



**1. Please provide sources reporting the practice of forced recruitment by Al-Shabaab of young men, particularly in relation to threats of physical harm**

The practice of forcibly recruiting young Somali men to join Al-Shabaab by threatening to cut off limbs was first reported in 2009. However, a number of reports have emerged that state that Islamic courts in Al-Shabaab controlled areas are regularly sentencing people convicted of stealing to such punishments. There is a suggestion in at least one source that the two phenomena are linked, whereby young men who refuse to join Al-Shabaab are accused of stealing and punished by amputation:

Somalia—Ismael Khalif Abdulle was on his way home from school when they came to get him.

He feared this might happen, as did every teenager who lived in the neighbourhood of Dayniile, where al Shabab has a stronghold. That's why kids joined, Abdulle says. They didn't believe in a religious obligation to fight; they were just scared, poor and, like him, had grown up with nothing but war. Joining a militia with big guns and deep pockets seemed like a smart thing to do.

But Abdulle wanted to go to school and said so. The two Shabab members who tried to recruit him came back a few days later to teach him a lesson, and this time they brought four truckloads of fighters.

"They pointed their guns at me and told me I was a thief and I was robbing people and took me to their prison," the slight 17-year-old said, his eyes widening as he recounted his capture in an interview with the *Toronto Star* this week.

In the house where they were held, he met three older boys who said they, too, were told they had committed crimes.

Twenty-five days later, the four hungry and thirsty captives were taken to a stadium where a crowd had gathered. "They were holding me tight on my arms and I said, 'Please don't hold me that tight. I'm not running anywhere.' They didn't even answer," Abdulle recalled.

Men in white coats, with masks and surgical gloves, stood around a dirty mattress on the stadium ground. Abdulle was held down first, suddenly thankful for the strong arms on him. "I asked, 'Please tie me tight because when you start I don't want to mistakenly move too much.'"

He doesn't remember when they cut off his left foot because the pain and blood from losing his right hand made him pass out. The severed limbs of the four boys were later hung in the town as a warning.<sup>1</sup>

A victim of a double amputation in *The Washington Post* states that his treatment was political and not for criminal reasons:

On a Friday in October, the Ibrahim brothers - Sayeed and Osman - were taken from their prison cell in the coastal Somali town of Kismaayo. An al-Shabab court had convicted them of robbery, they said, adding that their imprisonment was politically motivated.

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<sup>1</sup> Shephard, M. 2010, 'Al Shabab's reign of terror grips Somalia', *Wardheer News*, source: *Toronto Star*, 30 January [http://wardheernews.com/News\\_10/Jan/30\\_Al\\_Shabab\\_reign\\_of\\_terror\\_grips\\_Somalia.html](http://wardheernews.com/News_10/Jan/30_Al_Shabab_reign_of_terror_grips_Somalia.html) – Accessed 1 July 2010 – Attachment 1

The brothers and a third inmate were driven in a minibus to a field in front of a police station. A crowd of 4,000 had gathered. Ten masked men stood in the field; one held a microphone and another clutched a knife, the brothers recalled.

The third inmate, in his early 20s, was taken out of the van. Several of the masked men held him down and his foot was chopped off above the ankle, the brothers recalled.

It took five minutes.

“God is great,” chanted the fighters, drowning out the screams.

Minutes later, the brothers were taken out of the van. Sayeed looked away as his brother’s leg was sliced off.

“I felt powerless,” Sayeed said. “I wanted a miracle to happen.”

A voice over the loudspeaker announced that Sayeed’s right hand and left leg were to be amputated. By the time his limbs were hacked off, he had passed out. He woke up in a hospital. After 10 days, the brothers fled Kismaayo. In February, relatives hid them inside a crowded minibus and smuggled them into Kenya.

“What they did to us has nothing to do with Islam,” said Osman, as he struggled to get up from a chair with his crutches.<sup>2</sup>

*The Washington Post* also states that boys as young as 10 and 13 were demanded by a local Al-Shabaab commander for the militia. According to the Post, she had to pay a substantial sum:

An al-Shabab commander also sought to recruit two of Allawi’s sons, ages 10 and 13. Allawi begged him not to take them. In exchange, he forced her to buy three weapons for his force.

