Evictions against displaced women were also reported.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for single women and female heads of households to face persecution **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Being in a IDP situation:** Single women and girls who are displaced or live in IDP camps, face heightened risks of sexual exploitation and other forms of GBV violence. In 2023, most recorded cases of conflict-related sexual violence reported by UNSOM involved displaced women and girls.
- **Family status:** Divorced women may risk social ostracism within their communities. Women with children born out of wedlock might be pushed to live in the area of local sex workers.
- **Family and society perceptions:** Victims of rape without a support network are possibly being ostracised.
- **Clan affiliation:** Single women from minority clans are also at risk of being ostracised by their communities. Minority women are especially vulnerable to violence and abuse-including sexual and GBV from both within their communities and by armed forces, militias, and majority clan members.
- **Level of assistance by a support/clan network:** Single women are often supported by their community, which acts as a safety net, provided they have not violated customary laws or norms. However, women who are victims of rape or sexual violence frequently lack access to effective policing, justice, or welfare systems.

In the case of single women and female heads of households without support from the extended family or clan, well-founded fear of persecution would in general be

substantiated in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, persecution of this profile may be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**. For example, women with children born out of wedlock may be subjected to persecution based on their common background which cannot be changed (having a child out of wedlock) and distinct identity in Somalia (in relation to stigmatisation by society and seen as betraying the family honour).

3.12. Children

This profile refers to Somali nationals under the age of 18.

3.12.1. Violence against children

Last update: October 2025

This section covers certain child-specific circumstances of increased vulnerability and risks that children in Somalia may be exposed to.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [Country Focus 2025, 1.1.2, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.4](#); [Security 2025, 1.4.3, 1.5, 2.2.3, 2.4.1, 2.5.1, 2.5.2, 2.6.2, 2.7.2](#); [Targeting 2021, 2.3, 2.4](#); [COI Query FGM/C 2023, 1](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Children in Somalia have been exposed to various forms of violence by various actors.

On GBV, FGM/C, and child marriage practices against girls, see more under sub-profiles: [3.11.1. Gender-based violence \(GBV\)](#), [3.11.2. Female genital mutilation or cutting \(FGM/C\)](#), [3.11.4. Child marriage and forced marriage](#).

On child recruitment practices by Al-Shabaab, see more under sub-profile [3.12.2. Child recruitment by Al-Shabaab](#).

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which children could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, during the reference period grave violations against children were reported by various actors all over Somalia, including abductions as well as attacks on schools.

In the first half of 2024, there were more than 500 reported cases of sexual violence against children, including boys. Child labour incidents were also reported with children forced into labour in agriculture, domestic work, livestock herding, and selling khat internally and abroad. Incidents of child recruitment by multiple actors in Somalia have been reported, involving SNA,

government-aligned clan-based militias, federal armed forces, security services, regional forces, and the police.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that children could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be also considered. More specifically, stigmatisation resulting in limited school enrolment and a relatively low literacy rate of minority group children has been reported. Children born out of wedlock were also reported to face stigma, abandonment, and potential destitution. In terms of acute malnutrition, more than 1.7 million children, aged between 6 and 59 months were reported to be in need of treatment, either for severe or moderate acute malnutrition, notably in South-Central Somalia, while the destruction of schools and the displacement of teachers due to conflict has left children without access to education in conflict affected areas.

Being a child is to be taken into account in the assessment on whether an act reaches the threshold of persecution.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for a child to face persecution **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Gender:** Boys can also be subjected to child marriage, however at a lower rate compared to girls, and increasing concerns about sexual violence against boys were also reported. Child recruitment for combatant roles would be more relevant for boys.
- **Age:** Children aged between 11 and 17 years were identified as being most at risk of forced recruitment.
- **Home area and the control or influence of Al-Shabaab:** Individuals from areas where conflict is active may face increased risk of being abducted and forcibly recruited by security forces and clan militias. The destruction of schools and the displacement of teachers due to conflict has left children without access to education in conflict affected areas. Regarding forced labour children living in Al-Shabaab's territory are particularly vulnerable.
- **Displacement situation:** Regarding forced labour, IDPs children are particularly vulnerable.
- **Ethnic/minority background:** Children belonging to marginalised ethnic minorities are less often enrolled in school and more exposed to forced labour.
- **Family status:** Children born out of wedlock were reported to face stigma, abandonment, and potential destitution.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, the assessment should take into account the individual circumstances of the child. For example, children born out of wedlock may be subjected to persecution for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**,



based on their common background which cannot be changed (born out of wedlock) and distinct identity in Somalia (in relation to stigmatisation by society).

3.12.2. Child recruitment by Al-Shabaab

Last update: October 2025

This profile refers to children fearing recruitment by Al-Shabaab. For an overview of other actors recruiting children, see [3.12.1. Violence against children](#).

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), [1.1.](#), [1.2.](#), [1.10.1.\(b\)](#); [Security 2025](#), [1.2.2.](#); [Targeting 2021](#), [1.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Over the last years, thousands of children (basically between 11 and 17 years old) have been recruited by all sides, but the majority of them were recruited by Al-Shabaab. Children form most of the new recruits of Al-Shabaab, as the group targets predominantly boys and young men. Girls are subjected to forced marriages and sexual slavery (see [3.11.4. Child marriage and forced marriage](#)).

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Child recruitment is of such severe nature that it amounts to persecution, including when recruitment is not induced by coercion. According to UNICEF, around 500 children were recruited by Al-Shabaab between January and September 2023. In 2022, over 900 children were recruited and 663 abducted by Al-Shabaab, primarily in Bay, Bakool, Hiraan, Middle Juba, and Lower Shabelle, according to the UN Secretary-General's report on Children and Armed Conflict. The UN Panel of Experts on Somalia confirms that these patterns of child recruitment and abduction have continued unchanged through September 2023 to August 2024. Al-Shabaab was reported to recruit children for combatant roles (fighters, suicide bombers, or guards) and non-combatant roles (transportation of weapons, supplies, or communication, conceal explosives or personnel, informants or spies, religious indoctrination, sexual exploitation and forced marriages in the case of girls etc.).

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Gender:** Child recruitment for combatant roles would be more relevant for boys, while girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and forced marriage (see [3.11.4. Child marriage and forced marriage](#)).
- **Age:** Al-Shabaab usually recruits children from 12 years old, while also recruitment of children aged nine or younger was reported. Being an adolescent or of 'fighting age', from age 15 or 16, may put the person at risk of recruitment as an active fighter or a suicide bomber.



- **Home area and the control or influence of Al-Shabaab:** Recruitment is more easily facilitated in areas where Al-Shabaab has established control over a substantial period of time, mostly in South-Central Somalia areas (in Middle and Lower Shabelle, Middle and Lower Jubba, Bay, Bakool, Hirshabelle and Galmudug). IDPs residing in the outer districts of Mogadishu, where Al-Shabaab has strong influence, are frequently recruited by the group. In areas outside the group's direct control, such as Puntland, the risk of recruitment will be generally lower. In Somaliland, in general the risk would not be substantiated. Recruitment outside Al-Shabaab's control areas frequently involves aspects of coercion.
- **Clan affiliation and clan positioning towards Al-Shabaab:** Minority groups (e.g. Rahanweyn, Somali Bantu/Jareer, other groups from the Benadir coast) are discriminated against and forced into foot soldier roles and often seen as disposable used in high-risk operations like suicide attacks. Clans opposing Al-Shabaab may face increased recruitment pressure. Children belonging to marginalised ethnic minorities and those living in Al-Shabaab's territory are particularly vulnerable.
- **Socio-economic situation of the family:** Low socio-economic background families are coerced due to economic desperation or inability to resist pressure. For example, women who are unable to pay taxes to Al-Shabaab are in some cases forced to hand over their children to the group.
- **Family status:** Orphans and single-parent children are more vulnerable due to lack of protection or guidance and would be more easily manipulated and socialised into Al-Shabaab ideology.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, the individual circumstances of the child need to be taken into account to determine whether a nexus to a reason for persecution can be substantiated. For example, in case of recruitment of minors of specific clans perceived to be opposing Al-Shabaab, persecution may be for reasons of **political opinion**. Alternatively, recruitment of children from minority groups may be for reasons of **race/nationality**.

3.13. Persons living with disabilities and/or with severe medical issues

Last update: October 2025

This profile refers to people with disabilities as well as those who have severe medical issues, including mental health issues.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025](#), 1.2.1., 1.4., 2.1.3.(d); [Targeting 2021](#), 2.2., 2.3.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.



Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

The lack of personnel and adequate infrastructure to appropriately address the needs of individuals with (severe) medical issues fails to meet the requirement of Article 6 QD/QR regarding the existence of an actor that inflicts persecution or serious harm, unless the individual is intentionally deprived of healthcare⁽⁹⁾.

Some acts to which persons falling under this profile could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. Private ‘rehabilitation’ centres exist in Somalia for mentally ill people. Such centres are run by *sheikhs* and ‘treatment’ includes reading of the Koran, with incidents of physical and psychological abuse being reported. Women with disabilities may also be subjected to GBV and forced marriage (see profile [3.11.5. Child marriage and forced marriage](#)).

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that persons living with disabilities and/or with severe medical issues could be subjected to, such as discrimination and mistreatment by society, and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be considered. People suffering from mental issues face huge stigma from the Somali society.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the applicant to face persecution **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Nature and visibility of the mental or physical disability:** Individuals living with noticeable physical or mental disability would be at higher risk.
- **Support network:** Individuals that face their family’s or community’s negative perception would be at higher risk. Lack of other support networks should also be considered a risk factor.
- **Minority groups:** Cultural biases may limit the health care services available to minority clan members.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, for an applicant under this profile, this may be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**. For example, persons with a noticeable physical disability may be considered as having an innate characteristic and a distinct identity connected to their stigmatisation by the surrounding society.

3.14. Somalis who have resided for a long time in neighbouring countries or other countries in the

⁽⁹⁾ CJEU, M'Bodj, paras. 35-36. See also CJEU, MP v Secretary of State for the Home Department, C-353/16, judgment of 24 April 2018 (MP), paras. 57, 59.





region

Last update: October 2025

This profile refers to Somalis who returned to Somalia after spending time in neighbouring countries or other countries in the region, notably Yemen, Kenya, where they lived mostly in camps or were stranded on a migration route.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 1.9.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

In general, the treatment faced by individuals under this profile would not amount to persecution. More specifically, returnees face similar challenges and have similar profiles to the urban poor in Mogadishu. The primary hardships encountered upon return include widespread poverty and high unemployment, with the informal sector being for many of them the only option for work. Access to sustaining livelihoods in Mogadishu depends on personal networks, family structures and clan affiliation to strong clans.

Returnees who are unable to reunite with their families often become IDPs and that could be a risk-enhancing factor. For example, women and girls who are returning into precarious conditions face risks of sexual and gender-based violence (see [3.11.1. Gender-based violence \(GBV\)](#)).





4. Subsidiary protection

This chapter addresses the EU-regulated status of subsidiary protection. Where the applicant has not been found to qualify as a refugee, they may be eligible for subsidiary protection in accordance with Article 15 QD/QR.



The CJEU ruled in 2023 on **the importance of the individual circumstances to be taken into account while determining if an applicant is eligible for subsidiary protection, before identifying the type of serious harm**, notably⁽¹⁰⁾:

‘1. Article 15 of Directive 2011/95/EU (...) must be interpreted as meaning that in order to determine whether an applicant for international protection is eligible for subsidiary protection, **the competent national authority must examine all the relevant factors**, relating both to the individual position and personal circumstances of the applicant and to the general situation in the country of origin, **before identifying the type of serious harm** that those factors may potentially substantiate.’

Therefore, where refugee status is not granted, **established personal circumstances** (e.g. age, gender, professional and economic background, home area, potential vulnerabilities) **are still to be taken into account in the assessment of Article 15 QD/QR**.



For further information on the **specific individual circumstances** which may be relevant to consider in the assessment of a **real risk of serious harm under Article 15 QD/QR**, see relevant sections below.

4.1. Article 15(a) QD/QR: death penalty or execution

Last update: October 2025



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see ‘EUAA, [‘Article 15\(a\) QD/QR: death penalty or execution’](#) in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025’.

(10) CJEU, *X and Y v Staatssecretaris van Veiligheid en Justitie*, C-125/22, Fourth Chamber, judgment of 9 November 2023, operative part (Court’s ruling), <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=279488&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=7856939>



The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025, 1.6., 2.1.1., 2.1.2., 2.1.3., 2.2.1., 2.2.3.](#); [Country Focus 2025, 1.1.1., 1.3.1., 1.6.4., 1.8.](#); [Actors 2021, 2.3.3., 2.3.4.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The FGS has not abolished the death penalty, nor has it declared a moratorium on executions. Death sentences continue to be imposed and carried out for crimes beyond intentional killing, including treason, espionage, and acts endangering public safety, including crimes committed while under the age of 18. In this context, military courts often pronounce death sentences to civilians and carry out executions at a higher rate than civilian courts. In 2023, Somalia carried out at least 55 executions, including of minors and former security personnel. In August 2024, Puntland executed 10 alleged Al-Shabaab fighters, four reportedly underaged. The UN and other observers raised concerns about executions conducted without legal representation or the right to appeal against the execution.

Islamic courts in Somalia, including Somaliland, may impose the death penalty for *hudud* offences under Sharia law, such as illicit sexual relations (*zina*) and homosexuality, although the Somali criminal law does not provide for the death penalty in such cases. Traditionally, the application of *hudud* punishments by Islamic courts has been severely limited by the strict requirements for evidence.

