



**Somalia – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 17 June 2013**

**Are members of the Hawiye clan and more particularly the Abgaal sub clan adversely treated or subjected to forced recruitment by al-Shabab in Somalia? Are teenage boys at particular risk of forced recruitment by al-Shabab in Somalia?**

A report on a joint Danish Immigration Service & Norwegian Landinfo fact-finding mission to Somalia, in a section titled “Al-Shabaab and forced recruitment in Mogadishu” (section 2.2.4), states:

“According to a local NGO in Mogadishu (B) those most likely to be targeted by al-Shabaab for recruitment would be youngsters, often without family or close relatives, the disadvantaged and the minorities with less resources. Al-Shabaab has also recruited among some of the smaller Hawiye clans for instance Duduble and Murusade, whereas for example an Abgal of the Sa’ad sub-clan is less likely to be recruited to al-Shabaab. That does not mean they are not recruited but rather there are less [recruitment] of these clans.”  
(Danish Immigration Service & Norwegian Landinfo (4 January 2013) *Update on security and human rights issues in South-Central Somalia, including in Mogadishu*, p.30)

In a section titled “Clan affiliation: protection, human rights and property claims” (section 4.1) this report states:

“According to an international NGO working in S/C Somalia (A) the majority of the population in Mogadishu are Abgal from the Hawiye clan. The districts of Bondheere, Shibis, Karan, Abdiaziz and Yaqshid are Abgal dominated while Hodan district is dominated by the Habr Gedir sub-clans Sa’ad and Eyr. The DC of Hodan is Eyr. However, all clans are represented in Mogadishu but clans such as Rahanweyne, Isak and Darod are to be considered as ‘guests’ in Mogadishu and members of these clans will need to seek protection from the Abgal clans. Visitors from Hargeisa will also need protection when they come to Mogadishu to do business. However, the international NGO added that al-Shabaab does not target persons only because of their clan affiliation. Killings are not a clan issue any longer, but al-Shabaab always ensure that someone it wants to kill will be killed by members of the victims own sub-clan.” (ibid, p.51)

A Human Rights Watch report, in a section titled Recruitment and Use of Children as Soldiers”, states:

“Human Rights Watch interviews with Somalis who have fled Somalia since early 2010 indicate that forced recruitment and abductions have intensified in line with an upsurge in fighting. A significant proportion of children interviewed said they were forcibly taken from their schools, though many others recounted being abducted from playgrounds, football (soccer) fields, markets,

and homes, primarily by al-Shabaab militants. Girls and boys have both been targeted, with girls taken primarily for domestic duties and boys taken to be trained for combat or other work on the front lines. The ever-present reality of forced recruitment and abduction has caused children to leave school, often fleeing the country with their families.” (Human Rights Watch (20 February 2012) *No Place for Children: Child Recruitment, Forced Marriage, and Attacks on Schools in Somalia*, p.19)

In a section titled “Al-Shabaab” this report states:

“Former child recruits and child and adult witnesses described to Human Rights Watch how al-Shabaab forces took children to their training camps throughout 2010 and 2011. Most of the children were reportedly between ages 15 and 18 but some were as young as 10 years old. From the camps they were sent to the front lines or forced to act as porters, spies, and suicide bombers. Children have been injured, maimed, and killed. Al-Shabaab’s recruitment of children has been widely reported. Forced recruitment of children became common practice in 2009, but by April 2010 anecdotal reports indicated that child recruitment increased significantly and has shown no signs of reducing. While exact numbers of children recruited by al-Shabaab is unknown, in April 2011 a report from the UN secretary-general cited military sources stating that al-Shabaab abducted an estimated 2,000 children for military training in 2010.” (ibid, p.20)

See also section titled “Recruitment of Children from Schools” which states:

“Al-Shabaab has used schools to recruit boys and girls, both by subjecting them to organizational propaganda and by force, as detailed above. ‘They target schools as they see them as recruiting grounds, but also because they see school and education as a waste of time,’ said 16-year-old Khorfa. “‘Why go to school when you could be fighting?’ is their view.’ Of the 23 children Human Rights Watch interviewed who were recruited or abducted by al-Shabaab in 2010 and 2011, 14 were taken from their schools or en route. Twenty-four other students told us that al-Shabaab took children from their schools or on the way during this same time period. The methodical manner in which al-Shabaab has used schools as recruiting grounds was recounted with meticulous detail by many of the students interviewed. They reported that al-Shabaab regularly visited schools and forcibly removed children individually, often at gunpoint, from classrooms. On other occasions, they lined up students and faculty en masse in the school compound and selected children they deem fit to serve as fighters, suicide bombers, wives, or for domestic duties who they then take back to their training camps. Witnesses to these sweeps on schools said that the students had little to no chance of refusing without the risk of being beaten or killed.” (ibid, p.70)

An IRIN News report states:

“Civil society sources in Mogadishu estimate there are between 1,000 and 2,000 children in the ranks of Somalia’s Al-Shabab insurgency, some as young as nine.” (IRIN News (18 October 2011) *Somalia: Tempted with a phone to carry a gun*)

This report also states:

“A civil society source, who requested anonymity, told IRIN that Al-Shabab had been on a recruiting campaign since just before withdrawing from Mogadishu in July. ‘They do recruit people by force and we know of families whose relatives were forcibly taken, but that is half the story. They also entice young children, especially adolescent children, who don’t go to school and have nothing else to do, with money, phones and other things that may appeal to them.’ He said they preyed mostly on the children of the very poor in IDP camps, adding that the group not only gave small gifts to these children, ‘but also a sense of belonging to a bigger group and convinced them they are worthy of something’.” (ibid)

