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**Report on Nordic fact-finding mission to Nairobi (Kenya) and the Middle
Shabelle region of Somalia**

21 February – 6 March 1999

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Executive summary

The findings to emerge from this report are as follows:

- any clan members in Somalia are basically safe within their own clan area. This also applies in its way to members of minority groups and minor clans;
- there are a number of groups in Somalia who may be regarded as particularly vulnerable in some contexts, including Bantu clans and minor clans, ethnic minorities and other groups such as Christians;
- any need for protection of clan members has to be assessed in relation to their subclan status;
- ordinary clan members in Somalia cannot as a rule be considered to suffer persecution merely on account of their clan membership. The clan bears collective responsibility for individual rights and safety;
- Mogadishu cannot be regarded as traditionally home to any particular major clan. It is in reality a city now occupied by Hawiye clans;
- large parts of Somalia may run the risk of a humanitarian crisis as a result of drought;
- the security situation in central and southern Somalia varies considerably from one area to another. Mogadishu, Kismayo and the Bay region are the least safe areas;
- any repatriation of rejected asylum-seekers to certain parts of central and southern Somalia should be set up with the council of elders in the area returned to (their home area) and not just with faction leaders.

Background to the mission

The Danish Immigration Service (*Udlændingestyrelsen* (US)) and the Swedish Immigration Service (*Statens Invandrarverk* (SIV)) have for many years concerned themselves closely with the political, security and human rights situation in Somalia. Together and with other Nordic countries, the two immigration services have carried out a series of Danish-Swedish and joint Nordic fact-finding missions, as well as several trips by national delegations, to quite a number of regions of Somalia and met and consulted with numerous UN agencies, the EU, NGOs, authorities, politicians, clan representatives, interest groups and private individuals.

The information gleaned from those fact-finding missions has all been published in joint mission reports. In the light of those reports, among other factors, both the Danish and the Swedish immigration authorities have seen their asylum practice develop from a general approach, with virtually all Somali nationals, regardless of geographical origin or clan background, being issued a residence permit on a *de facto* basis in Denmark or on humanitarian grounds in Sweden, into a more qualified approach, taking into account factors including the current regional, clan and security situation in Somalia.

In order to update the information gathered by the Danish and Swedish Immigration Services on a previous mission to the Middle Shabelle region, in spring 1997, and obtain up-to-date information on the overall political and security situation, etc. in central and southern Somalia, the two carried out a joint fact-finding mission to Nairobi (Kenya) and the Middle Shabelle region of Somalia from 21 February to 6 March 1999.

The delegation dispatched to Nairobi and the Middle Shabelle region was led by Jens Weise Olesen, of the Danish Immigration Service, who was accompanied by Christer Svan, of the Swedish Immigration Service. In organising and carrying out the mission, the delegation was assisted by the UNDP-Somalia in Nairobi and while in the Middle Shabelle region by the UNICEF office in Jowhar, which helped with aspects such as arranging the delegation's meetings in the area. The UNDP-Somalia in Nairobi also assisted the delegation in arranging a number of meetings with UN agencies, the EU Somalia Unit and NGOs in Nairobi.

This mission report falls into two main parts, the first describing the ***political and security situation, etc. in the regions of southern and central Somalia*** and the second giving a more detailed ***update of information on the Middle Shabelle region***.

The mission report has been compiled by Jens Weise Olesen and Christer Svan.

POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION, ETC. IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN SOMALIA

Clan-based security

According to Walid Musa, Senior Adviser for Political Affairs and Governance at the Delegation of the European Commission, European Union Somalia Unit ("EU Somalia Unit"), the general situation in Somalia is that all clan members can, as a rule, live in safety within their own clan area. One explanation for this lies in Somalis' traditional strong clan identity and not least the customary Somali practice of settling disputes by means of collective *diya* compensation, also known as "blood money", whereby the entire clan is held liable for an individual's actions. This applies not only in north-western and north-eastern Somali but also in large parts of central and southern Somalia.

Members of virtually all Somali clans can thus find protection within their own clan area. This also holds true for those belonging to clans in some places engaged in armed conflict with other clans. All warring clans in those conflict zones (such as Mogadishu, Kismayo and the Bay region) have "resident areas", i.e. homelands in Somalia, where there are not normally any prolonged clashes and their clan holds control of a territory of its own.

It should nevertheless be pointed out that there are also areas in which subclans of some clans find themselves at loggerheads with one another. Such conflicts may vary widely in nature, ranging from sporadic local clashes to more long-standing traditional feuds. In many cases such conflicts will be kept under control, subject to the customary reconciliation and compensation arrangements, represented by clan councils of elders. In some instances, however, clan councils of elders are unable to intervene, let alone resolve disputes. There are thus areas where, in part, anarchy reigns. In such areas there is a risk of both outright bandits, commonly known as "*mooryaans*", and more established clan militias having a fairly free hand to engage in criminal activities.

A society rooted in conflict

David Stephen, Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Somalia, United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), explained that there do not appear to be any foreign powers supporting the SNA leader, Hussein Mohamed Aideed, whereas his former rival, the USC/SSA leader, Ali Mahdi, is backed by Egypt. The "President" of north-eastern Somalia (Puntland), Abdullahi Yussuf, is supported by Ethiopia, while the Benadir Regional Supreme Council (BRSC), in the Benadir region, is backed by Libya, Egypt and Eritrea. There has been speculation, however, as to whether Eritrea is aligning itself with Aideed. The source pointed out that theories about Ethiopia working politically for a regionally divided Somalia are at present no more than rumour, adding that the Arab League's political line on Somalia is to support developments in the country once Somalia has put its own house in order.

There are of course some parts of Somalia experiencing more conflictual developments than others. This can be seen in particular in some regions and districts of central and southern Somalia. It

applies to the Bay region, in central Somalia, where Aideed's Habr Gedir clan militia, the Somali National Alliance (SNA), has seized and occupied an area traditionally belonging to other clans, especially the Rahanweyn clans. Kismayo and Mogadishu, too, form the scene of recurrent fighting between various clans seeking to establish political and economic control of those areas. Everywhere else, broadly speaking, individual Somali clans are themselves in control of their own clan areas and have for some while been able to remain in control there.

Somalia is traditionally a society rooted in conflict. Some would go so far as to say violent, male-dominated and racist. However, as stated by Bryden and Steiner in the introduction to their book "Somalia Between Peace and War, Somali women on the eve of the 21st century": "Conflict is not inherently bad; conflict is a critical part of social transformation and change, restructuring the relationships not only between peoples, but also within their own groups. It is only when latent conflicts escalate into violent confrontation that generalised and unnecessary suffering results. Like so many other wars worldwide, the Somali conflict contains elements of both" (**Bryden and Steiner 1998**, p. 1).

The authors add that: "War has been a constant in the experience of the Somali state virtually since independence (and arguably even earlier). The civil war that ultimately deposed General Mohamed Cede Barre began in 1978, escalated throughout the 1980s, and continues even today in some parts of the country" (**Bryden and Steiner 1998**, p. 2).

Somalia's conflict holds a number of paradoxes. For instance, Ken Menkhaus and Roland Marchal state in the UNDP Human Development Report, Somalia 1998, that despite the lack of any central government some parts of Somalia actually enjoy a better law-and-order situation than do many developing countries. On conditions in the crisis zones in southern Somalia, the authors state that: "traditional methods of conflict management and dispute mediation are surprisingly effective in reducing and containing crime. The practice of blood-compensation, or *diya*, obliges groups to pay compensation for crimes committed by their *diya* group members; and *xeer*, or social contract, binds neighbouring clans into precedent-based rulings of disputes which arise between them. Increasingly, urban communities are relying as well on Islamic courts to maintain order and impose law on offenders. Collectively, these quasi-judicial practices help to deter crime in Somali communities. They are also low-cost mechanisms compared to police forces and formal judiciary. However, to the extent that some of these community policing methods violate human rights, they serve as reminders of the difference between "law and order" and good governance, a distinction that should not be lost of either Somali leadership or the international community" (**Menkhaus and Marchal 1998**, pp. 18-19).

UN agencies, the EU Somalia Unit and NGOs generally accept that Somalia does not appear likely to see a central state re-established within the foreseeable future. The bulk of Somali politics can instead be expected to be shaped by what Menkhaus and Marchal describe as "radical localisation", i.e. a situation in which the only significant political authority and activity is to be found at village or district level or, in larger urban settlements, at neighbourhood level ((**Menkhaus and Marchal 1998**, p. 18).

David Stephen, of the UNPOS, pointed out that the SNA leader, Hussein Mohamed Aideed, is not the only political and military factor of any moment in Somalia. He lastly questioned the widespread belief that southern Somalia faces a major military showdown. He thought this

perhaps over-pessimistic, also seeing a potentially important role for Italy as a mediator and conciliator.

Recurrent humanitarian crises

Humanitarian crises are a recurrent problem in Somalia, since the entire area is hit at fairly regular intervals by drought and flooding in turn. Those natural disasters often spark off food crises and epidemics among both human beings and livestock. Since the serious humanitarian crisis in 1991 and 1992, also due to fighting in large parts of Somalia, UN agencies, the EU and NGOs have been able to avert similar disasters.

David Stephen, of the UNPOS, pointed out that Somalia today plainly faces serious problems, including drought, internally displaced persons and a lack of resources for reconstruction and development, but at the same time there is an important, positive movement to be seen in Somalia in that foreign aid has declined from a glut situation to one of very limited humanitarian assistance.

He added that even that humanitarian assistance can be considered sufficient and, politically speaking, things are taking a turn for the better in Somalia. According to the same source, lastly, there is increased interest in security issues in the region and the United States Institute of Peace has suggested in particular that Somalis in exile should provide far greater support for the peace process and for developments in Somalia. He pointed here to the significance of councils of elders for developments in the country.

Central and southern Somalia, like the rest of Somalia, is experiencing a protracted drought just now. As a result, the *Deyr* harvest in February failed and in some places the drought has brought a serious shortage of foodstuffs, water and seed. The UN Food Security Assessment Unit (FSAU) reported on 1 March 1999 that a poor harvest for the last three years running and regional instability (in the form of clan disputes and internally displaced persons) in southern Somalia have hit the "sorghum belt", running across the Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Middle Juba and Hiran regions, very hard as regards food security. The FSAU states that food aid up to the time of the *Gu* harvest later in the year may help sorghum growers through the *Gu* season (**FSAU Focus, 1 March 1999**).

The UNCT Somalia Monitor reported in February 1999 that shortage of drinking water and water for livestock has become a serious problem, especially in the Bay, Bakool and Gedo regions and in some parts of central and northern Somalia. A combination of climatic conditions, insecurity and poorly maintained wells and other water sources has put existing wells and boreholes under tremendous pressure.

Over a million people are considered to be affected by drought, shortage of drinking water and poor security conditions in Somalia's central and southern regions. At least 300 000 people are considered at great risk as a result of that situation, with about 30 000 believed especially vulnerable, being internally displaced (**UNCT Somalia Monitor, 10 to 22 February 1999**, and **SACB 1999**).

Cholera was also reported to be spreading in central and southern Somalia, with 3 000 people said to be affected by the disease (**UNCT Somalia Monitor, 10 to 22 February 1999**). On 5 March 1999 a total of 157 people had died as a result of the cholera epidemic (**UNCT Somalia Monitor, 23 February to 5 March 1999**). On 16 March 1999 UNICEF reported that a serious

outbreak of cholera in Bardera, in the Gedo region, was now under control. The Bardera epidemic left 240 people dead, with around 2 000 having been treated (**IRIN - Central and Eastern Africa, 16 March 1999**).

In early March 1999 the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB) reported a generous response by donors to its updated appeal for aid to drought-stricken Somalia. As at 31 January 1999, as much as USD 25 million had been received to relieve the food crisis in southern and central Somalia. The original appeal was for only USD 18,1 million (**SACB 1999**).

Philippe Gourdin, of the UN Coordination Unit (UNCU), UNDP-Somalia, stated that the World Food Programme (WFP) has resources for food distribution until the end of June 1999. Should the rain due in April, the *Gu* season, not materialise, it may prove necessary to continue distributing food for another six months. He added that a large proportion of the internally displaced are going to the Gedo region, which he put down to the fact that, for some while, foodstuffs have been distributed there to internally displaced people from the Bay and Bakool regions.

See also **FSAU, February 1999**, for the latest food-security highlights report (**Annex 1**).

1. Division of central and southern Somalia into zones in general

As can be seen from the introduction to this report, both the political and administrative and the security situation is rather more complex and fluid in virtually all Somalia south of the town of Galkayo in the Mudug region of north-eastern Somalia. Galkayo in central Mudug forms a kind of political and security borderline between the relatively well-run administrations in north-western and north-eastern Somalia, regarded by the UN as recovery or transition zones, and a number of regions in central and southern Somalia, classed as transition or crisis zones.

