

Somalia: Displacement in Mogadishu

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Displacements, Evictions, Prison Conditions, and Access to IDs

May 2026



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Cover photo: An aerial view of a displacement camp in Daynile district, Mogadishu that hosts families displaced by both armed conflict and drought, ©Abdulkadir Mohamed/NRC, 29 August 2025.

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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology \(2023\)](#).¹ It is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care within a limited timeframe. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

‘Refugee’, ‘risk’ and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

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On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 11 April 2026. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the [Introduction](#).

¹ EUAA, EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, [url](#)





Glossary and abbreviations

Term	Definition
<i>Barakac or barakacayaal</i>	Somali for people who were forced to leave their place of origin and live in IDP camps. <i>Barakacayaal</i> is also formally used by UN and international organisations providing assistance.
<i>Barakacayaasha</i>	Somali for camps or neighbourhoods of ‘the displaced’
<i>Buush bariis</i>	Somali for ‘rice huts’, shelters that are put together to artificially increase the number of people entitled to humanitarian aid
Camp dweller	A person who lives in a IDP settlement, site
CCCM Cluster	Camp Coordination and Camp Management, Inter-Agency committee coordination mechanism that supports internally displaced persons (IDPs)
CDR	Crude Death Rate. Total number of deaths in a population divided by its average total population, conventionally expressed per 1 000 population per year for standard demographic tracking, while the crude mortality rate is expressed per 10 000 population per day in emergency or humanitarian contexts
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
<i>Ciyaal Weero</i>	Mogadishu youth gangs
<i>Damiin</i>	A guarantor or mediator who vouches for an individual's identity, credibility, or obligations
<i>Damiin system</i>	A Somali traditional, culturally-embedded mechanism based on trust and personal guarantee, often acting as a substitute for formal identification, legal security, and financial services
eTAS	Electronic Travel Authorisation System
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
GBV	Gender Based Violence
Goof	Somali for vacant private land





<i>Habeas Corpus</i>	Common law principle protecting personal liberty by requiring state authorities to justify an individual's detention before a judge
HLP	House, Land, and Property
HRC	Human Rights Council
IDLO	International Development Law Organisation
IDPs	Internally displaced persons: individual forced to flee their home or place of habitual residence due to conflict, violence, human rights violations, or disasters, and who remain within their own country's borders
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
Long-term IDP	Individuals whose displacement is protracted, typically lasting five years or more, with little prospect for a permanent solution
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MCP	Mogadishu Central Prison
MoJCA	Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
MPCC	Mogadishu Prison and Court Complex
NIN	National Identification Number
NIRA	National Identification and Registration Authority
NISA	National Intelligence and Security Agency
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPR	Organisation for Prisoners Rights
PACs	Police Advisory Committees
ReDSS	Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat
Returnee	A refugee or internally displaced person (IDP) who voluntarily returns to their home country or place of origin to settle permanently





SCAA	Somali Civil Aviation Authority
SCC	Somali Cash Consortium
SNBS	Somalia National Bureau of Statistics
<i>Tirsi Aqoonsi</i>	Somali for unique National Identification Number (NIN)
‘The Hole’	Godka Jilacow Prison
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VISO	Puntland Visa System
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene



Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant context information for the assessment of applications for international protection, including refugee status and subsidiary protection.

The report provides relevant thematic information with focus on Mogadishu, and should be read in conjunction with preceding complementary EUAA COI reports, notably the [Somalia Country Focus \(May 2025\)](#) – Section 2.1 on Mogadishu.²

Methodology

Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference of this report build on previous complementary EUAA reporting on Mogadishu, internal and external consultations with experts, as well as analysis of recently surveyed COI needs from both the EUAA COI and the EUAA Country Guidance networks. The final version can be found in [Annex 2](#).

The reference period for this report is from 1 April 2025 to 30 March 2026, but it also includes general information to provide background and contextual information on the current situation. The drafting period finished on 10 April 2026, peer review occurred between 13 and 17 April 2026, and additional information was added to the report as a result of the quality review process during the review implementation up until 30 April 2026. The report was internally reviewed subsequently, with limited additional info incorporated up until 13 May 2026.

Collecting information

This report is based on publicly available information in electronic and paper-based sources gathered through desk-based research, as well as on interviews with key sources.

Research on Somalia is challenging due to lack of reporting, security issues, and undercurrent trends. This report also contains information from multiple oral sources with ground-level knowledge of the situation in Somalia and in Mogadishu, who were interviewed or consulted specifically for this report. In some cases, sources were unwilling to go on record for security reasons. The report also makes reference to previous EUAA reports and key statements contained there whenever still relevant.

Both interviewed and written sources used are referenced in the Annex 1: [Bibliography](#). Wherever information could not be found within the timeframes for drafting this report, this is stated in the relevant section of the report.

² EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Country Focus, May 2025, [url](#)



Quality control

This report was written by the EUAA COI Sector in line with the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023)³ and the EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2023).⁴

The report has been peer-reviewed by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) of the Netherlands, as well as internally by the EUAA COI Sector. All the comments from reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report, which was finalised on 23 April 2025. Limited additional info was incorporated up until 13 May 2026.

Sources

In accordance with EUAA COI methodology, a range of different published documentary sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include: academic publications, think tank reports, and specialised sources covering Somalia; COI reports by governments; information from civil society and NGOs; reports produced by various bodies of the United Nations; Somali and regionally-based media.

In addition to using publicly available documentary sources, multiple oral sources were contacted for this report. The types of oral sources contacted include: scholars, international experts, development practitioners, and local experts based in Somalia, Mogadishu with reliable knowledge of the situation on the ground. Some sources who were interviewed chose to remain anonymous for security reasons. Sources were assessed for their background, publication history, reputability, and current ground-level knowledge. They were interviewed in the period March – May 2026. All oral sources are described in the [Bibliography](#).

Structure and use of the report

This thematic report on displacement in Mogadishu provides a detailed overview of life in – and management of – informal camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), including on access to their basic rights. The report then goes on to address the situation of people affected by widespread evictions, who largely correspond to the same IDP communities, and other city dwellers, living in informal settlements. Within this context, the report examines how displacement and eviction issues intersect with marginalisation, minority, and gender issues. Furthermore, the report addresses conditions in Mogadishu's prison establishments, where the same IDP population segment is overrepresented. In conclusion, the report focuses on access to ID documents, in general and for IDPs, which are crucial to integrate in the local context.

The report is divided into five thematic sections:

³ EUAA, EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, [url](#)

⁴ EUAA, Writing and Referencing Guide for EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports, February 2023, [url](#)



- In Section 1, Mogadishu demographics and clan composition, the report summarises information on Mogadishu's population, administrative organisation, and clan composition.
- In Section 2, Displacement in Mogadishu, the report provides a detailed overview of IDP camps distribution, composition, management, and access to basic rights.
- In Section 3, Evictions in Mogadishu and impacts on civilians, the report provides a detailed account of the legal and policy framework in place for evictions, as well as its de facto implementation, recent trends and impacts on the civilian population.
- In Section 4, Prison conditions and treatment of detainees in Mogadishu, the report, after touching upon the legal and policy framework in force, provides an overview of the prison establishments in Mogadishu, addresses prison conditions and treatment of detainees, and how they intersect with (IDP) issues of marginalisation and vulnerability.
- In Section 5, NIRA IDs and access to services, the report focuses on the newly adopted government measures regulating the issuance of ID cards, as well as their relevance for accessing services. Implications for the IDP population are also dealt with.

Note on transliteration

In relation to transliteration of local-language-terminology used in this report, it is important to understand that a national orthography for the Somali language was codified relatively late by adopting a Latin script (21 October 1972). Nevertheless, even today, Somali lacks a commonly applied and binding orthography.

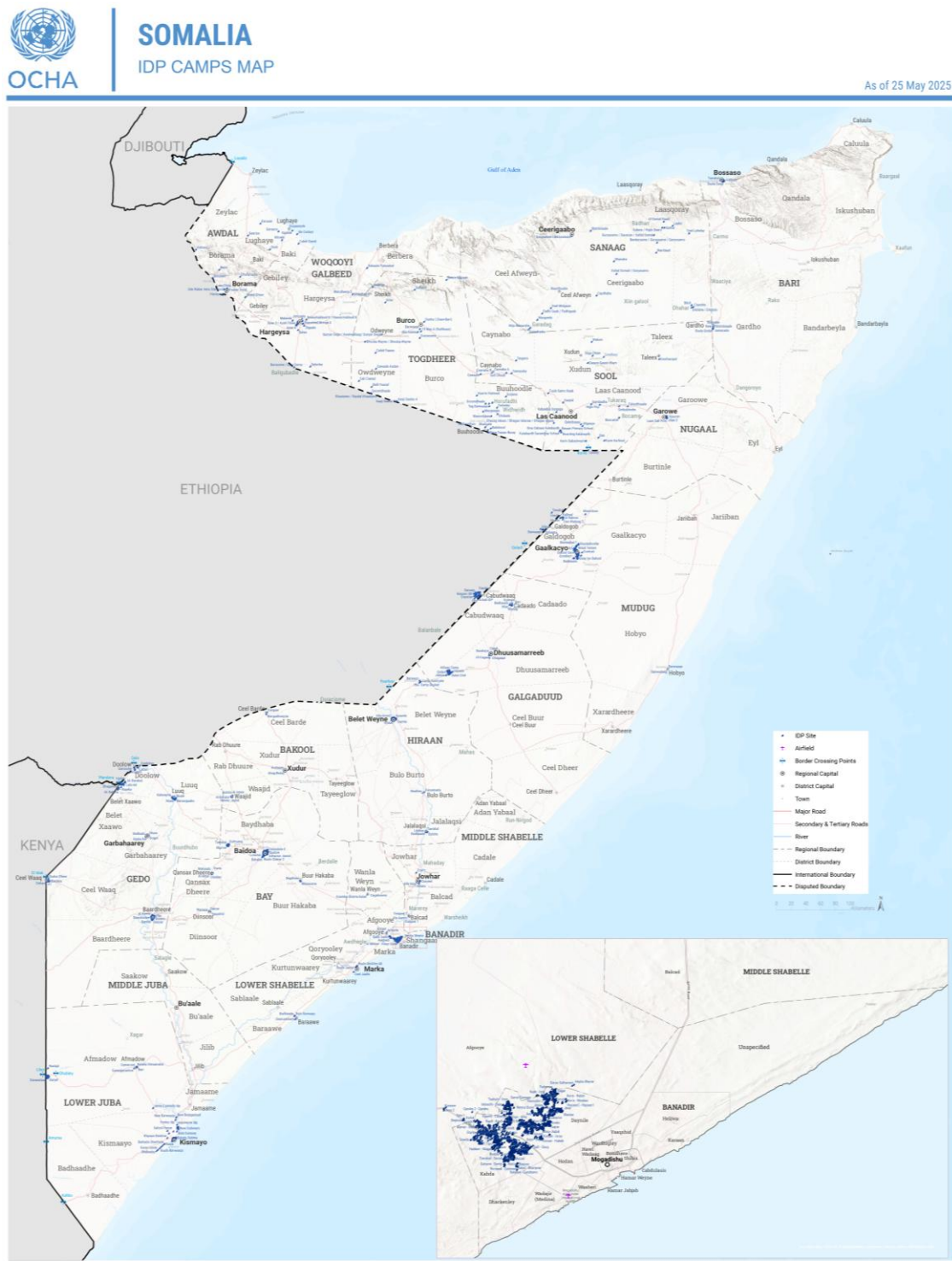
In this report, Somali-language names for places, clans and personal names usually follow Somali orthography: 'long vowels are indicated by doubling them', as in *Darood* or *Abbaan*, 'the Latin 'c' stands for a sound close to the Arabic ع (ayn), while 'x' denotes the strongly aspirated ح (ha)'.⁵ However, given the fact that other sources adopt different conventions, the reader will sometimes find other forms of place, clan, and personal names in the text, including where direct citations are used or in references.

It is also important to note that Somalis, notably Somali men, are frequently better known by their nicknames than by their formal names. The same applies to public figures and politicians mentioned in the text, whose nickname is provided in quotation marks, such as in 'better known' or 'also known' as 'Qoor Qoor'.