An Amnesty International report, in a section titled “Recruitment Of Children By Armed Groups” (sub-section headed “Age and Targets”), states:

“Most children recruited by armed groups appear to belong in the age bracket between 12 and 18 years old. However, refugees have told Amnesty International that even children as young as eight years old have been recruited by armed Islamist groups.” (Amnesty International (20 July 2011) *In the Line of fire: Somalia’s Children Under Attack*, p.23)

This section of the report also states:

“According to the testimonies collected by Amnesty International, the areas where recruitment of children, particularly young children, has been especially intense are Mogadishu, Brava, Kismayo, Baidoa, the Sakow district in the Middle Juba region and the Gedo region, areas which for the past three years were firmly under the control of al-Shabab, but are now disputed. In other areas, local al-Shabab factions appear to target children from about the age of 15 years for recruitment. Variations around the ages of children targeted for recruitment seem to depend on local factors. Although this report focuses on the recruitment and use of children by fighting forces, Amnesty International has also received many testimonies pointing to the forced recruitment of young men, from the ages of 18 to 25, by al-Shabab factions.” (Amnesty International (20 July 2011) *In the Line of fire: Somalia’s Children Under Attack*, p.24)

In a section titled “Recruitment Methods” this report states:

“Somali refugees’ testimonies point to various methods used by al-Shabab to recruit children. They range from luring children to join them by promising phones and money, ideological indoctrination in mosques, using children previously recruited as recruitment agents to more aggressive techniques such as threats to children and their relatives, raids on schools, abductions in public areas and from vehicles departing the country. Somali refugees who fled the country in late 2009 and early 2010 described more threatening recruitment methods than those who had fled in 2008 and earlier. This could indicate that al-Shabab is increasingly resorting to forcible recruitment.” (ibid, p.25)

See also 2013 Amnesty International annual report for Somalia which, in a section titled “Child soldiers”, states:

“Al-Shabab continued to forcibly recruit children before and during military operations. Most were sent to the front line.” (Amnesty International (23 May 2013) *Annual Report 2013 – Somalia*)

A report on a joint Danish Immigration Service & Norwegian Landinfo fact-finding mission, in a section titled “Targeted killings/attacks by al-Shabaab” (section 1.3), quotes the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) as follows:

“UNDSS added that there are fewer reports recently of al-Shabaab undertaking forced recruitment in S/C Somalia, but that does not necessarily mean there is less forced recruitment, though some clans are increasingly unwilling to support al-Shabaab. A UN agency, Nairobi, stated that forced recruitment to al-Shabaab only occurs in areas controlled by al-Shabaab. Thus, forced recruitment does not occur in Mogadishu now.” (Danish Immigration Service & Norwegian Landinfo (8 May 2013) *Security and protection in Mogadishu and South-Central Somalia*, p.13)

In a section titled “AMISON, SNAF and Ethiopian presence, public support for al-Shabaab” (section 3.1), this report states:

“Another reason for public discontent is the push of clans to supply recruits for al-Shabaab’s militias. Al-Shabaab is demanding young men to participate in its Jihad against the SNG and the international forces. Al-Shabaab not only recruits among the people, they are also expected to deliver firearms to al-Shabaab. The overall result is a growing discontent among the public in areas controlled by al-Shabaab. It was added by the international NGO (A), Nairobi that the heavy taxation imposed by al-Shabaab is much more than Zakat allows for. Al-Shabaab’s original strategy was to support the marginalized people in Somalia, i.e. the ethnic minority groups, IDPs and the weak and smaller clans. Thus al-Shabaab gained widespread support from those groups especially when it reallocated land previously taken from them by armed clans. However, today al-Shabaab has gone far beyond its original ideology and strategy. Support for al-Shabaab is rapidly declining and diminishing and many young people are fleeing areas under control of al-Shabaab as they fear being forcibly recruited to al-Shabaab. A UN agency, Nairobi, explained that al-Shabaab also undertake round ups of people in areas under its control. These round ups are mainly to recruit fighters into al-Shabaab.” (ibid, p.36)

This section of the report also states:

“Regarding forced recruitment and violations against children Peter Klansoe explained that al-Shabaab recruits between 80 and 100 child soldiers per month in S/C Somalia and there are significant violence incidents affecting children and the entire population in this area of Somalia These violations include killings, mutilations, recruitments, sexual violence, forced marriages, abductions and attacks on schools and hospitals. The total number of child violations documented and verified in S/C Somalia was approximately 230 in March 2013 alone. The number of such violations against children maintains a high rate since January 2013, especially abductions which most often will result in recruitment into armed groups whereas girls were abducted for the purpose of being married off to al-Shabaab fighters and other members.” (ibid, p.37)

A report to the UN General Assembly, in paragraph 121, states:

“In 2012, the country task force documented 4,660 cases of violations against children, of which 2,051 concerned recruitment and use of children (2,008 boys and 43 girls). Children were reportedly recruited by armed forces and armed groups from camps for internally displaced persons, schools and villages. Al-Shabaab also coerced teachers into enlisting pupils.” (UN General Assembly (15 May 2013) *Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General (May 2013) - Somalia excerpt*)

See also paragraph 122 which states:

“Al-Shabaab was the main perpetrator (1,789 cases of recruitment and use of children), followed by the Somali National Armed Forces (179 cases).” (ibid)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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