Danish Immigration Service

Report on Minority Groups in Somalia

17 to 24 September 2000

Copenhagen, 2000

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1. Background

A relatively large number of Somali asylum seekers in some European countries claim to belong to one of the so-called minority groups[1] in Somalia. This is the case in Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Information on the security and human rights situation as well as on the relations between these minority groups and the so-called major Somali clans[2] in Somalia is fragmented and to some degree uncertain. This lack of information may be attributed to the large numbers of minority group members that have fled Somalia since the outbreak of the civil war and the poor security situation in their traditional homelands, making reliable information from these areas difficult to obtain. Also, there has been no detailed study of the position of minority groups undertaken since Cassanelli's report on vulnerable minorities for the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board in 1995.[3]

Against this background, and in view of the large number of minority group members from Somalia that are refugees in Kenya, the British Home Office, the Danish Immigration Service and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to carry out a joint fact-finding mission to Nairobi. The mission was carried out from 17 – 24 September 2000. The delegation of the mission comprised Louise Anten, Co-ordinator Africa Region, Department of Asylum and Migration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Netherlands; Jens Weise Olesen, Senior Regional Adviser (Africa), Danish Immigration Service, Denmark, and Richard Pearce-Higginson, Somalia Country Officer, Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office, United Kingdom (UK). The delegation's terms of reference are attached as annex 2.

The delegation wishes to express its gratitude towards those agencies, organisations and individuals that have contributed to the information presented in this report, especially representatives of Somali minority communities in Somalia and Kenya; United Nations Co-ordination Unit for Somalia (UNCU-Somalia), Nairobi; United Nations Development Programme for Somalia (UNDP-Somalia), Nairobi; United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), Nairobi; War-torn Societies Project (WSP), Nairobi/Hargeisa; and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Nairobi.

The report was finalised on 24 November 2000. Developments that took place between the end of the mission and this date have been included in the report, on the basis of UN and press reports.

[1] For the purposes of this report, the term "minority groups" is that used by Cassanelli, i.e. any clans or communities that do not belong genealogically to one of the four major "noble" clan-families of Darod, Hawiye, Isaaq or Dir. "Noble" in this sense refers to the widespread Somali belief that members of the major clans are descended from a common Somali ancestor, and that the minority clans/groups have a different, usually mixed, parentage. The Digil and Mirifle (or Rahanweyn) clans take, in many aspects, an intermediate position between the main Somali clans and the minorities and a separate chapter on their situation is included in this report.

[2] The word 'clan' in this report is used as the persons who were interviewed used it, and as Somalis usually use it. This means that it may indicate different levels of lineage; 'clan' might therefore mean 'clan-family', 'clan' or 'sub-clan', depending on the context.

[3] Cassanelli, Lee, Victims and Vulnerable Groups in Southern Somalia (Ottawa 1995)

2. Introduction to sources and methodology

During its mission to Nairobi, the joint British, Danish and Dutch delegation held meetings with a number of representatives, elders and women of Somali minority communities, some of them living as refugees in Kenya. These meetings included the Bajuni, the Bantu, the Eyle, the Madhiban and the Tunni communities as well as various Benadir communities (among which the Ashraf and Bravanese). Representatives of these groups were identified with the assistance of United Nations (UN) agencies in Nairobi. The delegation also held meetings with representatives of UN agencies and embassy staff of the countries concerned as well as with independent observers. A list of persons consulted may be found at section 12.

It should be noted that the sections on the Shekhal and the Digil and Mirifle (Rahanweyn) are based partly on written historical and anthropological sources. The delegation to Nairobi did not meet with representatives of the Shekhal or Digil and Mirifle clans.

This report includes information gathered not only from interviews and meetings in Nairobi in September 2000 but also information obtained during earlier Danish and Nordic fact-finding missions to Somalia and to Nairobi, a Dutch mission to Somalia and Nairobi, from the British Home Office and from a meeting that a member of the delegation held with UNHCR, Branch Office for Kenya, on 28 September 2000.

The testimonies from individuals and spokespersons of Somali minority groups included in this report must be considered in the actual and historical context of the time in which they underwent their experiences. Many members of minority groups in Somalia experienced extreme situations during the civil war in their home country and are thus deeply affected by their experiences. Some suffered personally from such severe physical human rights violations and/or witnessed such violations that it was very difficult for these persons to relate their stories to the delegation without being painfully affected by their own memories and some of the questions asked by the delegation.

The civil war in Somalia was to a large extent a clan-based war[4], a very violent and destructive war in which the various population groups and clans have accused each other of committing physical violence and abuses, including murder, rape, abduction, looting etc. Beyond any doubt, the minority populations, especially in central and southern Somalia, have suffered severe losses in human as well as material terms. Because it can be difficult to identify impartial sources of information among members of the Somali diaspora, and because of the risk of one-sidedness and possible exaggerations, the delegation has included other sources in its report in addition to the testimonies of the representatives of the Somali minority groups.

The report also includes information from a number of written sources. Among these are documents, reports, books etc. from UN agencies, news agencies, humanitarian Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and researchers on Somalia.

The delegation learned that in some cases it is very difficult to obtain definitive answers to questions on minority groups regarding their sub-groups, their affiliations and other relations, including the incidence of intermarriage, with Somali clans, whether one puts these questions to members of the minority groups themselves or to members of Somali clans. Such information is sensitive and neither of the two sides is very willing to admit being either despised or an oppressor, or be vulnerable before stronger groups in a position of power. Also, statements about one's

[4] In the sense that the clan system was used to mobilise people, not in the sense that the causes of the civil war lay in the clan system; the war was very much about access to power and resources.

affiliations are in part cultural and political statements, in the sense that they declare one's identity and political standpoint.

Furthermore, as the French researcher Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos[5] explains, the war, the persecution, the exodus of groups to e.g. Kenya and the resettlement programmes for Somali refugees in Kenya, precipitated the process of identity construction. In Mombasa, where many refugees gathered, the logic of humanitarian aid, as well as idleness, the concentration of refugees in small, relatively homogeneous camps, and finally resettlement criteria all helped towards a reconstruction of identities around the concept of minority status. Since resettlement in the West is limited, very strict selection criteria were developed by Western countries to favour the most threatened people. In this context, minority status was equated to discrimination and therefore the need for resettlement. Consequently, refugees made significant historical changes in the establishment of a 'minority position'. For example, descendants of Bantu slaves, for whom a resettlement was planned in the land of their ancestors in Tanzania, preferred to be called Mushunguli rather than Gosha, the name they were given in Somalia. Also, the mixed race traders of the coastal ports decided to regroup under the generic term 'Benadir' that designates greater Mogadishu. As a result, those indigenous to the area succeeded in calling themselves 'Benadiri' even if they were not of mixed blood at all. This reconstruction of identity does not in any way alter the fact that minorities would, for a number of reasons, have problems on returning to Somalia.

Perouse de Montclos notes that the criteria used by Westerners to sort out candidates for resettlement were equally faulty, confusing a community's identity with territoriality. Brava, for example, was chosen to define traders of Arab or Indian origin who inhabited the port. However, on looking closer at Brava we discover communities with very diverse backgrounds despite numerous instances of intermarriage. On the one hand there are immigrants of Arab origin, while on the other hand there are the Somali of the Brava surroundings, whose minority status is more doubtful because they are part of the Tunni lineage of the Digil.

Perouse de Montclos concludes that the concept of minority is quite ambiguous and that its manipulation by refugees hardly clarifies it. All these minorities form a third of the Somali population (when the Digil/Mirifle are included). It is the civil war that created a sense of 'political solidarity' or 'common minority consciousness', assimilated with that of a victim. The minority notion is thus taken with a conflict dimension, outside of any demographical contingencies. The degree of discrimination overrides the number, be it a question of social class (the low caste *sab*), professional categories (Bajuni fishermen) or foreign elements (the traders of Arab origin).

The delegation learned that in some cases minority groups living as refugees in Kenya have developed a very strong sense of common political solidarity and identity, which may not have been so pronounced when these people were living in Somalia before the civil war of the 1990s. Members of certain minority groups are ready to identify themselves with groups or sub-groups with which they may not have had such a close relationship when they were living in Somalia. Some refugees would even label themselves by terms that were never in use before the war. According to UN sources in Nairobi the term 'Benadiri' was not in common use before the war, but today a number of minority populations living along the southern Somali coast are ready to identify themselves as Benadiri, and they will use the label for the purpose of being recognised as belonging to a minority group.

[5] Marc-Antoine Perouse de Montclos, Minorities and discrimination, Exodus and reconstruction of identities: the case of Somali refugees in Mombasa, ORSTOM (October 1997).

In the Human Development Report Somalia (1998) the authors draw attention to the fluidity of Somali clan identity, which is often poorly understood by outsiders. Firstly, each Somali can trace back his or her genealogy over thirty generations, giving Somalis membership in many sub-clans on their family tree. Which level in one's lineage is mobilised as one's "clan" depends entirely on the issue at hand. For example, in the past decade of stateless conflict, broad clan conflict between the Darod and Hawiye clan-families has over time devolved into much lower levels of clan identity. Secondly, clan links can be shifted and rediscovered according to the situation at hand. Clans migrating out of their home area will often take on the identity of the dominant clan (*shegad* status). If the situation dictates, they will rediscover their old lineage. Maternal clan links often provide vital flexibility for individuals conducting business or seeking security across clan lines. Thus, while the Somali clan system is usually portrayed as a fixed family tree, it is a tree on which a good deal of grafting takes place.[6]

UNHCR-Nairobi recently prepared an overview of Somali clans and groups, with their areas of residence. UNHCR stresses that the overview is not a definitive document and that it should be taken mainly as an orientation tool. The document is annexed to this mission report (annex 3). As can be seen, the UNHCR overview generally corresponds with the findings of the mission, although there are slight differences (which will be specified in the chapters on the minority groups of this report).

It would seem that in reality, genealogically speaking, many of the minority groups could be anywhere on a scale of genealogical affiliation (through intermarriages), running from complete separateness to complete assimilation, and that what they say about their affiliations is as much a political statement as a historical or genealogical fact.

Names of minority groups are not always consistently used by the various persons interviewed by the delegation, and by various authors. In the first part of the chapters of this report dedicated to the various minority groups an attempt is made to clarify which names are in use for which groups.

A number of representatives from the various minority groups and international organisations requested that they should remain unidentified in this report. Their requests have been respected. The identity of all persons consulted during the mission is however known to the delegation.

The joint delegation to Nairobi did not visit Somalia on this occasion as the political and security situation in parts of Somalia is deeply affected by the present tense relations between various politically minded clan-based groups and administrations. This situation is to a large degree related to the peace-conference that took place in Arta, Djibouti and the establishment in August 2000 of a Somali "Parliament" in Arta, the so-called Transitional National Assembly (TNA), which is now in the process of establishing itself in Mogadishu.

The current political developments and the overall security situation in Somalia will be presented in more detail in the following section of the report. More detailed information on the security and human rights situation of the minority groups in Somalia covered in this report will be found in the sections covering particular minority groups below. These sections also contain information on the minority groups' and sub-groups' geographical distribution in Somalia, language, socio-economic situation and relationship to other population groups and clans, and, in some cases, information on the situation of Somali minority refugees in Kenya.

[6] UNDP-Somalia, Human Development Report Somalia 1998

In the report, care is taken to present the views of the various spokespersons in a transparent way. Unless otherwise indicated, all statements within a paragraph are to be attributed to the source mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph.

3. Overall political developments and the security situation in Somalia

3.1 Arta peace process in Djibouti

For the purpose of being updated on recent political developments and the security situation in Somalia, the delegation met with David Stephen, Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS); Bernard Harborne, Chief, UN Co-ordination Unit for Somalia (UNCU); Wayne Long, Chief Security Officer, UN Development Programme for Somalia (UNDP-Somalia) and Matt Bryden, Co-ordinator, War-torn Societies Project (WSP), all of whom informed the delegation of developments following from the Arta peace conference held in Djibouti. Please note that some of the details of the recent political developments in Somalia have been filled out with news reports from BBC and CNN.

A peace conference chaired by Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh opened in May 2000 at Arta, Djibouti with the backing of the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) grouping of states, the UN, the European Union (EU) and the League of Arab States. This was the 13th major peace effort for Somalia since the collapse of central government in 1991, and, significantly, the first peace initiative that set out to work around civil society rather than the armed clan-factions.[7]

Nearly 2,000 delegates, including clan elders, religious leaders, businessmen and intellectuals, attended the Arta conference, with the aim of drafting a power-sharing arrangement and a constitution to see Somalia through a three-year transitional period.[8] Some leaders of armed clan-factions attended, most notably Ali Mahdi of Mogadishu's Abgal USC/SSA faction. Absent from the conference were the authorities of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland in the north-west and the Puntland State of Somalia in the north-east, and Mogadishu "warlords" Hussein Aideed, Musa Sude, Osman Ato, Mohamed Qanyare and Hussein Bod. David Stephen informed the delegation that a formula to include the clan-faction leaders in the peace process could not be agreed at Arta but efforts continue, led at present by the Yemeni President, to find a way for them to be able to participate in the new institutions.

3.2 Transitional National Assembly (TNA) and new President

In August 2000 the Arta delegates elected 172 members of a 245-member provisional parliament for Somalia, the so-called Transitional National Assembly (TNA), for a three-year period. The TNA is structured along clan lines. There are 49 seats for each of the main Somali clan-families, the Dir (including the Isaaq), Hawiye, Darod and Digil-Mirifle (Rahanweyn), plus 29 seats reserved for members of the minority groups, referred to at Arta as the "Alliance Clans Community". The seats allocated to the main clan-families are divided out amongst the various clans and sub-clans, with five seats for each clan-family reserved for women. President Guelleh of Djibouti was mandated to

[7] Government-in-exile for Somalia?, BBC News Online, 24.7.2000.
[8] Somalia's new civilian leader, BBC News Online, 29.8.2000.

select twenty members of the TNA, to correct any possible imbalances in the assembly's composition. Annex 4 shows the division of seats among the various clans and groups.

The TNA elected Abdiqassim Salad Hassan as President of Somalia for a three-year transitional period from among 24 candidates. Abdiqassim's election received public backing from the UN, EU and League of Arab States. Abdiqassim, a Hawiye of the Habr Gedir sub-clan Ayr, was Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister under Siad Barre.[9] He has received the support of business interests, Ali Mahdi (who had stood against him for the presidency) and the Islamic Shari'a courts, some of which have pledged the support of their militias to his new authority to enable it to establish itself in Mogadishu. Abdallah Derow Isaak, Secretary-General of the Rahanweyn Resistance Army (RRA), was elected as Speaker of the TNA.

In October 2000, Abdiqassim appointed as Prime Minister Ali Khalif Galayadh, a businessman and prominent member of the northern Dulbahante clan of the Darod. Abdiqassim asked Galayadh to form a "government of national reconciliation and reconstruction". Galayadh served briefly as Industry Minister under Siad Barre. However, Abdiqassim's administration has yet to establish a permanent base inside Somalia. Neither has he held any discussions with the authorities in Somaliland and Puntland, which stayed away from the Arta conference and have refused to recognise his authority or status as President, or solved the problem of how to include leaders of armed clan-factions that have so far opposed the Arta peace initiative. Abdiqassim has begun to consolidate his position internationally with a round of foreign visits, including to UN headquarters.

Abdiqassim made his first visit to Somalia in his new capacity as interim President when he visited Baidoa in early September 2000. Thousands of people attended a rally in Baidoa to welcome him. He made a surprise visit to Mogadishu later in September 2000 and met with no resistance to his visit from the clan-faction leaders that had threatened to oppose any such visit to the capital. Four of the armed clan-faction leaders were in Yemen for talks with the Yemeni government at the time of Abdiqassim's visit to Mogadishu.[10]

25 of the seats in the TNA are reserved for women. This represents a major breakthrough in women's rights and is the first time that women have been guaranteed parliamentary representation in Somalia. Abdiqassim has spoken of the important position of women, who constitute over half the population of Somalia, and has stated his intention of including women in his government.[11]

There are also 29 seats in the TNA reserved for members of the minority groups, including five seats reserved for women from the minorities. The UN regards the position and treatment of women and minorities as very important. David Stephen stressed that the UN will, to a large extent, measure the success of the new institutions created by the Arta conference by how well they deal with issues surrounding women and minorities. David Stephen informed the delegation that Abdiqassim has some family connections with the Benadiri and that he has appointed a former Somali Ambassador to India, Mohammed Osman Omar, who is a Reer Hamar, as his chef de cabinet.

David Stephen informed the delegation that the transitional charter agreed at Arta provides for a human rights commission and a land commission. He believes that if the Somaliland administration is ever to participate in the new structures established at Arta it will want the issue of human rights abuses committed in the north-west in the late 1980s and early 1990s by the Siad Barre regime

[9] Somalis elect veteran politician as president, CNN, 26.8.2000
[10] Baidoa welcomes Somalia's president, BBC News Online, 1.9.2000.
[11] Somali women find a voice, BBC News Online, 6.9.2000.

placed high on the agenda of any commission. David Stephen informed the delegation that the TNA includes two members that Somaliland regards as major human rights violators, General Morgan and General Gani. Gani has already taken his seat at Arta. Morgan did not attend the Arta conference but was nominated by his clan for a TNA seat.

All representatives of the UN agencies emphasised that continued Rahanweyn (Digil-Mirifle) support for the new structures established at Arta will be crucial. The TNA may establish itself in Somalia at Baidoa, controlled by the RRA, if an early move to Mogadishu cannot take place for security reasons. Continued Rahanweyn support for Abdiqassim and the TNA is likely to depend largely on progress on the issue of land. Hawiye militias occupied large tracts of Rahanweyn land during the civil war and Rahanweyn delegates at Arta insisted that the land issue be given a high priority and that the creation of a land commission was incorporated in the national charter. Hawiye delegates at Arta expressed their willingness to resolve land problems but made no specific commitments to return occupied land. The RRA is presently divided between those supporting Rahanweyn participation in the Arta process, as favoured by traditional Rahanweyn elders, and those, including prominent RRA leaders, who oppose it.

All representatives of the UN agencies stressed that one of Abdiqassim's earliest priorities must be to establish an effective police force in Mogadishu and demobilise the existing clan-based militias in the city (see also Section 3.3.5).

Somaliland and Puntland remain outside the Arta process and neither administration is recognised under the Arta agreements as a legitimate authority. Although the transitional charter agreed at Arta allows for federalism, it does so on the basis of the 18 administrative regions established under Siad Barre's government. Seats are allocated in the TNA for the clans and minorities that inhabit the territories controlled by the Somaliland and Puntland authorities.

3.2.1 Position of North West Somalia (Somaliland)

Although President Mohamed Ibrahim Egal's self-declared Somaliland administration stayed away from Arta, there was nevertheless strong representation by delegates from the Dulbahante, Warsangeli, Issa, Gadabursi and some Isaaq clans, though not the Habr Awal or Habr Yunis. David Stephen believes that there is more openness in Somaliland, and Puntland, towards the Arta process than the authorities are prepared to concede, and the public have been well-informed about developments at Arta through television and radio.

Wayne Long considered that Egal's administration has shown increasing signs of paranoia towards the developments at Arta. Habeas Corpus[12] has been suspended and civil rights curtailed, with new powers being given to the police and military to detain people. There is reported to be a wanted list circulating in Hargeisa of those who attended the Arta conference. Also, David Stephen informed the delegation, the Somaliland authorities have begun to issue "Somaliland" passports, a measure that they have previously refrained from.