... Al-Shabab’s religious police, often led by children, order people to put out cigarettes and give haircuts at gunpoint to anyone with modern hairstyles or longish hair, the refugees say. As a warning to those who defy their dictates, al-Shabab fighters have displayed severed heads on steel poles.

A 2010 report on Al-Shabaab for the Danish Justice Ministry cites examples of young men in Kismayo and Bu’ale of having their hands amputated for stealing. Given the claim made by Ismael Khalif Abdulle to the *Toronto Star*, it is plausible that these men were actually guilty of resisting recruitment:

In Kismayo in May 2009, a young man, Mohammed Omar Ismail, had been accused and found guilty of the theft of 10 pairs of trousers, 10 shirts and a few other items, in all valued at about \$90. Though he persistently claimed his innocence he was found guilty by a Sharia court and sentenced to have his right hand amputated; the punishment for thieves according to al-Shabaab. Hundreds of curious spectators had flocked to Kismayo’s park to witness the punishment. The hand was swiftly severed and shown to the crowds as a warning to deter future thieves.<sup>29</sup> In August 2009, a young boy, Mohammed Gelle Yusuf, was accused of stealing 100 US dollars and sentenced to have his right hand amputated. An al-Shabaab court in the town of Bu’ale in the Middle Juba region administered the trial, the verdict, and the execution of the sentence as well.<sup>3</sup>

An April 2010 report in *Afrique en Ligne* states that Human Rights Watch has documented a number of cases of amputations being carried out by Al-Shabaab without due process:

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<sup>2</sup> Raghavan, S. 2010, ‘For Somalis caught between Islamists and weak government, fleeing is only option’, Hiiran Online, source: *The Washington Post*, 17 April [http://www.hiiraan.com/news2/2010/apr/for\\_somalis\\_caught\\_between\\_islamists\\_and\\_weak\\_government\\_fleeing\\_is\\_only\\_option.aspx](http://www.hiiraan.com/news2/2010/apr/for_somalis_caught_between_islamists_and_weak_government_fleeing_is_only_option.aspx) – Accessed 8 July 2010 – Attachment 2

<sup>3</sup> Taarnby, M. & Hallundbaek, L. 2010, *Al-Shabaab: The Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe*, Justice Ministry Denmark, 26 February, p.17 [http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning\\_og\\_dokumentation/Forskningspulje/Taarnby-rapport.pdf](http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning_og_dokumentation/Forskningspulje/Taarnby-rapport.pdf) – Accessed 2 July 2010 – Attachment 3

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania – The Islamist armed group Al-Shabaab is subjecting inhabitants of southern Somalia to killings, cruel punishments, and repressive social control, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a report released Monday.

According to the report, Al-Shabaab, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), and African Union (AU) forces in the war-torn capital, Mogadishu, continue to conduct indiscriminate attacks, killing and wounding numerous civilians.

The 62-page report, ‘Harsh War, Harsh Peace: Abuses by Al-Shabaab, the Transitional Federal Government, and AMISOM in Somalia,’ finds that Al-Shabaab forces have brought greater stability to many areas in southern Somalia, but at a high cost for the local population – especially women.

Based on over 70 interviews with victims and witnesses, the report describes harsh punishments including amputations and floggings, which are meted out regularly and without due process.<sup>4</sup>

*Reuters* states in a 2009 report that double amputations (right hand & left leg) by Al-Shabaab were reported for the first time in June of that year:

MOGADISHU, June 22 (Reuters) – Somali’s al Shabaab insurgents sentenced four teenagers on Monday to each have a hand and a leg amputated as punishment for robbery in a show of power by the hardline Islamists in a Mogadishu stronghold.

It would be the first such double amputation carried out by the rebels, who follow strict sharia law in the parts of south Somalia that they control.

... “Today, the Islamic court sentences these four men who carried out robberies to have their opposite hand and leg amputated,” said Sheikh Abdul Haq, judge of the sharia court in the al Shabaab-held Suqa Holaha area of the Somali capital.

“They robbed mobile phones and people’s belongings.”

