

SOMALIA: FACT-FINDING MISSION TO MOGADISHU IN MARCH 2020

Security situation and humanitarian conditions in Mogadishu

7.8.2020

Fact-finding Mission Report
Country Information Service

Introduction

This and the preceding report on a fact finding mission¹ have been prepared as part of the European Union's FAKTA project, which has received funding from the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).² Two researchers from the Country Information Service of the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) visited Mogadishu on a fact-finding mission in early March 2020. The purpose of the mission was to obtain information about the security and humanitarian conditions in Mogadishu and establish a contact network with international and national actors such as international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGO) and researchers. In future, this contact network will provide information on the situation in Somalia in support of Migri's decision-making process.

International organisations, NGOs and researchers operating in Somalia were interviewed during the mission.

For safety reasons, most sources wanted to be interviewed anonymously, without anyone being able to identify them.

¹[Country Information Service, 5 October 2018: Somalia: Fact finding mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi in January 2018.](#)

²Development project for fact finding mission practices on country of origin information between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2020.

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Information on the report

The report by the Finnish Immigration Service's Country Information Service is based on the European Union's quality guidelines for analysing country information as well as guidelines for fact-finding missions. The report is based on carefully selected sources. The report makes use of the interviews conducted during the fact-finding mission and, where necessary, it has been supplemented with written source material. The amount of the source material use is limited, and the report is not exhaustive. To obtain an exhaustive picture about the matter at hand, the report should not be used in decision-making alone but supplemented with other sources. The absence of an event, person or organisation from the report does not imply that it never occurred or that the person or organisation did not exist. The report is based on independent research and analysis by the Country Information Service. The Country Information Service is responsible for the contents of the report. The perspectives and statements presented in the report do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Finnish Immigration Service, nor should the report be regarded as a legal or political statement.

1 Abstract

The current security situation in Mogadishu is unstable and unpredictable. Although many people have returned to the city in recent years, the security conditions cannot be considered good. The most significant actor increasing the instability is the Islamic terrorist organisation, al-Shabaab. Even though the Somali government and security forces control the capital city in principle, al-Shabaab is in an extremely strong position. Despite sizable security arrangements, the organisation is able to operate in all parts of the city, and security incidents caused by it occur in the capital city every day. The organisation's operational tactic is characterised by, e.g., armed guerrilla attacks, attacks by suicide bombers, assassinations, and attacks with hand grenades and home-made explosives against parties the organisation regards as its enemies. The organisation has infiltrated the capital city everywhere, including the Somali security forces and the administration of the city. It is also believed to be present at the closely guarded Halane compound. At present, al-Shabaab is able to charge taxes on a large scale within the city region, and the tax revenue collected is estimated to be larger than the Somali government's.

Al-Shabaab is not the only actor increasing instability in Mogadishu. Various security incidents are also caused by ordinary crime. Several people die each month in connection with robberies in the capital city. Violent altercations can also involve mutual competition between businessmen and conflicts between clans. The reasons for security incidents in the city cannot always be determined. The authorities do not have the capacity to protect city residents against al-Shabaab or crime.

Al-Shabaab, which is mainly responsible for the instability of the capital city, does not intentionally aim to cause civilian casualties. Even so, most of those who die in its large attacks are civilians who happen to be present at the scene.

Movement by road in southern and central Somalia is not deemed safe. It includes risks for everyone. Al-Shabaab controls all roads leading to Mogadishu, and attacks with improvised explosive devices and other incidents may occur along roads leading in all directions outside Mogadishu. In addition to al-Shabaab, other actors operate along the roadside that can cause difficulties for travellers. The safest method of travel is by air.

The humanitarian conditions in the capital city are severe. The most critical problems are related to intense urbanisation, urban poverty and unemployment, chronic cholera, diarrhoea, lack of education and health services, and malnutrition. From the perspective of humanitarian conditions, the people in the absolute worst position in Mogadishu are internally displaced persons, and there are hundreds of thousands of them in the capital city. As they are not members of the powerful clans in the metropolitan area, they struggle to integrate with communities in the city, so they have to live in camps where the living conditions are harsh and difficult. The camps are only capable of providing very scarce services and subsidies. They are in a vulnerable position in terms of their security circumstances. They have been subjected to various rights violations, and do not have access to legal protection.

People from all clans in Somalia live in Mogadishu, and in most districts the population has a heterogeneous clan background. Movement in the capital city is not restricted on the basis of clan background. In principle, Mogadishu is free from clan-based limitations and anything is possible for anyone, regardless of their clan background. Nevertheless, the Hawiye/Abgaal and Hawiye/Habr Gedir clans hold the strongest position in the city. Clan background and networks are still highly significant. Political and economic power in the capital city is dominated by the most powerful clans, and engaging in significant business activity, for instance, requires networking with the powerful clans. Marginal groups in Somalia, such as the Bantu, Tumaal, Reer Hamar/Benadiri, and Madhiban, are in a weak position and commonly face discrimination and racism. They have been excluded from the rest of society. They are subjected to different violations of rights and they have no legal protection.

As a result of the prevailing circumstances, many people try to leave the country and seek a better life abroad. Leaving with the help of illegal networks is expensive and dangerous, but many are willing to take the risk.

2 General security situation in Mogadishu

According to various sources, the current security situation in Mogadishu is unstable. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) describes the security conditions in Somalia as tense, unpredictable and fluctuating. The atmosphere in the capital city is dominated by a constant fear of new terrorist attacks and indirect gunfire.³ The director of an international organisation operating in Somalia does not regard the capital city as a safe place.⁴ According to a representative of an international organisation, Mogadishu is currently perhaps the most insecure area in Somalia.⁵ Professor Yahia Amir from Mogadishu says that the city remains unsafe despite the fact that many people have returned there in the last eight years.⁶

According to a representative of a development organisation operating in Somalia, the security situation in the capital city changes continuously; occasionally it appears to improve, at other times it seems to deteriorate.⁷ According to an international NGO, security circumstances have improved as far as the civilian population is concerned.⁸ A local security expert also evaluates that security conditions in the capital city for civilians are better than before; generally speaking, however, there have been no significant changes in the situation during the past few months.⁹

³ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

⁴ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

⁵ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁶ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

⁷ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁸ International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁹ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

Contrary to recent years when the security circumstances in the capital city were strongly affected by mutual conflicts between clans, the factor causing instability at present is more of an ideological nature.¹⁰ Al-Shabaab, the Islamist extremist group classified as a terrorist organisation, is the most significant factor intensifying the conflict in the capital city and elsewhere in Somalia.¹¹ Security incidents caused by the group occur in the capital city every day.¹²

However, al-Shabaab is not the only actor increasing such instability. Recurring attacks are targeted at the capital city, and the perpetrator is not necessarily al-Shabaab. Another party may be responsible for them, even if the operating methods used in an attack are typical of al-Shabaab.¹³ Sometimes it is impossible to be certain who or which group is behind an act of violence or a security incident.¹⁴ When a person's vehicle explodes on a street in the capital city as the result of a hidden explosive, the perpetrator and the motive may remain unknown. Individual attacks may be related to terrorism, but they can also be a consequence of hostility between clans.¹⁵ Professor Yahia Amir from Mogadishu says that vengeful murders between clans are relatively common in the capital city and take place, on average, once every two weeks.¹⁶ Security incidents may also be linked to commercial interests. Competition for market share is intense, and the possibility of using violence to eliminate a competitor cannot be ruled out.¹⁷ Different attacks in the capital city have also been made by armed forces of leaders in charge of administration in city districts, and by clan militias. In some cases, an individual security incident may be politically motivated.¹⁸ It is also possible that al-Shabaab declares itself responsible for an attack made by another actor if this benefits the organisation and supports its own agenda.¹⁹ According to a security expert in Mogadishu, local businessmen and politicians have also used al-Shabaab as a perpetrator of contract murders.²⁰

According to the UNHCR, Mogadishu is divided into three zones with regard to security circumstances. The first zone includes the airport guarded by the AMISOM forces²¹ and the compound in its vicinity. The size of the zone is 3.5–4 km². The area is not safe despite heavy security, because al-Shabaab has repeatedly managed to fire grenades there. International organisations can operate and move with armoured vehicles and in armed convoys in the second zone located outside the

¹⁰ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹¹ Local security expert 2.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020; Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020; UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹² Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹³ International security organisation 4.3.2020

¹⁴ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

¹⁵ International NGO 1.3.2020.

¹⁶ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

¹⁷ International NGO 1.3.2020.

¹⁸ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

¹⁹ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

²⁰ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

²¹ Peacekeeping mission operated by the African Union with approval by the UN: *African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)*

airport and compound. The zone has several checkpoints manned by security forces and houses, for instance, ministries of the Somali government, and the President's official residence. Some NGOs and humanitarian organisations also operate in this zone. The third zone is situated outside the other two zones, has fewer guards and is less secure than the other ones. It is easier for al-Shabaab to access the zone and move about within it.²²

According to the UNHCR, al-Shabaab is extremely active in zones 2 and 3, where various terrorism-related security incidents occur on a regular basis. These areas are characterised by recurring assassinations, armed guerrilla attacks, attacks with hand grenades and by suicide bombers, and by bomb attacks with home-made explosives hidden in vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles. The UNHCR says that al-Shabaab is able to operate practically in every part of Mogadishu, but strict security arrangements make movement and collection of taxes in zone 1 more difficult. Al-Shabaab is more influential in zone 2, where it can give the population instructions which, if refused or neglected, can lead to a reprisal against an individual.²³

Due to the lack of security, humanitarian operations outside zone 1 in the capital city must be planned carefully and implementing them requires precise and expensive safety arrangements. International organisations must keep their operating times brief due to risk related to safety and security. Aid organisations have been repeatedly targeted by terrorist attacks outside zone 1, in spite of sizable security arrangements and short operating periods. Furthermore, some employees of humanitarian organisations have been abducted.²⁴

Different sources assess the security situation in various districts of the capital city in slightly differing ways. An international NGO operating in Somalia says that the security situation is worse on the outskirts of the city where al-Shabaab has the greatest impact. The most secure area is the inner ring of the city – i.e. zones 1 and 2 according to the UNHCR's definition – which is where Mogadishu International Airport, the Presidential palace (Villa Somalia) and ministries of the Somali government are located.²⁵ According to a local security expert, movement in areas under strong influence of al-Shabaab is unsafe.²⁶ Professor Yahia Amir from Mogadishu mentions that these include the district of Yaqshid, controlled by al-Shabaab, and the animal market there. However, the Professor says that these can also be the most secure areas in the capital city.²⁷ A similar evaluation is presented by a Somali researcher.²⁸ This seemingly contradictory logic is explained by the fact that larger attacks which attract much attention, where explosive are used and which primarily cause civilian casualties, are perpetrated in the city's busiest and closely guarded central district. The threat of attacks by al-Shabaab is highest in

²² UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²³ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁴ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁵ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁶ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

²⁷ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

²⁸ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

that area, because its most important targets are situated there.²⁹ As a result, moving in the area can be dangerous. Correspondingly, the safest areas in the capital city are the ones under the strong influence of al-Shabaab.³⁰ According to the Somali researcher, the Dayniile district is one such area. It is quiet compared with other districts; there is little traffic, and few people in the streets. Police stations in the area are small, and the officers have a pragmatic attitude towards al-Shabaab: if the organisation does not cause problems for security forces, they cause no trouble for the organisation, either.³¹

A representative of an international organisation finds that the most stable area in the city is the Dayniile district, where the Hawiye/Murusade clan holds a strong position and is able to maintain order and security in the area.³²

2.1 Al-Shabaab's position and operation

Even though the Somali government and security forces control the capital city in principle, al-Shabaab is extremely influential within the city.³³ The organisation's operational capability remains high³⁴, and security incidents caused by it occur in the capital city every day.³⁵ It has operated in the capital city for a long time, and it has extensive networks among the local population that it uses in its operation.³⁶

According to the international organisation, al-Shabaab has become more aggressive and daring in terms of its operating methods than before. Elsewhere in Somalia, its fighters have attacked well-protected bases of AMISOM and U.S. forces; by doing this, the organisation seeks more media attention and attempts to show the public that it is a strong operator which should not be resisted. In the capital city, the organisation's increasingly aggressive method of operation is indicated by, e.g. repeated grenade fire against the closely guarded compound located in the vicinity of the airport.³⁷ In February 2020 the organisation used home-made explosives to destroy seven CCTV surveillance cameras installed near Villa Somalia, along the Maka al-Mukarama road leading from the airport to Villa Somalia, which had only been operating for a few weeks after installation.³⁸ The attack demonstrated the organisation's operational capability in the core area of the city³⁹

²⁹ International organisation 2.3.2020; Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020; Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

³⁰ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

³¹ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

³² International organisation 2.3.2020.