These labels are not, however, permanently attached. Several of central and southern Somalia's ten regions have over the years switched between being classed as transition zones and crisis zones. Leslie Mctyre, Resident Project Officer for UNICEF, whose office in Jowhar, in the Middle Shabelle region, covers the whole of central Somalia, took the view that any presentation of the political and security situation in central and southern Somalia has to be "dynamic", as he put it, i.e. constantly updated, owing to the risk or possibility of radical changes in the political and/or security picture at short notice. It is thus also hard to get observers, even those who have been following developments in Somalia at first hand for years, to comment on political and security prospects in the area.

Walid Musa, of the EU Somalia Unit, described the security situation in large parts of central and southern Somalia as "a day-to-day operational matter". He considered security in Somalia to be a practical consideration, with the lack of any national government the key factor. In the light of this he regarded central and southern Somalia generally as "fragile and unstable, without a legitimate judicial system for arbitration". Like a number of other sources, however, he pointed out that there are considerable variations in this respect, ranging from the Kismayo area and the Bay region at the one extreme to the Hiran and Galgaduud regions at the other. Walid Musa also referred to the SACB, regularly disseminating surveys of the situation in relevant regions; as a member of the SACB, the EU Somalia Unit follows the information given in SACB security assessments.

Parts of central Somalia and some pockets in southern Somalia are classified by the UNDP as transition zones, described by Ken Menkhaus and Roland Marchal as follows: "These regions are not plagued by endemic armed conflict, but possess only rudimentary, very localised political authorities, usually with little or no tax revenue to provide basic services" (**Menkhaus and Marchal 1998**, p. 18). The Hiran, Middle Shabelle, Lower Shabelle and Gedo regions are typical examples of such zones, although examples of this state of affairs can also be found in parts of other regions of southern Somalia, e.g. in the Galgaduud and Bakool regions.

The crisis zones are located in southern Somalia, concentrated especially in Mogadishu, the Kismayo area and the Bay region. In those zones, political authority is highly fragmented, contested and militarised.

At the other end of the spectrum lie north-western and north-eastern Somalia, i.e. Somaliland and Puntland. Menkhaus and Marchal consider Somaliland's administrative capacity comparable to

some of the poorest and weakest states among the developing countries. In both areas, conditions are generally peaceful and the security situation can be classed as good.

As mentioned, there are three specific parts of central and southern Somalia which have for some while been classed by the UN as crisis zones. The United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Somalia, January to December 1999 (**UN Appeal 1999**), includes the following comments by the UN on those crisis zones.

The three zones are: (a) the Mogadishu area and surrounding areas, including a smallish part of the Lower and Middle Juba regions, (b) the Kismayo area, including quite a large part of the Lower Juba region and part of the Middle Juba region, and (c) large parts of the Bay and Bakool regions, including their main towns of Baidoa and Hoddur (**Annex 2**).

The crisis zones undergo three types of recurrent crises: natural disasters, such as drought and flooding, epidemics (e.g. malaria, cholera and measles) and man-made disasters caused by armed conflict (**UN Appeal 1999**, p. 27).

Crisis zones are defined by the UN as areas experiencing "recurrent complex emergencies". Such areas frequently have no local authorities, but rather a fragmented political structure, with real power often held by militias. Also characteristic of such areas is a poor security situation and the occurrence of serious human rights violations, sporadic armed clashes and frequent population displacements.

In such areas it is a highly difficult and costly business providing effective emergency aid or other assistance, as bandits and militias show little respect for humanitarian work. Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF, in charge of security assessment for central Somalia, believed UN agencies to spend over 50% of their budgets directly or indirectly on ensuring proper security for the implementation of their programmes and operations in the area.

The UN appeal for Somalia for 1999 emphasises that unrestricted safe access for both local and international staff operating programmes in Somalia is a crucial factor in whether international emergency aid and reconstruction work can go ahead (**UN Appeal 1999**, p. 5). Leslie Mctyre pointed out that, despite the UN's great efforts to create proper security conditions in the crisis zones operated in, a watch has always to be kept on the changing security situation. He explained that having international staff working on the ground results in a high standard of security assessment and a similarly high awareness of the up-to-date security situation.

Transition zones show levels of governance, security and economic activity placing them somewhere between crisis and recovery. They are generally moving towards more stable conditions, although the situation is regarded as fragile with some risk of reversal. Militia activity is less noticeable and political authority localised. Settlement patterns and property ownership are relatively stable. Such areas allow some scope for reconstruction and reintegration.

The UN adds that many parts of Somalia can be regarded as transition zones. In late 1998/early 1999 the UN classed the following areas (of the whole of erstwhile Somalia) as transition zones:

northern Somalia: rural areas in the Toghdeer district of the Sanaag region as well as the Sool, Bari, Nugal and Mudug regions;

central and southern Somalia: parts of the Galgaduud, Hiran, Middle and Lower Shabelle, Gedo and Middle Juba regions.

Walid Musa, Senior Adviser at the EU Somalia Unit, placed the regions of central and southern Somalia in three categories, with Hiran and Gedo in the best one for security, followed by Middle and Lower Shabelle, whose political dependence on the Benadir region precludes them from the best class. He pointed out, however, that it is quite possible to carry out reconstruction work in Middle and Lower Shabelle but not yet in Mogadishu. Some districts of the Middle and Lower Shabelle regions were regarded in January 1999 as ready for what he termed "low-level" reconstruction work, although no more than that in the desire not to attract bandits to the area, this being in his view a real problem in some districts. The third and last category comprises the Bay, Bakool, Lower and Middle Juba and Benadir regions.

The political and administrative and the security situation in the crisis zones and the relationship between those zones and the transition zones will be explained in greater detail below, thus making it possible to form a kind of security picture of conditions throughout central and southern Somalia. The basic premise of such a picture is that the security situation in individual areas or zones cannot be assessed merely by appraising an area's internal political and administrative, humanitarian and human rights conditions or conflicts.

Seen in this way, it becomes possible to assess whether and, if so, to what extent the situation in the above three crisis zones can affect the security situation in the transition zones referred to. It should be noted that all sources, in explaining this, pointed to the importance of the influence, a significant one even, in some cases exercisable by the internal situation in the crisis zones not just on neighbouring regions but also on the overall political and security situation in large parts of Somalia. Walid Musa, of the EU Somalia Unit, highlighted the importance of a "regional approach", saying "it is no longer a doubtful issue", and made it clear that who controls and represents what is vitally important. This is not static, one implication being that an area's political and security situation is not determined by internal conditions within the individual region alone. External conditions also play a significant part. He further took the view that politicians, clan leaders, etc. in central and southern Somalia aspire to the same as their counterparts in north-western and north-eastern Somalia, although it is of course impossible to comment meaningfully on how this will turn out in any future political and administrative set-up in Somalia. He described central and southern Somalia as being undeveloped.

2. Risk of persecution on clan, ethnic or political grounds

2.1. General points

The point should first be made that, in the case of central and southern Somalia, asylum applications from Somali nationals cannot be assessed solely on the basis of geographical origin. Clan membership (see **Annex 3**) may in some contexts play a key role in a person's security situation in that part of Somalia. This applies in particular to members of minorities, socially isolated groups, groups regarded as outcasts or with a low ranking in the Somali clan hierarchy and religious groups and to people belonging to clans in conflict with other clans or whose own clan is divided by internal feuding at subclan or sub-subclan level. Prominent figures in the former Siad Barre administration may also run the risk of ill-treatment in some areas or at the hands of some clans.

Babafemi A. Badejo, Senior Political Officer, and Hussein Hassan Abdi, National Officer, both of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), pointed here to a number of vulnerable population groups in central and southern Somalia, warranting attention for asylum purposes. Those mentioned by them included the various Bantu communities, the Rer Hamar community in Mogadishu, the Barawani community, the Bajuni community in the far south of Somalia (the Bajuni Islands), the section of the Rahanweyn community opposed to Aideed's control (occupation) of Rahanweyn areas in central Somalia as well as Rahanweyn members in Bardera and Luuq in the Gedo region in particular, the Rer Culther community in Kismayo, the Tumaal and other Midgan groups, the Tumi, Jido, Jajae, Eile (an aboriginal people of hunters), Gelid, Shansi, Bimal and Shekal Gendershe and the relatively few, scattered Somali Christians. There may, of course, be other politically and socially vulnerable groups in central and southern Somalia.

2.2. Vulnerable population groups

Abdirahman O. Raghe, Deputy Coordinator for the War-Torn Societies Project - Transition Programme (WSP-TP), pointed out here that people returning from a lengthy stay abroad to an area in which traditional social mechanisms have broken down may risk ill-treatment. He thought this might be the case throughout southern Somalia and emphasised that anyone can live in safety anywhere in north-western and north-eastern Somalia, this being merely a political matter, whereas south of Galkayo it is not a political matter but a practical security matter.

Walid Musa, of the EU Somalia Unit, took the view that whether Somalis are granted asylum on account of the general situation in regions should be determined with the focus on applicants' clan membership, but not just at that level of the clan system. In that assessment, a great deal of weight should be carried by the subclan level in conjunction with applicants' geographical origin. At the same time, however, he thought there to be hardly anyone from the Hiran and Gedo regions in need of protection abroad and strongly emphasised that any clan members in Somalia can be considered able to live in safety in their own clan's home area. He illustrated this view by saying that Somali asylum-seekers giving individual persecution in their home area as a reason for asylum are not telling the truth, because no individuals can be persecuted within their own clan's home area. Nobody will be molested by their own clan, although a clan may, as it were, collectively face ill-treatment or persecution by another clan with which it is in conflict. Where this is the case, it

will not be a question of one individual from that clan seeking protection abroad, but rather of the entire clan requiring protection, the point being that it is not individuals but clans which may face persecution and the like. Walid Musa accordingly saw good reason to take particular care in assessing an asylum case where it hinges solely on an individual's position within that person's home area of Somalia. He considered it of the utmost relevance here for immigration authorities to take an interest in obtaining information on matters with a bearing on asylum by means of missions to particular parts of Somalia, especially to regions with a complex political and security situation and with subclans (potentially) in conflict with one another, as for instance in the Middle and Lower Shabelle regions.

Philippe Gourdin and Moe Hussein, both of the UNDP-Somalia, also thought, like Walid Musa, that clan members living within their own clan's home area would be safe from ill-treatment. In their view, any clan members can find protection among their own clan, i.e. in practice there is always a safe (traditional) homeland to live in or return to.

They believed this generally applicable as well to members of Bantu communities, having in most places their own settlement areas and their own adjustment mechanisms, which on the whole serve their purpose, including an ability to defend themselves against any ill-treatment.

3. Regional survey of central and southern Somalia

3.1. General points

As mentioned earlier, the ten regions of central and southern Somalia are not to be seen as separate, integrated units with clear political and clan-based demarcation lines. This point will be explained in greater detail below. For the sake of convenience, however, regional political and security situations will be presented by region, but with frequent overlaps. The regions are taken in succession, starting in the north and working southwards. The Middle Shabelle region is considered in depth in the second part of this report.

3.2. Galgaduud region

The Galgaduud region has no formal administrative structure and no regional authority. It is inhabited by a number of clans, although numerically dominated mainly by the Habr Gedir. There are also Abgal and Hawadle clans and other minor clans represented in the area. Clan councils of elders constitute individual clans' highest authority. The area is thus "administered" in accordance with traditional socio-political principles.

It should be noted that the region's inhabitants are commonly nomadic and only to a lesser extent live from farming. The region has a population of 185 000 and covers an area of 49 700 km² (UNDOS 1995) (see **Annex 4**).

This region is in various ways the most marginalised or overlooked in all of central and southern Somalia. For one thing, it is the region of the area with fewest NGOs (apart from the SNA-occupied and highly conflict-ridden Bay region), only three being represented there (**Handbook 1998**).

Frank Brenda, Country Coordinator for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), thus considered the Galgaduud region to have been neglected by international NGOs, while also pointing out that this is not to be seen in an adverse light. Such neglect stems from the region's minimal strategic importance but, as in the Hiran region, the lack of external aid has left people in the Galgaduud region better able to resolve their problems for themselves, having been forced to do so all along. Greater commitment can thus be felt on the part of the authorities (councils of elders) and the public than in many other parts of Somalia. It is therefore also relatively easy for NGOs to work in the Galgaduud region.

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, explained that NGOs in the Galgaduud region only employ Somali staff and UNICEF has very little information on conditions in the area. He even went so far as to describe the region as "an uncivilised no-man's-land", its northern part inhabited by the Hawiye clan of Habr Gedir and its southern part, bordering on the Hiran and Middle Shabelle regions, inhabited mainly by subclans of the Hawiye clan of Abgal. He described the region's population generally as "bush people" and did not believe there to be any significant conflicts between clans there. The only form of administration in Galgaduud is councils of elders, in the role customarily performed by them.

