



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note **Somalia (South and Central): Fear of** **Al Shabaab**

Version 2.0

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Preface

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and policy guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the policy guidance contained within this note; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Country information

COI in this note has been researched in accordance with principles set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#) and the [European Asylum Support Office’s research guidelines, Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), namely taking into account its relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability.

All information is carefully selected from generally reliable, publicly accessible sources or is information that can be made publicly available. Full publication details of supporting documentation are provided in footnotes. Multiple sourcing is normally used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, and that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided. Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source is not an endorsement of it or any views expressed.

Feedback

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The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office’s COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office’s COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI’s work and a list of the COI documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector’s website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

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Policy guidance

Updated: 27 June 2017

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

1.1.1 Fear of persecution or serious harm by members of Al Shabaab because of a person's actual or perceived political or religious opposition to the group.

1.2 Point to note

1.2.1 This note looks at targeted risks from Al Shabaab. For claims based on the general security and humanitarian situation, see the country policy and information note on [Somalia: Security and humanitarian situation in South and Central Somalia](#).

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2. Consideration of Issues

2.1 Credibility

2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).

2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Assessment of risk

2.2.1 Al Shabaab advocates a strict interpretation of Islamic law for Somalia and against the Western influence on Africa. Since the end of 2006 it has sought to discredit and destabilize the Federal Government of Somalia. The group is composed of Somali recruits as well as a number of foreign fighters (see [Background to Al Shabaab](#)).

2.2.2 Since 2011, Al Shabaab's military capacity has been considerably reduced due to the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali government forces, as well as internal division within Al Shabaab. Consequently Al Shabaab has retreated to the countryside having lost control of its urban stronghold. Al Shabaab, however, still controls large sections of rural areas, where it appears to have regrouped, as well as supply routes between towns (see [Al Shabaab's areas of influence](#) and [Freedom of movement and access to goods and services](#)).

2.2.3 Al Shabaab's reduced capacity has limited it to mainly using guerrilla tactics and asymmetrical attacks in areas controlled by the government / AMISOM. Al Shabaab appear to be more capable of launching larger, more complex

targeted attacks than in 2014/15 with vehicle born explosions occurring every few weeks in Mogadishu (see [Nature of violence by Al Shabaab](#)).

- 2.2.4 Suicide bombing of hotels used by the government or the international community has become a favoured method of attack, but the group has also targeted persons in drive-by shootings and assassinations (see [Al Shabaab's tactics](#) and [Al Shabaab targeted groups](#)).
- 2.2.5 Al Shabaab has targeted persons and/or institutions representing (or perceived to be supporting) the international community and the Somalia government, including members of the security forces, parliamentarians and government officials, election monitors, clan leaders who support the government, state employees and those believed to be spying for the government including Al Shabaab defectors. Such people are regarded as 'legitimate targets' by Al Shabaab (see [Al Shabaab targeted groups](#)).
- 2.2.6 Humanitarian aid workers, UN staff, NGO employees and journalists, may also be at risk. However, sources indicate that not all such people are necessarily automatically regarded as targets and it will depend on their activities and to what extent they are critical of Al Shabaab. For example, while all NGOs with a connection to the USA may be regarded as legitimate targets by Al Shabaab, others may, in some circumstances, have their approval (see [Journalists, human rights activists and NGOs](#)).
- 2.2.7 Although some people are regarded as 'legitimate targets', the majority of civilians are not. Sources indicate that Al Shabaab does not generally target local staff or those with a low-level profile from international or national NGOs. In general people without a government or international profile or perceived link are unlikely to be at targeted risk (see [Nature of violence by Al Shabaab](#) and [Al Shabaab targeted groups](#)).
- 2.2.8 Persons living in an area controlled by Al Shabaab who are not regarded as 'legitimate targets' are unlikely to be at risk unless they do not conform to Al Shabaab's strict interpretation of Islamic behaviour. Some young men, including children, may be subject to coercion to join Al Shabaab, sometimes to make up numbers of new recruits demanded of the local elders. In some circumstances this can be avoided by paying compensation. Women may also be at risk of forced marriage to Al Shabaab fighters in areas controlled by them (see [People at risk in areas under control of Al Shabaab](#)).
- 2.2.9 The onus is on the person to show that their profile and activities are such they are reasonably likely to attract Al Shabaab's adverse attention and be targeted as a result. Decision makers should consider:
 - the particular profile of the person, including, where relevant, previous personal security arrangements, their professional role, the organisation they work for, or with, is domestic/international and its perceived relationship with the government
 - the extent to which they and their activities are known by Al Shabaab and are perceived to support the government/international forces
 - whether the person has been previously threatened/harassed by Al Shabaab

- 2.2.10 For consideration of a general risk from indiscriminate violence and/or the humanitarian conditions, see the country policy and information note on [Somalia: Security and humanitarian situation in South and Central Somalia](#).
- 2.2.11 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.3 Protection

- 2.3.1 Where the person's fear of persecution and/or serious harm from Al Shabaab is in areas they control, effective state protection is not available.
- 2.3.2 Where the person's fear is of persecution and/or serious harm from Al Shabaab in an area under the government's control, decision makers must assess whether the state can provide effective protection.
- 2.3.3 The government is striving to improve its security services and, alongside AMISOM, has recently invested in a new policing model which seeks to establish both state and federal police forces. However, in Mogadishu and other urban areas controlled by the government and its allies, the continuing structural weaknesses in the security forces, including a lack of resources, training and adequate equipment, weak command and control structures together with corruption and official impunity for serious abuses, undermine its effectiveness. Despite recent improvements, the judiciary remains underfunded, understaffed, inadequately trained, ineffective, and subject to threats, political influence, and corruption.
- 2.3.4 As a result, the state may be willing but is unlikely, in many cases, to be able to offer effective protection and persons generally will not be able to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities.
- 2.3.5 However some persons, such as senior members of the government and military, may have access to resources to provide protection. There are, however, no clan militias remaining in Mogadishu and it is unlikely a person would be able to obtain clan protection against Al Shabaab (see [Protection](#)).
- 2.3.6 A decision maker's assessment of whether a person who demonstrates a real risk of persecution or serious harm from Al Shabaab would be able to access protection must be carefully considered on the facts of the case.
- 2.3.7 For further guidance on assessing the availability or not of state protection, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Internal relocation

- 2.4.1 Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation on a case-by-case basis taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person.
- 2.4.2 As the profile of those people who may be at risk from Al Shabaab in Mogadishu and other urban areas is likely to be high it is unlikely that internal relocation to other areas of south and central Somalia would be a viable option because Al Shabaab may still be able to reach them. However those with a low profile or who are not associated with the government or an

international organisation, or where the risk is only local, should be able to internally relocate. The person's profile will be important and will need to be taken into account when assessing this.

- 2.4.3 Those without a high profile who live in rural areas under Al Shabaab control/influence will generally be able to internally relocate to an urban area where Al Shabaab does not have influence, as long as it would not be unreasonable to expect them to do so.
- 2.4.4 See also the country policy and information note on [Somalia: Security and humanitarian situation in South and Central Somalia](#).
- 2.4.5 For further guidance on internal relocation, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Certification

- 2.5.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.5.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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3. Policy summary

- 3.1.1 Ordinary civilians living in an area controlled by the government/AMISOM are unlikely to be targeted by Al Shabaab.
- 3.1.2 Relevant factors in assessing any such risk are the particular profile of the person, the nature of the threat, whether the person has been previously threatened/harassed, how far the risk would extend, the nature of any personal security arrangements and whether the person has ceased to engage in the activities that brought them to the attention of Al Shabaab.
- 3.1.3 A person who is a high profile member of an institution representing the international community or the Somalia government may face a risk of persecution or serious harm from Al Shabaab, depending on their individual circumstances.
- 3.1.4 A person who is, or perceived to be, a supporter of the Somalia government may also be at risk. But this will depend on their profile and individual circumstances, and the onus will be on the person to show that they are likely to be targeted on return.
- 3.1.5 Members of NGOs and humanitarian aid workers may be at risk of persecution or serious harm from Al Shabaab, but this depends on their profile and whether or not their organisation is one that Al Shabaab favours. The onus will be on the individual to show that they are likely to be targeted on return.
- 3.1.6 Journalists may also be at risk of persecution or serious harm, but this will depend on their activities and how critical they are of Al Shabaab.

