

# 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](#).

31 August 2016

### SOM105590.E

Somalia: Information on the Ajuran clan, including location, clan affiliation, and whether the clan is a minority; treatment of members; reports of armed clashes with the Ogaden clan; reports of targeting of members of the Ajuran by Al Shabaab (2014-July 2016)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### 1. Locations

The Ajuran [Ajuuraan, Ujeran, Meqere] ethnic group in Somalia are described by sources as pastoralists (Doctoral candidate 31 July 2016; Ambroso Mar. 2002, 12). According to a 2011 report by the Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre (LandInfo), the Ajuran speak a "Benaadir dialect" called "Af-Ajuraan" a "dialect from central Somalia" (Norway 22 July 2011, 13-14, 20). Sources indicate that Ajuran inhabit the regions of:

- Gedo, Middle Juba, Bay regions (Somalia CEWERU Dec. 2013, 18) and Lower Juba (ibid., 33), including:
  - Hiraan region (Norway 22 July 2011, 13);
  - Dinsoor district (ibid.; AFP 12 Apr. 2007), about 270 kilometres west of Mogadishu (ibid.), in the Bay region (Radio Banaadir 11 Apr. 2007);
  - The Saakow and Bu'aale districts of Middle Juba (Norway 22 July 2011, 13; Somalia CEWERU Dec. 2013, 31);
  - Jilib district of Middle Juba, a district which was under Al Shabaab control as of 2013 (ibid.). The area has also been described as the "headquarters" of Al Shabaab in 2013 (ACLEDApr. 2013, 2);
- Northeast Kenya (Ambroso Mar. 2002, 12; Raxanreeb 17 Apr. 2015), specifically:
  - Wajir county of Northeast Kenya, dominated by Ajuran, Degodia and Ogaden clans (*The Nation* 26 Jan. 2012; DRC Aug. 2014, 30)

A map showing the areas of Somalia and North east Kenya inhabited by the Ajuran is attached to this Response.

In terms of political representation at the federal level, Minority Rights Group International (MRG) states that the Ajuran are allocated 2 parliamentary seats in the clan-based "'4.5 formula'" power-sharing system between majority and minority clans (MRG Oct. 2010).

#### 2. Clan Affiliation and Genealogy

For historical background information on the Ajuran, see Responses to Information Requests SOM17470 of May 1994 and SOM17551 of June 1994.

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a Doctoral candidate at the University of Oxford who specializes in Somali studies, including clan conflicts, and who conducts field research in Somalia, stated that the Ajuran were formerly part of the Hawiye but "detached" from the Hawiye in the late 17th to early 18th centuries (Doctoral candidate 20 Aug. 2016). Other sources describe the Ajuran as:

- "often seen as part of the Hawiye" (ACCORD Dec. 2009, 20); "Hawiye associates" (World Bank Group Jan. 2005, 56) or Hawiye "allied clan" (Ambroso March 2002, 11-12);
- a sub-clan of the Hawiye (ibid.; Somaliland Press 21 May 2015; ITPCM Dec. 2013, 14; Abbink 2009, 28);

*The Total Somali Clan Genealogy*, produced by the African Studies Centre at Leiden University in the Netherlands, states that the lineage of the Ajuran descends from the Hawiye as follows: Hawiye (clan family) - Bah Girel (clan moiety/kinship) - Jambelle [Jambee] (clan) - Ajuran (sub-clan) (Abbink 2009, 26-29). The descending lineages of the Ajuran are listed as: Garen, Gelberis, Yibidalla, Gashe, Dulhata, Waqle (ibid., 28).

