

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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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](#).

14 June 2016

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Somalia: Whether police investigate killings committed by Al-Shabaab [Al-Shabab] in Mogadishu, including whether police reports are written; procedures to obtain a copy of a police report (2014-June 2016)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Police in Mogadishu

According to the US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015*,

[t]wo separate police forces operated in Mogadishu, one under the control of the central government and the other under the Benadir Regional administration. The federal police force [known as the Somali Police Force (SPF) (UN n.d., 3)] maintained its presence in all 17 districts of the capital. (US 13 Apr. 2016, 8)

Sources report that the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) also provides policing in Mogadishu (ibid.; Assistant Professor 2 June 2016). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, Dr. Alice Hills, Chair in Conflict Studies at Durham University in the UK, who specializes in police development in Somalia (Durham University n.d.), indicated that the provision of policing by AMISOM is limited and that its units may answer to their national governments rather than to AMISOM's headquarters (Hills 1 June 2016). In addition, in her article on policing in Mogadishu, published in the *Policing and Society* journal, Dr. Hills notes that a number of "alternative policing providers" operate in Mogadishu, including "militia, groups loyal to factional leaders, business men and Shari'a courts" (ibid. 2016, 402). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Capacity of Somali Police Force (SPF) to Investigate

Country Reports 2015 states that the police in Somalia "were generally ineffective" (US 13 Apr. 2016, 7). According to the US Department of State's *Reports on Terrorism 2015*, the Somali police were in need of further training "to build basic police investigation skills" (ibid., June 2016, 50). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a PhD candidate at the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, whose research focuses on militancy and political violence including Al-Shabaab activities in Somalia, stated that while AMISOM has been providing capacity training to the police,

in reality the [SPF] ... require[s] close support (financial, supply, and military/armed) from international forces inside the country, such as AMISOM forces and [Federal Government of Somalia]-aligned militias, as well as from external actors operating inside Somalia against Al-Shabaab. (PhD candidate 3 June 2016)

In her article on police force development in Somalia, published in *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, Dr. Hills states that "many general-duties officers are unfit, elderly, illiterate or unable to understand the basic principles of international-style policing" (2014, 3). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an assistant professor of political science at the University of Toronto, who specialises in

international security and failed states and has written on the situation in Somalia, stated that "many policemen [in Mogadishu] are actually militiamen and gangsters, who have simply been given uniforms and the occasional police salary" (2 June 2016).

2.1 Police Investigations in Mogadishu

In her article on police work in Mogadishu, Dr. Hills states that "Mogadishu is a dangerous city in which even minimal forms of police work are challenging" (2016, 397). The Assistant Professor stated that it is "erroneous" to assume that police in Mogadishu are capable of conducting investigations, adding that neither the Somali police nor AMISOM units maintain complete control of the city, which "is an active and evolving war front" (2 June 2016).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, Dr. Hills noted that the police in Mogadishu do not have the capacity to investigate killings committed by Al-Shabaab (Hills 1 June 2016). Sources report that the SPF's Criminal Investigation Division (CID) is responsible for conducting investigations of killings committed by terrorists in Mogadishu (Criminologist 6 June 2016; PhD candidate 3 June 2016). However, according to the PhD candidate,

[i]n theory, the CID is responsible for handling cases of individual citizens who are being targeted by Al-Shabab or criminal elements ... but in reality its capabilities remain rather limited and its main focus currently seems to be on more large-scale investigations alongside AMISOM police and military forces against Al-Shabab, particularly in the capital ... [This] means that individual citizens targeted specifically by Al-Shabab will have limited recourse to official law enforcement bodies. (6 June 2016)

In its quarterly report for the period of April - June 2015 on the implementation of the Civilian Police Project [1] in Somalia, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) states that the SPF "has no intelligence unit, which hampers the fight against Al-Shabaab" (UN n.d.a., 3). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3. Reporting of Crimes

According to a Project Manager at the UNDP in Somalia, interviewed in November 2013 by a Danish-Norwegian fact finding mission to Mogadishu, "each police station keeps a so-called 'occurrence book' in which all reported crimes are registered. There is no central registration of crimes committed" (Denmark and Norway Mar. 2014, 36). The report further states that, according to an unnamed international NGO, "police stations in the various districts of Mogadishu are recording crimes. They keep hand written books, but whether these books are consistent or not are impossible to say. Most likely there is [no] central registry or data files" (ibid.).

According to Dr. Hills, in Somalia, the reporting of crimes is not common, neither among the population nor the police, and the police do not have procedures for writing reports on crime (1 June 2016). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a criminologist and international consultant who also acted as an expert for a UNDP police development project in Somalia, stated that the SPF has been developing standard operating procedures, but that "it will take time" before they become operational in practice (6 June 2016). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Information on procedures to obtain a police report 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.

Note

[1] The Civilian Police Project (CPP) is a UNDP project that "works with law enforcement personnel particularly at the regional level to ensure that they are properly equipped to protect citizens, especially in violent and insecure areas" (UN n.d.b). The project "helps Somali law enforcement institutions deliver better policing services through recruitment, international-standard law enforcement training that stresses human rights and gender issues, improved management capacities, internal governance and oversight" (ibid.).

References

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United Nations (UN). N.d.b. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). "[Civilian Police: What is the Project About](#)." [Accessed 14 June 2016]

United States (US). June 2016. Department of State. "Somalia." [Country Reports on Terrorism 2015](#). [Accessed 30 May 2016]

United States (US). 13 April 2016. Department of State. "Somalia." [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015](#). [Accessed 30 May 2016]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: African Union- Mission to Somalia (AMISOM); Associate Professor, Norwegian Institute of Life Sciences; BBC; International Organization for Migration mission in Somalia; Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention; PhD Student, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University; Project Manager, United Nations Development Program Somalia; Research Fellow, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs; Senior Researcher, Swiss Peace Foundation; Somali American Police Association; Somalia – Somali Police Force; UN – Assistance Mission in Somalia, UNDP, UNHCR.

Internet sites, including: Amnesty International; Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset; Canada – Global Affairs, High Commission in Kenya; ecoi.net; EU – Institute for Security Studies; Freedom House; Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces; Human Rights Watch; International Crisis Group; Interpol; UN – Office on Drugs and Crime, Refworld, ReliefWeb.

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