

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Responses to Information Requests

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Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the [Knowledge and Information Management Unit](#).

14 December 2017

### SOM106029.E

Somalia: Information on the Gadsan clan, including history, cultural practices, locations, occupations and position in the clan hierarchy; relationship with other clans, authorities and Al Shabaab (2015-December 2017) Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### 1. Position of the Gadsan Clan in the Clan Hierarchy

Sources indicate that the Gadsan [Gaadsen, Gadsen, Gaadsan] clan is a sub-clan of the Dir clan (ITPCM Dec. 2013, 14; Somalia CEWERU Dec. 2013, 15). Sources indicate that the Dir are nomadic pastoralists (ITPCM Dec. 2013, 14; Solomon 2015, 41), and are regarded as being "noble" (Solomon 2015, 41).

According to sources, there are four main clans in Somalia: the Dir, Darood [Darod], Hawiye, and Isaaq [1] (Gundel 15 Dec. 2009, 12; EU Aug. 2014, 43-44). A December 2013 article published by the International Training Programme for Conflict Management (ITPCM) [2] states that, according to various persons of Somali origin interviewed in November 2013 in Nairobi, the Hawiye and Darood are major clans in Somalia (ITPCM Dec. 2013, 14). The same source explains that the Hawiye and Darood control Somalia's "political development" and that all the other clans, including the Dir, "rally around these two for state power and control" (ITPCM Dec. 2013, 14).

According to sources, the Gadsan clan is a direct sub-clan of the Dir clan (Somalia CEWERU Dec. 2013, 15; Farah Oct. 2016, 8). Other sources indicate that the Gadsan clan is a sub-clan of the Biyomal [Biyamal, Biamal, Biimal] clan, itself a sub-clan of the Dir clan (Waagacusub Media 29 Jan. 2015; Center for Political Studies 28 May 2017, 131). In a 2009 working paper written for the African Studies Centre Leiden (ASCL) [3] in the Netherlands, Jan Abbink, an "anthropologist-historian" with research focusing on the history and cultures of the Horn of Africa (ASCL n.d.a), states that the Gadsan clan is a sub-clan of the Hiniiftire clan, itself a sub-clan of the Maahe, which is a sub-clan of the Dir clan (Abbink 2009, 17-19). A 2002 paper written by Guido Ambroso, while he was a field repatriation officer for UNHCR, states that the Gadsan clan is "considered by some informants as a sub-clan of the *Bimal* and by most others a clan on its own merit" (Ambroso Mar. 2002, 9, emphasis in original). For further information on the Biyomal clan, see Response to Information Request SOM105305 of October 2015.

#### 2. Locations of the Gadsan Clan

In his paper, Ambroso indicates that the Gadsan clan is found in southern Somalia and in eastern Ethiopia (Ambroso 2002, 6, 69).

Sources indicate that the Gadsan clan in Somalia is found in the Gedo region (Gutale 2008, 78; CRD May 2004, 15; Sharamo 2012, 198), a southwestern Somali region that borders Kenya and Ethiopia (Sharamo 2012, 198). Sources indicate that the Gedo region is also inhabited by the Marehan and Ogaden sub-clans of the Darood, the Dagodi [Degodia], the Ajuran and the Bantu sub-clan of the Jarer [Jareer] (CRD May 2004,

15; Sharamo 2012, 198). In his doctoral dissertation on politics and struggles of peacemaking in Somalia, submitted in 2012 to the Graduate Faculty of George Mason University, Roba D. Sharamo [4] explains that the Gedo region is

[q]uite a volatile region [and that] the major challenges to the peace and stability [of the region] were due to insecurity, rivalry and power struggles between SNF [Somalia National Front]/SRRC [Somali Reconstruction and Restoration Council] (that controlled the Luuq, Dolow and Beledhawa [d]istricts) and SNF (that controlled the El-Wak, Bardera, Burdubo and Gerbeharu [d]istricts); and external conflicts with RRA [Rahanweyn Resistance Army]/SRRC from the Bardeere [d]istricts. The region also experienced frequent communal clashes because of competition over the use of pasturelands. (Sharamo 2012, 198)