- 3.1.7 An Al Shabaab defector or government collaborator is likely to be at real risk of serious harm or persecution and it is likely that Al Shabaab, if they wish to, could track down such a person. Internal relocation is unlikely to be an option.
- 3.1.8 An ordinary civilian living in an area controlled by Al Shabaab may be at risk of serious harm if they do not conform to Al Shabaab's strict interpretation of Islam. In most cases internal relocation to an area not under Al Shabaab control is likely to be a reasonable option.
- 3.1.9 Consideration should also be given to what protection is available from the Somalia government forces, police and AMISOM. However, in general it is unlikely that the state, although willing, will be able to provide effective protection against Al Shabaab.
- 3.1.10 If a person can demonstrate that because of their high profile and the nature of the threat they will face a risk of persecution or serious harm from Al Shabaab on return to South and Central Somalia then it is unlikely that internal relocation would be an option, although each case must be considered on its individual circumstances.
- 3.1.11 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

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4. Background to Al Shabaab

4.1 Proscription of Al Shabaab

- 4.1.1 Al Shabaab was proscribed by the UK government as an international terrorist group in March 2010.¹

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4.2 Formation/composition

- 4.2.1 The United States Department of State's Country Reports on Terrorism 2015 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations, published 2 June 2016, noted:

'Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on March 18, 2008, al-Shabaab was the militant wing of the former Somali Islamic Courts Council that took over parts of southern Somalia during the second half of 2006. Since the end of 2006, al-Shabaab and associated militias have undertaken a violent insurgency using guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics against the transitional governments of Somalia. In 2015, the group continued to fight to discredit and destabilize the Federal Government of Somalia.

'Al-Shabaab is an official al-Qa'ida (AQ) affiliate and has ties to other AQ affiliates, including al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb. The group's leader is Ahmed Diriye aka Ahmed Umar aka Abu Ubaidah, a Specially Designated Global Terrorist.

'Al-Shabaab is composed of a mixture of Somali recruits and foreign fighters. Since 2011, al-Shabaab has seen its military capacity reduced due to the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and Somali forces, and clashes – some violent – within the group itself. Despite al-Shabaab's loss of urban centers since 2012, the group was able to maintain its hold on large sections of rural areas in south-central Somalia in 2015 and conducted multiple attacks in Somalia and Kenya.²

- 4.2.2 The Danish Immigration Service's fact finding report on the '[Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups](#)' (DIS 2017 report), published 8 March 2017 but based on interviews in Nairobi, Kenya, 3 to 10 December 2016, considered who is a member or affiliated to Al Shabaab. The report is composite of sources and details of those quoted are contained within the report:

'Al-Shabaab is estimated to consist of 5,000-9,000 armed fighters, who are able to move across regions to engage in combat, but in order to grasp the strength and capacity of al-Shabaab as an organisation it is important to

¹ Home Office, 'Proscribed Terrorist Organisations' (Al-Shabaab), 3 May 2017. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612076/20170503_Proscripti on.pdf. Accessed 15 May 2017

² United States Department of State 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2015' (Foreign Terrorist Organisations: al-Shabaab), 2 June 2016 <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257523.htm>. Accessed 3 May 2017

understand how al-Shabaab operates and that the organisation is more than its fighters.

'Al-Shabaab has an extensive network of sympathisers, informants/spies, and other collaborators throughout Somalia and several sources considered al-Shabaab to be everywhere in S/C Somalia. The presence of al-Shabaab can be felt throughout society and al-Shabaab is assumed to have infiltrated Somali government institutions, the police force, and SNA, and according to a UN source even the international airport in Mogadishu is regarded as infiltrated. Al-Shabaab has a rather sophisticated intelligence wing (Amniyat).

'Several sources also stressed that it is difficult to make a clear distinction of who is and who is not al-Shabaab. Members of al-Shabaab disguise themselves and cannot be distinguished from other locals. In addition, elders in a local community under al-Shabaab control might also be regarded as members as al-Shabaab will use them, willingly or not, to rule the area.'³

- 4.2.3 Global Security, in an undated report, noted that Al Shabaab also has different names:

'Al-Shabaab (Also known as: Al-Shabaab Al-Islaam, Al-Shabaab al-Islamiya, Al-Shabaab Al-Jihaad, Al-Shabab, Ash-shabaab, Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, Harakat Shabab Al-Mujahidin, Harakatul Shabaab al-Mujaahidiin, Hizbul Shabaab, Hisb'ul Shabaab, HSM, Mujahideen Youth Movement, Mujahidin Al-Shabaab Movement, Mujaahidiin Youth Movement, Mujahidin Youth Movement, Shabaab, MYM, The Popular Resistance Movement in the Land of the Two Migrations, The Unity of Islamic Youth, The Youth, Young Mujahideen Movement, Young Mujahideen Movement in Somalia, Youth Wing) was the militant wing of the former Somali Supreme Islamic Courts Union (ICU), that had taken over most of southern Somalia in the second half of 2006.'⁴

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4.3 Aims

- 4.3.1 Al Shabaab's objective is the establishment of an Islamic state in Somalia, based on Islamic law and the elimination of foreign 'infidel' influence.⁵
- 4.3.2 The Home Office 'Proscribed Terrorist Groups', updated May 2017, described Al Shabaab's principal aim as 'the establishment of a fundamentalist Islamic state in Somalia, but the organisation has publicly pledged its allegiance to Usama Bin Laden and has announced an intention to combine its campaign in the Horn of Africa with Al Qa'ida's aims of global jihad.'⁶

³ Danish Immigration Service, 'Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups', Report based on interviews in Nairobi, Kenya, 3 to 10 December 2016, (para1.2), 8 March 2017, https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁴ Global Security.org, 'Para-military: Al-Shabaab', (undated), <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/al-shabaab.htm>. Accessed 8 February 2015

⁵ Global Security.org, 'Para-military: Al-Shabaab' (undated) <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/al-shabaab.htm>. Accessed 6 January 2015

⁶ Home Office, 'Proscribed Terrorist Organisations' (Al Shabaab)', 3 May 2017.

4.4 Funding

- 4.4.1 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment, updated 6 April 2017, noted that Al Shabaab has 'a significant stake in charcoal exports, despite losing control of key ports such as Mogadishu, Kismayo, and more recently Baraawe in 2014, with the group reportedly raising an income of approximately USD25 million each year, according to UN estimates, which it uses to finance its military campaign.'⁷
- 4.4.2 Al Shabaab also obtained funds through taxation of local populations and businesses⁸. Reliance by Al Shabaab on revenue from taxing the illicit sugar trade, agricultural production and livestock has increased, in particular as revenue from charcoal has declined⁹.

5. Nature of violence by Al Shabaab

5.1 Al Shabaab's areas of influence

- 5.1.1 A Landinfo query response of 10 November 2016, 'Somalia: Power relations in Southern Somalia', noted:

'Most district cities in Southern Somalia are currently held by the authorities. Government areas constitute separate enclaves or "islands". Al-Shabaab has maintained power in some district cities, but has largely been forced out in rural areas. The authorities are dependent on assistance from AMISOM to seize and maintain control of areas. Al-Shabaab is not able to hold areas if AMISOM decides to seize them, but AMISOM has a limited number of soldiers and is vulnerable because the soldiers are dispersed over a large area, and the supply lines are long. On occasion, this has caused AMISOM to withdrawn from areas. Areas which AMISOM withdraws from are immediately seized by al-Shabaab. However al-Shabaab has limited resources and it is unlikely that al-Shabaab is able to seize major cities such as Mogadishu, Kismayo, Baidoa and Belet Weyne.'¹⁰

- 5.1.2 The DIS 2017 report looked at the extent of Al Shabaab control and presence:

'Al-Shabaab is in control of most rural areas in S/C Somalia. Al-Shabaab is not militarily present everywhere under its control and is described to rule by remote control through fear and intimidation. According to a UN source, al-Shabaab has set up blockades around most towns where AMISOM/SNA is

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612076/20170503_Proscripti
on.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612076/20170503_Proscripti
on.pdf). Accessed 15 May 2017

⁷ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Somalia, updated 6 April 2017. Subscription only

⁸ United States Department of State 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2015' (Foreign Terrorist Organisations: al-Shabaab) 2 June 2016 <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257523.htm>. Accessed 3 May 2017

⁹ UN Security Council, Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (para 83), 31 October 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia/> (S/2016/919). Accessed 8 May 2017

¹⁰ Landinfo, 'Somalia: Power relations in Southern Somalia', 10 November 2016, http://www.landinfo.no/asset/3519/1/3519_1.pdf. Accessed 15 May 2017

in military control. At night al-Shabaab is able to move around in urban centres that during the day is controlled by AMISOM/SNA while AMISOM/SNA stay in their barracks. Al-Shabaab can carry out hit-and run attacks and assassinations everywhere, including inside Mogadishu.¹¹

5.1.3 The DIS 2017 report also stated:

'Mogadishu is to some extent under the control of AMISOM/SNA and al-Shabaab has no military camps in Mogadishu. The city is, however, under constant threat as al-Shabaab has reach inside Mogadishu, and the city is by several sources considered as infiltrated by al-Shabaab, including Mogadishu International Airport and Villa Somalia. A Somalia Country Director of a humanitarian agency deemed the security situation in Mogadishu significantly improved compared to the 1990's but added that in the last five years the picture is more blurred. There was a peak in security incidents in 2013, and the number has been falling since. The source assessed that the decline in the number of incidents is linked to a shift in tactics by al-Shabaab from quantity to quality. Previously, a lot of smaller attacks took place, for instance detonating hand grenades. Now, larger explosions are carried out, and the city has seen a rise in large scale attacks and complex attacks, for instance at market places or hotels. The same source considered the improvements in the security situation as fragile. An NGO working in Somalia similarly underlined a change of tactics in the attacks observed, as Mogadishu has been more affected by IED's the last year compared to previous years and more complex attacks are taking place. A UN source mentioned that inside Mogadishu the number of attacks in the second half of 2016 has doubled compared to the first half of 2016.'¹²