⁵ Hoehne M., *Between Somaliland and Puntland*, 2015, [url](#), p. 7

Maps

IDP camps in Somalia and in Mogadishu



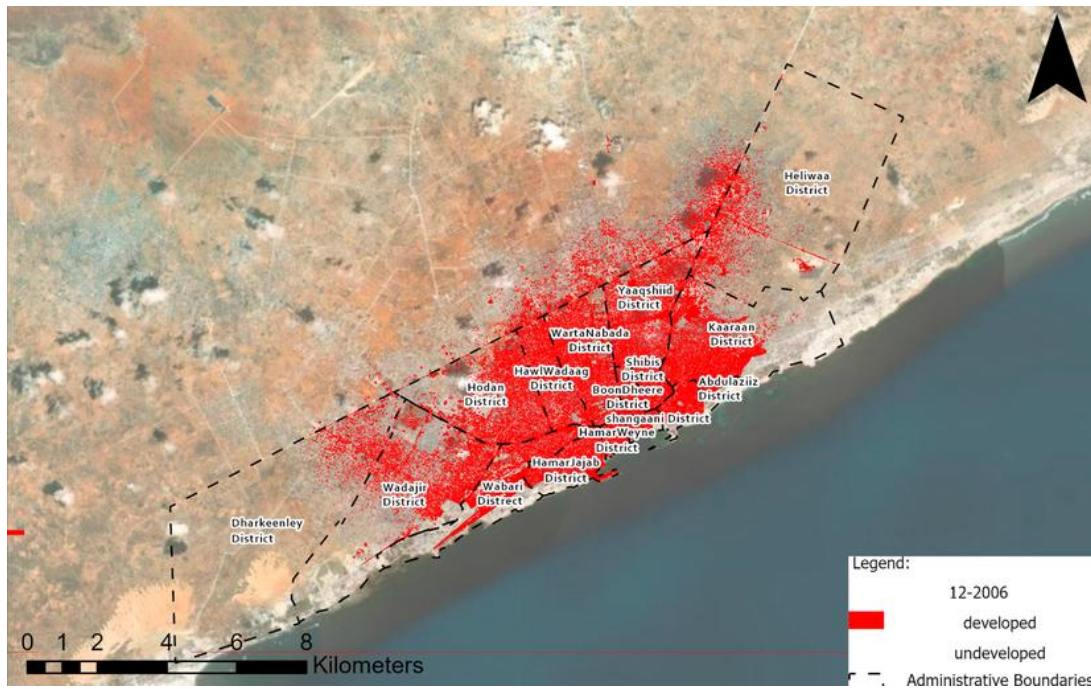
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Creation date: 29/05/2025. Source: OCHA CDDs, OCHA Cluster. Feedback: www.unocha.org, www.response.reliefweb.int/Somalia

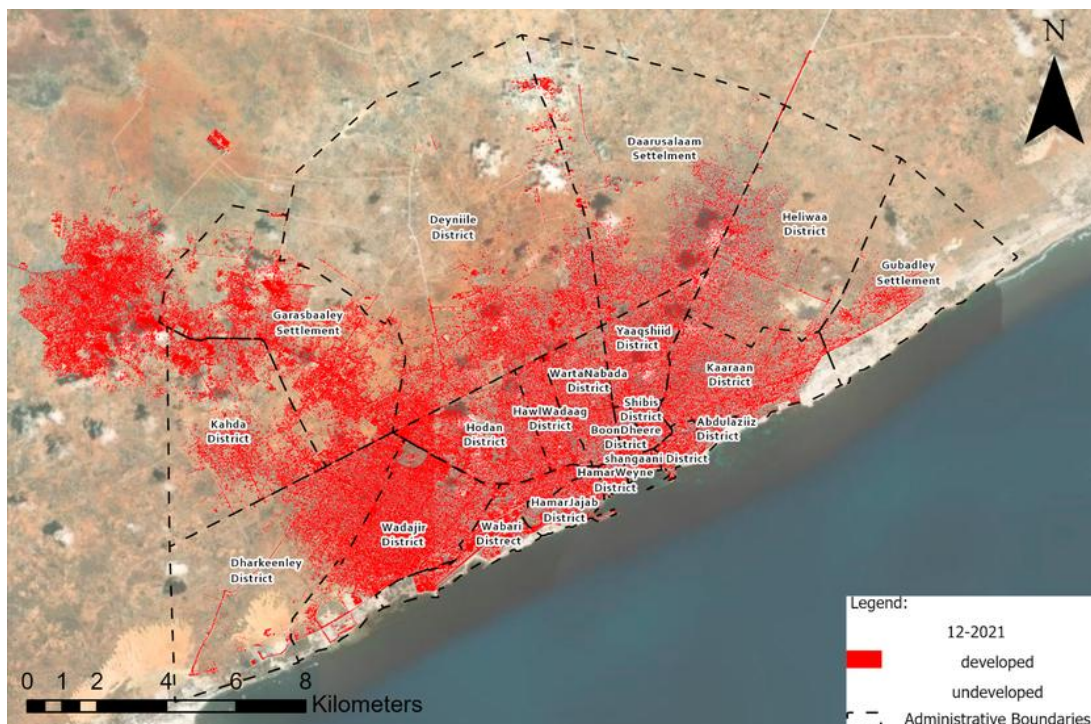
Map 1. Somalia – IDP Camps Map, 25 May 2025.⁶

⁶ UNOCHA, IDP Camps Map, 25 May 2025, [url](http://www.unocha.org)

Mogadishu's districts and urban sprawl maps



Map 2. The built-up area of Mogadishu city in 2006.⁷



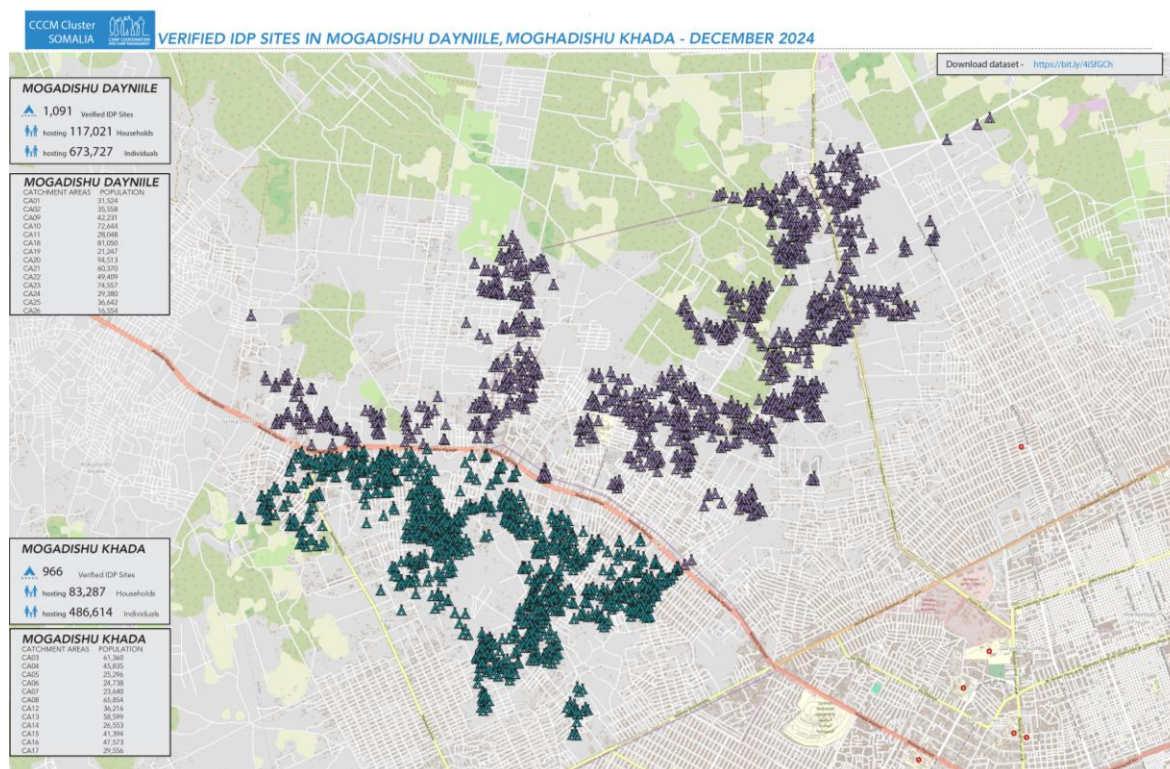
Map 3. The built-up area of Mogadishu city in 2021.⁸ IDP sites are included as developed areas in the maps.⁹

⁷ Hassan, M.O.; et al., Urban Sprawl Patterns, Drivers, and Impacts: The Case of Mogadishu, Somalia Using Geo-Spatial and SEM Analyses, March 2023, [url](#), p. 7. Map reproduced with permission from the authors.

⁸ Hassan, M.O.; et al., Urban Sprawl Patterns, Drivers, and Impacts: The Case of Mogadishu, Somalia Using Geo-Spatial and SEM Analyses, March 2023, [url](#), p. 9. Map reproduced with permission from the authors.

⁹ Hassan, M.O., Email exchange, 29 March 2026. Marwan Omar Hassan is the leading author of the article on Urban Sprawl Patterns in Mogadishu referenced above.

Verified IDP site in Dayniile and Khada Districts in Mogadishu



Map 4. Verified IDP site in Mogadishu Dayniile and Mogadishu Khada, December 2024.¹⁰

¹⁰ CCCM Cluster Somalia – Verified IDP sites in Mogadishu Dayniile and Mogadishu Khada, December 2024, [url](#)



1. Displacement in Mogadishu

1.1. Mogadishu demographics and clan composition

Mogadishu is the most populous city in Somalia.¹¹ In early 2026, ca. 2 969 000 people were estimated to be living in the city,¹² distributed over its 20 districts. The old ones are: Wadajir, Dharkenley, Daynile, Wardigley, Hawl Wadaag, Waberi, Hamar Jajab, Hamar Weyne, Bondere, Karaan, Yaqshid, Huriwaa, Kahda, Hodan, Shibis, Abdulaziz, Shangani.¹³ In May 2024, three new districts were added: Gubadley, Darussalam, Garasbaaley.¹⁴ In May 2025, Hassan Mohamed Hussein (also known as ‘Muungaab’) was appointed mayor of Mogadishu and Governor of the Benadir Regional Administration by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, replacing Mohamed Ahmed Amiir after six months in office.¹⁵ Mogadishu hosts the Federal Government of Somalia. While Al-Shabaab lacks permanent bases in the city, it keeps operating within it, with Mogadishu’s security landscape described as ‘porous’.¹⁶

Mogadishu is inhabited largely by Hawiye from the clans Abgaal, Habar Gedir and Murasade. Besides, certain minority groups such as Reer Hamar are traditional inhabitants of the city.¹⁷ Moreover, members from many other Somali clans reside in Mogadishu as students, professionals, business people, or government workers.¹⁸ Mogadishu is ‘not as segregated by clan as other areas of Somalia’. Still, clan membership is important and the Hawiye clan holds the most powerful positions,¹⁹ while minority group members and members of other clans face exclusion and discrimination.²⁰ In the oldest quarters of Shangani and Hamar Weyne, Reer Hamar- which consist of many small groups - have their ancestral homes.²¹ For more information on minority groups in Somalia and in Mogadishu please see the EUAA COI Report [Somalia: Country Focus \(May 2025\)](#).²²

¹¹ Mohamed Adam, Mogadishu’s Spiraling House Rents: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions, 29 January 2023, [url](#)

¹² Macrotrends, Mogadishu, Somalia Metro Area Population 1950-2026, 2026, [url](#); World Population Review: Mogadishu, 2026, [url](#)

¹³ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁴ SMN, Mogadishu Expands as President Recognizes Three New Districts, 20 May 2024, [url](#)

¹⁵ Hiraan Online, President Mohamud appoints Hassan Muungaab as Mogadishu Mayor amid political tensions, 28 May 2025, [url](#); Shabelle Media Network, New Mogadishu mayor Muungaab takes office, outlines 9-point agenda, 5 June 2025, [url](#). By law, the Mayor of Mogadishu also holds the title of Governor of Benadir Regional Administration (BRA)

¹⁶ EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, May 2025, [url](#), pp. 88-89

¹⁷ EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 13-15

¹⁸ Siyaad, Telephone interview, 8 August 2024. Siyaad is a medical laboratory supervisor in Mogadishu. Originally from northern Somalia he relocated to Mogadishu in 2013.

¹⁹ Afyare A. Elmi, and Faisal N. A., Mogadishu: City report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 10.