While much of the Somaliland authorities' actions and statements over Arta may be viewed as rhetoric, in September 2000, a Dulbahante member of the new TNA and former member of the Somaliland parliament, Garaad Abshir Salah, was arrested on his return to Somaliland from Djibouti and sentenced to seven years in gaol for treason.[13] His arrest was seen by many as a

[12] In law Habeas Corpus means a writ issued by a court commanding that a person held in custody be brought before a court so that the court may determine whether the detention is lawful. It is a safeguard against illegal imprisonment.
[13] Somali MP arrested in Somaliland, BBC News Online, 4.9.2000.

gesture by President Egal to demonstrate that he is still in charge in Somaliland. Some 60 to 80 delegates from the Somaliland area attended the Arta conference and only Garaad has been arrested to date. In early October 2000, Garaad was pardoned by Egal and released from prison. Opinion in Somaliland over the Arta process is divided and in late August 2000 thousands of people in Somaliland staged demonstrations against the Arta conference and Abdiqassim.[14] David Stephen stated that there is strong opposition to the Djibouti peace process and the Transitional National Government (TNG) from pro-Somaliland movements such as the "Red Flag Group".

The Somaliland, and Puntland, authorities have accused Abdiqassim of being an Islamic fundamentalist. David Stephen considered that although Abdiqassim is very religious, he should not be regarded as a fundamentalist and it may be the intention of the Somaliland and Puntland authorities to discredit him in the eyes of the West, and Ethiopia, which traditionally has concerns about militant Islam in the region.

3.2.2 Position of North East Somalia (Puntland)

The Puntland administration was initially willing to participate in the Arta conference, but most of its delegation withdrew early in the proceedings. However, a few members of the delegation remained at the conference, led by Hassan Abshir, who was Puntland's Minister for Home Affairs. Abshir became the chairman of the Arta conference. Puntland's President Abdullahi Yusuf saw Abshir's continued participation in the conference as a challenge to his authority. Yusuf has stated that he will only talk with Abdiqassim if he withdraws his claim to be President of all Somalia, makes various amendments in Puntland's favour to the transitional charter drawn up at Arta and de-recognises the delegates from Puntland who remained at Arta.

A large number of the delegates from the north-east that remained at the Arta conference have been able to return to Puntland without arrest, although this may possibly be because they have supporters backed by militia to defend them against the Puntland authorities if necessary. There have been limited skirmishes around Galkayo between supporters and opponents of the Arta conference but these have been contained so far. It was reported in September 2000 that several commanders in Puntland had been dismissed for failing to arrest people returning from the Arta conference.[15]

Wayne Long considered it likely that Abdiqassim would appoint a Prime Minister from the Darod clans to balance the interests of the main Somali clan-families. Abdullahi Yusuf had been suggested as a possible Prime Minister, despite his hostile public stance towards the Arta conference. Another possible Darod contender for the post was Hassan Abshir. Both Yusuf and Abshir are Majerteen but from different sub-clans. There was thus scope for a serious split in Puntland within the Majerteen clan. In October 2000 Abdiqassim appointed a former industry minister under Siad Barre, Ali Khalif Galayadh, a Darod from the Dulbahante clan, to be Prime Minister. Potential remains, however, for a border conflict south of Galkayo, where Hawiye clans, who have generally supported the Arta process, populate the area bordering Puntland.

[14] Baidoa welcomes Somalia's president, BBC News Online, 1.9.2000.
[15] Somali MP arrested in Somaliland, BBC News Online, 4.9.2000.

3.2.3 Prospects for a central authority in Somalia

All representatives of the UN agencies considered that it is much too early to predict whether or not Abdiqassim will be successful in establishing a central government for Somalia with any meaningful authority. Much will depend on whether he is able to establish his authority in Mogadishu at an early date, and whether the authorities in Somaliland and Puntland can be brought into the process. A place in the peace process also needs to be found for the leaders of armed clan-factions, although all the representatives of the UN agencies stressed that the power and influence of the so-called "warlords" has diminished noticeably in the past two years, and the Arta peace process is important because it has placed great importance on the role of civil society. Nevertheless, all UN sources consulted by the delegation strongly underlined the need to take a "wait and see" approach to the political developments in Somalia.

David Stephen considered that, in the short term, Abdiqassim's main aim will be to establish an administration with real authority in southern and central Somalia, based possibly initially in Baidoa but moving at an early date to Mogadishu, with Somaliland and Puntland remaining outside the Arta process for the time being but to be included at a later date. Both Somaliland and Puntland have indicated that they will not negotiate seriously with Abdiqassim until he has pacified the south and established his authority there.

David Stephen outlined to the delegation what he considered to be the best case - worst case scenarios for the Arta process in coming months. The best case scenario is one in which Abdiqassim establishes a civil authority in Mogadishu, pacifying the "warlords" and bringing stability to southern and central Somalia. Somaliland and Puntland will, realistically, remain outside the Arta process for the foreseeable future. The worst case scenario would see Abdiqassim and the TNG failing to establish control in Mogadishu, with southern and central Somalia remaining in a state of turmoil, but also seeing the stability of northern Somaliland and Puntland threatened at the same time.

3.3 Security Situation

3.3.1 General

A UN source informed the delegation that at the moment there is no large-scale violence in Somalia, only highly localised incidents. The source indicated though that tensions exist in certain areas arising from the developments at Arta. In Galkayo, Puntland, for example, Majerteen clan supporters of Puntland President Abdullahi Yusuf are strongly opposed to the Arta process whereas the Hawiye clan Habr Gedir south of Galkayo is in favour. There is also some potential for tension or conflict in the disputed Darod-populated Sool and Sanaag regions of eastern Somaliland, claimed by Puntland, if Puntland were to join the Arta process in the future but Somaliland remained outside. Mogadishu, the prospective seat of the Transitional National Government (TNG), with the majority of the warlords against the new government, is a potential tension area and continues to see sporadic violence. The Baidoa area could also see tensions, as the RRA and the Rahanweyn clan elders are split over support for the Arta process and the TNG.

According to the UN Somalia Monitor, October 2000 edition[16] Somalia continues to be divided by a combination of widespread endorsement of the TNG well as widespread tension relating to the peace process. There are persistent but still unconfirmed reports that that there is opposition support for an alliance of regional authorities consisting of Somaliland, Puntland, a yet unformed "Jubaland" and a yet unformed "Hawiyeland". Allegedly, this alliance would have both a political as well as military component.

The UN Somalia Monitor adds that a four-man delegation from the Marehan-based Somali National Front (SNF) central committee has returned from consultations in Ethiopia, and has joined the RRA and General Morgan's Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) for negotiations in Baidoa.

Since the peace conference in Arta, Djibouti, the relationship between the Ethiopian government and the interim government of Somalia has become somewhat strained. The IRIN Update on the Horn of Africa reported on 15 and 16 November 2000 that President Abdiqassim Salad Hassan of Somalia is visiting Ethiopia on 16 November 2000. He is expected to meet Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to discuss the relationship between the two countries. The Ethiopian government postponed the trip. Somali government sources have said that Abdiqassim is expected to request the Ethiopian government to help establish stability in Somalia, and to seek assurances that Ethiopia would not support Somali factions opposed to his new government. Diplomatic sources said Ethiopia would want a commitment from the new Somali government that Somalia would not be used as a base for attacks on Ethiopia by armed groups opposed to the Ethiopian government. The relations between the new Somali government and the Ethiopian government have been strained by the presence of Ethiopian troops in Gedo region in south-western Somalia, and in the South-Central regions of Bay and Bakool, diplomatic sources told IRIN. Ethiopia has also been accused of supporting faction leaders opposed to the new government in Somalia. According to CNN (19 November 2000), Somali Foreign Minister Ismail Hurreh Buba said talks in Addis Ababa with Ethiopian Government officials had "cleared all suspicions" between the two Horn of Africa states.

According to the IRIN Update on the Horn of Africa (16 November 2000), many of the Mogadishu-based faction leaders [opposed to the TNG] are currently in Yemen at the invitation of President Ali Abdullah Salih. Somali interim President Abdiqassim Salad Hassan is also expected to visit Yemen soon. President Salih has been trying to mediate between the faction leaders and the new government, but this is the first attempt to bring the two sides together for direct talks.

Bernard Harborne informed the delegation that UN access in southern Somalia is presently limited to Bay, Bakool and Gedo regions. The UN hopes to be able to resume operations in Belet Weyne, Hiran region, soon. Even if the TNG is able to establish itself in Mogadishu in the near future, the UN agencies do not envisage being able to re-open their offices in Mogadishu immediately.

[16] The UN Somalia Monitor is prepared by the United Nations Co-ordination Unit (UNCU), in collaboration with the Chief Security Advisor. The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) Somalia Monitor is compiled from various reports received from the field. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the United Nations. The security updates from the UN Somalia Monitor should not be quoted unless prior authorisation is obtained from the Chief Security Advisor. The Danish Immigration Service obtained permission from the Chief Security Advisor to include in this report information from the October 2000 edition of the UN Somalia Monitor in order to present recent political and security developments in Somalia after the mission had been concluded.

3.3.2 North West Somalia (Somaliland) and North East Somalia (Puntland)

The security situation in and between Somaliland and Puntland remains good and no major conflict is expected between the two authorities over the disputed Sanaag and Sool regions in eastern Somaliland, although this might change if Puntland were to enter the Arta process without Somaliland. Bernard Harborne stressed that the UN continues to operate freely in both Somaliland and Puntland and work with the administrations there and will continue to do so, whatever developments arise from the Arta process in central and southern Somalia. However, tensions lie beneath the surface in both territories and there is considerable opposition to the position taken by the Somaliland and Puntland authorities to the Arta conference.

According to the IRIN Update on the Horn of Africa (15 November 2000) a demonstration in Hargeisa, Somaliland, on 11 November 2000 resulted in two deaths as a crowd of people were protesting against the arrest of Sultan Mohamed Abdulkadir of the Idagale sub-clan of the Isaaq. Abdulkadir was arrested on his return from Djibouti, where he attended the Somali peace conference. He is an elected member of Somalia's TNA. The source added that "the Somaliland authorities are strongly opposed to the Djibouti process and have arrested people who attended the conference". More than 60 people were arrested following the demonstration. On 21 November 2000 the same source reported that Somaliland's President Egal had pardoned Mohamed Abdulkadir and released him from prison. Decrees have been issued by Egal pardoning those who participated in the Djibouti talks, on condition that they renounce the Djibouti process. According to IRIN the BBC has reported that those arrested in connection with the demonstration on 11 November 2000 have all been pardoned and released.

3.3.3 Hawiye clans in central Somalia (Galgaduud, Hiran & the Shabelle regions)

David Stephen informed the delegation that, while pleased that the President selected by the TNA is a Hawiye, the Hawiye clans nevertheless remain at odds with each other. Wayne Long advised that there are on-going disputes within the Hawiye down to "sub-sub-sub-clan" level. There have been major clashes in the territory between Jowhar and Belet Weyne between the Hawadle and Gaaljaal clans. In Mogadishu most Abgal sub-clans are fighting each other, the Habr Gedir sub-clan Sa'ad is split in two and the Murosade occasionally clash with the Habr Gedir sub-clan Suleiman and the Habr Gedir sub-clan Ayr. The Galgaduud region is, however, calm.

Generally, rival Hawiye groups are seeking to bolster their positions ahead of any lasting settlement that may follow from the Arta peace process, although at present most of the Hawiye armed factions, other than Ali Mahdi's Abgal-based USC/SSA, have been resolutely opposed to Arta and Abdiqassim.

Kalunga Lutato, Head of Somali Operations, UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Branch Office for Kenya, considered Hiran region to be part of the Central and Southern Somalia "problem area" because of the clashes that have occurred there between rival Hawiye clans; Hiran region contains pockets of insecurity. He said that UNHCR does not consider Hiran region sufficiently secure for "promoted returns", which take place only to the areas north of Galkayo, i.e. to Somaliland and Puntland. South of Galkayo UNHCR only supports "facilitated returns" on an individual basis, under which those who express the wish to return are given basic assistance and are fully informed of the security situation and the risks inherent in return.

Wayne Long informed the delegation that clashes in Hiran region have occurred between the Hawiye clans Hawadle and Gaaljaal in the Belet Weyne area. There is no immediate prospect of reconciliation between the Hawiye clans in Hiran. Bernard Harborne did, however, inform the delegation that the UN hoped to be able to re-establish its presence in Belet Weyne soon. Most recently the UN has reported that a peace agreement between the conflicting parties has been concluded and that the agreement seems to hold. According to the UN Somalia Monitor, October 2000, Belet Weyne and the immediate area remain quiet and peaceful. The Governor and elders have committed themselves to support the TNG. They have the support of what appears to be most Somali residents of the Hiran region. The peace agreement between the Hawadle and the Gaaljaal continues to hold.

Wayne Long furthermore explained that a three-sided power struggle is taking place in the Lower Shabelle regions, where the rich agricultural lands have been much fought over in recent years. Habr Gedir occupiers, who have held much of the area since the mid-1990s, have exploited indigenous clans and minorities. Much of Aideed's funding comes from banana plantations in the Shabelle regions. The Shari'a court militias that have emerged as a powerful force in the past two years are a third element in the struggle for power in the Shabelle regions. The court militias are usually Habr Gedir-based but are in direct conflict with the clan-based militia of Aideed and there have also been clashes between different court militias, even though militia members have come from the same clan.

3.3.4 Bay and Bakool Regions

All representatives of the UN agencies informed the delegation that there are still some divisions within the RRA over how much support to give to Abdiqassim's new administration. Originally there were plans to base the TNG in Baidoa, at least initially before a move to Mogadishu.

According to a UN source the very recent history of conflict with the Hawiye, particularly Hussein Aideed's Habr Gedir militia, has left some Rahanweyn leaders reluctant to sacrifice recent gains in favour of a government led by a Hawiye. Ethiopian forces remain in Bay and Bakool regions backing the RRA.

The Baidoa area could see tensions, as the Rahanweyn elders and the RRA are split on the matter of support for the TNG. The Rahanweyn elders support the TNG but the RRA leadership is against it. According to the UN Somalia Monitor, Baidoa continues to be politically and militarily tense. On 4 November 2000 the RRA arrested 17 traditional Rahanweyn leaders who support the TNG. Over the following weekend, this led to two armed confrontations between the RRA and militia controlled by Rahanweyn elders, resulting in two deaths. Several Rahanweyn elders are reported to be on the run in the bush. Although he remains opposed to the TNG, RRA number two Sheikh Aden has reportedly strongly criticised the military leader of the RRA, Hasan Muhammad Nur 'Shatigaduud', over this action.

IRIN Update on the Horn of Africa reports on 16 November 2000 that confusion affecting loyalties and decision-making within the RRA in Baidoa has led to a deterioration in security. Sources in Baidoa told IRIN that reported sackings of local officials were reflective of the "indecision" of Hasan Muhammad Nur 'Shatigaduud'. According to IRIN's source, the Governor of Bay region, Muhammad Ali Adan, has been dismissed as well as the RRA liaison officer and the commander of the militia.

Hasan Muhammad Nur 'Shatigaduud' announced his opposition to the TNG after initially being elected a TNA member at the Arta peace conference. He travelled to New York with the new Somali President, but later returned to Baidoa, withdrew his support, and arrested those who attended the Arta elections for the TNA. Sources in Baidoa told IRIN that insecurity in the town had increased with militia "getting out of hand" and shooting around the town. Roadblocks had sprung up near the town.

3.3.5 Mogadishu (Benadir Region)

Armed clashes and banditry have continued in Mogadishu. All the representatives of UN agencies that met with the delegation stressed that one of Abdiqassim's earliest priorities will be to establish an effective police force in Mogadishu and demobilise the existing clan-based militias in the city, essential if his administration is to be able to relocate there from Arta.

David Stephen and Wayne Long informed the delegation that Abdiqassim has appointed a security committee under General Mohamed Nur Galaal, a Habr Gedir, and General Jil'ao, an Abgal who is close to Ali Mahdi, to oversee the establishment of a new police force. The important task of demobilising the Hawiye militia is therefore in the hands of a professional Habr Gedir-Abgal partnership. General Galaal was a member of the former national police force, a respected body, and is not considered clan-minded.

A recruitment drive for at least 4,000 officers for a new Mogadishu police force began in September 2000. Faction leaders including Hussein Aideed, Musa Sude and Osman Ali Ato reacted by threatening to prevent the deployment of any new police force in territory that they control. There is strong business backing for the new police force and the Chairman of the South Mogadishu Shari'a court declared his support for it. Some Shari'a courts, however, have declared their unwillingness to have their militias incorporated into the new force because they oppose the inclusion of members of the "warlord" militias in the same force.[17] An attack later in September 2000 by Aideed's forces in an area of Mogadishu's Bermuda district controlled by Ali Mahdi was seen as a setback to Abdiqassim's plans for restoring order to the capital.[18]

Two supporters of the TNG have been killed in Mogadishu. General Yusuf Talan was killed on 18 October 2000 shortly after he had been appointed as head of the committee on disarmament. Hasan Ahmed Elmi, a member of the TNA, was killed on 12 November 2000. In both cases no-one claimed responsibility for the murder.[19]

According to the UN Somalia Monitor, October 2000, Mogadishu is quiet, but politically and militarily tense. Random banditry continues. Opposition forces remain in control in key areas, including Villa Somalia – the seat of the government – and there is still risk to guests of the government. The TNG Defence Minister Abdullah Baqor Musa "King Kong" has called for former Somali Army members to assemble at bases near Mogadishu for duty. By mid-November 2000 the UN had received reports to the effect that 10,000 men had responded to the call.

[17] Somali warlords oppose peace, BBC News Online, 11.9.2000.
[18] Clashes in Mogadishu, BBC News Online, 22.9.2000.
[19] IRIN press releases of 18 10 2000 and 15 11 2000

3.3.6 Gedo region

Wayne Long informed the delegation that Gedo region is calm and is one of the quieter regions in southern Somalia. It is also agriculturally productive. The security situation at present allows UN staff to move freely in the area without escort and it is possible to drive from Mandera in Kenya via Luuq as far as Baidoa. Ethiopian forces may be found in territory up to 100 km inside Somalia and they effectively keep the peace in the area where the borders of Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya meet, mainly in around the towns of Luuq, Dulo and Belet Hawe. While Ethiopia is not in direct control of this territory, its forces will intervene if the security situation deteriorates there. The Marehan-based Somali National Front (SNF) faction has district chiefs in the north of Gedo but its position is somewhat weaker in southern Gedo, where Islamic fundamentalist influence remains. From a purely security point of view, Marehan and even Bantu could be repatriated in safety to Gedo.

According to the UN Somalia Monitor the Ethiopian forces were still in Gedo region in October 2000. Their combined strength is estimated to be approximately 300 troops and they are based in Belet Hawe, Luuq and Dulo. Reports indicate that they have stepped up patrolling recently in terms of both size and intensity, but the Gedo region remains quiet.

3.3.7 Kismayo and the far south

Wayne Long informed the delegation that Kismayo and the area south to the border with Kenya remain in a chaotic state and are very unsafe. Many people have fled Kismayo city. Clashes between Marehan and Ogaden forces, and in-fighting between rival Marehan clans, continue along the southern border with Kenya. The far south of Somalia is also prone to Islamic fundamentalist activity.

4. Introduction to the minority groups in Somalia

4.1 Historical background

Several representatives of the minority groups stressed that most of the so-called minority groups in fact constitute the original population groups of Somalia, who were driven to the fringes of Somalia when the major Somali clans expanded southward. Some of these groups consider the civil war of the 1990s and its aftermath as a next, and for some groups final, phase in this process of driving the original population groups from Somalia.[20]

Historical claims and grievances play an important role in current political debates in Somalia. Moreover, interpretation of history is itself a contentious political issue. Descriptions of the historical backgrounds of Somali minority groups and clans are based only partly on historical facts, while another part is based on myths that serve to define the identity and/or political allegiance of the group or clan. This explains why there may exist different versions of the history of Somalia, according to the different actors at different times on the Somalia scene.