5.1.4 The UN Security Council's 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia', published 9 January 2017 and covering major developments between 1 September and 31 December 2016 noted:

'Al-Shabaab made some territorial gains following the withdrawal of Ethiopian and Somali forces from Muqakoori, Ceel Cali and Halgen, Hiraan region, on 15 September and 11 and 23 October. The group also regained control of Tayeeglow, Bakool region, following the withdrawal on 26 October of Ethiopian and Somali troops. Somali forces sought to recover the town on 15 November, but did not succeed. In Bay region, Somali forces twice lost Goof Guduud Shabelow to Al-Shabaab, on 1 and 23 November, but regained control of the town with the support of AMISOM on 7 December.'¹³

5.1.5 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Somalia, updated 6 April 2017, considered recent attempts by the Somalia government and AMISOM to weaken Al Shabaab's influence:

¹¹ Danish Immigration Service, 'Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups' (para1.2) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

¹² Danish Immigration Service, 'Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups' (para1.3) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

¹³ UN Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia' (para 9), 9 January 2017 http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2017_21.pdf. Accessed 8 May 2017

'AMISOM's anti-Al-Shabaab offensive made territorial gains, but is unlikely to completely eradicate the group from southern Somalia, where it has gained recruits from Kenya...

'President Mohamed is using an amnesty to weaken Al-Shabaab's semi-autonomous units in Bay, Bakool (Rahanweyne/Reewin clan), Gedo and Mudug (Hawiye/Murursade clan). The Somali National Army will, however, be incapable of retaking territorial control without significant external support, probably provided by the US and extension to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) until late 2019. AMISOM would focus on securing logistical supply corridors but this depends on renewed cooperation between Ethiopia and Kenya. Al-Shabaab will conduct grenade, mortar, and VBIED attacks in Mogadishu against the airport, hotels, police stations and government buildings.'¹⁴

5.1.6 The same source looked at likely forthcoming scenarios:

'Newly elected President Mohamed on 6 April issued a 60-day amnesty period during which Al-Shabaab militants could surrender, before the Somali National Army (SNA) launches a renewed offensive. This will drive a wedge between economically and ideologically motivated militants comprising Al-Shabaab's semi-autonomous units in Bay and Bakool regions (from the Hawiye/Murursade clan), and Gedo and Mudug regions (from the Rhanweyne/Reewin clan). This new strategy has already resulted in three senior Al-Shabaab commanders defecting in March and April. However, defections are unlikely in Lower and Middle Juba, where Al-Shabaab exploits frustrations with the ruling Darod-Ogaden clan...

'The SNA is poorly equipped and trained and is yet to undergo promised reforms to make fighting units representative of clans where it operates. The SNA would, therefore, require continued external support to retake territory from Al-Shabaab this year. A major shortcoming is the European Union's intention to stop funding the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) when a United Nations mandate ends after 31 May 2017, and subsequently withdraw forces in 2018. The African Union is reluctant to meet the anticipated funding shortfall. Progress on this issue would most likely be indicated on 11 May, during negotiations between senior stakeholders in London.'¹⁵

5.1.7 The DIS report 2017 assessed the presence and control of al-Shabaab and AMISOM in the following areas/towns:

[Lower and Middle Shabelle, including Marka](#) (page 13)

[Lower and Middle Juba, including Kismayo](#) (page 14)

[Hiraan](#) (page 15)

[Gedo](#) (page 15)

[Bay](#) (page 16)

¹⁴ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Somalia, updated 6 April 2017. Subscription only. Accessed 8 May 2017

¹⁵ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Somalia, updated 6 April 2017. Subscription only. Accessed 8 May 2017

[Bakool](#) (page 16)

[Galgaduud](#) (page 16)

[Mudug](#) (page 16)¹⁶

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5.2 Al Shabaab's Tactics

5.2.1 A letter dated 7 October 2016, from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009), with a mandate extended in 2016 to 15 December 2017, concerning Somalia and Eritrea, addressed to the President of the Security Council, [UN Security Council October 2016 update] stated, with reference to Somalia:

'...Al-Shabaab remains the most immediate threat to peace and security in Somalia. Contrary to prevailing narratives of successful counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism efforts, the Monitoring Group assesses that the security situation has not improved in Somalia during the current mandate. Al-Shabaab has retained the operational capacity to launch large-scale attacks against African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) contingents, such as the offensive on 15 January 2016 against a Kenyan military company stationed at a forward operating base in El Adde, Gedo region. Al-Shabaab has also continued to launch complex attacks in Mogadishu; six attacks against hotels during the current mandate claimed a combined total of some 120 lives, including three parliamentarians and the Minister of Environment. ...although Al-Shabaab has not successfully launched a major terrorist attack outside Somalia since the massacre at Garissa University College in Kenya on 2 April 2015, the Monitoring Group assesses that it retains both the capability to carry out another such attack and a self-proclaimed motive with regard to targeting countries contributing troops to AMISOM.'¹⁷

5.2.2 The UN Security Council October 2016 update noted:

'Under growing financial pressure, Al-Shabaab was increasingly reliant on violence against civilians to ensure the payment of taxation or zakat and to recruit from a reluctant population. At the same time, the group sought to project itself as a legitimate arbiter of law and order, purporting to conduct its own investigations into violations committed by other forces, disarming clan militias and convening peace negotiations.'¹⁸

¹⁶ Danish Immigration Service, 'Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups' (pages 14-16) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

¹⁷ UN Security council, Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (summary), 31 October 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia/> (S/2016/919). Accessed 8 May 2017

¹⁸ UN Security council, Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (para 98), 31 October 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia/> (S/2016/919). Accessed 8 May 2017

- 5.2.3 The International Institute for Strategic Studies, stated in its 2017 Armed Conflict Database (Somalia Conflict Summary) that:
- ‘The combined forces [of AMISOM], along with the troops of Somalia’s first formal government in 21 years and pro-government militias such as Ras Kamboni, have made significant territorial advances against al Shabaab, which has conserved its fighting strength through tactical withdrawals. The Islamist militant group has begun a reversion to guerrilla tactics in Somalia and Kenya in response to its losses.’¹⁹
- 5.2.4 The UN Security Council’s ‘Report of the Secretary General on Somalia’, published 9 January 2017 and covering major developments between 1 September and 31 December 2016 noted, ‘In Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab stepped up the use of car bombings with the intention of perpetuating a sense of insecurity among the public during the electoral period... In central and southern Somalia, Al-Shabaab continued to engage in guerrilla warfare and occasionally deployed fighters to carry out complex attacks.’²⁰
- 5.2.5 Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment – Somalia, updated 6 April 2017 noted:
- ‘Death, injury, and kidnapping-for-ransom [most likely foreign nationals] risks are severe throughout southern and central Somalia...
- ‘Al-Shabaab primarily uses co-ordinated high-impact vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) and small-arms attacks in the capital, Mogadishu. VBIEDs target security cordons around buildings frequented by government officials and foreign nationals, including hotels, conference centres, police stations, and Aden Adde International Airport. These operations are designed to provide militants with an opportunity to gain access to these buildings and conduct small-arms assaults. Al-Shabaab is, however, unlikely to obtain more sophisticated concealed IEDs capable of evading airport-style security. Consequently, death and injury risks are greatest at checkpoints conducting security screening of vehicles prior to entering these locations. Telecoms personnel face risks of extortion and kidnap, especially when operating in remote areas of southern Somalia...
- ‘Personnel perceived to support the government; including aid workers, election monitors, local government officials and representatives of multilateral organisations, face a significant risk of being abducted by Al-Shabaab militants, motivated primarily for ideological rather than for-profit reasons. Security precautions including restrictions on movement and attempts to improve relations with local clans have, however, reduced the number of successful kidnappings since 2013, with the kidnapping activity reaching a peak in 2011. This was primarily motivated by the deployment of the regional African Union Mission in Somalia the same year. This year, the most vulnerable areas are those where Al-Shabaab moves freely. These include remote areas in Gedo, Middle Juba and Lower Juba regions (not

¹⁹ International Institute for Strategic Studies, ‘Armed Conflict Database (Somalia Conflict Summary)’, 2017, <https://acd.iiss.org/en/conflicts/somalia-0fb3>. Accessed 8 May 2017.

²⁰ UN Security Council, ‘Report of the Secretary General on Somalia’ (paras 7 and 8), 9 January 2017 http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2017_21.pdf. Accessed 8 May 2017

including Kismayo) and along the Kenyan border; Middle and Lower Shabelle regions (not including Marka), and Mudug and Galguduud regions. Al-Shabaab is also infiltrating Puntland. The risk is lower in Bakool and Bay regions while newly elected President Mohamed's government negotiates with Al-Shabaab-affiliated clans during an 80-day amnesty window from 6 April [2017].'²¹

- 5.2.6 The Jamestown Foundation, in its Terrorism Monitor Volume: 15 Issue: 7 published 7 April 2017, 'Al-Shabaab Plays on Aid Distribution Role to Win Over Desperate Somalis', reported on a new tactic by Al Shabaab:

'With a severe drought unfolding across Somalia, al-Shabaab militants have turned to distributing food aid in the country's southern battlegrounds in a new strategy aimed at bringing locals on side...