²⁰ Zakia Hussien, Telephone interview, 8 April 2025. Former Deputy Police Commissioner General based in Mogadishu

²¹ Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 107

²² EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Country Focus, May 2025, [url](#)





1.2. Internally displaced people (IDP) in Somalia

According to the latest Somalia Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) IDP Site Master List, in the 4th quarter of 2024 the overall number of verified IDP sites in Somalia was 3 822, hosting a total IDP population of about 689 000 households or about 4 029 000 individuals.²³ However, government estimates are not always aligned with those of the humanitarian sector. As indicated by the SNBS, selected IDP camp sites surveyed at the end of 2022 in Baidoa, Beledweyne, Kismayo, and Mogadishu, reportedly registered an overall number of IDP households and IDP individuals that was respectively 40.8 % and 51.3 % of the corresponding CCCM Cluster estimates.²⁴

According to recent estimates from the UNHCR CCCM Cluster, 85 % of the sites at country level are informal settlements on private land and about 74 % of them are in urban areas.²⁵

1.3. IDPs and IDP sites in Mogadishu

Mogadishu hosts a considerable IDP population. Based on UNOCHA data, as of July 2025, out of 4 700 verified IDP sites across the country, Mogadishu was home to 2 493 of them, all districts considered, with an overall population of more than 1.1 million people.²⁶ According to a 2025 Risk Mapping Exercise conducted by the Peach Hub Foundation, the overall number of IDP sites in Benadir (Mogadishu) would be 2 565.²⁷

As of November 2025, Dayniile and Khada districts, which host the vast majority of IDP people in the city, were the location of 1 029 and 1 241 verified IDP sites respectively.²⁸ Among others, another district with a large IDP population is Hodan,²⁹ which hosted, as of November 2026, 87 verified IDP sites, while the rest was distributed across 17 Mogadishu districts.³⁰ The mapping exercise, conducted according to the CCCM site verification methodology, did not verify sites hosting less than 50 households, as well as sites consisting solely of ‘fake shelters’.³¹ These are also referred to as ‘rice huts’ (*buush bariis* in Somali), meaning shelters that are put together to artificially increase the number of people entitled to humanitarian aid.³²

²³ CCCM Cluster Somalia - HDX, IDP Site Master List – 4th Quarter 2024, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

²⁴ Somalia, FGS, SNBS, Survey on Nomadic Movement into IDP Camps in Mogadishu, Kismayo, Beledweyne & Baidoa, January 2023, [url](#), pp. 5-6

²⁵ UNHCR, Operational Data Portal, CCCM Cluster Somalia, 2023, [url](#)

²⁶ UNOCHA Somalia, Email exchange, 12, 29 March 2026

²⁷ Peace Hub Foundation, Eviction Risk Mapping Report – Benadir, March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

²⁸ UNOCHA, Consolidated CCCM and DTM IDP Baseline List, November 2025, n.a. The document was shared with the EUAA. For a recent public mapping, although outdated, see CCCM Cluster Somalia – Verified IDP sites in Mogadishu Dayniile and Mogadishu Khada, December 2024, [url](#)

²⁹ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 10; see also UNHCR and FGS, Internal Displacement Profiling Mogadishu, April 2016, [url](#), pp. 19-21

³⁰ UNOCHA, Consolidated CCCM and DTM IDP Baseline List, November 2025, n.a.

³¹ CCCM Cluster – Standard Operating Procedure – Site Verification Methodology, 25 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

³² Bakonyi, J., The Political Economy of Displacement: Rent Seeking, Disposessions and Precarious Mobility in Somali Cities, April 2021, [url](#), 14; Bakonyi, J., et al., War and city making in Somalia: Property, power and disposable lives, 2019, [url](#), pp. 87-88



In 2012, the distribution of IDP sites within Mogadishu was completely different, with over 60 % of them situated in Hodan, Wadajir and Dharkenley districts.³³ In 2013, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) set up a ‘Mogadishu Relocation Task Force’ with the aim to relocate IDPs living in informal settlements in Mogadishu to other areas on the outskirts of the city, including Dayniile District, and along the Afgoye Corridor.³⁴ In the period 2012-2016, Mogadishu’s IDP population remained relatively stable in numbers but it moved significantly within the city, mainly as a result of forced evictions.³⁵ For further details on this point see section below [2. Evictions in Mogadishu and impact on civilians](#).

1.4. Recent movements

Over the period 2023 – 2025, UNHCR registered over 4 million new displacements across Somalia, with over 1 173 million caused by conflict and insecurity (653 000 in 2023, 290 000 in 2024, and 230 000 in 2025). The rest of the IDP population was displaced predominantly by floods in 2023 and 2024, and by drought in 2025.³⁶

Overall, during the same period (2023-2025), Mogadishu experienced the arrival of about 250 000 new IDPs, and the relocation within city districts of about another 30 000. In the two preceding years (2021-2022), Mogadishu saw the arrival of an additional 500 000 IDPs and the internal relocation of about another 190 000 (mostly in 2021). The period 2017-mid 2018 was also a peak period for internal displacement in Somalia, with sizeable new IDP inflows to Mogadishu (over 200 000) - mostly originating from Lower and Middle Shabelle and triggered by insecurity and drought - and with another 150 000 relocating within the city districts, notably Kahda.³⁷

At the same time, in the period 2021-2025 only about 8 000 IDPs have relocated back to their home areas or outside Mogadishu in the period 2021-2025, mostly to Lower Shabelle and Bari region.³⁸ IDPs settled in urban areas tend to remain there, going back often not being an option due to circumstances in their place of origin (e.g. drought, conflict).³⁹ Also in terms of expressed preferences, recent evidence would suggest that 46 % of the IDPs in Dayniile district and 55 % of the IDPs in Kahda district of Mogadishu would prefer to stay. Main grounds for this would be livelihood opportunities, availability of basic services, availability of humanitarian assistance, and an improved security situation relative to their areas of origin.⁴⁰

³³ UNHCR and FGS, Internal Displacement Profiling Mogadishu, April 2016, [url](#), p. 22

³⁴ Mahad Wasuge et al., Land Matters in Mogadishu, 2017, [url](#), pp. 81-84, 87, 93

³⁵ UNHCR and FGS, Internal Displacement Profiling Mogadishu, April 2016, [url](#), p. 22

³⁶ EUAA analysis based on UNHCR, Operational Data Portal, Somalia – Internal Displacement, n.a., [url](#)

³⁷ iDMC, City of Flight - New and secondary displacements in Mogadishu, Somalia, November 2018, [url](#), pp. 1-3

³⁸ EUAA analysis based on UNHCR, Operational Data Portal, Somalia – Internal Displacement, n.a., [url](#)

³⁹ Refugees International, No Going Back: The New Urban Face of Internal Displacement in Somalia, 25 May 2023, [url](#); The New Humanitarian, ‘There’s no future in this IDP camp’: Why Somalia’s crisis needs a rethink, 17 August 2023, [url](#)

⁴⁰ Somalia expert on IDPs reintegration, Email exchange 27, 30 March 2026. The Somalia expert on IDPs reintegration has decades long experience in addressing IDPs issues and facilitating their reintegration in Somalia and in Mogadishu; see also Somalia, FGS, Durable Solutions Progress (DSP) Survey, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 6, 20



Wanting to remain in Mogadishu would be particularly true for those displaced by violence and conflict, including by Al-Shabaab.⁴¹ According to a survey conducted by ReDSS in 2021, those displaced by conflict would be more likely to want to stay in their current location in Mogadishu than those displaced by drought or floods.⁴² At district level, the primary reason they gave for this was the absence of conflict at their current sites.⁴³

1.5. Origin and composition

In the period 2021-2025, most arrivals in Mogadishu originated from neighbouring regions, notably, in order of number of arrivals, from Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Bay, and Bakool, along with other less substantial inflows coming from other South-Central regions.⁴⁴ This holds true also for previous periods.⁴⁵ Currently, according to expert opinions, most IDPs in Mogadishu originate either from Bay and Bakool,⁴⁶ or from Lower Shabelle and Bay.⁴⁷

These trends are also explained by the fact that control over land and production has been traditionally contested in Bay, Bakool, as well as along the Shabelle and Juba rivers, with their original inhabitants often challenged by discrimination, dispossession, and displacement at the hands of various actors, including Al-Shabaab.⁴⁸ In late years (post-2010), increased investments in cash crops has also forced marginalised groups to sell their land to other more powerful clans, before swelling the ranks of IDPs in Mogadishu. This trend - anticipated by an ethnically similar influx of destitute Mogadishu dwellers from the early 90s - ⁴⁹ can be observed in the Shabelle and Juba Valley, where it particularly affects Bantu groups, as well as in the Bay and Bakool regions, where it affects weaker Rahanweyn subclans.⁵⁰

Hence, according to recent analyses, most IDPs currently residing in Mogadishu belong to minority clans and marginalised groups,⁵¹ with large portions coming from either Rahanweyn

⁴¹ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), p. 17

⁴² Somalia expert on IDPs reintegration, Email exchange 27, 30 March 2026; see also ReDSS, Listening to displacement affected communities over time, September 2022, [url](#), pp. 25-28

⁴³ ReDSS, Listening to displacement affected communities over time, September 2022, [url](#), pp. 27-28

⁴⁴ EUAA analysis based on UNHCR, Operational Data Portal, Somalia – Internal Displacement, n.a., [url](#); see also Crawford, N., et al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 12; Bakonyi, J., and Chonka, P., Precarious labour – Precarious lives, 2019, [url](#), pp. 210-212

⁴⁵ Mahad Wasuge et al., Land Matters in Mogadishu, 2017, [url](#), p. 76; UNHCR and FGS, Internal Displacement Profiling Mogadishu, April 2016, [url](#), pp. 24, 49-50

⁴⁶ Expert on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, Video interview and email exchange, 17, 19 March 2026. The expert has a longstanding professional experience on Somalia evictions and is based in Mogadishu

⁴⁷ Somalia expert on IDPs reintegration, Email exchange 27, 30 March 2026

⁴⁸ Jaspars, S., et al., Food and Power in Somalia: Business as Usual?, 21 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 21-23; Besteman, C., and Cassanelli, L., The struggle for land in southern Somalia, 1996, p. 16, 42-44, 146-147, 157

⁴⁹ Mahad Wasuge et al., Land Matters in Mogadishu, 2017, [url](#), p. 43

⁵⁰ Jaspars, S., et al., Food and Power in Somalia: Business as Usual?, 21 January 2020, [url](#), p. 25; Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 15-16; see also TANA, Informal Settlement Managers: Perception and reality in informal IDP camps in Mogadishu, 2019, [url](#), p. 9

⁵¹ Crawford, N., et al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 12; Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 1-2; see also Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state reconstruction in Somalia's conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), p. 126



clans (Digil and Mirifle) or belonging to other often racialised minority groups such as Bantu/Jareer.⁵²

At the same time, according to Ayaan, a scholar specialised in migration and displacement in and out of Somalia, Mogadishu IDP camps may host returnees from both neighbouring countries, such as Kenya or Ethiopia, and from ‘Western countries’.⁵³ Returnees from neighbouring countries may be comparatively more likely to enter or transit through IDP settings due to prolonged displacement histories,⁵⁴ economic vulnerability, and fewer reintegration resources, especially if the return and reintegration packages from international organisations or NGOs are insufficient.⁵⁵ Returnees from ‘Western countries’ can end up in IDP camps or settlements in Mogadishu, particularly when they lack strong kinship, or clan-based support networks, sustainable livelihoods, or access to housing upon return.⁵⁶ Within this context, Dalmar, a Somali expert on migration and return, notes that individuals returning after prolonged absence, may face vulnerabilities that can increase the likelihood of temporary settlement in informal displacement sites.⁵⁷ Ayaan notes that in some cases, they can end up in the IDP camps because they are simply strangers, foreigners having lived abroad for many years, and with no family members in Mogadishu.⁵⁸ Further information on returnees from abroad living in IDP camps could not be found within the time limits of the research.