³³ International organisation 2.3.2020.

³⁴ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

³⁵ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

³⁶ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

³⁷ International organisation 2.3.2020.

³⁸ Local security expert 2.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020.

³⁹ International organisation 2.3.2020.

and the efficiency of its intelligence activity. The organisation knew precisely where the cameras were located and how they could be destroyed.⁴⁰

The main targets of al-Shabaab's major operations are mostly situated in the centre of the city. These include military targets in the city⁴¹, structures of the Somali government⁴², such as ministries and the Presidential palace Villa Somalia⁴³, and Mogadishu International Airport⁴⁴. In addition to large operations focused on the city centre, the organisation has made smaller attacks at markets and merchant sites in the city centre, such as assassinations of government officials.⁴⁵

Targets of al-Shabaab's violent attacks have included Somalia's security forces⁴⁶; representatives of the Somali government⁴⁷; parties that support the government and cooperate with it; and international actors, such as the AMISOM forces⁴⁸ and the UN⁴⁹. Any person whom the organisation regards as an enemy may become a target of its attack. A religious leader or a business may become a victim of assassination.⁵⁰ The organisation has also attacked politicians and clan elders. The UN's local workers can be targets of attacks, but according to a local security expert they are not at the top of the list of priorities for attacks by the organisation.⁵¹

The threat of violence is also directed at people who have fled from the organisation. Al-Shabaab does not allow anyone to resign from its ranks, and is ready and able to kill all fugitives.⁵² If the organisation finds out that a fugitive has fled to Mogadishu, the situation for that person is relatively dangerous. This is true regardless of the level at which the fugitive worked in the organisation. Whether a reprisal is carried out is affected by many factors, such as the period of how long the fugitive worked within the organisation's ranks. Generally speaking, however, anyone who leaves the organisation is regarded as a traitor, and this leads to serious consequences. Any fugitive is at risk in Mogadishu and has good reason to go into hiding. A representative of an international security organisation has not heard with certainty of fugitives having been killed in the capital city. Still, this possibility cannot be excluded because there are numerous assassinations in the city, and the reason and motive for some of these remain unresolved.⁵³ According to the UNHCR, al-Shabaab has killed fighters who have escaped from its ranks. In some cases, fugitives may find protection among their own clan, making it difficult for al-Shabaab to kill

⁴⁰ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁴¹ International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁴² UNHCR 3.3.2020.

⁴³ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴⁴ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

⁴⁵ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁴⁶ International NGO 1.3.2020; International security organisation 4.3.2020.

⁴⁷ International NGO 1.3.2020; International security organisation 4.3.2020.

⁴⁸ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁴⁹ UNHCR 3.3.2020; International security organisation 4.3.2020.

⁵⁰ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

⁵¹ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁵² Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

⁵³ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

them. The UNHCR says that, for instance, the clan of commander Mukhtar Robow, who had resigned from al-Shabaab, managed to protect him.⁵⁴

Individuals may face the threat of violence by al-Shabaab if they have a close relative who works in the Somali government or another organisation that al-Shabaab regards as an enemy.⁵⁵ The risk depends on the agenda implemented by the organisation. For al-Shabaab, relatives are a sensible target because they usually have fewer security arrangements, so it is easier to attack them. Generals in the military or politicians, for instance, have advanced security arrangements, and attacking them also incurs greater risk for al-Shabaab.⁵⁶

Al-Shabaab has a strong position in the capital city at present and is capable of challenging orders issued by the authorities.⁵⁷ Through its operation, the organisation wants to show city residents that the government is unable to protect them, and that they are safer following al-Shabaab's orders than trusting protection offered by the authorities.⁵⁸ According to the Somali researcher, one of the directors of Mogadishu's district administration ordered that a lamp or streetlight had to be on in front of every house in that district at night. Al-Shabaab responded to the order by declaring that no one was allowed to leave a light on. It also destroyed all lights that were already switched on.⁵⁹

Al-Shabaab has not carried out major bomb attacks in the capital city for a while. A local security expert says that there was an explosion every other week, on average, in the centre of the capital city a year earlier. Now, 3–4 months may pass between similar attacks.⁶⁰ A representative of an international security organisation also states that the centre of Mogadishu has not seen a similar number of large terrorist attacks compared with earlier times. According to the same source, the city's core areas have been more peaceful, except for mortar attacks by al-Shabaab against the closely guarded Halane compound.⁶¹

A representative of an international security organisation says that the number of major terrorist attacks in the capital city varies from one season to the next. Al-Shabaab has usually been extremely active during the first months of each year. It has carried out large-scale attacks on the core areas of the city and the highly guarded airport area in January and February. According to the same source, the Somali government has proactively enhanced the operation of the security forces during months prior to the active period by, for example, increasing the number of checkpoints and by bringing new troops to them. It has also ensured the appropriate payment of wages to security forces, which has been seen to have a

⁵⁴ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

⁵⁵ International security organisation 4.3.2020; UNHCR 3.3.2020; Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

⁵⁶ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

⁵⁷ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

⁵⁸ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁵⁹ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

⁶⁰ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁶¹ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

great impact on their operating efficiency and morals. In addition to the aforementioned measures, security forces have been rotated from one checkpoint to the next without prior notification. This has made it more difficult to bribe individual soldiers and police officers and prevented them from becoming too familiar with the local population. Such enhanced operation and control have succeeded in keeping the number of major attacks in the city's core area low.⁶²

Once the period of enhanced control passes, the security arrangements return to what they were before. There may again be a six-month break in the payment of wages, which deteriorates the operational capability and attention of the security forces. This makes it easier for terrorist cells transporting explosives to move through checkpoints. As control diminishes, a new peak can be anticipated in the number of attacks.⁶³

According to a representative of an international organisation, control at checkpoints in Mogadishu was enhanced in October 2017, after a car bombing at the KM5 intersection in central Mogadishu that claimed hundreds of civilian casualties. Strict control and attentiveness lasted for a few weeks, but people soon became lax again.⁶⁴

A local security expert says the reason for the decrease in major terrorist attacks in Mogadishu centre has been improved operating capability and enhanced control by the Somali military and police.⁶⁵ According to an international organisation, the number of checkpoints along roads has been increased.⁶⁶ A representative of an international NGO says that control at checkpoints on entrance roads leading to the capital city has improved.⁶⁷

Al-Shabaab's operating capability in the capital city has been impeded by operations against it by security forces that support the Somali government and the AMISOM forces in the provinces of Lower and Middle Shabelle. Military pressure against the organisation in these regions has pushed it closer to the brink and significantly limited its fighters' possibility to move from these areas to Mogadishu.⁶⁸

Explosives used in attacks in Mogadishu have been brought from outside the capital city and from al-Shabaab's "factories" in the region between Mogadishu and Afgoye. The organisation has been unable to make them on a large scale within the city.⁶⁹ As a result of enhanced control, al-Shabaab has not managed to bring explosives or weapons to inner parts of the capital city to the same extent as

⁶² International security organisation 4.3.2020.

⁶³ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

⁶⁴ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁶⁵ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁶⁶ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁶⁷ International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁶⁸ International NGO 1.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁶⁹ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

before.⁷⁰ This situation may be about to change, because the Somali researcher says that al-Shabaab has acquired know-how for manufacturing explosives from chemicals available in the capital city.⁷¹

Air strikes by the United States have had a deterrent effect, limiting al-Shabaab's operation. In 2019, the United States used aerial attacks to destroy a few vehicles which carried explosives and were headed to the capital city.⁷² Air strikes have also been used against the organisation's leaders and commanders. An international NGO says that they have been effective and have managed to disrupt al-Shabaab's chain of command, which has made it difficult to carry out operations in the capital city.⁷³

According to a local security expert, the enhanced control has forced al-Shabaab to adopt more mobile operating tactics than before. In early 2020, most of the organisation's operations were small-scale guerrilla attacks that were made rapidly, such as attacks with hand grenades against checkpoints run by security forces. The organisation has also carried out more assassinations than before. The grenades that hit the Halane base in early March were fired quickly from a pick-up truck, and the guerrillas fled the scene after the attack. They did not have time to build a firing position and precisely ensure the direction of the grenade fire, because security forces control the area more closely than before.⁷⁴

A representative of an international NGO believes that the decreasing number of car bombings in the capital city is caused by the tactics chosen by al-Shabaab. According to this view, it is possible that al-Shabaab has intentionally reduced the number of car bomb attacks because they claim so many civilian casualties.⁷⁵ The organisation tries to portray itself to the Somali population as a group that fights against foreign troops and the Somali military, so large bomb attacks that cause many civilian victims are not good for its reputation.⁷⁶

In the UNHCR's assessment, al-Shabaab's operational tactics have remained unchanged during the past six months.⁷⁷

Although the number of major attacks in the capital city area has decreased, they still occur.⁷⁸ On the surface, the city's security arrangements appear strict, but a closer review exposes significant shortcomings, according to a local security expert. People still manage to pass through checkpoints without appropriate inspections, and weapons and explosives are being smuggled into the city. Al-Shabaab has cells

⁷⁰ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020; International organisation.

⁷¹ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

⁷² International security organisation 4.3.2020.

⁷³ International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁷⁴ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁷⁵ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁷⁶ International organisation 2.3.2020; International security organisation 4.3.2020.

⁷⁷ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

⁷⁸ International organisation 2.3.2020.

operating in the city, and a large number of its members have infiltrated the security forces and the government.⁷⁹

In December 2019 al-Shabaab carried out a truck bombing at the Ex-Control intersection against a Turkish humanitarian convoy, which led to the deaths of 80–90 civilians. Soon after, the organisation committed a car bomb attack at the Sayyid intersection, only a few dozen metres from Villa Somalia.⁸⁰ In early March, al-Shabaab fired grenades at the compound near the Mogadishu airport⁸¹ where several international organisations, such as the UN's sub-organisations, have their offices, and various countries have missions.

Al-Shabaab has a clearly stronger presence on the outskirts of the capital city, where it enjoys greater support from the population. In these regions, city dwellers have been less cooperating and more willing to inform the authorities of security observations they have made in their surroundings.⁸² The organisation's position on the fringes of the city is so strong the local district courts are unable to function there. They have been forced to move to the centre of the city.⁸³ A representative of an international organisation says that al-Shabaab holds a powerful position and great influence in the Huriwaa district.⁸⁴ The organisation is also deemed to have a strong position in the districts of Dayniile⁸⁵ and Yaqshid⁸⁶. According to a local security expert, the organisation openly controls the area of the animal market in Yaqshid at night time.⁸⁷

On the outskirts of the capital city, where al-Shabaab holds a stronger sphere of influence, it has carried out more assassinations⁸⁸, which has affected the city residents' sense of security and freedom of movement. Al-Shabaab has also been active in the area of the Ministry of Defence north of the centre of Mogadishu, where it has attacked military convoys and other traffic, causing an indirect threat to the civilian population moving about in the area.⁸⁹

2.1.1 Al-Shabaab's infiltration of government structures

The director of an international organisation operating in Somalia says that in recent years, the capital city was more clearly divided into zones controlled by al-Shabaab and the government. The current situation is less clear, because al-Shabaab has

⁷⁹ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁸⁰ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁸¹ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁸² International security organisation 4.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁸³ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

⁸⁴ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁸⁵ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

⁸⁶ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁸⁷ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁸⁸ International organisation 2.3.2020; International security organisation 4.3.2020.