'The militants claim to have distributed aid in several regions: Bay, Bakol, Mudug, Hiraan and Galguduung. Al-Shabaab has launched drought committees in these regions to coordinate relief, and the group has dug canals to help farmers to access water for irrigation. Reports suggest the group is seeking international recognition for the work and has made public a schedule for further aid distribution. While it is unclear what form the group imagines this recognition would take, al-Shabaab likes to boast that the international media is sympathetically reporting the mujahedeen's distribution efforts in central Somalia.

'It is unclear where the militants would obtain large amounts of food aid... Regardless of the provenance, if the aid distributions are effective, the move will be a welcome one for locals. The move would be a positive "public relations" exercise, demonstrating something of a "softer side" to Somalis who have in other cases been subject to the group's radical interpretation of sharia...

'While some observers view the militant's distribution of food aid as simply propaganda, a wider view is that the tactic is critical for the group because it has been forced to retreat into the rural areas.

'With AMISOM troops remaining in towns and ports, al-Shabaab is believed to be re-grouping in these rural areas to launch attacks, coordinated from its base in Jilib.'²²

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5.3 Terrorist incidents in 2016 and early 2017 (Mogadishu)

- 5.3.1 The UN Security Council's 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia', published 9 January 2017 and covering major developments between 1 September and 31 December 2016 noted incidents attributed to Al Shabaab:

²¹ Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment – Somalia, updated 6 April 2017. Subscription only. Accessed 8 May 2017

²² Jamestown Foundation, 'Al-Shabaab Plays on Aid Distribution Role to Win Over Desperate Somalis', (Terrorism Monitor Volume: 15 Issue: 7) 7 April 2017 <https://jamestown.org/program/al-shabaab-plays-aid-distribution-role-win-desperate-somalis/>. Accessed 8 May 2017

'On 18 September, a suicide bomber drove his vehicle into a Somali forces convoy, killing a senior commander and seven soldiers. On 1 October, an explosive-laden vehicle detonated outside a restaurant, killing 4 people and injuring 10 others. On 5 November, a suicide bomber drove into a Somali and AMISOM convoy, killing four troops and injuring nine others. On 11 December, a minivan exploded at the port of Mogadishu, killing more than 35 people. Two suicide bombers failed to hit their targets on 10 and 15 December, but their vehicles exploded, killing a National Intelligence and Security Agency officer and injuring 12 other people. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for a mortar attack that caused minor damage to the United Nations common compound on 29 September. Suspected Al-Shabaab operatives gunned down six clan elders and two electoral delegates on 20 October, 2, 6, 9 and 29 November and 11 and 28 December.'²³

- 5.3.2 The UN Security Council's further 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia' published on 9 May 2017 covering developments between 1 January and 30 April 2017 reported the following incidents in 2017 attributed to Al Shabaab:

'On 16 February, four mortar rounds landed near Villa Somalia at the time of the presidential handover ceremony. On 19 February, a car bomb in a market area killed at least 34 people and injured 50. On 22 February, three mortar rounds impacted the same area, injuring four civilians. Al-Shabaab senior leaders have expressed hostility towards the new President and vowed to continue waging war on the Federal Government. On 13 March, two explosive-laden vehicles detonated near the former Jazeera Training Centre and in front of the Wehliye Hotel, killing 18 people and injuring others. Another car bombing at a checkpoint near the National Theatre on 21 March resulted in over 10 fatalities and more injured. In both cases, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility. On 16 April, a United Nations convoy on its way to a settlement of internally displaced persons in the outskirts of Mogadishu was nearly hit by a roadside bomb. A rear escort vehicle was slightly damaged and two Somali escort guards suffered minor injuries. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the bomb, stating that the United Nations was the intended target.'²⁴ UN news service reported that on 15 June a suicide attack on a pizza restaurant and an adjacent hotel in Mogadishu killed at least 19 people. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack.²⁵

- 5.3.3 On 25 January 2017 Aljazeera reported that a car bomb attack by Al Shabaab on a hotel in Mogadishu killed at least 28 people.²⁶ CNN reported that Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for a vehicle explosion close to a busy

²³ UN Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia' (para 7), 9 January 2017 http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2017_21.pdf. Accessed 8 May 2017

²⁴ UN Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia' (para 16), 9 May 2017 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2017/408. Accessed 27 June 2017

²⁵ UN News Service, UN envoy strongly condemns attack on popular restaurant and hotel in Somali capital, 15 June 2017 <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=56980#.WVJ1xelpyM8>. Accessed 27 June 2017

²⁶ Aljazeera, 'Bomb and gun attack on Mogadishu hotel kills dozens', 25 January 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/25/several-dead-after-militants-storm-mogadishu-hotel>. Accessed 9 May 2017

security checkpoint in Mogadishu which killed 10 people on 21 March.²⁷ Aljazeera reported on 9 April that the new chief of defence forces had survived a suspected suicide car bomb attack close to the defence military compound in Mogadishu. The attack claimed by Al Shabaab killed at least 15 people.²⁸ Daily Nation reported on 8 May that a car bomb planted by Al Shabaab had exploded close to an Italian café in central Mogadishu killing 6 people.²⁹

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5.4 Terrorist incidents in 2016 and early 2017 (South and Central Somalia)

5.4.1 The UN Security Council's 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia', published 9 January 2017 and covering major developments between 1 September and 31 December 2016 noted:

'On 16 September, some 150 fighters raided a Somali army base in Ceel Waaq, Gedo region, killing eight soldiers. On 18 October, more than 100 Al-Shabaab fighters attacked multiple government locations in Afgooye, Shabelle Hoose region, killing 14 people, including two senior military officials and the Director General of the Ministry of Finance of the Interim South-West Administration. On 25 October, an explosives-laden truck targeted Djiboutian positions in Beledweyne, Hiraaan region, leaving four people dead and eight injured.'³⁰

5.4.2 The Guardian reported on 27 January 2017 that Al Shabaab had attacked a Kenyan military base in southern Somalia close to the Kenyan border and claimed to have killed 57 Kenyan soldiers.³¹ Aljazeera reported on 6 April 2017 that at least 19 passengers were killed in southern Lower Shebelle when a mini bus ran over a land mine thought to have been planted by Al Shabaab.³²

5.4.3 The international Crisis Group, Crisis Watch Database for Somalia included the following incidents for April 2017:

'Al-Shabaab 3 April took control of El Bur town, Galmudug region, following retreat of African Union mission (AMISOM) troops. Al-Shabaab 4 April kidnapped four World Health Organisation aid workers in Gedo region in south...Al-Shabaab claimed 16 April attack on World Food Programme

²⁷ CNN, 'Mogadishu car bombing leaves 10 dead', 21 March 2017.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/03/21/africa/mogadishu-attack-kills-10/>. Accessed 9 May 2017

²⁸ Aljazeera, 'New army chief survives deadly Mogadishu bomb blast', 9 April 2017.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/04/army-chief-survives-deadly-mogadishu-bomb-blast-170409130843977.html>. Accessed 9 May 2017

²⁹ Daily Nation, 'Shabaab car bomb attack kills six in Mogadishu', 8 May 2017.

<http://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Shabaab-car-bomb-attack-kills-six-in-Mogadishu/1066-3919136-uga5ou/>. Accessed 9 May 2017

³⁰ UN Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia' (para 8), 9 January 2017

http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2017_21.pdf. Accessed 8 May 2017

³¹ Guardian, 'Witnesses say dozens killed in al-Shabaab attack on Kenyan troops', 27 January 2017

<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/03/21/africa/mogadishu-attack-kills-10/>. Accessed 9 May 2017

³² Aljazeera, 'At least 19 people killed by land mine in Somalia' 6 April 2017

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/04/19-people-killed-land-somalia-170406193811928.html>. Accessed 9 May 2017

convoy and suspected Al-Shabaab militants attacked Emirates Red Crescent aid convoy 20 April, no casualties reported.³³

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6. Al Shabaab targeted groups

6.1 Generally

6.1.1 The United States Department of State's Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 2016 [USSD 2016 report], published 3 March 2017, noted:

'Al-Shabaab caused significant civilian casualties, including 214 deaths and 346 injured, [between January and August 2016].

'Al-Shabaab committed politically motivated killings that targeted civilians affiliated with the government and attacks on humanitarian NGO employees, UN staff, and diplomatic missions. Al-Shabaab often used suicide attacks, mortar attacks, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). It also killed prominent peace activists, community leaders, clan elders, and their family members for their roles in peace building, and it beheaded persons accused of spying for and collaborating with Somali national forces and affiliated militias...

'From January to September [2016], al-Shabaab abducted 152 persons, 80 of whom it subsequently released.³⁴

6.1.2 The UN Security Council's 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia', published 9 January 2017, noted that between 1 September and 31 December 2017, 'Civilian casualties attributed to Al-Shabaab or unidentified persons totalled 91 deaths and 126 injuries. A total of 46 people were abducted by Al-Shabaab, 35 of whom were later released. The attacks represent an increase of 1.4 per cent from the previous reporting period.'

