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COI QUERY RESPONSE

SOMALIA – INFORMATION ON TREATMENT OF WOMEN BY AL SHABAAB. TREATMENT OF GOVERNMENT WORKERS BY AL SHABAAB.

INFORMATION ON TREATMENT OF WOMEN BY AL SHABAAB

In April 2024 *WardheerNews* in April 2024 reported that: “Within the context of the Al-Shabaab insurgency, wives of the militants often find themselves trapped in a cycle of oppression and coercion. These women are frequently subjected to strict interpretations of Islamic law enforced by the group. In many cases, women are forced into marriages with Al-Shabaab fighters, often at a young age and without their consent, perpetuating a system of exploitation and abuse. Once married, they are expected to adhere strictly to the militant’s interpretation of Islamic law, a rigid codes of conduct, which dictate everything from their clothing to their daily activities. Any deviation from these rules can result in severe punishment, including physical violence or even death, highlighting the brutal reality faced by women within the Al-Shabaab insurgency.”¹

A report issued by *Bertelsmann Stiftung (Germany)* in March 2024 states that: “In al-Shabaab areas, girls have been forcefully married to fighters and offered as a reward to volunteer suicide attackers. In some regions, women have been beaten for leaving the house without a male relative or for failing to obey strict dress codes.”²

The *Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNNR)* in September 2023 under the heading “Women Rights” notes that: “Al-Shabaab committed gender-based violence, including through forced

¹ WardheerNews (9 April 2024) Married in the Shadows: The Wives of al-Shabaab

² Bertelsmann Stiftung (Germany) (19 March 2024) Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2024 Country Report – Somalia



marriages, and meted out punishment according to the group's interpretation of sharia. For example, in February the group reportedly gave 100 lashes to Khadar Farah Abdi for fornication. Those detained by alShabaab were incarcerated under inhuman conditions for relatively minor offenses such as smoking, having illicit content on cell phones, listening to music, watching or playing soccer, wearing a brassiere, or not wearing a hijab.”³

The *European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)* in August 2023 points out that: “Al-Shabaab further limits women's rights and movement in public in a severe manner. Women are forced to adhere to a specific dress code and be accompanied by a male guardian.”⁴ The same report states that: “Sexual violence continued to be employed by Al-Shabaab as a strategy of social control in the communities under their influence.”⁵

The *US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report* in June 2023 reported that: “Al-Shabaab exploits women and girls in sexual slavery and forced marriage to al-Shabaab militants.”⁶

The *International Peace Institute* in April 2023 reported that: “...al-Shabaab has used forced marriage in Somalia against Somali women but perpetrates sexual slavery and sexual trafficking (without the marriage label) of Kenyan women at the Kenya–Somalia border.”⁷

In March 2023 the *United States Department of State* issued a report commenting on events of 2022 which included stating that: “Al-Shabaab also committed gender-based violence, primarily through forced marriages. The organization forced marriages on girls and women between the ages of 14 and 20 in villages under its control, and the families of the girls and young women generally had little choice but to acquiesce or face violence”⁸

In February 2023 *UN Women* reported that: “AlShabaab continues to abduct women and girls, to force families to give them their daughters to marry, and to occupy hospitals and maternity wards.”⁹

TREATMENT OF GOVERNMENT WORKERS BY AL SHABAAB.

Crisis24 in April 2024 notes that: “Al-Shabaab has continued to carry out frequent mass-casualty terrorist attacks in the capital and other major urban centers despite being ousted from Mogadishu in 2011. The majority of these attacks have been vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) bombings targeting security forces and government interests in the capital but the group have also conducted frequent assassinations of government officials and occasional mortar attacks on the outskirts of Mogadishu, including on the city's airport.”¹⁰

³ CNRR – Romanian National Council for Refugees (September 2023) General Report. Somalia. Human Rights Situation and Security Issues

⁴ European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) (August 2023) Country Guidance: Somalia

⁵ ibid

⁶ US Department of State (15 June 2023) Trafficking in Persons Report 2023: Somalia, p.5

⁷ International Peace Institute (1 April 2023) Forced Marriage by Non-state Armed Groups: Frequency, Forms, and Impact

⁸ United States Department of State (20 March 2023) 2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, p.20

⁹ UN Women (22 February 2023) Amid Devastating Drought, Ongoing Rights Violations, Somalia Pushes Forward in Fight against Al-Shabaab Terror Group, Security Council Hears

¹⁰ Crisis24 (9 April 2024) Somalia Country Report, p.2

The *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point* in February 2024 states that: “Al-Shabaab has also targeted Somali state officials in an effort to discourage them from supporting the federal government’s offensive or in retaliation for those who have supported the campaign. According to ACLED reporting, 76 instances of al-Shabaab perpetrating violence against local Somali state officials occurred between August and October 2023.”¹¹