1.6. Clan connections and access to resources

In general, concerning IDPs integration in Somalia, clan affiliation serves as the foundational, everyday structure determining – or not – local integration, citizenship, and access to rights, depending on the presence of clan affiliation in the areas of displacement.⁵⁹

IDPs who originate from agropastoral communities, even those who might have been part of the dominant clans in their places of origin, find themselves lacking the clan connections, social capital, and power base they used to have.⁶⁰ Similarly, returnees who had been in Mogadishu before being displaced abroad, and who do not belong to the majority clan now dominant in the city, experience similar lack of social capital impacting on their ability to access shelter, basic needs, and jobs.⁶¹ However, some long-term IDPs who have been

⁵² SCC, Role of gatekeepers in Somalia, Final report, May 2024, [url](#), pp. 7-8; The New Humanitarian, Powerful networks impose taxes on aid in Somalia. It's time for this to end, 26 October 2023, [url](#); Chonka, P., and Bakonyi, J., Precarious technoscapes: forced mobility and mobile connections at the urban margins, 6 December 2021, [url](#), p. 79; see also Somalia expert on IDPs reintegration, Email exchange 27, 30 March 2026

⁵³ Ayaan, Email exchange, 13 May 2025. Ayaan is a scholar based in Kenya, specialised in migration and displacement in and out of Somalia, and with decades-long experience in the humanitarian sector

⁵⁴ Ayaan, Email exchange, 13 May 2025. See also Dalmar, Email exchange 12 May 2026. Dalmar is a Somali expert on migration and return with focus on Mogadishu

⁵⁵ Ayaan, Email exchange, 13 May 2025

⁵⁶ Ayaan, Email exchange, 13 May 2025; see also Dalmar, Email exchange 12 May 2026

⁵⁷ Dalmar, Email exchange 12 May 2026

⁵⁸ Ayaan, Email exchange, 13 May 2025

⁵⁹ Ahmed S. Bile, et al., Rethinking (local) integration: domains of integration and their durability in Kismayo and Garowe, Somalia, 8 January 2024, [url](#), pp. 14, 16

⁶⁰ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 12, 20

⁶¹ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 20-21



residing in Mogadishu for several generations might have been able to establish their network of support.⁶²

IDPs coming from regions close to Mogadishu - Bay, Bakool, Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle - rely on social relations from their place of origin, when they exist, in order to access resources in Mogadishu. These relations consist of personal or clan bonds and prove to be crucial for accessing information upon arrival on where to settle or on how to access humanitarian assistance.⁶³ As the Somali Public Agenda (SPA) puts it:

‘when people from DACs arrive at IDP camps, they usually contact their relatives or neighbors from their place of origin who already live at the camp and stay with them for days or weeks before they can find an alternative residence. If they do not have relatives or acquaintances at the camp, they struggle to secure housing and are forced to find their own connections to aid themselves. This heightens their vulnerability. Regardless, bonding social capital is insufficient to support these IDPs to attain greater rights in Mogadishu. This will only come through stronger and denser social relations between these minority and marginalized clan groups and the dominant clan groups in Mogadishu since the latter control most of the resources necessary for IDPs to permanently overcome their displacement vulnerabilities.’⁶⁴

Similarly, returnees from abroad, who move back to a location where they have strong social connections, negotiate their re-integration through the clan structure. However, those who move back to a location where they are a minority or do not have clan protection are more likely to end up in a camp.⁶⁵ On this point, a doctoral research article published in 2022 and focusing on returnees from Kenya to Mogadishu - through the UNHCR’s voluntary repatriation program - found that few returnees were able to return to their place of origin. The majority ended up in IDP camps, were left to fend for themselves, and experienced lack of supportive social network.⁶⁶ According to Bakonyi, it seems quite common for Somali returnees from Kenyan refugee camps to settle in IDP camps.⁶⁷

For those returning from ‘Western countries’, as indicated by Ayaan, access to IDP camps and settlements in Mogadishu is often mediated through informal gatekeepers, clan affiliations, community connections, or local authorities.⁶⁸ In order to secure shelter and basic support within the camps, returnees generally require social connections, some form of economic

⁶² Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 15, 17, 21

⁶³ SPA, Marginalization and Social Cohesion among Minoritized Clan Groups and Dominant Groups, Aid Actors, and Local Authorities in Mogadishu, 28 August 2023, [url](#); SCC, Role of gatekeepers in Somalia, Final report, May 2024, [url](#), p. 14

⁶⁴ SPA, Marginalization and Social Cohesion among Minoritized Clan Groups and Dominant Groups, Aid Actors, and Local Authorities in Mogadishu, 28 August 2023, [url](#)

⁶⁵ Somalia expert on IDPs reintegration, Email exchange 27, 30 March 2026; see also Dalmar, Email exchange 12 May 2026. Dalmar is a Somali expert on migration and return with focus on Mogadishu

⁶⁶ Owigo, J., Returnees and the Dilemmas of (Un)sustainable Return and Reintegration in Somalia, 31 August 2022, [url](#), pp. 127-130

⁶⁷ Bakonyi, J., Email exchange, 19 March 2026. Jutta Bakonyi is Professor in Development and Conflict in the School of Government and International Affairs at Durham University. She is a Somalia expert with focus, among others, on displacement and urbanisation dynamics in the country.

⁶⁸ Ayaan, Email exchange, 13 May 2025; see also Dalmar, Email exchange 12 May 2026



means, or referrals from relatives and community members.⁶⁹ In practice, affiliation through family, clan, or trusted intermediaries can facilitate access to accommodation, protection, and basic livelihood opportunities.⁷⁰

However, according to an expert opinion, returnees from these ‘Western countries’, either voluntarily or forcibly repatriated, may find it quite challenging joining an IDP camp.⁷¹ As the expert puts it, apart from the clan/social network aspects, first of all, they would need legal documents to identify themselves. Secondly, they would need a security clearance from the local authority or from a guarantor vouching for them: either someone from their clan, a clan representative, or any well respected or businessperson. Finally, they would face strong integration challenges, with the local IDP population quite suspicious about their origin, actual belonging, mental health status, and potential safety risks they might pose.⁷² Other experts corroborate this last point by indicating that returnees from ‘Western countries’ may be perceived as culturally different or unfamiliar with local coping mechanisms and social norms,⁷³ or, as ‘outsiders’ within established camp communities.⁷⁴ Challenges can include limited social support, stigma, insecurity, language or accent differences, and difficulties accessing livelihoods and humanitarian assistance.⁷⁵

1.7. Type of sites, management, role of gatekeepers, and ‘rent’

All IDP settlements in Mogadishu are informal. There is no public land formally allocated by the local government or the FGS to host formal IDP camps.⁷⁶ These settlements lack formal agreements of landownership/rent and a formal camp administration. International organisations come and go, depending on their financial means, changing goals, and the networks they are embedded in.⁷⁷

Upon arrival, most IDPs set up housing structures on vacant private land - *goof* in Somali⁷⁸ - where they are constantly threatened with eviction.⁷⁹ These settlements are referred to in popular and humanitarian jargon as *barakacayaasha* camps or neighbourhoods of ‘the

⁶⁹ Ayaan, Email exchange, 13 May 2025

⁷⁰ Dalmar, Email exchange 12 May 2026

⁷¹ Expert on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, Video interview and email exchange, 17, 19 March 2026

⁷² Expert on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, Video interview and email exchange, 17, 19 March 2026; see also Ahmed S. Bile, et al., Rethinking (local) integration: domains of integration and their durability in Kismayo and Garowe, Somalia, 8 January 2024, [url](#), p. 16

⁷³ Ayaan, Email exchange, 13 May 2025

⁷⁴ Dalmar, Email exchange 12 May 2026

⁷⁵ Ayaan, Email exchange, 13 May 2025

⁷⁶ Expert on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, Video interview and email exchange, 17, 19 March 2026

⁷⁷ Bakonyi, J., Email exchange, 19 March 2026.

⁷⁸ Bakonyi, J., et al., War and city making in Somalia: Property, power and disposable lives, 2019, [url](#), p. 87

⁷⁹ Somalia, FGS, SNBS, Survey on Nomadic Movement into IDP Camps in Mogadishu, Kismayo, Beledweyne & Baidoa, January 2023, [url](#), p. 16; Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 15-16; Bakonyi, J., and Chonka, P., Precarious labour – Precarious lives, 2019, [url](#), pp. 210-211; Refugees International, Durable Solutions in Somalia, December 2019, [url](#), pp. 4-5, 13-14, 17



displaced’.⁸⁰ People living in these camps are referred to as *barakac* or *barakacayaal*. Key to their definition is the fact that they were forced to leave their place of origin and relative clan support.⁸¹

Those IDPs residing on public or government land are also exposed to eviction.⁸² According to the ‘Mogadishu Eviction Risk Assessment’ quoted by Refugees International in a study from 2019, this group would represent 6 % of all IDPs residing in Mogadishu.⁸³ Later reporting from 2023 corroborates this point, indicating that public land in Mogadishu is basically scarce and not available.⁸⁴ For further information on Evictions see section [2. Evictions in Mogadishu and impact on civilians](#).

(a) Humanitarian assistance, issues of marginalisation, and aid cuts

IDPs mostly rely on ‘daily labour, often in the informal sector; support from neighbours and family, either in places of origin or abroad; and – for some, but not all – small amounts of humanitarian assistance’.⁸⁵

Nowadays, mobile cash payments are the most common form of humanitarian aid in Somalia, with aid agencies biometrically registering camp dwellers and offering them SIM cards, even mobile phones at times.⁸⁶ Humanitarian agencies have adopted different digital registration platforms in the absence of a foundational ID system – see section [4. IDs and access to services](#) for further details. The registration process of individuals or households is typically based on a two-staged approach, whereby geographical targeting is followed by community-based targeting. The selection of recipients of cash transfers, where, among other actors, gatekeepers play a crucial role, ‘is influenced – sometimes strongly - by factors such as elite capture, corruption, favouritism... and clan power dynamics’.⁸⁷

According to Minority Rights Group, aid interventions do not reach minorities equally or in proportion to their needs, due to aid diversion, theft or corruption.⁸⁸ Among others, issues with digital literacy and absence of physical cash have an impact on the camp life of marginalised groups,⁸⁹ while not owning a phone, not being aware of cash programmes, or language

⁸⁰ Bakonyi, J., and Chonka, P., Precarious labour – Precarious lives, 2019, [url](#), p. 208

⁸¹ Ahmed S. Bile, et al., Rethinking (local) integration: domains of integration and their durability in Kismayo and Garowe, Somalia, 8 January 2024, [url](#), p. 2

⁸² Mahad Wasuge et al., Land Matters in Mogadishu, 2017, [url](#), pp. 32-33, 61-62, 80

⁸³ Refugees International, Durable Solutions in Somalia, December 2019, [url](#), p. 17

⁸⁴ SPA, Marginalization and Social Cohesion among Minoritized Clan Groups and Dominant Groups, Aid Actors, and Local Authorities in Mogadishu, 28 August 2023, [url](#)

⁸⁵ Crawford, N., et al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 13

⁸⁶ Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 12-13

⁸⁷ Owino, B., Harmonising data systems for cash transfer programming in emergencies in Somalia, 2020, [url](#), pp. 4-7; see also Ahmed S. Bile, et al., Rethinking (local) integration: domains of integration and their durability in Kismayo and Garowe, Somalia, 8 January 2024, [url](#), pp. 14, 16

⁸⁸ MRG, Inclusion in Somalia: An inclusive, safe, independent, and responsive feedback tool, 2025, [url](#)

⁸⁹ Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 12-13



barriers were identified as factors influencing access to aid and complaint mechanisms among minority groups.⁹⁰

As of August 2025, the impact of US funding cuts had begun to affect the levels of cash and voucher assistance (CVA) provided in Eastern Africa, including in Somalia, ‘with CVA programmes in some areas scaled back or terminated entirely’.⁹¹ The 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) prioritises 1.6 million people facing extreme intersectoral needs (severity level 4) in 21 priority districts, out of 4.8 million people estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance.⁹² Within prioritised areas, Mogadishu included, only 80 % of severity level 4 and 30 % of severity level 3 districts will be targeted.⁹³ IDPs would reportedly face closures of health facilities, reduced nutrition programs, and food aid disruptions.⁹⁴

Within this context, CVA, including Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) remained crucial in areas with high intersectoral severity (levels 3 and 4), and where markets and financial services are accessible.⁹⁵

(b) Site management and gatekeepers

IDP sites in Mogadishu are de facto managed by gatekeepers or informal settlement leaders. The informal settlement leaders work as subleaders, under the gatekeeper’s supervision, and can either belong to the same clan of the gatekeeper, be a leader of the hosting community, or be a representative of the hosted population appointed by the gatekeeper.⁹⁶

Usually, gatekeepers or informal camp managers - also referred to as ‘camp owners’,⁹⁷ ‘petty humanitarian entrepreneurs’,⁹⁸ ‘black cats’,⁹⁹ or just ‘entrepreneurs’¹⁰⁰ - access vacant land through personal or clan connections and set up informal IDP camps, where they intentionally attract newcomers to settle.¹⁰¹ The ‘camp owner’ obtains the land upfront from the landowner (or claimant), usually on a rental basis and through a notary agreement that often lasts for 5 years. After securing the land, the camp owner pays a fee for the camp to be registered with the local authorities, including the CCCM.¹⁰² Then, gatekeepers usually offer access to a small plot of land and assistance with setting up a basic shelter to the IDPs. In exchange for this,

⁹⁰ MRG, Minority exclusion in Somalia: shortcomings of aid agency feedback mechanisms, October 2022, [url](#), pp. 6, 9-10

⁹¹ UNOCHA, Eastern Africa - Regional Cash and Voucher Assistance Overview, August 2025, [url](#), p. 1

⁹² UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, January 2026, [url](#), pp. 5, 14

⁹³ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, January 2026, [url](#), pp. 14, 23

⁹⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, January 2026, [url](#), p. 25

⁹⁵ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, January 2026, [url](#), p. 22

⁹⁶ Expert on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, Video interview and email exchange, 17, 19 March 2026

⁹⁷ SCC, Role of gatekeepers in Somalia, The IDP Business Model, February 2024, [url](#)

⁹⁸ Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state reconstruction in Somalia’s conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), p. 126

⁹⁹ Mahad Wasuge et al., Land Matters in Mogadishu, 2017, [url](#), p. 79

¹⁰⁰ Jaspars, S., et al., Food and Power in Somalia: Business as Usual?, 21 January 2020, [url](#), p. 47; Besteman, C., and Cassanelli, L., The struggle for land in southern Somalia, 1996, pp. 16, 42-44, 146-147, 157

¹⁰¹ Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), p. 7; Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state reconstruction in Somalia’s conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), p. 128; Refugees International, Durable Solutions in Somalia, December 2019, [url](#), pp. 4-5

¹⁰² SCC, Role of gatekeepers in Somalia, Final report, May 2024, [url](#), p. 12

often through mobile transactions, IDPs residents pay back their rent to gatekeepers.¹⁰³ This 'IDP business model', as it is referred to in the literature, is typical of Mogadishu (and Baidoa).¹⁰⁴ See section [1.7.\(c\) Paying for living in the camp](#) for further details.