6.1.3 The United States Department of State, Country Reports on Terrorism 2015 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations, published 2 June 2016, noted:

'Al-Shabaab has used intimidation and violence to exploit divisions in Somalia and undermine the Federal Government of Somalia, recruit new fighters, and kill activists working to bring about peace through political dialogue and reconciliation. The group has claimed responsibility for several high profile bombings and shootings throughout Somalia targeting AMISOM troops and Somali officials. Al-Shabaab fighters and others claiming allegiance to the group have claimed responsibility for the assassination of numerous civil society figures, government officials, journalists, international aid workers, and members of NGOs.³⁶

³³ International Crisis Group, 'Crisis Watch Database: Somalia' April 2017.

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database>. Accessed 10 May 2017

³⁴ United States Department of State, 'Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 2016' (section 1g), 3 March 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265300.htm>. Accessed 9 May 2017

³⁵ UN Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia' (para 44), 9 January 2017

http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2017_21.pdf. Accessed 8 May 2017

³⁶ United States Department of State 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2015' (Foreign Terrorist Organisations: al-Shabaab) 2 June 2016 <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257523.htm>. Accessed 3 May 2017

6.2 In areas with AMISOM/SNA presence

6.2.1 The DIS 2017 report stated, 'Al-Shabaab is regarded by an independent organisation to mainly attack high profile targets and according to a UN source, civilians, who do not belong to any of the [...] mentioned categories [paras 6.2.4 – 6.2.15], are not considered targets.'³⁷

6.2.2 The UN Security Council October 2016 update stated 'Complex attacks against "soft" civilian targets, such as hotels and restaurants, increased during the mandate, especially in Mogadishu, Baidoa and North Galkayo, resulting in a significant number of casualties.'³⁸

6.2.3 Sources within the DIS 2017 report added:

'As the capital Mogadishu is characterised by the presence of many high value targets, most assassinations and attacks (IED's, shootings, and car bombs) in Somalia, take place in Mogadishu. For the civilian population the highest risk is being in the wrong place at the wrong time and become collateral damage. Mogadishu has been the scene of several attacks with a number of civilian casualties but terror attacks against e.g. market places with no presence of high value targets are deemed unusual. A UN source added that civilians perceived to be associated with the government and the international community are seen by al-Shabaab as legitimate targets.'³⁹

6.3 The Somali government, AMISOM/SNA and international organisations

6.3.1 Sources interviewed in the DIS 2017 report stated:

'Most sources agreed that the main al-Shabaab targets are federal state officials, high-ranking politicians, clan leaders supporting the federal government, AMISOM, and SNA [Somali national army]. A UN source mentioned that al-Shabaab may also target cleaning staff and other low-ranking staff at government and AMISOM facilities. UN staff and staff of international organisations at all levels are also a target. A UN source elaborated that anybody identified to be under a contract with the UN i.e. travelling regularly by the road to the airport of Mogadishu – and therefore assumed to be working there – can be a target. The same source mentioned that day workers at government and UN facilities are not considered a target.'⁴⁰

³⁷ Danish Immigration Service, 'Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups' (Section 2.6) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

³⁸ UN Security council, Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (Section IV), 31 October 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia/> (S/2016/919). Accessed 8 May 2017

³⁹ Danish Immigration Service, 'Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups' (Sections 1.3 and 2) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁴⁰ Danish Immigration Service, 'Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups' (Sections 1.3 and 2) 8 March 2017. <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/ronlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A->

6.3.2 The same UN source also noted:

‘During the current mandate, numerous targeted killings were either claimed by or attributed to Al-Shabaab. Victims included government officials and civil servants (from the district to the federal levels), international agency staff, including from the United Nations... In a statement issued on 30 December 2015, Al-Shabaab declared that security officials and civil servants would be specifically targeted in future attacks. In later statements it specifically threatened parliamentarians and individuals participating in the elections in 2016, together with United Nations and Western actors supporting the process.’⁴¹

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6.4 Journalists, human rights activists and NGOs

6.4.1 The UN Security Council October 2016 update noted that:

‘During the current mandate...there was a reduction [compared to 17 in 2014/15] in the overall number of humanitarian workers who lost their lives directly as a result of their engagement in humanitarian operations, owing to the absence of a single high-casualty attack. Nevertheless, there was an absolute rise in the number of security incidents affecting humanitarian workers since the previous mandate, heightening the danger for humanitarian operations overall...Although they faced daily attacks, threats and harassment from all the parties to the conflict and political and government actors, most attacks against humanitarian workers conducted with deadly intent and outcome were carried out by Al-Shabaab.’⁴²

6.4.2 Sources within the DIS 2017 report noted:

‘Journalists, human rights activists and employees of NGO’s might also be targeted depending on their activities and how distinct they criticise al-Shabaab. A Somali NGO elaborated that it would depend on the context of each case. Al-Shabaab can potentially target everyone in these categories, but that does not mean that any person with such profile automatically is a target. It will depend on the circumstances. The source made reference to the fact that, in general, aid workers from NGO’s are a target to al-Shabaab, but if an approval from al-Shabaab is obtained, the staff members of an approved NGO will not be targeted. However, the source stressed that NGO’s affiliated with the US are a general target.’⁴³

[C119BE069792/0/South and Central Somalia Report March 2017.pdf](#). Accessed 9 May 2017

⁴¹ UN Security council, Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (Section IV), 31 October 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia/> (S/2016/919). Accessed 8 May 2017

⁴² UN Security council, Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (Section IIIA), 31 October 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia/> (S/2016/919). Accessed 8 May 2017

⁴³ Danish Immigration Service, ‘Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups’ (Sections 1.3 and 2) 8 March 2017. <https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South and Central Somalia Report March 2017.pdf>. Accessed 9 May 2017

- 6.4.3 The UN Security Council October 2016 update noted that there were targeted killings of civil society activists and journalists.⁴⁴
- 6.4.4 Human Rights Watch, World Report 2017 - Somalia, published 12 January 2017 and covering events in 2016, noted 'Al-Shabab continues to threaten and target journalists in government-controlled areas and bans independent media from reporting in areas it controls. It claimed responsibility for a December 3, 2015 car bomb that killed 31-year-old reporter Hindiya Haji Mohamed, who worked for the state-run media.'⁴⁵

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6.5 Business people

- 6.5.1 Sources consulted in the DIS 2017 report stated:

'Some sources mentioned that small business owners, for instance persons selling tea outside government buildings, are not seen or targeted as government collaborators. However, the sources added that due to the fact that AMISOM/SNA frequents the area, such persons risk becoming collateral damage. Another source mentioned that al-Shabaab has declared that anyone in proximity to government and AMISOM buildings are legitimate targets, and al-Shabaab has advised civilians to stay away from government and AMISOM buildings. Two sources pointed out that businessmen perceived to be collaborating with or supporting the federal government are targets, but businessmen who do not work with the government and pay their taxes to al-Shabaab are not considered a target.'⁴⁶

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6.6 Al Shabaab defectors/collaborators

- 6.6.1 Sources within the DIS 2017 report stated:

'Al-Shabaab defectors are also considered a prime target for al-Shabaab, as they are regarded as having sensitive information about al-Shabaab. One source added that even a cook might have sensitive information, and the source did not distinguish between high and low profile members of al-Shabaab. When asked if a defector could relocate safely to urban centres with AMISOM presence, for instance to Mogadishu, several sources pointed out that al-Shabaab has informants everywhere, including in Mogadishu, and would be able to find a defector.

'Sources explained that when al-Shabaab tries to track down a defector they use clan networks and bio-data collected by al-Shabaab on each individual member. Bio-data in this context is the father's name, grandfather's name, great grandfather's name, mother's name, name of village etc.