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

A 2016 document on famine in Somalia published by the Feinstein International Center, a research and teaching centre at Tufts University that promotes the use of evidence and learning in operational and policy responses to protect people affected by humanitarian crises (Tufts University n.d.), quotes a farmer from the Jamame district, in the south of the Jubba [Juba] valley, as stating that there are about 700 families in his village who belong to various clans, "[t]he largest [being] the Biyomaal followed by the Darood (Majerteen and Ogaden) and the Gaadsan" (Feinstein International Center Jan. 2016, 8, 30). Similarly, according to a 2012 draft document on community reconciliation in the Somali Gedo and Jubba regions, written by the Somalia NGO Consortium, an association of NGOs that acts as a "coordinated voice" for local and international NGOs invested in development and humanitarian work in Somalia (Somalia NGO Consortium n.d.), the Gadsan clan is present in the Lower Jubba region in Somalia (Somalia NGO Consortium 29 Mar. 2012, 6).

According to a 2017 report on clans in Somalia, prepared by the International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc. (IBTCI), "an international development consulting company" (IBTCI n.d.), and submitted to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Gadsan clan also inhabits the Bakool region in Somalia, specifically the Rabdhure district (IBTCI 20 Sept. 2017, 56). The same source states that the Bakool region is also inhabited by, among others, the Rahanweyne [Rahanweyn] clan, the "Ogden's Aulihan," Reer Afgab sub-clans, Buurashadley, the Aulihan and the Jejele clan (IBTCI 20 Sept. 2017, 56). According to a 2001 report by the UN, the Gadsan clan also live in the Raaso [Rasso, Raso] region in Ethiopia (UN 29 May 2001, 13). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

### 3. Employment and Occupations of the Gadsan Clan

In a 1999 book on pastoralism and politics in Somalia, Ioan Myrddin Lewis, a former professor at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences who specialised in Somali Studies (WardheerNews.com 3 June 2014), indicates that the Gadsan clan is of a religious or priestly lineage of Somali descent (Lewis 1999, 224). The same source explains that priestly lineages in Somalia are "nominally 'men of God,' possessed of blessing by definition, rather than necessarily learned in the Shariah" (Lewis 1999, 224). According to the same source, clans that are of priestly lineages, such as the Gadsan clan, have a higher proportion of sheikhs [Arab chiefs] than "other 'warrior' lineages and clans" (Lewis 1999, 224).

In a 2000 paper on castes and minorities in Somalia, Mohamed Mohamed-Abdi, while he was an anthropologist at the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD), explains that the Gadsan clan, along with the Dir clan, belongs to the *waranle* cast, the members of which [translation] "are holder[s] of land and of water supplies," are "in general" nomadic pastors, and breed dromedaries, cattle, goats and sheep (Mohamed-Abdi 2000, 135). The same source further explains that, among the clans belonging to *waranle*, some, including the Gadsan, assume religious functions (Mohamed-Abdi 2000, 135).

Information on the history and cultural practices of the Gadsan clan could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

### 4. Treatment of the Gadsan Clan and Relations to Other Somali Actors

According to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), a project that collects data on "the dates and locations of all reported political violence and protest event in over 60 developing countries in Africa and Asia" (ACLED n.d.), the Gadsan clan has been involved in the following incidents of "non-state armed conflicts":

- on 5 March 2008, according to local informants, militias of the Gadsan clan and of the Macalin-Weyne sub-clan engaged in a battle, which did not lead to a change of territory, in Luuq in the Gedo region (ACLED 2016, event 84 549);