⁸⁹ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

infiltrated everywhere. It is also believed to be present at the closely guarded Halane compound.⁹⁰

According to the Somali researcher, the organisation has spread everywhere in the capital city like a virus.⁹¹ Within the city, it has penetrated both the government⁹² and the security forces.⁹³ For example, the bombing of the office of Mogadishu's mayor last July proved that the organisation had an operational cell within the office.⁹⁴

Even though the capital city is officially controlled by the government of Somalia and the AMISOM forces that support it, al-Shabaab is able to collect taxes on a large scale within the city region.⁹⁵ In this respect, the situation has changed in a few years. While al-Shabaab's taxation ability was only a subject of rumours earlier, it is now a fact known by everyone.⁹⁶

The organisation's operation and tax collection are described as a mafia-style business, which it uses to try to secure its own interests.⁹⁷ This operation has nothing to do with religion.⁹⁸ According to the Somali researcher, the organisation taxes all business operations in the capital city. It has a connection with the notary public of Mogadishu, whom it has forced to provide information about all financial transactions registered, such as sales and purchases of cars, factories, machines and land. Based on the information it has received, the organisation has taxed individuals involved in such transactions.⁹⁹ The organisation collects charges from businessmen engaged in import at the Port of Mogadishu, owners of small shops, and businesses and merchants operating at Bakaara Market, the city's most important area of commerce.¹⁰⁰ A few months ago, companies operating at the Port of Mogadishu closed it down, because al-Shabaab raised the amount of taxes collected from them. However, a few days later the parties reached an agreement on the charges claimed, and the port was reopened.¹⁰¹ A representative of an international organisation says that al-Shabaab collects more taxes than the Federal Government in the capital city.¹⁰² Its efficient assessment of taxes has made it strong in an economic sense.¹⁰³

⁹⁰ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

⁹¹ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

⁹² International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁹³ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁹⁴ International NGO 1.3.2020; Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

⁹⁵ International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁹⁶ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

⁹⁷ International NGO 1.3.2020; Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁹⁸ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

⁹⁹ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁰⁰ International organisation 2.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020; Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹⁰¹ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁰² International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹⁰³ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

In late 2019, several assassinations were carried out at the Bakaara Market. Local merchants contacted al-Shabaab and complained that they were forced to pay taxes to the organisation, which still killed people in the area. The assassinations ended after the complaint.¹⁰⁴

The Somali researcher says that the organisation's infiltration of the administration of the capital city and business structures is well-described by the dispute over the selection of the Somali Chamber of Commerce. The *Voice of America/Somalia* news agency published a Somali-language report of the subject in January 2020.¹⁰⁵ According to the report quoted by the researcher, key businessmen in the capital city disputed over who would become the new chairperson of the Mogadishu Chamber of Commerce. Since the businessmen were unable to agree on the matter, al-Shabaab invited all the key representatives of the business world to a meeting and ordered them to appoint the man proposed by the organisation to the position. According to a report prepared by the Voice of America news agency, that man had co-operated with the organisation before and had imported supplies to the country that it had used in its terrorist attacks. Furthermore, money received from the sales of cars he had imported was used to finance al-Shabaab's operations. The Somali security forces arrested the man selected as the chairperson.¹⁰⁶

The security forces arrested several members of al-Shabaab in Mogadishu in late 2019 and early 2020. According to the Somali researcher, it is not fully clear whether the arrests were due to more effective operations by the Somali intelligence service or the organisation infiltrating to such an extensive area that increased apprehensions were inevitable.¹⁰⁷

2.1.2 Al-Shabaab's support

Al-Shabaab's operations receive some support from the population on the outskirts of Mogadishu¹⁰⁸, but most city residents have a profoundly negative attitude towards the organisation. Most people do not support it and would not like to follow its orders or pay the charges it demands. They must do so, however, because they are afraid of violent reprisal by the organisation.¹⁰⁹

The organisation operates in a manner similar to the Mafia, and threatens those who reject its demands with serious consequences.¹¹⁰ Payment of taxes it demands is akin to 'protection money' that must be paid to prevent anything unpleasant from

¹⁰⁴ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁰⁵ VOA Somalia 16.1.2020. The report was quoted by Somali Guardian on 26.1.2020 ja Horn Observer on 16.1.2020.

¹⁰⁶ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁰⁷ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁰⁸ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

¹⁰⁹ International NGO 1.3.2020; Somali researcher 4.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹¹⁰ International organisation 2.3.2020; Local security expert 2.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020.

happening.¹¹¹ A Somali researcher says that one cannot play games with the organisation: it can do extremely brutal things. Instructions or orders it issues cannot be neglected, and people must also never lie to the organisation. Its position and ability to operate in the capital city is so strong that its members can do practically anything they want.¹¹² Its threats must be taken seriously. It can kill in the worst case, and people also know this. The organisation has assassinated well-known businessmen in the capital city, and in areas it controls it has organised public executions as a showcase of its strength. Fear makes most people obedient.¹¹³

Somali authorities do not have the capacity to intervene in payment obligations imposed by al-Shabaab or protect city residents against them.¹¹⁴ Since al-Shabaab has also infiltrated the police, the organisation may hear of a request for help or a complaint to the police, risking the complainant's and their family's safety.¹¹⁵ Even members of a clan cannot protect their community from al-Shabaab's demands by force.¹¹⁶ According to a local security expert, the organisation usually enforces a punishment by using a person who is a member of the victim's clan, as it tries to avoid causing a conflict between clans. It also wants to show that it is stronger than the clans.¹¹⁷

In practice, no individual or group can provide protection against al-Shabaab.¹¹⁸ No one dares to even criticise the organisation, in fear of a potential reprisal.¹¹⁹ People are even more cautious because one can never be fully certain who is a member of the organisation. Recently, the security forces managed to arrest a well-known Somali pop musician who worked in the Banadir government and was also a member of al-Shabaab. It would have been impossible to believe from that person's appearance and behaviour that he was a member of al-Shabaab¹²⁰, and he was not a religious person.¹²¹ A few months earlier the security forces arrested a teacher who belonged to al-Shabaab and was responsible for several of the organisation's operations and assassinations in Mogadishu.¹²²

Last year the organisation advised all clan members who had participated in the previous elections to report to the organisation. Anyone not heeding this advice would be killed, whereas those obeying it would be pardoned. The organisation has acted in accordance with its demand. According to the Somali researcher, a clan elder who had previously evaded and lived in hiding from al-Shabaab's assassins

¹¹¹ International NGO 1.3.2020.

¹¹² Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹¹³ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹¹⁴ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

¹¹⁵ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020; UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹¹⁶ International security organisation 4.3.2020; Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹¹⁷ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹¹⁸ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹¹⁹ International NGO 1.3.2020.

¹²⁰ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹²¹ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

¹²² Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

reported to the organisation and has since then been able to move around freely and without fear.¹²³

Most people comply with al-Shabaab's orders out of fear, but some support it for ideological reasons.¹²⁴ There are positive stories going around about the organisation, some old, others more recent. Some people may, for instance, reminisce about the times when al-Shabaab controlled the capital city. Back then, moving through the city was safe, and there were no checkpoints on streets restricting movement.¹²⁵

Some people support al-Shabaab because it can provide some services that are in the State's domain, such as legal protection. The organisation has tried to assume the government's role as a service provider and thereby increase its support.¹²⁶ The Somali researcher says that the reasons for al-Shabaab's existence and support are largely the weak administration of Somalia and the lack of basic services.¹²⁷

Mogadishu has a significant number of land and property disputes caused as a result of active remigration. People who have lived as refugees for years have returned to the city and are now reclaiming their old property, which has fallen into other people's hands.¹²⁸ Resolving such disputes is difficult¹²⁹, and since the Somali government's courts of law lack the operating capability to settle the disputes, many city residents seek help from al-Shabaab's court.¹³⁰ Although its decisions are not necessarily always right¹³¹, it is deemed to be better, more efficient and just as well as less corrupt than the State's courts.¹³² The court hears all parties concerned, makes a decision based on what it has heard, and ensures that it is observed – by violent means if necessary.¹³³ Ultimately, the organisation may kill anyone who does not comply with the decision issued.¹³⁴

The organisation does not have a court in Mogadishu: the nearest one is a bus trip away in Torotorow, in the Lower Shabelle province.¹³⁵

The operation of the organisation's court is described by an example reported by a representative of an international organisation from March 2018. According to the report, a poor man who had been wronged travelled to al-Shabaab's court and said that a general in the Somali military had stolen a patch of land that belonged to him. Al-Shabaab's court called the general and advised him to appear before

¹²³ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹²⁴ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

¹²⁵ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹²⁶ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹²⁷ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹²⁸ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹²⁹ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹³⁰ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹³¹ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹³² International organisation 2.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

¹³³ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹³⁴ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹³⁵ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

the court to be heard. The general refused because he knew his life was in danger. For him, as a soldier, appearing before the organisation's court would mean certain death. Al-Shabaab's representative responded that since he was a general in the armed forces of Somalia, he would certainly be killed at a later date. This was a case of justice being served, so the organisation promised to guarantee the general's safety. The general ultimately accepted the proposal. He was transported to be heard by the court which issued a decision favourable to the general after a process lasting two days. After that, the general was taken back unharmed. Although it is not certain that the court's decision in this case was correct, the example shows that the organisation wishes to influence the Somali population and create the impression that its judicial institution and system are efficient.¹³⁶

The Somali researcher says that al-Shabaab's leadership consists of Somalis, so they are familiar with the country's customs and culture. They know how to act flexibly and effectively in the Somali environment in order to legitimize their own position. The organisation knows how to best influence hearts and minds among its own supporter base also. One of the organisation's methods of impact among its own has been the way it looks after its own fighters and their families. According to the Somali researcher, al-Shabaab demanded the Sahafi Hotel in Mogadishu to pay compensation to widows of al-Shabaab fighters whose spouses were killed in an attack against the hotel. The organisation set the payment of compensation as a precondition to repair of the hotel damaged during the attack. If such compensation were not paid, the organisation threatened to kill the construction workers who had started the repairs and their families. The difference in looking after one's own interests is clear when one compares it with the support given to soldiers injured or killed among the ranks of the Somali security forces and their family members. A security forces soldier who has been wounded on duty may not even receive treatment at a hospital. Some soldiers who have been disabled for life have not received any support from the government.¹³⁷

2.1.3 Al-Shabaab's recruitment activities

According to an international security organisation, al-Shabaab tries to recruit young men by means of persuasion, ideological and religious influence, and financial promises. Forced recruitment that occurs in other provinces is almost non-existent in the capital city.¹³⁸ Young men living with unemployment, poverty and lack of prospects, who have hardly any understanding of Islam, can be easily manipulated to join the organisation when offered a small amount of money.¹³⁹ Some men's desire to join may be intensified by grudges arising from the death of family members in attacks by security forces or during acts of violence at checkpoints.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹³⁷ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹³⁸ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

¹³⁹ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

¹⁴⁰ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

According to the UNHCR, al-Shabaab continues to recruit young boys into its ranks, but not by coercion. Still, the possibility of forced recruitment is an ongoing concern, according to the UNHCR.¹⁴¹

The Somali researcher says that al-Shabaab recruits new fighters mostly in the areas it controls. The organisation has established schools where it indoctrinates children into battle, alongside other instruction. Regions controlled by the organisation have no Internet connections: there is only radio that transmits al-Shabaab propaganda. However, new members are recruited in Mogadishu also. Such recruitment is done partly by means of persuasion, partially by force. Some young people may join its ranks without their parents' knowledge.¹⁴²

In practice, the organisation does not need to persuade people much to have them act as it wishes, since its severe punishments provoke strong fear. For instance, the organisation may recruit an office worker in Mogadishu as its informant by presenting an offer for co-operation that includes a threat: "We do not want to harm you, we just want you to cooperate with us. At some point, we may ask you a question related to your work, such as where the mayor is at the moment. If you tell us, you can obtain money; if you do not want to help us, we know what school your child attends."¹⁴³

2.2 Activities of the ISIS organisation

As far as is known, the ISIS organisation has no activities in the capital city at the moment.¹⁴⁴ However, the UNHCR states this is not absolutely certain. It is possible that ISIS is behind some of the security incidents in Mogadishu, but its operational capability in the capital city is limited in any event.¹⁴⁵

In 2019, ISIS tried to gain a foothold in Mogadishu and to collect taxes to fund its operations, like al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab disapproved of ISIS's activities, which led to clashes between the two organisations. These forced ISIS to retreat, and no reports have been filed of its activities in the capital city since then.¹⁴⁶

This struggle indicates that al-Shabaab and ISIS act like Mafia organisations that vie for shares in criminal activity. Religion is the cover used by both organisations to conceal the true nature of their operations.¹⁴⁷

ISIS's current area of operation is situated in Puntland, in northern Somalia.¹⁴⁸ The United States has managed to limit its growth with air strikes. Foreign fighters who

¹⁴¹ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹⁴² Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁴³ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁴⁴ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020; Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹⁴⁵ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹⁴⁶ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020; Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁴⁷ International organisation 2.3.2020.

may join the organisation are a serious threat that is monitored actively. Some foreigners are known to be members of the organisation, but thus far its size has remained at a few hundred fighters.¹⁴⁹

2.3 Ordinary crime

The security conditions in the capital city are affected by terrorist activity and also by ordinary crime, which is at a high level according to the UNHCR.¹⁵⁰ Little is reported of it, and it has not come to the forefront to the same extent as security incidents related to terrorism.¹⁵¹ Several people die each month during robberies in the capital city carried out by criminals.¹⁵² According to a representative of a Somali NGO, during the evening before the interview, two members of marginal groups were shot in front of the representative's home in the Madina district. There is no detailed information about the motive for the act.¹⁵³

