



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Somalia - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 23 & Friday 24 October 2014

Treatment of Somalis who have been westernised after years in Europe upon return to Somalia

A report issued in October 2014 by *Amnesty International* states:

“People on transport routes report being interrogated and treated with suspicion by al-Shabaab. Movements need to be justified, particularly if the movement is between al-Shabaab areas and areas controlled by the SFG and allied forces. An unknown person or a person looking slightly westernized may be at increased risk if al-Shabaab stops the vehicle” (Amnesty International (23 October 2014) *Forced Returns To South And Central Somalia, Including To Al-Shabaab Areas: A Blatant Violation Of International Law*, p.4).

This document also notes that:

“The Netherlands foreign office guidance of December 2013 found al-Shabaab had been increasingly suspicious towards those returnees from abroad, because of alleged espionage for the SFG or allied troops or for westernization... It stated that Somalis returning from western countries usually try to avoid going back to al-Shabaab controlled areas, even when their clans live in that area...A Danish and Norwegian fact-finding mission found Somalis returning from the diaspora could be at risk of targeted attacks by al-Shabaab, especially those ‘who are visible and do not blend in.’ (ibid, p.7).

In August 2014 a publication released by *European Union: European Asylum Support Office/EASO* cites other sources noting:

“According to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Somalis returning from Western countries may be suspected of spying for the SFG or SFG-allied troops. They usually try to avoid going back to Al-Shabaab-controlled areas, even when their clan lives in that area...Somalis returning from the Diaspora can be at risk of targeted attacks by Al-Shabaab, especially ‘those who are visible and do not blend in...’ (European Union: European Asylum Support Office/EASO (August 2014) *EASO Country of Origin Information report. South and Central Somalia Country overview*, p.106.

In April 2014 a paper published by the *Migration Law Clinic* states:

“It follows from country of origin information that, aside from the difficulties faced by any returnee to comply with al-Shabaab rules, Somalis returning from western countries are at a even higher risk of ill- treatment. There are numerous reports and witness testimonies about executions of Somalis being accused of spying for the U.S., the Ethiopians or the TFG. People returning from western countries are at a great risk of being accused to have ties with the TFG” (Migration Law Clinic (7 April 2014) *Assessment of the risk of refoulement under Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights in cases of persons returning to Somalia*).

Citing another source, a report issued in April 2014 by the *United Kingdom Home Office* notes that:

“Somalis that have left, particularly those that have been in western countries, tend to be viewed as foreigners, and may be perceived to have western agendas. This in itself puts them at an increased risk of persecution. Economically, they are often seen as people who can be manipulated and coerced, particularly if they lack the clan protection that is essential for their survival and protection.” (United Kingdom Home Office (April 2014) *Country Information and Guidance, Somalia*, p.47).

This report also notes:

“Al-Shabab’s reasons for imposing its requirements and restrictions, such as regarding manner of dress and spending of leisure time are religious and those who transgress are regarded as demonstrating that they remain in a state of kufr (apostasy). The same is true of those returnees who are identified as returning from the West” (ibid, p.89).

References

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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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