- on 28 April 2008, according to local informants, a battle occurred between militias of the Gadsan clan and of the Macalin-Weyne sub-clan in Luuq in the Gedo region (ACLED 2016, event 84 740). According to the same source, the battle did not lead to a change of territory (ACLED 2016, event 84 740).
- on 4 May 2008, according to Agence France-Presse (AFP) and the Associated Press (AP), militias of the Gadsan clan and of the Rahanweyn-Moalim Weyne sub-clan engaged in a battle over land dispute in Luuq in the Gedo region (ACLED 2016, event 84 771). The same source states that the battle did not lead to a change in territory, and that 12 people died in the 12-hour conflict between the two militias (ACLED 2016, event 84 771);
- on 13 August 2013, a gunman from a Madhiban clan militia wounded two civilians, one of whom belonged to the Gadsan clan, with gunshots in Qardho in a private dispute (ACLED 2016, event 93 329).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

#### **4.1 Relationship with Al-Shabaab**

Information on the Gadsan clan's relationship with Al Shabaab was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to ACLED, on 17 November 2015, gunmen, revealed to be from al Shabaab, "shot and killed" a civilian member of the Gadsan clan in Galkacyo in the Mudug region [north-central Somalia] while the victim was at a wedding event (ACLED 2016, event 99 594). The same source states that the motivation for the killing was "unknown" (ACLED 2016, event 99 594). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

#### **4.2 Relationship with Somali Authorities**

Information on the Gadsan clan's relationship with Somali authorities was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources report that, in 2015, Ahmed Hassan Gabobe, was named Minister of Justice and Religious Affairs (Waagacusub Media 29 Jan. 2015) or Minister for Endowment and Religious Affairs (WardheerNews.com 28 Jan. 2015). The webpage of Somalia's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock indicates that Gabobe is currently the Somali minister of agriculture (Somalia n.d.).

According to a 2015 article by Waagacusub Media, a source of "independent news and information in East Africa" (Waagacusub Media n.d.b), based in the Netherlands (Waagacusub Media n.d.a), Gabobe belongs to the Gadsan clan (Waagacusub Media 29 Jan. 2015). The same source states that Gabobe is a former "[i]slamist [e]xtremist and a member of the Cancelled Islamic Union Court" (Waagacusub Media 29 Jan. 2015). According to the same source, Gabobe is "linked [to] participating in fights in Defow, Kabhanley and Lower Shabelle" (Waagacusub Media 29 Jan. 2015). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### **Notes**

[1] A 2011 article written by Abdi Ismail Samatar, a professor at the University of Minnesota who specializes in Somalia and in the relationship between democracy and development (University of Minnesota n.d.), indicates that the Digil and the Rahanweyne are also among the largest clans in Somalia (Samatar Mar. 2011, 50).

[2] The ITPCM, a part of the Institute of Law, Politics and Development, an interdisciplinary research centre on law, economics and political science of the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies (Sant'Anna n.d.a), is an organization that helps "enhance international expertise for the peaceful management of conflicts" and "contributes to the development of political, socio-economic and cultural strategies for lasting peace" (Sant'Anna n.d.b).

[3] The ASCL is a "knowledge institute that undertakes research and is involved in teaching about Africa and aims to promote better understanding of and insight into historical, current and future developments in Africa" (ASCL n.d.b).

[4] Roba D. Sharamo is a Commissioner at the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) of the Republic of Kenya who "has over 16 years of experience in international development, diplomacy and conflict analysis and resolution (George Mason University n.d.)."

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**Oral sources:** Assistant Professor specialized in African and Middle Eastern politics and development at Qatar University; Canadian Friends of Somalia; Life & Peace Institute in Somalia; Midaynta Community Services; Ogaden Somali Community Association of Ontario; Professor of anthropology specialised in African studies at Colby College; Professor with specialization in the African diaspora, social transformation and social change in Africa at the Iowa State University; Professor of African and Middle Eastern History at State University of Savannah; Professor specialized on Somalia at University of Leipzig; Professor specialized in Somalia and in the relationship between democracy and development at the University of Minnesota; Researcher on nation-state and nationalism in Somalia at the University of Oxford.

**Internet sites, including:** eoi.net; Factiva; *Force Migration Review*; Freedom House; Human Right Watch; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre; International Crisis Group; Jane's Intelligence Review; Minority Rights Group International; Somalia – Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development; UN – Refworld; US – Department of State.

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