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Responses to Information Requests

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](#).

2 September 2016

SOM105605.E

Somalia: Information on the Degodia clan, including distinguishing features, locations, occupations and position in the clan hierarchy; treatment (2014-August 2016)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Locations

Members of the Degodia [Dagodiye, Dagodiya, Dagodia, Dagoodi, Dagoodiye, Degodiya, Degodiye, Degodi] clan can be found in regions of Somalia, such as:

- Jubaland [Jubaland] (Doctoral candidate 31 July 2016) [Jubaland is a region created in 2013 and consists of Gedo, Middle Juba, and Lower Juba in southern Somalia (AMISOM n.d.)];
- Kismayo [Kismaayo town] (Norway 22 July 2011, 5; Doctoral Candidate 31 July 2016);
- Lower Juba (Norway 22 July 2011, 12; HCTV 24 Jan. 2016) and Upper Juba (ibid.);
- Bay [Baay] and Bakool (ibid.);
- Gedo (ibid.; Somalia CEWERU Dec. 2013, 23-24; Norway 22 July 2011, 5), and specifically Bardheere (ibid.);
- Regions of Hiiraan (HCTV 24 Jan. 2016; Dalsan Radio 26 Jan. 2016) and Middle Shabelle (ibid.);
- Regions of southern and northern Somalia (ibid.).

Somali clans of the Degodia are also located in northeast Kenya (International Crisis Group 15 Feb. 2012; Ambroso Mar. 2002, 11) along the Somali border (ibid.), including in:

- Wajir county, where three major Somali clans are Ogaden, Ajuran and the Degodia, who are "the majority" (*The Standard* 23 Jan. 2013);
- Mandera, situated in north east Kenya on the border with Somalia and Ethiopia (RFI 22 Nov. 2014; Human Rights Watch Feb. 2013, 41) where members of the Degodia, Garre, and Murale are located; members of these clans "also live in Ethiopia and Somalia" (ibid.);
- Ashabito, Rhamu, Malka Mari, and along the Daawa River (Dalsan Radio 26 Jan. 2016).

A map showing the regions where the Degodia are located in Somalia and Kenya is attached to this Response.

2. Distinguishing Features and Occupations of Degodia in Somalia

Sources report that the Degodia in Somalia are nomadic pastoralists (Ambroso Mar. 2002, 11) or "pastoralists and farmers" (Doctoral candidate 31 July 2016).

According to a report on Somali languages and dialects, produced by Norway's Country of Origin Information unit, LandInfo, the Degodiya language belongs to the northern Somali dialect group and is called

Af-Degodiya (Norway 22 July 2011, 11-12). Af-Degodiya dialect speakers from the Lower Juba coastal area are influenced by the Benadir dialects also spoken in that region, and Af-Degodiya "features specific characteristics because of this" (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Further information on distinguishing characteristics of the Degodia ethnic group could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Genealogical Lineage and Clan Position

Sources report that the Degodia are a sub-clan of the Hawiye (Ambroso Mar. 2002, 11; Doctoral candidate 20 Aug. 2016; Abbink 2009, 29). *The Total Somali Clan Genealogy*, produced by the African Studies Centre at Leiden University in the Netherlands, states that the clan lineage of the Degodia descends as follows: Hawiye (clan family) - Bah Girel (clan moiety/kinship) - Gugundabe (clan) - Degodia (sub-clan) (ibid., 26-29). The descending sub-lineage groups of the Degodia are listed as: Masare, Fardanow, Midhimaal, Gelible, Dumaal, Jibrail, Fau, Reer Mohamud, Mau, Samatar (ibid., 29).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a Doctoral candidate at the University of Oxford who focuses on Somali studies and clan conflict, explained that the Degodia are part of the Hawiye clan group, but "rarely do they call upon the broader group for assistance or protection ...[because] they are not part of the influential, powerful, and majority Hawiye clans such as the Abgaal, Habar Gidir, Hawaadle, and even Murusade" (Doctoral candidate 20 Aug. 2016). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a researcher for Minority Rights Group International (MRG) who works on Somalia stated that the Degodia are a sub-clan of a major clan, and not considered a minority by MRG (MRG 18 Aug. 2016).

4. Activities and Treatment in the South of Somalia

According to the Doctoral candidate, the Degodia are "marginalised in the southern regions" of Somalia (Doctoral candidate 20 Aug. 2016). The same source explained that since the creation of the Jubaland "mini-state" in the south dominated by the Ogaden sub-clan of the Daroud, the Degodia are "excluded" and experience "socio-political marginalisation and humiliation" (ibid., 31 July 2016). International Crisis Group reports that "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 northeastern Kenya, such as the [Somali] Ajuran and Degodia" (15 Feb. 2012, 13). For more information on the 2013 creation of the Jubaland state, associated violence, and its impacts on clans, including the Ajuran, who are also associated with the Hawiye and inhabit similar territory to the Degodia, see Response to Information Request SOM105590 of August 2016.

Sources cite leaders of the Degodia clan as claiming that they had been left out of consideration during consultations with the federal government concerning the creation of the new regions of Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle; spokespeople of the clan have called the process unfair (Dalsan Radio 26 Jan. 2016; HCTV 24 Jan. 2016). According to Somali station Horn Cable TV, the Degodia, described as "one of the moral-fibres of the Hawiye clan," walked out of the conference because the group had not been mentioned in the table of tribes living in these two regions, although the clan's leaders claimed that they do inhabit these areas (ibid.).