The judge did not say when the sentence would be carried out at the hearing, attended by hundreds of residents. Shackled and silent, the teenagers were led away into custody.<sup>5</sup>

The major danger posed to young males by Al-Shabaab is when they accept money from the group and then flee:

So when a recruiter from Al Shabab (whose name means “the youth” in Arabic) gave him \$400 and the promise of a regular salary, Dahir joined willingly. He knew that even if he didn’t survive the war, his family would have a better chance to ward off starvation.

By the time Dahir arrived for six months of training at a camp in the densely forested southern coastal town of Ras Kiamboni, it was clear that he was just one of hundreds of young recruits preparing for war. It was clear, too, that deserting from Shabab – which has declared its allegiance to – would be dangerous.

“When they recruited me, I was told I am going to fight against the African Union troops and against the Transitional Government, which didn’t want an Islamic government,” says Dahir, a talkative young man with a lean frame, who deserted Al Shabab late last year and now lives in hiding.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Human Rights Watch report implicates AMISOM, TFG, Al-Shabaab’ 2010, *Afrique en Ligne*, 19 April <http://www.afriquejet.com/news/africa-news/human-rights-watch-report-implicates-amisom,-tfg,-al-shabaab-2010041947982.html> – Accessed 5 July 2010 – Attachment 4

<sup>5</sup> ‘Somali Islamists order teenagers hands, legs amputated’ 2009, *Reuters*, 22 June <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSLM261120.CH.2400> – Accessed 8 July 2010 – Attachment 5

<sup>6</sup> ‘Somalia’s Al Shabab Recruits ‘Holy Warriors’ with \$400 Bonus’ 2010, Horsheed Media, source: *ABC News*, 21 April <http://horsemedia.net/news/somalias-al-shabab-recruits-holy-warriors-with-400-bonus/> – Accessed 8 July 2010 – Attachment 6

## 2. Please provide information on the ethnic and/or clan makeup of Al-Shabaab

The ethnic makeup of Al-Shabaab is diverse. Initially it appeared to attract large numbers of recruits from the Habre Gedir clan due to the fact that its then leader, Aden Hashi Farah Ayro, was from that clan.<sup>7</sup>

In August 2006, Sheikh Aweys formally declared that Ayro's militia had become the Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahedin, the Mujahedin Youth Movement. Ayro, together with Hassan al-Turki, the former al-Ittihad commander with a strong al-Qaeda affiliation, emerged as the top figures in al-Shabaab, and six training camps in and around Mogadishu were under their control. Somali youth were greatly attracted to this new movement which gave them the opportunity and means to fight back at the widely disliked Ethiopians.

Ayro was perceived as a star, especially within his own sub-clan the Air, but also managed to recruit more widely. He can be said to embody the transition from the first generation of Somali Jihadis to the second which was much younger.<sup>8</sup>

Human Rights Watch claimed in 2007 that Al-Shabaab recruits are largely from the Hawiye and Ogaden clans:

The first group is comprised of members of Al-Shabaab, a well-trained militia and the core of the group that led the Islamic Courts to victory during their rise to power in mid-2006. Many observers believe that Al-Shabaab consisted of between 500 and 700 fighters, largely from the Hawiye and Ogaden clans. Sheikh Hassan Turki is reportedly their spiritual leader while their operational commander is Adan Hashi Ayrow.<sup>9</sup>

Human Rights Watch is also concerned about detention practices by the TFG and Ethiopian forces. Since March TFG security forces, with Ethiopian military backing, have increasingly conducted mass arrests of people suspected of links to the insurgency and have detained many of them without any legal process. The majority of arrests appear to involve members of the Hawiye clan, from which the insurgency derives many of its fighters.<sup>10</sup>

As stated in Country Advice SOM36945, Al-Shabaab has had success in attracting voluntary recruits from marginalised minority clans. Angry, radicalised men and boys from clans or tribes that have been traditionally marginalised by Somalia's dominant clans are said to be disobeying their own tribal elders and are joining the ranks of Al-Shabaab. A June 2010 report in South Africa's *Mail & Guardian* states that some are as young as "14, 15, 16... They empower the young... They go to the young, give them power, the power to face that rotten structure of the tribe, power in the shape of a gun. Power as self esteem and belief... This is why they succeed."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Taarnby, M. & Hallundbaek, L. 2010, *Al-Shabaab: The Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe*, Justice Ministry Denmark, 26 February, p.12 [http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning\\_og\\_dokumentation/Forskningspulje/Taarnby-rapport.pdf](http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning_og_dokumentation/Forskningspulje/Taarnby-rapport.pdf) – Accessed 2 July 2010 – Attachment 3