Several sources were able to confirm that the situation in the Galgaduud region is not appreciably different from before the civil war. Walid Musa, of the EU Somalia Unit, reported that the region was largely unaffected by the civil war and the situation there is as before the war. The region has all along served as a region through which members of other clans pass on their way to northern Somalia. He thought it unlikely, moreover, that refugees had left in any numbers from this part of Somalia. Given its isolated position and freedom from fighting in the civil war, Walid Musa classed Galgaduud as one of the safer regions in central Somalia.

Frank Brenda, of the ADRA, explained that its operations in the Galgaduud region include water supply and education, in places such as Dusa Mareb. He thought it reasonably safe to travel around the region by car, which the ADRA does from Beled Weyne in the Hiran region. It should be noted that the Hiran region is Hawadle-controlled, with relations between the Hawadle and Habr Gedir clans being strained. As far as the ADRA was concerned, Frank Brenda explained, relations between the Habr Gedir and Hawadle clans did not impede its work and transport within the Galgaduud region. The ADRA had itself been able to resolve the problem in a reasonable way.

3.3. *Hiran region*

The Hiran region is in practice controlled by the USC/PM Hawadle movement, except for the Mataban district, which is Habr Gedir territory. The Hawadle clan is politically dominant in the region, but with a number of other clans represented on its regional and district councils.

The region has a population of 223 000 and covers an area of 34 000 km² (UNDOS 1995) (see **Annex 4**).

The Hiran region forms a centre for trade between northern and southern Somalia and benefits from having the River Shabelle flow through it, enabling intensive farming to be practised.

Walid Musa, of the EU Somalia Unit, along with several other sources, classed the Hiran region as one of the best-run regions in central and southern Somalia.

Frank Brenda, of the ADRA, explained that, like the Galgaduud region, Hiran is not strategically situated and has therefore been neglected by international donors, which have on the other hand showered Hiran's southern neighbour, the Middle Shabelle region, with aid. He did not think neglect of the Hiran region had adversely affected its economic, political or security situation. On the contrary, he believed the region now far better equipped to resolve its problems for itself than, say, the Middle Shabelle region, in his words "spoilt" by donors. He pointed out here that the authorities and the public in Hiran show more commitment, stakeholderism and energy than in, say, Middle Shabelle.

As regards the Hawiye conference in Beled Weyne, going on for quite some while now, Abdirahman O. Raghe, of the WSP, reported the aim to be much the same as with the Darod conference in Garowe, in north-eastern Somalia, i.e. to establish a Hawiye-dominated area with a degree of self-government. The problem with the Beled Weyne conference, though, is its inability to draw in all parties involved in the Hawiye's internal dispute. The conference is not attended by Aideed or Ali Mahdi, nor by a number of well-known Hawiye leaders. The source nevertheless basically regarded the conference in Beled Weyne as a positive step, the problem being that it is

hard to see how anything politically worthwhile can emerge. He considered the conference to be in outright opposition to Aideed and Ali Mahdi.

David Stephen, of the UNPOS, regarded the Beled Weyne conference as "not inclusive", adding that it is accused by Aideed of being an Ethiopian invention. Egypt has likewise criticised the conference. Aideed is not attending the conference, but David Stephen would regard it as a positive sign should he decide to do so. The UNPOS in fact rejected the idea that the conference reflected Ethiopia's interests in the area or was an Ethiopian invention.

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF, considered the Hiran region to come at the better end of the security spectrum in central and southern Somalia. He pointed out, however, that Aideed has been trying to inflame traditional animosity between the Hawadle and Galja'el clans in the area. Relations between the two clans have been peaceful in recent years, but the last four months have seen them become more strained, with Aideed actively seeking to arouse tension between the Hawadle and Galja'el clans. The source therefore saw a risk of violent confrontation between the two clans.

According to the same source, in 1998 Ethiopia trained some 1 500 militiamen from the Hawadle clan. The Hawadle militia is therefore regarded as one of the strongest in southern Somalia. The point was made that Ethiopia generally supports anyone opposing Aideed and the Islamic Al-Itihad movement.

3.4. Middle Shabelle region

See the second part of this report, concerning the Middle Shabelle region, which gives a detailed survey of conditions there.

3.5. Lower Shabelle region

Political power in the Lower Shabelle region is in practice held by the Habr Gedir clan, although the region is home to a wide range of other clan members, who have in the past settled in its farming areas.

The region has a population of 616 000 and covers an area of 27 700 km², making it the most densely populated in all of Somalia, except for Mogadishu/the Benadir region (UNDOS 1995) (see **Annex 4**).

Economically, the Lower Shabelle region is the home of Somalia's best-developed and most productive agricultural cultivation of cash crops, prime among them bananas.

According to the SACB Area Assessment of 27 January 1999, the Lower Shabelle region remains in a state of what is termed "political occupation" by outside forces (i.e. the Habr Gedir clan) extraneous to its local inhabitants (who include Bimaal, Geledi and Tuni clans) and continues to come under the direct influence of (southern) Mogadishu. However, local councils in the Merka, Quaryole, Awdhegele and Brava districts have managed to enhance their legitimacy. Security is thus reasonably under control along the road from the region's main town, Merka, via Baidoa to Kismayo, despite sporadic problems. There are, however, potential security problems in the Afgoi area, particularly as a result of problems in the Bay region and in Mogadishu. It should also be noted that clashes still occur between various Habr Gedir subclans in Merka. Lastly, there is a clear trend for NGOs to switch their operations from Mogadishu to Merka. Uneven distribution of

resources among the area's various clans was also regarded as a problem in the making. The SACB therefore advises carrying out only "low-key rehabilitation and reconstruction operations" in the Merka, Brava, Awdhegele and Quarryole districts, going on to recommend that work there be directed at rural areas so as to spread economic resources.

Ken Menkhaus reported in mid-December 1998 that for the last two or three years Lower Shabelle has been a stable and relatively peaceful region. It has one of the most dynamic economies in southern Somalia. He added that: "there are no storm clouds on the immediate horizon in this area, but there are underlying problems and tensions that could at any time render this area a crisis zone" (**Menkhaus 1998**, p. 8).

Philippe Gourdin, of the UNDP-Somalia, described Lower Shabelle as a banana-producing region and that is in fact where a large proportion of Somalia's bananas are grown for export. They are exported via the port of Merka, which partly on that account has taken on vital political and economic importance for much of central Somalia. He further described Lower Shabelle as a region of business people, because local warlords have seen the merit of letting them do business in peace. This fairly peaceful state of affairs has also helped draw a relatively large number of NGOs into Lower Shabelle, which is now one of the regions of Somalia as a whole with most NGOs. The NGOs' presence is also due to that of the EU in the region. Lastly, Lower Shabelle is a close, easily accessible base for operations in Mogadishu.

Merka airport, in reality an upgraded airstrip on the coastal plain, has thus become a hub for quite a number of EU and UN flights to central Somalia. There are thus air links from Merka to a range of destinations in the rest of central and southern Somalia.

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, classed Lower Shabelle as the safest and most stable region in all of central and southern Somalia. Like Philippe Gourdin, he too pointed to the considerable importance of banana exports for the Lower Shabelle region. He explained that the largest banana company there, Somfruit, has run into difficulty, with a slump in banana exports. The head of Somfruit, Abdirashid, who used to play a political role in the region, is now a wild card and a few months earlier had to accept the establishment by a prominent Habr Gedir businesswoman, Isterlin, of her own militia force in Merka. Isterlin is therefore to be regarded as the leading political and economic force in much of the Lower Shabelle region. She is said to be in control of five of the region's eight districts: Merka, Coriolei, Kutum Wayre, Brava and, in part, Sablale. The other three districts, all close to Mogadishu, were described by Leslie Mctyre as in varying degrees of anarchy. The Lower Shabelle region is generally to be regarded as being occupied by the Habr Gedir clan but, despite both belonging to that clan, Isterlin and Aideed show a strong aversion towards one another.

Isterlin's operation of her own militia, however, means that she is the upholder of peace throughout the major part of the Lower Shabelle region. Leslie Mctyre reported Isterlin's main policy to be maintaining relatively peaceful conditions in the area. Among other steps, she carried out a demobilisation programme about two years ago, which he described as a great success, with many militiamen allowing themselves to be demobilised. The demobilised militiamen have over those two years acted, in his words, as "peacekeepers" in disputes between the businesswoman Isterlin, the businessman Abdirashid, referred to above, and Aideed's SNA militia forces. Isterlin holds control of both the port of Merka and the governor and chief of police.

3.6. Benadir region (Mogadishu)

Mogadishu in the Benadir region was the capital of Somalia under the former Siad Barre regime. As such, it saw violent clashes during the civil war between the conflicting Hawiye and Darod clans, fighting for control of the capital.

Mogadishu is traditionally home to the Rer Hamar community (known as the Benadirs, i.e. Rer Hamar and Barawani communities, regarding themselves as the original coastal population of southern Somalia). Both under Siad Barre and during the civil war Mogadishu was politically dominated by other Somalia clans, the Darod and Hawiye clans respectively. Political and military power in Mogadishu is nowadays held by the Hawiye clans, although according to Walid Musa, of the EU Somalia Unit, the city cannot be regarded as the traditional home of any Somali clan.

Mogadishu has a population of 688 000 and its region covers an area of 800 km² (UNPOS 1995) (see **Annex 4**).

In July 1998 the leaders of the Hawiye clans of Habr Gedir, Abgal and Murosade in Mogadishu concluded an agreement on joint administration of the Benadir region. On that basis the clan leaders announced shortly afterwards that they had set up a Benadir Regional Supreme Council (BRSC). According to David Stephen, of the UNPOS, the BRSC is composed to a considerable extent of former participants in the Cairo conference, held in the spring of 1997, including the USC/SSA leader, Ali Mahdi, and the SNA leader, Aideed.

David Stephen, who at the time of the delegation's visit to Middle Shabelle had been holding meetings in Mogadishu with the city's clan leaders, went on to explain that the day-to-day administration of Benadir is in the hands of a governor, whom he described as a responsible and pragmatic leader. However, the administration faces resistance from a number of leaders and groups. Opposition comes from the clan leaders Muse Sude, Mohamed Sheikh Osman (alias Osman Ato), Hussein Bood and a variety of minority groups, whose criticisms include a lack of clan balance in the administration of the Benadir region and a dictatorial and corrupt administration. Muse Sude has in fact claimed that financial assistance from Libya went straight into the pockets of the two clan leaders, Ali Mahdi and Hussein Aideed. The opposition is therefore calling for a return to the July 1998 administration agreement.

The city's new administration is nonetheless being built up, with its development supported by Libya, whose assistance has been used for purposes including reconstruction or renovation of courts, prisons, the port and a hospital. David Stephen added that militia forces no longer control the port and demobilisation of militias is to be regarded as an important step in the right direction. Libya has also contributed new uniforms for the Benadir region's recently established police force, while making known its unwillingness to assist the administration any further until the political problems and differences in Mogadishu have been sorted out.

David Stephen voiced concern at reports of arms and other military equipment being imported into Mogadishu. In January 1999 an Eritrean aircraft landed at Balidogle airport near Mogadishu, rumoured to be carrying arms for Hussein Aideed. A ship in the port of Merka is also rumoured to have brought in arms for Aideed. The source made the point that rumours of some of those arms being destined for the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) Ethiopian rebel movement could not be either scotched or confirmed, while adding that it looks as though Aideed has close links with Eritrea. In support of this assumption, David Stephen said he had just been told by "President" Abdullahi Yussuf of north-eastern Somalia (Puntland) that he firmly believes Eritrea to be backing Aideed.

Rumours of general rearmament in Mogadishu and of increased tension between the administration and the opposition were confirmed by David Stephen, who added that Italy has expressed a willingness to act as a mediator between the Benadir administration and the opposition.

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, classed the Benadir region as far and away the most violent and unsafe part of Somalia, reporting about ten deaths a day from violence in Mogadishu and the surrounding area. He also saw a rising tide of violence as a result of the breakdown of law and order in the city. The people of Mogadishu, however, are increasingly aware of the responsibility of the leaders, or "warlords", for that breakdown and realise that those leaders are only able to remain in power because they control (in part) militia forces with what are known as "technical".

Walid Musa, of the EU Somalia Unit, considered there to have been some progress as regards the security situation in Mogadishu. It is in fact the only place in central and southern Somalia where there have been any developments, even though they are still at a preliminary stage. He pointed here to the establishment of a new police force, while emphasising that this is a recent and therefore very uncertain factor. A pointer to the security situation in Mogadishu will be given by future operating capacity at its port and airport over the next few months. He thus regarded the situation in Mogadishu as highly unstable, adding that the city is not traditionally the territory of any particular clan but is in practice occupied by the Hawiye clans (Habr Gedir, Abgal, Murosade and, in part, Hawadle). It is therefore crucially important for a favourable course of events both in Mogadishu and in the rest of Somalia that other clans and clan leaders also remain interested in developments in Mogadishu.

