



## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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24 September 2004

### SOM42952.E

Somalia: Update to SOM25493.E of 31 October 1996 on the traditional homelands of the Dulbahante and on the circumstances of the Dulbahante in and outside of their traditional homelands (2000 to August 2004)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Dulbahante belong to the Harti, the main subgroup within the Darod (Aug. 2002), which is one of the six major clans within Somalia (The Global Review of Ethnopolitics, March-June 2003; Global IDP Project of Norwegian Refugee Council 2002).

Various sources indicate that the Dulbahante live in the Sool and Sanaag regions, which are at the core of a territorial dispute between the independent-proclaimed State of Somaliland and the autonomous region of Puntland (UN 29 Jan. 2004; UNHCR Aug. 2003; *ibid.* Aug. 2002; BBC 11 June 2004). This information is partially corroborated by an article published in the Paris-based monthly *Le Monde Diplomatique*, which stresses that the Dulbahante are present in the Sanaag region (Apr. 2000), while an article in *The Somaliland Times* insists on the preeminence of the Dulbahante in the Sool Region (8 Mar. 2003).

Two sources locate the Sool and Sanaag regions within Somaliland (IRIN 31 Dec. 2003; ICG 28 July 2003). The Initiative & Referendum Institute of the University of Southern California, an educational and research organization dedicated to the study of initiative and referendum processes throughout the world, reports that the Dulbahante are inhabitants of Somaliland (27 July 2001). However, other sources, when referring either to both regions or to one of them, locate them at the borders between Puntland and Somaliland (*The Somaliland Times* 8 Mar. 2003; *Le Monde Diplomatique* Apr. 2000).

Politically, there was renewed tension between Somaliland and Puntland at the end of December 2003 over the control of the Sanaag and Sool regions (AI 2004; UN 29 Jan. 2004; IRIN 31 Dec. 2003). In reaction to the resolution passed by Somaliland's Parliament strengthening its authority over the Sool and Sanaag regions, Puntland authorities took control of the Las-Anod district in the Sool region (UNSC 12 Feb. 2004; UN 29 Jan. 2004; IRIN 31 Dec. 2003). However, in 2003, the UNHCR reported that Somaliland and Puntland enjoyed "much higher levels of stability ..." than did south-central Somalia (Aug. 2003).

The Dulbahante political allegiance over the Somaliland-Puntland territorial dispute is divided, since there are those who are pro-Somaliland, pro-Puntland or

pro-Mogadiscio (ICG 28 July 2003). However, most of the clans living in Somaliland, including the Dulbahante, are loyal to Puntland (IRIN 31 Dec. 2003).

Economically, the Sool and Sanaag regions depend on livestock (UN 30 Oct. 2003; Horn Relief 2003). According to Horn Relief, more than 70 per cent of the population in the Sanaag region are nomadic pastoralists (2003). However, the poor productivity of the livestock sector caused by drought conditions contributed to the creation of a humanitarian crisis in both the Sanaag and Sool regions (USAID 31 Mar. 2004, UN 30 Oct. 2003; Horn Relief 2003).

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) notes the following factors that have further hurt the ailing livestock sector in the Sanaag and Sool regions: "reduced remittances from overseas, unchecked inflation, cross-border trade restrictions from Ethiopia, and livestock export bans imposed on Somalia and other countries in the Horn of Africa by several Persian Gulf countries" (31 Mar. 2004; see also Horn Relief 2003).

Recent information on the Dulbahante in their non-traditional homelands could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

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.

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Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Several Professors did not respond to requests for information within the times constraints.

**Internet sites, including:** The African Studies Center of the University of Pennsylvania, the European Country of Origin Info Network, US Department of State.

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