



**Somalia – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 12 December 2012**

**Any information on the Mareexaan (Marehan) clan and their relation with the Ashraf, particularly in the Luq area of Somalia. Any reports of conflict between the two clans around October 2012.**

The Introduction to a Danish Immigration Service report on a fact-finding mission to Somalia in 1998 states:

“A fairly large proportion of the Somali asylum-seekers in Nordic countries belong to the Marehan clans. Many claim to come from Mogadishu, but some also give the Gedo region as their home. During the civil war, members of the Marehan clans in Mogadishu suffered violence at the hands of clan militias coming under the United Somali Congress (USC), which in January 1991 seized control of Mogadishu and forced the President of Somalia, Siad Barre, to flee. Siad Barre himself belonged to the Marehan, which was one of the reasons why Marehan members in Mogadishu faced ill-treatment by USC militias. Many Marehan lost their lives during the fighting in Mogadishu, where in a string of cases the conquering militias took over Marehan members' property in the city. This left large numbers of Marehan members internally displaced, and most fled from Mogadishu to the Marehan clans' traditional homelands in Somalia: the Gedo region and the Abud Waq area of the Galgaduud region. The vast majority, however, fled to Gedo, as the Abud Waq area was heavily affected by fighting, especially between Aideed's Habr Gedir militias and the Marehan clan, a clan-based conflict simmering away beneath the surface for generations but now heightened by the civil war. The Gedo region, on the other hand, was relatively peaceful, with large parts of it already inhabited by Marehan clans.” (Danish Immigration Service (1 July 1999) *Report of the Nordic Fact-finding Mission to the Gedo Region in Somalia (15 October - 30 October 1998)*)

A report published by the World Bank, in a section headed “Conflicts among Regions in Somalia”, states:

“Since the end of the civil war, Lower Juba has been a conflict zone. The control of the capital of the region, the port city of Kismaayo, has repeatedly changed hands among the key opposing actors. The major protagonists in the conflict are the historically migratory clans of the Majerten-led Harti/Darod versus the Marehan/Darod in alliance with the Habargidir/Hawiye clans, all of whom seek to dominate the affairs of the region.” (World Bank (January 2005) *Conflict in Somalia: Drivers and Dynamics*, pp.34-35)

A document from the Danish Refugee Council/Novib-Oxfam states:

“Luuq, which is located in the Southern region of Gedo, shares much of the history of the Raxanweyn and the Geledi Sultanate as their Gasargude Sultanate was closely linked with the Geledi. Here too, you find that nomadic

clans have settled and mixed with the sedentary people, however here the nomadic element was primarily represented by the Marehan from the Darood clan family. Today, they have formed a guurti, which they claim is like the one in Somaliland...The Marehan are also part of the Guurti. The highest ranking elders among the Mare-han in Luuq is the Ugaas of the Marehan /Howrarsame, and the Suldaan of the Marehan, Rer Hassan lineages. These two represent all the Marehan in Luuq, and replace each other when the other is absent. The role of these duub in Luuq is to chair all the shir, and ratify decisions made by the nabadoon." (Danish Refugee Council/Novib-Oxfam (November 2006) *The predicament of the 'Oday' - The role of traditional structures in security, rights, law and development in Somalia*, p. 33)

A document published by the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), in a section headed "Darood", states:

"The Darood are commonly divided into three major groups referred to as Ogaden, Marehan, and Harti. The Harti are composed of the Majerteen who now are found in Puntland mainly, and the Dulbahante and Warsangeli who mainly live within the borders of Somaliland. Puntland almost entirely overlaps with the Majerteen clan family. The Marehan inhabit South-Central Somalia, where they are dominant in Gedo region." (Austrian Centre for Country of Origin & Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) (December 2009) *Clans in Somalia: Report on a Lecture by Joakim Gundel, COI Workshop Vienna, 15 May 2009 (Revised Edition)*)

A report from the Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre (Landinfo), in a section titled "The Gedo and Juba Regions" (section 3.6), states:

"In June 2008, the Gedo region was described as relatively stable, but was the scene of greater insurgent activity in the autumn. The Marehan clan has consolidated its position in Gedo, but there are conflicts with the Rahanweyn clan in the area, and the situation in Gedo is closely connected with the situation and changes in the conditions related to the powers in Kismayo in Lower Juba." (Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre (Landinfo) (12 November 2008) *Conflict, security and clan protection in South Somalia*, p.15)

A Voice of America News report, in a paragraph headed "Warlordism in historical perspective", states:

"Somali history shows that controlling Kismayo has been the goal of various clans that have historical claims to the city and its surrounding regions. But for much of the past decade, that power was in the hands of Barre Hirale, a factional leader of the Marehan, a sub-clan of one of the largest clans in Somalia, the Darod. In 2006, Hirale and most of his Marehan militia were chased out of Kismayo by the Islamic Courts Union. With the support of neighboring Ethiopia, Hirale re-took Kismayo from the Islamists in 2007, only to be chased out again in August 2008 by Hizbul Islam and al-Shabab. The two Hizbul Islam factions that captured Kismayo in 2008 - Ras Kamboni and Anole -- were Islamists fighting to turn Somalia into an Islamic state. But equally, they were members of Darod sub-clans that have long held a grudge against the locally dominant Marehan group. Weinstein says Ras Kamboni and Anole saw an opportunity for their respective sub-clans to reclaim power through Hizbul Islam. But the rise of Ras Kamboni and Anole threatened

Marehan clansmen and sub-clan members of Darod's biggest rival, the Hawiye, in Kismayo. They aligned themselves with al-Shabab, hoping their support of the extremist group would elevate their clans to positions of power as well." (Voice of America News (7 November 2009) *Somali Clan Disputes Giving Boost to al-Shabab*)

An Agence France Presse report on the current situation in Kismayo states:

"Residents in Kismayo -- relatively peaceful under four years of authoritarian rule by the Shebab -- are reportedly fearful of violence between rival Somali clans in potential power struggles for control of the port. While the Ras Kamboni are largely drawn from the Ogadeni clan, powerful forces from the Marehan as well as the Majertan clan are also influential in the region." (Agence France Presse (3 October 2012) *African Union troops bolster gains in Somali port*)

No reports of any conflict between the Marehan and Ashraf in October 2012 were found among sources available to the Research and Information Unit.

A Minority Rights Group International report, in a section headed "Ashraf and Shekhal", states:

"Ashraf and Shekhal traditionally played important conflict-resolution roles, and were respected and protected by clans with whom they lived. However, some were badly affected by the civil conflicts of the 1990s and lost this customary protection, becoming targets for human rights abuses by clan militias and warlords. Ashraf claim descent from the Prophet Mohammed and his daughter Fatima, and believe they migrated to Somalia in the twelfth century. Ashraf from some areas are affiliated to and counted as Benadiri, while Ashraf living among Digil-Mirifle are affiliated with them as a sub-clan. Shekhal (also known as Sheikhal or Sheikash) are a similar dispersed religious community of claimed Arabian and early Islamic origin. Both Ashraf and Shekhal have achieved political influence and success in education and commerce with Arab countries, yet they can still face discrimination and human rights abuses on account of their non-clan origins and lack of an armed militia." (Minority Rights Group International (1 October 2010) *No redress: Somalia's forgotten minorities*, p.12)

An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to a request for information on the Ashraf, in a paragraph headed "Affiliated clans and risks from other tribes", states:

"The Independent Scholar said that tribal alliances, affiliated clans or risks from other clans are all specific to the particular subgroup of Ashraf and the location of the subgroup in the country. She clarified that the Ashraf tend to form alliances with whichever clan they are living among. This information is corroborated by a report produced by the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) with the Austrian Red Cross. The ACCORD-Austrian Red Cross report states that Ashraf live integrated with the various Somali groups or clans with whom they have settled. A Northern Arizona University associate professor of history whose research focus is Islamic Africa stated, in a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, that alliances between clans and tribal groups in Somalia are fluid and contextual, and added his opinion that available

knowledge of clan alliances is not comprehensive.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (23 November 2010) *Somalia: Information on the Ashraf clan, including the location of their traditional homeland, affiliated clans, risks they face from other tribes; whether the name Sharif is given to a male at birth*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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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