David Stephen, of the UNPOS, reported that a large proportion of the Abgal clan in Mogadishu in fact supports the opposition to Aideed and Ali Mahdi, adding that both men consistently underestimate the strength of the opposition. At his meeting with the opposition leader Musa Sude, he had found him to have a fairly large militia force available. The force stood ready to fight, but there was nothing to indicate that Musa Sude wanted to see such an armed confrontation.

Philippe Gourdin, of the UNDP-Somalia, confirmed that Ali Mahdi does in fact face opposition from a number of Abgal leaders, including Musa Sude, Sharia Chief Justice Dheere, Hussein Bood and Osman Ato. Ali Mahdi is thus largely to be regarded as politically isolated.

Despite the rift in Mogadishu, Philippe Gourdin did not see any clear willingness by the Benadir Regional Supreme Council (BRSC) to resort to violence against the opposition. He explained that there are only two political factions in Mogadishu: the pro-BRSC camp and the opposition. The BRSC leaders, Aideed and Ali Mahdi, have received assistance from the UNDP-Somalia for purposes including clearing the streets of Mogadishu (which for some years have resembled a battlefield) and have also carried out some reconstruction projects. This can be regarded as a positive move and the BRSC is clearly following a line of "non-violent confrontation". Philippe Gourdin would not say, however, whether any violent clashes might arise between the two sides. Overall he found it hard for the immediate future to see any really positive developments in Mogadishu. Basically, nothing has happened to bring about any decisive change in the situation there. His reason for saying this was that politics in Mogadishu still appears to be rooted in the personal interests of leading politicians. However, he thought there to be less risk of renewed major warfare in Mogadishu than previously, but deplored the widespread banditry in the city and its environs.

On 5 March 1999, however, an anonymous UN source reported that the governor of the Benadir region has launched an anti-bandit campaign in the city, with a favourable impact on security in Mogadishu. The same source stated that the drive against bandits has had its limits, though, with two bandit raids being carried out on WFP vehicles in the vicinity of the part of the city controlled by Osman Ato. This suggested that the Benadir administration was reluctant to arrest the bandits for fear of provoking opposition hostilities in the city's Medina district. According to the source, however, there are still reports of hostilities between various Abgal subclans in areas to the north of Mogadishu and also of those hostilities at times being reflected on the city's northern outskirts.

Philippe Gourdin also regarded initiatives by some prominent business people to bring peace and security to Mogadishu as a positive aspect, since they have an objective interest in seeing peaceful conditions in the city.

3.7. Middle Juba region

Middle Juba is considered by Ken Menkhaus to be one of the most isolated and underdeveloped regions of southern Somalia. The region is also uneven in nature, with its three districts, Sakow, Buale and Jilib, having nothing in common and being regardable as quite separate areas both politically and economically. In addition the Buale and Jilib districts are uneven in their clan make-up. It is therefore not possible to comment in more general terms on the region, which has no regional authority but a number of local authorities at village level. Buale district council merely acts as an intermediary between international donors and the local community. Jilib is divided between two clans: the Habr Gedir clan of Ayr and the Mohamed Zubeir clan (Absame). The source reports that, up until the autumn of 1998, Sakow had the best-organised administration at district level, as a result of a carefully struck balance between the Rahanweyn clans on the district council. However, armed clashes between the Rahanweyn clans of Geledle and Macalinweyne in the area in the autumn of 1998 brought down that administration.

Ken Menkhaus points out that political clan leaders ("faction leaders") do not play any role in the area, it being rather the traditional clan elders and their militias who provide the local leadership. They cannot, however, control the areas' *mooryaans*, meaning bandits (**Menkhaus 1999b**).

The Middle Juba region has a population of 191 000 and covers an area of 18 700 km² (UNPOS 1995) (see **Annex 4**).

The Bantu community living along the Rive Juba are numerically dominant in Buale and Jilib, but unarmed and enjoying little political influence. To the north of Jilib the Bantus live in a state of dependence on "ethnic" Somalis, which is not the case in the area to the south of Jilib. Bantus from the Jilib and Buale districts, in particular, have suffered and still face abuses in the form of attacks, rape, forced labour and loss of property. Unpaid and uncontrolled militia units have repeatedly demanded part of Bantus' harvest as "protection money". Ken Menkhaus describes this as living in semi-feudal conditions. As compared with before the civil war, between one third and one half of the Bantu population have fled from the Buale and Jilib districts, many of them to Kenya, Kismayo or Mogadishu.

Ownership of farming land is a latent political issue, especially in the Jilib district. Should the Bantus return to Lower Juba, it will turn into a decisive political issue in the region.

For part of the 1990s the Middle Juba region was classified as a crisis zone, followed by a fairly quiet period from 1995 to 1998, since when the region has reverted to a state of humanitarian crisis and armed conflict (**Menkhaus 1999b**).

Walid Musa, of the EU Somalia Unit, described the security situation in both the Middle and Lower Juba regions as fragile. The area's Rahanweyn clans are not strong enough to retain control of those areas, being made up of a ragbag of fragmented subclans. Leslie Mctyre placed the Middle Juba region in an intermediate position for security in comparison with the other regions of central and southern Somalia. He explained that in clan composition the region comprises a numerically dominant Bantu community and a variety of Majerteen, Ogaden, Marehan and Rahanweyn clans. The political and security situation in the region is to be regarded as uncertain, since Aideed has begun supplying one Rahanweyn subclan with money and arms in order to persuade it to take up the cudgels against other Rahanweyn clans and the Majerteen clan in the area.

3.8. Lower Juba region (Kismayo)

Ken Menkhaus reports that since 1991 most of the Lower Juba region and especially Kismayo has been the scene of the most violent, complex and unrestrainable conflicts in Somalia. Fighting for control of this potentially rich area and access to the port of Kismayo has sucked in clans, clan militias and arms from all of Somalia. He therefore describes the region's disputes as more of a national than a regional conflict.

The political picture in Lower Juba is extremely complicated, with new alliances and deep divisions incessantly arising between and within clans and political leaders' factions.

There is therefore no regional or district administration in the area. Every attempt to reconcile clans and build an administration has failed (**Menkhaus 1999c**).

Ken Menkhaus cannot recognise any administrative division of the Lower Juba region into districts. On the other hand, he lists five *de facto* political zones in the region:

- the town of Kismayo: an urban enclave, home to Harti clans, but also shared with the Absame clan among others. Kismayo forms the economic heart of the region. Power-sharing in Kismayo is a core issue in the region's ongoing conflict;
- the valley of the River Juba: a densely populated farming area, where the Bantu population are under constant military occupation by warring Somali clans, at present mainly the Marehan clan and the Habr Gedir clan of Ayr;
- the pastoral west bank: this vast grazing area is dominated by the nomadic Absame clan. There has been only limited conflict in this area, but a measure of political dissension within the Absame clan prompts Ken Menkhaus to describe the area as "somewhat anarchic";
- the east bank: this part of the Jamaame district is physically and politically isolated from the rest of the Lower Juba region. Both of the area's bridges have been destroyed as a result of fighting. The town of Jamaame is dominated by the Bimaal clan in a loose alliance with Habr Gedir militia forces, which hold control of the east bank (of the River Juba) in the vicinity of the strategically important but now demolished bridge at Kamsuuma to the north of Kismayo (see below);

- the coastal zone: this is a sparsely populated area, inhabited mainly by Harti and Absame clans and Bajuni fishermen. The area is described by Ken Menkhaus as remote and lawless. It houses illegal fishermen, smugglers, militiamen and fundamentalists in the shape of Al-Itihad, which has a smallish base on the Ras Kamboni peninsula. Al-Itihad apparently receives extensive support from tradespeople in Doble.

Walid Musa, of the EU Somalia Unit, like other sources, was deeply concerned about developments in Lower Juba and in Kismayo especially. There is an imminent danger of serious armed conflict between the SNA and SNF, on the one hand, and Morgan's SPM forces, on the other, with reports of a sizeable joint SNF-SNA force merely awaiting completion of a new bridge over the Rive Juba at Kamsuuma to the north of Kismayo before launching a final assault on Kismayo.

Philippe Gourdin, of the UNDP-Somalia, reports the new bridge at Kamsuuma to be identical to the bridge in Jowhar, previously stolen by unidentified robbers. According to Ken Menkhaus, the governor of the Middle Shabelle region tried to have the Jowhar bridge dismantled, wanting to sell it for his own enrichment to a UN agency engaged in rebuilding another bridge somewhere further up the River Shabelle. However, local people in Jowhar prevented the governor from appropriating the entire bridge (**Menkhaus 1998**, p. 8). According to Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, however, in late January 1999 the remaining section of the bridge in Jowhar was stolen by the governor, who with the support of militia units and after an armed clash with local people in Jowhar was able to dismantle the rest of the bridge. This was then, according to Philippe Gourdin, transported to Kamsuuma, north of Kismayo. In his assessment, once the bridge at Kamsuuma is rebuilt, a violent offensive against Morgan's forces in Kismayo can be expected. He feared that conflict might have devastating consequences for the whole of central and southern Somalia.

In the event of a joint SNF-SNA assault on Kismayo, there is a serious risk of a general, all-out confrontation between the Hawiye and Darod clans; on that point several sources were agreed. Abdirahman O. Raghe, of the WSP, took the view that a conflict between the major clans of Hawiye and Darod could prove disastrous for Somalia as a whole, there being a risk of such as confrontation escalating. He regarded this as a nightmare scenario for Somalia, especially if Galkayo also becomes the scene of fighting between Majerteen and Habr Gedir clans. This is due to the risk of north-eastern Somalia's Majerteen clans, led by "President" Abdullahi Yussuf, going on the offensive against the Habr Gedir clans south of Galkayo in order to relieve the pressure on Morgan, under threat in Kismayo, Morgan and Abdullahi Yussuf being considered allies. Were that to happen, it would mean a nationwide conflict, which could have very serious consequences for the security situation throughout Somalia. The source had heard reports, however, that Abdullahi Yussuf does not want to see fighting in Galkayo, but also that he has sent arms to Morgan in Kismayo.

David Stephen, of the UNPOS, said there are signs that Aideed's forces cannot agree on how to resolve the conflict in Kismayo. He also cautioned against overestimating Aideed's military strength.

Walid Musa, of the EU Somalia Unit, like a number of other sources, feared a Darod-Hawiye confrontation and described one as a "worst-case scenario", but he hoped that the Isaq clan would take on its traditional role as a mediator between precisely those two clans. He stated without hesitation that the Isaq clan's conciliation role may provide a safeguard against any all-out

confrontation between the Darod and Hawiye clans. An armed confrontation between those two clans could have a bearing on the whole of Somalia.

According to Walid Musa, however, there is nothing to indicate any willingness on the part of the Isaq clan to mediate in such a conflict. It should nevertheless be noted that "President" Egal of north-western Somalia recently paid a visit to Yemen. According to the BBC, he was asked by the Yemeni President to turn his attention to developments in southern Somalia. The source confirmed that, in making that request, the Yemeni President specifically had in mind the Isaq clan's traditional mediation role. The Yemeni President reportedly on the same occasion made the point that Yemen cannot recognise the secession of north-western Somalia, but rather wants to see a united Somalia.

According to Ayub Sheikh Yeroid, a UNICEF field officer in Baidoa, ex-President Siad Barre knitted the Middle and Lower Juba regions together more closely and thereby enabled the Majerteen clan in Kismayo and the Ogaden clan in the rest of Lower Juba to sideline the Rahanweyn clans in the two Juba regions. This has left the Rahanweyn clans in the area more or less desperate. The Rahanweyn clans have traditionally had various Bantu clans affiliated with them and, according to the source, the Bantu and Rahanweyn clans are closely related, with marriages between members of the two not uncommon.

Philippe Gourdin, of the UNDP-Somalia, explained that the purpose of the Marehan clan's involvement in the conflict in Kismayo is to strengthen the clan's negotiating hand so that it can maintain its position in the town. This is not really a clan issue, but rather a "warlord issue", i.e. a political one, not affecting those Marehan members who in actual fact have been and still are living in Kismayo. He thus saw two alternative courses of events in Kismayo: either the SNF-SNA forces will try to capture Morgan and kill him or else the SNF will manage to negotiate its way into Kismayo.

Ken Menkhaus reports as a characteristic feature that various warring clan militias are at times driven out of Kismayo, while ordinary members of the same clans as the militias driven out can still live in the town without any difficulty, because such ordinary clan members, often business people, bridge any clan differences. He also points to the importance of personal and marital ties bringing members of different clans together (**Menkhaus 1999c**, p. 3).

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, classed Lower Juba as a relatively unsafe region on account of the conflict in Kismayo. He expected the conflict to culminate in Aideed taking Kismayo and in the Majerteen clan, with support from north-eastern Somalia, gaining control of the port. The latter point is a tricky question, however, since the SNF (the Marehan clan) also has interests in Kismayo. The entire conflict has a bearing on the Rahanweyn, Hawadle, Ogaden, Marehan, Majerteen and Habr Gedir clans. There is thus a considerable risk of conflict in the area to the south of Galkayo (where the Majerteen and Habr Gedir clans come up against one another), should fighting develop in Kismayo. Such a course of events might also put the Hiran region's Hawadle clan under pressure from the Habr Gedir clan. Alternatively, should the Majerteen win out in the confrontation with the Habr Gedir, the Majerteen clan may seek an alliance with the Hawadle clan in Hiran.