In essence, in Mogadishu, gatekeepers control the hard management of the IDP sites. The CCCM Cluster, which comes into play for many but not all IDP sites in Mogadishu, deals with soft management only, such as service mapping and assistance, including cash assistance and food aid.¹⁰⁵ Based on UNOCHA data, as of November 2025, the CCCM Cluster co-managed 1 669 IDP sites across Mogadishu, with the rest being self-managed.¹⁰⁶

Gatekeepers in Mogadishu are mostly women belonging to the Hawiye clan family, but there are also cases of IDP gatekeepers belonging to other clan families, such as Digil-Mirifle, although they are limited.¹⁰⁷ The role of gatekeepers as ostensibly providers of (tenure) security and as intermediaries between humanitarian organisations and IDPs, including the exploitative nature of this relationship, is well documented in the literature and dates back several years.¹⁰⁸ Already in 2017 more than 130 gatekeepers were reportedly operating in Mogadishu,¹⁰⁹ with similar estimates confirmed in 2019.¹¹⁰

(c) Paying for living in the camps

In the context of the informal management system detailed above, camp dwellers who receive humanitarian assistance have to digitally transfer a percentage of the aid they receive to camp leaders or gatekeepers.¹¹¹ Until a few years ago, when food aid was still mostly distributed in-kind to camp households, camp committees nominated by the camp leader used to go from door-to-door to collect a percentage of that aid, which was then resold on Mogadishu's markets.¹¹²

¹⁰³ Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state reconstruction in Somalia's conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 126, 128; Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 7, 13; The New Humanitarian, Aid theft in Somalia is not what you think, 28 September 2023, [url](#); Chonka, P., and Bakonyi, J., Precarious technoscapes: forced mobility and mobile connections at the urban margins, 6 December 2021, [url](#), pp. 78-79, 86; Jaspars, S., et al., Food and Power in Somalia: Business as Usual?, 21 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 47-48

¹⁰⁴ SCC, Role of gatekeepers in Somalia, Final report, May 2024, [url](#), pp. 10, 12-15

¹⁰⁵ Expert on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, Video interview and email exchange, 17, 19 March 2026

¹⁰⁶ UNOCHA, Consolidated CCCM and DTM IDP Baseline List, November 2025, n.a.

¹⁰⁷ Expert on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, Video interview and email exchange, 17, 19 March 2026; see also SCC, Role of gatekeepers in Somalia, Final report, May 2024, [url](#), pp. 8, 12

¹⁰⁸ SCC, Role of gatekeepers in Somalia, Final report, May 2024, [url](#), pp. 12-13; SCC, Role of gatekeepers in Somalia, The IDP Business Model, February 2024, [url](#); Refugees International, Durable Solutions in Somalia, December 2019, [url](#), pp. 8, 13; iDMC, City of Flight - New and secondary displacements in Mogadishu, Somalia, November 2018, [url](#), p. 7; TANA, Informal Settlement Managers: Perception and reality in informal IDP camps in Mogadishu, 2019, [url](#), pp. 4-5, 15; Mahad Wasuge et al., Land Matters in Mogadishu, 2017, [url](#), pp. 79-80, 88; DEVEX, The 'Gatekeepers' to providing aid in Somalia, 23 August 2017, [url](#); UNHCR and FGS, Internal Displacement Profiling Mogadishu, April 2016, [url](#), pp. 38, 44

¹⁰⁹ iDMC, City of Flight - New and secondary displacements in Mogadishu, Somalia, November 2018, [url](#), p. 7

¹¹⁰ The New Humanitarian, Somalia's displacement camp 'gatekeepers' – 'parasites' or aid partners? 18 July 2019, [url](#)

¹¹¹ Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state reconstruction in Somalia's conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), p. 128

¹¹² Bakonyi, J., The Political Economy of Displacement: Rent Seeking, Disposessions and Precarious Mobility in Somali Cities, April 2021, [url](#), p. 14

Typically, informal camp managers provide access to a plot of land, basic services - e.g. water and sanitation - and some protection in exchange for either cash or a proportion of humanitarian assistance, up to 60 % in some cases.¹¹³ According to a recent study submitted to the Somali Cash Consortium,¹¹⁴ such financial return for the camp owners follows a pre-agreed social arrangement, with the following most common breakdown: 50 % claimed by the camp owner and 50 % of a cash/voucher entitlement for the 'beneficiary'. The amount of cash/voucher intended for the camp owner is reallocated on the following basis: '10 % rent; 10 % security; 10 % local authority/NGO/UN; 20 % camp owner'.¹¹⁵

An opinion article published by The New Humanitarian in 2023 provided a similar estimate, suggesting that the "rent" "fee can amount to as much as 50 % of the aid allotted for each beneficiary – half of a ration that is calculated as the bare minimum a person can survive on".¹¹⁶ This would leave IDPs 'with less than they require to meet their basic needs', for instance between 30 and 40 USD a month out of 120 USD as a cash voucher on some accounts.¹¹⁷ For previous periods, different reporting settled this 'tax' at different levels, in average between up to 50 %, ¹¹⁸ 30 %, ¹¹⁹ 20 %, ¹²⁰ and 10-15 % of the received humanitarian aid, although with sensible fluctuations.¹²¹

(d) Unregistered camps dwellers

While the existence of IDP populations outside formal humanitarian assistance or oversight is well documented, information on camps and camps dwellers which or who are not registered with the humanitarian sector/ NGO/UN could not be found within the research timeframe. Based on UNOCHA data, as of November 2025, about 800 IDP sites in Mogadishu were self-managed.¹²²

1.8. Living conditions in the camps

Living conditions are in general quite poor in informal camp settlements, with IDPs' lives characterised by precarity, structural uncertainty, housing and tenure insecurity, poverty, and

¹¹³ Crawford, N. et al, The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia, April 2024, [url](#), p. 22

¹¹⁴ The SCC is comprised of a collection of agencies and initiatives, led by Concern Worldwide (Concern). It aims to provide cash transfers to vulnerable households affected by conflict, displacement, and natural disasters in Somalia

¹¹⁵ SCC, Role of gatekeepers in Somalia, Final report, May 2024, [url](#), p. 13

¹¹⁶ The New Humanitarian, Powerful networks impose taxes on aid in Somalia. It's time for this to end, 26 October 2023, [url](#)

¹¹⁷ SPA, Marginalization and Social Cohesion among Minoritized Clan Groups and Dominant Groups, Aid Actors, and Local Authorities in Mogadishu, 28 August 2023, [url](#)

¹¹⁸ Bakonyi, J., The Political Economy of Displacement: Rent Seeking, Disposessions and Precarious Mobility in Somali Cities, April 2021, [url](#), p. 14

¹¹⁹ Jaspars, S., et al., Food and Power in Somalia: Business as Usual?, 21 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 21-23; Besteman, C., and Cassanelli, L., The struggle for land in southern Somalia, 1996, pp. 47

¹²⁰ The New Humanitarian, Somalia's displacement camp 'gatekeepers' – 'parasites' or aid partners?, 18 July 2019, [url](#)

¹²¹ TANA, Informal Settlement Managers: Perception and reality in informal IDP camps in Mogadishu, 2019, [url](#), pp. 4-5

¹²² UNOCHA, Consolidated CCCM and DTM IDP Baseline List, November 2025, n.a.



constant risk of eviction.¹²³ According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2023), already in 2023, 87 % of IDPs who had been displaced for more than a year in Mogadishu were unable to meet their basic needs.¹²⁴

(a) Land, shelter and tenure types

According to a 2024 study by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, 87 % of IDPs in Mogadishu lack clear tenure arrangements, while 92 % do not own any property.¹²⁵ An expert on House, Land and Property (HLP) rights confirms this by indicating that 87 % of the IDP population is 'land tenure insecure'. In most cases there is no formal agreement in place, most land tenure agreements being oral agreements only, when they exist.¹²⁶

A related study provides for the following breakdown in terms of tenure types: (a) free occupancy of private land, including landowner authorised (~45 %); free occupancy of communal or customary-free land (~16 %); paying rent, cash or in-kind (~30 %); squatting, without owner's or caretaker's knowledge (~8 %).¹²⁷ However, figures must be taken with caution. For instance, according to the Somalia CCCM Cluster, about 54 % of site residents in Dayniile and Kahda paid rent in form of cash at the end of 2024.¹²⁸ At the same time, the NRC noted that still in Dayniile and Kahda, landowners have often allowed IDPs temporary, free settlement in their properties, in order to increase land value, to subsequently evict them after market development and land appreciation.¹²⁹

Accessing land (and property) in Mogadishu is extremely challenging for displaced, marginalised and minority groups, who are confronted with an intricate web of multiple and fake title deeds, illegal sales, public property and land grabbing, real estate development projects, as well as discriminatory practices.¹³⁰ The vast majority of IDPs in Mogadishu (95 %) lives in temporary makeshift huts or tents, while the remaining 5 % is accommodated in metal houses or shelters. Most of these structures are either owned by the camps (72 %) or directly by landlords from whom IDPs rent.¹³¹

¹²³ Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state reconstruction in Somalia's conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), p. 126; Crawford, N., et al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 15-18; Bakonyi, J., The Political Economy of Displacement: Rent Seeking, Disposessions and Precarious Mobility in Somali Cities, April 2021, [url](#), p. 19; Bakonyi, J., and Chonka, P., Precarious labour – Precarious lives, 2019, [url](#), pp. 221-222; see also Bakonyi, J., et al., War and city making in Somalia: Property, power and disposable lives, 2019, [url](#), pp. 87-88; Refugees International, Durable Solutions in Somalia, December 2019, [url](#), pp. 8, 15; Mahad Wasuge et al., Land Matters in Mogadishu, 2017, [url](#), p. 80

¹²⁴ UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan – Somalia 2023, February 2023, [url](#), p. 22

¹²⁵ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 6, 19-20

¹²⁶ Expert on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, Video interview and email exchange, 17, 19 March 2026

¹²⁷ Peace Hub Foundation, Eviction Risk Mapping Report – Benadir, March 2025, [url](#), p. 3

¹²⁸ CCCM Cluster Somalia – Verified IDP sites in Mogadishu Dayniile and Mogadishu Khada, December 2024, [url](#)

¹²⁹ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), p. 16

¹³⁰ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 21-23

¹³¹ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 6, 19-20



(b) Jobs

Camp dwellers make for a significant proportion of the lowest paid labour force in urban contexts.¹³² In fast growing cities such as Mogadishu, (recently displaced) IDPs play a crucial role in the local job markets, particularly as labour force in the construction and in the domestic services sectors, as well as small-scale retailers.¹³³ In the construction sector, they are also crucial for the clearing of encampments that can temporarily host IDP sites and are later exploited for real estate developments, thus resulting in cycles of subsequent evictions.¹³⁴ IDP women often offer laundry services, either domestically,¹³⁵ or in local markets, or engage in petty trade. Others, especially those originating from Bay and Bakool, may also engage with street begging. Increasingly, they display signs showing their mobile numbers in order to receive digital transfers for support.¹³⁶

While recently displaced people are the most vulnerable, more reliant on humanitarian aid and less likely to be employed, long-term IDPs are reportedly more settled and able to negotiate life in the camps and in the city.¹³⁷ Being labelled as an IDP – and to a lesser extent as a returned refugee for whom the same word is used – is equated with being poor.¹³⁸

A study conducted in 2018 found that about 10 % of IDP household heads are in paid work.¹³⁹ More recent information on this point could not be found during the research timeframe.