Professor Yahya Amir from Mogadishu says that violence associated with crime is commonplace but rarely reported in the news, unless victims include well-known individuals. According to him, there can be many reasons for killing people in the capital city which are not always linked to terrorism: businessmen may have a competitor killed, or violence can also be related to a conflict between clans or revenge. The government of Somalia may also be responsible for violence leading to death. Professor Yahya Amir, who was interviewed during the fact-finding mission, was himself the target of a bomb attack, in autumn 2019. He survived the explosion of a bomb hidden in his car, but his brother was killed. The professor does not know who planted the bomb or what the motive was, but in his view it was certainly not al-Shabaab. He suspects that the reason for the murder attempt was that he has spoken against corruption and financial abuses in his work. He has also criticised the government, Ethiopian troops and al-Shabaab. He suspects that several parties have a motive for eliminating him.¹⁵⁴

Security circumstances are also affected by occasional unrest and demonstrations organised every now and then.¹⁵⁵

2.4 Protection by the authorities and the operational capability of the security forces

The UNHCR says that Somalia's public structures are weak and unable to provide the population with shelter and protection against crime. Authorities are susceptible to

¹⁴⁸ International organisation 2.3.2020; Local security expert 2.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹⁴⁹ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

¹⁵⁰ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹⁵¹ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

¹⁵² Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

¹⁵³ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

¹⁵⁴ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

¹⁵⁵ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

corruption due to low wages, which diminishes the ability of the police to protect residents of the city.¹⁵⁶ City dwellers have a high threshold to submitting complaints and seeking help from the police against crime and violations of rights, because people do not trust the police in general.¹⁵⁷ The ability of the authorities to intervene in ordinary crime, such as theft of a mobile phone, is so poor that victims find it futile to report such a minor offence to the police.¹⁵⁸

Even though the police are deemed to cope with their duties regarding public security, people try to manage their personal or the family's safety by themselves. A representative of an international NGO says that the best method of protection against violations of rights is to remain 'invisible' and not cause problems for anyone.¹⁵⁹ However, if something happens, people first turn to their own family and clan for help. In the capital city, it is also common for people facing adversity to contact their own clan's Member of the Federal Parliament.¹⁶⁰

According to a representative of an international organisation, there are serious shortcomings in the operations of the Somali security forces.¹⁶¹ They are unable to protect the population from the threat caused by al-Shabaab¹⁶², and city residents do not trust their capacity for action. Al-Shabaab can move and operate quite freely in various parts of the city despite sizable security arrangements. In practice, it can keep doing whatever it wants.¹⁶³ The organisation raises fear among the population¹⁶⁴, and people know it is strong and has infiltrated everywhere¹⁶⁵, including the security forces and government of Somalia.¹⁶⁶ Seeking help and protection from security forces against the threat posed by al-Shabaab further deteriorates the situation of the victim of a threat, increasing the risk of a reprisal.¹⁶⁷

According to a local security expert, the operating capacity of the Somali security forces has improved. They are now able to control regions where al-Shabaab used to operate with impunity. For example, the areas in Mogadishu from where the organisation used to fire grenades at the compound, are now under better control. The expert says that the operating morals of the security forces are still highly dependent on regular payment of wages. Even though security forces should receive their pay automatically and biometric identifiers have been taken of every member, delays in the payment of wages remain.¹⁶⁸

¹⁵⁶ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹⁵⁷ International NGO 1.3.2020.

¹⁵⁸ Somali researcher 4.3.2020; International security organisation 4.3.2020.

¹⁵⁹ International NGO 1.3.2020.

¹⁶⁰ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁶¹ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹⁶² UNHCR 3.3.2020; Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹⁶³ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹⁶⁴ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹⁶⁵ UNHCR 3.3.2020; Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹⁶⁶ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹⁶⁷ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹⁶⁸ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

According to an assessment by the UNHCR, the operating capacity of the Somali security forces has remained unchanged. Even special forces trained by the Americans are not much more efficient than other units of the Somali military. The special forces have different uniforms and weapons, but there is no difference in practical military activities.¹⁶⁹

A representative of an international NGO says that the justice system in Somalia is still extremely weak,¹⁷⁰ and there are serious shortcomings in the legal protection of the civilian population. Courts of law take a long time issuing decisions, and are susceptible to corruption.¹⁷¹ A representative of an international security organisation provided an example of a decision made by a court in Mogadishu in which a man who had arrived in the city from northern Somalia claimed that a previously unknown woman and her child were his spouse and child. The woman took the case to court, but it was resolved in favour of the man despite DNA tests and a legal process that lasted three days. In a court of law, a man's word outweighs a woman's. Furthermore, in this case, the man was wealthy and managed to obtain the decision he wanted with money.¹⁷²

Receiving legal protection from courts of law in Somalia is especially difficult for members of marginal groups¹⁷³. The Somali researcher says that this is one reason why so many members of marginal groups have joined the ranks of al-Shabaab. Many of them have lost their patches of land when armed militia of powerful clans have seized them illegally. For those who have lost their land, the only opportunity to obtain justice has been to resort to the power of al-Shabaab, which has intervened in unlawful seizures and restored land ownership to original owners. However, the problem is being reactivated now that al-Shabaab has been forced to retreat from some regions. The Somali researcher says that many members of powerful clans wait for the opportunity to return to 'areas liberated' from al-Shabaab, so they can again rob land from farmers who belong to marginal groups. Violations of rights against marginal groups and the injustice they experience represent a serious problem that sustains the conflict.¹⁷⁴

2.5 Checkpoints on the streets of Mogadishu

Streets in Mogadishu have several hundred checkpoints manned by security forces and aimed at ensuring the safety of the city.¹⁷⁵ The city centre has the highest number of them, because that is where ministries and offices of the Somali

¹⁶⁹ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹⁷⁰ International NGO 1.3.2020; Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹⁷¹ International NGO 1.3.2020; Somali researcher 4.3.2020; Local security expert 4.3.2020.

¹⁷² International security organisation 4.3.2020.

¹⁷³ For details, please see section 6.1.

¹⁷⁴ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁷⁵ International NGO 1.3.2020; Somali NGO 5.3.2020; Local security expert 2.3.2020; Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

government are situated. There are also numerous checkpoints round the headquarters of the military in the northern section of the city.¹⁷⁶

Some of the checkpoints in the city are “mobile” and some are permanent.¹⁷⁷ Most checkpoints are permanent and have lifting booms that stop traffic, and the road has been narrowed in such places.¹⁷⁸ There are five main roads leading to the city, all of which have a checkpoint.¹⁷⁹

Checkpoints are maintained by various operators of the security forces, i.e. the police, the Somali intelligence service NISA¹⁸⁰, and the military. Different forces may have both their own and shared checkpoints. Most checkpoints of the military are located on the outskirts of the city.¹⁸¹

Some of the capital city's checkpoints are maintained by detachments of security forces that are members of certain clans (Hawiye/Habr Gedir and Hawiye/Abgaal). For instance, police officers working at the checkpoint of the district populated by the Abgaal are usually from the same clan, because they know members of their own community better.¹⁸²

Information varies regarding whether fees are charged from people passing through checkpoints within the city, and what the amounts may be. According to the UNHCR, everyone who goes through a checkpoint is charged a pass-through fee that is comparable to corruption. Security forces are paid low wages, so money is demanded from everybody.¹⁸³ Soldiers are paid approx. US\$ 100 per month¹⁸⁴, which is not much to provide for a family and to pay rent.¹⁸⁵ Also, many soldiers use *khat*, which has a narcotic effect and costs several dollars a day.¹⁸⁶

A representative of an international organisation says that drivers of all vehicles passing through checkpoints are required to pay a fee. No fee is charged from pedestrians.¹⁸⁷ According to a representative of an international security organisation, fees are charged at only some checkpoints.¹⁸⁸ A representative of an international NGO says that fees are not usually charged from anyone at checkpoints¹⁸⁹, whereas a local security expert states that fees are only collected at

¹⁷⁶ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹⁷⁷ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹⁷⁸ International NGO 1.3.2020.

¹⁷⁹ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹⁸⁰ *National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA)*, in Somali *Hay'ada Sirdoonka iyo Nabadsugida Qaranka (HSNQ)*.

¹⁸¹ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

¹⁸² Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁸³ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹⁸⁴ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

¹⁸⁵ Professor Yahya Amir 4.3.2020; Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁸⁶ Professor Yahya Amir 4.3.2020; Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁸⁷ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹⁸⁸ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

¹⁸⁹ International NGO 1.3.2020.

checkpoints on the border, from people arriving in the city.¹⁹⁰ The Somali researcher says that in general fees are not demanded at checkpoints, but security forces there may ask passers-by for tips by pleading to their low wages and challenging work conditions under the scorching sun. The researcher states that it is possible that security forces sometimes extort money from people passing through checkpoints.¹⁹¹

According to a local expert, no fees are charged at checkpoints within the city but people arriving at them are required to prove their identity. They may also be asked if they have acquaintances where they are headed. Security forces may require an individual to have a contact person who is responsible for the person in question on the other side of the checkpoint. A fee of US\$ 1–2 may be demanded from anyone who does not have an identity certificate.¹⁹² The director of an international organisation says that fees required at checkpoints apply to everyone and amount to US\$ 0.25–0.5. There is no way to pass through a checkpoint without paying for it.¹⁹³

According to the UNHCR, the amount of the fee charged at checkpoints varies. It is usually approx. US\$ 1.¹⁹⁴ A representative of an international organisation says that drivers of all vehicles passing through checkpoints are charged a fee of US\$ 5.¹⁹⁵ Anyone refusing to pay a fee may be arrested for a short time, but usually security forces leave a person waiting in line for an hour or two, until they finally become frustrated and agree to pay the fee.¹⁹⁶

According to a local security expert, only vehicles are checked at checkpoints within the city, not pedestrians. The expert says that security forces which control the checkpoints operate more responsibly these days and their procedures have improved.¹⁹⁷ No information supports serious violations of rights, such as sexual violence against women, occurring at checkpoints.¹⁹⁸ According to a representative of an international security organisation, there would probably be more reported information about sexual violence at checkpoints if it occurred on a large scale.¹⁹⁹ Women are more likely to be victims of sexual violence at checkpoints outside the city where fewer people are about to see it.²⁰⁰ It is possible that people who are suspicious and refuse to pay a fee demanded at a checkpoint face closer scrutiny, which may also involve violence.²⁰¹ According to the UNHCR, police officers working at checkpoints have not necessarily received any training for their duties. They can

¹⁹⁰ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹⁹¹ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

¹⁹² Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹⁹³ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

¹⁹⁴ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

¹⁹⁵ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹⁹⁶ International organisation 2.3.2020.

¹⁹⁷ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

¹⁹⁸ Local security expert 2.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020; International security organisation 4.3.2020.

¹⁹⁹ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

²⁰⁰ International organisation 2.3.2020.

²⁰¹ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

be very arrogant and have no respect towards other people. There are some reports of them assaulting people who have arrived at checkpoints.²⁰²

Three-wheel mopeds and other vehicles have been repeatedly fired at for not obeying orders to stop issued by security forces at checkpoints. Some people have lost their lives in such shootings.²⁰³

Checkpoints within the city restrict the movements of the city's residents, which often causes irritation among them.²⁰⁴ Members of marginal groups moving by car have been prevented from passing through checkpoints, even if they carry the required identity certificate.²⁰⁵

People fear going through checkpoints because they are forced to deal with corrupt police officers.²⁰⁶ Also, at checkpoints everyone must come to a stop, which may cause congestion. People waiting for their turn are exposed to a possible bomb attack that have occurred at checkpoints repeatedly of late.²⁰⁷ Presumably, some of the attacks intentionally targeted the checkpoint in question. It is also possible that in some cases a load of explosives was meant to be used on the other side of the checkpoint, but the terrorist apprehended by the security forces wanted to detonate the bomb immediately, without surrendering. The main objective of terrorism is to create terror, a purpose well served by an attack at a place where people are mobile every day.²⁰⁸

Some checkpoints have been the scene of clashes between different units of security forces. The reasons for such confrontations may be communication problems between various groups, clan-based disputes or, in some cases, arguments related to the distribution of money collected at checkpoints.²⁰⁹ Most clashes at checkpoints take place outside the capital city. The situation inside the city is better in this respect.²¹⁰

2.6 Position of civilians

Al-Shabaab, which is mainly responsible for the instability of the capital city, does not intentionally aim to cause civilian casualties.²¹¹ Still, most of those who die in its large-scale attacks are civilians. Military convoys targeted by the organisation move in armoured vehicles that provide soldiers with a good level of protection. Unprotected civilians who happen to be at the site of attack suffer must greater

²⁰² UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁰³ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁰⁴ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020.