Al-Shabaab courts also implement Sharia law in a strict and violent way and may impose severe punishments for *hudud* crimes, including for adopting un-Islamic behaviour and for 'spying' for the government or other foreign powers. These punishments refer to instances of executions, including public executions by stoning and shooting. Moreover, in areas controlled by the group, defectors, people of non-Muslim faiths and converts from Islam routinely face execution. Blasphemy is also sanctioned with death. During the reference period, several cases of public executions of men accused of spying for the FGS or foreign forces were reported in Gedo, Middle Juba, Lower Juba, Bakool and Lower Sabelle and one case of a public execution of two civilians accused of committing sexual offences in Hiraan.

Some profiles of applicants from Somalia may be at risk of death penalty or execution (e.g. [3.7. Individuals \(perceived as\) contravening social or religious laws/tenets](#), [3.10. Persons with diverse SOGIESC](#), [3.3. Deserters and defectors from Al-Shabaab](#), [3.1.4. Civilians perceived as 'spies' by Al-Shabaab](#)), and those individuals would qualify for refugee status.

The home area of the applicant is to be taken into account when assessing the real risk of death penalty or execution. Such risk is higher where Al-Shabaab operates.

In case of real risk of death penalty or execution, if nexus to a reason for persecution is not substantiated, Article 15(a) QD/QR would apply.

In some cases, the death penalty would have been imposed for a serious crime committed by the applicant, or for other acts falling within the exclusion grounds (Article 17 QD/QR). Therefore, although the criteria of Article 15(a) QD/QR would be met, exclusion considerations should be examined (see [7. Exclusion](#)).



4.2. Article 15(b) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Last update: October 2025



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see 'EUAA, [Article 15\(b\) QD/QR: torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the country of origin](#)' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.



According to the [EUAA Practical Guide: Qualification for International Protection](#), the assessment of whether a treatment or punishment is inhuman or degrading also implies a subjective consideration by the person who suffers such treatment. In some cases, the gender, age and state of health of the person may be individual circumstances to consider for the assessment under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

4.2.1. Arbitrary arrests, illegal detention and prison conditions

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025, 1.6.](#); [Actors 2021, 2.4.6.](#); [Country Focus 2025, 1.7.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Special attention should be paid to the phenomena of arbitrary arrests and illegal detention, as well as to prison conditions.

Arbitrary arrests and detentions: Security forces have conducted arbitrary arrests and detentions.

Prison conditions: As of July 2024, there were 14 operational prisons in Somalia, with the conditions described as 'substandard' and 'below internationally recognized standards'. Issues include inadequate infrastructure, lack of steady food and water supplies, limited medical facilities, inadequate separation of prisoners by gender and age, and insufficient rehabilitation and reintegration programs. Medical facilities within prisons were described as rare, and prisoners have restricted access to external medical care.



In cases where a person faces conditions of arrest and/or detention amounting to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, a situation of serious harm under Article 15(b) QD/QR would occur.



In cases where there would be a nexus to a reason for persecution, those individuals would qualify for refugee status. If a nexus cannot be substantiated, Article 15(b) QD/QR would apply.



In some cases, the arrest, detention and imprisonment would have been imposed on the applicant for a serious crime committed or other acts falling within the exclusion grounds (Article 17 QD/QR). Therefore, although the criteria of Article 15(b) QD/QR would be met, exclusion considerations should be examined. See [Exclusion](#).

4.2.2. Criminal Violence

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025](#), [1.3.](#), [1.5.](#); [Country Focus 2025](#), [1.10.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Criminal violence in Somalia is widespread and deeply rooted in the country's fragile governance and security structures. In 2023, Somalia ranked 13th out of 54 African countries for criminality and had the world's highest score for extortion and protection racketeering, mainly by non-state armed groups like Al-Shabaab and ISS. The criminal economy thrives amid weak institutions, corruption, and low public trust in law enforcement, perpetuating insecurity and violence across the country.

Major crimes include arms trafficking, human smuggling and trafficking in human beings, forced child labour- particularly among IDPs and minority groups- and extortion targeting civilians, businesses, NGOs, and humanitarian actors. Extortion through the use of 'taxes' has been imposed not only by Al-Shabaab (see also [3.4. Individuals refusing to pay 'taxes' to Al-Shabaab](#)), but also by other groups and militias. In the reference period, various incidents, including shootings, killings, and beatings, were triggered by disputes over 'taxes or money extortion'. Reported perpetrators include government institutions, local administrations, ISS, clan militias, individual soldiers and mooryaan or bandits, depending also on their area of operations. Crimes, such as arms trafficking, trafficking in human beings, and smuggling are also pervasive in Somalia. Smuggling, often perceived as a legitimate income source, frequently transitions into trafficking in human beings involving forced labour and sexual exploitation. Youth gangs, such as *ciyaal weero*, are active in Mogadishu, engaging in robbery, assault, and looting. Criminality is driven by non-state actors, clan-based militias, and even state-embedded actors. Criminal networks, often intertwined with political actors and Al-Shabaab, control smuggling routes and illicit trade, including charcoal, frankincense, and gold, sometimes resulting in violent disputes.



Personal circumstances such as: the home area of the applicant as well as his/her gender, being in an IDP situation, belonging to a minority are to be taken into account for the assessment of real risk of criminal violence. A real risk of a violent crime, such as abduction, murder, robbery and violence related to trafficking in



human beings and forced child labour would meet the requirements under Article 15(b) QD/QR. Where there is no nexus to a reason for persecution under the refugee definition, but there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the individual to face violent crime, this risk would qualify under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

4.2.3. Corporal punishments

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025, 1.6.](#); [Country Focus 2025, 1.1.1., 1.3.1., 1.3.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Corporal punishments for the so called *hudud* crimes in case of theft, banditry, unlawful sexual intercourse, alcohol consumption and drug abuse, as well as drug dealing and espionage may be imposed by Sharia or Al-Shabaab courts.

Corporal punishment in Somalia is not foreseen by the Provisional Constitution nor in the Penal Code and it is officially stated that such practices do not occur in Mogadishu's central prison. However, corporal punishment is widely accepted in the Somali society and not prohibited either in the home, schools or care settings, or as a sentence for crimes committed in penal institutions, or as a judicial sentence for children who have committed offences.

Under Sharia law, which operates alongside the formal system, corporal punishment, including flogging, stoning, and amputation, is lawful and recognised as a sentence for crime. However, it is rarely enforced for crimes, such as adultery, alcohol consumption, or theft due to high evidentiary standards. In Somaliland, corporal punishment is explicitly prohibited by its constitution and juvenile justice law. However, cases of physical assaults and beatings failing to 'return to Islam' were documented in Somaliland in the period 2019-2021.

In practice, corporal punishment remains widespread, particularly in areas under Al-Shabaab control, where it is imposed harshly and publicly by the group for offenses under Sharia, like adultery, sexual misconduct, homosexuality, and theft. Documented incidents between 2023 and 2025 included public flogging, amputations, injuring, and execution. During the reference period, Al-Shabaab demonstrated capacity to sanction adultery and sexual misconduct outside its control area with punishments, including flogging, amputation, injuring, and torture.



Corporal punishments, such as those described above, would meet the requirements of serious harm under Article 15(b) QD/QR. The home area of the applicant is to be taken into account when assessing the real risk of corporal punishment. Particularly where Al-Shabaab operates, there is a higher risk of corporal punishment.

Where there is no nexus to a reason for persecution under the refugee definition, and there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the individual to be subjected to corporal punishment, this risk would qualify under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

In some cases, the corporal punishments would have been imposed for a serious crime committed by the applicant, or for other acts falling within the exclusion



grounds (Article 17 QD/QR). Therefore, although the criteria of Article 15(b) QD/QR would be met, exclusion considerations should be examined (see [7. Exclusion](#)).

4.2.4. Forced evictions

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025, 1.4.3., 2.4.1.; Country Focus 2025, 1.2.3., 2.1.1., 2.2.3., 2.3.4.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In the course of 2024, the Norwegian Refugee Council registered the evictions of more than 192 000 individuals across Somalia, while there were more than 207 000 in the course of 2023. Banadir (Daynille, Kahda), Bay (Baidoa), and Wogooyi Galbeed (Hargeisa) accounted for more than 90 % of all forced evictions. The most affected are the urban IDPs, particularly those living on private land without formal tenure agreements.

In 2024 alone, 197 000 cases involving eviction of IDPs were recorded, primarily in Mogadishu and surrounding areas. In Belet Weyne (Hirshabelle), UNOCHA documented evictions of 180 IDP households in the first half of 2024. In Hargeisa (Somaliland), 41 % of households living in IDP sites were reported to rely on oral land agreements, leaving them vulnerable to disputes and eviction risks. In Garowe (Puntland), 36 % of IDP sites were reported to be at severe risk of eviction.

Women and children -who make approximately 80 % of Somalia's 3.8 million displaced persons- are particularly at risk of eviction, facing heightened risks of gender-based violence and exploitation (see profiles [3.1.1.5. Single women and female heads of households](#) and [3.12.1. Violence against children](#)).



Personal circumstances such as: the home area of the applicant as well as his/her gender and being in an IDP situation are to be taken into account for the assessment of real risk of forced eviction. Where there is no nexus to a reason for persecution, (the risk of) being subjected to forced eviction may qualify under Article 15(b) QD/QR, depending on the severity of its consequences in the individual case.

4.2.5. Healthcare and socio-economic conditions

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025, 1.4.3.; Country Focus 2025, 1.2.1., 2.1.1., 2.2.1., 2.3.1.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Somalia faces a prolonged humanitarian crisis fueled by conflict, climate shocks, disease outbreaks, and mass displacement. In 2025, 9.1 million people -47 % of the population- were affected, with nearly 6 million needing humanitarian aid. Socio-economic conditions remained dire, especially in urban centres like Mogadishu, Hargeisa, and Garowe; widespread poverty,



informal employment, and lack of access to food, clean water, and secure housing are common, especially among IDPs, who make up the most vulnerable group.

Half of the population is water-insecure, and over 1.7 million children suffer from acute malnutrition. IDPs often live in informal settlements without land rights, exposing them to forced evictions and exploitation by informal camp managers. Healthcare is limited due to inaccessible facilities, high costs, and medicine shortages. Ongoing conflict has severely damaged essential infrastructure, with more than 25 attacks on hospitals and numerous incidents targeting schools reported between 2023 and 2024.

Women and children (who constitute 80% of the IDP population), minority groups, the elderly, and people with disabilities face heightened risks. In areas controlled by Al-Shabaab, residents suffer from extreme restrictions and lack of services. The ongoing destruction of infrastructure and the lack of public support systems deepen the crisis, leaving many reliant on humanitarian aid for survival.



It is important to note that serious harm must take the form of conduct of an actor ([Article 6 QD/QR](#)). In itself, unless there is intentional conduct of an actor, the general unavailability of healthcare, education or other socio-economic elements (e.g. situation of IDPs, difficulties in finding livelihood opportunities, housing) is not considered serious harm meeting the requirements of inhuman or degrading treatment under Article 15(b) QD/QR in relation to Article 6 QD/QR. When such conditions are the result of an intentional conduct of an actor, they may qualify under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

Personal circumstances such as: the home area of the applicant as well as his/her gender, being in an IDP situation, belonging to a minority are to be taken into account in the assessment of real risk of inhuman or degrading treatment based on the socio-economic conditions. Where there is the intentional conduct of an actor and no nexus to a reason for persecution is substantiated, the treatment may qualify under Article 15(b) QD/QR, depending on the severity of its consequences in the individual case.

4.3. Article 15(c) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict

Last update: October 2025



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this section, see 'EUAA, [Article 15\(c\) QD/QR: indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict](#) in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.



In armed conflicts, the targeting of civilians may have a nexus to one of the grounds for persecution according to the refugee definition. Therefore, refugee status may be granted. Such targeted violence, furthermore, would not be considered ‘indiscriminate’.

Reference period: The following assessment for the applicability of Article 15(c) QD/QR is primarily based on the EUAA COI report ‘[Somalia: Security situation](#)’, published in May 2025 and concerning the reference period 1 April 2023 – 30 March 2025. Some indicators, mainly referring to data until 31 July 2025, are added during the finalisation of the document, based on the [COI Update 2025](#).



This guidance should be considered valid as long as current events and developments fall within the trends and patterns of violence observed within the reference period of the mentioned COI report. New events and developments that cause substantial changes, new trends or geographical shifts in the violence, may lead to a different assessment. The security situation in a given territory should always be assessed in light of the most up-to-date COI available.

All of the elements under Article 15(c) QD/QR (Figure 2) have to be fulfilled in order to grant subsidiary protection in accordance with this provision.

Figure 2. Article 15(c) QD/QR: elements of the assessment





4.3.1. Armed conflict (international or internal)

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 1](#); [COI Update 2025, 1](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Throughout the reference period, Somalia continued to be affected by various conflicts. The main conflicts are outlined below:

- AI-Shabaab – anti AI-Shabaab armed conflict:** With the support of the international coalition of ATMIS/AUSSOM, Kenya, Ethiopia and the United States of America, the FGS continued its offensive against AI-Shabaab which, in response, staged high profile attacks, especially in Mogadishu. In South-Central Somalia, particularly, AI-Shabaab maintained or regained control over large swathes of territory. This remains the main conflict driver in Somalia.
- The inter and intra-clan rivalries:** The second conflict driver and source of insecurity in the country is the continuation of clan rivalries and intra-clan conflicts, which has led to an increase of relevant security incidents and estimated fatalities across the country. The existence of clan militias has been reported throughout Somalia, including Puntland and Somaliland. In some cases, clan rivalries have escalated to armed confrontations, therefore taking the form of an armed conflict in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.
- SNA – SSC-Khatumo conflict:** The major conflict that erupted in February 2023 between SNA and SSC-Khatumo forces continued intermittently throughout the reference period, leading to the establishment of the autonomous SSC-Khatumo administration in the contested regions between Puntland and Somaliland.
- Anti-ISS armed conflict:** The operations of Somali and US security forces against ISS continued, especially in Bari region, with the associated security incidents spiking during the first quarter of 2025. The Hilaac offensive, backed by UAE and US airstrikes, expelled ISIS from the Al-Miskaad mountains. By late July 2025, the operation entered its final phase to eliminate remaining fighters and prepare for Operation Onkod against AI-Shabaab, while US forces captured ISIS's Somalia finance chief.