The gravity of the armed conflict between the SNA-SNF and Morgan in the Kismayo area is shown by the commission of war crimes by each side against the other. Philippe Gourdin explained that in late January 1999 Habr Gedir militia units executed a number of Majerteen prisoners of war in the Jamaame district. When Marehan militia units allied to the Habr Gedir saw this, they opened fire

on the Habr Gedir militia, causing a further escalation of the conflict. In the light of this he could report that the UNDP, MSF and the ICRC subsequently took steps to have rules drawn up for the exchange of prisoners of war so as to prevent them from being executed in future.

Philippe Gourdin lastly reported Morgan still to be in Kismayo itself and now to have been listed as a war criminal, which means that he cannot leave Somalia.

3.9. Bay region

Aideed's SNA militia forces have occupied a large proportion of the Bay region since 1995, having captured the regional capital, Baidoa, and other parts of the region in September 1995.

Ken Menkhaus reported in December 1998 that the political situation in the Bay region is more complex than in the neighbouring Bakool region. In spite of Ethiopian support for the RRA and attacks by the latter on SNA militia forces in the regional capital, Baidoa, and in Bur Akaba, Aideed's SNA militia forces have managed to hold their ground in both places and the SNA is also strongly represented along the road near Wanley Weyn and near the strategically situated Balidogle airport. The source points out that local elders and village headmen are unable to exercise any authority over those militia forces, although the SNA does not control the Bay region's western districts of Qansadheere and Dinsoor (**Menkhaus 1998**, pp. 5-6).

Bay is very much an agricultural region, in what is known as the "inter-riverine area". The area is traditionally dominated by Rahanweyn clans, living from arable and livestock farming.

The Bay region has a population of 643 000 and covers an area of 42 500 km² (UNDOS 1995) (see **Annex 4**).

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, explained that the region used to be regarded, before the civil war, as one of the most civilised parts of Somalia. Its population was one of the best-educated in the country and the regional capital, Baidoa, was in the past under consideration to be Somalia's capital. The situation at present is quite the reverse, with the region now one of Somalia's most unsafe, violent and anarchic, chiefly because of the SNA occupation. He considered that, even after any eventual national peace and reconciliation in Somalia, it would be difficult to rebuild the region and thus restore it to its previous level.

Ayub Sheikh Yeroid, of UNICEF in the Bay region, explained that prior to 1969, i.e. before Siad Barre came to power, the Bay, Bakool and Gedo regions and the Sakow and Buale districts of the Middle Juba region were combined in what was called the Upper Juba region. It was Siad Barre who carved up the Upper Juba region into the present units, partly so as to secure for his Marehan clan an area of its own in Somalia, in the shape of the present Gedo region. That area was previously a traditional Rahanweyn territory, as were and are the Bay and Bakool regions, Bay being inhabited by eight Rahanweyn clans and Bakool by nine, but following Siad Barre's reparcelling of the Upper Juba region all Rahanweyn clans found themselves under the control of either Darod or Hawiye clans.

This state of affairs obtained until southern Somalia plunged into civil war in 1991. Since the ruling Marehan clan was then driven out of Mogadishu, the Rahanweyn clans were subjected to serious pressure and abuses by the Marehan clan. As a result of UNOSOM's presence from 1992 onwards, an unnatural balance of power was established between clans in the Bay region, among

others, but by late 1993, with UNOSOM's assistance, the Rahanweyn clans had an opportunity to dominate the Hawiye and Darod clans. In 1994 the Rahanweyn clans formed their own "Digil-Merifle" (Rahanweyn) parliament, based in Baidoa.

However, the Rahanweyn clans' Digil-Merifle coalition soon ran into difficulty, being plagued by internal dissension. Some Rahanweyn clans not previously enjoying any great influence had suddenly become politically and militarily significant and thus had a chance to squeeze out other Rahanweyn clans previously enjoying considerable political influence.

Those Rahanweyn clans which lost the political battle joined forces with General Mohamed Farah Aidede's Somali National Alliance (SNA). This made it fairly easy for Aidede to launch a *blitzkrieg* offensive in September 1995, in which his SNA militia forces seized control of the regional capital, Baidoa. The Rahanweyn clans have since then been divided into two factions: the Rahanweyn Resistance Army (RRA) and the Habr Gedir-dominated SNA militia. The Rahanweyn clans supporting the SNA include the Elay, Gelidh and Jarons clans, plus a number of smaller ones. The other Rahanweyn clans generally support the RRA.

RRA militia forces have steadfastly struggled against the occupation by SNA militia forces of Rahanweyn territory in the Bay and Bakool regions. The fighting has given rise to large numbers of internally displaced Rahanweyn members from Bay and Bakool, many of whom have fled to the neighbouring Gedo region, where they are regarded as a minority group by the politically dominant Marehan clan.

Ayub Sheikh Yeroid was uncertain how the situation in the Bay region would develop in the immediate future, but saw positive elements in some sections of the RRA. This could not, however, outweigh his belief that the Rahanweyn clans currently supporting the SNA will continue to do so and he could therefore not see any solution to the conflict between the RRA and the SNA in the Bay region.

With regard to human rights violations in the Bay region, he pointed in the first place to the very violent atrocities committed against the region's population by the SNA, especially by its Habr Gedir militia forces. They include outright massacres, in which SNA militia units loot village dwellers' homes, often with the aim of seizing their property. They then forcibly remove the male inhabitants and drive them to a place outside the village, where they are executed. These reports were corroborated by Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF.

Ayub Sheikh Yeroid emphasised that some Rahanweyn members also take part in such looting and massacres and that both the SNA and the RRA are responsible for crimes against the population of the Bay and Bakool regions. He pointed to two sides to human rights violations in the area, in that the communities and individuals suffering them are affected in different ways. Settled Rahanweyn farmers are normally unarmed and therefore lose possession of both their land and their allotted shares of emergency aid supplies from the international community. Bantu communities entirely lack kind of support at all in the area. They therefore suffer constant abuses, so that Bantus are to be regarded by far as the hardest-hit population group. For this reason many Bantus attempt to take refuge in Mogadishu, Kenya and Ethiopia, among other places.

In more general terms the source saw a discernible new, growing trend in the flow of refugees from parts of Somalia, going to places such as Nairobi in Kenya. He feared this could be taken as a sign of increasing desperation among some communities in central and southern Somalia.

3.10. Bakool region

Like the Bay region, Bakool was also occupied by SNA militia forces in 1995. The region's Rahanweyn and Bantu communities have since faced looting, insecurity and occupation by an outside military power, i.e. Habr Gedir militia forces. Ken Menkhaus reports that villages in the vicinity of SNA bases in the Hoddur area have been attacked and in some cases burnt to the ground, food stores looted and communities' survival strategies undermined (**Menkhaus 1998**, p. 5).

The Bakool region has a population of 245 000 and covers an area of 26 300 km² (UNDOS 1995) (see **Annex 4**).

One effect of the above has been to increase the vulnerability of local communities to drought and flooding. Ken Menkhaus fears this may entail a risk of famine comparable to the 1992 disaster. However, the first food distribution operations in Tieglo in the autumn of 1998 evidently passed off without any major problem, although the source expresses concern that the fragmented Rahanweyn clans and the RRA militia forces may hamper food distribution. He states that: "Rahanweyn are notoriously fissurable, as the SNA knows and exploits so well". It is therefore unclear whether the local authorities (i.e. Rahanweyn elders) are capable of exercising sufficient control over undisciplined RRA militia forces and "freelance" Rahanweyn militias, i.e. ones operating independently at will (**Menkhaus 1998**, p. 5).

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, regarded Bakool as a relatively unstable region. He pointed out, however, that SNA occupation of the region has largely ceased since October 1998, the RRA, assisted by Hawadle militia forces and Ethiopia, having driven the SNA out of the area. The RRA has since been the dominant militia in the Bakool region, where it is also the leading political force, although there is a risk of internal dissension within the RRA resulting in fighting between different RRA factions.

The source further pointed out that the Bakool and Gedo regions both adjoin Ethiopia and that Ethiopia and Aideed are enemies. This has prevented Aideed from gaining full control of the Bakool region, since the Ethiopian armed forces support the RRA. He also reported rumours of Aideed supporting the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) Ethiopian rebel movement. The OLF is represented in Mogadishu and in Coriolei in the Lower Shabelle region. Rumour has it that Aideed has imported arms and other military equipment from Libya, part of it presumably intended for the OLF. The source expressed considerable concern at those rumours, which, should they have any substance, could give rise to a serious situation in the Bakool region.

Ayub Sheikh Yeroid, of UNICEF in the Bay region, confirmed that since the autumn of 1998 the RRA has held control of about half of the Bakool region, namely the Hoddur and Wajid districts. He explained that, as the Gedo region's Marehan militia, the SNF, has formed an alliance with Aideed's Habr Gedir militia, the SNA, against General Morgan in Kismayo, the RRA has lost the SNF's support. In his view, this may be instrumental in bringing about changes in the political and military picture in central and southern Somalia.

Frank Brenda, of the ADRA, explained that it is relatively easy for NGOs to carry out projects in Bakool, since the region has not seen any great range of NGO operations. This has made the authorities and the public more committed and favourably disposed towards such cooperation. He himself had recently visited the Bakool region and the ADRA had made enquiries showing there to be a relatively high risk of striking land mines there. He thus considered it dangerous to travel around by car in the Bakool region. During his visit, lastly, he had met village chiefs and councils of elders, from which meetings he saw positive signs of the possibility of establishing a constructive relationship with them.

Like Abdirahman O. Raghe, of the WSP, Frank Brenda could report that the area's Rahanweyn clans have formed an alliance with Ethiopia against Aideed's SNA militia forces and a home guard has been raised in the area against those forces. Rumours have recently surfaced that Aideed's militia forces plan to retake Bakool's regional capital, Hoddur, regarded as a strategically important town, and that Aideed is mobilising his troops for a showdown with Ethiopia.

Abdirahman O. Raghe saw a risk of Ethiopia, following a victory over Eritrea, stepping up its support for the Rahanweyn clans in their struggle against Aideed and possibly launching raids right down to Merka, in the Lower Shabelle region, where the OLF is said to have an office and to have received arms from Aideed.

David Stephen, of the UNPOS, reported conjecture that Ethiopia is preparing a secret operation against Aideed. At the same time, Aideed's political and military objectives are shrouded in uncertainty, although he is nevertheless surrounded by competent advisers. However, the source considered that any notions of Aideed being able to win control of the entire south, eject Morgan from Kismayo, hold his ground in Baidoa and govern in Mogadishu all at once would appear to be dubious speculation.

3.11. Gedo region

In the Gedo region, clan elders enjoy greater respect and authority than in many other parts of southern Somalia. Hence, politically speaking, there is a relatively well-run administration at district level. The region's local authorities thus cooperate closely with local clan elders, business people and the SNF. All districts have district councils, most of them appointed by the SNF. Some districts have also, with the assistance of the UN Somalia Rehabilitation Project (UNOPS), set up development management groups (DMGs) to help run local development projects.

The Gedo region has a population of 330 000 and covers an area of 45 400 km² (UNPOS 1995) (see **Annex 4**).

According to Ken Menkhaus, there can be found, in some of the region's districts, commitment and authority comparable to those met with in north-eastern and north-western Somalia. The UNCT Somalia Monitor has for some while regularly reported the situation in the districts of Luuq, Dolo and Belet Hawa to be peaceful.

Ken Menkhaus points out that the politics of the Gedo region cannot be seen in isolation from the situation in the rest of southern Somalia, Gedo's political forces being deeply involved in some of those conflicts. The Marehan clan is a party in the conflict in Kismayo and Gedo's Rahanweyn clans support the RRA in its struggle against Aideed in the Bay region, even though the RRA and the SNF find themselves on different sides in the conflict in Kismayo, where the SNF, as has been

mentioned, is allied to the SNA. The source makes the point that, despite this, there has been no sign of trouble in the offing between the Rahanweyn and the Marehan on that score. Nor does he consider any likely (**Menkhaus 1999d**, p. 3).

The Gedo region has for years been controlled by the Marehan clan, which regards it as a Marehan region. That clan's militia movement, the Somali National Front (SNF), is now the dominant political and military force there. This has been further brought out since the SNF managed to defeat the fundamentalist Al-Itihad movement in 1997 and 1998. A peace agreement concluded between Al-Itihad and the SNF in the town of El Adde in the summer of 1998 sparked off internal debate within the SNF leadership in the autumn of that year, but without this resulting in renewed armed conflict between the two sides.