(c) Mobile phones

Mobile phones and mobile money are a central feature of IDPs' daily life in urban camps.¹⁴⁰ Mobile phones are crucial for reaching out to relevant contacts in the city (such as gatekeepers, potential employers, etc.), for maintaining contacts with family and support network members, for accessing the job market and receiving casual payments, and for receiving (cash) humanitarian assistance, among others.¹⁴¹ Hence, the cost of maintaining

¹³² Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), p. 12

¹³³ Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state reconstruction in Somalia's conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), p. 126; Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 16, 18; see also Bakonyi, J., The Political Economy of Displacement: Rent Seeking, Disposessions and Precarious Mobility in Somali Cities, April 2021, [url](#), p. 14

¹³⁴ Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state reconstruction in Somalia's conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 132-133; Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 7, 15-16

¹³⁵ Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state reconstruction in Somalia's conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), p. 127; Bakonyi, J., and Chonka, P., Precarious labour – Precarious lives, 2019, [url](#), pp. 216-218

¹³⁶ Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), p. 8-11

¹³⁷ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 15-17

¹³⁸ Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 15

¹³⁹ Mohamed Jelle, et al., Forced evictions and their social and health impacts in Southern Somalia: a qualitative study in Mogadishu Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, 6 September 2021, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁴⁰ Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), p. 11; Chonka, P., and Bakonyi, J., Precarious technoscapes: forced mobility and mobile connections at the urban margins, 6 December 2021, [url](#), p. 68

¹⁴¹ Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 10-13; Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state



mobile phones is an essential component of people's living expenses, with many IDPs only irregularly able to top-up their airtime.¹⁴²

(d) Water, health, civil documentation and other (government) services

According to a cross-sectional 2025 study on household water practices in IDP settlements (Sahal, Anfac) in the Kahda district, most IDPs - who reside predominantly in informal, unplanned, temporary shelters on private land - rely primarily on unprotected wells and shared water resources. Patterns of waterborne disease transmission linked to their IDP condition were identified by the study that also revealed that: (a) more than 80 % of respondents face challenges in accessing water; (b) almost 60 % experience slightly contaminated water and over 2 % heavily contaminated one;¹⁴³ (c) main sources of water for IDP dwellers are hand-dug wells (77.9 %); (d) among those accessing water through communal water taps (21 % of respondents), almost 60 % indicated availability one day per week; (e) more than 60 % of respondents are unaware of households' water treatments and storage methods.¹⁴⁴

Based on a 2025 study conducted across Daynile and Khada IDP sites, Crude Death Rate (CDR) peaked during the baseline period (October 2022 – February 2023) in the two districts - at 3.15 and 1.26 respectively, while the countrywide CDR was estimated to be between 0.33 and 0.38 deaths per 10 000 person-days, and with the Under 5 Death Rate (U5DR) nearly twice as high. In the overall period under investigation (October 2022 – November 2023), severe malnutrition emerged as the leading cause of death, followed by unspecified infectious diseases, neonatal pneumonia, anaemia of pregnancy, and road traffic accidents.¹⁴⁵

A 2025 study on health seeking behaviour among IDPs in Somalia, with focus on Mogadishu (and Baidoa), revealed that: (a) almost 70 % of respondents reported facing barriers in accessing health services, including lack of transportation, long wait times, unavailability of medicaments and treatments, unavailability or difficulty finding a healthcare facility;¹⁴⁶ (b) diarrheal diseases were the most frequently reported health issue; (c) among those who sought healthcare in the previous three months (almost 55 % of the IDP population), acute illness was the most common reason, followed by injury/accident, and by pregnancy/childbirth; (d) Maternal and Child Health (MCH) facilities, typically operated by

reconstruction in Somalia's conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 126-127; Chonka, P., and Bakonyi, J., Precarious technoscapes: forced mobility and mobile connections at the urban margins, 6 December 2021, [url](#), pp. 79-86

¹⁴² Chonka, P., Displacement stigma, insecurity and inequality in urban Somalia: the limits of digital financial Empowerment, 30 June 2025, [url](#), p. 13; Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state reconstruction in Somalia's conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 127-128; Chonka, P., and Bakonyi, J., Precarious technoscapes: forced mobility and mobile connections at the urban margins, 6 December 2021, [url](#), p. 85

¹⁴³ Yusuf Hared Abdi, et al., Household water treatment and storage practices in Mogadishu's IDP camps: a cross-sectional study, 2025, [url](#), pp. 698-699, 701-702; see also NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁴⁴ Yusuf Hared Abdi, et al., Household water treatment and storage practices in Mogadishu's IDP camps: a cross-sectional study, 2025, [url](#), pp. 698-699, 701-702

¹⁴⁵ Mohamed Hussein Adam, Community-based mortality surveillance among internally displaced vulnerable populations in Banadir region, Somalia, 2022–2023, 9 April 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-4

¹⁴⁶ Abdullahi Ahmed Tahlil, Health-seeking behavior in conflict-affected settings: a cross-sectional study of internally displaced persons in Somalia, 2025, [url](#), p. 5; see also NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), p. 24



international NGOs and local partners, were the primary source of healthcare for the majority of IDPs (51.9%), followed by government hospitals (~17 %), and NGOs hospitals (9.5 %).¹⁴⁷

Against this backdrop, among other barriers to children vaccination – e.g. caregivers’ lack of awareness and decision-making power – health facilities often experience vaccine stock-outs, short supplies, do not provide any vaccination services, or lack outreach capacity.¹⁴⁸

According to UNHCR RMS data, a mere 16 % of all surveyed IDPs at country level possess a form of legally recognised identification.¹⁴⁹ Within this context, a recent survey conducted by the NRC among Mogadishu’s IDPs, found that 98 % of the surveyed marginalised and minority IDP households completely lacked any form of legal identity and civil documentation, and some 94 % lacked easy access to birth certificates and business certificates.¹⁵⁰ While identity documents are required to sign site-level lease agreement, minority and marginalised groups often rely on the ‘*Damiin*’ system, whereby clan elders, community leaders, or camp managers (gatekeepers) vouch for them.¹⁵¹ For further information on the implications of the lack of ID documents see section [4. IDs and access to services](#).

Among other issues mentioned above, 74 % of those who have children lacked easy access to education services.¹⁵²

1.9. Situation of women and girls in IDP camps

More than 3.8 million people are displaced in Somalia, of whom 80 % are women and children,¹⁵³ who, according to the UN, are at risk of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and eviction.¹⁵⁴ Minority women were described as among the ‘most marginalised people in Somalia’¹⁵⁵ and as ‘particularly vulnerable’ to violence and abuse, including sexual and gender-based violence both from within their communities and by armed forces, militias and members of majority clans.¹⁵⁶ For more information on minorities in Somalia, see also the [Somalia Country Focus \(May 2025\)](#) – Section 1.4 Minorities.¹⁵⁷

In IDP camps, poor infrastructure, limited water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and overall insecurity resulted in sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls by individuals in

¹⁴⁷ Abdullahi Ahmed Tahlil, Health-seeking behavior in conflict-affected settings: a cross-sectional study of internally displaced persons in Somalia, 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-5, 6-7

¹⁴⁸ Mohamed Jelle, et al., Understanding multilevel barriers to childhood vaccination uptake among Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs) in Mogadishu, Somalia: a qualitative study, 2023, [url](#), pp. 6-7

¹⁴⁹ UNHCR, Somalia - Annual Results Report, 25 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 10-11

¹⁵⁰ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 21-23

¹⁵¹ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), p. 28

¹⁵² NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁵³ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/426, 3 June 2024, [url](#), para. 38

¹⁵⁴ UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 39

¹⁵⁵ UNFPA Somalia, GBV Brief: January – March 2023, 1 May 2023, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁵⁶ UNOCHA, Somalia 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP), 30 January 2024, [url](#), p. 15

¹⁵⁷ EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Country Focus, May 2025, [url](#)



positions of control,¹⁵⁸ with UNFPA noting that women and girls living in IDP camps were exposed to ‘heightened risks’ of Gender Based Violence (GBV).¹⁵⁹ In 2023, the majority of cases of conflict-related sexual violence verified by UNSOM were against displaced women and girls.¹⁶⁰ Among the women living in IDP camps in Mogadishu, many women ‘expressed living with a preoccupying fear of sexual violence’ at work, while others noted incidents of harassment and violence they had experienced at work or on the way there.¹⁶¹

Canada’s IRB, citing UNICEF’s Chief of Child Protection in Somalia, reported in 2019 that family ties in Somalia were strong and that women who have lost husbands or fathers were taken in by their community who would act as a safety net; however, this only applied for the women who “have broken no customary laws or norms”. Women who broke social norms or customs or who were victims of rape or sexual violence were ‘left “at the whim” of society without effective policing, justice or welfare systems’, possibly being ostracised if they were from a minority clan in the area, divorced, or victims of rape.¹⁶² Single women in Somalia were described as ‘remain[ing] vulnerable’, particularly those living in IDP camps or at informal IDP sites, while being more in danger of experiencing sexual violence,¹⁶³ while displaced women and girls in Baidoa, Qansax Dheere and Dinsor ‘raised concerns of men intruding in the evening with the intent to raping women, particularly targeting new arrivals and women without male protection, whose men travel to rural villages for farming’.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ UNFPA Somalia, GBV AoR Strategy: June 2024 - December 2025, 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3; UNFPA, Overview of Gender-Based Violence situation in Somalia, Advocacy Brief, 2022, [url](#), p. 3

¹⁵⁹ UNFPA Somalia, GBV Brief: July – September 2024, 25 September 2024, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁶⁰ UNSC, Conflict-related sexual violence, Report of the Secretary-General, S/2024/698, 4 April 2024, [url](#), para. 56

¹⁶¹ Crawford, N. et al, The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia, April 2024, Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) and ODI Global, [url](#), p. 24

¹⁶² Canada, IRB, Somalia: Situation of women without a support network in Mogadishu, including access to employment and housing; treatment by society and authorities; support services available to female-headed households (2017-March 2019), 25 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶³ The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General country of origin information report on Somalia, June 2023, [url](#), p. 53

¹⁶⁴ UNFPA Somalia, GBV AoR Strategy: June 2024 - December 2025, 12 February 2025, [url](#), p. 4



2. Evictions in Mogadishu and impact on civilians

2.1. Policy framework

International human rights standards on evictions are embodied in the Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Displacement by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR, 2007). These include the evictees' rights to information, consultation, sufficient notice, protection from (illegal or disproportional) use of force, protection from direct or indiscriminate attacks or other acts of violence, access to remedies, including compensation and relocation/resettlement.¹⁶⁵

In 2012, a first Compact on the Protection Against Evictions of Internally Displaced Persons in Mogadishu - in line with OHCHR principles - failed to be endorsed by the government. Building upon it, in 2014, the Ministry of Interior and National Security of the FGS developed a draft Policy Framework on Displacement within Somalia^{166,167}. However, while such draft policy document provided 'far greater details on the definition of IDPs, the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders, protection measures, approaches to protracted displacement and durable solutions', the document and its 'remarkably progressive approach'¹⁶⁸ also failed to be implemented.¹⁶⁹

Finally, in December 2019, the FGS adopted the National Policy on Refugees-Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons,¹⁷⁰ the National Eviction Guidelines,¹⁷¹ and the Interim Protocol on Land Distribution for Housing to Eligible Refugee-Returnees and IDPs,¹⁷² which were developed with support from IDLO. The new National Policy groups together all persons of concern – IDPs, refugees and returnees – and seeks to protect them from further displacement while providing support towards finding durable solutions.¹⁷³ In the frame of this policy, refugee-returnees and IDPs 'are Somali citizens or habitual residents of Somalia', and 'remain equally entitled to all constitutional and human rights as granted to other citizens, without discrimination'.¹⁷⁴ In combination with this, according to the Eviction Guidelines, the FGS and the Somali competent authorities are responsible for refraining from and protecting against, 'arbitrary and forced eviction of occupiers of public and private properties, from

¹⁶⁵ UN OHCHR, Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Displacement, A/HRC/4/18, 2007, [url](#), para. 37-68

¹⁶⁶ Somalia, FGS, Policy Framework on Displacement within Somalia, 2014, [url](#)

¹⁶⁷ Mahad Wasuge et al., Land Matters in Mogadishu, 2017, [url](#), pp. 85-87

¹⁶⁸ Mahad Wasuge et al., Land Matters in Mogadishu, 2017, [url](#), pp. 86

¹⁶⁹ Refugees International, No Going Back: The New Urban Face of Internal Displacement in Somalia, 25 May 2023, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ Somalia, FGS, National Policy on Refugees-Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, December 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷¹ Somalia, FGS, National Eviction Guidelines, 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷² Somalia, FGS, Interim Protocol on Land Distribution for Housing to Eligible Refugee-Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷³ IDLO, Somalia launches first policy on displaced persons, refugee-returnees, 17 December 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴ ReDSS, National Policy on Refugee-Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), n.a., [url](#)



homes, encampments and lands' and for protecting the human right to adequate housing and other related human rights.¹⁷⁵

However, as reported by various sources, implementation and enforcement of the legal and policy framework in force, including the eviction guidelines, remains challenging.¹⁷⁶ For further information on these challenges see section [2.3 Recent instances of evictions in Mogadishu](#) and section [2.4 Impact of evictions on the general population and vulnerable minority groups](#).