Somalia is currently affected by multiple overlapping conflicts, in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR. These conflicts affect different areas in Somalia at different degrees. See more under [4.3.4. Indiscriminate violence](#).



4.3.2. Qualification of a person as a ‘civilian’

Last update: October 2025



Being a civilian is a prerequisite in order to be able to benefit from protection under Article 15(c) QD/QR. The purpose of the provision is to protect only those who are not taking part in the conflict. **This includes the potential application of Article 15(c) QD/QR to former combatants who have genuinely and permanently renounced armed activity.**

Applications by Somali nationals falling under the following profiles should be examined carefully. Based on an individual assessment, such applicants may be found not to qualify as civilians under Article 15(c) QD/QR. For example, members of:

- FGS security forces, including SNA, NISA and SPF;
- FMS armed forces;
- Somaliland armed forces;
- Al-Shabaab;
- Clan militias;
- ISS.



See also [2. Actors of persecution or serious harm](#)

Actively taking part in hostilities is not limited to openly carrying arms but could also include substantial logistical and/or administrative support to combatants.



Exclusion considerations for former members of armed forces may also apply. See [7. Exclusion](#).

4.3.3. Indiscriminate violence

Last update: October 2025



The common analysis regarding the degree of indiscriminate violence combines quantitative and qualitative elements in a **holistic and inclusive assessment**.

For more information on the methodology and indicators used to assess the level of indiscriminate violence in country guidance documents, see ‘EUAA, [Indiscriminate violence](#) in *Country Guidance: Explained*’, February 2025.



It should, furthermore, be noted that the COI used as a basis for this assessment cannot be considered a complete representation of the extent of indiscriminate violence and its impact on the life of civilians. Underreporting issues should be borne in mind.

a) Security situation in Somalia: recent events

Situation in Somalia

The analysis below is based on following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 1.1.](#); [COI Update 2025, 1, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Between April 2023 and July 2025, Somalia experienced a volatile and complex security environment marked by persistent conflict, political fragmentation, and humanitarian crises. Al-Shabaab remained the most significant threat, controlling large swathes of South-Central Somalia and maintaining strongholds in the north. The group intensified operations and reversed previous government gains, retaking towns in Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, and Lower Shabelle, while consolidating control over key routes. In Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab conducted high-profile attacks with mortars, IEDs, and suicide bombings targeting the airport, military facilities, and civilians, causing heavy casualties and instability.

The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) faced internal divisions, with Puntland and Jubbaland suspending ties over political disputes. The emergence of the SSC-Khatumo administration in contested northern regions further complicated the federal landscape. The major conflict, which led to the official recognition of SSC-Khatumo as the sixth federal member state of Somalia with the name 'Northeastern State', continued throughout the reference period, causing casualties and fatalities from both sides, loss of civilian lives and resulting in the displacement of more than 200 000 people.

Military operations, such as Operation Black Lion, targeted Al-Shabaab, but the group demonstrated resilience, aided by forced recruitment and clan alliances.

Security incidents totalled more than 7 000, with over 18 000 fatalities. Clan conflicts also surged, particularly in Gedo, Bay, and Mudug, contributing to over 1 200 deaths between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025. ISS expanded its presence in Puntland, while inter-clan and political violence persisted across regions.

International actors, including the US, AU forces (AUSSOM), and regional militaries, remained engaged.

Presence, methods and tactics of actors

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 1.2.3.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Somalia's security landscape remains dominated by a complex array of armed actors, with Al-Shabaab continuing to pose the most significant threat. Al-Shabaab's control is marked by the



establishment of checkpoints, taxation systems, and parallel governance and justice structures.

Al-Shabaab's tactics include a mix of guerrilla warfare, complex urban attacks, and targeted assassinations. The group frequently uses IEDs, suicide bombings, and mortar attacks, particularly in Mogadishu and other urban centres. In 2024–2025, it launched a major offensive, reversing many of the government's earlier territorial gains. The group has demonstrated increasing operational sophistication, including the use of drones and coordinated assaults on military bases and strategic towns. It also engages in forced recruitment, including of children, and uses propaganda to mobilise support.

ISS has conducted IED attacks, assassinations, and drone strikes. A major offensive by Puntland forces in early 2025, supported by the U.S. and UAE airpower, disrupted ISS operations but did not eliminate the group.

The SNA, supported by elite units like Danab (U.S.-trained) and Gorgor (Turkish-trained), remains the core of the FGS military apparatus. However, the SNA suffers from fragmentation, clan-based recruitment, and limited operational capacity. FMS maintain their own forces, such as the Jubbaland Dervish and Puntland Security Forces, often operating independently or in competition with federal forces.

Clan militias, including the Macawisley, have played a growing role in anti-Al-Shabaab operations, particularly in Hirshabelle and Galmudug. These militias are often mobilised along clan lines and have been both a source of local security and inter-clan conflict. Over 100 clan militias were active during the reporting period, contributing to over 1 200 fatalities from inter- and intra-clan violence. In mid-June 2025, over 150 members of Macawisley, along with SNA fighters, defected to Al-Shabaab.

The AUSSOM continues to provide critical support, though its sustainability is challenged by funding issues. AFRICOM and other international actors (e.g., Kenya, Ethiopia, UAE) conduct airstrikes and provide training and logistical support.

Security incidents and geographical scope

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 1.4.1](#); [COI Update 2025, 2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.



Data concerning this indicator are primarily based on ACLED reporting from 1 April 2023 to 31 July 2025.

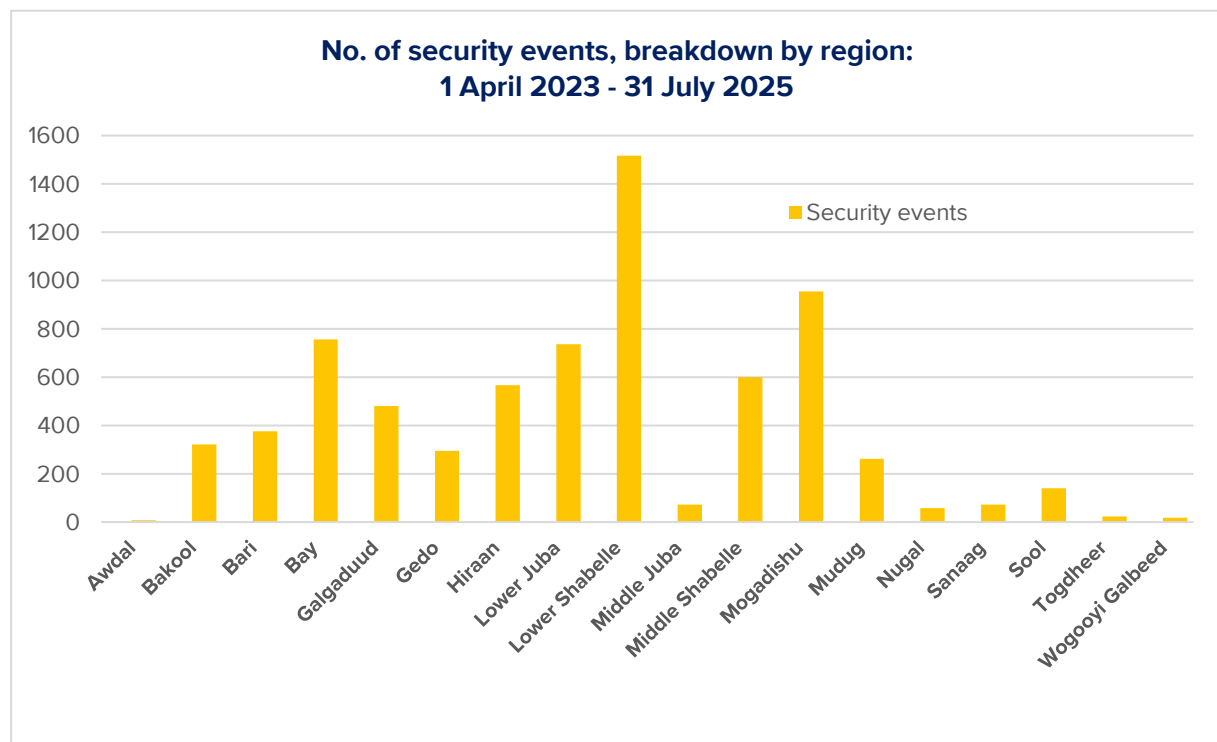
Relevant reporting from other sources, including the UNSG and INSO CHDC, is also noted.

It should be noted that different sources use different methodologies for the recording of incidents, therefore some discrepancies on data are to be expected. For more information on the methodologies of data collection, see the COI report

[Security 2025](#), [Sources](#). Concerns with regard to underreporting, especially pertinent to the quantitative indicators, should be taken into account.

According to the **ACLED** dataset, between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 there were 7 269 security incidents recorded in Somalia. Most security incidents were recorded in Lower Shabelle (1 655), Benadir/Mogadishu (955) and Bay (756) regions.

Figure 3: Breakdown by region of number of security events recorded by ACLED



The **UNSG** reports covering the period 8 February 2023 – 20 September 2024, recorded in total 3 145 security incidents. It should be noted that for the period 25 January 2024 – 23 May 2024, an unspecified number of incidents was recorded according to this source.

For the period April 2023 – March 2025, **INSO CHDC data** – the Conflict and Humanitarian Data Centre of the International NGO Safety Organisation, which adopts a methodology with a stronger focus on NGO security, recorded 6 861 security incidents in Somalia.

Civilian casualties

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025](#), 1.4.1.; [COI Update 2025](#), 2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

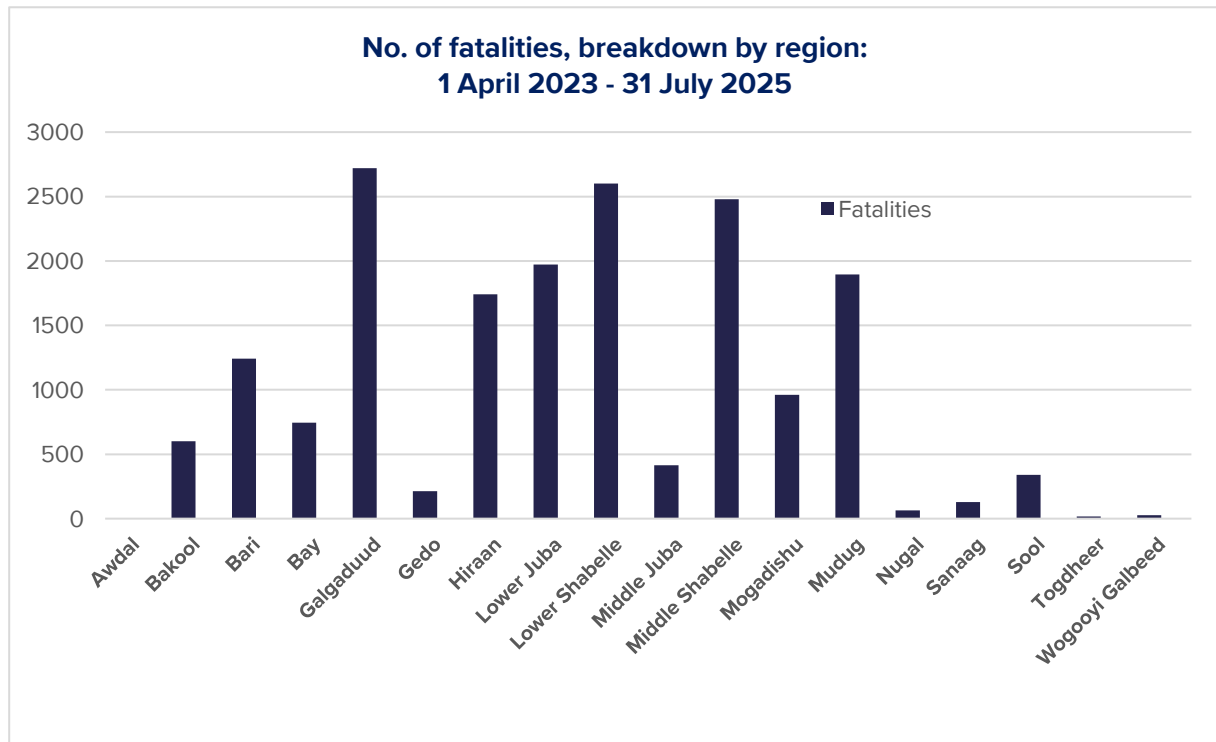


Data concerning this indicator are primarily based on **ACLED** reporting from 1 April 2023 to 31 July 2025.

Note on ACLED methodology: Data primarily come from secondary sources such as media reports. All ACLED fatality figures provided here are estimates based on

ACLED's methodology. ACLED's database does not distinguish between civilian and non-civilian fatalities and only provides figures of direct deaths or fatalities per event, not of injured persons and casualties; indirect deaths resulting from security events are also not taken into consideration. Concerns with regard to underreporting, especially pertinent to the quantitative indicators, should be taken into account.