²⁰⁵ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

²⁰⁶ International organisation 2.3.2020.

²⁰⁷ International organisation 2.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁰⁸ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁰⁹ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

²¹⁰ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

²¹¹ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

losses. Where security forces protected by armour may lose a few men in an attack, the blast effect can cause death and injuries for dozens of civilians. This happened with a truck bombing in the Ex-Control area in December where the target was a Turkish aid convoy.²¹²

Cafes, restaurants and hotels used by government officials, politicians and security forces have often been targets of al-Shabaab attacks. These attacks are directed at parties regarded by the organisation as its enemies, but victims often include civilians who happen to be near the targets and merchants earning their living on the street. City residents know the risk of terror attacks at these sites and therefore try to avoid them. The same applies to, e.g. the Maka al-Mukarama road leading from the airport to Villa Somalia, one of al-Shabaab's more active areas. It is a dangerous place, and people try to find alternative routes to avoid being there.²¹³ Generally speaking, moving about in the city causes fear and anxiety among city residents, because anything can happen without any warning.²¹⁴

Although the organisation's official view is that attacks against parties deemed as the enemy are justified despite civilian victims²¹⁵, its ranks are not unified on this matter. Rumour has it that the attitude towards civilian casualties have caused arguments, possibly even an open conflict, within the organisation.²¹⁶ After the December attack in the Ex-Control area, al-Shabaab apologised on an exceptional basis for the high number of civilian victims caused by the assault. The organisation wishes to create the impression that it does not kill ordinary citizens without a reason.²¹⁷

Residents of the capital city have become accustomed and numb to the ongoing instability.²¹⁸ Insecurity, explosions and constant incidents have become part of their lives²¹⁹, and instability has become a normal state of being. Despite these circumstances, people persistently try to go on with their lives.²²⁰ After an explosion takes place in the city, people quickly arrive at the scene. Once the victims have been taken away, they begin to clear and clean the site. Soon the situation at the scene has been restored and people move about as usual.²²¹ After a security incident that causes casualties, people are on edge for a few days, but soon carry on with their lives as if nothing happened.²²² People must move about in the city to earn a living and feed their families regardless of the circumstances. There is no

²¹² UNHCR 3.3.2020; Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

²¹³ International security organisation 4.3.2020; Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²¹⁴ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²¹⁵ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

²¹⁶ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

²¹⁷ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

²¹⁸ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

²¹⁹ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²²⁰ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²²¹ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²²² Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

alternative.²²³ Either those responsible for the family stay home and starve to death with family members, or they go to the street to earn a few dollars so they can feed themselves and their children.²²⁴

The insecurity of moving about in the city is reflected daily in the everyday lives and movement of the residents. People try to rent a flat in areas deemed safe, where all the necessary services are close by. They avoid unnecessary movement within the city at all times of the day.²²⁵ Places they especially shun are areas potentially targeted by terrorist attacks.²²⁶ In some districts of the city it is difficult to move after sunset, because al-Shabaab is active in such areas and part of the inner city has been closed off by the government and security forces.²²⁷ It is commonplace that going to work in the morning is impossible because some streets are closed for one reason or another.²²⁸

City residents constantly monitor the security conditions and warn their relatives not to enter areas known to be dangerous.²²⁹ Most residents of Mogadishu have an Internet connection and access to social media, which help them obtain information about security incidents in the city and about checkpoints that restrict movement.²³⁰ Details of security incidents spread quickly on the Internet.²³¹ However, not all people have access to up-to-date information about the security situation on the Web. Many civilian victims of various bomb attacks in the centre of Mogadishu are people who sell small items and food along the streets; approximately 80% of them are women and children. They usually have old phones that do not provide access to the Internet.²³²

Although city residents continue to live amidst non-stop insecurity undaunted, death and fear are present in their lives every moment of the day. This has consequences for their mental well-being. People still do not talk openly about possible traumas and mental health problems caused by the violence that has persisted for years.²³³

Anxiety caused by violence particularly affects parents of small children. The fear is that a child on their way to a day care centre or school by bus will become a civilian casualty of a bomb attack. This happened in December 2019, for instance, when a bus full of children stood next to a bomb that went off at a junction. One can never be certain what may happen, and being in the wrong place at the wrong time can be a fatal mistake. Because of this fear, many parents have

²²³ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²²⁴ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²²⁵ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²²⁶ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²²⁷ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²²⁸ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

²²⁹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²³⁰ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

²³¹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²³² Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²³³ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

decided to teach their children at home. Some privileged parents have taken their children to safety abroad.²³⁴

3 Transport links from Mogadishu to other parts of Somalia

Movement by road from Mogadishu to Kismayo in the south, Baidoa in the west and Beledweyne in the north is highly restricted.²³⁵ Short trips, such as from Mogadishu to the city of Afgoye, can be made by road, but there are checkpoints maintained by various forces along the way.²³⁶

Generally speaking, movement by road in southern and central Somalia is not deemed safe. It includes risks for everyone – politicians, employees of international organisations and ordinary civilians alike.²³⁷ Al-Shabaab is able to control all roads leading to Mogadishu. If you set out on a journey by road, you can never be certain that you will ever reach your destination.²³⁸

Besides al-Shabaab, other actors operate along the roadside, such as the government's security forces, who can cause difficulties for travellers.²³⁹ Because of the dangers associated with road travel, no one wants to travel by road from Mogadishu to cities in southern or central Somalia²⁴⁰, and there are usually few people on roads.²⁴¹ International organisations do not even transport freight by road.²⁴²

Attacks with improvised explosive devices and other explosives may occur along roads leading in all directions outside of Mogadishu. Particularly on roads used by security forces that support the Somali government and supply transports, civilians risk being victims of explosive or other security incidents.²⁴³

At present, Somalia has far fewer passable roads than 2–3 years ago. For instance, the road leading from Mogadishu to Jowhar was available for use in 2019 but not as of early 2020. Transport on the road from Mogadishu to Baidoa is also very difficult. This applies both to humanitarian aid transport and civilian traffic.²⁴⁴

Groups of different kinds maintain checkpoints alongside roads outside Mogadishu.²⁴⁵ People arriving at checkpoints fear that a person whom someone

²³⁴ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²³⁵ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

²³⁶ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²³⁷ Local security expert 2.3.2020; International security organisation 4.3.2020.

²³⁸ International organisation 2.3.2020.

²³⁹ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

²⁴⁰ International organisation 2.3.2020.

²⁴¹ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁴² International organisation 2.3.2020.

²⁴³ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

²⁴⁴ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁴⁵ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

wants to murder or kidnap is travelling in the same car, and the other passengers may become civilian casualties. Al-Shabaab is not the only threat; there are also clan militias and roadside bandits on the roads.²⁴⁶ Checkpoints demand fees from people who want to pass through them.²⁴⁷

Al-Shabaab acts in unpredictable ways at its checkpoints, so people can never be sure how they will be treated. In the worst case, the organisation can use extreme violence.²⁴⁸ Al-Shabaab collects fees from people who want to pass through its checkpoints. It taxes, in particular, business activities and entrepreneurs engaged in transport.²⁴⁹ The organisation verifies everyone's identity at its checkpoints. Anyone working for or otherwise linked to the Somali government is at risk.²⁵⁰ The threat also applies to employees of the UN's organisations and non-governmental organisations.²⁵¹ At risk are also people who have a relative working on the government's side. The organisation knows people and their background, because its intelligence services work effectively.²⁵² Al-Shabaab can employ violence against such a person in order to take revenge on a relative working for the government, or it may extort money from a relative by threatening to hurt a person it has arrested at a checkpoint.²⁵³

A representative of an international organisation says that stories abound of how al-Shabaab has picked up a person using public means of transport on the road and killed that individual. Sometimes the organisation does not give any reason why someone was killed, but one explanation can be that the person did not pay a fee demanded by it. Often a person who has been killed was accused of being a spy.²⁵⁴

Al-Shabaab does not have permanent checkpoints on the road leading from Mogadishu to Marka. Still, everyone knows that the organisation is present in all parts of the region. It controls the road by means of small groups of fighters driving pick-up trucks. They check all vehicles and supplies headed from Mogadishu to Marka. Vehicles moving in the area without permission or lorries carrying freight are destroyed by setting them on fire, loads included.²⁵⁵

According to the UNHCR, the remigration of refugees it organised from the camp at Dadaab in Kenya to regions in southern and central Somalia was carried out with buses. Thus far, the return transport has proceeded without problems, and not a single attack has been made against convoys. Still, travel by road arouses fear every time. Travellers may come across corrupt security forces or al-Shabaab's fighters who can stop a vehicle and demand money. The UNHCR says that some people

²⁴⁶ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁴⁷ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁴⁸ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

²⁴⁹ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁵⁰ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁵¹ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

²⁵² UNHCR 3.3.2020; Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

²⁵³ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁵⁴ International organisation 2.3.2020.

²⁵⁵ International organisation 2.3.2020.

travel by road despite the risks. There is more road traffic in Somalia's border areas, though more security incidents have occurred in those regions.²⁵⁶

In practice, the only option for safer travel from Mogadishu to other parts of southern and central Somalia is by air.²⁵⁷ Due to the insecurity of roads, people try to fly even shorter distances of 30–90 kilometres, whenever possible.²⁵⁸

All civilians who absolutely must travel in southern and central parts of Somalia and who have financial resources do so by air.²⁵⁹ The prices of one-way flights within the country range from US\$ 100 to US\$ 150, which is expensive for people of limited means²⁶⁰, and not everyone can afford them.²⁶¹ People who try to use airplanes include, in particular, those who have previously had problems at checkpoints, and those who are not fully certain of their own status and therefore fear how they would be treated at checkpoints.²⁶² Humanitarian aid is also transported by air.²⁶³

Security at airports in southern and central Somalia is at a reasonably good level. A representative of an international security organisation estimates that airports are left at relative peace from attacks, because everyone has an interest for using them.²⁶⁴

Flying is a common and quick method of travel in Somalia. For instance, a flight from Mogadishu to Baidoa takes approx. 40 minutes.²⁶⁵ Mogadishu provides a flight connection to the largest cities in Somalia. At least the following cities can be reached by air: Baidoa, Kismayo, Hargeisa, Bosaso, Garowe, Galkayo, Dhobley, and Dholo.²⁶⁶ Airports are usually situated near cities, in a protected area.²⁶⁷ It is impossible to fly to Marka from Mogadishu, because the cities are too close to each other.²⁶⁸

Airplanes do not fly to different cities every day. At worst, there is one flight per week. Also, flight schedules and routes are irregular and prone to constant changes.²⁶⁹ Most routes go via Mogadishu, and one cannot travel between cities by air without a stop-over in the capital city.²⁷⁰ There are areas in southern and central

²⁵⁶ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁵⁷ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁵⁸ Local security expert 2.3.2020.

²⁵⁹ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020; Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²⁶⁰ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁶¹ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁶² UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁶³ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁶⁴ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

²⁶⁵ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁶⁶ International organisation 2.3.2020.

²⁶⁷ International security organisation 4.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁶⁸ International organisation 2.3.2020.

