Somalia - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 24 June 2014

Information on Al Shabaab including: areas of control; indiscriminate attacks & torture/executions

A report issued in April 2014 by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of 2013 notes:

> "Compared with previous years, the terrorist group al-Shabaab executed a wider spectrum of attacks in Mogadishu and throughout Somalia, including more sophisticated, asymmetrical attacks and assassinations; and destruction of property. Several larger and more deadly al-Shabaab attacks in Mogadishu involved two-part operations, where attackers targeted first responders and onlookers, producing higher casualties" (United States Department of State (30 April 2014) *Country Reports on Terrorism 2013: Somalia*).

This document also notes that:

> "…al-Shabaab continued to control large sections of rural areas in south-central Somalia, including areas in the Juba, Shabelle, Bay, and Bakol regions. Al-Shabaab also continued to operate in northern Somalia along the Golis Mountains and within the federal state of Puntland's larger urban areas" (ibid).

This report also points out that:

> "In 2013, al-Shabaab conducted suicide attacks, remote-controlled roadside bombings, kidnappings, and killings of government officials, foreigners, journalists, humanitarian workers, and civil society leaders throughout Somalia. Al-Shabaab executed attacks in Mogadishu targeting convoys, and popular gathering places for government officials, diaspora, and foreigners, using beheadings, stonings, and other forms of public executions to instill fear and obedience in communities" (ibid).

In March 2014 a document released by the *United Nations Security Council* states:

> "The security situation in Mogadishu remained volatile. Al-Shabaab continued to use both guerrilla and terrorist tactics, which often resulted in civilian casualties…" (United Nations Security Council (3 March 2014) *Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia, p.*2).

A profile issued in May 2014 by *BBC News* notes that:

> "Although it has lost control of most towns and cities, it still dominates in many rural areas" (BBC News (16 May 2014) *Who are Somalia's al-Shabab?*).

In May 2014 *Agence France Presse* states:

> "The insurgents have been driven out of fixed positions in Somalia's major towns by AMISOM troops but still regularly launch guerrilla raids. Recent Al Shabaab attacks have targeted key areas of government or the security forces in an apparent bid to

discredit claims by authorities that they are winning the war against the Islamist fighters" (Agence France Presse (18 May 2014) *United Nations deploys troops in Somalia to defend staff from Al Shabaab insurgents*).

A report issued in June 2014 by *Reuters* points out that:

"AMISOM said al Shabaab had lost control of more than 10 major towns in the new push by African troops, including soldiers from Uganda, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Burundi and Sierra Leone…Officials and diplomats have said towns cleared of Al Shabaab are in a dire state, with food stocks emptied and largely abandoned by their inhabitants, creating what one envoy described as "ghost towns". They say al Shabaab still controls tracts of countryside, making it difficult for supplies to be moved to the towns" (Reuters (23 June 2014) *Kenyan jets hit al Shabaab bases in Somalia, kill 80: AU force*).

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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.

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