⁴⁴ UN Security Council, Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (Section IV), 31 October 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia/> (S/2016/919). Accessed 8 May 2017

⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 2017 – Somalia' (Al-Shabaab abuses), 12 January 2017 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/somalia>. Accessed 10 May 2017

⁴⁶ Danish Immigration Service, 'Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups' (Sections 1.3 and 2) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

‘A defector who is tracked down will likely be killed. A Somali NGO assessed that no genuine safety for al-Shabaab defectors could be found in Somalia, and a defector would only be safe if able to raise enough money to flee abroad, e.g. to Kenya. High profiled al-Shabaab members might successfully turn themselves over to the government in exchange for information, but such defection would have to be well arranged. The average al-Shabaab defector will risk being killed by government forces.’⁴⁷

- 6.6.2 The UN Security Council October 2016 update noted that Al Shabaab executed civilians suspected of having “collaborated” with its enemies, especially in the wake of a cycle of AMISOM and SNA withdrawals.⁴⁸
- 6.6.3 Human Rights Watch in its annual report, published 12 January 2017 and covering 2016, noted ‘Al-Shabaab committed targeted killings, beheadings, and executions, particularly of those accused of spying and collaborating with the government.’⁴⁹

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6.7 Family members of defectors

- 6.7.1 Sources within the DIS 2017 report noted ‘Family members to al-Shabaab defectors are in general not considered a target for al-Shabaab.’⁵⁰
- 6.7.2 However, the UN Security Council October 2016 update noted that abductions by Al Shabaab were sometimes followed by abductions by government forces of Al Shabaab family members.⁵¹

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6.8 Women

- 6.8.1 Sources within the DIS 2017 report stated that ‘Women as a generic category are not considered al-Shabaab targets.’⁵²

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6.9 In areas under control of Al Shabaab

- 6.9.1 The DIS 2017 report consulted sources who stated:

⁴⁷ Danish Immigration Service, ‘Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups’ (Sections 1.3 and 2) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁴⁸ UN Security council, Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (Section IV), 31 October 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia/> (S/2016/919). Accessed 8 May 2017

⁴⁹ Human Rights Watch, ‘World Report 2017 – Somalia’ (Al-Shabaab abuses), 12 January 2017 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/somalia>. Accessed 10 May 2017

⁵⁰ Danish Immigration Service, ‘Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups’ (Sections 1.3 and 2) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁵¹ UN Security council, Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (Section IV), 31 October 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia/> (S/2016/919). Accessed 8 May 2017

⁵² Danish Immigration Service, ‘Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups’ (Section 2.5) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

'With regard to who can become a target profile in areas under the full control of al-Shabaab sources referred particularly to three factors: The background of a person, i.e. the links the person has, his/her behaviour in relation to conformity with al-Shabaab's interpretation of Sharia law, and finally acts and attitudes that can raise suspicion of spying.

'Anyone linked to AMISOM/SNA/ENDF [Ethiopian National Defence Forces]/KDF [Kenya Defence Forces], FGS, and international organisations would also become a target in al-Shabaab controlled areas.

'In general, people under al-Shabaab rule must follow the al-Shabaab way of life ("play by the rules of al-Shabaab"), otherwise they would be at risk. Severe sanctions can be carried out against civilians who do not obey to the rules and ideology of al-Shabaab. For instance, not dressing or behaving in accordance with al-Shabaab rules can lead to arrest and corporal punishment. Two sources explained that so-called un-Islamic conduct could include soccer, basketball, listening to music, and smoking cigarettes. An anonymous source found that living under the strict Sharia regime of al-Shabaab cannot be seen as a safe way to live for civilians, who do not want that kind of regime. A Somali NGO found that in the rural areas, there is little difference between al-Shabaab's rules, and the already existing traditional norms, and exemplified that the dress code for women is the same under al-Shabaab as under other actors. The source added, however, that al-Shabaab is more brutal and ideological. A Western source concurred that even though al-Shabaab's interpretation of Islam is strict it is not completely foreign to Somalis...

'According to an international organisation the fact that a person has been abroad, including in the West, is not in itself important when returning to an al-Shabaab area. What is important is his/her clan, and the returnee will need relatives who are not in bad standing with al-Shabaab and who can vouch for them. If returnees are related to clans or individuals that are well regarded in al-Shabaab, they are likely to be safe. If not, he/she might face at least some initial scrutiny.'⁵³

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7. Forced recruitment to Al Shabaab

7.1.1 Sources within the DIS 2017 report noted:

'According to [...] UN source [...] forced recruitment does not take place in areas not under the full control of al-Shabaab. This UN source underlined that in these areas, al-Shabaab will influence potential recruits through preaching, incentives and peer pressure...

'As a generic example of a likely recruitment process one source explained that al-Shabaab will inform the elders of a given area that a specific number of youth must join al-Shabaab, e.g. in defending the town, concurrent with

⁵³ Danish Immigration Service, 'Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups' (Section 4) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

preaching its interpretation of jihad. If the elders refuse to supply the demanded recruits, al-Shabaab will use force...

'A UN source mentioned that if al-Shabaab is to accept that a person refuses to be recruited, some kind of compensation is required. If a person refuses to compensate al-Shabaab, he will have to flee otherwise al-Shabaab will locate him and execute him.'⁵⁴

7.1.2 Human Rights Watch's World Report 2017 - Somalia, published 12 January 2017 and covering events in 2016, stated 'Some young men and boys who returned from Kenya's refugee camps to Al-Shabab-controlled areas, including Buale and Sakoow, have faced pressure to join Al-Shabab.'⁵⁵

7.1.3 The USSD 2016 report stated:

'During the year there were continued reports ...al-Shabaab using child soldiers. UN officials documented the recruitment and use during the year of 1,744 children (1,679 boys, 65 girls), including by al-Shabaab (1,091).. There were 1,381 children (1,306 boys, 75 girls) abducted: 857 by al-Shabaab. More than half of the children al-Shabaab abducted were used to increase its numbers before joint SNA/AMISOM operations, including the March attack in Puntland. The number recruited during the first half of the year equaled the total number recruited throughout 2015, demonstrating an increase in al-Shabaab recruitment..

'Al-Shabaab continued to recruit and force children to participate in direct hostilities, including suicide attacks. Al-Shabaab raided schools, madrassas, and mosques to recruit children. Children in al-Shabaab training camps were subjected to grueling physical training, inadequate diet, weapons training, physical punishment, and religious training. The training also included forcing children to punish and execute other children. Al-Shabaab used children in combat, including placing them in front of other fighters to serve as human shields and suicide bombers. In addition, al-Shabaab used children in support roles, such as carrying ammunition, water, and food; removing injured and dead militants; gathering intelligence; and serving as guards. The organization sometimes used children to plant roadside bombs and other explosive devices. The Somali press frequently carried accounts of al-Shabaab indoctrinating children at schools and forcibly recruiting students into its ranks.'⁵⁶

7.1.4 Two UN sources within the DIS 2017 report were quoted as saying that 'women are subjected to forced marriage in areas controlled by al-Shabaab but it is unknown to what extent, ' and that 'forced marriage to al-Shabaab fighters is occurring, and that it can happen through intimidation of the parents.'⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Danish Immigration Service, 'Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups' (Section 3) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 2017 – Somalia' (Al-Shabaab abuses), 12 January 2017 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/somalia>. Accessed 10 May 2017

⁵⁶ United States Department of State, 'Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 2016' (section 1g), 3 March 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265300.htm>. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁵⁷ Danish Immigration Service, 'Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups' (Section 4.4)

- 7.1.5 The USSD 2016 report also stated ‘Al-Shabaab also committed sexual violence, including through forced marriages.’⁵⁸

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8. Freedom of movement and access to goods and services

- 8.1.1 Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment, updated 6 April 2017, considered the risks associated road travel, particularly with goods:

‘There is a severe risk of roadside IEDs, small arms ambushes and abduction attempts by Al-Shabaab militants targeting land cargo in the regions of Gedo, Middle Juba and Lower Juba (Kenya’s operational sector); southern Bay and Hiraan (Ethiopia’s operational sector), and Lower and Middle Shabelle (Uganda and Djibouti’s respective sectors). These risks are likely to be lower in northern Bay and Bakool regions, where newly elected President Mohamed is engaged in negotiations with Al-Shabaab affiliated clans, for at least an 80-day window from 6 April. This year, humanitarian convoys and commercial land cargo will be most exposed along the following routes:

‘Merca to Afgoye highway, particularly in Mahadey district, Lower Shabelle

‘Baidoa/Buur Hakaba to Afgoye highway

‘Kismayo/Jilib to Mogadishu highway, particularly near Jamaame and Junyo Barrow, Middle Juba

‘Beledweyne-Jowhaar-Mogadishu highway, particularly when transiting through Mahaday Weyne

‘Qardho to Garowe and Eyl highways, in the disputed area between Puntland and Galmudug

‘Mogadishu and Banadir region. Private hire vehicles are often planted with IEDs in political assassination attempts

‘An agreement was, however, finalised on 4 April [2017] by African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) sector commanders and the Somali National Army to secure the country’s main supply routes. Ground and air operations will probably start in June, following the conclusion of President Mohamed’s amnesty for Al-Shabaab.’⁵⁹

- 8.1.2 Sources within the DIS 2017 report stated:

‘In general, travelling by road in S/C Somalia is not easy and is regarded as risky and expensive. Main roads in S/C Somalia are only partly controlled by AMISOM/SNA and in some areas al-Shabaab is in full control of the roads. According to a UN source, al-Shabaab controls most of the main supply

8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁵⁸ United States Department of State, ‘Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 2016’ (section 1g), 3 March 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265300.htm>. Accessed 26 June 2017

⁵⁹ Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment – Somalia, updated 6 April 2017. Subscription only. Accessed 10 May 2017

routes in S/C Somalia. Al-Shabaab, and in certain areas also other armed actors, have checkpoints throughout S/C Somalia and public transportation vehicles will be stopped and passengers questioned and/or taxed. Day-to-day activities and business life for civilians, however, continue underneath the conflicts and travelling for locals is considered less problematic compared to profiled persons. Travelling between AMISOM/SNA and al-Shabaab areas entails the risk of falling under suspicion from both sides of being affiliated with the enemy. Such suspicion can lead to punishment, kidnapping and interrogation, or killing. For AMISOM/SNA, the lack of security on roads restricts the movement of goods on main supply routes. Therefore, AMISOM/SNA continues to airlift troops and some of the key life sustenance items. Especially the main supply routes from Mogadishu to Baidoa and Belet Weyne, respectively, are affected by al-Shabaab attacks. According to a Somalia Country Director of a humanitarian agency, the roads from Mogadishu to Beled Weyne, Baidoa, and Kismayo, respectively, are partly controlled by AMISOM.’⁶⁰

8.1.3 The USSD 2016 report noted:

‘Checkpoints operated by government forces, allied groups, armed militias, clan factions, and al-Shabaab inhibited movement and exposed citizens to looting, extortion, harassment, and violence. Roadblocks manned by armed actors and attacks on humanitarian personnel severely restricted movement and the delivery of aid in southern and central sectors of the country...Al-Shabaab restricted medical care, including by impeding civilian travel to other areas to receive care, destroying medications provided by humanitarian agencies, and closing medical clinics.’⁶¹

8.1.4 The same report also noted:

‘Al-Shabaab and other nonstate armed actors continued to ban commercial activities in the areas they controlled in the Bakool, Bay, Gedo, and Hiraaan Regions and impeded the delivery of humanitarian assistance. For example, on June 19 [2016], armed men attacked and looted a truck convoy contracted by a humanitarian agency to deliver food aid and supplies in the Bakool Region and destroyed the vehicles.