²⁶⁹ International NGO 1.3.2020; Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²⁷⁰ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

parts of Somalia that are inaccessible even by air or which are only served by flights of the UN.²⁷¹

4 Humanitarian conditions in Mogadishu

The humanitarian conditions in the capital city are severe.²⁷² They are affected negatively by the ongoing instability.²⁷³ Troublesome security circumstances make it difficult to secure the human rights of city residents and the living conditions of internally displaced people.²⁷⁴ This insecurity prevents people who need help from seeking assistance and services.²⁷⁵

According to the director of an international organisation operating in Somalia, problems concerning the humanitarian conditions in the capital city are mostly related to accelerated urbanisation, urban poverty, chronic cholera, diarrhoea, malnutrition and lack of education and health services. The city is large and has little infrastructure that provides services. Although the rate of malnutrition is highest among internally displaced people, lack of sufficient nutrition applies to the majority of the population in the capital city.²⁷⁶

Most food in Mogadishu is imported from abroad, because the country's own production has collapsed as a consequence of the civil war and ongoing instability. Somalia's key agricultural areas are situated in the zone between the Juba and Shabelle rivers, and these regions remain under al-Shabaab's sphere of influence. In the 1980s, Somalia was still an important exporter of bananas, and efforts are being made to bring production back to life.²⁷⁷

Agricultural production has also suffered from climate change and recurring extreme weather phenomena. As a result, the capital city has poor food security and the prices of foodstuffs are high.²⁷⁸ Farmers and nomads have poor buffers for surviving exceptional weather phenomena, and the government does not have the capacity to assist them during acute crisis situations. Local production has also suffered from food exports from foreign countries, inefficiency and scant incentives by the government for farmers to increase production.²⁷⁹

²⁷¹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²⁷² Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020; Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

²⁷³ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020; UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁷⁴ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

²⁷⁵ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁷⁶ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

²⁷⁷ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁷⁸ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020; Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

²⁷⁹ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

With regard to humanitarian conditions in Mogadishu, the UNHCR brings up three key problems, and they are related to education, health care and housing.²⁸⁰

According to the UNHCR, Mogadishu has approximately 250 schools and educational institutions. Of these, 220 are private. Education is not free; instead, depending on the school, pupils must pay of a fee of US\$ 5–500 per month. In addition to this, pupils must pay for materials used in school and a school uniform. The costs of education make school attendance difficult for many families. The city has slightly more than 20 public schools, but even they require pupils to pay some kind of a fee. The price depends on how much time a child spends in school: those who attend teaching on a part-time basis pay US\$ 15–25 per month, whereas full-time pupils pay US\$ 40–50 a month. Studying at the university is also in private hands and subject to a fee.²⁸¹

The UNHCR says that all of Somalia has a total of 61 hospitals, 11 of which are public. Mogadishu has 50 first-instance health centres and four of these are public. The problem at public hospitals is the poor condition of their equipment. Relatively often, patients must be sent from public hospitals to private ones due to lack of equipment and expertise required in treatment. Patients who use private health centres and institutions must pay for the treatment they receive.²⁸² The director of an international organisation says that the health services available in Mogadishu are of poor quality, but this also applies to services offered by the private sector. Those who can afford it travel to Nairobi for treatment of health problems more serious than the common cold. According to the director of an international organisation, some of the employees of the organisation had problems with thyroid glands and was unable to receive treatment in Mogadishu. The city cannot provide dialysis treatment or ultrasound examinations for pregnant mothers, either. An accurate description of the health conditions is that people keep dying of diseases that are, in principle, easily treated, such as measles, cholera and malaria. Basic medicines are available in the city, but storing them appropriately in the constant heat is a problem.²⁸³

According to the UNHCR, housing conditions in the capital city are challenging. The city has grown strongly and is home to an estimated 2.5 million people. Housing is extremely expensive in the better districts of the city where security is guarded more closely.²⁸⁴ These include Waberi, Madina, Hodan, and airport area, which are core regions of the government. On the outskirts of the city, such as in the district of Huriwaa and Suuqa Hoolahan (animal market), prices are more affordable.²⁸⁵ In the most expensive part of the city, the price of a room of 25 m² room with no fittings or fixtures and a concrete floor is US\$ 50–100 per month. Some people cannot afford to pay the rent in better regions, so they have to live in cheaper areas that are

²⁸⁰ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁸¹ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁸² UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁸³ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

²⁸⁴ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁸⁵ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

deemed less secure.²⁸⁶ Also, people coming from outside Mogadishu can be charged a higher rent.²⁸⁷ Many homes are being built, however, and they are available for those who can afford to pay for them.²⁸⁸

Those looking for a residence in the rental market usually need a local person who can vouch for the tenant. In principle, only a man is eligible for speaking in favour of a tenant. A single woman has a harder time renting her own apartment, as this is not customary in Somali culture. A female living alone raises questions about the reasons for her housing arrangements in the neighbourhood. Women are expected to live at home until they are married and start their own family. A woman living alone can be criticised for becoming too Western-minded.²⁸⁹

Generally speaking, living in Mogadishu is expensive.²⁹⁰ There are hardly any free public services. Basic services, such as water, health care and teaching are subject to a charge.²⁹¹ In Mogadishu, a small bottle of high-quality drinking water costs US\$ 0.4, which is relatively expensive. One can drink tap water in Mogadishu, but its quality is not good. Tap water sold by a private company costs a consumer US\$ 1–1.5/m³.²⁹²

Since living in Mogadishu is expensive, residents must earn well to be able to offer a good life for themselves and their family.²⁹³ On average, however, families earn little money.²⁹⁴ Many people who engage in small-scale business can earn enough on some days to buy food for their family for a few days, but sometimes they do not earn anything at all. For cost-related reasons, many families cannot send their children to school at all.²⁹⁵ Public health services, in particular, are very expensive; anyone with a low level of income may have to do without health care in addition to children's education.²⁹⁶

Mogadishu offers limited business and employment opportunities.²⁹⁷ There is hardly any work on offer²⁹⁸, and the best jobs are usually taken.²⁹⁹ The labour market in Somalia is very narrow, as the country has no industry that would employ a significant number of people.³⁰⁰ Somalia would have excellent opportunities for developing fishing as a business, but thus far the country has done little to utilise its resources in the sea areas. A key reason for this is that Somalis are mostly a nomadic

²⁸⁶ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁸⁷ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²⁸⁸ International NGO 1.3.2020; Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²⁸⁹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²⁹⁰ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁹¹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²⁹² Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

²⁹³ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁹⁴ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁹⁵ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

²⁹⁶ International NGO 1.3.2020.

²⁹⁷ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

²⁹⁸ International organisation 2.3.2020.

²⁹⁹ International NGO 1.3.2020.

³⁰⁰ International organisation 2.3.2020.

people, and fish is not part of the traditional diet. The culture is changing, however, and lately cities have begun to use fish as food more than before. Also, the government of Somalia has a Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources that aims to develop the country's fishing industry, so the resources in its coastal areas could be utilised more efficiently and in a strategically durable manner.³⁰¹

There are no precise statistics on unemployment, but the figure is estimated to be high. Youth unemployment is also at a high level. The Directorate of National Statistics in Somalia initiated operations recently but, according to a representative of an international NGO, at this point statistics comprise, more or less, educated guesses, regardless of topics and contents.³⁰²

Mogadishu's lively diaspora-funded reconstruction³⁰³ offers work opportunities at building sites as a carrier, for instance. However, there is a lot of labour on offer and work at construction sites does not pay much. Wages can be approx. US\$ 100 per month.³⁰⁴ In addition, members of the majority population have negative attitudes towards construction work and do not want to do it. Those who work at building sites are usually members of marginal groups.³⁰⁵

The Port of Mogadishu provides some job opportunities. Non-governmental organisations and the Somali government have few employees, security forces such as the police and the military provide slightly more jobs. Many people earn their living from small-scale sales at markets or by working at restaurants and tea shops.³⁰⁶ However, the job of a waitress is one of low esteem and most people do not want to work as one.³⁰⁷

The primary factors in obtaining a better job are personal relationships and the clan network.³⁰⁸ International organisations are extremely desirable workplaces. A representative of an international NGO says that they may receive hundreds of applications for a fixed-term position, although the organisation is small and relatively unknown. The representative states that larger organisations that are more well-known have even more applicants for vacant positions.³⁰⁹

The most desirable jobs are often staffed with individuals coming from the diaspora with good relationships and also better education acquired in the West. They also have good language skills, understand local culture and may have done similar work in the diaspora.³¹⁰ People who have lived in Somalia and received poor-quality

³⁰¹ International organisation 2.3.2020.

³⁰² International NGO 1.3.2020.

³⁰³ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³⁰⁴ International NGO 1.3.2020.

³⁰⁵ International organisation 2.3.2020.

³⁰⁶ International organisation 2.3.2020.

³⁰⁷ International organisation 2.3.2020.

³⁰⁸ International NGO 1.3.2020; Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

³⁰⁹ International NGO 1.3.2020.

³¹⁰ International NGO 1.3.2020; Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

education find it difficult to compete for the few jobs with them³¹¹, which has fuelled bitterness within the Somali community.³¹²

The intense competition in the labour market exposes women to sexual harassment. A representative of a development organisation operating in Somalia says that, these days, men in charge of recruitment within the Somali government and in the private sector request sexual services as a favour for a job more openly than before. Women have few possibilities for complaining about abuses by men who are often protected by their own clan. And if a woman complains about how she has been treated, she will definitely lose her job. As a result, many women are forced to put up with sexual exploitation in order to provide for their family.³¹³

People who have been forced to flee internally have poor possibilities to earn a living. They are not members of local communities, so they have no networks that could help them find a job.³¹⁴ They may be able to find work at construction sites³¹⁵ or as a day labourer.³¹⁶ Women living at camps can get work as a maid, cleaner or washer of clothes. The way they are treated and the amount of their wages, however, are fully dependent on the discretion of the person who employs them. A woman hired as a maid may not receive any pay at all for the work done.³¹⁷ Women can also sell fruit at marketplaces, where they usually earn a maximum of US\$ 1–2 a day.³¹⁸ New people are moving into the city all the time from other parts of the country, and the intense competition for employment creates tensions between the native population and internally displaced persons.³¹⁹

Shipments of money from the diaspora have a significant impact on the country's economy. Funds sent by relatives are a necessity for many families' survival, and the entire national economy of Somalia is strongly dependent on them. Every family has someone in a foreign country who sends money. If money deliveries to Somalia ended, the country's economic situation would be very different.³²⁰

4.1 Internally displaced people

From the perspective of humanitarian conditions, the people in the absolute worst position in Mogadishu are internally displaced persons who have come to the capital city due to, e.g., weather conditions, general instability, insecurity arising from al-Shabaab's operations, or due to the swarms of locusts that destroy

³¹¹ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

³¹² International NGO 1.3.2020.

³¹³ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

³¹⁴ International NGO 1.3.2020.

³¹⁵ UNHCR 3.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

³¹⁶ International NGO 1.3.2020.

³¹⁷ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

³¹⁸ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

³¹⁹ International NGO 1.3.2020.

³²⁰ International organisation 2.3.2020.

agricultural crops.³²¹ Estimates of their number in the capital city area vary. According to the UNHCR, the total figure is 497,000 in the 145 IDP³²² camps within the city.³²³ The director of an international organisation says that the number is approx. 750,000.³²⁴ A representative of a Somali NGO estimates the figure to be 900,000.³²⁵

People who have been forced to flee internally come from all parts of the country³²⁶, but the majority have come to the capital city from the nearby Lower Shabelle province.³²⁷ In early 2020, people came to the capital city especially from the provinces of Middle and Lower Shabelle, where insecurity has increased as a consequence of intensified fighting in the region.³²⁸

Most internally displaced persons have settled in the Dayniile district situated on the outskirts of Mogadishu.³²⁹

Migration within the country has increased very quickly since 2012, and this applies to other large cities besides Mogadishu, such as Kismayo, Jowhar, Beledweyne, and Garowe.³³⁰ Some migration to the capital city comprises "ordinary" urbanisation.³³¹ People assume that they can find various services (health care, educational and other services) and financial opportunities more easily in Mogadishu than in the home region, where recurring periods of drought and flooding have made it very challenging to lead a nomadic life and work in agriculture.³³²

However, leaving one's home region and moving to Mogadishu in the hope of a better life can result in even worse living conditions. Back home, people had a chance at life on their own terms and with small-scale cultivation. Those who move to the capital city are not offered anything, and most of them face poverty and life in miserable camp conditions, dependent on humanitarian aid.³³³ Camps may provide some services; in practice, however, the lives of people living there remain unchanged from one year to the next. Some have lived in camps for a couple of decades without becoming integrated in the society around them. Even for someone who wants to return to the home region, this is not easy, due to climate change and absence lasting years.³³⁴ A move to a city is often permanent, because engaging in the traditional sources of livelihood in the old home region has become

³²¹ International NGO 1.3.2020; Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020; Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³²² *Internally Displaced People*.

³²³ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

³²⁴ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³²⁵ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³²⁶ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³²⁷ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³²⁸ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³²⁹ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³³⁰ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

³³¹ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³³² Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020; Director of an international NGO 5.3.2020.

³³³ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³³⁴ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

more difficult than before.³³⁵ It is also possible that someone has already taken possession of the farm that was left behind.³³⁶ Recently, a Somali network of NGOs arranged a special programme aimed at helping farmers who had moved to a city return to the countryside and cultivate the land. Of those who took part in the programme, only 18% returned.³³⁷

Internally displaced persons who are not members of the powerful clans in the metropolitan area struggle to integrate with communities in the city, so they are forced to live at camps there.³³⁸ As outsiders, they lack the security and protection of their own clan.³³⁹ People who have a relation and clan connection with the powerful clans in the city find it much easier to integrate with the urban community. In some cases, adapting to the new living environment can be made easier by an internally displaced person's special skills that the majority population in the area finds useful.³⁴⁰

People who have been forced to flee internally due to security circumstances are in a vulnerable position. At camps and in huts alongside roads, they are at risk of being victims of different violations of rights and bomb attacks by al-Shabaab. Armed forces, such as government soldiers, AMISOM and al-Shabaab have been guilty of sexual violence and robbery against women and girls. Some people have been injured or killed as a result of violence used during a robbery.³⁴¹ People living in camps have no access to legal protection, and there are no police officers at camps or in the vicinity who could be contacted in the case of an emergency.³⁴² As far as security circumstances are concerned, the situation is the worst for camps on the outskirts and outside of the city. There is slightly more security within the city, but not enough.³⁴³

Generally speaking, the conditions of internally displaced people living in camps are harsh.³⁴⁴ Camps often lack basic necessities of life, such as toilets.³⁴⁵ Conditions at camps vary a great deal depending on how new the camp is. Camps that have been in operation longer are more organised and provide some basic services. Established camps may have plastic covers for huts donated by the UNHCR or some other organisation, water is delivered by tank trucks, and they usually have basic sanitation, health and education services. People who have recently arrived in the capital city may have to live in absolutely rudimentary conditions.³⁴⁶ Inhabitants of

³³⁵ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

³³⁶ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³³⁷ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

³³⁸ International NGO 1.3.2020.