Figure 4: Breakdown of number of fatalities by region, recorded by ACLED between 1 April 2023 to 31 July 2025.



According to ACLED, all types of events had or potentially had an impact on the civilian population; the total number of fatalities recorded in Somalia was 18 163. Most fatalities were recorded in Galgaduud (2 719), Lower Shabelle (2 601) and Middle Shabelle (2 480).

Based on ACLED data, further calculations on fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants in each region for the period are also provided in the sub-section [4.3.3.b\) Assessment of indiscriminate violence per region](#).

Conflict-related displacement

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 1.4.2.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.



Data concerning this indicator are primarily based on UNHCR PRMN data reporting from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025.



For more information on the methodologies of data collection, see the COI report [Security 2025, Sources](#).

Between April 2023 and July 2025, Somalia experienced significant conflict-related displacement, with approximately 711 355 people forced to flee due to insecurity and violence out of about 2 788 000 newly displaced (as of March 2025). This displacement was driven by escalating inter-clan conflicts, armed confrontations between federal and regional forces, and militant activity, particularly by Al-Shabaab. Many displaced individuals remained within their home regions, although thousands relocated to neighbouring areas. The majority settled in informal IDP sites in urban and peri-urban zones, often lacking tenure security and access to basic services. As of June 2025, there were about 3.5 million IDPs in Somalia, who depended on humanitarian aid for survival, with Mogadishu and Baidoa being the most densely populated. Displacement patterns were compounded by limited humanitarian access, infrastructure damage, and ongoing insecurity. The situation remains fluid, with displacement continuing into 2025, exacerbated by political fragmentation, armed group offensives, and climate-related shocks.

Further impact on civilians

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Security 2025, 1.4.3](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Infrastructure damage is widespread, and attacks both on schools and hospitals were recorded between 8 February 2023 to 20 September 2024. Humanitarian access was severely restricted, with aid workers facing threats, detentions, and killings, particularly in Gedo, Lower Juba, and Sanaag. The humanitarian crisis persisted, with 6 million people needing assistance in 2025, including 1.7 million children suffering from acute malnutrition. Access to water, healthcare, and shelter remained inadequate, especially in IDP settlements. Forced evictions affected over 192 000 people in 2024 alone (see also [4.2.4. Forced evictions](#)).

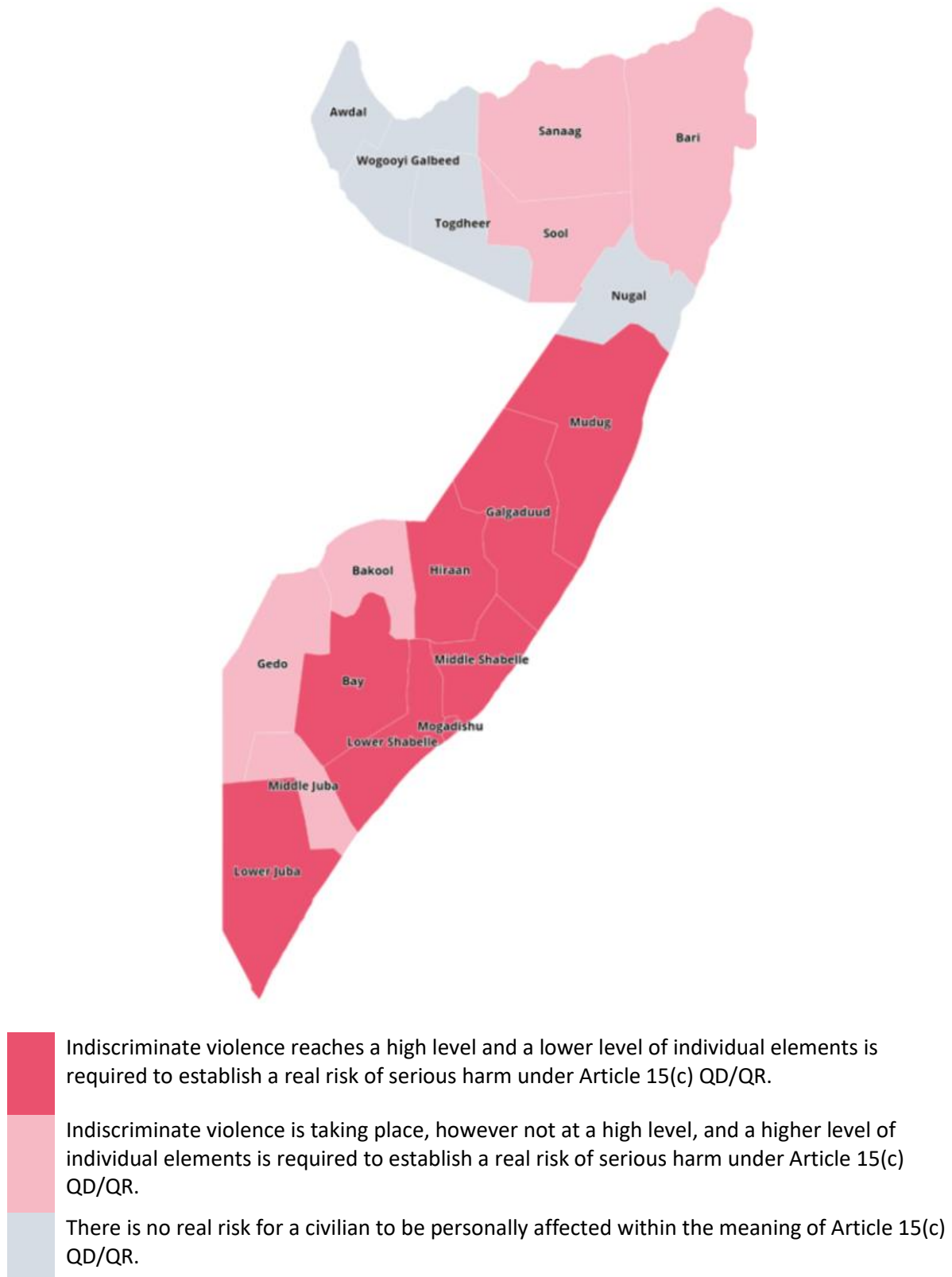
b) Assessment of indiscriminate violence per region

Last update: October 2025

The map below summarises and illustrates the assessment of indiscriminate violence per administrative region under Article 15(c) QD/QR:



Figure 5: Level of indiscriminate violence in Somalia (based on information up to 31 July 2025)



For more information and analysis on the level of indiscriminate violence per region, see sections below.



Mere presence

Areas where the degree of **indiscriminate violence reaches such an exceptionally high level** that substantial grounds are shown for believing that a civilian, returned to the relevant area, would, **solely on account of their presence there**, face a real risk of being subject to the serious threat referred to in Article 15(c) QD/QR. Accordingly, additional individual elements are not required in order to substantiate subsidiary protection needs under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

No such areas have been identified in Somalia.

High level of indiscriminate violence

Areas where 'mere presence' would not be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR, but where, **indiscriminate violence reaches a high level**. Accordingly, **a lower level of** individual elements ([see Serious and individual threat](#)) is required to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to the area, would face a real risk of serious harm in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

The areas assessed as belonging to this category as well as the main elements leading to this assessment are highlighted below.

Bay

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.2.2.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Bay remains under the mixed control of FGS coalition and Al-Shabaab, although the group's influence in the area remains strong. The region's rural terrain is largely under Al-Shabaab's control. Urban areas were controlled by the FGS coalition, while the SNA regained control of previously Al-Shabaab controlled areas. In April 2025, Al-Shabaab resurfaced in rural areas of the region, temporarily lifting a decade-long blockade in several towns of Bay and Bakool regions. However, at the end of July 2025, key roads connecting these regions and the route to Mogadishu remained largely blocked.

ACLED recorded 756 security incidents in Bay region between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 (an average of 6.3 incidents per week), resulting in 744 fatalities (representing approximately 60 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Al-Shabaab was involved in almost all the recorded incidents. Such incidents included IED attacks striking SNA troops and security forces, ground raids against armed forces and using artillery to attack the capital city's airport and regional hospital. During the reference period, a notable increase in deadly clan violence was also recorded. Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 23 722 individuals were newly displaced from Bay due to conflict or insecurity.





Despite the high number of fatalities, which includes also combatants, and looking at all the indicators, it cannot be concluded that mere presence in the region of Bay would be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Based on the highly contested control of the region, the ongoing armed confrontations involving several actors, the number of security incidents as well as the nature of the violence, it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence in Bay region reaches a high level.

Benadir/Mogadishu

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 1.2.2., 1.3.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Mogadishu remained under the control of FGS security institutions although Al-Shabaab maintained its capacity to carry out attacks in the region, through the agents of its Amniyat intelligence service. In September 2024, the group set up strategic bases in Mogadishu's northern outskirts, collecting taxes and administering justice. In March 2025, reports indicated a significant increase of Al-Shabaab's activity across several other suburbs. During the reference period, the Aden Adde International Airport areas, along with government and military facilities, were frequently targeted by the group with mortar attacks, coupled with IED targeted explosions and bombings.

ACLED recorded 955 security incidents in Benadir region between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 (an average of 7.9 incidents per week), resulting in 962 fatalities (representing approximately 30 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Al-Shabaab was involved in the majority of the recorded incidents, carrying out more than 160 attacks against civilians. For example, Al-Shabaab carried out complex attacks/suicide attacks against two busy hotels and a restaurant, targeting soldiers and civilians alike. Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 1 952 individuals were newly displaced from Benadir due to conflict or insecurity. UNOCHA recorded 98 humanitarian access incidents in the region from April 2023 and over the year 2024 ranking first amongst all regions.

Despite the high number of fatalities, which includes also combatants, and looking at all the indicators, it cannot be concluded that mere presence in Benadir/Mogadishu would be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Given the number of security incidents and fatalities, the persistent presence of Al-Shabaab in the region and the nature of the attacks (e.g. attacks in public spaces), it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence is taking place in Benadir/Mogadishu at a high level.

Galgaduud

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.5.1.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.





Federal-aligned coalition forces, Al-Shabaab and Macawisley were the main actors in Galgaduud region, while different clan militias were also involved in clan clashes.

Galgaduud is described as a longstanding battleground for control between government forces and Al-Shabaab. Federal-aligned forces captured areas, withdrawing however after a short period of time. Airstrikes, battles, explosions from landmines and other explosive devices, remote violence and violence against civilians have been reported.

Al-Shabaab controlled the southern-central part of Galgaduud from the coastline up to north and northeast of Ceel Buur town. The remaining part of the region was under mixed, unclear or local control with the exception of the area along the border with Ethiopia, which was under the control of the federal-aligned coalition forces, along with the capital city. In January 2025 intense fights erupted in Masagaway and in February fights continued with Macawisley attacking Al-Shabaab.

ACLED recorded 480 security incidents during the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 July 2025 (an average of 4 incidents per week), causing 2 719 fatalities (representing approximately 335 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). During the period from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025, 11 203 people were newly displaced from Galgaduud. Humanitarian activities were restricted due to violent incidents.

Despite the high number of fatalities, which includes also combatants, and looking at all the indicators, it cannot be concluded that mere presence in the region of Galgaduud would be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Based on the nature of violence, such as the use of landmines and other explosives, as well as the high number of security incidents, it can be concluded that the indiscriminate violence in Galgaduud region reaches a high level.

Hiraan

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.4.1.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In Hiraan region the main actors of armed conflicts were the FGS in coalition with ATMIS/AUSSOM, Al-Shabaab, Macawisley clan militias, and the Ethiopian National Defense Force (summer 2024). Actors in armed inter-clan conflicts, such as the Hawadle, the Abgaal, the Makane and the Habar Gidir, were also active.

Since late 2024, Hiraan has been the focal point of the Federal Government coalitions fight and the epicenter of the Macawisley clan militias fight against Al-Shabaab, which resulted in battles, explosives and in early 2024 airstrikes. Between April and July 2025, Al-Shabaab made significant gains in Hiraan, rising local resentment over the government's failure to support clan militias. Al-Shabaab used IED, suicide attacks and suicide car bombs, causing civilian casualties.



The north-eastern part of the region and the urban centres were under the control of the Federal Government coalition. Al-Shabaab fully controlled the area between South-West state border and the Shabelle River Valley. Other parts of the region were under mixed, unclear or local control. A counter-offensive against Al-Shabaab by Somali government forces together with local clan militias in April 2023 was initially 'promising', but later slowed down due to lack of forces, inter-clan conflicts and logistical difficulties. In February 2025 heavy fighting was reported along the Shabelle River.

From 1 April 2023 to 31 July 2025, ACLED recorded 567 security incidents (an average of 4.7 incidents per week), causing 1740 fatalities (representing approximately 345 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, approximately 10 500 people were newly displaced from Hiraan. Al-Shabaab increased attacks on food and water resources as a punishment for clans cooperating with the government against the group.

Despite the high number of fatalities, which includes also combatants, and looking at all the indicators, it cannot be concluded that mere presence in the region of Hiraan would be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Based on the highly contested control of the region, as well as the different kinds of violence used by the conflicting parties, including explosive weapons and suicide attacks, it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence in Hiraan region reaches a high level.

Lower Juba

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.1.2](#); [COI Update 2025, 2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In Lower Juba, armed confrontations involved Al-Shabaab, Jubbaland forces, and the FGS, competing for the territorial dominance of the region. Small-scale counter-insurgency operations against Al-Shabaab, including airstrikes and ground operations took place in June and July 2023. Clashes intensified in 2024 and Al-Shabaab conducted coordinated attacks. Deadly clashes in Kismayo amid pre-election tensions were reported.

