



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Somalia - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Wednesday 29 June 2016

Availability of state protection for the Ashraaf/Minority clans

In August 2014 a document issued by *European Asylum Support Office* notes that:

“The Ashraf are a religious minority affiliated to (and sometimes considered as) Benadiri living mainly in the coastal regions (Merka, Baraawe) and, as a clan, with the Digil-Mirifle in the riverine areas of Bay and Bakool...” (European Asylum Support Office (August 2014) *EASO Country of Origin Information report. South and Central Somalia Country overview*, p.47).

This document also states that:

“The Ashraf and Sheikhal are usually respected and protected as moderate religious leaders by clans with whom they live...The Digil/Mirifle Ashraf might be targeted by Al-Shabaab ‘partly because the latter do not recognise the religious status of the Ashraf, and partly because they oppose the Shariff Hassan who was the driving force in the 2008 Djibouti agreement together with President Sheikh Shariff...No reports were found about recent human rights violations of the Sheikhal and Ashraf” (ibid, p.103).

A publication issued in July 2015 by *Minority Rights Group International* points out that:

“...exclusion from the dominant clan structure, or membership in a weaker clan, leaves minority groups more vulnerable to property-grabbing, physical attacks, killings and general discrimination” (Minority Rights Group International (2 July 2015) *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2015 – Somalia*).

In September 2015 a document issued by the *Danish Immigration Service* notes that:

“As a general rule, Somalis will assist even very distant relatives coming from a different area as long as there is a clan connection, provided they have the capacity to do so. However, in S/C Somalia the concept of clan solidarity has been overstretched, and many families and clan networks find themselves unable to respond to the needs of their displaced relatives. As a consequence, persons leaving AlShabaab areas and attempting to relocate to cities or towns with AMISOM/SNAF presence will be forced to settle in IDP settlements unless they have nuclear or extended family with the necessary resources to support them” (Danish Immigration Service (September 2015) *South Central Somalia. Country of Origin Information for Use in the Asylum Determination Process. Report from the Danish Immigration Service's fact finding mission to Nairobi, Kenya and Mogadishu, Somalia. 2 – 12 May 2015*, pp.20-21).

In April 2016 the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of the previous year notes that:

“Minority groups, often lacking armed militias, continued to be disproportionately subjected to killings, torture, rape, kidnapping for ransom, and looting of land and property with impunity by faction militias and majority clan members, often with the acquiescence of federal and local authorities. Many minority communities continued to live in deep poverty and to suffer from numerous forms of discrimination and exclusion” (United States Department of State (13 April 2016) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015, Somalia*, p.39).

A document released in 2016 by the *Bertelsmann Foundation* notes that:

“Members of minority groups are often targeted and their civil rights are systemically violated” (Bertelsmann Foundation (2016) *BTI 2016; Somalia Country Report, 2016*, p.15).

A paper issued by the *UNHCR* in May 2016 points out that:

“Members of minority clans often lack vital protection and suffer pervasive discrimination. The same applies to others who, being displaced, find themselves outside their normal social clan structures and unable to rely on the protection and support generally extended by such social networks” (UNHCR (23 May 2016) *UNHCR Position on Returns to Southern and Central Somalia (Update I)*, p.3).

No further information on this issue could be found among sources available to the RDC.

References

Bertelsmann Foundation (2016) *BTI 2016; Somalia Country Report, 2016*

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

Sources Consulted

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