Council on Foreign Relations in February 2024 mentioned that: “March 15, 2024 Militant group al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack on a popular hotel in the capital, Mogadishu, last night, while the Somali government did not immediately comment; the hotel is known for hosting government officials.”¹²

A report issued by *Human Rights Watch* in January 2024 states that: “Al-Shabab fighters continued to execute individuals accused of working or spying for the government and foreign forces, often after unfair trials.”¹³

Romanian National Council for Refugees (CNRR) in September 2023 reported that: “Al-Shabaab committed religiously and politically motivated killings that targeted civilians affiliated with the government and attacked humanitarian NGO employees, UN staff, and diplomatic missions.” [...]”¹⁴ The report further mentioned that: “The Shabaab also engage in public executions of those they suspect of working with the government or international forces.”¹⁵

The *European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)* in August 2023 states that: “Al-Shabaab has increased its operational tempo since August 2020, and the beginning of 2021 had seen a new peak in the number of attacks targeting government officials.”¹⁶ The report further notes that: “Al-Shabaab has targeted individuals such as high-ranking FGS and FMS government and administration officials, also in the context of the parliamentary and presidential elections [Security 2023, 2.4.2., p. 131], police officers, government intelligence officials, tax collectors and any individual suspected to be a government or an administration employee. It has also targeted government officials with different or non-specified profiles, both in targeted assassinations and in attacks on venues frequented by government and security officials. Lawmakers have also faced attacks, assassinations and executions.”¹⁷ The report also mentioned that: “From July 2021 to November 2022, Al-Shabaab’s attacks included: several IED attacks targeting officials of the South-West administration, a mortar attack against the Presidential Palace in Baidoa, the killing of the Minister of Justice and Judiciary Affairs of the South West State and his son [Security 2023, 2.2.2., pp. 94, 96], the killing of Marka’s District Commissioner in Lower Shabelle [Security 2023, 2.2.3., p. 105], the attack and siege of a hotel frequented by members of parliament and senior government officials, injuring a minister, the attack in Benadir of a seaside restaurant frequented by government officials [Security 2023, 2.3.3., p. 117], election-related killings and attacks on government officials in Hiraan [Security 2023, 2.4.1., p. 122],

¹¹ Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (15 February 2024) *Somalia’s Stalled Offensive Against al-Shabaab: Taking Stock of Obstacles*, p.7

¹² Council on Foreign Relations (14 February 2024) *Conflict With Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, p.8

¹³ Human Rights Watch (11 January 2024) *World Report 2024: Somalia*, p.6

¹⁴ CNRR – Romanian National Council for Refugees (September 2023) *General Report. Somalia. Human Rights Situation and Security Issues*, p.10

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) (August 2023) *Country Guidance: Somalia*, p.81-82

¹⁷ *ibid*

the killing of two lawmakers in a twin attack in Hiraan [Security 2023, 2.4.1., p. 126], the attack on a local restaurant in Hiraan ‘packed with local officials and politicians’ [Security 2023, 2.4.1., p. 127], the killing of several members of Middle Shabelle regional parliament over the past years, and the attack on a restaurant in Middle Shabelle.”¹⁸

The *Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs* in June 2023 mentioned that: “Most sources consulted stated that, as a rule, al-Shabab’s acts of violence were not specifically directed against civilians, provided they did not belong to a group seen by al-Shabab as a legitimate target (such as government officials, certain businesspeople, journalists, NGO workers or others perceived as loyal to the government or foreign powers).”¹⁹ The report further states that: “During the reporting period, government officials, politicians and security personnel from AMISOM/ATMIS and the SNL were the main targets of al-Shabab attacks. Electoral delegates, businesspeople, journalists, human rights activists, NGO employees and pro-government clan elders were also at risk of being targeted in attacks.”²⁰ The report also points out that: “In March 2023, al-Shabab carried out an attack on a meeting of government officials in Bardhere. At least five people were killed.”²¹ The same report notes that: “Al-Shabab regularly carried out attacks on military convoys, government officials’ convoys and aid convoys on these roads.”²²

In March 2023 *Tana Copenhagen, University of Manchester* states that: “Today, insecurity in Mogadishu takes on different forms, ranging from Al Shabaab attacks targeting government officials to inter-communal conflict, robbery and physical assaults.”²³

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¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (June 2023) General country of origin information report on Somalia

²⁰ *ibid*

²¹ *ibid*

²² *ibid*

²³ Tana Copenhagen, University of Manchester (10 March 2023) Safety and Security in Mogadishu: A Research Note, p.3

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