



Somalia - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Wednesday 30 April 2014

General information including landmarks, government and for Koyama including maps

A report issued by the *United Nations Security Council* in March 2014 notes that:

“The political landscape in Somalia was dominated by the formation of a new cabinet, with regional political processes showing promising signs” (United Nations Security Council (3 March 2014) *Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia*, p.1).

A publication released in April 2014 by the *CIA* states:

“Britain withdrew from British Somaliland in 1960 to allow its protectorate to join with Italian Somaliland and form the new nation of Somalia. In 1969, a coup headed by Mohamed SIAD Barre ushered in an authoritarian socialist rule characterized by the persecution, jailing, and torture of political opponents and dissidents. After the regime's collapse early in 1991, Somalia descended into turmoil, factional fighting, and anarchy. In May 1991, northern clans declared an independent Republic of Somaliland that now includes the administrative regions of Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sanaag, and Sool. Although not recognized by any government, this entity has maintained a stable existence and continues efforts to establish a constitutional democracy, including holding municipal, parliamentary, and presidential elections. The regions of Bari, Nugaal, and northern Mudug comprise a neighboring semi-autonomous state of Puntland, which has been self-governing since 1998 but does not aim at independence; it has also made strides toward reconstructing a legitimate, representative government but has suffered some civil strife. Puntland disputes its border with Somaliland as it also claims portions of eastern Sool and Sanaag. Beginning in 1993, a two-year UN humanitarian effort (primarily in the south) was able to alleviate famine conditions, but when the UN withdrew in 1995, having suffered significant casualties, order still had not been restored. In 2000, the Somalia National Peace Conference (SNPC) held in Djibouti resulted in the formation of an interim government, known as the Transitional National Government (TNG). When the TNG failed to establish adequate security or governing institutions, the Government of Kenya, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), led a subsequent peace process that concluded in October 2004 with the election of Abdullahi YUSUF Ahmed as President of a second interim government, known as the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of the Somali Republic. The TFG included a 275-member parliamentary body, known as the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP). President YUSUF resigned late in 2008 while United Nations-sponsored talks between the TFG and the opposition Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) were underway in Djibouti. In January 2009, following the creation of a TFG-ARS unity government, Ethiopian military forces, which had entered Somalia in December 2006 to support the TFG in the face of advances by the opposition Islamic Courts Union (ICU), withdrew from the country. The TFP was doubled in size to 550 seats with the addition of 200 ARS and 75 civil society members of parliament. The expanded parliament elected Sheikh SHARIF Sheikh Ahmed, the former ICU and ARS chairman as president in January 2009. The creation of the TFG was based on the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC), which outlined a five-year mandate leading to the establishment of a new Somali

constitution and a transition to a representative government following national elections. In 2009, the TFP amended the TFC to extend TFG's mandate until 2011 and in 2011 Somali principals agreed to institute political transition by August 2012. The transition process ended in September 2012 when clan elders replaced the TFP by appointing 275 members to a new parliament who subsequently elected a new president" (CIA (16 April 2014) *The World Factbook, Somalia*).

Under "ethnic groups" this report lists:

"Somali 85%, Bantu and other non-Somali 15% (including 30,000 Arabs)" (ibid).

Considering "government type" the report states the country is:

"in the process of building a federal parliamentary republic" (ibid).

A report issued in March 2014 by *Landinfo* includes respectively maps of Somalia and Mogadishu (Landinfo (March 2014) *Update on security and protection issues in Mogadishu and South-Central Somalia*, pp.86-87).

A map issued in 2002 by the CIA outlines the geography of the clan structure (CIA (2002) *Ethnic Groups: Somalia's Clan Families and Major Subclans*).

The UNHCR in 2000 produced a genealogical table of the Somali clans (UNHCR (2004) *Genealogical Table of Somali Clans*).

Koyama is referenced in the following commentary on the Bajuni in a publication issued in August 2002 by the *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* which states:

"The Bajuni are a people related to the coastal people (Waswahili) along the Eastern African Coast. They live in Kismayo and the Islands of Jula, Madoga, Satarani, Raskamboni, Bungabo, Dudey, Koyoma and Jovay (Bajuni Islands). They are a seafaring community" (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (1 August 2002) *A study on minorities in Somalia*, p.2).