2.2. Evictions, drivers and latest trends

According to the NRC in the period 2017-2025, over 2 million people/IDPs have experienced (repeated) forced evictions across Somalia. Benadir/Mogadishu stands out in this context, accounting for over 1 million of them,¹⁷⁷ or over 1.3 million in the period 2015-2024.¹⁷⁸ During the first 8 months of 2025, evictions in Mogadishu accounted for more than 80 % of the 140 000 people that had been evicted overall in Somalia until then, consisting mostly of IDP camps residents in Dayniile (64.7 %) and Kahda districts.¹⁷⁹ By the end of 2025, they amounted to 149 452, while, as of January 2026, another 7 134 had taken place.¹⁸⁰ In 2024, evicted people in Mogadishu were 68 880,¹⁸¹ in 2023 more than 100 000, with increasing government-led evictions (more than 10 000 people from 13 sites), for a total of 836 incidents.¹⁸²

According to the Somalia CCCM Cluster, 47 % of the 2 057 verified IDP sites that had been mapped in Mogadishu at the end of 2024 were exposed to extreme (18 %) or high (29%) risk of eviction.¹⁸³ Among these, the NRC report from December 2024 found that 89 % of surveyed marginalised and minority groups households had suffered and faced a risk of forced eviction, with 11 % having been evicted repeatedly. Another 11 % instead had never been evicted until then.¹⁸⁴ Similar estimates were published by the Peace Hub Foundation at the beginning of 2025, which indicated that among the IDPs mapped sites in Mogadishu (2 565, reportedly all of them), more than 1/3 were exposed to a form of risk, either extreme (~13 %), high (~9 %), or medium (~12 %).¹⁸⁵

¹⁷⁵ ReDSS, National Eviction Guidelines, n.a., [url](#)

¹⁷⁶ Somalia Protection Cluster, Joint Advocacy Paper, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 2-3, 8; Refugees International, No Going Back: The New Urban Face of Internal Displacement in Somalia, 25 May 2023, [url](#); Somalia Protection Cluster, Protection Analysis Update, February 2022, [url](#), p. 17

¹⁷⁷ NRC, Somalia Eviction Analysis Assessment, August 2025, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁷⁸ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁷⁹ NRC, Somalia Eviction Analysis Assessment, August 2025, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁸⁰ NRC, Somalia Evictions Information Portal, Housing, Land & Property (HLP) Area of Responsibility (AoR), February 2026, [url](#)

¹⁸¹ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁸² NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 5, 11

¹⁸³ CCCM Cluster Somalia – Verified IDP sites in Mogadishu Dayniile and Mogadishu Khada, December 2024, [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), p. 8, 35

¹⁸⁵ Peace Hub Foundation, Eviction Risk Mapping Report – Benadir, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 6-7



Development remains, by far, the most common driver of forced evictions in the country.¹⁸⁶ According to a 2021 analysis conducted by the NRC, 89 % of evictions recorded in Somalia were carried out by private landlords while pursuing private development projects, while 11 % were carried out by the state for government-led development.¹⁸⁷

City reconstruction promotes rent seeking and real estate developments, which go hand in hand with mass-scale evictions. Against this backdrop, camps development and their progressive integration in the economy of the city, including provision of basic services (water, sanitation, roads, transports) increases their value and thus exposes them to possible (repeated) evictions.¹⁸⁸ Similarly, in the post-2012 period, with the progressive reestablishment of both national and local administrative apparatus in Mogadishu, government officials have prioritised the clearing of informal settlements in government or near government properties, often while resorting to the use of force.¹⁸⁹

2.3. Recent instances of evictions in Mogadishu

According to the NRC, in recent periods Mogadishu's 'forced eviction crisis has worsened, with reports of deaths, physical assaults, and destruction of housing, land and property assets, coupled with the inhumane treatment of internally displaced persons (IDPs)'.¹⁹⁰

In the period April 2025 – March 2026, ACLED registered 84 instances of protests against (forced) land evictions all across Somalia, 78 of which took place in Banadir/Mogadishu. In the preceding year, April 2024 – March 2025, ACLED registered another eight such events, with all of them taking place in Mogadishu. Registered evictions were either carried out by private developers or were government-led operations escorted by security forces, which often cracked down on protesters, resulting in arrests, injuries and sometimes fatalities.¹⁹¹

Evictions are carried out either by private landlords or by government authorities. Basically, there are two types of evictions: (1) those targeting IDP informal settlements in the outskirts of Mogadishu; (2) those targeting IDPs or urban poor dwellers squatting in government buildings or occupying government properties.¹⁹² In the period 2025-2026, there has been a surge in the number of government-led evictions in Mogadishu with the FGS claiming back several

¹⁸⁶ InterAction, Enhancing Multi-Disciplinary Strategies: Disrupting the Cycle of Forced Eviction in Somalia, 12 February 2026, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁸⁷ NRC, Loss and Damage – Cost analysis of losses in investments and infrastructure due to forced evictions in Somalia and other regions, November 2022, [url](#), p. 2

¹⁸⁸ Bakonyi, J., The Political Economy of Displacement: Rent Seeking, Disposessions and Precarious Mobility in Somali Cities, April 2021, [url](#), pp. 10, 16; Bakonyi, J., et al., War and city making in Somalia: Property, power and disposable lives, 2019, [url](#), pp. 88; see also InterAction, Enhancing Multi-Disciplinary Strategies: Disrupting the Cycle of Forced Eviction in Somalia, 12 February 2026, [url](#), p. 1; Chonka, P., et al, Mobile money, (dis)empowerment and state reconstruction in Somalia's conflicted digital economy, 6 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 132-133; Crawford, N., et al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 22

¹⁸⁹ Mahad Wasuge et al., Land Matters in Mogadishu, 2017, [url](#), pp. 80-82, 83-85; see also InterAction, Enhancing Multi-Disciplinary Strategies: Disrupting the Cycle of Forced Eviction in Somalia, 12 February 2026, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁹⁰ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁹¹ EUAA, Analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 31 March 2026, [url](#). Data were filtered for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026, keyword 'evict' in the field 'notes', admin1 'Benadir'.

¹⁹² Expert on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, Video interview and email exchange, 17, 19 March 2026



government properties. Out of the 143 548 evictions registered in 2025 in the city, 63 132 individuals were evicted from government properties.¹⁹³

As reported by the Coalition of Somalia Human Rights Defenders (CSHRD), in the course of 2025, evictions were frequently carried out without adequate notice, genuine consultation, compensation, or provision of alternative housing, in violation of international human rights standards.¹⁹⁴

Within this context, opposition groups and leaders have raised serious concerns about compliance with human rights standards on the one hand, and about the unlawful selling of the cleared public properties on the other. Forcible evictions of IDPs had been carried out while violating human rights, resorting to power abuse, and in violations of national law and humanitarian standards.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, the selling of public lands and properties - that used to be reserved for military installations, public institutions, educational and healthcare facilities, housing for civil servants, recreational areas, and others - has been allegedly conducted without proper legal process, public consultation, planning, or transparency, and was detrimental to the public interest.¹⁹⁶

2.4 Impact of evictions on the general population and vulnerable minority groups

Evictions, also referred to as ‘secondary displacements’, disproportionately affect IDP populations.¹⁹⁷ Evicted households are faced with limited or no viable options, and may relocate to other eviction-prone or insecure locations, which could subject them to further risks of eviction and displacement.¹⁹⁸ Others may find their way to other IDP sites.¹⁹⁹ Having been previously evicted increases the chances of being evicted again, further undermining

¹⁹³ Expert on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, Video interview and email exchange, 17, 19 March 2026

¹⁹⁴ CSHRD, Quarterly Human Rights Report IV, 28 December 2025, [url](#); CSHRD, Quarter III 2025 — Human Rights Situation in Somalia, 23 October 2025, [url](#); see also CSHRD, Somalia Annual Human Rights Report 2025, 15 February 2026, [url](#); CSHRD, Somalia Annual Human Rights Report 2024, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁵ Wardheer News, Investigative Brief: Presidential Accountability and the Sale of Public Lands in Somalia, 29 October 2025, [url](#); CSHRD, Quarterly Human Rights Report IV, 28 December 2025, [url](#); CSHRD, Quarter III 2025 — Human Rights Situation in Somalia, 23 October 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁶ Wardheer News, Former Somali Presidents Unite against Hassan Sheikh Over Illicit Land Deals, PFCS Violations, 21 August 2025, [url](#); see also FTL, Ex-President of Somalia condemns illegal sale of public property, 5 January 2025, [url](#); Puntland Post, Illegal State Asset Sales Deepen Somalia’s Political and Social Divisions, 6 January 2025, [url](#); Horn Observer, Mogadishu Corrupt Businessmen Warned: Do Not Be Fooled Into Illegally Buying Public Land, 5 January 2025, [url](#); Somali Guardian, Somalia’s opposition blasts government for corrupt land sales to elite, 5 January 2025, [url](#)

¹⁹⁷ InterAction, Enhancing Multi-Disciplinary Strategies: Disrupting the Cycle of Forced Eviction in Somalia, 12 February 2026, [url](#), p. 2; NRC, Loss and Damage – Cost analysis of losses in investments and infrastructure due to forced evictions in Somalia and other regions, November 2022, [url](#), pp. 1-2

¹⁹⁸ NRC, Loss and Damage – Cost analysis of losses in investments and infrastructure due to forced evictions in Somalia and other regions, November 2022, [url](#), p. 1

¹⁹⁹ Radio Ergo, Cruel evictions leave thousands of people pushed back into poverty in Mogadishu, 13 October 2025, [url](#); NRC, Somalia: The harsh reality of the devastating impact of forced evictions, 9 June 2023, [url](#)



the person's stability and dignity.²⁰⁰ For most IDPs, returning to their original home is not a real option, either because of on-going violence and conflict, or because of other challenges.²⁰¹

Forced evictions are mostly unlawful, violent, and emotionally traumatic, including for family stability and children well-being. Evictees' possessions, livelihoods, and sources of income are often damaged, destroyed, disrupted, and further dislocated, while exacerbating chronic poverty and insecurity issues. Moreover, forced evictions severely impact adult physical and mental health, including fear, despair, and anxiety.²⁰² Additionally, lack of hygiene and of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, as well as overcrowding in unsanitary conditions, often resulting in open defecation and drinking of unclean water, easing the outbreak of infectious diseases.²⁰³

As reported by the NRC, 'forced evictions intensify inequality, social conflict, segregation and invariably affect the poorest, most socially and economically vulnerable and marginalized sectors of society, especially women, children, minorities, elderly and people with disabilities'.²⁰⁴

Minority or marginalised groups are particularly vulnerable to evictions. They lack strong connections and are not in a position to negotiate with those claiming back their land.²⁰⁵ According to a 2021 study on the impacts of forced evictions in Mogadishu, respondents indicated that, while minority groups were more vulnerable, clan status did not prevent evictions.²⁰⁶

Evictions are extremely costly also for the humanitarian sector, with aid invested in supporting IDPs communities and their basic services (including latrines, shelters, water facilities, school) basically wasted as a consequence of them.²⁰⁷ A 2022 NRC study indicated that the monetary value of the loss caused by eviction incidents that had taken place in Mogadishu between January and October 2022 amounted to almost USD 3.4 m, roughly half of which sustained by the humanitarian sector and the other half by the hosting community. More in detail, Mogadishu suffered the destruction of almost 6 000 latrines, 10 schools and temporary

²⁰⁰ InterAction, Enhancing Multi-Disciplinary Strategies: Disrupting the Cycle of Forced Eviction in Somalia, 12 February 2026, [url](#), p. 2; NRC, Loss and Damage – Cost analysis of losses in investments and infrastructure due to forced evictions in Somalia and other regions, November 2022, [url](#), pp. 1-2

²⁰¹ InterAction, Enhancing Multi-Disciplinary Strategies: Disrupting the Cycle of Forced Eviction in Somalia, 12 February 2026, [url](#), p. 2

²⁰² NRC, Loss and Damage – Cost analysis of losses in investments and infrastructure due to forced evictions in Somalia and other regions, November 2022, [url](#), p. 2; Mohamed Jelle, et al., Forced evictions and their social and health impacts in Southern Somalia: a qualitative study in Mogadishu Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, 6 September 2021, [url](#), pp. 5-6; see also InterAction, Enhancing Multi-Disciplinary Strategies: Disrupting the Cycle of Forced Eviction in Somalia, 12 February 2026, [url](#), p. 2

²⁰³ Mohamed Jelle, et al., Forced evictions and their social and health impacts in Southern Somalia: a qualitative study in Mogadishu Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, 6 September 2021, [url](#), p. 6

²⁰⁴ NRC, Loss and Damage – Cost analysis of losses in investments and infrastructure due to forced evictions in Somalia and other regions, November 2022, [url](#), p. 2

²⁰⁵ Expert on Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights, Video interview and email exchange, 17, 19 March 2026

²⁰⁶ Mohamed Jelle, et al., Forced evictions and their social and health impacts in Southern Somalia: a qualitative study in Mogadishu Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, 6 September 2021, [url](#), p. 4

²⁰⁷ InterAction, Enhancing Multi-Disciplinary Strategies: Disrupting the Cycle of Forced Eviction in Somalia, 12 February 2026, [url](#), p. 2; Mohamed Jelle, et al., Forced evictions and their social and health impacts in Southern Somalia: a qualitative study in Mogadishu Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, 6 September 2021, [url](#), p. 5



learning centres, 24 Quranic schools, two health and nutrition centre, one MCH facility, 41 water points, and 86 community centres, among others.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ NRC, Loss and Damage – Cost analysis of losses in investments and infrastructure due to forced evictions in Somalia and other regions, November 2022, [url](#), pp. 3-4



3. Prison conditions and treatment of detainees in Mogadishu

Various sources suggest the existence of a connection between IDP concentration in Mogadishu and level and composition of the prison population.²⁰⁹ Within this context, according to Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, a licensed Somali lawyer based in Mogadishu, there is a noticeable relationship between the two.²¹⁰ In a similar vein, Zakia Hussen, former Deputy Police Commissioner General based in Mogadishu, notes that, while there are no direct links proven between prison and IDP population, ‘it is nonetheless safe to assume that IDPs would be disproportionately vulnerable to the justice system’.²¹¹

For this and other reasons that will become clear in the remainder of this chapter, this section - while addressing the situation in the Mogadishu’s detention facilities in general - should be read in conjunction with the situation of IDPs and as a complement to the preceding chapters.