Writing in January 1999, Ken Menkhaus notes that the problems over the peace agreement between Al-Itihad and the SNF have weakened Al-Itihad, but also created tensions within the SNF and between the SNF and Marehan clan elders. In his view, however, while Al-Itihad has an opportunity to regroup, it will only be able to engage in a "low-level campaign of destabilisation" in the region, failing a resumption of the basis for the peace process (**Menkhaus 1999d**, p. 2).

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, thought the Gedo region comparable to the Hiran region in security, the key security factor in Gedo being Ethiopia's role and the combat against Al-Itihad. There are also signs of infighting within the Marehan clan, as reflected in a dispute between Bardera's district commissioner and the head of the SNF, Omar Hagi, involving the first of the two being opposed to the SNF's alliance with Aideed's SNA.

Matt Bryden, of the WSP, did not think the conflict between the joint SNF-SNA forces and Morgan's SPM in the Kismayo area would of necessity adversely affect the security situation in the Gedo region.

Abdirahman O. Raghe, of the WSP, differed from some other sources in considering that the Kismayo conflict may have a serious negative impact on the political and security situation in the Gedo region. He explained the position as follows.

Those now fighting for control of Kismayo are the same forces as were previously driven out of Mogadishu when the Hawiye clans captured the capital and expelled President Siad Barre and his allies from the city, i.e. the Marehan clan and Morgan. The problem with the Marehan clan is that it can no longer be regarded as a Darod ally, but rather as an SNA faction. This leaves the Marehan clan in opposition to the other Darod clans.

There is also some dissension discernible within the Marehan clan, which has not settled internally who is to head any future administration of the Juba valley area, i.e. control one of Somalia's main agricultural areas. The section of the Marehan clan forming the "original" inhabitants of the Gedo region consider that they should lead the administration. The section of that clan regarded as outsiders in the Gedo region, i.e. clan members from Mogadishu and from Abud Waq, in central Somalia, are looked upon as some kind of "hooligans" by Gedo's "original" Marehan population.

Abdirahman O. Raghe made the point, however, that this is not a subclan conflict within the Marehan clan, but a political dispute stemming from two different political cultures: nomadic Marehan from Abud Waq and Gedo's more sedentary Marehan clans. Mohamed Khalif is leading

the struggle against nomadic Marehan members from Abud Waq in Bardera, where there is now armed conflict in progress. The source also made it clear that all Marehan clans are agreed on one point, the combat against Morgan in Kismayo. Unless the Marehan clans' militia leader, Omar Hagi Mohamed, head of the Somali National Front (SNF), agrees to hold a long-awaited Marehan conference, however, there is hardly likely to be any peaceful solution to their problem. In the light of this, the source considered that the Gedo region may slide from recovery into crisis. He pointed out lastly that the SNF leader, Omar Hagi Mohamed, feels strengthened by his cooperation with the SNA.

As a result of the present drought in Somalia, tens of thousands of internally displaced people, mainly from the Bay and Bakool regions, have moved to the Gedo region. The UN reports a considerable emergency aid effort being made in Gedo to relieve the problem.

See also the Danish and Swedish Immigration Services' *Report on the Nordic fact-finding mission to the Gedo region, 15 to 30 October 1998*, Copenhagen, November 1998.

MIDDLE SHABELLE REGION

Introduction

As the Danish and Swedish Immigration Services visited Middle Shabelle, among other regions, in the spring of 1997, when they gleaned a variety of information there, including details of the region's geography, clan patterns and economy, those matters will not be further considered below. See instead the report on that mission, in particular pages 25 to 41 (**US/SIV 1997a** in the bibliography). There have, of course, been changes in the Middle Shabelle region in a number of social, political and economic respects, but the following account generally updates the 1997 information only in those fields considered of relevance to the Danish and Swedish immigration authorities' ability to assess future asylum practice in this area.

It should be noted that, since the 1997 mission to Middle Shabelle, a number of political and administrative developments in the regional capital, Jowhar, and in Mogadishu have, among other effects, somewhat weakened the existing administration in Middle Shabelle. Those developments also adversely affected the security situation generally in parts of the region. However, since those developments, which began in the spring of 1997, there has been a gradual improvement in the security situation in large parts of the Middle Shabelle region.

That is not to say, nonetheless, that the entire period from the spring of 1997 up to the present has seen an uninterrupted progression towards greater security in the region. There have been setbacks, with security deteriorating at times, but overall the security situation in the region is now regarded by the SACB as being better than, say, a year ago (**SACB 1999**).

1. Political and administrative situation in the Middle Shabelle region

1.1. General points

In its clans and politics, the Middle Shabelle region shows close links with northern Mogadishu, both being politically dominated by the Abgal clan. Abdirahman O. Raghe, of the WSP, explained that the USC/SSA leader in northern Mogadishu, Ali Mahdi, was in fact elected to parliament in Mogadishu in 1969 for a constituency in Jowhar, in the Middle Shabelle region, where his Abgal subclan of Agoniey hails from.

Ken Menkhaus reports the security and administrative situation in the Middle Shabelle region to derive mainly from the political turbulence in northern Mogadishu, which has close clan and geographical ties with the region. He points out, however, that local authorities in Middle Shabelle have endeavoured to shield the region from the negative effects of the political situation in northern Mogadishu, albeit with mixed success (**Menkhaus 1999a**, p. 1).

The Governor of the Middle Shabelle region, Noor Mahamud "Shirbow" Mahamed, lives in northern Mogadishu. In his absence, Jowhar's former District Commissioner, Hassan Nuur Hassan, has been installed as Deputy Governor, the present District Commissioner being Abdi Mohamud Guad.

According to several sources, Mahamed is highly unpopular in Jowhar, having recently come into armed confrontation with the townspeople. The Governor is allegedly responsible for the dismantling and removal from Jowhar of one of the town's two bridges, in the autumn of 1998. Leslie Mctyre, UNICEF's Resident Project Officer, confirmed that the remaining section of the bridge was removed under cover of darkness in late January 1999, triggering off a fierce shootout between the Governor's militia and the local townspeople, although nobody was killed in the incident.

1.2. Regional and district administration

Ken Menkhaus saw a deterioration, at an advanced stage, in the political and administrative state of the region. He described the relatively densely populated areas along the River Shabelle as "virtually ungoverned", whereas the grazing lands to the east of it are fairly quiet. This contrasts strongly with the situation a few years ago, when Sharia-court-imposed law and order was at its height. The Sharia court was undermined by the political dispute in northern Mogadishu between Ali Mahdi and the head of the Sharia courts, Sheikh Ali Dheere. This prompted the source to conclude that the curse of the Middle Shabelle region is its proximity to Mogadishu, whose problems are immediately reflected in the region.

He explained that, although Jowhar has its regional and district councils, they are unable to collect taxes and thus powerless. As elsewhere in Somalia, those councils serve only to keep in touch with international donors (**Menkhaus 1998**, p. 8).

Abdirahman O. Raghe, of the WSP, reported it to be characteristic of the Balad district, being the part of Middle Shabelle closest to Mogadishu, to refer directly to northern Mogadishu, having no official contact with the authorities in Middle Shabelle's capital, Jowhar. Precisely that district of Balad was also described by Ken Menkhaus as one of the most lawless places in southern Somalia. Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, saw the Balad district as a catchment area for what he termed "human trash" from Mogadishu.

It is therefore open to doubt whether the Balad district can really be regarded as coming within the political and administrative sphere of the Middle Shabelle region or whether it is in fact to be considered a kind of appendage of northern Mogadishu.

Hassan Nuur Hassan stated that he was made Deputy Governor at the request of representatives of the local population, a request agreed to by the USC/SSA leader, Ali Mahdi, in Mogadishu. According to the source, the population also asked Ali Mahdi to have a new governor appointed to Middle Shabelle, emphasising that they wanted one coming from the region and resident within it.

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, confirmed that, if Ali Mahdi goes along with the wishes of the local leaders and population, this is a sign of the Middle Shabelle region not being completely subordinate to northern Mogadishu.

Hassan Nuur Hassan added that all 21 members of the now dissolved regional council have left the region and taken up residence in Mogadishu, being unable to get by financially in Jowhar.

1.2.1. Farjano Company

In the absence of any actual local administration in Jowhar, the Farjano Company plays a central role as a kind of municipal council. It consists of 14 executive members, drawn from the same number of clans in the area. Its management pointed out, however, that none of the 14 members represents their clans and the company is not a political organisation.

Ken Menkhaus regards the Farjano Company as the only real authority in Jowhar, describing it as a *de facto* authority (**Menkhaus 1999a**, p. 3). He reports the Farjano Company to be "a multi-clan cooperative of businessmen and elders who run the local water system set up by UNICEF" (**Menkhaus 1998**, p. 8). The company's management said it is in contact with all districts of the Middle Shabelle region.

Business people in the Middle Shabelle region are generally regarded as an important source of what Ken Menkhaus terms "social and political leadership". This may be due to the region's close links with Mogadishu and hence the business community's close ties with the wider political world in that city (**Menkhaus 1999a**, p. 3).

The Farjano Company's management reported close cooperation between the company and the authorities in Jowhar on administration of the area. There is no rivalry with the authorities, which often consult the company regarding attempts to resolve disputes etc., just as the company actively

approaches councils of elders in the region's districts when problems arise over dispute settlement and conciliation.

Hassan Nuur Hassan, District Commissioner Abdi Mohamud Guad and the Head of Social Affairs, Abucar Osman Rage, explained that the waterworks is still owned by the administration in Jowhar, but has been let out to the Farjano Company until the year 2000, when the lease comes up for renegotiation. Under the contract, the company pays Jowhar's administration a 5% tax on profits.

1.2.2. Councils of elders, *ugaas* and imam

There are clear signs of the traditional authorities having gained greater influence as a result of the vacuum left by the breakdown of the regional administration and the Sharia court in the Middle Shabelle region. This has given councils of elders a significant role in what Ken Menkhaus terms "day-to-day local governance" (Menkhaus 1999a, p. 3). Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, confirmed this, adding that councils of elders hear all criminal cases throughout the Middle Shabelle region. Such cases are disposed of in traditional fashion, with judgments handed down and *diya* compensation paid.

The Deputy Governor, the District Commissioner and the Head of Social Affairs all concurred in confirming that the absence of a regional administration and lack of support for the Sharia court and the police has left councils of elders a key role to play as dispute settlers and conciliators. They made the point that elders have proved able to perform that part of day-to-day administration reasonably well. There are also, however, local authorities of a kind, deriving legitimacy from the election of their members by local communities and headed by a district commissioner. Such local authorities are thus merely district-based, there being no overall regional administration apart from the position held by Hassan Nuur Hassan as Deputy and Acting Governor. The latter pointed out that one function of those local authorities is to liaise between local communities and NGOs operating in the region.

The Abgal clan's *ugaas*, according to Hassan Nuur Hassan, lives in Mogadishu. The *ugaas* enjoys considerable respect among the Abgal clans, but becomes involved in dispute settlement only in the event of very serious problems. The *ugaas* is a member of the USC/SSA.

The religious leader of the Abgal clan, known as the "Imam of Hirab", while a generally respected leader, does not have sufficient authority to prevent banditry, for instance (Menkhaus 1999a, p. 3).

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, considered religion the most cohesive force in Somali society. He explained that Jowhar's religious leader, the local *sheikh*, is a highly respected figure and fully aware of the political situation in the area. The *sheikh* tours villages on the Muslim holy day, Friday, giving talks on subjects ranging from health care to demobilisation, violence and traumas resulting from the war. UNICEF engages in close, effective cooperation with that *sheikh*.

2. Security situation

2.1. General points

According to Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, disunity within the Abgal clan poses the greatest threat to security in the Middle Shabelle region. Such divisions leave more scope for banditry in some parts of the region.

Frank Brenda, of the ADRA, considered the Middle Shabelle region generally to be more fragile than, say, the Hiran and Galgaduud regions. This can be put down to Middle Shabelle having a weaker administration than the other two regions and to the Abgal clan being politically divided in the region. The divisions may spread to the entire clan and, in his view, might surface at any time and in any place. However, he did not think the Middle Shabelle region could be classed as a crisis zone.

In November 1998 the Somali Aid Coordination Body (SACB) made an assessment of the state of security in the Middle Shabelle region, in order to weigh up the security situation and the scope for aid operations there. The assessment was produced by a broad-based mission composed of the International NGO Consortium (a grouping of all INGOs operating in Somalia), UNICEF, the UNCU, the WFP, the UNPOS, the UNDOS and the SACB Secretariat, a mission led by the European Commission. Its mission report states that: "the security situation is becoming more stable in comparison to a year earlier, and the group noted the activities of the local courts. The group recognised that one of the reasons for the derailment of interventions in the recent past was mainly due to the unchecked infusion of external resources in a region with limited absorption capacity. The frequency of changes in the local administration reflects the significant association of this region to the politics in (north) Mogadishu" (**SACB, 27 January 1999**, pp. 3-4).