A map locating Koyama is published by National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (Undated) *Koyama Island: Somalia*).

An undated document from *Africa.com* considering "what to do in Somalia" lists:

1. Laas Gaal Cave Paintings: A French archaeological team discovered these ancient artifacts in 2002. In order to preserve the cave, there's currently a restriction on the number of tourists allowed to visit the site at a time.
2. Sheikh: This historic town is home to many British colonial buildings, untouched for some 40 years.
3. Zeila: Formerly a part of the Ottoman Empire, Zeila was also a dependency of Yemen and Egypt, as it served as a major trading city in the 19th century. There one can view old colonial landmarks, coral reefs, towering cliffs, and beaches.
4. Freedom Arch of Hargeisa: The arch and the war memorial in this city's center are worth visiting. Both sites offer commentary on Somalia's remarkable progress.
5. Naasa Hablood Hills: Located on the outskirts of Hargeisa, these twin hills are considered by native Somalilanders a majestic natural landmark" (Africa.com (Undated) *What to Do in Somalia*).

An undated document from *Wondermondo.com* states:

“Prehistoric and ancient cave paintings. Somalian cave art belongs to world's best prehistoric art, here are hundreds of sites with beautiful and often - mysterious paintings and undeciphered signs.

Ancient port cities. Today Somalia has some of most feared pirates in the world but millenia ago it was known for its welcoming, rich port cities which were attracting ships even from the present day Indonesia and Malaysia. Many of these ancient cities have been preserved up to this day.

Natural landmarks

Country has amazing ecosystems, especially the lush tropical forests of Cal Madow mountains - but their size exceeds the threshold of Wondermondo landmarks. In these mountains have formed numerous tall waterfalls, some waterfalls are found outside Cal Madow mountains too.

Berde Ficus - Awdal. Giant fig (*Ficus* spp.) tree, possibly the largest tree in Somaliland, grows near Qabuurta village.

Daalo Frankincense Forest - Sanaag. Lush forest of frankincense trees (*Boswellia frereana*) at the base of Cal Madow mountains. Thanks to the trees in the air is constant, intense fragrance. Other rare plants, including Gabel Elba dragon's blood tree (*Dracaena ombet*). Here live also numerous rare animals.

Iskushuban Falls - Bari. Perennial waterfall.

Lamadaya (Lama Daye) - Sanaag. Impressive waterfall in Cal Madow mountains, falls have formed travertine formations.

Man made landmarks

There are known hundreds of locations with rock art and many more still are waiting to be discovered.

Buur Heybe rock paintings (Gogoshiis Qabe) - Bay. Rock paintings and remnants of prehistoric settlements from the Middle and Late Stone Age. Found skeletal remains of 14 people. Site is located at some 300 m tall granitic inselberg.

Dhambalin - Togdheer. Rock shelter in sandstone with some of the best polychrome paintings in Africa, a testimony of one of the oldest pastoral societies in the world.

Here are depicted different animals: bovines, goats, sheep, dogs, snake, turtle and also at least eight giraffes which are extinct here now. Site includes also paintings of humans with bow and arrows, one seems to be riding a horse. Many animals and people have white belts. Paintings were made 5000 - 3000 BC.

Karin Heegan - Sanaag. Granitic hill with prehistoric rock art - more than 100 figures, mostly bovines, also goats, camels, three humans. Cave in the hill was inhabited circa 100 BC - 400 AD, but it is possible that drawings are older.

Jilib Rihin and Haadh rock art - Sanaag. Rock paintings of cattle and human.

Interesting detail is white belt on them.

Laas Gaal - Togdheer. Group of 10 caves and shelters with beautiful, well preserved cave paintings, created 11 - 5 thousand years ago. Undeciphered inscriptions are under the drawings. In this region have been found numerous other caves with paintings.

Prehistoric sites

Botiala necropolis - Bari. Ancient burial grounds next to Botiala fortress. Site includes some 200 stone cairns, some with standing stones.

Jalelo site - Awdal. Paleolithic - Neolithic "factory" of stone tools - lanceheads, arrowheads, scrapers. Scientifically important site which links the Paleolite cultures of the West and East.

Ancient cities

List includes these cities where most of the visible structures were built before the medieval period.