<sup>8</sup> Taarnby, M. & Hallundbaek, L. 2010, *Al-Shabaab: The Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe*, Justice Ministry Denmark, 26 February, pp.27-30 [http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning\\_og\\_dokumentation/Forskningspulje/Taarnby-rapport.pdf](http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning_og_dokumentation/Forskningspulje/Taarnby-rapport.pdf) – Accessed 2 July 2010 – Attachment 3

<sup>9</sup> Human Rights Watch 2007, *Shell-Shocked: Civilians Under Siege in Mogadishu*, Volume 19, No. 12(a), August, p.28 – Attachment 7

<sup>10</sup> Human Rights Watch 2007, *Shell-Shocked: Civilians Under Siege in Mogadishu*, Volume 19, No. 12(a), August, p.75 – Attachment 7

<sup>11</sup> Abdul-Ahad, G. 2010, 'How Somalia's civil war became new front against al-Qaeda', Ethiomedia.com, source: *Mail & Guardian*, 8 June <http://www.ethiomedia.com/absolute/3339.html> – Accessed 2 July 2010 – Attachment 8

## Attachments

1. Shephard, M. 2010, 'Al Shabab's reign of terror grips Somalia', *Wardheer News*, source: *Toronto Star*, 30 January [http://wardheernews.com/News\\_10/Jan/30\\_Al\\_Shabab\\_reign\\_of\\_terror\\_grips\\_Somalia.html](http://wardheernews.com/News_10/Jan/30_Al_Shabab_reign_of_terror_grips_Somalia.html) – Accessed 1 July 2010.
2. Raghavan, S. 2010, 'For Somalis caught between Islamists and weak government, fleeing is only option', *Hiiran Online*, source: *The Washington Post*, 17 April [http://www.hiiraan.com/news2/2010/apr/for\\_somalis\\_caught\\_between\\_islamists\\_and\\_weak\\_government\\_fleeing\\_is\\_only\\_option.aspx](http://www.hiiraan.com/news2/2010/apr/for_somalis_caught_between_islamists_and_weak_government_fleeing_is_only_option.aspx) – Accessed 8 July 2010.
3. Taarnby, M. & Hallundbaek, L. 2010, *Al-Shabaab: The Internationalization of Militant Islamism in Somalia and the Implications for Radicalisation Processes in Europe*, Justice Ministry Denmark, 26 February [http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning\\_og\\_dokumentation/Forskningspulje/Taarnby-rapport.pdf](http://www.justitsministeriet.dk/fileadmin/downloads/Forskning_og_dokumentation/Forskningspulje/Taarnby-rapport.pdf) – Accessed 2 July 2010.
4. 'Human Rights Watch report implicates AMISOM, TFG, Al-Shabaab' 2010, *Afrique en Ligne*, 19 April <http://www.afriquejet.com/news/africa-news/human-rights-watch-report-implicates-amisom,-tfg,-al-shabaab-2010041947982.html> – Accessed 5 July 2010.
5. 'Somali Islamists order teenagers hands, legs amputated' 2009, *Reuters*, 22 June <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSLM261120.CH.2400> – Accessed 8 July 2010.
6. 'Somalia's Al Shabab Recruits 'Holy Warriors' with \$400 Bonus' 2010, *Horsehead Media*, source: *ABC News*, 21 April <http://horseheadmedia.net/news/somalias-al-shabab-recruits-holy-warriors-with-400-bonus/> - Accessed 8 July 2010.
7. Human Rights Watch 2007, *Shell-Shocked: Civilians Under Siege in Mogadishu*, Volume 19, No. 12(a), August.
8. Abdul-Ahad, G. 2010, 'How Somalia's civil war became new front against al-Qaeda', *Ethiomeia.com*, source: *Mail & Guardian*, 8 June <http://www.ethiomeia.com/absolute/3339.html> – Accessed 2 July 2010.