In the light of this information, the SACB recommends carrying out reconstruction projects in all districts of the Middle Shabelle region, but only "low-key" projects in the Jowhar and Balad districts. It advises linking reconstruction work to life-saving humanitarian projects, i.e. health care, nutrition, water supply and sanitation projects and projects to improve food security. The SACB points out that projects should include support for local district administrations so as to enable them to promote cooperation between international donors and local communities in the Middle Shabelle region. Local administrations also need to be strengthened before "full-scale" rehabilitation and reconstruction is undertaken in the region (**SACB, 27 January 1999**, p. 3).

In his Local Administrative Structures (LAS) Study of Middle Shabelle, Ken Menkhaus states that the region was largely unaffected by the civil war and the famine in the early 1990s, as well as during the UNOSOM period (1993 to 1995), and up until 1997 the Middle Shabelle region had "earned a reputation as one of the more stable and lawful regions of southern Somalia" (**Menkhaus 1999a**, p. 1). Since 1997, however, the area has taken a turn for the worse as regards administration and security. The same author writes that since 1997 the Middle Shabelle region has been the scene of what he describes as "worrisome political deterioration - collapsed local authority, a dramatic increase in banditry and lawlessness, and a rise in localised inter-clan conflict". He

therefore classes Middle Shabelle as one of the more anarchic regions in southern Somalia.

Generally speaking, both District Commissioner Abdi Mohamud Guad of Jowhar and Deputy Governor Hassan Nuur Hassan considered security in Middle Shabelle to be under control, largely as a result of the ability and willingness of councils of elders to resolve disputes by traditional means.

Wayne Long, Chief Security Adviser to the UN Coordination Unit (UNCU) at the UNDP-Somalia, told the delegation that there were no security obstacles standing in the way of a mission to Jowhar in Middle Shabelle or to some other parts of the region. The overriding bone of contention in the region, in his view, is ownership of farming land, which has sparked off some disputes between various Abgal subclans there. He also pointed out that the Balad district in the south of the region is unsafe, being bandit-infested.

2.2. *Role of the authorities in enforcing peace and reconciliation*

The Farjano Company explained that it supports clan elders in resolving any disputes and reconciling the opposing parties, irrespective of which clans are pitted against one another. It is a cross-clan company, its 14 managers being drawn from virtually all of the area's clans, including the Bantu community. The company supports dispute settlement by traditional means, i.e. brings in clan councils of elders to assume responsibility as traditional conciliators.

Hassan Nuur Hassan stated that cooperation with the Farjano Company works well; together, he and the company have managed to reconcile the parties involved in disputes in Mahadey and Balad. Since September 1998, therefore, there have not been any serious security problems there. Meetings were held with clan elders and district commissioners in both places and he described the situation as being under control. In support of this assertion he reported that two NGOs, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and INTERSOS, are now carrying out vaccination projects in Mahadey and Balad respectively.

With regard to the security situation in Jowhar, Hassan Nuur Hassan explained that the town has been divided into four districts, in each of which councils of elders have appointed a number of people to act as a night-watchman force. He and Jowhar's District Commissioner see that force as the forerunner of a police force proper. They plan to equip the force with a car in the near future. Both pointed to a crucial problem affecting the region's security in the form of shortage of financial resources, i.e. inability to collect taxes. The lack of a tax base can mainly be put down to flooding in 1998, when the harvest was lost.

2.3. *Clan disputes*

A direct consequence of the political disintegration of northern Mogadishu and the Middle Shabelle region is the emergence of what Ken Menkhaus terms "subclannism", i.e. fragmentation of clan-based demands for political power and resources. As a result of such fragmentation, some Abgal clans now find themselves in potential or actual conflict with one another. Political clan mobilisation is currently under way at subclan level within the Abgal clan. Conflict arises in particular between the Abgal subclans of Wabuden and Harti, i.e. between the subclans of Rer Matan, Daud and Mohamud Musa, all of which are Wabuden, and the subclans of Agoniey, Yibir and Warsangeli, all of them Harti (note that the Abgal clans of Harti and Warsangeli bear

some relation to the Harti clans of Warsangeli, Majerteen and Dulbahante, which are Darod, the Abgal clans being Hawiye).

2.4. Demobilisation of militias, banditry and possession of arms

Hassan Nuur Hassan reported there to be many privately-held arms in Jowhar, kept at home, to protect families against bandits and common robbers. The town's security force uses only privately owned arms. The chief of police has carried out a number of round-ups in Jowhar, as the townspeople have decided that any bandits caught are to be punished. The source denied that there are any actual militia forces in Middle Shabelle. Ken Menkhaus, on the other hand, states that, following divisions within the USC and the folding-up of the Sharia court, militias in the Middle Shabelle region are now fully clan-based. Militias do not normally draw any pay, but earn money by collecting "taxes" at roadblocks or work part-time as day labourers and militiamen in turn. Since 1997 *mooryaans* have been operating as completely uncontrolled militias, which neither councils of elders nor clan leaders have been able to curb.

The town's business people have paid for bandits held at its prison, run by the chief of police, to be fed. Ken Menkhaus reports that business people in Jowhar and in the Middle Shabelle region generally have proved an important factor both in keeping the peace and in local administration and have provided weighty support for clan elders. He mentions the Farjano Company, described by him as progressive, which not only runs the town's water supply system but also acts as a *de facto* municipal council in the absence of any functioning administration (Menkhaus 1999a, p. 3). The Chairman of the Farjano Company, Unshag Ahmed Arale, explained that it plans to set up a demobilisation centre for ex-militiamen, etc. At the centre, it is intended that those demobilised will follow a 2½ years' training course to re-equip them for civilian life. Training will include arithmetic, language and practical subjects, rounded off with a specialist skill. However, the Farjano Company lacks sufficient financial resources to carry out the project and it requested assistance for the purpose. The point was made that an earlier demobilisation scheme (described in US/SIV 1997a), participants in which received seed, fertiliser and tools, etc., is no longer in operation. The source explained that the problem in Jowhar is not food but rather a lack of training and job opportunities for the population and for former militiamen or *mooryaans*. The Farjano Company's management hoped that a demobilisation scheme would arouse interest among ex-militiamen and highlighted the importance of the power of example.

Deputy-Governor Hassan Nuur Hassan reported there to be 15 people held at Jowhar prison, these being ex-militiamen imprisoned for banditry. He pointed to the need for demobilisation of *mooryaans* living out in the bush and making a living from banditry.

2.5. Relationship with Mogadishu and the Hiran region

Deputy-Governor Hassan Nuur Hassan of the Middle Shabelle region reported moves under way in Jowhar to limit northern Mogadishu's political influence. He himself was installed as Acting Governor in response to a request made to Ali Mahdi by local clan leaders in Middle Shabelle after the former Governor left Jowhar in August 1998. The USC/SSA leader, Ali Mahdi, has now been asked to name a new governor, coming from the Middle Shabelle region and to live in Jowhar, given that the previous incumbent is not held in any regard in Middle Shabelle and does not even come from the region. He spends most of his time in northern Mogadishu and has a reputation for leaving Jowhar the moment there are any problems to be resolved.

Commenting on reports that Jowhar's townspeople and authorities wanted to see a new governor from the area, Abdirahman O. Raghe, of the WSP, regarded it as a positive sign should Ali Mahdi agree to this, while pointing out that, even if Ali Mahdi appoints a local governor, Ali Mahdi himself will still hold military power in Jowhar, being from the Agoney clan. It should be noted that Abucar Osman Rage, Head of Social Affairs in Jowhar, who attended the delegation's meeting with Jowhar's District Commissioner and Deputy Governor, also belongs to the Agoney clan (a subclan of the Abgal clan of Harti). At that meeting the delegation gained the impression that it was important for the three officials to have a chance to discuss the delegation's questions before they could reply in unison. Both the District Commissioner and the Deputy-Governor of Jowhar belong to the Mohamud Musa clan (a subclan of the Abgal clan of Wabuden). The main conflict within the Abgal clan, according to Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, is precisely between the Harti and Wabuden clans.

Hassan Nuur Hassan would not, however, describe the present state of relations between Mogadishu and Middle Shabelle as bad, although he did point out that the big problem for the Middle Shabelle region is Mogadishu's present inability to help the region's authorities resolve their difficulties, as political problems and administrative initiatives in Mogadishu overshadow all else. Should a dispute break out between the heads of the Benadir administration in Mogadishu, i.e. Aideed and Ali Mahdi, the Middle Shabelle region would remain neutral, while supporting reconciliation between Ali Mahdi and Aideed and the establishment of a Benadir administration.

In his assessment of the situation in the Middle Shabelle region, Ken Menkhaus states that Abgal politicians in the USC in northern Mogadishu play down regionalism and regard northern Mogadishu and Middle Shabelle as a single political and economic unit, to be controlled from the capital. They thus treat the region as a resource base on which they have a prior claim and from which in particular to recruit militiamen. He is therefore not surprised that political forces in northern Mogadishu actively seek to undermine attempts by the Middle Shabelle authorities to build an authoritative, autonomous local administration in the region. He recognises, however, that Abgal leaders in Middle Shabelle are pressing for greater influence over the choice of the region's political leaders. These conflicts of interest and this manifestation of what he terms "localism" play an underlying but central part in the present political conflict throughout the area (**Menkhaus 1999a**, p. 2).

Ken Menkhaus also points out that local leaders and people in Middle Shabelle have on several occasions protested at unpopular and corrupt leaders in the region and have forced Ali Mahdi to appoint new ones in place of them. It is thus to be regarded as a positive sign that Hassan Nuur Hassan has been appointed Acting Governor, since he is held in considerable regard by local people in the Middle Shabelle region. This is confirmed by Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar. Ken Menkhaus further reports that District Commissioner Abdi Mohamud Guad of Jowhar plays an active role in the community and is likewise held in considerable personal regard, although this very point sheds some light on the failure to place the region's local administration on an institutional footing.

The Deputy-Governor and the District Commissioner concurred in the view that relations with the Hiran region to the north of Middle Shabelle are good and reported regular contact with Beled Weyne in Hiran as well as close links between the Abgal clan and the Hiran region's Hawadle clan. This also extends to all clans in the two regions. In addition the Hawadle clan has its own chief in Jowhar and the Abgal clan also has a chief in Beled Weyne.

Road transport between Mogadishu and Baled Weyne, passing through Jowhar, operates satisfactorily, according to Hassan Nur Hassan and his District Commissioner. However, the 1998 flooding has damaged the road in a number of places, hampering road haulage operations. The point was made that there are no checks on such traffic to see what clan or individual might own a consignment. There were no significant security problems on the road. The delegation was able to observe fairly brisk bus and lorry traffic along that road, running between Mogadishu, Jowhar and Beled Weyne.

As a specific example of the good relations between the Hiran and Middle Shabelle regions, Hassan Nur Hassan and his District Commissioner reported that criminals attempting to cross the border between the two in search of safety in the neighbouring region could still be apprehended, as the authorities cooperate on combating crime.

Hassan Nur Hassan did not, lastly, see any external threat to the Middle Shabelle region. This applies to all of its neighbouring regions, i.e. Hiran, Galgaduud, Bay, Bakool and Benadir. He pointed out that not even Aideed's SNA militia poses any threat to security in the Middle Shabelle region. The only threat which he could see to the region's stability and security was recurrent flooding and drought. There are no financial resources available to rebuild and maintain the vitally important system of canals and embankments along the River Shabelle.

Ken Menkhaus also mentions the breakdown of that system, reporting the area to be degenerating into a "seasonal swamp". He concludes that: "since this is one of Somalia's most important agricultural zones, this development has serious implications" (**Menkhaus 1998**, p. 8).

3. Human rights situation

3.1. General points

There is no organisation in Jowhar specifically dealing with human rights problems or violations. The area does, however, have a women's organisation, the Jowhar Women's Group (JWG), dealing with women's rights and position generally. In the absence of any actual courts, it is usually councils of elders which rule on criminal cases and disagreements between clan members. Human rights violations in the Middle Shabelle region are mainly directed against members of minorities or marginalised groups, including Bantus, although there are also serious abuses affecting women.

3.2. Law enforcement and legal safeguards

3.2.1. Courts

Middle Shabelle's Deputy-Governor, Hassan Nuur Hassan, reported that the Sharia court in Jowhar was closed down in late 1997. Ken Menkhaus states that the disbanding of the Sharia court was due to political rivalry between the head of the Sharia court in Mogadishu, Sheikh Ali Dheere, and Ali Mahdi (Menkhaus 1999a, p. 3).

Hassan Nuur Hassan confirmed that one of the reasons for the folding-up of the Sharia court lay in Mogadishu, but added that some people in Jowhar do not favour such a court. Amputation sentences inspired revulsion among some of the public. Amputations were carried out without any anaesthetic, a hand or foot being cut off with a sharp knife and the surface of the wound then plunged into boiling oil to prevent infection. He made the general point, however, that the closing down of the Sharia court was due to financial straits as a result of flooding the previous year, when the failed harvest prevented the authorities from collecting taxes to be used for purposes including the court's operation.