ACLED recorded 598 security incidents between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 (an average of 5.0 incidents per week), resulting in 1 973 fatalities (representing approximately 170 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). A significant number of newly IDPs (50 650) was also reported, as well as 11 humanitarian access incidents, including the destruction of a school, a water and sanitary infrastructure.

Despite the high number of fatalities, which includes also combatants, and looking at all the indicators, it cannot be concluded that mere presence in the region of Lower Juba would be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Based on the number of security incidents and the nature of violence (attacks and armed clashes) and the rising number of IDPs, as well as the ongoing armed confrontations between several actors, it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence in Lower Juba region reaches a high level.



Lower Shabelle

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [Security 2025, 2.2.3.](#); [Country Focus 2025, 1.4.2.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Lower Shabelle remains an Al-Shabaab stronghold as the group exercises control over most of the region's areas, including several checkpoints. By March 2025 Al-Shabaab had seized control of strategic locations and relative bridges in the region. The group staged attacks against SNA, local government and ATMIS troops, using tactics such as hit-and-run attacks, IED attacks and ambushing small groups of soldiers. In June 2025 the SNA army and allied forces launched 'Operation Silent Storm', aimed at liberating areas under Al-Shabaab's control, however as of July 2025, this operation was only partially successful. Dozens of civilians were killed in the region due to drone strikes by the FGS, by patrolling ATMIS forces, and in artillery crossfire, as well as due to unattributed explosions. A notable increase of clan conflicts escalating into armed violence was also reported in mid-2024.

ACLED recorded 1 655 security incidents between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 (an average of 13.8 incidents per week), resulting in 2 601 fatalities (representing approximately 163 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Al-Shabaab was involved in 1 302 of the total security incidents. Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 78 367 individuals were newly displaced from Lower Shabelle due to conflict and insecurity. UNOCHA recorded 28 humanitarian access incidents in Lower Shabelle region between April 2023 and over the year 2024. Al-Shabaab reportedly hindered humanitarian access in the region. An increase in child casualties due to mortar fire, unexploded ordnance and remnants of war, was documented over the summer of 2023 and in early 2024 and mostly attributed to Al-Shabaab.

Despite the high number of fatalities, which includes also combatants, and looking at all the indicators, it cannot be concluded that mere presence in the region of Lower Shabelle would be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Based on the strategic nature of the region, the significant number of incidents, and the nature of violence inflicted in the region as well as the high number of displaced persons, it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence in Lower Shabelle reaches a high level.

Middle Shabelle

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.4.2.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The control of Middle Shabelle remained fragmented, with most of the region being under mixed, unclear, or local control shared between Al-Shabaab and the federal-aligned coalition forces. By mid-May 2025, al-Shabaab had managed to recapture most of the territory it had lost in Middle Shabelle since 2022 and by the end of July 2025 the group had deployed a significant number of troops and armoured vehicles along a strategic road. However, at the end of June 2025, the SNA and allied forces managed to reclaim control of a zone long



exploited by Al-Shabaab for recruitment and attacks, and still highly contested. Additionally, violent conflicts have been reported between the Abgaal and the Hawadle clans.

The ongoing conflict between the federal-aligned forces and Al-Shabaab has led to a series of violent incidents, including targeted airstrikes on Al-Shabaab strongholds, battles over control of military bases and checkpoints, as well as the use of IEDs, suicide car bombings, remote violence, and attacks against civilians. From 1 April 2023 to 31 July 2025, ACLED recorded 600 security incidents (an average of 5 incidents per week), causing 2480 fatalities (representing approximately 245 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). In the period from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025, 66 238 individuals were newly displaced in Middle Shabelle. Al-Shabaab controlled a key road, disrupting the delivery of aid and daily supplies. In 2024, 14 humanitarian incidents were recorded.

Despite the high number of fatalities, which includes also combatants, and looking at all the indicators, it cannot be concluded that mere presence in the region of Middle Shabelle would be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Based on the highly contested control of the region, as well as the high number of different kinds of security incidents, including explosives and suicide attacks, it can be concluded that the indiscriminate violence in Middle Shabelle reaches a high level.

Mudug

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.5.2.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In Mudug region, the main actors were the federal-aligned coalition forces and Al-Shabaab. The region is also characterised by distinct clan dynamics; the northern part is predominantly controlled by the Darod clan (Majerteen-Omar Mahmoud sub-clan), while the southern part is dominated by the Hawiye clan (Habar Gidir Sa'ad sub-clan).

Xarardheere town, historically a stronghold for Al-Shabaab fighters, was liberated in May 2024. As of February 2025, federal-aligned forces have regained control over key areas in southern Mudug, that had remained under prolonged Al-Shabaab control. Illustrative security incidents included battles, explosions and remote violence, violence against civilians and a drone strike.

Mudug's central part is fully controlled by federal-aligned coalition forces. Al-Shabaab fully controlled an area stretching from the border with Galgaduud region to towns of Ba'adweyne, Amara and Qey'a. Northern Mudug remained under the control of 'Autonomous armed forces (unionists)'. The unionists and the federal-aligned coalition forces had mixed control over Gaalkacyo city.

In the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 July 2025, ACLED recorded 262 security incidents (an average of 2.2 incidents per week), causing 1 894 fatalities (representing approximately 129 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). 30 787 people were newly displaced from Mudug due to conflict and insecurity, during the period from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025.



Southeastern Mudug is suffering from severe economic hardship, with many people being unable to secure food and water. Host communities remained overburdened. Due to security incidents, the access to humanitarian help was restrained. School education was also disrupted.

Despite the high number of fatalities, which includes also combatants, and looking at all the indicators, it cannot be concluded that mere presence in the region of Mudug would be sufficient to establish a real risk of serious harm under Article 15(c) QD/QR.

Based on the highly contested control of the region the high numbers of fatalities, as well as the increased number of security incidents and IDPs, it can be concluded that the indiscriminate violence in Mudug region reaches a high level.

Indiscriminate violence not at a high level

Areas where indiscriminate violence is taking place, however **not at a high level**. Accordingly, **a higher level of** individual elements ([see Serious and individual threat](#)) is required in order to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to the area, would face a real risk of serious harm in the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

The areas assessed as belonging to this category as well as the main elements leading to this assessment are highlighted below.

Bakool

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.2.1](#); [COI Update 2025, 2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Control over Bakool region remained mixed between FGS coalition and Al-Shabaab. The group controlled large rural areas, obstructing humanitarian aid, imposing taxes and recruiting children to its ranks. Most of the region's towns, including the capital, remained under the control of FGS. In April 2025, Al-Shabaab temporarily lifted a decade-long blockade in several towns of Bay and Bakool regions. However, at the end of July 2025, key roads connecting these regions and the route to Mogadishu remained largely blocked.

ACLED recorded 321 security incidents in Bakool region between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 (an average of 2.7 incidents per week), resulting in 600 fatalities (representing approximately 110 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Al-Shabaab was involved in 277 of the total security incidents. Notable incidents included an ambush staged by Al-Shabaab against Ethiopian troops and airstrikes targeting the group's positions. Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 20 284 individuals were newly displaced from Bakool due to conflict and insecurity. Furthermore, nine humanitarian access incidents were reported in the region from April 2023 and over the year 2024, and in August 2024, Al-Shabaab blocked main supply routes, leaving the town dependent on airlifts and smuggling.

Despite the ongoing conflict between SNA and Al-Shabaab and taking into consideration the number of security incidents mainly involving warring parties, which followed relatively stable





patterns in comparison to the reference period of the previous guidance, it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence takes place in Bakool however not at a high level.

Bari

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.6.2](#); [COI Update 2025, 2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In Bari region, armed confrontations involved Al-Shabaab, the ISS, and autonomous unionist forces. Al-Shabaab and ISS maintained a presence in key mountain ranges and parts of Bari, while most urban centers remained under autonomous unionist control, with some areas contested between actors. Violence included clashes between ISS, Al-Shabaab, and Puntland forces, car bomb attacks, suicide bombings, and airstrikes.

ACLED recorded 376 security incidents during the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 July 2025 (an average of 3.1 incidents per week), causing 1 241 fatalities (representing approximately 101 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 15 778 individuals were newly displaced from Bari due to conflict or insecurity.

Civilians experienced extortion by ISS, business attacks, and restricted access to livelihoods. Notable reported incidents include hospital closures, farmers' displacement, and attacks on humanitarian workers and facilities.

Based on the number of security incidents and fatalities as well as the nature of violence, it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence takes place in Bari region, however not at a high level.

Gedo

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.1.1](#); [COI Update 2025, 2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Gedo region remained a hotspot of armed confrontations involving Al-Shabaab, FGS, Jubbaland forces, and Ethiopian troops. Violence stemmed from political tensions between FGS and Jubbaland.

As of July 2025, control of the Gedo region remained fragmented among various actors. Al-Shabaab held large rural areas, while urban centers were divided between Jubbaland regional forces and the FGS coalition. Some areas experienced mixed control. Ethiopian forces seized key airports in late 2024, intensifying the conflict's complexity and strategic importance. Violence included Al-Shabaab attacks on military bases, clan clashes, IED road attacks, and FGS–Jubbaland armed confrontations. As of mid-July 2025, the FGS planned a new military deployment to some of these locations, with the reported objective to bring the entire Gedo region under the direct control of Villa Somalia. After days of intense fighting, Somali government forces regained full control of a key town, while causing widespread destruction and civilian deaths.





ACLED recorded 295 security incidents between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 (an average of 2.5 incidents per week), resulting in 214 fatalities (representing approximately 22 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 94 452 individuals were newly displaced from Gedo region due to conflict or insecurity. Humanitarian workers and infrastructure were targeted in several attacks

Despite the ongoing armed confrontations between several actors and taking into consideration the number of security incidents and fatalities as well as the nature of the violence, including attacks on military bases, it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence takes place in Gedo region however not at a high level.

Middle Juba

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.1.2.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Middle Juba region remained an Al-Shabaab stronghold as the group has kept control of virtually the entire region despite several operations conducted against them by SNA, Jubbaland forces, U.S., and Kenyan forces. Violence included ground offensives, targeted airstrikes, and public executions. Notable incidents reported involved airstrikes killing Al-Shabaab commanders and civilians.

ACLED recorded 72 security incidents during the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 July 2025 (an average of 0.6 incidents per week), causing 415 fatalities (representing approximately 96 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 52 217 individuals were newly displaced from Middle Juba due to conflict or insecurity.

Despite the increase of fatalities and the large number of IDPs and given the relatively low number of security incidents as well as the stable control of Al-Shaabaab, it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence in Middle Juba is taking place, however, not at a high level.

Sanaag

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 1.3., 2.7.2.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Sanaag is part of the Somaliland-Puntland contested areas. The western part of the region was controlled by the Somaliland administration with the remaining areas being largely under mixed control. Al-Shabaab maintained its presence in the northern part of the region. The conflict dynamics in Sanaag involved also clans in land, resources and inter-clan disputes, and fights against Somaliland's forces. In July 2025 the SSC-K state formation process sparked clashes between SSC-Khatumo forces and Puntland security forces. ACLED recorded 72 security incidents in Sanaag between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 (an average of 0.6 incidents per week), resulting in 129 fatalities (representing approximately 30 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Illustrative incidents included violent clan disputes and fights between clan militias and the Somaliland police forces. Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 22 608 individuals were newly displaced from Sanaag due to conflict or insecurity. UNOCHA recorded





12 humanitarian access incidents from April 2023 and over the year 2024. Due to violent clashes displaced populations were left in dire humanitarian situation, while the humanitarian operations, business activities and schooling were reportedly completely disrupted.

Although conflicts between the various armed actors persisted, taking into consideration the nature of violence and that the numbers of recorded security incidents followed relatively stable patterns in comparison to the reference period of the previous guidance, it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence in Sanaag is taking place, however not at a high level.

Sool

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 1.3., 2.7.1.](#); [COI Update 2025, 2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Sool is part of the Somaliland-Puntland contested areas. Control over the region's areas was divided between the autonomous armed forces of SSC-Khatumo (for the newly established autonomous administration of SSC-Khatumo, see [4.3.3. a\) Security situation in Somalia: recent events](#) and the Somaliland administration, with certain districts being under mixed control. Clan militias were also involved in the conflict.

ACLED recorded 140 security incidents in Sool between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 (an average of 1.2 incidents per week), resulting in 340 fatalities (representing approximately 62 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Somaliland military forces and SSC-Khatumo militia were involved in 56 of the recorded incidents, causing 255 fatalities. Illustrative incidents included an attack to a health facility and deadly clan violence. At district level, Laas Caanood recorded the most security incidents (59), followed by Buhodle (53) and Caynabo (14).

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 54 077 individuals were newly displaced from Sool due to conflict or insecurity. UNOCHA recorded 21 humanitarian access incidents in Sool between April 2023 and over the year 2024, including the damage of hospitals and the injuries of health workers.

Despite the ongoing conflicts between armed actors and considering the reduced number of recorded security incidents and nature of the violence, it can be concluded that indiscriminate violence in Sool region is taking place, however not at a high level.

No real risk

Areas where, **there is no real risk** for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR. This may be because the criteria for **an armed conflict** within the meaning of this provision **are not met**, or because **no indiscriminate violence** is taking place.

The areas assessed as belonging to this category as well as the main elements leading to this assessment are highlighted below.





Awdal

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.8.1](#); [COI Update 2025, 2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Al-Shabaab had no control of any territory in Awdal region. The entire region was reported to be under the control of the 'Somaliland administration (separatist)' and has generally been characterised by relative stability in the latest years. In September 2023, Gadabursi clan chiefs stated their desire for the Awdal region to secede from Somaliland. However, as of April 2025, no further information on this subject could be found.