Information on instances of violence involving the Degodia in Somalia reports, including reports of targeted killings of Degodia on the basis of clan could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

5. Cross-border issues and Treatment in Border Regions of Kenya-Somalia

Sources indicate that the Somali clans Degodia and Ajuran in northeastern Kenya have been involved in historical feuding with each other (Ambroso Mar. 2002, 12; DRC 2014, 105).

A March 2015 conflict assessment on northern Kenya and Somaliland, produced for the Danish Demining Group (DDG) [1] of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), states that "Mandera county is currently the site of some of the worst armed violence in Kenya" driven by two separate dynamics: interclan clashes between the Garre and Degodia and cross-border attacks by Al-Shabaab from Somalia into the territory (DRC Mar. 2015, 93). Sources describe interclan violence between the Degodia and the Garre in Mandera as [translation] "frequent" (RFI 12 May 2013) or "active" since 2011 due to political representation and cross-border trade issues (Somalia CEWERU Dec. 2013, 24). According to a report by Human Rights Watch, violence between the Garre and majority Degodia communities in Mandera "flared in Somalia in late 2011 and crossed the border into Kenya in 2012" (Human Rights Watch Feb. 2013, 41). The same source indicates that the conflict escalated with a July 2012 attack on the Degodia and had left 40 civilians dead and 60,000 displaced on both sides by August 2012 (ibid.). According to the 2013 report, the Degodia and Garre clans both have fighters "ready to respond to attacks from hostile clans" because the police do not respond to "calls for

protection"(ibid.). In a 2014 interview with the UN's news agency, International Regional Information Networks (IRIN), the Secretary-General of the Kenyan Red Cross Society described the Degodia and Garre militias in northeastern Kenya as "men who are fully armed, trained, sometimes wear uniform[s], and go totally unobstructed" (UN 2 Sept. 2014).

Kenyan newspaper *The Star* cites a Degodia community leader in 2014 as stating that the clashes between the Garre and Degodia result from "'ill plans to throw the [Somali] Degodia community out of Mandera county'" (*The Star* 1 Sept. 2014) while IRIN reports that the Degodia perceive themselves to be politically excluded in Mandera (UN 2 Sept. 2014). Sources report on examples of clashes in this Kenyan border region involving the Degodia:

- As of August 2014, IRIN reported that 18,000 households had been displaced and 77 have been killed due to Degodia-Garre fighting in Mandera (UN 2 Sept. 2014);
- Two people were killed in Degodia-Garre interclan violence in July 2015 (Daily Nation 2 July; 2015);
- In 2015, Somali clans Degodia and Ajuran fought each other in the area of Moyale in northeastern Kenya, reportedly killing 6 (Hiraan Online 6 Aug. 2015);
- In August 2015, Degodia and Ajuran interclan fighting along the border of Eldas and Wajir North left 15 individuals killed and nine injured (US 13 Apr. 2015, 49);
- Through 2015, violence between the Garre and Degodia clans continued in Mandera and Wajir counties resulting in several deaths (ibid., 48).

6. Al-Shabaab Activity in Degodia Inhabited Areas

The Somalia Conflict Early Warning Early Response Unit (Somalia CEWERU) [2] produced a 2013 conflict mapping report that states that in Gedo, where Al Shabaab had control in 2013, targeted killings are carried out against "anyone perceived to oppose them" (Somalia CEWERU 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, without providing details, that there were incidents of Degodia people being harassed by Al Shabaab 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.

Radio France internationale indicates that in November 2014, Al Shabaab killed 28 non-muslims in an attack on a civilian bus in Mandera (RFI 22 Nov. 2014). Sources further report that Al Shabaab has used Mandera as a crossing point from Somalia into Kenya to conduct attacks (ibid.; Hiiraan Online 20 May 2014).

According to the Doctoral candidate, Al Shabaab has heavily concentrated their attacks in the area of the Somali-Kenyan border where the Degodia clan reside (31 July 2016). In 2014, the governor of Mandera County was quoted by IRIN as stating that he claimed to have "information showing that the Degodia clan sought the assistance of Al Shabaab" during a clan conflict and that Al Shabaab was involved in launching attacks in Mandera (UN 2 Sept. 2014). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Somali news source Sabahi Online states that in May 2014, in a border town near Mandera, "suspected Al Shabaab members" attacked a security team that was en route to a peace meeting between the Degodia and Garre; the attackers fled towards Somalia (Sabahi Online 20 May 2014). 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] The DDG is a "Humanitarian Mine Action Unit" of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) (DDG n.d.). The DRC is a humanitarian, non-governmental, non-profit organization that provides "direct assistance to conflict affected populations" including refugees, IDPs and host communities by administering support programs such as "relief, humanitarian aid, rehabilitation and support to return home" and the promotion of durable solutions (DRC n.d.).

[2] CEWARN is a network of government and non-government stakeholders from Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Eritrea, which shares information on potentially violent

conflicts (CEWARN n.d.). It produced a conflict mapping report 2013, funded by the governments of Norway and Switzerland (Somalia CEWERU Sept. 2013, 4).

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Additional Sources Consulted

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; Hiiraan Online; *Horn of Africa Bulletin*; Human Rights Watch; Institute for War and Peace Reporting; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre; IRIN; Institute for Security Studies Africa; Puntlandi.com; Puntland News24; Puntland Post; Radio Banadir; Raxanreeb; Shabelle Media Network; Somalia Current; Somaliland Press; *Somaliland Times*; Sonna.net; United Nations – Refworld, Reliefweb, UNDP.

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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Date modified: 2016-01-05