It was added that the authorities in Jowhar punish criminals committing repeated offences, who face expulsion from Jowhar for three months or more, being sent to Mogadishu or elsewhere.

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, reported the traditional system of *diya* compensation applied by councils of elders to be in operation.

3.2.2. Police and prison system

Middle Shabelle's Deputy Governor, Hassan Nuur Hassan, explained that there is no police force operating in Jowhar or in the region generally, owing to a lack of financial resources with which to maintain one. The hope is, however, that increased resources will make it possible to re-establish a police force as soon as possible. He did report there to be a chief of police in Jowhar.

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, likewise stated that Jowhar has no police force, but in the event of any serious incidents the public rally round. He added that in the Mahadey district there is a militia force which may in some cases act as a police force.

3.3. Freedom of movement

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, explained that the Middle Shabelle region is divided into a number of clan areas. There are no obstacles to free movement by clan members between those areas, but in some cases it may be risky for members of certain clans to stay in particular areas for any length of time. Ongoing clan disputes may also restrict freedom of movement, e.g. in the Mahadey district, where, owing to a protracted dispute between the Abgal clans of Daud and Agoney, members of those clans should not remain on each other's territory for more than about a day at a time. In the event of hostilities in an area, members of the warring clans should not, for instance, leave the bus on which they are travelling while it is in "enemy" territory. He made the point that clan members from a mixed clan background have ample opportunity to cross various clan boundaries.

3.4. Clan-related and politically motivated persecution

Abdirahman O. Raghe, of the WSP, pointed out that Jowhar is a multiethnic town, yet clan peace prevails there.

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, reported that, even if it could not actually be termed persecution, members of minor clans who have committed a criminal offence would often face heavier punishment than members of more dominant clans. A member of, say, the Galja'el clan would thus face significantly heavier punishment than a member of an Abgal clan.

3.4.1. Position of the Bantu community and other groups

Despite being numerically dominant in some districts (Balad, Jowhar and Mahadey), the Bantu community is more vulnerable to abuse than other groups in the Middle Shabelle region. Ken Menkhaus makes the point, however, that the Bantu community generally in that region (the Shiidle, Mobileyn and Kabole) is better organised and hence better able to uphold its rights than Bantu communities in many other parts of central and southern Somalia (**Menkhaus 1999a**, p. 4).

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, confirmed that the Bantus are a vulnerable population group. Bantus may generally have difficulty in retaining possession of anything of value. For instance, when distributing food aid to a Bantu community, he had to hide the goods under, say, boxes of medicine or whatever. Otherwise there was a risk of bandits going along to demand possession of the goods supplied, as soon as he had left the Bantu village.

The Bantu community's self-defence arrangements may include secretly burying emergency aid supplies and other resources which bandits might try and loot.

An anonymous source from the Bantu community in the Middle Shabelle region similarly reported that in late 1998 the Bantu community of Shiidle in the Bantu-dominated Kulmis area of Jowhar (see **Annex 5**) decided to take the law into its own hands in order to put a stop to repeated rape attacks on Shiidle members in that part of town. The area's Abgal clans were first warned that any Abgal member attempting to rape a Shiidle member there would be killed. When the next rape attack was attempted and Shiidle members killed the rapist, they were sentenced to pay 40 000 000 Somali shillings in compensation, but no Shiidle members have since been attacked by Abgal rapists in Kulmis.

Leslie Mctyre noted that theft, rape and other offences against Bantu members rarely elicit any response from the authorities or from other Somalis. This he saw as a form of racism.

The Eile community in north-eastern Middle Shabelle is another population group which might possibly be considered vulnerable. Leslie Mctyre explained that this people of hunters live in a wilderness-like area and are not welcome in other parts of the region. If their territory were hit by drought and they had to leave it, they could conceivably have difficulty in living in safety elsewhere in the region. An anonymous Bantu representative, however, reported there to be an Eile community in the Hanti Waadag area in the eastern part of Jowhar, where Bantus and Abgal members also live (see **Annex 5**).

3.5. Position of women and children

Halima Mohamud Hagi, Chairwoman of the Jowhar Women's Group (JWG), explained that the position of women has generally worsened, as the security situation in places such as the Balad district has made it difficult for women to do business, small-scale trading being a typical women's occupation. Communications between Mogadishu and Jowhar (and right up to Beled Weyne) have in several cases been cut, because of security problems on the road between those towns, which has reduced trade.

She pointed out that women are generally overlooked in Somalia, not least in politics. A woman's place is traditionally considered to be in the home.

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, reported that women in Somalia are marginalised and often regarded as second or third-class citizens.

Violence against Bantu women has been described above by an anonymous Bantu representative, who added that (Bantu) victims of violence, regardless of the nature of that violence, have difficulty in obtaining assistance from the authorities or from their local community. Neither the authorities, in the form of a district commissioner, nor the courts, such as the former Sharia court, have shown any willingness to help victims of violence if from the Bantu community. There is also a danger that anyone reporting ill-treatment may face revenge attacks from the accused person's clan or *mooryaans*.

Leslie Mctyre reported lastly that, for instance, rape attacks on women, regardless of their ethnic or clan background, are often ignored as far as the culprit is concerned. A rape victim may also risk being abandoned by her husband or family, who will see rape as a great dishonour. An abandoned rape victim faces a life of social isolation.

3.5.1. Female genital mutilation

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, reported the type of female genital mutilation (circumcision of girls) practised in Somalia to be the most radical form of all. It is carried out almost without exception. UNICEF has worked to change attitudes regarding this serious issue, but without any noticeable success. He explained that, even where a girl's mother is apprehensive or directly opposed to the operation, the girl's grandmother will as a rule take matters into her own hands while the mother is not at home and have the operation carried out before the mother returns. It is

normally carried out between the ages of five and six, but according to him can in principle take place at any time between the ages of two and thirteen.

Leslie Mctyre reported the harm caused to girls by the operation to be both physical and psychological, often with serious, lifelong effects. He had carried out a survey of about 600 women, from which he found that at least 98% of them were psychologically traumatised. He added that infections as a result of the operation are often very serious. About a quarter of all girls concerned are treated for serious infections at Jowhar's hospital. The operation gives rise to extensive mortality and may also make childbirth very complicated and life-threatening. This directly contributes to a very high death-rate among women in the course of pregnancy and childbirth.

In its appeal for 1999, the UN states that female genital mutilation in Somalia is a very harmful traditional practice needing to be addressed from a human rights as well as from a gender perspective (**UN Appeal 1999**, p. 53).

4. Humanitarian situation

Writing in December 1998, Ken Menkhaus considered the economy of the Middle Shabelle region to be in a depressed state but not crisis-stricken. Agricultural production in the flood recession areas along the River Shabelle has enabled small farmers to survive flooding and drought (**Menkhaus 1998**, p. 8).

The UN and NGOs have worked hard in Middle Shabelle to reconstruct and develop the region. According to the SACB, however, much of that work has proved unsuccessful, because the region has only a limited uptake capacity (**SACB 1999**). The region currently has the UN and four NGOs operating in it, in the shape of UNICEF and then the ADRA, reconstructing irrigation canals, etc., the CEFA, working on agricultural development, MSF-Spain, dealing with health, including vaccination campaigns, and INTERSOS, assisting with the running of Jowhar's hospital.

The Middle Shabelle region has traditionally been an important farming area of Somalia, but damage to irrigation canals and embankments has considerably reduced agricultural production. Alberto Fait, Coordinator for the CEFA (Organisation for Development Cooperation and International Voluntary Service), believed there in rice-growing, for instance, now to be only about 200 ha in cultivation as against 2 000 ha before. Alberto Rognoni, a CEFA agronomist, however, reported that this season's harvest in Middle Shabelle was one of the best for the last three or four years.

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, stated that malnutrition does nevertheless pose a serious problem in the Middle Shabelle region. In January 1999 about 22% of the population were estimated to be suffering from malnutrition and the figure has since risen to about 28%.

The water supply system in Jowhar, previously restored by UNICEF, is now actually run by a local private firm, the Farjano Company. Access to clean water is considered crucial in preventing outbreaks of a range of diseases, but clean water is a scarce resource in the area and many people without access to it use water from the Rive Shabelle for drinking, which causes a variety of diseases. In a number of cases, wells and boreholes have been allowed to fall into disrepair, thus further restricting access to clean water. Leslie Mctyre reported instances of people dying as a result of a shortage of drinking water in north-eastern parts of the region. When the delegation visited Bio Adde, north-east of Jowhar, there had recently been a great commotion in the village on account of water supply problems. UNICEF helped the villagers to repair the village water pump and thus, according to Leslie Mctyre, prevented Bio Adde's inhabitants from becoming internally displaced. The area has a population of several thousand.

There is little access to a proper school education in Jowhar, which according to the Deputy Governor, Hassan Nuur Hassan, has three schools. Most children aged between eight and eighteen do have a chance to attend school for a while. He reported there to be schools in a few other parts of the region. The Farjano Company's management showed the delegation around a fairly large school in Jowhar, which the company was rebuilding with some of the funds earned from sales of drinking water in the town. Several of the school's classrooms had been completed and the entire school was due to be finished in the very near future.

Frank Brenda, of the ADRA, pointed out that the presence of many NGOs in Middle Shabelle has left the region "spoilt". This has in turn led the authorities and the public to tend to sit back and wait for outside donors to take the initiative. The same point was confirmed by Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF, and the delegation saw an example of it when visiting Bio Adde, where the council of elders showed no interest at all in taking steps itself to establish a school for the village's children. They clearly believed it impossible to establish a school in Bio Adde, as Somalia has no government. They therefore took the view that it must be a job for UNICEF, not a local matter which they could themselves take steps to deal with. UNICEF's representative, Leslie Mctyre, rejected that view out of hand, telling them that, if the community itself built a school from local building materials and provided teachers from the local community, UNICEF would willingly supply teaching materials. This was only reluctantly accepted by the council of elders.

5. Repatriation and reintegration

The question of repatriation of rejected asylum-seekers or people found to be present in the Nordic countries illegally was addressed by the authorities in Jowhar, i.e. Deputy-Governor Hassan Nuur Hassan and his District Commissioner, as follows.

For the security of a repatriated rejected asylum-seeker, they did not consider that there could be any problem at all. The difficulty, however, is a lack of resources in the community, especially as a result of the earlier flooding and the present drought. Even people already living in the region face problems. The actual principle that anybody coming from the Middle Shabelle region should be allowed back into their home area met with no objection.

Leslie Mctyre, of UNICEF in Jowhar, believed that the local community might take a dim view of anyone repatriated. Should returnees from one of the major clans lack financial resources, the matter would probably be arranged with their clan after a while. Returnees from a Bantu clan who took back anything of value would risk losing everything they had brought home with them. Bantus not previously living in the area to which they were repatriated would in addition risk being killed.

The clan is generally regarded as safeguarding individual Somalis' security, a basic point hammered home by Walid Musa, of the EU Somalia Unit, among others. Hence, in his view, nobody would be likely to have reason to flee any particular area inhabited by their fellow clansmen. If a clan is genuinely under threat, the result will be that its members all have to leave the area.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADRA	- Adventist Development and Relief Agency
BBC	- British Broadcasting Corporation
BRSC	- Benadir Regional Supreme Council
CEFA	- Organisation for Development Cooperation and International Voluntary Service
COSV	- Coordination Committee of the Organisations for Voluntary Service
DC	- District Commissioner
DMG	- Development management group
ECHO	- European Community Humanitarian Office
EU	- European Union
FSAU	- Food Security Assessment Unit
HEMCO	- Home Economy Midwife and Child Care Organisation
ICRC	- International Committee of the Red Cross
INGO	- International non-governmental organisation
INTERSOS	- Humanitarian Organisation for Emergency
IRIN	- Integrated Regional Information Network
JWG	- Jowhar Women's Group
LAS	- Local administrative structures
MSF	- Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	- Non-governmental organisation
OLF	- Oromo Liberation Front
RRA	- Rahanweyn Resistance Army
SACB	- Somalia Aid Coordination Body
SIV	- Statens Invandrarverk (Swedish Immigration Service)
SNA	- Somali National Alliance
SNF	- Somali National Front
SPM	- Somali Patriotic Movement
SSA	- Somali Salvation Alliance
UN	- United Nations
UNCT	- United Nations Country Team
UNCU	- United Nations Coordination Unit
UNDOS	- United Nations Development Office for Somalia
UNDP	- United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	- United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	- United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNOPS	- United Nations Office for Project Services
UNOSOM	- United Nations Operations in Somalia
UNPOS	- United Nations Political Office for Somalia
US	- Udlændingestyrelsen (Danish Immigration Service)
USC	- United Somali Congress
USIP	- United States Institute of Peace
WFP	- World Food Programme
WSP	- War-Torn Societies Project

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