[20] This aspect of the historical background is not shared by the so-called *occupational castes* of Midgan, Madhiban, Tumal, Yibir and Yaher, which traditionally live in a patron-client relationship among the major nomadic Somali clans. As explained in Chapter 9 of this report, the Midgan, Tumal and Yibir will be considered as three separate occupational castes; the Midgan will be considered to have two sub-groups, the Madhiban and Musa Dheryo (or Musa Dheere).

In the tenth or eleventh centuries,[21] Somali clans pushed into the eastern Horn of Africa, first northward from southern Ethiopia[22], and then southward into the inter-riverine regions. At the time Oromo and other pastoral tribes as well as hunter-gatherer groups, such as the Eyle, inhabited the Somali interior. *Bantu* communities farmed along the river valleys. Along the coast, several ancient trading cities had been established since the ninth century by a mix of Arab, Persian and other communities who developed their own ethnic identities as *Benadiri*. The *Bajuni*, a Swahili fishing people, also lived on the southern coast.

In the inter-riverine regions between the Juba and Shabelle rivers, the Digil-Rahanweyn clan, composed primarily of other clans absorbed into the lineage as they settled, adopted a sedentary, agro-pastoral lifestyle.

The southward expansion of the Somali clans accelerated again in the mid-19th century, when clans from the central and north-eastern regions, probably responding to population pressures in their marginal, arid lands, crossed the Juba river and migrated all the way into northern Kenya. At the same time, Somali populations along the Benadir coast imported slaves from East Africa to provide labour for a rising slave-based grain export economy along the lower Shabelle river. Descendants of those slaves, along with remnants of the original Bantu farming populations, constitute the Jarer (Jereer) or Bantu minorities that populate agricultural villages in much of the Shabelle and Juba river valleys.

This history of, often violent, migration left several important legacies to the Somalia of Siad Barre. First, it produced a dominant Somali culture as well as universal adherence to Islam. Yet, significant diversity existed beneath the surface of what appeared a highly homogeneous society. The ancient coastal populations retained their distinct ethnic identities outside the Somali lineage. Bantu communities, though usually affiliated with Somali clans, were considered a low-status ethnic group and continued to endure racial prejudice. The more settled, agro-pastoral Rahanweyn clans of the inter-riverine areas were significantly different in culture, political organisation and language from their nomadic cousins. Siad Barre's political ideology of Somali nationalism and equality tended to mute these differences and draw members of minority groups into co-operation with the regime. Since the collapse of the state in 1991, however, these ethnic distinctions have vigorously reasserted themselves. The Rahanweyn, Bantu and coastal populations were the main victims of both a famine and a civil war imposed on them by the dominant pastoral clans. Large numbers of these groups subsequently fled the country. In the past twenty years the position of these groups, who traditionally are not armed and who fall outside the Somali clan law of blood compensation, has remained precarious, especially in the conflict areas.

4.2 Present situation of minority groups in Somalia

During the civil war the minority groups of Somalia were among the most vulnerable and victimised populations in the country. These groups did not have any militia as most major Somali clans did. Generally members of the various minority groups were and still are unarmed and they were very often victims of the killings, lootings, rapes, abductions, exclusions, displacements and other forms of aggression committed by members of the major Somali clan-based militias. This was and still is the case in parts of central and southern Somalia.

[21] The following paragraphs are largely based on: Human Development Report Somalia 1998, UNDP (Nairobi, 1998)
[22] Although other versions assert that they came from the Arabian Peninsula, as descendants from the Prophet Mohamed.

Some of the minority groups sided with, or have been forced to side with, various militias during the civil war years and some also sided with, or have been accused of having sided with, the regime of Somalia's former dictator Siad Barre. When war anarchy broke out in central and southern Somalia these minority groups faced severe retribution and acts of revenge from the militias that had been fighting the Siad Barre regime. According to Cassanelli some of these minority groups were even subject to waves of invasions by successive militias (Cassanelli, 1995, p. 7).

Dr Adam Abdelmoula, Human Rights Officer, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Nairobi, informed the Danish Immigration Service in August 2000 that there are four main human rights concerns in Somalia, namely the status of the minorities, the plight of the displaced, the status of women and the situation of civil society groups under the control of the "warlords".

The Somali minority populations are not evenly distributed throughout Somalia. There is a concentration of minority groups in the central and southern parts of Somalia, especially in urban centres along the coastline and along the two main rivers, Shabelle and Juba. In the urban centres of Mogadishu, Merka, Brava, Afgoye and Kismayo one may find the remains of what used to be functioning minority communities with their own cultural identity. Also, along the two rivers a large Bantu population still live as agriculturalists, although they have been under heavy pressure from the major Somali clans to hand over their agricultural land to members of these clans. Inland in Somalia one may find other minority populations including various religious groups such as the Ashraf, and also the Midgan groups who have special occupational skills.

Kalunga Lutato, Head of Somali Operations, UNHCR-Nairobi, informed a member of the delegation that although members of minority groups in Somalia are, at the present time, generally not individually targeted by members of the major Somali clans or their militias, under certain conditions they might be. This is typically the case when a former positive relation or alliance between a minority group and a major Somali clan is subject to a change as a result of a shift in the local power balance between major Somali clans and their militias.

Such changes of relations between major clans and minority groups still occur in Somalia. A recent example of this took place in June 1999 when a so-called "alliance", or understanding, between the Bajuni minority group in southern Somalia and General Morgan's Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) militia broke down with the defeat of the SPM forces and the conquest of Kismayo by an unusual alliance of the Aideed-controlled Somali National Alliance (SNA) militia and the Marehan-based Somali National Front (SNF) militia. The Bajuni communities in Kismayo and on the Bajuni islands suffered from serious suppression and repeated looting by the allied SNA/SNF forces. Kalunga Lutato explained that some of the Bajuni fled all the way to Bosasso in North East Somalia (Puntland) while those that stayed behind sent an appeal dated 26 September 2000 to the UNHCR office in Nairobi for assistance, stating that their islands and property were being looted repeatedly by the Somali militias.

Kalunga Lutato explained that minority groups are especially vulnerable to fluctuations in the local power balance, as they are mostly unarmed and totally dependent for their protection on a major Somali clan-militia. If that protection disappears they are at the mercy of their new "masters". This situation applies, for example, to a number of the Bantu communities along the Shabelle River, especially those in Lower Shabelle region.

Another aspect of vulnerability among the minority populations in Somalia is that there is no national government with institutions to protect these populations against the militias and individual Somalis. Kalunga Lutato gave an example of such vulnerability among the Bravanese. The Bravanese did not normally intermarry with members of the main Somali clans or other groups and consequently their own distinct ethnicity was fairly well preserved. They were, in a way, an isolated and distinct people and their property, and their women, were beyond the reach of members of the Somali clans. When the state collapsed in 1991 and the Bravanese lost their "protection" from the central government they soon became targets for various militias that raged through the coastal areas of central and southern Somalia. The militias especially targeted Bravanese women and many were raped or forced into marriage with non-Bravanese Somalis. The Bravanese women were seen as "attractive" to the Somali militias in the sense that before the collapse of government they were "inaccessible" but when the government fell they were easy victims.

Kalunga Lutato stressed that in order to deal with asylum claims from members of minority groups in Somalia it is important to understand what kind of persecution a minority group has experienced during the war. It is important to know what has happened to them in Somalia. Groups such as the Bantu who have lost their property and land are unlikely to be able to return to Somalia in the foreseeable future. That is also why the UNHCR is in the process of resettling Bantu refugees currently in Kenya in other countries such as the United States. Should the situation in Somalia become "normalised" and the threats against members of the minority groups be stopped some of the "minority" refugees should be able to return home. However, a settlement of the whole question of private ownership of property in Somalia, especially houses and land, will be crucial for such a normalisation to take place.

Wayne Long, Chief Security Officer, UNDP-Somalia, considered that the minorities in Somalia are generally not in control of their own lives. Even in northern Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland) the dominant Isaaq and Majerteen clans effectively determine the position of the minorities. Small groups of Midgan (Gaboye) are living in both Somaliland and Puntland but they have little influence with the authorities on matters concerning their own communities. In Somaliland the minorities have a small representation in the Parliament, but in real terms their influence is extremely limited.

Wayne Long emphasised that minorities can rarely challenge the dominant Somali clan militias on a military basis, as they have no military capability of their own. One exception to this is the Bimaal, who he described as a "neo-Somali" group, part of the Dir clan-family but of mixed Arab ancestry, who have no organised militia but are able to assemble small armed groups to challenge Habr Gedir dominance. Also, some Bantu communities along the Shabelle river, who have been continually losing their traditional lands and properties to encroaching Somali clans, have been able to assemble small defensive groups against predatory Somali clan militias.

The transitional charter agreed at the Arta peace conference in Djibouti provides for the establishment of a land commission. However, Wayne Long estimated that it might take a very long time before the land issue is resolved in Somalia, maybe even as long as 50 years. He added that a fact to take into consideration in regard to the land issue is that many of the present "soldiers" in the militias are mostly from the rural areas and many were nomads.

According to Wayne Long, Bantu working on plantations in the south live in a situation akin to slavery. Bantu have no bargaining power against the main Somali clans, particularly the Hawiye in Lower Shabelle and the Darod in Lower Juba. In most southern and central areas there is not even a vague pretence of rights or representation for minorities, with the exception of a few isolated areas where the power of Somali clan militias and the Shari'a courts is limited, such as Qorioley and

Brava. In Brava, Habr Gedir control, established in the mid-1990s, weakens at times. In the past two to three months much of Aideed's militia force has moved back towards Mogadishu, in anticipation of a power struggle in the capital in the wake of developments at Arta. At times such as this, when militia power diminishes, the Bravanese are able to resume some degree of control over their lives. Some local authority is able to assert itself, providing it is not seen as a direct threat to Aideed's overall position. Bravanese may even be able to regain property taken by Habr Gedir occupiers although such regained property is always liable to be retaken when militia control reasserts itself.

Some Bajuni were resettled on their traditional islands south of Kismayo by UNHCR two years ago, but Wayne Long informed the delegation that returnees have not fared well. Somalis from dominant clans have harassed returnees and the area is also prone to Islamic fundamentalist activity. Bajuni returnees have little control over their lives on the islands and it has been reported that dominant Somali clans even control their water supply. The delegation held a meeting with elders from the Bajuni clan who stressed that the position of returnees to the islands was hopeless and many had made their way back to Kenya.

A UN source in Nairobi estimated that in the present situation there are no longer any generic threats to any of the minority groups in Somalia. But the delegation was also told that the Reer Hamar community of Mogadishu and the Bravanese community of Brava have almost ceased to exist in Somalia. They have been dispersed, number a few thousand at the most along the southern coast, and have nothing to go back to. The same source added that the new government (the TNG established at the Arta peace conference in Djibouti) would be seen not as a government of the minorities but as a government of the victors.

A UN source informed the delegation that while Midgan (also referred to as Gaboye in northern Somalia) suffered during the civil war, they are now safe in Somaliland and Puntland. Some Gaboye work for UN projects in Somaliland. Their position is similar in southern and central Somalia. Midgan from the south might be able to relocate to the north without being threatened, although they might find themselves in conflict with northern Midgan (Gaboye) for the same jobs.

Finally, several sources pointed to the latest political developments in Somalia and emphasised that for the first time in Somali history the minority populations of Somalia are representing themselves in a national parliamentary assembly (the TNA) although the assembly is not yet established firmly in Somalia. During the Djibouti conference the minority communities were allotted 29 seats in the TNA. A few of the minority communities such as the Shekhal have been included in the Somali clan with which they are attached or affiliated. The Shekhal is included in with the Hawiye clan-family's TNA seat allocation. But most of the minority communities are being represented in the TNA through their own group, the so-called "Alliance Clans Community", which has 29 seats in the assembly.

4.3 Somali minority refugees in Kenya

Several representatives of the minority groups interviewed drew the delegation's attention to the present difficult situation of their groups in Kenya, since the closure of the coastal camps for Somali minorities in 1997 (e.g. the Bajuni, the Bantu and the Benadiri, see also chapters 5.5, 6.5 and 7.5).

Regarding the closure of the coastal refugee camps in Kenya in which a number of minority groups had been staying, Kalunga Lutato stated that the closing of these camps came about for a combination of reasons. In 1994 the Kenyan Government decided that the Somali refugees should leave the so-called designated camp areas near Mombasa. A large proportion of so-called minority

refugees from Somalia stayed in these coastal camps. The Government found no justification for the camps to be located in the populated areas near Mombasa. The Government then designated the Dadaab refugee camp as a major place of refuge for all Somali refugees. Those that had problems in the Dadaab camps were later moved to Kakuma.

According to Perouse de Montclos the Kenyan Government policy towards refugees is to keep them in camps away from the main urban, economic and tourist centres of the country. Furthermore they are kept in a state of dependence that is supposed to compel them to return to their homeland as soon as possible.[23]

Kalunga Lutato explained that Somali refugees who have left their refugee camp in Kenya are no longer supported by the UNHCR. This is part of the agreement between the UNHCR and the Kenyan Government. Somali (and any other) refugees can only be assisted in the so-called designated areas, i.e. the recognised refugee camps. However, once a refugee has left the camp he or she is still under the protection of the UNHCR and is still recognised as a refugee in Kenya.

Kalunga Lutato added that according to the knowledge of the UNHCR no Somali citizen – whether a person from a minority group or a person from one of the major Somali clans – recognised as a refugee in Kenya has been deported to Somalia. He was not able, however, to exclude fully the possibility that this has ever happened.

The UNHCR has agreed with the Kenyan Government that Somali asylum applicants (and all other asylum applicants) should be provided with an ID card that states that they have a pending refugee case at the UNHCR in Kenya. But Kalunga Lutato acknowledged that it is a problem that Kenya does not register refugees.

A recent IRIN report on the security situation of Somali refugees in the Kenyan Dadaab camps is attached to this report as annex 5.

5. Bajuni

The delegation met with a group of elders from the Bajuni community in Nairobi. All had left the Bajuni islands in the early 1990s and had spent time in the Jomvu UNHCR camp in Mombasa before it was closed in 1997 (see also annex 6)[24]. One of the elders had returned to the Bajuni islands in the late 1990s but had since come back to Kenya. The elders are now in Nairobi as they chose not to relocate to the Kakuma camp when Jomvu closed.

[23] Perouse de Montclos, Marc-Antoine, Minorities and discrimination, Exodus and reconstruction of identities: the case of Somali refugees in Mombasa, ORSTOM (October 1997).

[24] The Bajuni elders handed over a document dated 21st September 2000 (annex 6) to the delegation. The document is addressed to the "American Embassy, Nairobi, Kenya" as the elders thought they were to meet with representatives of the US Embassy and not the joint British, Danish and Dutch delegation. They nevertheless wished the delegation to take the letter as it contained information that they wanted the delegation to include in its report. Furthermore the Bajuni elders were happy to proceed with the meeting with the joint delegation once the purpose of the delegations mission had been explained to them.

5.1 Groups and sub-groups, geographical distribution

The Bajuni elders described the Bajuni as a united people that are not divided into sub-groups. Their community was scattered across the Bajuni islands south of Kismayo, in the city of Kismayo itself and in coastal settlements south of Kismayo to Raskamboni and the border with Kenya. Lee Cassanelli[25] refers to small Bajuni communities in Brava and Mogadishu in addition to the population in Kismayo and the islands.

The elders stated that Kismayo was the original home of the Bajuni people. The name Kismayo translates into English as "top of the well". The Bajuni can trace their origins in Kismayo back to the thirteenth century. Some Bajuni moved to the remote islands and south along the coast towards the border with Kenya when the main Somali clans moved into the Kismayo area in the nineteenth century, although some remained in the Majengo district of Kismayo. Cassanelli[26] comments that most anthropologists believe the Bajuni represent a mixture of Arab, Bantu, Somali and possibly Malay backgrounds.

According to the elders the Bajuni population was distributed in the following locations, running south from Kismayo to the border with Kenya:

- Kismayo (mainly in the Majengo district of the city)
- Nchoni – a coastal settlement
- Fuma Iyu Na Tini – an island
- Koyama – an island
- Chovaye – an island
- Istanbul – a coastal settlement
- Chula – the most populated island
- Ndoa – an island
- Kudai – an island (location of a police station)
- Burkavo – a town
- Raskamboni – a town (location of a former Somali navy base)

According to Perouse de Montclos the Bajuni are locally called *tiku*, and they are essentially found on the islands of Koyama, Ngumi, Chovayi or Chula and in the city of Kismayo, of which they claim paternity.[27]

[25] Cassanelli, Lee, Victims and Vulnerable Groups in Southern Somalia (Ottawa, 1995)
[26] ibidem
[27] Perouse de Montclos (1997)

The elders described how the communities on the islands maintained close links with each other and with Bajuni communities along the coast and in Kismayo. Bajuni from the islands would usually have spent a part of the year in Kismayo, where it was essential to travel for trading fish, purchasing essential commodities, medical treatment and any official business with government bodies.

The elders estimated that before the civil war the total number of Bajuni was some 11,000, although they were not exactly sure of the number. Cassanelli[28] estimated the number of Bajuni at perhaps 3,000 to 4,000.

With the collapse of central government in 1991 and the ensuing clan-based civil war many Bajuni fled the islands and coastal settlements and moved south to Kenya. Some Bajuni remained on the islands and even in Kismayo but during the civil war it was not possible for the Bajuni that had left for Kenya to maintain communication with those that had remained in Somalia.

5.2 Language

According to the elders most Bajuni speak some Somali, although the main language spoken by the Bajuni is Kibajuni, a dialect related to Swahili. The Bajuni elders advised the delegation that younger Bajuni, who have lived mainly in exile, alienated from mainstream Somali society, may have only a very limited knowledge of Somali but they stressed that they should know at least some key words in Somali as their family elders would have taught them. Bernard Harborne, Chief of the UN Co-ordination Unit for Somalia, with whom the delegation met, also stated that most Bajuni are able to speak some Somali in addition to Kibajuni.

The Bajuni elders informed the delegation that, although their language, Kibajuni, is related to Swahili, their language is very different to the Swahili dialect spoken in the areas of Kenya immediately below the Kenya-Somalia border, including the islands that continue from the Somali border down along the coast towards Mombasa, although there are some common words.

5.3 Socio-economic situation

5.3.1 Relationship with other groups and clans

The Bajuni elders considered that the Bajuni had traditionally held a low status in Somalia and were regarded as inferior by the Somali clans. The Bajuni had enjoyed very few educational or employment opportunities and most had survived as fishermen.

Perouse de Montclos considers the Bajuni as a community apart from all other Somali populations. They do not lay claim to being Somali, Bantu or Swahili and they may even have Indonesian or Yemenite origins. Perouse de Montclos explains that even before independence the Bajuni felt marginalised and they formed a short-lived political movement, called the Fiqarini Youth. Since then the region of the Bajuni has been the scene of serious fighting between the Hawiye and the Darod clan militias. The Bajuni were on good terms with the Darod, but were accused of treachery when they refused to fight against the Hawiye. Perouse de Montclos adds that while the Bajuni organised the Darod exodus to Kenya, they were then blamed for enriching themselves and sinking refugee ships that were refused entry by the Kenyan authorities.[29]

[28] ibidem
[29] Perouse de Montclos (1997)

The Bajuni elders explained that under the Siad Barre administration Somalis had been told not to use clan names. The Bajuni had been told to refer to themselves not as Bajuni but as "jazira", meaning islanders. Despite the official policy of Siad Barre opposing clanism the term jazira enabled clan Somalis to identify the Bajuni as non-Somali. The elders explained that it was difficult at that time for Bajuni to acquire passports or seamen's certificates and other official documents and that they were discriminated against in dealings with government institutions.