Violence included clashes between protesters and security forces after the killing of an off-duty Somaliland police officer, by Somaliland police forces. Between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025, ACLED reported 7 security incidents (0.1 per week) and one fatality (approximately 0 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants) and the number of newly IDPs (8) remained low.

Considering the generally stable control exercised by the Somaliland administration as well as the low number of security incidents and civilian fatalities, it can be concluded that in Awdal region there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected by indiscriminate violence.

Nugal

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025, 2.6.1](#); [COI Update 2025, 2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Al-Shabaab had no reported presence in Nugal. The region was largely under 'autonomous armed forces' control, with some mixed/local control near the Galmudug-Puntland border. Increased security measures were noted in Garowe in August 2024 due to suspected Al-Shabaab infiltration. Violence included clashes between government forces and opposition clan militias over electoral disputes.

ACLED recorded 58 security incidents in Nugal region between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 (an average of 0.5 incidents per week), resulting in 65 fatalities (representing approximately 10 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). A significant number of fatalities was the result of clashes linked to political opposition. Between 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025, 48 200 individuals were newly displaced from Nugal region due to conflict or insecurity. Moreover, 29 humanitarian access incidents were reported in the region from April 2023 and over the year 2024, including an attack on humanitarian supplies and the delay in the processing of imported aid supplies. Also, school closings and local businesses and transport services facing disruptions were reported.

Considering that Al-Shabaab had no reported presence in Nugal and that security incidents and fatalities were mostly associated with political disputes, it can be concluded that in Nugal region there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected by indiscriminate violence.



Todgheer

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.8.3](#); [COI Update 2025, 2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Al-Shabaab does not control any territory in Todgheer region. The entire region is reported to be under the control of the 'Somaliland administration (separatist)'.

Violence included clashes between Somaliland forces, clan-based militias and inter-clan fights. On 15 May 2025, protests erupted in the capital of the region against the planned release of SSC-Khatumo prisoners. Security forces violently suppressed the demonstrations, resulting in at least six deaths, over 30 injuries, and the temporary arrests of hundreds of people, who were later released. ACLED recorded 24 security incidents in Todgheer between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 (an average of 0.2 incidents per week), resulting in 18 fatalities (representing approximately 2 fatalities per 100 000 inhabitants). Newly displaced individuals due to conflict or insecurity were on the rise compared to previous years (7 712). The region experienced significant food aid looting.

Considering the generally stable control exercised by the Somaliland administration as well as the low number of security incidents and civilian fatalities, and despite the rising number of new IDPs, it can be concluded that in Todgheer region there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected by indiscriminate violence.

Wogoyi Galbeed

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report and query: [Security 2025, 2.8.2](#); [COI Update 2025, 2](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Al-Shabaab does not control any territory in Wogoyi Galbeed region. The entire region is reported to be under the control of the 'Somaliland administration (separatist)'. Violence included clashes between Somaliland forces, Gacaan Libaah militia and clan militias.

Notable incidents reported involved the killing of one person in election-related clashes in Baliguabadle, the killing of nine soldiers by Gacaan Libaah militia in Saaxil and the deaths of a police officer and a civilian by Ethiopian forces near the Ethiopian border. Between 1 April 2023 and 31 July 2025 ACLED reported 18 security incidents (0.1 per week), resulting in 27 fatalities (approximately 2 per 100 000 inhabitants). Furthermore, newly displaced individuals number (7) remained stable and low.

Considering the generally stable control exercised by the Somaliland administration as well as the low number of security incidents and civilian fatalities, it can be concluded that in Wogoyi Galbeed region there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected by indiscriminate violence.



Please note that in areas where there would be 'no real risk' for a civilian to be affected by indiscriminate violence within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR,



depending on personal circumstances, an applicant may still be exposed to a risk of persecution or a risk of serious harm under Article 15(a) or (b). Hence, this assessment of 'no real risk' should in no way be misconstrued as the designation of 'safe areas' for return or any other purposes.

4.3.4. Serious and individual threat

Last update: October 2025



For general information on the individual circumstances which may be relevant to consider in the assessment of a serious and individual threat in territories where the 'mere presence' threshold is not reached, see 'EUAA, ['Serious and individual threat'](#) in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

In the context of the 'sliding scale', each case should be assessed individually, taking into account the applicant's personal circumstances together with the nature and intensity of the violence in their home area (see also [Indiscriminate violence](#)). It is not feasible to provide exhaustive guidance as to what the relevant personal circumstances could be and how those should be assessed. Individual elements can exist in combination. Other factors may also be relevant.

Below are some examples of personal circumstances to be taken into account, where the 'mere presence' threshold is not reached, in the context of Somalia:

- **Age:** Children and elderly people may not be able to move without help or be able to quickly assess and avoid risky locations. Furthermore, infrastructure damage in Somalia, mostly South-Central Somalia, is widespread, with schools and hospitals being sometimes attacked. In a few occasions, children have also been affected by explosive remnants of war, e.g. in Lower Shabelle region. Therefore, younger children and elderly persons may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.
- **Health condition and disabilities, including mental health issues:** Indiscriminate attacks in Somalia, mostly in South-Central Somalia, have taken place in public spaces, including checkpoints hindering the access to hospitals. Some attacks in hospitals have been also reported in Las Anood. People with disabilities related to mobility may not be able to move without help. Furthermore, people with mental health issues might not be able to quickly assess and avoid risky situations. Persons with health issues required to visit the hospital on a regular basis might be also exposed to indiscriminate violence at checkpoints. Infrastructure damage in hospitals is also reported in the country. Therefore, some persons with health conditions may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.
- **Economic situation:** The economic situation in Somalia is difficult. People in dire economic situation may be forced to expose themselves to risks, such as working in areas which are affected by indiscriminate violence.





- **Knowledge of the area:** Some Somalis were born or have lived for an extensive period of time outside Somalia, such as in neighbouring countries. Such individuals may not have knowledge of the area and experience of local violence patterns; therefore they may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.
- **Profession and/or place of residence:** Indiscriminate attacks in Somalia, mostly in South-Central Somalia, have taken place in public spaces such as restaurants, cafes, hotels, checkpoints, *khat* or *mira* markets. Persons who, due to their place of residence or professional activity, are frequently in the vicinity of such places (e.g. (employees of potentially targeted restaurants, hotels, airport, health workers) or people working outside a lot (e.g. street vendors, drivers) may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.
- **Family members or support network:** Clans in Somalia offer shelter, support and protection for their clan members, depending also on the (military) strength a clan has. The clan can be a source of information, that is necessary to evaluate dangerous situations. Therefore, a person with no or limited clan support may be more susceptible to indiscriminate violence.

In some cases, these personal circumstances may be cumulative, leading to enhanced exposure to indiscriminate violence.

4.3.5. Qualification of the harm as a ‘threat to (a civilian’s) life or person’

Some of the commonly reported types of harm to civilians’ life or person in Somalia include killing, injury, forced displacement, etc. A real risk of such serious harm would qualify as a threat to a (civilian’s) life or person in accordance with the provision of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

4.3.6. Nexus/‘by reason of’

The interpretation of the causation ‘by reason of’ may not be limited to harm which is directly caused by the indiscriminate violence or by acts that emanate from the actors in the conflict. To a certain extent, it may also include the indirect effect of indiscriminate violence in situations of armed conflict. As long as there is a demonstrable link to the indiscriminate violence, such elements may be taken into account in the assessments, for example: destruction of the necessary means to survive, destruction of infrastructure, criminality.





5. Actors of protection



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this chapter, see 'EUAA, ['Actors of protection'](#) in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

5.1. The State

5.1.1. The Somali State

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025](#), [1.1.](#), [1.2.](#), [1.2.3.](#), [1.3.](#), [1.5.](#), [2.6.2.](#); [Actors 2021](#), 2.1., 2.3., 2.3.1., 2.3.2., 2.3.4., 2.4., 2.4.3., 3.2., 5.1., 5.2., 7.6., 7.6.1., 7.6.2., 7.6.4., 7.7.4.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Somalia is a Federal State, composed of the FGS and several FFMS, which include both state and local governments. The country's political and governance structures were reported fragmented, with overlapping responsibilities between federal and state authorities. The judiciary, composed of constitutional, federal, and state-level courts, was constitutionally independent but practically compromised by political interference, clan influence, corruption, and resource limitations.

Puntland developed significant institution-building and governance mechanisms, and it demonstrated the most advanced (formal) judicial infrastructure among the FMS. However, it was still affected by security, humanitarian, political, and socio-economic challenges, such as tensions with FGS, clashes with Somaliland, Galmudug, ISS and Al-Shabaab, and clan rivalries. As from 31 March 2024, Puntland does not recognise the FGS.

The Somali justice system relied heavily on three co-existing mechanisms: the official state justice system, customary law (xeer), and Sharia courts. Most Somalis resolved disputes through customary systems. Over 80% of civil and criminal cases were handled outside the formal system due to greater accessibility, perceived fairness, and enforceability. However, major issues undermined the statutory justice system, including chronic underfunding, lack of qualified personnel, and poor enforcement of court decisions. Corruption and clan political influence frequently obstructed the fair administration of justice.

Moreover, access to justice was reported deeply unequal. Women and children faced cultural and legal restrictions, especially within the xeer system, which they could only access through a male representative. Sharia courts offered somewhat better access for women, but patriarchal norms still dominated. Minority groups were particularly vulnerable, often lacking effective access to either customary or statutory justice mechanisms. These groups faced marginalisation based on clan status and economic disadvantages, further diminishing their ability to seek protection or redress.



Somalia's state security architecture remained fragmented and weak. The FGS struggles to assert authority over the FMS, many of which act independently, with overlapping or competing mandates. Most FMS security forces remained under-resourced, factionalised, or politically manipulated. The SNA faced capacity issues due to poor training, insufficient equipment, and infiltration by Al-Shabaab. Key security agencies, like NISA were undermined by Al-Shabaab infiltration and political manipulation. Notably, special units like Danab and Gorgor, often supported by foreign allies such as the US, conducted the bulk of counterterrorism operations.

Within the FMS, Puntland's state police was the only functioning police service. However, paramilitary forces like the PMPF and PSF operated autonomously and were heavily involved in internal politics and clan disputes, operating outside Somalia's national constitutional framework.

International forces, such as AUSSOM and AFRICOM also contributed to Somalia's security, despite their limited effectiveness due to underfunding, mandate restrictions, and logistical challenges. Although the U.S. military resumed operations in Somalia in 2022, international efforts have not resulted in a coherent, sustainable security or justice system.



The Somali multi-faceted justice system is still experiencing significant weaknesses and is unable to effectively detect, prosecute and punish acts that constitute persecution or serious harm. Furthermore, law enforcement is continuously challenged by the different conflicts taking place in South-Central Somalia and Puntland, including the conflict with Al-Shabaab.

Therefore, it can be concluded that, **in general, the Somali State would not be considered an actor of protection** meeting the criteria under Article 7 QD/QR.

5.1.2. Authorities of Somaliland

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Actors 2021](#), 7.7., 7.7.1, 7.7.4.; [Targeting 2021](#), 4.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

The authorities of Somaliland dispose their own legislative, executive and judiciary branches and have generally maintained control over their territory, successfully preventing Al-Shabaab from establishing a presence. The justice system integrates statutory courts, customary law (xeer), and Sharia, all recognised under Somaliland's Constitution. While steps have been taken to improve access to justice -including doubling the number of judges, introducing mobile courts, and appointing female legal professionals- challenges remained. These included lengthy procedures, high legal fees, a shortage of legal professionals, limited rural access, poor enforcement of court rulings, and corruption. Many residents preferred the competence of xeer or Sharia courts for quicker and more affordable resolutions. Even though fair trial rights are generally respected, women, children, and minority groups still faced restrictions in accessing justice, especially within customary systems.



When assessing the availability of protection by the authorities of Somaliland, individual circumstances such as home area, age, gender, clan, social and economic situation, actor of persecution and type of human rights violation must be taken into account.

The **authorities of Somaliland, in areas under their control, may**, depending on the individual circumstances of the case, **be considered able and willing to provide protection** that meets the requirements of Article 7 QD/QR. **In disputed areas between Somaliland and Puntland**, the criteria under Article 7 QD/QR **would generally not be met**.

Protection by the Somaliland authorities is generally not considered available for members of minority groups, persons with diverse SOGIESC, children and women, including girls, especially in cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

5.2. Parties or organisations, including international organisations

5.2.1. Al-Shabaab

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025](#), [1.2.2.](#), [2.3.1.\(b\)](#); [Actors 2021](#), 4.3., 4.4.; [Targeting 2021](#), 3.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Al-Shabaab has established a parallel justice system in areas under its control, including mobile courts that operate even beyond its territory, including in Mogadishu. These courts enforce a strict interpretation of Sharia law, often resulting in executions and corporal punishments. While some civilians turned to these courts for swift rulings on civil disputes, due process is lacking - there is no legal representation, no appeals, and decisions are often arbitrary.



The lack of due process and the nature of the punishments would not qualify the parallel justice mechanism operated by Al-Shabaab as a legitimate form of protection. Further taking into account its record of human rights violations, it can be concluded that **Al-Shabaab does not qualify as an actor of protection** who is able to provide effective, non-temporary and accessible protection.



5.3. Considerations of clan support

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Actors 2021](#), 2.3.2., 3.2.1., 3.2.2.; [Targeting 2021](#), 4.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Most Somalis rely on support from patrilineal clan relatives. Clans can provide different forms of support for their members. Inside the *jilib*, community must help individuals in case of smaller or larger problems, reaching as far as the mutilation or the murder of someone from another clan (blood price). Arrangements can also be made between clans for protection outside the clan.