The Hawiye clan are described in an article by the news website the Somaliland Press as "predominant in the south of Somalia, the capital Mogadishu, as well as the main towns of Merka and Kismayo" (Somaliland Press 21 May 2015).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a Somalia researcher for MRG explained that the Ajuran are a sub-clan of a major clan, and not considered by MRG to be a minority (MRG 18 Aug. 2016). The Doctoral candidate stated that the Ajuran "have no patron" to attach themselves to for broader clan protection (Doctoral candidate 31 July 2016). The same source explained that "to have an affiliation to a larger 'noble' clan does not necessarily mean you can have reliable protection from them" (ibid. 20 Aug. 2016). He further noted that "even those who are connected to a major clan or have a larger affiliation can be a minority within the majority, or a minority within the minority" (ibid.). Further information on the availability of broader clan protection for the Ajuran could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

### 3. Reports of Clashes with Ogaden and Other Clans

Sources report that Jubbaland is a region in Southern Somalia created in 2013 through a local initiative of 500 regional representatives (AMISOM n.d.; US 13 Apr. 2016, 28), though it was unrecognized by the federal government until August 2013 (ibid.). In a profile of Kismayo city, Jubbaland, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) states that Jubbaland consists of Gedo, Middle Juba, and Lower Juba [which are locations where Ajuran inhabit - see Section 1] and the "major clans" in the region are the Ogaden, Harti, Mirifle (Rahanweyn), Marehan, Galja'el, Sheekhaal, Awramleh, Jareer (Bantu), and Bajun (ibid.).

According to International Crisis Group, "the possibility of a semi-autonomous state in the south of Somalia politically dominated by Ogaden may not be favoured by the minority, marginalised clans of north-eastern Kenya, such as the [Somali] Ajuran and Degodia" (15 Feb. 2012, 13). The Doctoral candidate indicated that "the Ajuuraan have long been in contestation with the Ogadeen in Somalia and in Kenya" as well as the Boran and other neighbouring communities (Doctoral candidate 31 July 2016). The same source stated that the Ajuran are "marginalised in the southern regions in Somalia, especially Jubbaland" (ibid. 20 Aug. 2016). He further explained that since the creation of Jubbaland in 2013, a Somali "mini-state" which he stated is "dominated by the Ogaadeen clan of the Daarood," many less powerful and less numerous clans in the region, such as the Sheekhaal, Gaalje'el, Awramaleh, Ajuuraan, and Degodiye, are subject to "political marginalisation and economic exclusion" (ibid. 31 July 2016).

In a conflict assessment by the Somalia Conflict Early Warning Early Response Unit (Somalia CEWERU), the Ajuran located in Gedo region [Jubbaland], are described as a "minority social group" who feel they have been "marginalized politically, economically, and militarily by the Marehan" (Somalia CEWERU Dec. 2013, 17).

Sources report that the leader of the Ras Kamboni Brigade (RKB) militia [which is led by a member of the clan Ogaden/Darod (Somalia CEWERU Dec. 2013, 36)] was selected as leader of the Jubbaland region in 2013 (ibid.; US 13 Apr. 2016, 28). Clans opposing him organized militia attacks, causing violence (Human Rights Watch 25 June 2013; US 13 Apr. 2016, 28), displacement, and 80 civilian casualties (ibid.). According to Human Rights Watch, fighting occurred primarily between the clan militias of Ras Kamboni, Ormale, and the Gaaljecel (25 June 2013). Specific information on the involvement or impact on the Ajuran could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The Doctoral candidate stated that he was not aware of reports of targeted killings of Ajuran members on the basis of clan specifically (Doctoral candidate 31 July 2016).

Sources report the following incidents involving the Ajuran:

- In 2007, 18 people were killed during inter-clan fighting between the Ajuran and Geledi in Dinsoor, Bay Region (Radio Banaadir 11 Apr. 2007; AFP 12 Apr. 2007).
- Intermittent, inactive, but unresolved inter-clan conflict between the Ajuran and Absame (Darod) in the Bu'ale district of Middle Juba, over political representation in 2013 (Somalia CEWERU Dec. 2013, 31).
- In 2016, Radio Shabelle reported that the Ajuran condemned the federal government for "interfering in [their] internal affairs" (Radio Shabelle 1 July 2016).