The Bajuni elders made it clear that the Bajuni do not consider themselves to be a Benadiri people, although they did acknowledge that they had some links with the Bravanese people who live further along the coast past Kismayo towards Mogadishu. Trading links existed between the Bajuni and the Bravanese before the civil war. The Bajuni traded fish for various commodities with the Bravanese. One member of the Bajuni group that met with the delegation stated that his sister is married to a Bravanese man, but the Bajuni elders emphasised that such examples of intermarriage came about through the traditional trading links between the Bajuni and the Bravanese rather than from any particular kinship bond.

The UNHCR genealogical table of Somali clans and groups (annex 3) shows the Bajuni as a Bantu sub-clan. The delegation did not, however, receive information from any other source that indicated that this was the case.

The Bajuni elders stated that the Bajuni have no close links with the people in Kenya who live immediately below the Somalia-Kenya border on the coast and islands. The islanders in Kenya did assist the Bajuni when they left Somalia in large numbers in the early 1990s, before they travelled on to camps in Mombasa, but links with the islanders in Kenya have not continued since the Bajuni moved into the camps.

5.3.2 Occupations

The elders informed the delegation that the principal occupation of the Bajuni was fishing in the waters around their islands in small boats. Fish were traded in coastal towns, mainly in Kismayo, although the Bajuni enjoyed trading links with the Bravanese further along the coast from Kismayo towards Mogadishu. There are a number of usually uninhabited islands in the chain of islands that run south from Kismayo to the border with Kenya. It was usual for the fishermen to remain for part of the year in small camps on some of these islands, where fish would be dried ready for trading.

Some Bajuni women worked, mainly gathering shellfish on the islands. They would not accompany the men on the fishing boats or stay with them in the seasonal fishing camps on the uninhabited islands.

The Bajuni do not fish the waters south of the Somalia-Kenya border as to have done so would have incurred hostility from the local fishermen there and from the Kenyan Navy, which patrols the waters along the border.

Those Bajuni that had returned to the islands when the Jomvu UNHCR camp was closed in 1997 had been unable to assume their former occupations as fishermen, as the group of elders explained. Their property had been taken and they could not reclaim it from clan Somalis who occupied it. Returnees had been robbed of everything they possessed when they reached the islands and even those who had managed to resume fishing had had their nets cut and boats taken from them. In order to survive on the islands some Bajuni had attempted small-scale farming, but are always at the mercy of the Somali clans that still occupy the islands.

5.4 Security and human rights situation

The Bajuni elders informed the delegation that in the late 1980s, as Siad Barre's rule weakened, the Bajuni began to suffer more at the hands of Somali clans. Groups of Somalis mounted looting raids on the Bajuni islands. As Barre's administration collapsed in 1990 and 1991 the Bajuni were attacked by organised Somali clan militias, who wanted to force the Bajuni off the islands, particularly the Ogadeni SPM from Raskamboni and, later, Aideed's USC/SNA forces. Attacks became more severe and rape of Bajuni women was common. Bajuni property in Kismayo was occupied by the Marehan and mainly by the Majerteen on the islands. As the situation deteriorated in the civil war many Bajuni left Somalia for Kenya, the majority having left during 1992, by which time their position had become untenable.

The Bajuni elders stressed very strongly that they considered themselves unable to return to Somalia. Somali clans still occupy the islands and Kismayo remains in a state of near anarchy. Although there have been no reports of Bajuni returnees being killed, returnees have been unable to recover their property and cannot support themselves economically. The elder who had returned to the Bajuni islands when the Jomvu camp had closed in 1997 described his experiences on reaching home. He had been beaten and forced to work for no pay, only food, for clan Somalis who still occupy the islands. After two months he decided to return to Kenya, even though he knew that he would not receive any support from UNHCR as he had left the camps.

Wayne Long, Chief Security Officer, UNDP-Somalia, confirmed that the position of Bajuni returnees to the islands was very poor and that it was very hard for them to maintain themselves in the face of harassment from occupying Somali clans. He understands that Somali clans even control Bajuni water supplies on the islands.

Kalunga Lutato, Head of Somali Operations, UNHCR-Nairobi, informed a member of the delegation on 28 September 2000 that with the fall of Kismayo in June 1999 to allied SNA/SNF forces a Bajuni-SPM "alliance" was destroyed and Bajuni property on the islands was looted by SNA/SNF militias, forcing many Bajuni to flee. Some Bajuni made their way to Bosasso in Puntland. Those Bajuni that remain on the islands are still suffering as the SNA/SNF forces that took Kismayo regularly attack the islands, looting property and boats. He added that two days earlier UNHCR had received an appeal from the Bajuni still on the islands stating that the islands were now occupied and controlled by Somali militias.[30]

Wayne Long informed the delegation that the security situation in the far south of Somalia is chaotic and very unsafe, with clashes continuing between rival Somali clan militias. The area is also prone to Islamic fundamentalist activity. Regarding Kismayo, he described the situation there since the city's capture by SNA/SNF forces as "hell".

5.5 Bajuni refugees in Kenya

The Bajuni elders informed the delegation that most Bajuni who fled Somalia in 1992 had initially travelled to Mombasa and were accommodated there or in the Marafa camp near Malindi. From 1993 they were accommodated at their own request in their own camp at Jomvu. In 1997 the Kenyan Government asked UNHCR to close Jomvu camp. The Bajuni elders stated that UNHCR, at the time, considered that conditions in the Bajuni islands were sufficiently good for the Bajuni to

[30] In July 2000 Kalunga Lutato informed the Netherlands Embassy in Nairobi that UNHCR had halted the repatriation of Bajuni in view of the fall of Kismayo. At that time UNHCR still classified the islands as a safe area.

be able to return there. UNHCR therefore gave the Bajuni in Jomvu the choice of relocation to the Kakuma camp, inland in the Rift Valley, or returning to the Bajuni islands in Somalia. UNHCR encouraged Bajuni elders to return to the islands, as this would then encourage other Bajuni to follow.

Kalunga Lutato explained that Jomvu camp was closed for a combination of reasons. Firstly, the Kenyan government decided that Somali refugees should leave the designated areas along the coast as there was no justification for camps to be sited in populated areas, such as around Mombasa. The Kenyan government designated the Dadaab refugee camp as the major place of refuge for Somalis. Those that had problems there were later moved to Kakuma camp. A second consideration was that up to May-June 1999 the areas of origin in Somalia of some minorities, such as the Bajuni, were seen by UNHCR as being safe for returns. A large majority of Bajuni were therefore repatriated to the Bajuni islands. Kalunga Lutato stated that UNHCR was sorry that some Bajuni had not opted for repatriation as the closure of the camps on the coast meant that some Bajuni had to transfer to Kakuma camp in north-western Kenya, an inland area far away from the sea and the normal Bajuni environment. UNHCR had believed that the Bajuni would only stay in Kakuma for a temporary period but in June 1999 the allied forces of the SNF and Aideed's SNA took over Kismayo and expelled General Morgan's SPM forces, as a result of which UNHCR decided that further returns to the Bajuni islands were not possible.

According to the Bajuni elders some 2,500 Bajuni returned to the islands in Somalia from 1997 onwards but received no assistance other than the cost of their journey home. Those Bajuni that remained in Kenya were unhappy at the prospect of relocation to Kakuma camp. Being a coastal people they would have preferred to remain in Jomvu on the coast. The Bajuni elders stated that their position in Kenya was very poor, as UNHCR would only provide support to Bajuni who moved to Kakuma camp. The elders that met with the delegation were living in Nairobi and were reliant on donations from sympathetic religious groups and individuals.

Bernard Harborne informed the delegation that UNHCR ended the repatriation of Bajuni in 1999 after Kismayo changed hands and the security situation deteriorated in the far south of Somalia.

6. Bantu

The delegation met with a group of Bantu elders in Nairobi. These elders explained that normally a Somali of Bantu as well as of non-Bantu origin will refer to a Bantu as a "Jarer", which indicates that the person has strong curly hair. According to Perouse de Montclos the Bantus are also called *habash* (meaning servants) by the Somali and *shanqila* by the Ethiopian Oromo along the River Shabelle.[31]

The American anthropologist Catherine Besteman regards the term Gosha as referring to the geographical area in which the Bantu live in the Juba Valley area. Gosha is classed as "dense jungle" and denotes the forested banks of the Juba river in Southern Somalia, i.e. the area between Kismayo and the town of Saakow. She makes a distinction between the "Gosha" or Bantu populations of the Juba Valley and the other Bantu farmers of the Shabelle Valley. She claims that the farmers of the Shabelle Valley have a distinct history and a somewhat different position in

[31] Perouse de Montclos (1997).

Somali society.[32] The majority of the riverine farmers of the Juba Valley are descendants of slaves acquired by Somalis in the 19th century.

According to Besteman it has been estimated that around 50,000 slaves were absorbed into the riverine areas between 1800 and 1890. During this period of expanded agricultural production in the Shabelle Valley, the more remote and forested Juba Valley remained largely uninhabited until the 1840s when the first fugitive slaves from the Shabelle Valley arrived and settled along the river. They were followed by a constant and increasing number of runaway slaves from the Shabelle Valley. Around the turn of the 20th century between 30,000 and 40,000 former slaves had settled in villages along the Juba river. These settlements were initially established along the lines of East African ethnic affiliations: Yao in one village, Nyasa in another, etc. Even today some villages in the Lower Juba area continue to retain a sense of ethnic distinctiveness, especially those settled by Mushunguli.

By the late 19th century settlement patterns had begun to change as affiliations with Somali clans emerged as an important force in shaping village identity. This process took place as former slaves entering the area after about 1890 began to settle in communities of people who had been enslaved to the same Somali clan. Many people that arrived in the Juba Valley around the turn of the 20th century had been enslaved as children or had been born into slavery and thus held only tenuous connections to their original ethnic groups. For them, Somali clan affiliation provided a degree of social organisation and identity. Affiliation with Somali clans was strengthened by the influx of so-called pastoral slaves, for example Oromo pastoralists. Somalis captured Oromo, especially women and children, during raids and wars and they became slaves or servants. Intermarriage between the Oromo and the descendants of the slaves in the Juba Valley occurred. Later, so-called "*reer* Shabelle" immigrants began filtering into the valley, starting in the late 1920s and continuing into the 1960s. Their history is obscure, but they speak Somali, practise Islam and are closely affiliated with the Somali Ajuraan clan in their home area of Kalafo on the Shabelle River across the border in Ethiopia. Many *reer* Shabelle settled in Ajuraan-affiliated villages in the mid-valley area.[33]

Besteman concludes from her historical sketch that it demonstrates the varied background of the people who settled the Juba Valley. These people are referred to in various terms. The derogatory term *adoon* (meaning slave) is still used to describe this population, but the more neutral term *Gosha* has become more prevalent as an inclusive identifier.

Perouse de Montclos explains that refugee status has altered the collective identity of the Gosha. The name Gosha has now been refused or left behind by the Bantu refugees in Kenya. It is considered pejorative because it refers to the "sleeping sickness" of the tsetse fly, i.e. idleness. They instead prefer to be called "Mushunguli" after one of the founders of fugitive slave communities along the Juba River.[34]

The term *jareer* means "hard (or kinky) hair" and literally denotes hair texture and other physical characteristics such as particular bone structures and facial features, which are negatively valued by Somalis. Gosha are said to be bulkier while so-called "pure" Somalis are said to have longer, more slender fingers. But most significantly according to Besteman, the people who are *jareer* are considered more "African", as distinct from Somalis, who are considered more "Arabic". In opposition to the term *jareer* is either the term *jileec* (or *jileyc*), meaning "soft" or, more commonly,

[32] Besteman, Catherine, The Invention of Gosha: Slavery, Colonialism, and Stigma in Somali History in: Ali Jimale Ahmed ed., The Invention of Somalia (Lawrenceville, 1995), p. 57.
[33] Besteman, p. 47.
[34] Perouse de Montclos (1997).

bilis (which is the opposite of *adoon* or "slave"). Besteman notes that Oromo descendants are not considered *jareer*, but this distinction is blurred by the fact that Oromo have intermarried with *jareer*, the descendants of the slaves.

According to Besteman the term *jareer* has its greatest significance in the cultural values embedded in being *jareer* (or "African"). It is a term that refers to history, that of non-Somali pagan slave origins, a history devalued in Somali culture and ideology. This has the effect in social terms that carrying a *jareer* identity is a denigrated status within the Somali social structure. On this basis Besteman concludes that the people of the Gosha, grouped together as jareer, share a lower status within Somali society.

The Bantu elders with whom the delegation met urged that the Bantu population in Somalia should not be considered as a minority population in Somalia, because, they argued, the Bantu constitute a majority in a number of regions in Somalia.

According to Perouse de Montclos[35] the Bantu of southern Somalia represent a minority whose marginality is more easily seen. They represent less than 2% of the inhabitants of the country. Perouse describes the Bantu as made up of the descendants of slaves and Negroid groups present before the Somali migration. They are generally despised. While some succeeded in making themselves respected and in working on an equal footing with their neighbours, they do not belong to Somali lineages and are considered to be second class citizens.

6.1 Groups and sub-groups, geographical distribution

The Bantu elders estimated that between 30 and 40% of the population in Somalia are Bantu, but they acknowledged that no reliable statistics exist. A UN agency in Nairobi could not confirm these figures, but considered the estimate to be a slight exaggeration while at the same time they confirmed that no reliable statistics exist concerning the figures of the various population groups in Somalia. The same agency confirmed however that the Bantu population constitutes a majority of the population in a number of districts along the two main rivers in Somalia.

According to Perouse de Montclos (1997) the Bantu population in Somalia includes nearly one hundred thousand Swahili-speaking Gosha that are sometimes called *dalgolet* ("forest people" in Somali), *molema* (or *mlima*, "mountain people" in broken Swahili), *watoro* ("runaway slaves" in Oromo) or *oji* (from the Italian word *oggi*, "today", because these Bantu were said not to think beyond the present day).

According to the Bantu elders the Bantu mainly occupy the territory between the two main rivers in Somalia, the Shabelle and the Juba, the so-called inter-riverine area of Somalia. The area covers eight regions in southern and central Somalia. The elders stated that in the regions of Middle- and Lower Shabelle, Middle- and Lower Juba, Bay, Benadir and former Upper Juba (parts of which are now in Gedo region) the Bantu population is still today actually a majority.

The Bantu elders stated that so-called Negroid (black-skinned) Benadiri are considered to belong to the Bantu population and are called "Zanj", which means black or land of the black.[36] The Zanj intermarry with the Bantu but the other, so-called 'light-skinned', Benadir population does not intermarry with the Bantu. The Zanj are slaves of the light-skinned Benadiri.

[35] Perouse de Montclos (1997).
[36] Cf. chapter 7: the Benadiri did not give any indication that they considered some of their groups as Bantu.

Perouse de Montclos considers the so-called Zendj (Zanj?) as a Negroid group of pre-Somali settlers. They were referred to by Arab travellers and Swahili as Kashour ("fugitives") and Wa-Nyika ("bush people") respectively. Some were later chased away or deported out of Somalia, but others remained in Somalia as farmers, hunters, fishermen, and artisans. They live between the Shabelle and Juba Rivers in the "green" part of Somalia, especially Jalalaksi, Kurtunware, Sablale, Dujuma, Garbahare and Jowhar districts.

The term "Bantu" covers a large number of sub-groups but these groups all consider themselves as belonging to one large group, the Jarer. However, according to the Bantu elders, some Bantu groups have been "brainwashed" to such an extent that they identify themselves with the non-Bantu clans with which they have been attached for a long time.

According to the Bantu elders the Bantu population is made up of a number of lineages, some of which live in certain areas and some of which are mixed and/or have resettled in other places in Somalia. Only a few groups are distinguished by their location, such as the Mushunguli, almost all of whom live in Lower Juba region. There are a number of well-known Bantu groups that are not attached and have not been swallowed up by the non-Bantu Somali clans. All of these Bantu groups are referred to as lineage-groups:

- Shabelle
- Shiidle
- Kabole
- Mushunguli
- Gabaweyn (Garbaweyn)
- Eyle (Eile)
- Makane

There is another group of less well-known Bantu-lineages, most of which are living in the Lower and Middle Juba areas:

- Manyasa
- Miyau
- Majindo
- Makua
- Mlima
- Pokomo
- Manyika

The Bantu elders explained that many Bantu groups would readily identify themselves with the non-Bantu clan that they are attached to and a Bantu from such a group will say, for example, that he is a Hawadle or an Abgal etc. Such a person considers his identity as totally incorporated into the non-Bantu clan with which he is affiliated. The above-mentioned second group of less well-known Bantu lineages originally came from one of the first-mentioned more well-known groups but have lost their identity to other non-Bantu groups. Migration and intermarriage can also result in a situation where a Bantu will not identify himself as belonging to one of the Bantu groups.

According to Somali sources quoted by IRIN those Bantu that have assimilated themselves with the indigenous clans they live with are known as '*sheegato*', which means they are not bloodline clan members, but adopted.

The UNHCR overview distinguishes three so-called "Bantu groups": Mushunguli, Swahili and Bajuni. The Eyle are considered as a Mirifle sub-clan and the Gabawayn (Garbaweyn) as a separate minority group (see annex 3). Perouse de Montclos considers the Mushunguli and the Eyle (Eile) as Bantu groups.[37] During its mission to Gedo region the Danish Immigration Service was informed that the Gabaweyn is a Bantu group.[38]

A UN agency in Nairobi stated that the group identity of the Bantu population in Somalia is stronger than ever before. A person of Bantu origin will no longer automatically identify himself with one of the major Somali clans or sub-clans as the group identity of the Bantu has generally been strengthened during the civil war.

6.2 Language

The Bantu elders stated that a non-Bantu that has lived among the Bantu in Somalia would very often speak the same Somali dialect as the Bantu in his area.[39] They stated that this was a result of what they described as the "cultural genocide" that the Bantu have experienced in Somalia.

Some Bantu groups have maintained their own Bantu dialect or language while others have completely lost their dialects. The Mushunguli of the Lower Juba still have their own dialect called "kiziguua" and the Mushunguli call themselves "waziguua".[40] Any other Somali will call them Mushunguli. According to Perouse de Montclos the Zigua are of Tanzanian origin and they claim to be the first to have arrived in the Kismayo hinterland where they settled along ethnic lines in order to preserve their culture.

Perouse de Montclos notes that only a small proportion of the Mushunguli spoke a Bantu language while in Somalia (although three quarters of those that sought refuge in Kenya wanted to "return" to Tanzania).

Quoting Somali political sources, IRIN reported on 23 November 2000 that most of the current Bantu population in the Juba valley was originally from Tanzania, Malawi, and Mozambique. Some of the Bantu in southern Somalia have kept their traditions and speak the language of their ancestors.

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[37] Perouse de Montclos (1997).
[38] Danish Immigration Service & Swedish Immigration Board (1999b).
[39] In southern Somalia, a substantial part of the population speaks *Af-maay-maay*, a distinct dialect of Somali (cf. Besteman, Unravelling Somalia, 1999, p. 21). Swahili rapidly died out as a *lingua franca* among Gosha villagers after 1900 (ibidem, p. 68).
[40] Besteman (1999) mentions that the Mushunguli are Zegua originally from Tanzanian territory, who retained their Bantu language through the 1980s.