‘Attacks against humanitarian workers and assets impeded the delivery of aid to vulnerable populations. During the first seven months of the year [2016], there were more than 90 violent incidents targeting humanitarian agencies, as a result of which seven humanitarian workers were killed and eight injured, 10 were arrested, three abducted, and five assaulted while in detention. On July 26, a UNHCR staff member, 13 UNHCR employees, and 11 security personnel were killed during an al-Shabaab attack on the UNHCR compound in Mogadishu.’⁶²

⁶⁰ Danish Immigration Service, ‘Security Situation, al-Shabaab Presence and Target Groups’ (Sections 4) 8 March 2017. https://www.nyidanmark.dk/NR/rdonlyres/57D4CD96-E97D-4003-A42A-C119BE069792/0/South_and_Central_Somalia_Report_March_2017.pdf. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁶¹ United States Department of State, ‘Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 2016’ (section 2d), 3 March 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265300.htm>. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁶² United States Department of State, ‘Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 2016’ (section 2d), 3 March 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265300.htm>. Accessed 9 May 2017

- 8.1.5 The UN Security Council October 2016 update noted that ‘Al-Shabaab created the main obstacles [to the distribution of humanitarian aid] through its economic blockades, especially in Bakool, Bay, Gedo and Hiran, besieging towns and areas controlled by anti-Al-Shabaab forces and preventing the movement of goods and people, including humanitarian personnel and supplies.’⁶³

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9. Protection

For more information on the government security services and AMISOM see country policy and information note on [Somalia: Security and humanitarian situation in South and Central Somalia](#).

9.1 Security provision

- 9.1.1 The USSD 2016 report looked at the role of the police and security apparatus:

‘The provisional federal constitution states that the armed forces are responsible for assuring the country’s sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity and that the national federal and state police are responsible for protecting lives, property, peace, and security...

‘AMISOM and the SNA worked to maintain order in areas of the southern and central regions. The FGS [Federal Government of Somalia] regularly relied on NISA [National Intelligence and Security Agency] forces to perform police work, often calling on them to arrest and detain civilians without warrants. Some towns and rural areas in the southern and central regions remained under the control of al-Shabaab and affiliated militias. The Ministry of Defense is responsible for controlling the armed forces...

‘Civilian authorities did not maintain effective control of security forces. Security forces abused civilians and often failed to prevent or respond to societal violence. Although authorities sometimes used military courts to try individuals believed to be responsible for abuse, they generally did not investigate abuse by police, army, or militia members; a culture of impunity was widespread. For example, on August 1 [2016], in Mogadishu an SNA soldier reportedly killed a bus driver during an extortion attempt. The soldier was not arrested.

‘The Ministry of Defense’s control over the army remained tenuous but improved somewhat with the support of international partners. At year’s end the army consisted of between 11,000 and 14,000 soldiers, according to estimates by international organizations. The bulk of forces were located in Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle regions, as well as in the ISWA and IJA. The Ministry of Defense exerted some control over forces in the greater Mogadishu area, extending as far south as Lower Shabelle Region, west to Baidoa, Bay Region, and north to Jowhar, Middle Shabelle Region. Army

⁶³ UN Security Council, Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (Section III), 31 October 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia/> (S/2016/919). Accessed 8 May 2017

forces and progovernment militia sometimes operated alongside AMISOM in areas where AMISOM was deployed.’⁶⁴

- 9.1.2 The UN Security Council’s ‘Report of the Secretary General on Somalia’, published 9 January 2017 and covering major developments between 1 September and 31 December 2016 noted ‘Delays in regular salary payments to Somali security personnel remain a key concern and a major incentive for personnel to desert or, worse, defect. Salary arrears are currently estimated at between 6 and 13 months for soldiers and 15 months for police officers. Donor-funded stipends, however, are paid regularly to the national army, the federal police and 1,000 regional police officers in Baidoa and Kismaayo.’⁶⁵
- 9.1.3 Jane’s, however, in its Sentinel Security Assessment of the Somali army noted in a February 2017 ‘key development’ that, ‘The new Somali president Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed’s [aka Farmaajo] popularity extends to the armed forces. Soldiers stationed close to the presidency - who had been without pay for nine months - told Jane’s on 10 February that Farmaajo’s earlier tenure had been one of the few periods in recent history when they had been paid on time and in full.’⁶⁶
- 9.1.4 The UN Security Council October 2016 update noted:
‘The Monitoring Group received multiple reports implicating federal and regional security forces, as well as local militias, in violations against civilians, whether at roadblocks, in the context of unlawful detention or extrajudicial executions, in pursuit of extortion, for clan revenge or to serve political ends...
‘Both federal and regional administrations increasingly conducted executions, the existence of a formal commitment by the Federal Government to a moratorium notwithstanding.’⁶⁷
- 9.1.5 The UN Security Council’s ‘Report of the Secretary General on Somalia’, published 9 January 2017 and covering major developments between 1 September and 31 December 2016 noted that the government is putting in place measures aimed at countering the threat from Al Shabaab:
‘As part of its evolving counter-terrorism platform, the Federal Government announced its national strategy and action plan for preventing and countering violent extremism in September. Identified therein are key areas for development, with a focus on ensuring an inclusive process, involving Somali civil society, youth and women’s groups, religious leaders and the

⁶⁴ United States Department of State, ‘Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 2016’ (section 1d), 3 March 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265300.htm>. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁶⁵ UN Security Council, ‘Report of the Secretary General on Somalia’ (para 26), 9 January 2017 http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2017_21.pdf. Accessed 8 May 2017

⁶⁶ Jane’s Sentinel Security Assessment – Somalia, February 2017 key development.. Subscription only. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁶⁷ UN Security council, Letter dated 7 October 2016 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council (Section IVB), 31 October 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/somalia/> (S/2016/919). Accessed 15 May 2017

private sector. Since the launch, the Federal Government has aimed to further devolve the strategy for implementation by the [sic] countering violent extremism coordinators at the subfederal level.’⁶⁸

9.1.6 The Security Council’s May 2017 monthly forecast stated:

‘On 6 April [2017], President Farmajo declared Somalia a war zone and offered members of the Islamist militant group Al-Shabaab amnesty, including training, employment and education, if they laid down their arms in the following 60 days. “We want to pardon the Somali youth who were misled by Al-Shabaab,” he said. Farmajo also announced a major shake-up in the security services, in which senior intelligence and police officials have been replaced to prepare for the escalating war against the militants.’⁶⁹

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9.2 AMISOM

9.2.1 [UN Security Resolution 2297 \(2016\)](#), adopted by the Security Council at its 7731st meeting, on 7 July 2016, gave full details of AMISOM’s current mandate. This resolution authorises the Member States of the African Union [AU] to maintain the deployment of AMISOM up to a maximum level of 22,126 uniformed personnel until 31 May 2017.⁷⁰ On 14 June 2017 the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2358 (2017) to extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia until March 2018.⁷¹

9.2.2 AMISOM troop contributing countries are: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. Police contributing countries are: Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda.⁷²

9.2.3 The International Crisis Group, in a 2017 commentary called ‘Somalia: Transforming Hope into Stability’ considered the impact of the possible withdrawal of AMISOM:

‘After AMISOM played a key role in pushing Al-Shabaab’s conventional forces from most urban centres, most troop contributing countries (TCCs) are seeking to depart; at a March [2017] meeting in Nairobi, the TCCs began crafting a plan for the mission’s drawdown. AMISOM Commander General Soubagleh now says the withdrawal could start as early as 2018. But to make this possible, the FGS and federal states will need to improve governance dramatically and end local conflicts in liberated areas.’⁷³

⁶⁸ UN Security Council, ‘Report of the Secretary General on Somalia’ (para 33), 9 January 2017 http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2017_21.pdf. Accessed 8 May 2017

⁶⁹ UN Security Council ‘May 2017 monthly report’ http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2017-05/somalia_29.php. Accessed 10 May 2017

⁷⁰ UN Security Resolution 2297 (2016) [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2297\(2016\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2297(2016)). Accessed 10 May 2017

⁷¹ UN Press Service, ‘Security Council Extends Mandate of United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2358’ 14 June 2017

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc12868.doc.htm> Accessed 27 June 2017

⁷² AMISOM Home page, undated. <http://amisom-au.org/>. Accessed 10 May 2017

⁷³ International Crisis Group, ‘Somalia: Transforming Hope in Stability’ 2017 <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/somalia-transforming-hope-stability>. Accessed 10

9.3 Police force

9.3.1 The USSD report 2016 noted:

‘Police were generally ineffective and lacked sufficient equipment and training. In Mogadishu, for example, police lacked sufficient vehicles to transfer prisoners from cells to courts or to medical facilities. There were reports of police engaging in corrupt practices...