Sources also report that the Ajuran have been involved in inter-clan conflict in Kenya border regions where Somali clans reside; these instances include:

- Historical feuding with the Degodi [Degodiye, Degodia, Dagodiye] in Kenya and the Garre (Ambroso Mar. 2002, 12; DRC Aug. 2014, 105);
- Fighting between the Ajuran and Degodia "over control of resources" near Moyale (Hiraan Online 6 Aug. 2015);
- In 2012, armed incidents and minor clashes with subclans of the larger Ogaden clan in border disputes in Wajir (DRC Aug. 2014, 109); or "cross-border clan conflicts" near Wajir (Somalia CEWERU Dec. 2013, 18);
- In 2015, Somali clans Ajuran and Degodia fought each other in the area of Moyale in Northeast Kenya, killing 6 (Hiraan Online 6 Aug. 2015).

#### 4. Al Shabaab

Somalia CEWERU states that in Gedo, where Al Shabaab has had control since 2008, targeted killings are carried out against "anyone perceived to oppose them" (Dec. 2013, 19). The Doctoral candidate similarly explained that Al Shabaab "targets clans randomly" for purposes of recruitment and to extract resources (31 July 2016). The same source also stated that there were incidents of Degodia people being harassed for recruitment purposes, and that those Degodia that are targeted for recruitment and resources are mainly those living along the border with Kenya (ibid. 29 Aug. 2016). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The US Department of State's *Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2015* for Somalia indicates that Al Shabaab lost control over the "key city" of Dinsoor to AMISOM and Somali forces during 2015 (US 13 Apr. 2016, 1).

A 2009 article by *Africa Confidential* states that the armed militia opposition group, Jabhat al Islamiyya (Islamic Front) [Jabhatul Islamiyya, Jabatulla Islamiyya], was led by a member of the Ajuran, and recruiting from the Garee and Gaaljecel, described as "all Hawiye groups, with a warrior tradition" (20 Feb. 2009). Jabhat al Islamiyya, along with 3 other Islamist groups and Ras Kamboni [Ras Kamboni later defected and became anti-Shabaab (Somalia CEWERU Dec. 2013, 34, 36)], was associated with Hisbul Islam (CFR Mar. 2010, 36; Hansen 2013, 107) and nominally allied to Al Shabaab in 2009 (ibid.).

Sources indicate that in April 2013, Al Shabaab attacked a court in Mogadishu (Radio Andalus 8 Jan. 2015; UN 17 Jan. 2014, 5). The UN reported that the incident occurred at the Banadir High Court and resulted in the deaths of four legal professionals (ibid.). According to a 2015 broadcast by Al Shabaab's station, Radio Andalus, the April 2013 attack killed more than 36 people and wounded 26 more (8 Jan. 2016). The same source states that a member of the Ajuran clan was part of the "elite" fighters that carried out the attack for Al Shabaab (ibid.). 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.

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**Oral sources:** Anthropologist, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology; Associate Professor of history, University of Pennsylvania; Center for Research and Dialogue Somalia; Doctoral Candidate, history and African studies, University of Oxford; Human Rights Watch; IIDA (Women's Development Organization); Independent Researcher; Professor of anthropology, Colby College; Professor of history, Rutgers University; Professor of political science, Davidson College; Professor of political science, Northwestern University; Senior Lecturer in development studies, University of London.

**Internet sites, including:** *Africa Confidential*; African Arguments; Amnesty International; Anti-Tribalism Movement; BBC; ecoi.net; Factiva; Freedom House; Garowe Online; *Horn of Africa Bulletin*; Human Rights Watch; Institute for Strategic Studies; Institute for War and Peace Reporting; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre; IRIN; Puntlandi.com; Puntland News24; Puntland Post; Radio Benadir; Radio France internationale; Sabahi Online; Shabelle Media Network; Somalia Current; Somaliland Press; *Somaliland Times*; Sonna.net; *The Standard*; United Nations – Refworld, Reliefweb, Development Programme; United States – Department of State.

## Attachment

European Union (EU). August 2014. European Asylum Support Office (EASO). "[Clan Map - Abikar 1999](#)." In *EASO Country of Origin Information Report: South and Central Somalia Country Overview*. [Accessed 26 July 2016]

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