6.3 Socio-economic situation

6.3.1 Relationship with other groups and clans

Perouse de Montclos writes that the so-called Negroids (Bantu) are made up of heterogeneous communities that are relatively widespread. At independence there was a Shidle Party but no political movement was able to unite the Bantu from Somalia. Most of these communities are in fact linked to a Somali lineage but with a more or less inferior status. Those of the Shabelle River thus acknowledge the authority of Hawiye clans (the Shidle are associated with the Mobilen, the Kabole with the Molcan, the Makanne with the Badi-Addo, the Rer Issa and the Shebelle with the Ajuran). Those of the Juba River, the Gobawein, work for the Gasar Gudda of Luuq, a Rahanweyn lineage that is seen by the other Somali clans as a low Sab caste, but is considered by the Rahanweyn as being 'noble'. Along the Juba River, one also finds hunting, farming and fishing communities such as the Ribi and the Boni. The Boni, or Bon, escaped the Oromo and now pay tribute to the Somali. Also other groups along the Juba and Shabelle Rivers are despised. The Eile (Eyle) (see chapter 8) of the Bur Eibi Hills, for example, have a name that, etymologically, comes from *ei*, their hunting dog. It is important to understand that all these names are appellations and not tribes, since the Somali deny the Bantu any genealogy that would legitimise their presence in the South of the country. The Helai of Baidoa thus claim to be a homonymous Rahanweyn lineage, settled at Bur Acaba; this relationship is obviously denied by the latter.[41]

It should be noted that the Bantu elders in Nairobi described the Bantu as the most vulnerable and most seriously affected population in Somalia. They stated that, in contrast to other so-called minority groups such as the Benadiri and Madhiban, the Bantu have no close ties to other Somalis. While the Benadiri often intermarry with other Somalis this never happens between the Bantu and other Somalis. The Bantu are afraid to speak freely in Somalia and are the only group that is totally excluded and marginalised in political, social and economic terms. They claimed that Bantu identity is being suppressed because the 'Cushistic Somalis' want to deny the original ownership of Somalia by the Bantu, who are the true indigenous people and original inhabitants of Somalia.

Former governments in Somalia employed several Benadiri and Madhiban on a high level, but a Bantu has never held a government post as manager or as a Director-General.

The Bantu elders explained that the Siad Barre regime handed over land from Bantu to members of the Darod clans,[42] especially in the Lower Shabelle, Middle and Lower Juba and Gedo regions, where a large number of Bantu were driven from their land. Some ended up as regular slaves on their former land, whereas some became beggars or tried to seek alternative occupations, which was difficult as they were farmers with no other skills. Some Bantu were also forcibly conscripted into the army from 1973 until the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991. Large areas of Bantu land were confiscated by the Siad Barre regime and given to non-Bantu Somalis under agricultural development projects supported by foreign donors. Bantu never benefited from such development projects. Even a project where the government exempted imported agricultural equipment from taxation did not benefit the Bantu as the agricultural equipment was bought by Somalis close to the government and then sold to other non-Bantu landowners. The so-called Cushistic or Jileec Somalis have, according to the Bantu elders, established a deliberate policy of suppression and impoverishment of people of Bantu origin in Somalia. This policy was established already during the colonial period and was continued by successive governments of independent Somalia.

[41] Perouse de Montclos (1997).

[42] cf. the chapter on the Digil and Mirifle, who share to a large extent this history of land grabbing, confiscations, lootings, etc. with the Bantu, since they largely live in the same areas and are also agriculturalists.

The independent governments never handed over land to the Bantu and their policy was to keep the identity of the Bantu hidden from the outside world. The government policy was that all land belongs to the so-called "protector", meaning a dominant Somali actor.

The Bantu elders stated that the Bantu in Somalia and in exile in Kenya are not satisfied with the outcome of the Arta peace conference. They stated that the conference did not allocate a proportional number of seats in the Transitional National Assembly (TNA) to the Bantu population. 29 seats were allocated to the so-called "minority groups" (or "Alliance Clans Community", as they were referred to at Arta). When consideration was given to the division of seats among the minority groups the Bantu delegates declared that they wanted 15 seats. However, the Benadir group offered the Bantu only nine seats even though, according to the Bantu elders, the Bantu are considered to be the "majority of the minority". The situation deteriorated further as the so-called Mediating Committee headed by Dr. Rajis, a Benadir, was, according to the Bantu elders, partial and the Bantu were finally allocated only six TNA seats. The Bantu elders stated that these six seats are all occupied by what they referred to as "infamous" Bantu and the Bantu elite and intellectuals were never invited to participate in the Arta conference.

6.3.2 Occupations

The Bantu communities in Somalia are typically agriculturalists, farmers or labourers on farms and plantations in the area between the Shabelle and Juba rivers in central and southern Somalia. A representative of a UN agency in Nairobi informed the delegation that the Bantu or Jareer population in Somalia know different levels of integration (or "Somalisation"), especially those living along the Shabelle River in central Somalia. Some Bantu are employed as plantation labourers and are almost in a situation of slavery. They are the only workforce available and they have no bargaining power against the main Somali clans, the Hawiye along the Shabelle River in the Lower Shabelle region and the Darod in Lower Juba. The source had no detailed information on the situation of the Bantu population in Lower Juba, southern Somalia. The Bantu are generally a resourceful people, and in North West Somalia (Somaliland) they are working as construction workers and as watchmen. In the North West and in North East Somalia (Puntland) their position is that of an "under-clan". They are safe throughout northern Somalia and in certain cases they could even marry very poor members of one of the major Somali clans.

6.4 Security and human rights situation

The Bantu elders explained that the Bantu are unarmed and are victims of serious human rights violations. They argued that human rights violations against the Bantu population in Somalia are of such a scale that they cannot be compared to the human rights violations against other, non-Bantu, populations in Somalia. They stated that there is an important difference in addressing human rights and addressing minority rights in Somalia because the Bantu population should not be regarded as a minority group.

The Bantu elders considered Somalia as a nation to be more racist than South Africa during its apartheid period. They feel they have no assurance from any future government in Somalia that the rights of the Bantu will be protected and they have no trust in a future government. They claimed that freedom of expression does not exist for the Bantu in Somalia and their voice is not being heard. Perouse de Montclos comes to a similar conclusion when he makes a distinction between the Bantu and the so-called Sab castes (the Digil, mainly the Tunni and the Rahanweyn). The camel-herding clans of northern Somalia despise the latter, but they are still part of the Somali lineage system and they will still be able to negotiate "when the hour of reconciliation arrives in Somalia".

Minorities, who are not part of the lineage system, the Bantu and the 'half castes' "argue that they will never benefit from any compensation mediation procedures amongst the Somali clans".[43]

Reporting on the planned resettlement of Somali Bantu in the United States, IRIN (23 November 2000) quotes humanitarian sources as saying that the minority Somali Bantu are "treated like second class citizens" by Somalis. Insecurity and the civil war in Somalia over the last decade made the group even more vulnerable, according to the source.

Enclosed as annex 7 is a document written for the delegation by Abdulkadir Moallim Omar, a Bantu elder from Luugh-Ganaane District in Gedo region who was interviewed by the delegation in Nairobi. The document details the origins of the Bantu peoples in Somalia, their history and their present situation in Somalia as well as their situation as refugees in Kenya.

Regarding the situation of the Bantu in Somalia, Omar writes that:

"when rivalries began with the overthrow of the military dictatorship, the Bantus became the worst hit. The Bantus' homes and farms and animals were taken over by the different militias not to mention money and other wealth. Some of them were forced to work for the militias that took their land. They worked in conditions not better than slaves. In certain areas the Bantu women cannot go down to the river to fetch water; they have either to pay for the water or they are denied the water or raped at gunpoint. There is a silent policy of ethnic cleansing in Somalia against the Bantu that the rest of the world is turning a deaf ear to."

Omar claims that the Bantu at the farms in both the Shabelle and the Lower Juba regions of Somalia are "forced to work at these farms at gunpoint over 24 hours without food and water most of the time. There are lots of examples of men, women and children who fainted because of hunger, thirst, and fatigue, who when they came to, were accused of pretence and shot dead as a warning to the others not to try to emulate them. Reports reaching us from Somalia claim that hundreds of Bantu young men were abducted by militias and taken to the Central regions of Mudug and Nugaal to look after the camels, when some of them tried to escape they were caught and burnt alive in front of the others. Most of them had to be bought back by their relatives – only a few managed to escape alive and reach home safely. It is commonplace in Mogadishu to take a Bantu man, woman, or family hostage and demand for ransom. Hardly any day passes without having, seeing or hearing a Bantu being killed in Mogadishu."

A UN agency informed the delegation that the Bantu population along the river Shabelle in the lower parts of Hiran region and the upper parts of Middle Shabelle region has been pushed towards the river banks to such an extent that today the Bantu live literally on the river bank itself.

A UN agency in Nairobi described the land issue in Somalia as "dynamite". They pointed out that while the Bantu population has so far been a loser in the land issue, they have never before been represented in a Somali Parliament, as they are now in the TNA. The Bantu population therefore now has more political influence than ever before in modern Somali history. Also, as a result of the civil war in Somalia a large number of Bantu fled the country and are now living in a diaspora in Kenya and in other countries. This has had the side effect that today the Bantu are better educated than ever before.

[43] Perouse de Montclos (1997).

During the Dutch mission of November 1999 to Hargeisa and Puntland, an NGO source informed the mission that quite a few Bantu went to northern Somalia, especially Bosasso, where they often found work as construction workers. There had been some trouble with indigenous Puntland construction workers because the Bantu brought down wage levels. A UN source confirmed to the mission that large groups of Bantu worked in Puntland, mostly in construction. A second UN source and the Puntland authorities confirmed the presence of Bantu in Puntland. According to Somali sources quoted by IRIN (23 November 2000), Somali Bantu are almost exclusively found in the South, but many scattered during the civil war to parts of the North, where they work on buildings and take on odd jobs.

The UNCU/FSAU report on IDPs in northern Somalia mentions Bantu as one of the groups among the IDPs in northern Somalia.[44]

6.5 Bantu refugees in Kenya and abroad

The Bantu elders were of the opinion that most of the Somali refugees in Europe and America are of non-minority origin and some of them participated in human rights violations in Somalia before they left their home country. They stated that the Bantu have no economic means to travel to the EU and apply for asylum; consequently there are no Bantu seeking asylum in Europe. The Bantu in Kenya have been offered resettlement in the USA and more than 10,000 Bantu in Kenya will be resettled during 2000 and 2001.[45] European countries have also offered resettlement of the Bantu from Kenya, but the elders stated that it is a serious problem that during negotiations between UNHCR and the receiving countries no Bantu representatives have been consulted. This has resulted in a situation that many of the resettled Bantu are not really Bantu, but belong to other Somali groups of non-Bantu origin. The elders claimed that this has taken place in New Zealand, Australia, Europe and the USA.

The Bantu elders informed the delegation that Bantu refugees initially stayed in UNHCR refugee camps along the Kenyan coast. Today the Bantu are only to be found in the Dadaab camps (3 camps) in Kenya's North Eastern Province and in one camp in Kakuma near Turkana. About 15,000 Bantu are registered in these camps. Very difficult humanitarian and security conditions in the camps have made many Bantu leave the camps and settle in Nairobi, Mombasa and other urban centres in Kenya. These persons are no longer under the protection of the UNHCR and they are vulnerable to harassment from the Kenyan police and risk being deported to Somalia against their will.[46] According to the Bantu elders the London-based Minority Rights Group has reported such incidents. It is not only the Bantu that have these problems in Kenya but all Somalis that do not belong to the major Somali clans.

The Bantu elders made it clear that they will not return to Somalia before they are convinced that they will have a just government with a fair Bantu representation in the Parliament. However, the elders stated, no Bantu believes that justice will come to Somalia and that the Bantu will ever be considered as equal citizens in Somalia; so long as policies in Somalia are made by non-Bantu Somalis there will never be justice for the Bantu. For this reason, the Bantu community appeals to be accepted as refugees abroad. The Bantu elders argued that the United Nations and other

[44] Report on Internal Migration and Remittance Inflows in NW and NE Somalia, prepared for UN Co-ordination Unit (UNCU) and the Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU) (November 1999-January 2000)

[45] IRIN reported on 23 November 2000 that over 8.000 Somali Bantus from Dadaab refugee camp are to be resettled in the United States next year.

[46] Kalunga Lutato (UNHCR) stated that to the knowledge of UNHCR no Somali citizen recognised as a refugee in Kenya has been deported to Somalia (cf. chapter 4.2)

international organisations have an obligation to consult the Bantu population to a much higher degree than it is the case today. They believe that the present UN system relates to a large degree only to those who have the power in Somalia and overlooks the suppressed. They feel that if a new government is formed in Somalia the Bantu will face even larger problems than before because international donors and organisations will deal with the government rather than with the minority groups. They believe that the reason why the US Government has accepted to Bantu for resettlement in the USA is exactly because they have realised that the Bantu refugees will never be able to return to Somalia. The Bantu elders believe that UNHCR will not accept this fact because UNHCR will then loose its strong position in Kenya and Somalia. The elders stated that UNHCR executives enjoy good relations with the Somali warlords and elders who are in control of areas where UNHCR has operations. The elders claimed that UNHCR gives consultation fees to the warlords and the elders in such areas in order to operate there, especially in south-western Somalia. Programmes intended to facilitate the repatriation of refugees have ended up in the hands of people connected with the warlords.

See also annex 7 in which Abdulkadir Mallim Omar states that the situation of the Bantu in the refugee camps in Kenya is no better than their situation in Somalia. He writes that the Bantu in the refugee camps, especially in the camps at Dadaab, Ifo and Hagar-Dheer, are being directly or indirectly intimidated. According to Omar the Bantu in the refugee camps in Kenya claim that Somalis from the main clans are posing as Bantu in order to qualify for resettlement.

7. Benadir

7.1 Groups and sub-groups, geographical distribution

The delegation met in Nairobi with three groups of Benadiri: a group of Benadiri elders from Mogadishu and Merka (belonging to the Ashraf, Duruqbe and Morshe sub-clans), a group of Ashraf elders from Mogadishu, Merka and Qorioley, and a group of Benadiri from Brava, the so-called Bravanese (or Barawan).

From discussions with these groups it transpired that the term Benadiri is used by these groups to indicate the coastal population of Somalia roughly between Mogadishu and Kismayo, who share an urban culture and who are of mixed origin (Persian/Portuguese/Arabian/Swahili/Somali), separate from the major Somali clans. The groups with whom the delegation met advised that the Bajuni, who live in Kismayo and on the coast and islands further southwards, are not considered to be a Benadiri people. Bajuni elders with whom the delegation met (see section 5 of this report) confirmed this to be the case.

According to Perouse de Montclos[47], the name Benadiri does not correspond to any well defined sociological reality. In the context of resettlement programmes for Somali refugees in Kenya, the Somali refugee traders of the coastal ports decided to regroup under the generic term 'Benadir', which designates greater Mogadishu. Those indigenous to this area succeeded in calling themselves 'Benadiri'.

Perouse de Montclos adds that the term Benadiri, as a community, did not fully appear before the 1990 civil war (N.B. This is also in accordance with other, UN, sources). In the spoken language, 'Benadiri' implies a cloth, 'alindi, hand woven by artisans in the city and distinguished by variously coloured stripes. Etymologically it comes from a Persian word 'bandar', which signifies 'harbour'. In

[47] Perouse de Montclos (1997)

the strictest sense of the word it applies to the traders who were the first inhabitants of Mogadishu but have always been seen as foreigners by the Somalis: the Bandhabow, the Morshe-Iskashato, the Abdisamad, the Sadiq Gedi, the Bafadal, the Amudi, the Duruqo, the rer Shikh, the rer Manyo, the Gudmane in Hamar Weyne district and the rer Faqi in Shingani district.[48,49]

Other sources use the names Reer Hamar or Reer Brava. Reer Hamar means people from Mogadishu (Hamar Weyne), but some sources (such as the elders interviewed by the delegation) use it to include the whole coastal population of mixed origin. Reer Brava means people from Brava, and is generally used only to indicate people from Brava of mixed origin.

Please note that the UNHCR genealogical table of Somali clans mentions the Barawan (Bravanese), Asharaf and Reer Hamar as separate groups, without including them in the list of Minority Groups (see annex 3).

The delegation gained the impression, by comparing information from the discussions with the groups of elders it met with in Nairobi with information gathered in an earlier Danish mission[50] and with information gathered earlier from informants by the Netherlands Embassy in Nairobi, that not all Benadiri would know all the sub-groups, and that there exist many more sub-groups than the ones mentioned by the elders in Nairobi. It also appears that sub-groups mentioned as living in one town or city quarter may have spread to other coastal towns, and sometimes to inland towns like Baidoa.

The Benadiri elders stressed that Benadiri do not put as much weight on genealogical descent as do the Somali clans. They do not count back many generations although Benadiri life is nonetheless clan-based. Each group or clan, in theory at least, traces its origins to a single male ancestor.[51] The Benadiri elders distinguished:

- four Hamar groups:

- Qalmashube
- Dhabar Weyne
- Shanshiya
- Morshe (Moorshe)

[48] Perouse de Montclos (1997)

[49] Perouse de Montclos (1997) also mentions the Amarani, as part of the Benadiri. The Amarani, hardly a thousand in number, are supposed to be descendants of an Israeli group chased away from southern Arabia by Islam. Their name comes from one of the oldest areas of Mogadishu, Hamar Weyne, which they founded before the arrival of the Somali in the interior. They speak a dialect that is typically urban, Chimbelazi, that is tinged with Portuguese, Swahili, Arabic and Somali and which has come to be known as Cimini.

[50] In a note on the Benadir communities in Somalia a compilation was made by the Danish Immigration Service of information gathered from sources in Nairobi as well as from Benadir communities in Denmark. This compilation shows a larger number of sub-groups than the number shown in this mission report. Also it gives more details on distribution, occupation, etc. of the Benadiri. (Udlaendingestyrelsen, Notat om Benadir-befolkningen i Somalia, (in Danish), Copenhagen, 19 June 2000)

[51] cf. Refugee Information Series, Benadir refugees from Somalia (Washington 1996)

After some discussion they added that the Bandhawaw and Reer Faqi also belonged in this category.

- five Shangani groups, e.g.:

  - Amudi
  - Baa Fadal
  - Reer Sheich
  - Abakarow

- twelve 'caps' (sub-groups) in Merka, e.g.:

  - Shukereere
  - Ahmed Nur
  - Reer Maanyo
  - Ali'iyo Mohamed
  - Duruqbe
  - Gameedle

- and the Ashraf.

The elders explained that before the civil war the Benadiri in Mogadishu used to live only in the quarters of Hamar Weyne, Shingani and Bondere. Now Benadiri live in all quarters of Mogadishu.

Another sub-division is made between 'light-skinned' ('gibil ad') and 'black-skinned' ('gibil madow') Benadiri.

Benadiri intermarry, but the elders stated that 'light-skinned' Benadiri do not marry 'black-skinned' Benadiri like Moorshe or Dhabar Weyne.[52]

The delegation also held a meeting with representatives of the Ashraf (Asharaf, Asheraf, Sharifians) community in Nairobi including elders and women. They were all refugees from the coastal areas of Somalia. The Ashraf elders interviewed by the delegation readily identified themselves as Benadiri. The Ashraf elders made it clear that only one Ashraf group (or clan) exists in Somalia.[53] However, this group is further sub-divided on the lines of their male ancestors. The Ashraf of Bay and Gedo regions (Baidoa, Hoddur, Bardera) are the same group as the Ashraf in the coastal areas. One sub-group of the Ashraf called Ashraf Sarman lives mainly in Hoddur (Bakool region), Bay region, Bardera (Gedo region) and Mogadishu. Other sub-groups called Mohammed Sharif, Sharif Ali and Sharif Ahmed live mainly in Kismayo, Merka, Bardera, Jalalaqsi, Jowhar and Mogadishu.