‘Police forces fall under a mix of local and regional administrations and the government. The national police force remained under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Security, while regional authorities maintained police forces under their areas’ interior or security ministries...

‘The federal police force maintained its presence in all 17 districts of the capital. AMISOM-formed police units complemented local and FGS policing efforts in Mogadishu. These police officers provided mentoring and advisory support on basic police duties, respect for human rights, crime prevention strategies, community policing, and search procedures. More than 300 AMISOM police officers worked alongside the formed units to provide training to national police.’⁷⁴

9.3.2 The UN Security Council’s ‘Report of the Secretary General on Somalia’, published 9 January 2017, reported on developments to improve the police service:

‘UNSOM [UN Assistance Mission in Somalia] and UNDP [UN Development Programme] continued to support the implementation of the new federated policing model that was endorsed by the National Leadership Forum in June. While there is strong commitment on the part of the existing and emerging federal member states to developing a decentralized policing model, the momentum that existed at the federal level stalled during the second half of 2016. International advocacy and support will be provided to the incoming Federal Government to promote the implementation of the model and to reinvigorate commitment.

‘The Interim Jubba Administration is authorizing explosive ordnance disposal capacity training for selected members of its police service, with assistance from the Mine Action Service and UNSOM. The initiative supports the comprehensive approach to security, in line with the new policing model. A total of \$2 million was received from Germany for a non-lethal support package for the Somali police. An amount of \$1 million has been assigned to the technical committees for the implementation of the new policing model in each state. The remaining \$1 million will be used to build a police training facility in Kismaayo; the land has been secured and it is expected that construction will begin early in 2017.’⁷⁵

May 2017

⁷⁴ United States Department of State, ‘Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 2016’ (section 1d), 3 March 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265300.htm>. Accessed 9 May 2017

⁷⁵ UN Security Council, ‘Report of the Secretary General on Somalia’ (paras 27 and 28), 9 January 2017 <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3->

9.3.3 AMISOM, in a news release of 28 April 2016, spoke about capacity building in the police force:

‘Gen Hamud [the police force’s commissioner] said the police service, which is receiving training from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), is focusing on internal security and learning from terror attacks that take place in Mogadishu and elsewhere.

‘AMISOM Police Commissioner, Brig. Gen. Anand Pillay, who was also present, said the country’s revamped police force is being structured to accommodate the country’s new federal system of government... “We have revised our concept of operations to align with the new political status. Now we are in all the Somali regions”...

‘AMISOM offers 12 week basic training courses for police before their deployment, followed by on-the-job training.’⁷⁶

9.3.4 A further AMISOM press release of 25 April 2017 stated:

‘More than 200 Jubbaland Police recruits yesterday graduated after completing a three-month training programme conducted by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

‘The 201 policemen and women are the third batch of recruits to graduate in Jubbaland, bringing the total number of officers trained in the state to 600. The increase in number of trained officers is in line with the New Policing Model (NPM), endorsed in June 2016, which calls for the establishment of both state and federal police forces.’⁷⁷

9.3.5 AMISOM also reported:

‘A newly refurbished [and fully equipped] police station was handed over to Jubbaland authorities in Kismaayo, the administrative capital of the Jubbaland state, on Monday [8 May 2017], by the Police component of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), as part of the AU Mission’s support, to policing and maintenance of law and order in Somalia...

‘[The Jubbaland Police Commissioner] explained that the facility would provide the necessary enabling environment for residents to go about their normal duties, without fear or intimidation...

‘Mr. Adan Yussuf, the Director General of Jubbaland’s Ministry of Security, appealed to Jubbaland residents to collaborate with the administration, by pulling forces together, to rebuild the state’s facilities such as police stations.

“Our priority is to be self sustaining. Refurbish our police stations, enhance our security and rely on ourselves for security, because AMISOM will not be here forever,” he emphasized.’⁷⁸

[CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2017_21.pdf](#). Accessed 8 May 2017

⁷⁶ AMISOM, ‘Security Improves In Somalia As Police Force Builds Capacity – SPF Commissioner’ 28 April 2017. <http://amisom-au.org/2016/04/security-improves-in-somalia-as-police-force-builds-capacity-spf-commissioner/>. Accessed 10 May 2017

⁷⁷ AMISOM, More than 200 police recruits graduate in Jubbaland state, 25 April 2017 <http://amisom-au.org/2017/04/more-than-200-police-recruits-graduate-in-jubbaland-state/>. Accessed 10 May 2017

⁷⁸ AMISOM, ‘AMISOM hands over newly refurbished police station to police authorities in Somalia’s

9.4 Private security firms

- 9.4.1 Aljazeera reported in 2013 that, 'The pace of development has been matched by the growth of a fleet of private, armed security officers who now stand guard outside hotels and restaurants.'⁷⁹
- 9.4.2 The Somali Investor, in an article of 9 April 2016 stated, 'In the past, it was not uncommon to see civilians carrying guns in Somalia. Now that is a rare sight. But that does not mean that there are no guns in the hands of civilians. The job of carrying guns has largely been left to private security companies, a new phenomenon in Mogadishu as more business set-up base.'⁸⁰

9.5 The judiciary

- 9.5.1 The USSD report 2016 noted:

'The provisional federal constitution states, "The judiciary is independent of the legislative and executive branches of government." The civilian judicial system, however, remained largely nonfunctional across the country. Some regions established local courts that depended on the dominant local clan and associated factions for their authority. The judiciary in most areas relied on some combination of traditional and customary law, sharia, and formal law. The judiciary was subject to influence and corruption and was strongly influenced by clan-based politics. Authorities did not respect court orders. Civilian judges often feared trying cases, leaving military courts to try the majority of civilian cases...

'Traditional clan elders mediated conflicts throughout the country. Clans frequently used and applied traditional justice practices swiftly. Traditional judgments sometimes held entire clans or subclans responsible for alleged violations by individuals'⁸¹

- 9.5.2 A guest blog, posted 21 November 2016, on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's UK in Somalia site by Adrian Strong, a criminal justice advisor, spoke about how the UK is driving a number of key justice sector projects in Somalia:

'We are helping support mobile courts and access to justice projects; literally bringing the courts to places and people who would otherwise not be able to access the formal justice system, in order to tackle the causes of conflict at root and give the vulnerable and marginalised the opportunity to assert their rights...

Jubbaland state', 9 May 2017. <http://amisom-au.org/2017/05/amisom-hands-over-newly-refurbished-police-station-to-police-authorities-in-somalias-jubbaland-state/>. Accessed 10 May 2017

⁷⁹ Aljazeera, 'In Pictures: Mogadishu boosts security', 19 April 2013 <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2013/04/201341411511289545.html>. Accessed 2 February 2016

⁸⁰ The Somali Investor, 'Demand for private security firms steadily on the rise in Mogadishu', 9 April 2016. <http://somaliiinvestor.so/demand-for-private-security-firms-steadily-on-the-rise-in-mogadishu/> Accessed 15 May 2017

⁸¹ United States Department of State, 'Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 2016' (section 1e), 3 March 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2016/af/265300.htm>. Accessed 9 May 2017

'The Criminal Justice Programme at the Embassy delivers training and support to senior prosecutors and the judiciary to enhance their ability to handle serious criminal cases in accordance with Somalia's international human rights obligations. We also provide technical assistance and support to the Somali Federal Government on legal reform in areas that reflect the UK's values...

'Are we making a difference? A perception survey commissioned by the UN Development Programme reported on 21st September 2016 that 61% of Somali respondents believed the justice system had improved in the last 12 months. 73% reported being satisfied with the justice system as a whole (despite its limitations).'

⁸²

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⁸² FCO, UK in Somalia, 'UK Support to Somalia's Justice System – Governance and Rule of Law go beyond the justice programmes', 21 November 2017. <https://blogs.fco.gov.uk/harrietmathews/2016/11/21/uk-support-to-somalias-justice-system-governance-and-rule-of-law-go-beyond-the-justice-programmes/>. Accessed 16 May 2017

Version control and contacts

Contacts

If you have any questions about this note and your line manager, senior caseworker or technical specialist cannot help you, or you think that this note has factual errors then [email the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

If you notice any formatting errors in this note (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability, you can [email the Guidance, Rules and Forms Team](#).

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **2.0**
- valid from **17 July 2017**

Changes from last version of this note

Updated country information and guidance

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