³³⁹ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³⁴⁰ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

³⁴¹ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

³⁴² Somali NGO 5.3.2020; Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020; Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

³⁴³ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

³⁴⁴ International NGO 1.3.2020.

³⁴⁵ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

³⁴⁶ International NGO 1.3.2020.

camps may seek health care services from a few public hospitals in Mogadishu, most of which are maintained by the Turkish. Camp residents who cannot afford a consultation fee demanded by a hospital can be treated without charge. Alternatively, they can use health services maintained by UN organisations.³⁴⁷

People who have been forced to flee internally are in a poor socioeconomic position. Poverty is commonplace, they are unable to own land, and many do not have enough food or shelter.³⁴⁸ They have virtually no property at all and are forced to live on financial assistance provided to them.³⁴⁹

The amounts of assistance distributed at camps are small. A significant share of international aid intended for internally displaced people disappears in the pockets of powerful clans that control the camps.³⁵⁰ In most cases, international aid to camp residents is channelled through an NGO established by the local powerful clan and a "gatekeeper" who manages the camp.³⁵¹ For them, managing camps is a profitable business³⁵² as they charge "their own expenses" from the assistance provided.³⁵³ For instance, from an aid coupon worth US\$ 100 handed to a camp resident, the gatekeeper can take US\$ 30 or even half. If the resident resists, the gatekeeper may keep the whole amount, because usually the assistance comes from an organisation controlled by the gatekeeper's clan. The gatekeeper may also threaten to evict the camp resident from the area.³⁵⁴

Inhabitants at camps are forced to live in constant uncertainty, because they can be forced to move elsewhere if the landowner decides to sell or lease the land of the campground.³⁵⁵ There have been recurring cases in the capital city where the UN has first constructed basic infrastructure at a camp, such as toilets and health services, and then the price of the land has doubled or tripled. After this, the landowner has evicted the camp residents, seized the structures built there, and sold the land that has appreciated in value.³⁵⁶

In principle, people who live in camps can move freely within the city like other city residents.³⁵⁷ In practice, the opportunities for doing so are limited as many of them do not have the identity certificate required. Often they are also unable to afford to pay charges demanded at checkpoints within the city. The amount may not be

³⁴⁷ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³⁴⁸ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

³⁴⁹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

³⁵⁰ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020; Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁵¹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020; Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020; Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁵² Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁵³ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

³⁵⁴ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁵⁵ Somali NGO 5.3.2020; Director of an international NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁵⁶ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³⁵⁷ Director of an international NGO 5.3.2020; Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

high when paid at one checkpoint, but it is expensive for a poor camp resident who must pay it both ways.³⁵⁸

There are many street children living in Mogadishu, and city and State administration, private actors and non-governmental organisations lack appropriate systems or programmes for helping them. Most of these children come from other parts of the country, and some are orphans who have lost their parents. The city has a few orphanages, but in practice the system does not function properly. The traditional procedure, passed on through Somali culture and Islam, has been that orphaned children are looked after by relatives. However, many children cast children of relatives who have ended up in their care to the street once they turn seven or eight years old. Many boys, in particular, end up in the life of a street child. Many children in the street try to make a living by shining shoes or washing cars. Street life is a harsh existence, and many children living in the street sniff glue. For al-Shabaab, street children can be easily recruited, and the organisation is known to have used them in bomb attacks. Children have been paid, for instance, US\$ 5–10 to attach a magnetic bomb to a certain car.³⁵⁹

5 Clans in Mogadishu

During the civil war that began at the turn of the 1990s, the capital city of Mogadishu was divided, on a clan-specific basis, into zones controlled by the Hawiye/Abgaal and Hawiye/Habr Gedir clans, and members of clans who traditionally lived in other parts of Somalia moved to their 'home regions' due to the insecurity. The north side of the capital city and its districts of Kaaraan, Yaaqshid, Bondheere, and the Bermuda area, as well as the district of Madina in the south, were manned by the Hawiye/Abgaal clan. The rest of the city centre and the southern sections were controlled by Hawiye/Habr Gedir.³⁶⁰

Professor Yahia Amir from Mogadishu says that the clan setting during the civil war still has an impact today. According to him, the Abgaal, who have been regarded as Mogadishu's original inhabitants and landowners, retain a powerful position in the capital city. Members of its sub-clans live in all parts of the city. Most residents of the district of Kaaraan are Abgaal, as it lies next to the province of Middle Shabelle that is regarded as Abgaal land. Members of the Hawiye/Habr Gedir clan have mostly settled in districts that were occupied by the clan during the civil war.³⁶¹ A representative of an international organisation says that the Hawiye/Murusade clan has a strong foothold in the Dayniile district.³⁶²

³⁵⁸ Director of an international organisation 5.3.2020.

³⁵⁹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

³⁶⁰ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

³⁶¹ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

³⁶² International organisation 2.3.2020.

Despite the strong position of the Abgaal and Habr Gedir clans, people from all clans in Somalia live in Mogadishu.³⁶³ In most districts, the population has a heterogeneous clan background and there are people from many different communities.³⁶⁴ The old section of the city, i.e. Hamar-Weyne, Bondhere, Shibis, Shingan, Abdi Aziz, and Hamar-Jajab, are regarded as more cosmopolitan than other districts.³⁶⁵ Members of “marginal groups”³⁶⁶ live mostly in the districts of Wadajir, Hamar-Jajab, Hamar-Weyne, Dharkenley, Madina, Bondhere, Shibis, and Shingan.³⁶⁷ Most of the inhabitants of the districts of Bondhere and Wabar are Bantu.³⁶⁸

In principle, people can move freely within the capital city regardless of their clan background, and there are no clan-based restrictions on movement.³⁶⁹ This also applies to people in Somali marginal groups.³⁷⁰ According to a representative of a Somali network of NGOs, Mogadishu is free from clan-based limitations and anything is possible for anyone, regardless of their clan background. People with means can buy a residence and settle in the best areas of the city, even if they are not members of the capital city's powerful clans.³⁷¹ Anyone can also buy land or a vehicle³⁷², and people are free to engage in business.³⁷³ However, in some sectors the dominant operators do not allow new competitors into the marketplace, especially if they are members of Somalia's marginal clans.³⁷⁴

Generally speaking, friendship and clan networks are extremely important in Mogadishu.³⁷⁵ The significance of the clan network is emphasised for anyone wishing to establish a large company or engage in sizable business operations.³⁷⁶ For instance, businessmen coming from outside Mogadishu need local networks to expand their activities to the capital city.³⁷⁷ Sometimes even business with UN organisations or the Federal Government requires political networks, and a familiar Minister or Member of the Federal Parliament can be of assistance. Starting small-scale or medium-sized business activity does not require a network.³⁷⁸

³⁶³ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

³⁶⁴ International organisation 2.3.2020.

³⁶⁵ International organisation 2.3.2020.

³⁶⁶ For more information about marginal groups and their position in the capital city, please read the next chapter.

³⁶⁷ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁶⁸ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

³⁶⁹ International security organisation 4.3.2020; Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020; Local security expert 2.3.2020; UNHCR 3.3.2020.

³⁷⁰ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

³⁷¹ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

³⁷² Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

³⁷³ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020; UNHCR 3.3.2020; Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

³⁷⁴ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

³⁷⁵ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

³⁷⁶ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

³⁷⁷ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

³⁷⁸ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

Many people who were not members of Mogadishu's powerful clans and fled the city at the beginning of the civil war were forced to leave their possessions behind. After the security circumstances improved, some returnees have reclaimed their property, but this is difficult without contacts with one of the powerful clans in the capital city. Some of those with good networks and support for their claim from the local community have managed to regain possession of their property. For some without a network, the property restoration process has cost their life.³⁷⁹

Although people can freely settle down in any part of the city, the clan background affects where it is safest for an individual to live, in relative terms. Most city residents try to live in an area inhabited by members of their own community.³⁸⁰ If there is an act of violence between sub-clans of the Abgaal, for example, the act can be avenged by targeting a member of the clan known to be guilty. This makes it dangerous for members of the perpetrator's clan to move about in the district where the victim's clan is strongly represented. It is safest to stay within one's own community.³⁸¹

The clan background is also highly relevant in the administration of the city and use of power there. Administration of districts is usually the responsibility of the powerful clan in the district.³⁸² This emphasises the position of the Hawiye/Abgaal and Hawiye/Habr Gedir clans. Although a significant number of the Bantu live in the capital city, they do not hold influential positions in the administration of the city or its districts.³⁸³ In some districts, local administration is run by a member of the Darood, Hawiye/Hawadle or Hawiye/Murusade clan³⁸⁴, and the administrative director of the Hamar-Weyne district is a member of the Reer Hamar/Benadiri minority group. However, their position is not strong due to the dominance of the Abgaal and Habr Gedir clans.³⁸⁵

Mogadishu is home to, e.g. politicians and Members of the Federal Parliament who belong to different clans, and their clan background does not set limitations to their residence. They must stay at hotels in the capital city and take good care of their own security arrangements, but the reason is not their clan background. They may be targets of attacks by al-Shabaab because they work on the government's side. They can also be subject to legal infringements by the government for political reasons.³⁸⁶

The significance of clan dynamics is returning to a stronger role in politics, and this has an impact on Mogadishu also. For years, the clan structure has outlined the administration of Somalia to a significant extent, and ministries and the rest of the government have been divided between the clans so that everyone has received

³⁷⁹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

³⁸⁰ International security organisation 4.3.2020.

³⁸¹ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

³⁸² UNHCR 3.3.2020.

³⁸³ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

³⁸⁴ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

³⁸⁵ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020; Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁸⁶ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

their share.³⁸⁷ At present, members of the Hawiye/Abgaal, one of the powerful clans in Mogadishu, feel that they have been driven to the fringes as a result of the politics led by President Farmaajo. He is a member of the same Darood/Marehan clan as military leader Siad Barre who was deposed in 1991, and the clan background is allegedly reflected in the President's policies. The position of Mogadishu in the structure of the Federal Republic of Somalia is also linked to the clan question. Members of the Hawiye/Abgaal clan find that they are largely entitled to make decisions on the capital city's future role in the federation of Somalia: will it possess the status of local government, will it constitute its own state, or will it hold the position of the capital city?³⁸⁸

5.1 Position of marginal groups

Discrimination and racism against marginal groups in Somalia, such as the Bantu, Tumaal, Reer Hamar/Benadiri, and Madhiban, are commonplace in Somalia and have continued for a long time.³⁸⁹ Generally speaking, they are in a bad position.³⁹⁰ In practice, they have been cut off and excluded from the rest of society where they live without the same possibilities and rights that members of powerful clans have. Members of powerful clans can do virtually anything they please to members of marginal groups, and no one cares.³⁹¹

Reasons behind the discrimination include appearance different from powerful clans³⁹² and, for some groups, a non-Islamic diet.³⁹³

The largest marginal group is the Bantu, who are also known by the name *jareerweyne*. As a community, it is larger than any of the families in the powerful clans and its members live in all the nine provinces in southern and central Somalia.³⁹⁴ The second largest marginal group in Mogadishu is the Reer Hamar/Benadiri.³⁹⁵ The Tumaal are a small group in Mogadishu, with only a few hundred living in the city.³⁹⁶

Members of marginal groups live in many districts in the capital city.³⁹⁷ The majority of them reside in the districts of Wadajir, Hamar-Jajab, Hamar-Weyne, Dharkenley, Madina, Bondhere, Shibis, and Shingan.³⁹⁸ Most of the inhabitants of the districts of Bondhere and Wabar are Bantu. Members of the Reer Hamar/Benadiri marginal

³⁸⁷ UNHCR 3.3.2020.