An NGO informant explained on an earlier occasion to the Netherlands Embassy in Nairobi that there are various sub-groups of the Ashraf, including the Sarman who reside in Bay region. According to this source, the Ashraf Sarman have the same skin colour as Somalis, while the Ashraf in Merka have light skin.

[52] This information does not quite correspond to the information given to the delegation by the Bantu delegation, cf. chapter 6

[53] Since information gathered earlier by the Danish Immigration Service had found that there are two distinct groups of Ashraf, the delegation insisted on this question with the Ashraf elders. These were quite outspoken on the issue.

The Ashraf elders sub-divided the Ashraf in the following way:

- Hussein:

- Reesharif Magbuul
- Sharif Ahmed
- Sharif Baalawi

- Hassan:

- Mohammed Sharif
- Sharif Ali
- Sharif Ahmed
- Ashraf Sarman.

The Ashraf elders trace their origin to the Prophet Mohamed, whose daughter Fatima had two sons with Ali, named Hassan and Hussein. Any member of the Ashraf community belongs to one of these two lines of descent, from Hassan or Hussein, and any Ashraf (both females and males from the age of two) is able to identify her- or himself as belonging to one of these two lines. The Prophet Mohamed conferred the title "Sharif" upon Hassan and Hussein. Since that time, all their descendants have the name Sharif as part of their name, added to the personal name and the father's, and sometimes the grandfather's, name. From this comes the name of the group, Ashraf being the plural of Sharif. Ali had children by other wives after the death of Fatima, but they were not "Sharif".

The Ashraf elders indicated that the Ashraf are living in southern and central Somalia, especially in urban locations like Bardera, Kismayo, Baidoa, Hoddur, Merka, Brava and Mogadishu. In Mogadishu the largest concentration of Ashraf was to be found in the Shingani district, but they also lived in Hamar Weyne. Ashraf used to live also in Ethiopia. Some Ashraf from Ethiopia became exiled in Somalia at the time of the Ogaden war in 1977. These Ashraf came from Ogaden, Oromia, Dire Dawa and Harar in Ethiopia and some of them fled Somalia in 1991-92. Those remaining in Somalia reside with other Ashraf.

UN sources confirmed that Ashraf communities are also to be found in the Ogaden district of Ethiopia.

The elders from Brava told the delegation that they consisted of two sub-groups: the Bravanese and the Tunni. Both groups are from Brava and they share to a large extent the same culture. They intermarry between their groups. However, the Bravanese consider themselves Benadiri, while the Tunni do not. The Bravanese are of Persian/Arab/Portuguese/Spanish origin. According to the Bravanese elders the Tunni belong to the Digil clan-family. They are originally from the region of Brava. However, the elders gave the delegation a copy of a letter, written by the Baravani elders in Nairobi to a number of organisations (including UNHCR, the US Immigration Department and Amnesty International) on their situation in Kenya, in which the Tunni are mentioned with the Bravanese as part of the Baravani community (see annex 8).

The UNHCR overview classifies the Tunni with the Digil (annex 3).

The Bravanese sub-divided themselves into:

- Bida
- Hatimi
- Ashraf

The Tunni explained that they are sub-divided into the Tunni Torre plus five *gamas* (sub-groups):

- Da'afarad
- Goygal
- Daqtiro
- Hayo
- Werile

Perouse de Montclos[54] notes that some of the Tunni Torre of the hinterland claim a relationship with the Ajuran, the Gaaljaal and the Gurreh of the Hawiye clan family, while others claim a relationship with the Helai and the Hadam of the Rahanweyn clan-family. In concrete terms, they are the vassals of the Tunni Digil of the Brava Coast.

According to Perouse de Montclos, 'Reer Brava' designates a territorial community. The confusion between territory and clan or ancestral identity brought about the grouping of a much larger body of people than one would have expected from a minority group of traders of foreign origin. Historically, in Brava (like in Merka) the Arabs from Zanzibar allied with the Tunni, a Digil clan, in order to counter the Hawiye from the hinterland. Brava was the scene of numerous battles, against the Portuguese, Omanis, British, Egyptians, Italians and Somali of the interior (Rahanweyn and Dir), many of them establishing lineage. As a consequence, the races in the city were completely 'mixed up'. Although the common hardships and tragedies experienced during and after the 1990 civil war certainly reinforced the sentiment of an identity and uniqueness, on closer inspection we discover communities with very diverse backgrounds despite numerous instances of intermarriage. On the one hand there are immigrants of Arab origin, while on the other hand there are the Somali of the Brava surroundings, whose minority status is more doubtful because they are part of the Tunni lineage of the Digil.

7.2 Language

According to the Benadir community in Nairobi the Benadir populations in Somalia generally speak a dialect that is different from the dialect of the major Somali clans. Even within this dialect there are sub-dialects: the dialect spoken by the Benadiri of Mogadishu is called *Af-Reer Hamar*, that spoken by the Benadiri of Merka is called *Af-Merka*, and the dialect spoken by the Benadiri in Brava and further south is called *Af-Brava*. The Af-Brava dialect is not understood by the other Benadiri.[55] An informant of the Netherlands Embassy stated earlier that the Ashraf in Bay area speak the Rahanweyn dialect.

Most of the Benadiri, including the women, are able to speak and understand the Somali language.

[54] Perouse de Montclos (1997)
[55] Cassanelli (1995) mentions that most Bravanese spoke Chimini, a dialect of Swahili, rather than Somali as their primary language.

7.3 Socio-economic situation

7.3.1 Relationship with other groups and clans

The Benadiri elders told the delegation that the Benadiri who are still in Somalia have no protection from any clan; on the contrary, they live under occupation by Somali clans and militias. In available reports on the situation of the Benadiri before the war, no indications have been found that Benadiri stood in a relation of clientship or protection to main Somali clans.

According to UN and NGO sources consulted earlier by the Netherlands Embassy, the Benadiri look down upon pastoralists and keep to their own identity.

Intermarriage between Benadiri and the Somali clans was rare and not generally accepted.[56]

The Ashraf elders explained that the Ashraf have no particular affiliation with any of the major Somali clans. They stated that they used to have good relations with all other clans in Somalia. They were considered a highly respected clan of devout religious members. They travelled widely throughout Somalia as religious teachers and were well received by other clans. Under the Siad Barre regime the Ashraf did not as a group face any security or human rights problems in Somalia. Intermarriage between members of the Ashraf community in Somalia and members of the major Somali clans was rare, according to the Ashraf community in Nairobi, although some intermarriage occurred with the Hawiye (while during the last ten years forced marriages took place with Hawiye and even Majerteen). Marriage takes places almost exclusively within the Ashraf community itself. A relatively large number of the representatives of the Ashraf community in Nairobi with which the delegation met were related to each other.

7.3.2 Occupations

The Benadiri elders stated that the Benadiri were an urban and educated people, who worked almost exclusively in commercial occupations. The elders mentioned business, fishery, construction, metal work, carpentry, tailoring, weaving and gold smithing as the occupational sectors of the Benadiri. They also mentioned that some Benadiri were medical doctors, engineers or economists. Benadiri women might sell snacks or handicrafts.[57]

The Bravanese and Tunni elders said their people were also commercially orientated or working as craftsmen.

The Ashraf elders explained that the Ashraf are a religious people. They were traditionally considered a highly respected clan whose members travelled throughout Somalia as religious teachers. Before the civil war a relatively large number of Ashraf received education in Somalia, and during the Siad Barre administration a number of Ashraf were employed as civil servants in the administration while others were businesspeople and therefore travelled frequently throughout the country.

[56] Cassanelli (1995) mentions that most of the established urban families tended to marry among themselves, as a cultural preference and perhaps as a way of keeping wealth "in the neighbourhood".

[57] See also Danish Immigration Service (Udlændingestyrelsen), Notat om Benadir-befolkningen i Somalia (in Danish), (June 2000)

Benadiri mostly were self-employed and had a reluctance to working for someone else. They have great entrepreneurial talents.[58]

7.4 Security and human rights

All three groups of Benadiri elders stated that during the civil war in 1991 and 1992 the Benadiri suffered seriously. Lacking any tradition of warfare and any militia, they were often attacked and targeted by looters, who considered them to be very rich, owing to their trade.[59] Cassanelli (1995) claims that many southern minorities were accused by Somali militias of helping to sustain the Barre government in its later years. The Ashraf, however, stated that they were not persecuted because of any perceived close links with Siad Barre.

During its mission to Mogadishu in 1997 the Danish Immigration Service learned from the Dr. Ismail Jum'ale Human Rights Organisation and from representatives of the Reer Hamar community in Mogadishu that the Reer Hamar are considered a wealthy business community by members of the Somali clans and the militias. Because of this, and because the Reer Hamar are unarmed, their homes were repeatedly looted. The same sources estimated that more than 70% of the Reer Hamar population in Mogadishu fled the country during the civil war. In January 1999 the War-torn Societies Project (WSP) in Nairobi and other UN agencies informed the Danish Immigration Service that the Benadiri community was still facing serious human rights violations in Mogadishu, and that members of this community would probably never be able to return in safety to Mogadishu.[60]

The Ashraf elders stated that there are several reasons why members of the Ashraf community have fled Somalia. To some degree members of the Ashraf are considered as 'strangers' in Somalia by the major Somali clans. The Ashraf claim to originate in Arabia and are called "Arabs" by other Somalis. They are considered to be a weak, unarmed religious group with no social or legal rights.

Many Benadiri women were raped or forced into marriage, as the Benadiri elders confirmed to the delegation. The Ashraf elders stated that their identity as a specific ethnic group has been weakened since the war, as Ashraf women have been abducted, raped or forced into marriage with members of other Somali clans.

Kalunga Lutato explained that the Bravanese would not normally intermarry with members of the main Somali clans or other groups and consequently their own distinct ethnicity was fairly well preserved. They were, in a way, an isolated and distinct people and their property, and their women, were beyond the reach of members of the Somali clans. When the state collapsed and the Bravanese lost their "protection" from the central government they soon became targets for various militias that raged through the coastal areas of central and southern Somalia. The militias especially targeted Bravanese women and many were raped or forced into marriage with non-Bravanese Somalis. The Bravanese women were seen as "attractive" in the sense that before the collapse of government they were "inaccessible" but when the government fell they were easy victims.

[58] Refugee Information Series, Benadir refugees from Somalia (Washington 1996)
[59] Human Development Report Somalia 1998, UNDP (Nairobi, 1998); Cassanelli (1995)
[60] Danish Immigration Service/Swedish Immigration Board, Report on Nordic fact-finding mission to Mogadishu, Somalia (Copenhagen 1997) and Danish Immigration Service (Udlændingestyrelsen), Notits om Benadir-befolkningen i Somalia (Copenhagen, January 1999, in Danish).

The Benadiri have all lost property in Somalia during the war. The majority of Benadiri fled the country, mainly to Kenya.[61] Members of Somali clan militias took the majority of Benadiri homes.

The Benadiri elders stated that there are still Benadiri in Mogadishu and Merka today, although they could not say how many. Those who are still living in Somalia have seen their houses taken by members of Somali clan militias, although sometimes the owners could stay in one room of their house.

The Benadiri elders were fairly sure that none of the Benadiri that fled to Kenya had since returned to Somalia. They described the situation of the Benadiri that remained in Mogadishu and Merka as difficult, as they cannot rebuild their businesses in the presence of the militias, for fear that their resources would again be taken. The elders stated that a few Benadiri had relocated to Bosasso in Puntland, either to seek work there or to move on from there to Yemen, although none of the elders had personal knowledge of any person now in Bosasso, or Hargeisa.

The Bravanese and Tunni elders said that although in the civil war Brava was most affected[62], the majority of Bravanese remained in the town. They stated that today about 70% of the Bravanese still live in Brava[63], living under the occupation of Aideed's Habr Gedir USC faction. They described how, although their houses have generally been occupied by militias members, some Bravanese have been allowed to remain living in one room of their house. The Bravanese could not claim back their properties without the risk of being killed.

Wayne Long, Chief Security Officer, UNDP-Somalia, explained that in Brava, Habr Gedir control, established in the mid-1990s, weakens at times. In the past two to three months much of Aideed's militia force has moved back towards Mogadishu, in anticipation of a power struggle in the capital in the wake of developments at Arta. At times such as this, when militia power diminishes, the Bravanese are able to resume some degree of control over their lives. Some local authority is able to assert itself, providing it is not seen as a direct threat to Aideed's overall position. Bravanese may even be able to regain property taken by Habr Gedir occupiers although such regained property is always liable to be retaken when militia control reasserts itself.

While the Ashraf elders estimated that most Ashraf have left Somalia as refugees, an unknown number still remain in Somalia, the ones that lacked any means with which to leave, and some are still leaving the country. Those who are left behind inside Somalia are living at the mercy of the other Somali clans. They have no protection from any other clan as the Ashraf are not related or allied in any way to any of the major Somali clans. As a religious group the Ashraf do not have an armed militia as many other clans have. They do not consider themselves safe in any part of Somalia, as they do not have a traditional home area of their own that they control. They are an urban population with no larger traditional residential area. Today they are at risk of being looted, raped and even killed by members of other Somali clans and militias.

The Ashraf are a religious clan but they are not supporters of armed Islamic fundamentalist groups such as Al-Ittihad; on the contrary, they fear Al-Ittihad. For this reason the Ashraf prefer not to relocate within Somalia to Puntland, where Al-Ittihad has had some influence in recent years.

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[61] Refugee Information Series, Benadir refugees from Somalia (Washington 1996).

[62] Cassanelli (1995) mentions that residents of the coastal town of Brava seem to have been singled out for harassment from the early stages of the civil war.

[63] Wayne Long, when asked, considered it possible that 70% of the Bravanese are still in Brava, since the place is without economic interest. Another UN source however stated that the Bravanese, like other Benadiri peoples, have almost ceased to exist in southern Somalia.

An earlier Dutch mission to Somaliland and Puntland in November 1999 found that Reer Hamar and Reer Brava have resettled in Puntland, in small (but unknown) numbers. They live in IDP camps. In general they are not persecuted there and their safety is not at risk, although they suffer discrimination and their socio-economic position is precarious.

In a recent UN study Ashraf are mentioned as one of the clans among the IDPs in northern Somalia.[64]

7.5 Benadir refugees in Kenya and abroad

The three groups of Benadiri elders called the delegation's attention to the position of the Benadiri in Kenya, since they fled Somalia. Most Benadiri were at first received in refugee camps close to Mombasa, like Saint Anne's refugee camp, Hatimy camp, Jomvu camp and Banadir camp. In 1992 these camps were recognised by UNHCR as transit camps and inhabitants were registered by the UNHCR and were to all effect considered refugees. But by the end of 1997 these coastal refugee camps were closed down and the inhabitants were compelled to choose between staying in their camp in Mombasa but no longer being considered as refugees by UNHCR, or relocation to Kakuma camp in the hinterland of Kenya. Most of the inhabitants of the coastal refugee camps opted to stay where they were, being aware of the risks they would face in Kakuma camp where members of the major Somali clans formed the majority of inhabitants. Some relocated to Kakuma camp on the promise that they would soon be resettled to the USA, but since the resettlement process was so slow, 90% of them are now back in Mombasa. Several cases have been recorded of Bravanese living in Kakuma who were subjected to murder, abduction, humiliation and threat.

At present there are about 2,500 Bravanese living in the coastal area of Kenya. In 1999, 97 Bravanese were arrested and taken to the Mombasa Police Station. Afterwards they were sentenced to pay a fine.

The Bravanese have repeatedly appealed to the Kenyan government and UNHCR to find a durable solution to their problems in Kenya.

UNHCR confirmed that the coastal camps had been closed by the Kenyan government because of their proximity to populated areas such as Mombasa. The agency also confirmed that refugees who have left the camps are no longer supported by UNHCR. However, refugees who have left the camps do not lose UNHCR's protection, they are still accepted as refugees. Refugees in Kenya are not living under the threat of being deported to Somalia.

The Bravanese elders in Nairobi gave the delegation copies of several of their requests to the Kenyan government and UNHCR (see annex 8).

The Ashraf elders estimated that about 250 Ashraf families are now living in Kenya. Of these about 100 families are living in Nairobi. An unknown number has been resettled in the USA together with other Benadiris. Members of the Ashraf community in Somalia are still leaving the country as refugees. The Ashraf community in Kenya is in contact with the Ashraf community in Somalia by telephone and other ways of communication.

[64] UNCU/FSAU, Report on migration and remittance inflows in NW and NE Somalia (Jan. 2000)

According to the Ashraf elders in Nairobi, Ashraf refugees remaining in Kenya do not receive any assistance from UNHCR or any other UN agency. They have found it very difficult to make a living in Kenya. Some of the refugees have been employed as unskilled workers, such as housecleaning while others are petty traders. They receive some economic assistance from their relatives living abroad (see annex 9).

8. Eyle

8.1 Groups and sub-groups, geographical distribution

According to Mr Fara Oumari Mohamud, a representative of the Eyle (Eile) community in Nairobi, the Eyle centuries ago had their own kingdom, ruled by King Gedi Ababo, around the hill Bur Eyle close to Bur Hakaba (Bay region). The Eyle were hunters and agro-pastoralists. They believe themselves to be of Falasha (or Jewish) origin before they were Islamised. They were treated by the main Somali clans as religious outcasts.

Fara Oumari Mohamud said that before the war there were some one thousand Eyle families living scattered throughout southern Somalia up to and including the Hiran region, but the majority lived in two districts, Bulo Burte in Hiran region, and Bur Hakaba in Bay region. These remain today the principal areas where the Eyle live in Somalia. Presently, there are approximately two to three hundred Eyle families in Somalia.

The information provided by Fara Oumari Mohamud can be supplemented from other sources.

Lewis (1994a) considers the Eile (Eyle) of Bur Eibe as a Negroid people, living in the area between the two rivers. They cultivate during the rains and hunt in the dry season (with dogs, considered dirty creatures by the 'noble' Somali). Both the Hawiye and the Digil despise them, and there seems good reason to regard them as a pre-Cushistic aboriginal population. They comprise three primary sections, one of which appears to be related to a dynasty of chiefs that ruled the Bur region at some time. Smaller Eile groups are found at Dafet, on the lower and mid-Shabelle, and among the Shidle.[65]

Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi[66] adds that in the 1960s and 1970s the Eyle had some hunting and farming communities in the vicinity of Mount Eyle (Bur Eyle, Bur Eibe), some 60 km south of Baidoa. Their numbers have been constantly in decline since the 1960s due to assimilation with the Rahanweyn and Bantu agricultural communities or through migration to large towns such as Mogadishu where they found employment as butchers. In Mogadishu, before the civil war, the Eyle occupied a large squatter camp beside the grounds of the National University, to the consternation of the university officials who demanded their eviction. The civil war has scattered the few communities that the Eyle had. Abdullahi considers the Eyle an endangered community that would have difficulty in reconstituting its former settlements around the plains of Mount Eyle.

Fara Oumari Mohamud explained that in 1992, in Mogadishu, he gathered members of eight minority groups to create an NGO, in order to appeal for help to the international community. The NGO implemented a number of projects with donor aid, but in 1998 the members of the executive committee were targeted by Aideed's USC, after which they fled to Kenya.

