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15 October 2007

SOM102640.E

Somalia: The sect of Islam followed by the Bravanese ethnic group
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

The Bravanese [also referred to as Bravan or Barawan (Denmark 2000, 38; Institute for Cultural Partnerships 1997)] are an ethnic minority group from the southern Somali town of Brava (ibid.; Denmark 2000, 41). The group is also referred to as "Benadir," a term used to describe several ethnic groups located in the southern coastal region of Somalia (ibid., 38; Institute for Cultural Partnerships 1997). The Bravanese are of mixed Persian, Arab, Portuguese and Spanish origin (Denmark 2000, 41; see also Institute for Cultural Partnerships 1997). The ethnic group reportedly speaks its own language, known as *Jimini* [also called Chimini (Institute for Cultural Partnerships 1997)], which is related to Swahili (Musse Ahmed 2004, 61).

In 1997, the Institute for Cultural Partnerships, an American non-profit organization that strives to "help individuals and communities successfully live, learn, and work in [an] increasingly diverse society" (Institute for Cultural Partnerships n.d.), prepared a report on new refugee arrivals from Somalia, including those of Bravan ethnicity (ibid. 1997). According to the report, the Bravanese belong to the greater Somali clan of Tunni, whose members are Sunni Muslims of the Shafiite rite (ibid.). The report also notes that the Bravanese are "religiously observant and conservative in their practices" (ibid.).

In a 15 October 2007 telephone interview, a representative of the Somali Bravanese Welfare Association in the United Kingdom (UK), a non-profit organization that provides support to Bravanese refugees in the UK, corroborated that the Bravanese practise the Sunni Muslim faith.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Denmark. 2000. Danish Immigration Service. *Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 17 to 24 September 2000*. (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR)
<<http://www.unhcr.org/home/RSDCOI/3ae6a5fa0.pdf>> [Accessed 15 Oct. 2007]

Institute for Cultural Partnerships. 1997. "A Profile of New Refugee Arrivals: The Rer Brava and Shangamas Tunnis from Somalia." <<http://www.culturalpartnerships.org/productspubs/tunnisprofile.asp>> [Accessed 12 Oct. 2007]

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Musse Ahmed, Sadia. 2004. "Traditions of Marriage and the Household." In *Somalia - The Untold Story: The War Through the Eyes of Somali Women*. Edited by Judith Gardner and Judy El Bushra. London: Pluto Press.

Somali Bravanese Welfare Association [UK]. 15 October 2007. Telephone interview with a representative.

_____. N.d. "About Us." <http://www.somalibravanese.com/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1> [Accessed 15 Oct. 2007]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: An associate professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania who specializes in the history of the Horn of Africa did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: Emory Law School - Islamic Family Law, European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), United Kingdom Home Office, United States Department of State, United States Library of Congress.

Publications:

Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World. 2004. Edited by Richard C. Martin. Farmington Hills, Michigan: Thomson Gale.

Encyclopedia of Religious Practices. 2006. Vol.3. Edited by Thomas Riggs. Farmington Hills, Michigan: Thomson Gale.

The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World. 1995. Edited by John L. Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press.

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