Abasa - Awdal. Ancient city with ruins of numerous old buildings, remnants of city walls. Here has been found pottery from the Middle East and China.

Amud Old City - Awdal. Ruins of ancient city with ruins of hundreds of buildings, city walls. City flourished in the 15th - 16th century AD.

Elaayo - Sanaag. Ancient coastal town, possible trade city in the times of Ancient Egypt and Greece. Town and its surroundings are rich with prehistoric burial cairns.

Haylaan ruins and necropolis - Sanaag. Ruins of stone settings, cairns made by Kushitic people in prehistoric times.

Maydh - Sanaag. Ancient port town, home of Sheikh Isaaq in the 12th or 13th century AD. Contains tombs of ancient rulers.

Ras Hafun ruins (possibly - Opone) - Bari. Ruins of once important port city which flourished in the 1st century AD. Back in those times this port served trade ships from Malaysia, Indonesia and nearer places. Here have been found remnants of diverse buildings and megaliths, necropolis, Roman and Partho-Sassanid pottery, different coins.

Qa'ableh - Sanaag. Ruins of ancient town with numerous archaeological landmarks, including purported tombs of former kings - megalithic stone settings.

Qombo'ul - Sanaag. Historical town with ancient ruins, stone settings and cairns.

Sheikh - Togdheer. Ancient town with numerous historical structures, including interesting ancient temples.

Medieval cities

Barawa, Somalia

Barawa.

List includes these cities where most of the visible buildings were built before in medieval period.

Barawa - Shabeellaha Hoose. Picturesque port city, founded in 10th century AD or earlier. Historical centre consists of coral stone buildings with large windows, there are remnants of city walls. City has a tradition of ornate handicrafts in local style.

Gondershe - Banaadir. Medieval port city with fortifications, located at the sea. Established in 14th century AD or slightly later.

Las Khorey - Sanaag. This town contains ruins of fortress, palace (Sha'a) and other buildings from the 13th - 14th centuries, when it was the capital of Warsangali Sultanate.

Maduna - Sanaag. Medieval city, founded in the 15th or 16th centuries. Old city includes several hundreds of drystone buildings, large mosque.

Merca - Shabeellaha Hoose. Ancient port city, established in the 5th century AD.

Whitewashed buildings at the sea form picturesque skyline. Earlier city walls surrounded the historical centre, fortified lighthouse - Jamia tower - rises above the city.

Mogadishu Old City (Hamar Weyne) - Banaadir. Historical centre of Mogadishu - important port city since the 1st century AD or earlier. Old buildings are located at the ocean, forming an impressive waterfront, there are remnants of city walls.

Fortifications

Almnara Tower - Banaadir. Massive tower in the centre of Mogadishu, built in the 15th century. Structure served as a lighthouse and fortification tower.

Botiala Fortress - Bari. Old, massive fortress rising above the Botiala town and port.

Taleh Fort - Sool. Enormous fortress, former administrative centre of Dervish state, constructed around a group of Dervish tombs. Constructed in 1910 - 1912.

Wargaade Wall - Bari (?). Ancient (possibly - 2000 years old) fortification wall built from dressed stones around Wargaade settlement, 230 by 210 m large. Abandoned after the coming of Islam.

Mosques

Fakr ad-Din Mosque - Banaadir. Old mosque in Mogadishu, built in 1269 from marble, coral stone and glazed tiles. Building has sophisticated design.

Old Arba Rukun Mosque - Banaadir. Possibly the oldest mosque in Mogadishu, built in 1260. Its round tower rises 13.5 m tall and is built from coral stone” (Wondermondo.com (undated) *Somalia*).

A map produced in May 2010 by the *United Nations* shows landmarks in Mogadishu (United Nations (May 2010) *Somalia- Mogadishu Landmarks*).

An undated article from *USA Today* states:

“Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, is a primary stop for visitors to the country. A notable landmark in the city is the Bakara Market, where vendors offer street food, clothing and other native merchandise at low prices. Shanghai Old City, with its white houses and narrow streets, and Mogadishu Cathedral are scenic landmarks that are vestiges of a time the city was under the control of the Italian government. The Old City was once a wealthy area, now controlled by warlords and closed to tourists” (USA Today (Undated) *Landmarks in Somalia*).

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

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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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