[65] Lewis (1994a), p. 42
[66] Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, Minorities of Somalia: Victims forgotten amid War and Chaos, 1998

8.2 Language

Fara Oumari Mohamud stated that the Eyle have the same language as the main Somali clans among whom they live.

8.3 Socio-economic situation

8.3.1 Relationship with other groups and clans

Fara Oumari Mohamud informed the delegation that the Eyle were treated as slaves by the main Somali clans. They had no protection from any clan and their relationships with the clans in their home areas (Rahanweyn, Hawadle) were not good. Also for religious reasons, they were treated as outcasts. There are no physical differences between the Eyle and the surrounding Somali clans. There was no intermarriage between the Eyle and the major Somali clans. There were no Eyle in government institutions, and there are no Eyle involved in the Arta peace process at the present time. Eyle could intermarry with some Benadiri and with Tumaal, but not with Yibir.

Lewis (1994a) describes the Eyle as clients of the Rahanweyn clans, while Abdullahi (1998) mentions the assimilation of Eyle with Bantu and Rahanweyn communities.

The Bantu elders interviewed by the mission consider the Eyle to be a Bantu lineage group (see chapter 6.1).

The UNHCR overview classifies the Eyle as a Mirifle clan (see annex 3). Perouse de Montclos (1997) considers the Eile (Eyle) of the Bur Eibi Hills to be a Bantu group.

8.3.2 Occupations

The Eyle are hunters and agro-pastoralists. According to Lewis (1994a) they also make pottery, and their home area is one of the centres of pottery making.[67] Abdullahi mentions that in Mogadishu the Eyle found employment as butchers.[68]

8.4 Security and human rights

During the civil war many Eyle fled Somalia for Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen. Fara Oumari Mohamud knew of no Eyle who had fled to the northern part of Somalia.

At the present time there are some two to three hundred Eyle families remaining in Somalia, mainly in the districts of Bulo Burte in Hiran region and Bur Hakaba in Bay region. They are still in a weak position, as they do not bear arms. They cultivate and suffer from the drought that reigns in southern Somalia. Hunting is difficult these days, according to Fara Oumari Mohamud.

There are no indications from other sources that the Eyle are at present targeted by the main Somali clans. Insofar as they live in unstable areas, they could become victims of armed conflicts.

No Eyle have been included as members of the Transitional National Assembly.

[67] Lewis (1994a), p. 82
[68] Mohamed Diriye Abdullahi, Minorities of Somalia: Victims forgotten amid War and Chaos, 1998

9. Midgan, Tumal, Yibir (*sab*)

9.1 Groups and sub-groups, geographical distribution, origins

In traditional Somali society a number of 'occupational castes'[69] lived scattered in a client status among the majority of 'noble' Somali clans. Various names are used for these groups, and their use is not always consistent.

The northern Somali pastoral society distinguishes three occupational castes, the Midgan, Tumal (also called Tum Tum, Tumaal, Tomal) and Yibir (also called Yibro, Hebrew), referred to collectively as *sab* (which means low-caste).[70] These names are also used by the southern Darod.[71] Another collective term used for these groups in northern Somalia is Gaboye (Geboyo), but Gaboye is also used as another name for the Midgan only.[72] A third collective name used for the three groups is *Baidari*.[73] The terms Midgan, Gaboye and *sab* are derogatory terms.

According to Perouse de Montclos the word *sab* refers to professional castes without territorial, genealogical or ethnic foundation, less than 1% of the country's population. Three quarters of them are shoemakers or barbers who carry out circumcision: they are called 'untouchables', Midgan, and try to impose a new name since the beginning of the war, the 'harmless' Madhiban. Less than a quarter are Tumal blacksmiths. One also finds a handful of Yibir hunters, said to have magic power, and some weavers called Yahhar in the south (according to the name of the shuttle of their weaving loom).[74]

The UNHCR overview distinguishes within the minority groups the Geboyo, Yibro, Yaharo, Tomal and Madhiban (see annex 3).

In the inter-riverine area of southern Somalia, occupational caste groups were scattered through the clan system, but the words Midgan and Yibir used to be unknown, while Tumaal was simply the name of the occupation of smith and not of a descent group. Here, the occupational castes were collectively known as *boon* or *gum*. But again, by others, Boon and Midgan were used interchangeably.[75]

The delegation met with Mr Yassin Hersi Jama, a representative of the Madhiban, who had lived in Mogadishu from 1980 onwards and in Nairobi from 1990 onwards. He used the term Midgan as a collective term covering the sub-groups Madhiban, Musa Dheryo, Tumal, Yaher, Yibir and Jaje. Written sources mention these same sub-groups among the occupational castes, with the exception of the Jaje.[76]

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[69] Virginia Luling coins the term, in: Virginia Luling, The other Somali - Minority Groups in Traditional Somali Society (1983). Other terms used are outcaste or lowcaste groups.
[70] Luling (1983).
[71] I.M. Lewis, Peoples of the Horn of Africa, Somali, Afar and Saho, new edition 1994 (London).
[72] e.g. in: Rebuilding from the ruins: A Self-Portrait of Somaliland (DRAFT), Somaliland Centre for Peace and Development/War-torn Societies Project (WSP) (Hargeisa, October 1999).
[73] e.g. in Minority children of Somalia, in: War: The Impact on Minority and Indigenous Children, Minority Rights Group International (1997).
[74] Perouse de Montclos (1997).
[75] Luling (1983).
[76] e.g. Lewis (1994a), p. 51; Kirk, John W.C., The Yibirs and Midgans of Somaliland (1905); UNHCR (annex 3).

A UN source in Nairobi considered the Midgan, Yibir and Tumal to be separate groups, while she considered that 'Midgan' is a derogatory term for Madhiban. She informed the delegation that the Yibir are called Yaher in the southern part of Somalia.

Another staff member of a UN organisation informed the delegation that the Midgan, Tumal and Yibir live to this day scattered all over Somalia, but especially in the central and northern areas.

In this report, Midgan, Tumal and Yibir will be considered as three separate occupational castes; the Midgan will be considered to have two sub-groups, the Madhiban and the Musa Dheryo (or Musa Dheere).[77]

The origins of these occupational castes are vague. They are probably related agnatically to the mainstream Somalis, but also ethnically much intermixed, and patrilineally segmented, like the mainstream Somalis. But they are considered by other Somalis to have become impure ('haraam'). The origins of their perceived impurity are not clear. It may have to do with their hunting activities, in which animals are killed in contrast to the Shari'a precepts on slaughtering. Also, the menial jobs to which they are confined are considered impure (see section 9.3.2). Yassin Hersi Jama indicated that the Madhiban originally come from the central area (Mudug and Nugal regions).

The Yibir (or Hebrew) are said to have Jewish origins but have been Muslims for centuries and know nothing about Judaism.

9.2 Language

Lewis (1994a) notes that the Midgan, Tumal and Yibir speak the Somali language of the clan to which they are attached. The Midgan and Yibir also have a special, secret dialect that the major Somali clans would not understand.[78]

9.3 Socio-economic situation

9.3.1 Relationship with other groups and clans

According to Yassin Hersi Jama, the Madhiban do not intermarry with the main Somali clans. When, centuries ago, they moved from their original areas of Nugal and Mudug into the northern parts of Somalia, they needed protection and entered into client-patron relationships with the major Somali clans. Since then they have held no territory of their own. Many Madhiban used to tell strangers that they belonged to the Somali clan that was their patron clan. They did this partly because they did not want to be seen as vulnerable.

Before the civil war the position of the Madhiban in various parts of Somalia was not strong. Yassin Hersi Jama gave the example of Hargeisa in Somaliland, where Madhiban were restricted to certain jobs like barber or cleaner. For women, he stated that the only job open was prostitution. Madhiban were not able to study, unless a patron from the main Somali clans would allow them. At the time there were some 60,000 Midgan in Hargeisa.

Yassin Hersi Jama informed the delegation that during the civil war the Madhiban suffered greatly. He stated that in Mogadishu in 1990 the Hawiye wanted to kill the Madhiban and many

[77] Lewis (1994a) gives a sub-division of the Yibir (p. 55).
[78] Lewis (1994a), p. 52.

consequently fled the city. In North East Somalia (Puntland) the Madhiban had a client-patron relationship with the dominant Majerteen clan of the Darod and also fought for the Majerteen. Their position was not, however, very strong. They could be killed easily, since no *diya*[79] had to be paid when a Madhiban was killed, according to Yassin Hersi Jama. In Hargeisa, the Isaaq chased the Madhiban in 1994 to Puntland and Ethiopia.

These findings can largely be substantiated and generalised from written sources. According to Lewis (1994a), the *sab* (indicating the Midgan, Tumal and Yibir) are attached to 'noble' Somalia tribes through patronage and perform specific duties, in return for which they are paid and allowed to remain in the territory of the tribe of attachment. The *sab* attached to a 'noble' tribe identify themselves with it in relation to other tribes. They have no recognised genealogy of their own. They are not land owning groups. Conventional paths to upward social mobility are not open to them. They are excluded from the councils of elders. They have no right to claim compensation for murder from 'noble' Somali except through the patron to whom they are attached, and the (lower) compensation is paid to the patron (N.B. this is in contradiction with Yassin Hersi Jama's statement that for the killing of a Madhiban no *diya* is paid). They cannot contract legitimate marriage with Somalis.

According to Perouse de Montclos, *sab* castes cannot demand reparations from a Somali in case of murder, unless they do it through their master.[80]

The *sab* have a reputation for witchcraft and magic. The Midgan's poisoned hunting arrows are feared. The Yibirs are despised by all Somalis, who never speak to them if they can avoid doing so, and are feared for their skills in witchcraft. Whenever a son is born to a 'noble' Somali, and at marriages, a Yibir has the right to a gift in return for an amulet and blessing.

Although the position of the *sab* had many points in common with the position of slaves in Somali society, their position was nevertheless distinct. The *sab* were a ritually impure group of people segregated from the Somalis by general prohibitions, e.g. to eat together or to marry. Although they owned no land, they were nonetheless distinct communities with their own customs. Their adoption by 'noble' Somalis implied a voluntary contract, while ownership of slaves entailed absolute rights of possession. The *sab* have the right to move from 'noble' family to family at will.

Lewis' findings mostly date from well before the Siad Barre era. Even then, he noted that restrictions placed on the *sab* were gradually disappearing. In 1960 the Somali government, in its drive to replace tribal particularism by national solidarity, passed legislation officially abolishing the status of client and upholding the right of every Somali citizen to live and work where he chose, irrespective of his particular clan or lineage affiliation.[81] Siad Barre, in his policy of modernisation and abolition of tribalism, or 'clanism', tried to emancipate the minorities and some members of the occupational castes, especially Midgan and Yibir, held important offices during his regime, including in the military. As a result the occupational castes supported Siad Barre and they were accordingly expelled after his downfall. In Somaliland, their role in the conflict between Barre and

[79] *Diya* means blood compensation (compensation for homicide, injury or other offence). Somali clans (in this case including the Digil and Mirifle clans) were organised in *diya*-paying groups. "The *diya*-paying group was an alliance formed by related lineages within a clan by means of a contract, traditionally oral but filed in written form with district officials during the colonial era, at least in British Somaliland. The contract explicitly stated the rights and duties of members of the group with respect to the burdens of payment and the distribution of receipts of blood compensation" (Raveen Satk, The segmentary social order, in: Maroodi Jeex, A Somaliland Alternative Newsletter, Issue number 9, Summer 1998).

[80] Perouse de Montclos (1997).

[81] Lewis, I. M. Blood and Bone, the Call of Kinship in Somali Society (Lawrenceville, 1994), p. 144.

the Isaaq-based Somali National Movement (SNM) earned them the hostility of the SNM rebels, and of the Isaaq as a group. Also, whereas other former adversaries in this area have reconciled, the Midgan, Tumal and Yibir have not been party to any peace agreement. They have found recovery after the war especially difficult and consider themselves as being discriminated against, in spite of the one seat they obtained in the Somaliland parliament.[82]

9.3.2 Occupations

The Midgan, Tumal and Yibir are called occupational castes because they traditionally perform specialised occupational services. The Midgan women also performed female circumcision and acted as midwives to the dominant Somali clans.

The Tumal are traditionally blacksmiths, making spears, knives, arrowheads, swords, as well as prophylactic amulets and charms. The Yibir and Midgan are traditionally both hunters and leather-workers, making ornaments, straps, amulets, prayer-mats and saddles. They hunted with bows and arrows poisoned with an extract obtained from a species of euphorbia. Both groups were feared for their witchcraft and magic. Some Musa Dheryo were basket-makers, and attached to the Rahanweyn or to the Isaaq clan Habr Awal. The occupational castes traditionally could not own cattle or horses or 'noble' possessions.

In the last few decades many Midgan, Tumal and Yibir have migrated to the cities, where they have been employed by politicians from more powerful clans as drivers, bodyguards and spies. As described above, Siad Barre elevated several Midgan to important positions in the Ministries of Defence and Education. With no independent clan base or status of their own, such appointees could be trusted to carry out orders. Other clans also employed Tumal, Midgan and Yibir families.[83] To this day their work opportunities are mainly confined to menial jobs such as hairdressing, blacksmithing, metalworking, tanning, shoemaking, pottery and craftsmanship in general. Some Madhiban rose to higher positions, e.g. as artists.

9.4 Security and human rights situation

The Midgan, Tumal and Yibir traditionally lived in the areas of the four main nomadic clan families of Darod, Isaaq, Dir and Hawiye in northern and central Somalia. In the last few decades many of them migrated to the cities.

During the civil war that followed Barre's downfall in 1991 the occupational castes were in general not specifically targeted, although as groups without natural clan allies, they were sometimes attacked with impunity. Moreover, particular individuals and families who had visibly supported the Barre regime were vulnerable to targeted retaliation. For example, Abgal militiamen of the USC executed several Yibir who had formerly been their clients. In its waning days, the Barre regime reportedly armed many Yibir and sent them to the local market to kill Abgal clansmen in retaliation for Abgal rebellion against the government. After Abgal forces succeeded in helping to oust Barre, they turned on their former Yibir clients and massacred them. Having broken with their former Abgal patrons, the Yibir then had no-one to turn to for protection.[84]

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[82] Rebuilding from the ruins: A Self-Portrait of Somaliland (DRAFT), Somaliland Centre for Peace and Development/War-torn Societies Project (WSP) (Hargeysa, October 1999).
[83] Cassanelli, Lee, Victims and Vulnerable Groups in Southern Somalia (Ottawa, 1995).
[84] Cassanelli, Lee, Victims and Vulnerable Groups in Southern Somalia (Ottawa, 1995).

Somaliland provides a further example. During the war, members of the Midgan, Tumal and Yibir enlisted in government military service and were assigned to a special unit. Their role in the conflict earned them the hostility of the SNM rebels, and of the Isaaq clans in general. Many fled in fear of retaliation to Ethiopia and Puntland. In recent years they have started to come back, and returnees have been able to reclaim some of the land and property taken from them during the civil war.[85] In 1998, for example, some two thousand Midgan, Tumal and Yibir returned to Somalia from Ethiopia, mostly to Hargeisa.[86]

Midgan, Tumal and Yibir today live scattered all over Somalia, but mostly in northern areas. There is little specific information available on their human rights and security situations. There are no indications that the security of Midgan, Tumal and Yibir is at risk from targeted actions by other clans. At the same time, indications are that their relationships with the major Somali clans have not improved much from traditional times, and that they are still discriminated against in the social and economic spheres. In some instances Madhiban have married into the Majerteen clan.[87]

In the Djibouti peace initiative, Mr. Hersi (aged 68 years), who has been the elected leader of the Yibir for 22 years, was asked to speak at one of the opening sessions of the peace conference. He noted that the Yibir had suffered terribly during the war but wanted badly to forgive and move on. Part of the bad treatment, he conceded, was due to the support of many Yibir for the dictator Siad Barre. But part of it was simply that they are one of the low castes of Somalis, and particularly that they are believed to be ethnic Jews, in a strongly Muslim country. He stated that the Yibir were never given their rights. For many years the Yibir were denied education. They perform work that is considered menial, such as metalworking and shoemaking. Traditionally many earned money through the belief, stretching back perhaps centuries, that it is lucky to give the Yibir a small amount of money when a son is born or at a marriage.[88]

Yassin Hersi Jama declared himself to be against the Djibouti peace initiative, and against the representatives of the Madhiban in the Transitional National Assembly, as he considered that those who chose to be in the power structure of the oppressor could never be the true representatives of the Madhiban (see annex 10).

In Somaliland, Midgan, Tumal and Yibir found recovery from the civil war especially difficult. They feel that they are under-represented politically, with one seat in the Somaliland parliament. Economically they still find themselves mostly in menial jobs, and do not feel sufficiently secure to conduct any business as other clans could confiscate their possessions.[89]

A UN report on the conditions of returnees and IDPs in north-west and north-east Somalia found that in Puntland approximately 10,000 Madhiban from Mogadishu and Bay and Bakool regions live in camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The report also found that IDPs from the South were generally worse off than town residents, but that the problems of the returnees were also quite severe. Both IDPs and returnees face severe problems in terms of integration within the depressed local economy. The IDPs around Bosasso face great risks in terms of sanitation and health. The meagre shelter available is vulnerable to fires.

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[85] Rebuilding from the ruins: A Self-Portrait of Somaliland (DRAFT), Somaliland Centre for Peace and Development/War-torn Societies Project (WSP) (Hargeisa, October 1999), p. 61.
[86] Plan of Action for Repatriation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, Initiative of the Administration of Somaliland with the support of UNDP and UNHCR (Hargeisa, July 1999).
[87] information from a UN source in Nairobi
[88] The New York Times, 15 8 2000.
[89] Rebuilding from the ruins: A Self-Portrait of Somaliland (DRAFT), Somaliland Centre for Peace and Development/War-torn Societies Project (WSP) (Hargeisa, October 1999), p. 61.

The Madhiban IDPs are especially vulnerable to spontaneous and forced relocations, and IDPs cited the insecurity of land tenure and ownership as their primary concern.[90]

10. Shekhal

10.1 Sub-groups, geographical distribution, relationship with other clans

The Shekhal clan has been described in various terms such as Sheikhal, Sheikal, Shekhal Lobogi, Shekhal Gendershe or Shekhash.

One source considers them as a minority group, though other sources consider them as associated to the Hawiye, as a sub-clan of the Hawiye or even as a separate clan-family:

Guido Ambroso[91] writes that the Shekhal is a priestly lineage with segments present both in central and southern Somalia as well as eastern Ethiopia. In Somalia they are known as Shekhal and in Ethiopia as Shekhash. The Shekhal claim direct descent from a religious Arab lineage even if some genealogists consider them as part of the Hawiye.

Information gathered by the Netherlands Embassy in June 1999 from UNPOS Nairobi, shows that the Shekhal are associated with the Hawiye. In general, Shekhal clan members have no specific area or zone of residency in the country. They are scattered in different districts and regions of the country. One can find Shekhal (as a family) in Mogadishu, Belet Weyne, Jowhar, Middle and Lower Juba and Gedo. The Shekhal Loboge is a sub-clan of the Shekhal, who have their traditional homeland in Ethiopia (Zone V, the Ogaden).

According to a UN source in Nairobi members of the Shekhal clan are living among the other Somali clans, especially among the Hawiye clans Habr Gedir and Abgal. The Shekhal clan comprises two sub-clans, which are the Martile and the Aw Qudub. The Shekhal sub-clan Martile, meaning "guest", is a member of the so-called Hirab (Herab) alliance, which is an alliance of all Abgal and Habr Gedir clans and the Martile sub-clan. The source said that the Sheikhal should not be considered as a Benadiri clan. It was remarked that the Shekhal Martile clan occupies three seats in the Transitional National Assembly (TNA) established at the peace conference held in Djibouti. These three seats are included in the 49 seats that the Hawiye clan-family and its allies were allocated in the TNA. See annex 4.