³⁸⁸ Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

³⁸⁹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

³⁹⁰ International NGO 1.3.2020.

³⁹¹ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁹² Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020; Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁹³ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁹⁴ Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, Lower Shabelle, Benadiri, Bay, Bakool, Lower Jubba, Middle Jubba, and Gedo.

³⁹⁵ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁹⁶ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

³⁹⁷ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020; Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

³⁹⁸ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

groups originally lived in the districts of Hamar-Weyne, Hamar-Jajab, and Shingani. However, most of them have moved to Mombasa over the years. A small number of them continue living in the districts listed above.³⁹⁹

Most members of marginal groups are forced to live in camps for internally displaced people, with scarce resources, unemployed, excluded from the rest of society, and without any rights whatsoever.⁴⁰⁰ A representative of a Somali NGO estimates that of the 900,000 internally displaced persons living at IDP camps in the Mogadishu region, approximately 700,000 are Bantu.⁴⁰¹

Members of marginal groups have suffered in many ways for several years.⁴⁰² They are killed, assaulted and arrested for no reason, without anyone intervening in this or helping them. According to a representative of a Somali NGO, only a couple of days before the interview two members of a marginal group were shot in front of the representative's home in the Madina district. There is no information about the offender.⁴⁰³

Most members of marginal groups have no possibility for legal protection⁴⁰⁴ or legal support if they are accused of crimes. They also have no access or opportunity to seek justice and indemnification for legal infringements they have experienced through Somalia's traditional adjudication system, called *xeer*. The opportunity for negotiations under the *xeer* system is only reserved for powerful clans of equal strength who can avenge violations of their rights. Marginal groups are unarmed and lack the capacity to defend themselves or exact revenge for acts of violence against them. For them, the only possibility to obtain recompense for abuses is that the clan guilty of the legal infringement acknowledges that it has done wrong and apologises. This rarely happens.⁴⁰⁵

Journalists do not write articles about the situation of members of marginal groups or legal infringements against them by powerful clans. They focus on the powerful clans and matters related to them in their reports.⁴⁰⁶ Discrimination against marginal groups is hardly ever discussed in Somalia, because it is not regarded as a problem from the perspective of the clans in power.⁴⁰⁷

Marginal group members do not have the same financial resources and opportunities as other people.⁴⁰⁸ They find it difficult to acquire and own land. If a member of such a group buys land today, the person who sold the land can question the transaction tomorrow. Unless the buyer has good relationships and

³⁹⁹ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

⁴⁰⁰ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020; Somali NGO 5.3.2020; Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

⁴⁰¹ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴⁰² Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴⁰³ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴⁰⁴ Somali NGO 5.3.2020; Somali researcher 4.3.2020.

⁴⁰⁵ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴⁰⁶ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴⁰⁷ International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁴⁰⁸ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

support from a member of a powerful local clan, the purchaser will struggle to defend their right to the land bought or receive their money back.⁴⁰⁹

Members of marginal groups have a low level of education.⁴¹⁰ Of the Bantu population, for instance, most have never gone to school.⁴¹¹ Marginal group members are discriminated against in the labour market. They have little chance of getting a job, even if they are educated and have a university degree.⁴¹² A representative of a development organisation operating in Somalia says that, in some cases, an employer has openly admitted that a person with the required educational level cannot receive a vacant job due to their Bantu background. Indeed, many parents who belong to a Bantu group do not send their children to school because their education is virtually useless. Why pay for education when you can never get a job that matches it?⁴¹³

Most members of marginal groups do menial and physical work, such as at building sites. According to a representative of a Somali NGO, marginal group members include 5,000 women with a university degree. Only some of them have a job, and even that means cleaning in shops and businesses. They have no chance of being employed in the Somali government or international organisations.⁴¹⁴

Members of the Reer Hamar/Benadiri clan have traditionally earned their living in business, and some of them have succeeded and managed to become wealthy. However, most of them have moved to Mombasa and transferred their business activities there also.⁴¹⁵

Although the number of marginal group members in the capital city is significant, they do not hold influential positions in the administration of the city or its districts.⁴¹⁶ The administrative director of the Hamar-Weyne district is a member of the Reer Hamar/Benadiri, but his position is weak and subordinate to the powerful clans of the capital city.⁴¹⁷

At the national level, marginal groups have a position in the Federal Government of Somalia according to the 4.5 formula, but they do not control any 'strong ministries'.⁴¹⁸ They do not have representatives in other high political offices⁴¹⁹ or in the administration of the country⁴²⁰. In practice, marginal group members have been completely left out of the development of the country's government, with no opportunities for participation and influence in official institutions. Their

⁴⁰⁹ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁴¹⁰ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

⁴¹¹ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020; Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴¹² Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020; Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴¹³ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴¹⁴ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴¹⁵ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

⁴¹⁶ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

⁴¹⁷ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴¹⁸ Somali network of NGOs 5.3.2020.

⁴¹⁹ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴²⁰ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

representatives are not invited to meetings where important decisions concerning the society are made. At best, they are informed of rulings and decisions made by others.⁴²¹

Members of marginal groups have few chances of enlisting in the security forces of Somalia⁴²², and such members do not hold any senior positions in the forces.⁴²³ At present, the security forces consist mostly of members of the Hawiye/Abgaal and Hawiye/Habr Gedir clans. The Somali government does not want to arm members of marginal groups to a large extent, because they could challenge the position of the powerful clans.⁴²⁴

Female members of marginal groups are in a desperate position, finding it difficult to obtain protection from legal infringements against them. Eighty percent of the victims of violence against women in Mogadishu belong to marginal groups, and most of them live in camps of internally displaced people. Women who belong to marginal groups are often subjected to sexual or other violence. According to a representative of a Somali NGO, more than 30 serious acts of violence were committed against female members of marginal groups in Mogadishu in February 2020.⁴²⁵

Mixed marriages between members of marginal groups and powerful clans are seen in a negative light.⁴²⁶ The prevailing culture does not approve of mixed marriages, and members of powerful clans have no desire to marry marginal group members. Last year, a case where a man with a Bantu background married a female member of a powerful clan attracted wide attention in Mogadishu. The bride's family did not accept the marriage and, while trying to find out where the marriage couple had fled, killed the groom's uncle. The married couple and their children still live in hiding for fear of a potential reprisal.⁴²⁷

Although people in general have a negative attitude towards mixed marriages, some Reer Hamar/Benadirri women have married men from a powerful clan in order to obtain protection for themselves and their family. This practice is known by the term "black cat" in Somalia.⁴²⁸

On the other hand, several Bantu groups have entered into an alliance with local powerful clans in order to protect themselves against instability and legal infringements.⁴²⁹

Members of marginal groups are able to acquire services they need if they can afford to pay for them. Also, some health services are available through aid

⁴²¹ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴²² Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴²³ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

⁴²⁴ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴²⁵ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴²⁶ Somali NGO 5.3.2020.

⁴²⁷ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020; Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴²⁸ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

⁴²⁹ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020.

organisations. For instance, a pregnant mother can obtain help with childbirth when so desired. Children of marginal groups can go to school but are, as a rule, bullied at ordinary schools due to their background. Many children are bullied in Somalia because they are somehow different, due to having a diverging skin colour or a disability, for example.⁴³⁰

The situation with marginal groups is slowly changing for the better. The Bantu, for instance, have raised their own profile and begun to oppose discrimination and injustice against them more actively. More and more members of the Bantu clan have educated themselves, and many have succeeded in obtaining a better position in society. Changes in culture and ways of thinking are already discernible, and attitudes are shifting in a better direction. In the way the younger generation thinks, the clan background is no longer as significant as among the older population.⁴³¹

6 Leaving Somalia

Citizens of Somalia can usually obtain a passport without any problems. Getting one in Mogadishu lasts a few weeks if the person's affairs are otherwise in order.⁴³² Passports are manufactured by the Federal Government of Somalia and cost US\$ 90–100. To receive a passport, the applicant must present a birth certificate and identity certificates of the parents. Acquiring these costs US\$ 50. When a passport is granted, the applicant is issued an identity card at the same time.⁴³³

It is difficult to buy a Somali passport in the 'grey market' with a false identity, because the passport is digital. Details on recipients of passports are collected in a database with a connection to all stations that issue passports; in addition, biometric identification is taken of every person. However, the process is vulnerable to abuses due to widespread corruption. It is possible to purchase a birth certificate with false information, in which case the details in the passport are inaccurate also.⁴³⁴

The problem with a Somali passport involves limitations of its eligibility. Many countries still refuse to accept an ordinary Somali passport as a travel document. It has been possible to travel with a passport to individual Schengen countries on a case-specific basis, if the reason for the trip has been justified.⁴³⁵ Due to the limitations on ordinary passports, those who can try to acquire a diplomatic passport of Somalia, which is accepted as a travel document in many more countries. Virtually all government officials have a diplomatic passport.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁰ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴³¹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴³² International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁴³³ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁴³⁴ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁴³⁵ International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁴³⁶ International organisation 2.3.2020.

As a result of the circumstances prevailing in Somalia, many people try to leave the country and seek a safer life abroad.⁴³⁷ Some want to leave in order to acquire citizenship of another country, because it often enables access to good positions and resources in Somalia. According to the professor from Mogadishu, people who move abroad later return to serve as leaders in Somalia. Many Somali politicians, for instance, have two passports.⁴³⁸

People who leave Somalia usually have a network in the destination country helping them adapt to the new circumstances. However, the lack of hope and prospects with the conditions in Somalia lower the threshold to leaving without a network.⁴³⁹

Leaving Somalia for Europe by means of illegal networks is expensive.⁴⁴⁰ Moving from Somalia to Ethiopia alone costs money, and poor people cannot afford to pay human smugglers. To pay for the trip, a poor immediate and extended family often have to sell their camels and other items of property.⁴⁴¹ A trip to Italy arranged by human smugglers costs approx. US\$ 10,000–12,000.⁴⁴² Crossing the Gulf of Aden from Bosaso to Yemen or the Mediterranean from Libya to Europe costs US\$ 3,000.⁴⁴³

Human smugglers have good networks and co-operate with one another. Smugglers have people everywhere along the route from Somalia to Libya. One of them escorts travellers out of Somalia and hands them over to another one at some point of the journey.⁴⁴⁴ Smugglers are usually paid an initial amount upon the start of the trip, and during a stop-over in Libya or Sudan they demand more money to continue with the journey.⁴⁴⁵ They may also kidnap a 'client' during the trip and demand additional payments.⁴⁴⁶ Smugglers may call a family member of a person who has embarked on the trip, and if the relative does not answer the call or agree with the demands, the kidnapped person can be assaulted or killed.⁴⁴⁷ The smuggling route via Libya is especially infamous for extortion, violence, exploitation and even organ theft, if the smugglers' demands are not met.⁴⁴⁸ Some human smugglers have sent relatives in Somalia videos on which their family member is assaulted or tortured; in such cases, people subjected to extortion have been forced to sell their property quickly and below the current price. Since many people do not have anything to sell, they are forced to ask their local community and clan for money.⁴⁴⁹

⁴³⁷ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴³⁸ Professor Yahya Amir 1.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁴³⁹ International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁴⁴⁰ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴⁴¹ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁴⁴² Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

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⁴⁴⁴ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁴⁴⁵ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴⁴⁶ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁴⁴⁷ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴⁴⁸ International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁴⁴⁹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

Some people who have left Somalia for Europe and ended up in Libya are forced to wait for several months before they get a seat on a vessel crossing the Mediterranean. During this period, relatives in Somalia must send the person waiting for the boat ride more money for rent and food, which causes a significant financial burden. The situation is especially dire in cases where a young man on a trip has left a wife and children in Somalia who also expect financial support from family members. In the best instance, it takes years before a Somali who has successfully reached Europe can provide financial support to the family left in Somalia.⁴⁵⁰

Despite dangers and other challenges associated with such journeys, many young people try to leave Somalia.⁴⁵¹ Most of those who depart are aware of the risk but leave nevertheless.⁴⁵² They cannot find work in the home country or may, at any time, be killed in a bomb attack or recruited by al-Shabaab.⁴⁵³ Even if they were to die during the journey, they have nothing to lose due to the insecurity and lack of prospects in the home country.⁴⁵⁴ Leaving is the only option. Some who fail during the first trip are ready to try again and face risks associated with the journey a second time.⁴⁵⁵

People who leave Somalia for a foreign country use three different routes: One via Bosaso to Yemen, another one via Libya to Europe and a third one to South Africa.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁰ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴⁵¹ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020; International organisation 2.3.2020.

⁴⁵² International organisation 2.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

⁴⁵³ Development organisation operating in Somalia 2.3.2020.

⁴⁵⁴ International organisation 2.3.2020; International NGO 1.3.2020.

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