Under the *xeer* system, clan elders act as mediators or arbiters, and play a central role in the resolution of local and intra-clan disputes.

For information with regard to support provided by clans, see [1.2. The role of clans in Somalia](#). For more information on the *xeer* system, see [5.1.1. The Somali State](#).



The support provided by clans in Somalia cannot be considered as meeting the requirements of Article 7 QD/QR⁽¹¹⁾.

(11) CJEU, *OA v Secretary of State for the Home Department*, C-255/19, Second Chamber, judgment of 20 February 2021 (OA), <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=236682&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=3564514>.



6. Internal protection alternative



For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this chapter, see EUAA, '[Internal protection alternative](#)' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025.

6.1. Part of the country

Last update: October 2025

When identifying the part of the country to be considered for IPA, the decision-maker should take into account factors related to individual circumstances, including, inter alia, the applicant's area of origin, existing ties with the proposed area of relocation, such as previous stay or residence and/or availability of a support network, including the clan affiliation, within the proposed area.

This guidance document looks into the existence of internal protection alternative, specifically in **Mogadishu** (Benadir region), **Garowe** (Puntland) and **Hargeisa** (Somaliland), as the main urban centres in Somalia in relation to the requirements of Article 8 QD/QR. **This is without prejudice to the possibility to apply IPA to other places in Somalia.**



Given the importance of clan affiliation in Somalia, the specific clan family the applicant belongs to should be considered when assessing a specific part of the country for IPA.

For example, for applicants from the Darood/Harti/Majeerteen/Ise Mahamoud clan family, **Garowe** may be particularly relevant to assess. **Hargeisa** may be particularly relevant to assess for applicants originating from Somaliland and/or belonging to the Isaaq clan family. **Mogadishu** may be particularly relevant for applicants from the Hawiye clan family, however being not as segregated by clans as other areas of Somalia it may also be considered for IPA for applicants belonging to other clans.

For more details on the demographic composition of these cities, see [Country Focus 2025, 2.1.1., 2.2.1., 2.3.1.](#)

6.2. Safety

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report/s: [Country Focus 2025, 2.](#); [Security 2025, 2.3., 2.6.1., 2.8.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.



6.2.1. Absence of persecution or serious harm

When examining the element ‘absence of persecution or serious harm’, the decision-maker should refer to chapters 2 to 5 of this document.

When assessing the requirement of safety with regard to the applicability of IPA in individual cases of applicants from Somalia, the following elements should be taken into account:

- **General security situation in relation to indiscriminate violence**

Based on the analysis under [4.3.3. Article 15\(c\) QD/ QR: Assessment of indiscriminate violence and of real risk per region](#), the conclusions with regard to the three cities of Mogadishu, Garowe and Hargeisa are as follows:

In **Mogadishu** (Benadir/Mogadishu region): indiscriminate violence reaches a high level, and, accordingly, a lower level of individual elements is required to show substantial grounds for believing that a civilian, returned to the territory, would face a real risk of serious harm within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD.

In **Garowe** (Nugal region): there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD/QR.

In **Hargeisa** (Wogoyi Galbeed region): there is no real risk for a civilian to be personally affected within the meaning of Article 15(c) QD.

With regard to the **safety of IPA in Mogadishu**, a careful examination should be performed, given the complex security situation in the capital.

- **Actor of persecution or serious harm and their reach**

In case where the applicant fears persecution or serious harm by **State actors** (e.g., [journalists](#), [individuals \(perceived as\) contravening Islamic and customary laws/tenets outside Al-Shabaab controlled areas](#), [persons with diverse SOGIESC](#)), there is a presumption that IPA would not be available.

In specific cases where **the reach of a certain State actor is clearly limited** to a particular geographical area (e.g. FMS authorities, Somaliland authorities), the safety criterion may be satisfied with regard to other parts of Somalia.

In cases where the applicant faces persecution or serious harm by **Al-Shabaab**, the safety requirement would, in general, not be satisfied in South-Central Somalia. With regard to Puntland and Somaliland, IPA may be considered safe depending on the applicant’s individual circumstances. The group’s capacity to track and attack individuals in areas outside its direct control, should be given due consideration.

In cases where the applicant faces persecution or serious harm by **ISS or clans**, the safety requirement may be satisfied depending on the applicant’s individual circumstances.



For more information on the territorial control and influence of different actors, see [2. Actors of persecution or serious harm](#) and [4.3.3. Assessment of indiscriminate violence per region](#).

In cases where the applicant faces persecution or serious harm for reasons related to the prevalent social norms in Somalia and the actor of persecution or serious harm is the **Somali society at large** (e.g. [persons with diverse SOGIESC](#), [individuals contravening social or religious laws/ tenets](#)), the safety requirement would generally not be met.

For certain particularly vulnerable individuals, such as some women and children, if the actor of persecution or serious harm is the **(extended) family or the community at large** (e.g. [FGM/C](#), [forced marriage](#)), considering the reach of these actors, the lack of State protection and their potential vulnerability to other forms of violence, the safety requirement would in general not be met.

For the territorial control and influence of actors, see also [2. Actors of persecution or serious harm](#).

- **Whether the profile of the applicant is considered a priority target and/or a threat by the actor of persecution or serious harm**

The applicant's profile could make him or her a priority target, increasing the likelihood that the actor of persecution or serious harm would attempt to trace them in the potential IPA location (e.g. high-level federal and state officials).

- **Behaviour of the applicant**

It is recalled that an applicant cannot be reasonably expected to abstain from practices fundamental to their identity, such as those related to religion or sexual orientation and gender identity, in order to avoid the risk of persecution or serious harm⁽¹²⁾.

- **Other risk-enhancing circumstances**

The information under [3. Refugee status](#) should be used to assist in this assessment.

6.2.2. Availability of protection against persecution or serious harm

Last update: October 2025

Alternatively, it may be determined that the requirement of safety is satisfied if the applicant would have access to protection against persecution or serious harm, as defined in Article 7 QD/QR, in the area where IPA is considered. In the case of persecution by the State, a presumption of non-availability of State protection applies. See also [5. Actors of protection](#).

(12) CJEU, *Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel v X and Y and Z v Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel*, joined cases C199/12 to C-201/12 judgment of 7 November 2013, X and Y and Z, paras. 70-76,

<https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=144215&pageIndex=0&doclang=en&mode=I%20st&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=7670158>

CJEU, *Bundesrepublik Deutschland v Y and Z*, joined cases C-71/11 and C-99/11, judgment of 5 September 2012, para. 80, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?docid=126364&doclang=en>



6.2.3. Conclusion on safety



In relation to **Mogadishu**, the requirement of safety may be satisfied only in **exceptional cases**. Individual circumstances are to be taken into consideration.

In relation to **Garowe and Hargeisa**, the requirement of safety may be satisfied, depending on the profile and the individual circumstances of the applicant.

6.3. Travel and admittance

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports and query: [Country Focus 2025, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3](#); [Security 2025, 2.3, 2.6.1, 2.8.2](#); [COI Update 2025, 4](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

If the criterion of ‘safety’ is satisfied, as a next step, it has to be established whether an applicant can **safely** and **legally travel** and **gain admittance** in the suggested IPA location.

- **Safely travel**

Travel in **Mogadishu** raises significant challenges due to insecurity and poor infrastructure. Frequent Al-Shabaab attacks, especially at checkpoints, create constant threats, particularly near government buildings and strategic areas like Villa Somalia and the Aden Adde International Airport. Roads are often in disrepair, with some being further damaged by recent floods as of March 2025. Although limited road rehabilitation has been undertaken, many routes remain partially closed due to security concerns. The surge in vehicles, especially unregulated ones driven by unlicensed individuals heightens vulnerability to attacks using vehicle-borne explosives.

Garowe International Airport serves as a key hub for both domestic and international travel. Road access to Garowe is generally open, while checkpoints at city entrances, controlled by Puntland police, operate with relatively loose controls, tightening only during specific alerts. Within the city, there are no permanent checkpoints, with only ad hoc ones set up by the police. Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal International Airport is the main entry and exit point for flights to/from Somaliland.

Road conditions in **Hargeisa** are generally poor despite rehabilitation efforts. Public transport is widely used, while checkpoints are limited mostly to customs checks at main entrances and security near the presidential palace.

- **Legally travel**

To access Somalia by air or land, Somali citizens require a passport. One source noted that Somalis can access Somalia also with a public ID and, depending on an individual's network

and connections, it could be possible to even 'circumvent the need for documents'. It is possible to apply for a passport at a Somali embassy.

Somalis arriving in **Mogadishu** by air must present valid passports and follow standard entry procedures at the airport, while those arriving by land pass through city checkpoints but are not always required to show ID. To settle in the city, individuals must register with local authorities, including background checks by NISA, while formal registration is also required to rent or purchase property.

For documents required to access **Garowe**, see general information on access to Somalia, above. Somalis who settle into Garowe have to provide an ID and register with the local government. In practice, however, people can also settle through personal connections.

Anybody travelling to **Hargeisa** by air from abroad requires a valid passport for entering the territory of Somaliland. Somalilanders travelling with a passport issued by the Somaliland state administration do not require a visa. All other Somalis travelling with a passport issued by the FGS, require a visa. For the granting of the visa, sometimes a letter of invitation or travel justification is also required. On arrival' visas are awarded for stays of up to 30 days.

● Gain admittance

While **Mogadishu** is less segregated by clan compared to other parts of Somalia, clan affiliation remains influential, with the Hawiye clan holding most powerful positions. Minority groups and individuals from non-dominant clans often face exclusion and discrimination. The city also hosts a large population of IDPs, many of whom lack clan support or a local power base, leaving them particularly vulnerable.

Garowe, traditionally the homeland of the Darood/Harti/Majeerteen/Ise Mahamoud clan, has a diverse population that includes members of other clans, Hawiye businesspeople, and former IDPs from southern Somalia.

Members of the Isaaq clan-family currently make up most of **Hargeisa**'s population. While people belonging to different clans or ethnic origins can generally reside across the city, certain districts are dominated by specific groups. When settling in the city, no particular formal requirement is needed to buy land or properties or engage in business and other legal activities, provided that the individual is informally 'identified' by the hosting community through clan or local contacts. ID and other formal documentations are instead needed in case people intend to officially register. In this case, women need to be escorted by a male guarantor and witness, in whose absence two female witnesses are needed.



It is concluded that there are some security concerns with regard to the safety of travel to **Mogadishu**. With regard to **Garowe** and **Hargeisa**, it is concluded that, in general, a person can access these cities without serious risks.

The existence and/or possibility to issue **relevant identification documents** should be given due consideration. The possession of appropriate identification and/or travel documents is required to access Somalia and Somaliland. When passing

through checkpoints to travel to **Mogadishu, Garowe, and Hargeisa**, and to circulate in the three cities, the lack of identification documents may render the applicant vulnerable to ill-treatment at checkpoints. The possession of a 30-day visa would not be sufficient to consider that the applicant can settle in Hargeisa.

Clan affiliation does not constitute a legal requirement to travel and gain admittance in Mogadishu, Garowe and Hargeisa, however it would be a crucial factor to take into account when examining the [reasonableness to settle](#) in one of these cities.

6.4. Reasonableness to settle

If the criteria of safety and travel and admittance are met, the next step is to consider the reasonableness to settle in light of the general situation in the respective city and the individual circumstances of the applicant. According to Article 8(1) QD/QR, IPA can only apply if the applicant ‘can reasonably be expected to settle’ in the area of internal protection under consideration.

6.4.1. General situation

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 2.1.3., 2.2.3., 2.3.3.](#); [Security 2025, 2.3., 2.6.1., 2.8.2.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

- **Means of basic subsistence and employment**

Somalia, especially **Mogadishu**, heavily relies on foreign aid to support IDPs, who are among the most vulnerable. Mogadishu is the city with the largest growth opportunities in Somalia, with high productivity levels. However, economic growth is hampered by increasing costs for land and property, and scarcity of water. The general unemployment rate is still high and employment opportunities generally depend on the existence of support network such as, family or clan affiliations. The majority of the capital’s residents depend for income on casual labour in the city’s markets, restaurants and tea shops, earning low salaries. Another challenge for the city is that Al-Shabaab maintains a presence, and taxes businesses, but also private persons. The existence of a high IDP population has resulted in increased competition for urban livelihoods.

Garowe is experiencing growing humanitarian challenges, due to increasing number of IDPs, driven by drought in surrounding areas and conflict in southern Somalia, as well as due to poverty. The employment landscape in Garowe is characterised by general instability and low employment rates, especially amongst youth and IDPs. The majority of the population relies on casual labour and petty trades, with many international organisations having moved their offices from Garowe to Mogadishu.



Poverty is also widespread in **Hargeisa**. Unemployment and poverty rates are generally high across the city, especially among young people and IDPs. In Hargeisa, salaries are generally low although the city's economy is booming, with the majority of business based on small to medium enterprises. Formal and informal trading plays an important role as well as the various markets which are central to the local economy. On the other hand, low unemployment rates disproportionately affect young people and women. Clan affiliation plays an important role in the social and economic life of Hargeisa residents, with IDPs mostly relying on humanitarian aid for survival.

- **Housing and shelter**

In **Mogadishu**, property prices and rents are generally high, with the housing situation in urban locations being aggravated due to increased movement from rural areas. Owning of property in Mogadishu is typically associated with individuals from dominant clans whereas low-income inhabitants tend to be mostly tenants. The city's outer districts record higher levels of insecurity and poverty.

Living costs in **Garowe** vary depending on income level and life choices. Rent prices are increasing as the city is experiencing a steady growth of IDPs.

The majority of the population in **Hargeisa** resides in stone houses and shacks, with varying rent prices.