Wayne Long, UNDP-Somalia understood that the Shekhal should not be considered as a minority group, but as a Hawiye clan that seceded from the Hawiye five to ten years ago and no longer considers itself as Hawiye.

The recent UNHCR overview considers the Shekhal as a separate group, with four sub-groups: Lobogay (Lobogi), Aw Qudub, Gendershe and Aw Hassan.

The sub-group of Rer Aw Hassan is most likely a minority population according to a UN source in Nairobi. This group is represented in the TNA by two seats within the minority grouping called "Alliance Clans Community". The term Aw before a clan-name means 'chief' and indicates that the clan in question is a respected religious clan. The UN source had no information as to the

[90] Report on Internal Migration and Remittance Inflows in NW and NE Somalia, prepared for UN Co-ordination Unit (UNCU) and the Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU) (November 1999-January 2000).
[91] Ambroso (1994), p. 25.

geographical distribution of the Rer Aw Hassan population in Somalia, or from where they may have originated.

Lewis (1994a) considered the Sheikal Lobogi as a sub-clan of the Hawiye. They are a priestly group or section scattered among the Hawiye clans generally, but sometimes appearing as autonomous sections in some clans, as for instance in the Herab clan of the Hawiye. Lewis (1982) mentions that the largest clan of the Sheikhal is the Reer Fiqi Omar, whose most important lineage, the Reer Sheikh Aw Gutub, lives in the Ogaden.[92]

Ambroso adds that another priestly clan called the Sharifians (or Ashraf) is similar to the Shekhal. Both the Shekhal and the Sharifians are said to have acquired a certain degree of political prominence during Siad Barre's regime.[93]

According to a UN source in Nairobi the Shekhal Gendershe clan of Mogadishu inhabits the "Gendershe" village that borders on the Medina District of South Mogadishu.

A UN source in Nairobi indicated in December 1997 that the Mogadishu-based Shekhal Gendershe clan is one of the minority clans in Somalia, who seek protection from Hawiye sub-clan members occupying their areas since 1990.

10.2 Occupations

According to Ambroso, the Shekhal were religious sheikhs and qadis (judges) although nowadays many Shekhal have secular occupations.[94]

10.3 Security and human rights situation

According to a UN source in Nairobi dating from December 1997 the Mogadishu-based Shekhal Gendershe clan is one of the minority clans in Somalia. They are an unarmed community, which has been receiving threats in their traditional areas since 1990. They cannot defend themselves against the armed militiamen and therefore seek protection from Hawiye sub-clan members, who have been occupying their traditional home areas since 1990. Another UN source also considered that the Shekhal clan enjoys some degree of protection from the Hawiye clans.

According to the information gathered by the Netherlands Embassy in June 1999 from UNPOS Nairobi, members of the Shekhal clan and the Loboge sub-clan (if the person in question is not a political figure or has no special case) can travel freely throughout the country.

[92] Lewis (1982), p 224.
[93] Ambroso (1994), p. 25.
[94] Ambroso (1994), p. 25.

11. Digil and Mirifle (Rahanweyn)

11.1 Groups and sub-groups, geographical distribution

The Digil and Mirifle, or Rahanweyn, seem to take a middle position between a Somali clan and a minority. They are considered as a minority group by some experts (such as the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Somalia, Ms Mona Rishmawi). By others they are considered as clans related to the major Somali clans, though considered as less 'noble'. In the Transitional National Assembly (TNA), recently formed in Djibouti, the Digil and Mirifle have been included as one of the major Somali clan-families (with 33 sub-clans) and allotted 49 seats, distinct from the recognised "official" minorities grouped together at Arta under the title "Alliance Clans Community".

Different use is made of the names Digil, Mirifle (Merifle) and Rahanweyn. A UN source in Nairobi explained that this is a consequence of an effort made by Siad Barre to amalgamate all these clans under the one name Rahanweyn (the largest group). Originally, however, the Somali distinguished two clan-families, one called the Digil and another variously called Rahanweyn or Mirifle.

The Digil and Mirifle[95] are related ethnically to the four main Somali clan-families in various ways. Both Somali and Digil-Mirifle trace their origins back to the same ancestor, at the highest genealogical level: the ancestor of the Digil-Mirifle, Sab, and the ancestor of the four main Somali clan-families, Somali (or Samaale), are traced back to a common ancestor Hill, who is believed to have had Arabian origins. The descendants of Sab are segmented into three families: the Digil, Mirifle (or Rahanweyn) and Tunni; the Mirifle and Tunni derive from the Digil. The Mirifle and Tunni are numerically the most important, but the Digil survive as a small independent confederacy.

The Mirifle are concentrated in the inter-riverine areas of Bay and southern Bakool, but they also form substantial minorities in Gedo, the Lower and Middle Juba and the Lower Shabelle regions. The Digil are concentrated in the Lower Shabelle region. Historically, the Digil and Mirifle arose from the intermixture of south-driving Somali with the rearguard of the Galla then occupying most of the lower reaches of the Juba.[96] The characteristic structure of the Digil and Mirifle results from the adoption of other groups. Elements from all the other Somali clans as well as Oromo and Bantu have been absorbed in this way. These elements (individuals, families or groups) have been enabled to coalesce, thus forming mixed clans, with a founding lineage acting as a thread round which successive groups crystallise. In this way, relatively stable confederacies, bound together by reciprocal relations of aid and defence, are formed. Such unions are at first organised on the lineage principle. This, however, usually disappears in their further development. The end-point in the process of federation is the mixed village, where lineage segmentation no longer corresponds to territorial distribution. An example is the Tunni confederacy, which is formed by a number of Hawiye, Mirifle, Dir, Galla, Gobawein (Bantu), Ashraf, Ajuran and Boon groupings, with each segment containing an original Tunni lineage.

[95] the following paragraphs are mainly based on Lewis (1994a)

[96] The Galla had formed the first wave of Hamitic conquerors that displaced the original, Negroid, population of southern Somalia (before the 16th century).

Perouse de Montclos describes how Rahanweyn (Mirifle) identity rests more on land tenure than on genealogical affiliations. The name Rahanweyn ('large crowd') evokes at once incorporation and disparity. Blurred genealogies and oral history allow all kinds of recomposition. Genealogies do not reflect so much the past but the prevailing political and numerical power, which makes it easier to 'downplay' names of smaller or extinct lineages. In Somalia, the Rahanweyn will amplify his membership to the wider Somali family, while as a refugee in Kenya, he will insist on being a victim of discrimination due to the fact that he is from a lower caste. This said and done, these groups will still be able to negotiate when the 'hour of reconciliation' arrives, because they are part of the Somali lineage system.[97]

In the genealogical structure of the Mirifle (Rahanweyn), the offshoot of the Digil that has come to eclipse its parent stock in number and importance, there are only three orders of segmentation between the ancestor Rahanweyn and the individual sub-clans, in marked contrast to the charts of the nomadic clan-families. Sub-divisions of the Mirifle can be found, e.g. in Lewis (1994a) or Cassanelli (1995).

Lewis (1994a) describes the Tunni as a large tribe, or rather tribal confederacy. They lived at one time on the Juba river, but since the tenth century they were driven south-west and eventually settled in and around Brava. They had a mixed cattle-cultivation economy and also hunted. The Tunni Torre, a Negroid group, were federated to the Tunni of Brava as their vassals.[98]

As described in chapter 7, the Tunni in Brava town are culturally close to the Benadiri (Reer Brava). The five lineages (*gamas*) which the Bravanese Tunni mention as sub-division of the Tunni clan, can be found in Lewis (1994a) as Daffarat, Werile, Aggiuwa, Dacktira and Goigal, with further sub-groups.[99]

11.2 Language

The Mirifle speak a separate Somali dialect (called *Af-may* or *Af-maymay*), which serves as a lingua franca among the various Mirifle groups, several of whom also speak distinct local dialects, and some of their Bantu neighbours.[100] Also the Digil speak *Af-may*, although some will speak standard Somali. Both Digil and Mirifle generally understand the standard Somali spoken elsewhere.

11.3 Socio-economic situation

11.3.1 Relationship with other groups and clans

The Digil and Mirifle are held in contempt by the nomadic Somali clans for their lowly origins, stemming from Sab as opposed to Somali, for their heterogeneous composition that includes Bantu elements, for their lack of a clear, politically significant genealogical structure, and, more important perhaps, because they are predominantly cultivators. They were shunned as marriage partners by the 'noble' Somali clans.[101] They do have *diya* paying groups, and thus fall within this aspect of clan law. Villages could function as *diya* paying groups, even if villagers were members of different kinship-based *diya* paying groups.[102]

[97] Perouse de Montclos (1997).
[98] Lewis (1994a), p. 33.
[99] Lewis (1994a), p. 119.
[100] Cassanelli (1995).
[101] Cassanelli (1995).
[102] Besteman (1999), see also earlier footnote on *diya* (79).

In past decades, the predominant ideology of Somali nationalism tended to mute these differences. Since the collapse of the state in 1991, however, these ethnic distinctions have vigorously reasserted themselves, especially since the Mirifle (along with the Bantu and coastal populations) were the main victims of a famine and civil war imposed on them by the dominant pastoral clans.

The fertile areas inhabited by the Digil and Mirifle have long attracted other clans. In the 1980s thousands of hectares of land were appropriated from villagers without compensation. Also, an epidemic of land grabbing by well-connected Somalis began in those years.

The Digil and Mirifle did not play a major role in either the Barre government or the military rebellion against it. But in 1991-92 they found themselves in the middle of a struggle between three heavily armed factions: the Hawiye USC, retreating government forces that sought to regroup in the Gedo region, and the Ogaden-dominated Somali Patriotic Movement. The Bay, Bakool and Lower Shabelle regions became major battlegrounds. The resulting anarchy resulted in a food crisis in 1992. Thousands of Mirifle died, and thousands more were displaced, mostly within the region. Digil from Lower Shabelle sought refuge in the bush or in Mogadishu.

In the 1990s the competition for rich agricultural land in the Juba and Shabelle valleys intensified. In the Shabelle region the Darod, who had grabbed land in the Barre era, were ousted in 1991-92 by Habr Gedir and Hawadle militia, who subsequently laid claim to those same districts.[103]

Like the minority groups, Rahanweyn farmers used to have few weapons and they have no military tradition. After the UN's UNITAF operation had helped restore order in 1992 in the main population centres around Baidoa, many Mirifle clans set up local police forces and courts. In 1992 the Mirifle started to organise their own army, the Somali Democratic Movement (SDM), which held the Baidoa area.[104] In 1995 the Mirifle/Rahanweyn set up a council of elders, the Supreme Governing Council, as a self-administrative body. However, it rapidly fell apart when the SDM split into three, and Hussein Aideed's father, General Mohamed Farah Aideed, and the Habr Gedir clan took the opportunity to seize a large area of the Mirifle/Rahanweyn regions of Bay and Bakool including the town of Baidoa.

The Mirifle organised themselves militarily to fight the Habr Gedir militia. The Rahanweyn Resistance Army (RRA) was formed, allied to the SDM, and recaptured Hoddur from pro-Aideed forces in August 1996. In June 1999 the RRA, probably backed by Ethiopia, recaptured Baidoa from Hussein Aideed's forces and drove them out of Bay and Bakool regions. In December 1999 the RRA established a local administration for Bay region.

The Digil and Mirifle support the Arta peace process. RRA Secretary General Abdullah Derow Isaaq was elected as Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly (TNA). In the peace negotiations Baidoa was mentioned as a possible temporary seat for the TNA, as long as security conditions in Mogadishu were not satisfactory. Recently, however, a split has occurred within the RRA, with some members feeling that the new president, Abdiqassim, has no interest in Baidoa. The support by the Digil and Mirifle for the peace process has been somewhat surprising. As was pointed out to the mission by a UN staff member in Nairobi, it is not clear what they stand to gain from Arta, after the RRA had just recaptured their whole territory and had started to rebuild a local administration.

[103] Cassanelli (1995).
[104] Perouse de Montclos (1997).

11.3.2 Occupations

The Digil and Mirifle are mainly cultivators, although some groups combine cultivation with pastoralism and others are mainly pastoralists (more often cattle than camels).

11.4 Security and human rights

During the civil war, the Digil and Mirifle have repeatedly been victims of killings, lootings and other human rights violations by the various militias, mainly Aideed's USC.

Since 1999, when the RRA finished recapturing their main home areas, Bay and Bakool regions, the situation of the Mirifle has improved. Since that time, those parts of Bay and Bakool where the RRA has established firm control, and is making efforts to install a civil administration (e.g. Baidoa and its environs), can be qualified as zones of transition. The other parts of Bay and Bakool are considered zones of conflict. Much of the Lower Shabelle region, the traditional home area of the Digil, is considered a zone of transition.[105]

A UN staff member informed the mission that thousands of Digil and Mirifle are at the moment in North West Somalia (Somaliland), where they are a visible minority. Most of these Digil and Mirifle fled their home area since 1995, when Aideed's forces captured Baidoa. Although these displaced persons were well received in 1997-98, they are no longer welcome. The Somaliland population has grown tired of what they see as aggressive begging by the Digil and Mirifle. In Somaliland, the Digil and Mirifle live in very poor circumstances, in slum conditions, and there is no place for them in society. They form the lowest socio-economic stratum. However, they are not systematically threatened. Sometimes a Digil or Mirifle will be arrested. The UN staff member added that Digil and Mirifle are probably also living around Bosasso, in Puntland, but he was not well informed about conditions there.

Another UN staff member interviewed in Bosasso during the Dutch mission to Puntland of November 1999 stated that Rahanweyn are present in Puntland, and that they are very poor and often live from begging.

In the (large) sample of camps included in the UN study into conditions of returnees and IDPs in northern Somalia, one camp, of 360 people, was found to house Rahanweyn IDPs.

[105] UNHCR-Nairobi (May 2000).

12. Individuals and organisations consulted

Abdalla, Hemed Said, Bajuni elder from Jomvu Camp, Mombasa

Abdinoor, Abobasid Sharif, Secretary General of the Asharaf Welfare Association, Nairobi

Abu, Mohamed Abdurahman, Tunni from Brava

Adan, Abdullahi Sharif, Ashraf from Qorioley, Lower Shabelle

Ahmed, Ahmed Kassim (Badi), Bajuni elder from Jomvu Camp, Mombasa

Ahmed, Hassan Sharif, Ashraf from Mogadishu

Ali, Ali Mahdi, Bajuni elder from Jomvu Camp, Mombasa

Ali, Sharif Mohammed Sharif ("Kingo"), Ashraf from Merka, Lower Shabelle

Bakari, Bakari Abdalla, Bajuni elder from Jomvu Camp, Mombasa

Bashir, Alrahid Sharif, Ashraf Businessman from Medina, Mogadishu

Bauer, Julien, Professor, ECOTERRA, Society for Ecology and Sound Economy, Nairobi

Benadir elders (Ashraf, Duruqbe, Morshe) from Mogadishu and Merka

Bobow, Mohamed Jeylani, Tunni from Brava

Bryden, Matt, Programme Co-ordinator, War-torn Societies Project (WSP), Nairobi

Eno, Mohamed Abdulkadir, Bantu elder, Chairman of Bantu Rehabilitation Trust, Nairobi

Giama, Safia, Information Officer, United Nations Co-ordination Unit for Somalia (UNCU), Nairobi

Habib, Abdiaziz Sharif, Ashraf from Mogadishu

Harborne, Bernard, Chief, United Nations Co-ordination Unit for Somalia (UNCU), Nairobi

Hassan, Madina Sharif, Spokeswoman, Ashraf from Merka, Lower Shabelle

Hassan, Sahra Sharif, Ashraf from Merka, Lower Shabelle

Hassan, Sheikhnuur Yusuf ("Boob"), Bantu elder, Secretary-General of Somali Bantu Refugee Committee in Kenya, Nairobi

Hussein, Ali Ibrahim, Bravanese from Brava

Hussein, Moe A., Field Co-ordination Officer, United Nations Development Programme for Somalia (UNDP-Somalia)/United Nations Co-ordination Unit for Somalia (UNCU), Nairobi

Ibrahim, Mohamed Sharif Adan Sharif, Ashraf from Baidoa

Ibrahim, Zeinab Sharif, Ashraf from Mogadishu

Imberwa, Munye Imberwa, Bantu elder, Chairman of Somali Bantu Refugee Committee in Kenya, Nairobi

Jama, Yassin Hersi, Representative of the Madhiban, Nairobi

Long, Wayne, Chief Security Officer, United Nations Development Programme for Somalia (UNDP-Somalia), Nairobi

Lutato, Kalunga, Head of Somali Operations, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Branch Office for Kenya, Nairobi

Mohamed, Mohamed Bakari, Bajuni elder from Jomvu Camp, Mombasa

Mohamed, Farah Oumari, Representative of Eyle Community, Nairobi

Musalem, Abdulkadir Mohamed, Bravanese from Brava

Naji, Ali Mohamed, Bajuni elder from Jomvu Camp, Mombasa

Noor, Haji Amin Mohhammed, Bravanese from Brava

Omar, Abdulkadir Moallim, Bantu elder from Gedo region, Luugh-Ganaane District

Osman, Omar Sharif, Ashraf from Lower Juba

Qullaten, Osman Said, Tunni from Brava

Salah, Yusuf Abdi, Bantu-elder, Chairman of Centre for Minority Rights and Development, Nairobi

Sheikh, Mohamed Muhyadin, Bravanese from Brava

Sheikh, Mohamed Yasin, Tunni from Brava

Stephen, David, Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Somalia, United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), Nairobi

Wazir, Abdalla Mohamed, Bajuni elder from Jomvu Camp, Mombasa

Yousuf, Mohammed Sharif, Ashraf from Mogadishu

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14. Abbreviations

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

CNN – Cable News Network

EU – European Union

FSAU – Food Security Assessment Unit

ID-card – Identity Card

IDP – Internally Displaced Person

IFA – Internal Flight Alternative

IGAD – Inter-Governmental Authority for Development

IRIN – Integrated Regional Information Network

MSF – Médecins Sans Frontières

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

OHCHR – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

ORSTOM – The French Scientific Research Institute for Development through Cooperation

RRA – Rahanweyn Resistance Army

SDM – Somali Democratic Movement

SNA – Somali National Alliance

SNF – Somali National Front

SNM – Somali National Movement

SPM – Somali Patriotic Movement

SSA – Somali Salvation Army

TNA – Transitional National Assembly

TNG – Transitional National Government

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

UNCU – United Nations Co-ordination Unit

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNITAF - United Nations International Task Force

UNOPS/SRP – United Nations Office for Project Services/Somali Rehabilitation Project

UNPOS – United Nations Political Office for Somalia

USA – United States of America

USC – United Somali Congress

WSP – War-torn Societies Project

15. List of annexes, maps etc.

1. Map of Somalia showing major towns and regions.
2. Terms of reference for the mission.
3. UNHCR: Genealogical table of Somali clans (November 2000).
4. Distribution of seats in the Transitional National Assembly.
5. IRIN: Kenya-Somalia: Somali refugees struck by insecurity, 24 November 2000).
6. Document written by Bajuni elders in Nairobi, 21 September 2000 (see also note 24).
7. Document written by Abdulkadir Moallim Omar, Nairobi, a Bantu elder from Luugh-Ganaane District in Gedo region, 26 September 2000.
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