- **Food security**

In **Mogadishu**, food remains affordable when purchased from local markets.

Climate changes and low salaries affect the food access rates in **Garowe**.

Household food insecurity in **Hargeisa** is higher than the national prevalence, with people living in IDP camps particularly struggling with accessing food.

- **Water and sanitation**

In **Mogadishu**, properties in expensive areas are connected to the pipe system, however the water is not considered sufficiently clean for consumption. Residents in poorer areas are reportedly relying on wells, kiosks and trucks for provision of water. Water shortages and pollution are reported, affecting mostly IDPs, whereas the city's sewage system often experiences malfunctions due to planning shortcomings.

In **Garowe**, most houses are connected to the pipe system, with the city's residents having access to tap water, bottled water and purified water delivered by trucks.

Water affordability is a concern for residents in Hargeisa, where limited access to water and sewage services result in high costs. Provision of piped water is limited, with residents relying mostly on water delivered by truck and hand carts.

- **Basic healthcare**



The quality of healthcare services is poorly controlled across Somalia, with the provision of specialised or complicated treatments to be either limited or not available at all.

More specifically, the majority of healthcare services and facilities is located in **Mogadishu**. Officially, public hospitals are free of charge although unofficial fees may apply. The quality of health services provided in private hospitals is reportedly better. When it comes to provision of specialised treatments, however, this is either limited or unavailable.

In **Garowe**, public and private healthcare services are available. Even though healthcare is not free, the costs are significantly lower in the public sector. The quality of healthcare services is reportedly good although of low capacity. Specialised mental health care is, however, not provided in any of the public or private facilities.

In **Hargeisa**, both public and private medical health care facilities exist, with costs for services provided in private hospitals being higher. Although mental healthcare is generally underdeveloped in Somaliland, there are some services provided in Hargeisa.



The **general circumstances** prevailing in Mogadishu, Garowe and Hargeisa assessed in relation to the factors above **entail significant hardship. However, they do not preclude the reasonableness** to settle in the cities as such. A **more careful examination** of the applicant's individual circumstances is required when assessing the reasonableness of IPA to **Mogadishu**, given the general socio-economic situation, exacerbated also by the security situation, in the city.

The person's ability to navigate the above circumstances in the three cities will mostly depend on access to clan support and financial means and in individual cases, the reasonableness requirement may be satisfied.

6.4.2. Individual circumstances

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: [Country Focus 2025, 1.2., 1.2.1.b, 1.2.3., 1.4., 1.4.3., 2.1.3.\(d\), 2.1.3.\(e\), 2.1.3.\(f\), 2.1.4.\(a\), 2.2.3.\(d\), 2.2.3.\(e\), 2.2.3.\(f\), 2.2.4.\(a\), 2.3.3.\(d\), 2.3.3.\(e\), 2.3.3.\(f\), 2.3.4.\(a\).](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

In addition to the general situation in the area of potential IPA, the assessment whether it is reasonable to settle in that part of the country should take into account the individual circumstances of the applicant. The individual considerations may include potential vulnerabilities and availability of coping mechanisms. A non-exhaustive list of relevant considerations is provided below:

- **Clan affiliation and support network:** Clan affiliation is one of the most important factors in Somali society. The applicant's clan family and specific clan affiliation should be taken into account as members of minority clan families would face discrimination



as well as social, political and economic marginalisation when relocating and assimilating into an area dominated by another clan. The existence, capacity and willingness of other support networks, such as family and/ or social network, to assist should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Family and personal connections are often a prerequisite for finding and securing employment. Minority groups and returnees who have been absent for several years may lack clan support. Large numbers of returnees who lack financial means end up in IDP camps where the living conditions are no different than for those internally displaced, thus with limited access to basic services.

- **Age:** Young age as well as elderly age could significantly limit the applicant's access to means of subsistence such as through employment, making them depended on other providers. Children, in particular, are exposed to child recruitment and exploitation and the child's best interest shall be a primary consideration which shall include, among others, their access to basic education. For example, access to education may be difficult for children belonging to minority clans.
- **Gender:** Women and girls in Somalia may be subject to discriminatory restrictions and may need support of a male family member in order to access services, such as in relation to education, work and housing, and to exercise certain rights. Further difficulties have been reported for single women without a clan network as well as for IDPs. The applicant's gender should therefore be taken into account when considering reasonableness in conjunction with their family status and available support.
- **Health status:** The quality of and access to healthcare is strained across Somalia, making the health status of the applicant and any need for medical treatment an important consideration when assessing the reasonableness of IPA. Health status may also affect the ability to work and, for minors, their access to education. For persons with disabilities, access to basic subsistence would be further limited.
- **Professional and educational background and financial means:** The professional background of an applicant, their level of education and available financial means should be taken into account when assessing the reasonableness of IPA. Uneducated persons are particularly affected by severe lack of access to the labour market in urban settings.

These factors would often intersect, leading to different conclusions on the reasonableness of IPA. In some cases, more than one element of vulnerability would indicate that IPA is not reasonable for the particular applicant (e.g. person with a disability without support network), while in other cases the relevant factors may balance each other (e.g. non-educated single male with strong clan or other support network).

6.4.3. Conclusion on reasonableness

Last update: October 2025

The general conclusions of the reasonableness of IPA for particular profiles of applicants are based on an assessment of the general situation in Mogadishu, Garowe and Hargeisa, and the applicant's individual circumstances, as outlined above.





Mogadishu

IPA **might be reasonable in exceptional cases** which may include, inter alia, single able-bodied men and married couples without children and/or no additional vulnerabilities, who belong to the majority or dominant clan families in the area of settlement, who have educational and professional background facilitating access to employment or with a support network which is able and willing to assist them in accessing basic subsistence.

Garowe and Hargeisa

IPA **may be reasonable** in cases of single, able-bodied men and married couples without children and/or no additional vulnerabilities, who belong to the locally dominant clan.

Internal protection alternative would **in general not be reasonable for families with children and unaccompanied children**, as well as with applicants from **minority groups**, including clans who can be considered minorities in the local context.

In the case of other profiles, the individual circumstances of the applicant, in particular in relation to clan affiliation, gender, age, the existence of a support/clan network, etc. should be given due consideration.

For more details on the demographic composition of these cities, see [Country Focus 2025, 2.1.1., 2.2.1., 2.3.1.](#)

6.5. General conclusion on the applicability of IPA



Taking into account the assessment with regard to the three criteria under Article 8 QD/QR, it can be concluded that:

Given the security situation and living conditions, **IPA in Mogadishu might be applicable only in exceptional cases.**

IPA in Garowe and Hargeisa may be applicable depending on profile and individual circumstances of the applicant, as detailed above.

Clan affiliation is a crucial element to consider for IPA in all three cities.



7. Exclusion



For general guidance on Exclusion, see [EUAA Practical Guide: Exclusion](#) and [EUAA Practical Guide on Exclusion for Serious \(Non-Political\) Crimes](#).

For general guidance on the country guidance approach to this chapter, see 'EUAA, [Exclusion](#)' in *Country Guidance: Explained*, February 2025'.

In the context of Somalia, various circumstances may require consideration of the potential applicability of exclusion grounds. The QD/QR does not set a time limit for the application of the grounds for exclusion. Applicants may be excluded in relation to events regardless of when they took place.

More specifically, the need to examine possible exclusion issues in the context of Somalia may arise, for example, in cases of applicants being former or current members of the groups cited below. This list is non-exhaustive:

- (Former) members of the Somali state or FMS armed forces, such as SNA members, NISA, darwish forces
- (Former) members of the federal Somalia or state institutions, such as government officials and members of political or administrative institutions of a certain rank or level, judicial officials, prosecution authorities, prison officials and detention personnel
- (Former) members of Islamist/jihadi groups, such as Al-Shabaab or ISS members
(Former) members of clan militias or clan elders



Given the serious consequences that exclusion may have for the individual, the exclusion grounds should be interpreted restrictively and applied with caution.

The examples mentioned in this chapter are non-exhaustive and non-conclusive. Each case should be examined on its own merits.

7.1. Exclusion based on the commission of international crimes

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Security 2025](#), [1.2.2.](#), [1.2.3.](#), [1.3.](#); [Actors 2021](#), 2.4.6., 3.6., 4.5., 5.1., 6.3., 7.1.5., 7.2.5, 7.4.5., 7.5.5, 7.6.5, 7.7.5.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.



The ground 'crime against peace' is not likely to be of relevance in the cases of applicants from Somalia.

Violations of international humanitarian law by different parties in the current and in past conflicts in Somalia could amount to war crimes, such as the deliberate and systematic attacks on schools and hospitals, the deliberate attacks on civilians, rape, forced and child marriage, child recruitment of children under 15 years old, attacks on humanitarian workers etc.

Relevant situations include the civil war (1988-1991) and the non-international armed conflict between the Somali government and Al-Shabaab. Furthermore, fighting between the ISS and Al-Shabaab amounts to a non-international armed conflict.

Reported crimes such as murder, torture and rape by the different actors could amount to crimes against humanity, when committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population.

Some acts in the current and past conflicts, such as extrajudicial killings, torture, forced disappearance, rape, could amount to both, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Especially (former) members of the SNA, the SPF, the NISA, as well as FMS security forces and anti-government armed groups, in particular Al-Shabaab and ISS can be implicated in acts that would qualify as war crimes and/or crimes against humanity.

Crimes committed in the context of clan militias clashes, in particular in the civil war in the past, could also give rise to considerations under Article 12(2)(a) and 17(1)(a) QD/QR.

7.2. Exclusion based on the commission of a serious crime

Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: [Country Focus 2025, 1.1., 1.2., 1.3., 1.10.](#); [Security 2025, 1.2., 1.5.](#); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Criminal activity in Somalia is widely reported, including killings, sexual violence, abductions, theft, trafficking in human beings, money extortion/illegal taxation, piracy, human and/or arms smuggling. In some cases, these crimes are linked to armed groups, such as Al-Shabaab. Such serious (non-political) crimes would trigger consideration of the application of Article 12(2)(b)/Article 17(1)(b) QD/QR.

Violence against women and children (for example, in relation to domestic violence, honour-based violence, child labour, forced and child marriage, FGM/C) could also potentially amount to a serious (non-political) crime.



Some serious (non-political) crimes could be linked to an armed conflict (e.g. if committed in order to finance the activities of armed groups) or could amount to fundamentally inhumane acts committed as a part of a systematic or widespread attack against a civilian population (e.g. kidnapping of recruits, taxation to finance the activities of non-state armed groups), in which case they should instead be examined under Article 12(2)(a)/Article 17(1)(a) QD/QR.

7.3. Exclusion based on acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations

Last update: October 2025

Former membership in terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab, ISS, a could trigger relevant considerations and require an examination of the applicant's activities under Article 12(2)(c)/Article 17(1)(c) QD/QR, in addition to the considerations under Article 12(2)(b)/Article 17(1)(b) QD/QR.

However, membership alone is not enough to substantiate exclusion. The application of exclusion should be based on an individual assessment of the specific facts in the context of the applicant's activities within that organisation. The position of the applicant within the organisation would constitute a relevant consideration and a high-ranking position could justify a (rebuttable) presumption of individual responsibility for crimes or acts within the scope of Article 12(2)(c)/Article 17(1)(c) QD/QR. Other engagement with a group, such as the aforementioned, could also trigger exclusion considerations. Nevertheless, it remains necessary to examine all relevant circumstances before an exclusion decision can be made.

Where the available information indicates possible involvement in crimes against peace, war crimes or crimes against humanity, the assessment would need to be made in light of the exclusion grounds under Article 12(2)(a)/Article 17(1)(a) QD/QR.

7.4. Exclusion based on constituting a danger to the community or to the security of the Member State

Last update: October 2025

In the examination of the application for international protection, the exclusion ground under Article 17(1)(d) QD/QR (danger to the community or the security of the Member State) is only applicable to persons otherwise eligible for subsidiary protection.

Unlike the other exclusion grounds, the application of this provision is based on a forward-looking assessment of risk. Nevertheless, the examination takes into account the past and/or current activities of the applicant, such as association with certain groups considered to represent a danger to the security of the Member State or criminal activities of the applicant.



Annex: Country of origin information references

The main COI sources used in the common analysis are the following (listed alphabetically by reference used in the text)	
Actors 2021	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Somalia, Actors (July 2021) Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2021_07_EASO_COI_Report_Somalia_Actors.pdf
AS Deserters 2023	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Somalia - Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al-Shabaab (February 2023) Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_02_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_defection_desertion_disengagement_Al_Shabaab.pdf
FGM/C 2023	EUAA Country Of Origin Information Query: Somalia - Forms and prevalence of repeated FGM/C (May 2023) Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_04_EUAA_COI_Query_Response_Q12_Somalia_FGM-C.pdf
COI Update 2025	EUAA Country of Origin Information Query: Somalia - Major political, security, and humanitarian developments (August 2025) Available at: https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2025_08_EUAA_COI_Query_Response_Q24_Somalia_Major_political_security_and_humanitarian_developments.pdf



Country Focus 2025	EUAA Country of Origin Information Report: Somalia: Country Focus (May 2025) Available at: https://euaa.europa.eu/coi/somalia/2025/country-focus/coi-report-somalia-country-focus
Security 2025	EUAA Country of Origin Report: Somalia: Security Situation (May 2025) Available at: https://euaa.europa.eu/coi/somalia/2025/security-situation/coi-report-somalia-security-situation
Targeting 2021	EUAA Country of Origin Report: Somalia – Targeted profiles (September 2021) Available at: https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2021_09_EASO_COI_Report_Somalia_Targeted_profiles.pdf