3.1. Legal and policy framework

A large corpus of international legal instruments provides guarantees and safeguards for the rights of prisoners. Among them, relevant for Somalia, are: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949);²¹² the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976) and the Convention Against Torture (1987), to both of which Somalia is a signatory;²¹³ the Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa (1996), and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (2015), also known as the Nelson Mandela Rules, among other sets of rules.²¹⁴

The international standards set by these rules include: equality and inherent dignity of all individuals and prisoners, including before the court; the prohibition of slavery, and of inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment; the prohibition of torture, slavery and forced labour; the prohibition of arbitrary arrest and the requirement of a valid commitment order

²⁰⁹ Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), pp. ii, 13; see also UNHCR and FGS, Internal Displacement Profiling Mogadishu, April 2016, [url](#), pp. 6, 41-42

²¹⁰ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026. Abdirizak Farah Mohamed is a licensed Somali lawyer with focus on civil and criminal cases, based in Mogadishu, and with several years of experience appearing before ordinary and military courts. He is a member of the East Africa Law Society (EALS) and the Pan African Lawyers Union (PALU)

²¹¹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026

²¹² Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), p. 59; OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. i

²¹³ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 5; see also Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), p. 60; OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. i

²¹⁴ Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 59-61; see also UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 7; OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 2



before incarcerating; the prohibition of any form of discrimination; the provision of adequate living conditions for all prisoners that uphold human dignity; the importance of communications between prisoners and their families; access to education; the principle of separation between male and female prisoners, between young and adults offenders; adequate living, sanitation and hygiene standards in prison cells as well as in all other prison areas; adequate access to food, water, and healthcare services; access to outdoor work or exercise.²¹⁵

The relevant national legal framework in force in Somalia comprises: the Somali Penal Code (1962),²¹⁶ the Criminal Procedure Code (1963),²¹⁷ the Somali Prison Law (1972),²¹⁸ the Somali Custodial Corps Act (1972), the Regulation for the Country's Prisons (1984), the Provisional Federal Constitution (2012)²¹⁹.²²⁰ Among others, rights and guarantees enshrined in these legal instruments, include:

- as per the Provisional Constitution (2012), basic principles and human rights, the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, the right to be brought before a court within 48 hours, the right to consult with a legal practitioner and appeal decisions, the principle that no one can be convicted of a crime that was not considered an offense at the time it was committed;²²¹
- as per the Regulation for the Country's Prison (1984), prisoners must undergo a health check upon arrival; children (14 – 18 age) and adults, as well as men and women must be kept segregated; set quality standards for prison cells, cleanings, personal hygiene, and external activities;²²² standards for conduct of Custodial Corps;²²³
- as per the Somali Custodial Corps Act (1972), the Custodial Corps are tasked with the administration, investigation, and inspection of the prisons and rehabilitation centres in Somalia. The Custodial Corps are a military component of the National Security Architecture. The Custodial Corps are headed by the Commissioner General who is appointed by and report directly to the President of the Federal Republic. At the same time though, the correctional facilities fall under the jurisdiction of the Corrections Services Directorate of the Somali Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.²²⁴
- as per the Somali Prison Law (1972), the separation between male and female prisoners, with women supervised by female staff; the separation between young and adult offenders, between pre-trial detention and convicted prisoners, as well as between habitual and first-time offenders; 'requirement' to work; access to sufficient and adequate

²¹⁵ Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 59-61

²¹⁶ Somalia, Republic of, Penal Code, 1962, 16 December 1962, [url](#)

²¹⁷ Somalia, Republic of, Criminal Procedure Code, 1 June 1963, [url](#)

²¹⁸ Somalia, Supreme Revolutionary Council, Prisons Law, 30 December 1971, [url](#)

²¹⁹ Somalia, Republic of, Provisional Federal Constitution, 1 August 2012, [url](#)

²²⁰ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 3-6; Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 61-63; OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 2

²²¹ Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), p. 62

²²² Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), p. 63

²²³ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 7

²²⁴ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 4-5



food, provided by the prison administration, but also possibility to receive it from private sources; access to education;²²⁵

- as per the Criminal procedure Code (1963), the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, the right to legal representation, conditions for the issuing of an arrest warrant and granting of bail, the principle of *Habeas Corpus* (personal liberty);²²⁶
- as per the Somalia Penal Code (1962), children under the age of 14 are not held legally accountable for their actions, while individuals between 14 and 18 years of age are considered responsible, but their punishments are typically less severe or moderated.²²⁷

Moreover,

- Monitoring and supervision: the Commandant of the Custodial Corps, who is responsible for the administration and control of all prisons and other penal institutions, is supposed to visit and inspect prison facilities at least once a year, or have them so, and share a report with the Ministry of Justice; moreover, the Attorney General (or 'his deputy') is tasked with the supervision of prisons and penal institutions to ensure proper care and treatment of prisoners, in collaboration with the Commanding Officer (in charge of a given prison or penal institution).²²⁸

Outstanding issues in the legal framework include:

- lack of explicit prohibition of **torture**: while the Somali Provisional constitution prohibits torture (Art. 15.2), and the Regulation for the Country's Prisons strictly prohibits the use of excessive force or the implementation of unlawful punishments by prison administrative personnel (Art. 47), the Somali Prison Law does not explicitly prohibit the use of torture, differently from international human right standards.²²⁹ For more information see section below [3.4 Prison conditions and treatment of detainees in Mogadishu](#);
- **solitary confinement** not considered as a measure of last resort: the Somali Prison Law permits the use of solitary confinement without emphasising its exceptional nature;²³⁰ the Regulation for the Country's Prison foresees that each establishment must have a solitary cell meant to discipline individuals who engage in misconduct.²³¹ For more information see section below [3.4 Prison conditions and treatment of detainees in Mogadishu](#);

²²⁵ Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 62-63

²²⁶ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 6; Somalia, Republic of, Criminal procedure Code, 1963, [url](#), Artt. 13, 15, 40, 60, 66

²²⁷ Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), p. 63

²²⁸ Somalia, Supreme Revolutionary Council, Prisons Law, 30 December 1971, [url](#), Artt. 5, 14; see also Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 62-63, 65

²²⁹ Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), p. 65; UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 5-6

²³⁰ Somalia, Supreme Revolutionary Council, Prisons Law, 30 December 1971, [url](#), Artt. 50-52

²³¹ Abdurisaq Abdurahman A., Prisoner's Rights in Somalia Law and International Law: Comparative Analysis, 15 September 2024, [url](#), p. 66



- **outdated** prison law: the 1971 Prison Law, which is under revision at the time of writing, does not meet modern prison needs and must be assessed against international human rights standards;²³²
- lack of **harmonisation** between the federal and the state level: different prison laws apply in different regions of Somalia, such as in Puntland and in Somaliland, therefore creating double standards;²³³
- lack of clarity in the **repartition of competences** between the federal and the member states level, as well as within the federal level – between the President and the MoJCA - in the management and the supervision of the prison establishments.²³⁴

3.2. Prison facilities in Mogadishu

The main operational prisons across Somalia include:

- Somaliland: Hargeisa Central Prison and Mandera prison;²³⁵
- Puntland: Garowe Central Prison, prisons in Bosasso, Galkacyo, Qhardo;²³⁶
- Benadir: Mogadishu Central Prison (MCP), Mogadishu Prison and Court Complex (MPCC), Godka Jilacow Prison;²³⁷
- South-Central Somalia: prisons in Kismayo, Baidoa, Beledweyn,²³⁸ Bula Burto, Jowhar;²³⁹
- Al-Shabaab controlled area: thousands of prisoners are held in prison-like establishments in the regions under its control.²⁴⁰

Focusing on the situation in Mogadishu, an overview of prisons and prisons-like detention facilities as of December 2025 is offered in the table below:²⁴¹

²³² UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 5; OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 1

²³³ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 5, 7

²³⁴ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 4-5

²³⁵ WPB, Somalia, 2023, [url](#)

²³⁶ Kaalo, Capacity mapping of criminal rehabilitation systems targeting short term prisoners in Puntland, April 2019, [url](#), pp. 3, 6, 8, 10

²³⁷ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 6

²³⁸ WPB, Somalia, 2023, [url](#); UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 4

²³⁹ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 5

²⁴⁰ WPB, Somalia, 2023, [url](#)

²⁴¹ When not otherwise indicated all information from the table has been drawn from OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-7



Facility	Background	Capacity	Actual population	
			Convicted	Remand
Mogadishu Central Prison (MCP)	Colonial period establishment; host ~ 80 % of the entire detained population in Somalia	~400-500 ²⁴²	2 590 [2 301 males, 66 females, 189 male juveniles, 34 female juveniles]	1 105 [987 males, 29 females, 89 male juveniles]
Mogadishu Prison and Court Complex (MPCC)	Facility includes two courtrooms and three prison blocks, inaugurated in February 2019 ²⁴³	~700	309 [males only]	
				Unwarranted or remand
Godka Jilacow Prison (The Hole)	Known for holding many suspected AS fighters and political opponents; run by NISA, reportedly as an interrogation centre			627 [113 male political prisoners, 315 males linked to AS, 91 females linked to AS, 108 male juvenile linked to AS]
CID (Criminal Investigation Directorate)	Accommodate numerous individuals awaiting investigation			83 [60 males, 21 females, 2 male juveniles]
Mogadishu District Police Stations	19 district police stations that operate as detention facilities; host individuals before sent to CID			408 [192 males, 39 females, 130 male juveniles, 47 female juveniles]
Undisclosed detention sites	Several detention sites, in the form of houses, operated by NISA; host mainly political opposition figures, prominent leaders affiliated with AS			n.a.

3.3. Composition of prison population in Mogadishu

As noted by expert Zakia Hussein, clan composition of the prison population is very difficult to ascertain but the general assumption is that it reflects the general composition of the

²⁴² Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. 13

²⁴³ UN UNifeed, Somalia New Prison Court Complex, 23 February 2019, [url](#)



population in Mogadishu - thus it is more likely to have a higher proportion of Hawiye, Rahanweyn, and Jareer clans than Isaaq and Darood for instance.²⁴⁴

Within this context, Abdirizak Farah Mohamed notes that the prison population in Mogadishu includes a significant number of individuals from minority communities, particularly the Jareer minority, as well as detainees originating from the South West State, including members of the Digil and Mirifle (Rahanweyn) clans. While these groups appear to be disproportionately represented in detention facilities, he indicates that this reflects broader social and structural patterns that may influence who is more likely to be arrested, detained, or lack adequate legal safeguards.²⁴⁵ Both Abdirizak Farah Mohamed and Zakia Hussen also maintain that there is a correlation between the prison population and the IDP population in Mogadishu.²⁴⁶

Sources point to two main reasons. On the one hand, IDP settlements are often locations where ‘serious crimes occur due to the vulnerability and poverty of the residents’, notes Abdirizak. As a result, police operations in these areas sometimes lead to the arrest of individuals ‘simply because they live in the camps’.²⁴⁷ In addition, many IDPs lack access to legal assistance. In the absence of free legal aid, accused persons must hire private lawyers, which most IDPs cannot afford. This contributes to a higher number of IDP residents being detained without the ability to effectively defend themselves in court.²⁴⁸ Along similar lines, Zakia notes that one of the strongest links between the IDP and the prison population is the rise of *Ciyaal Weero* (youth/street gangs). High unemployment rates amongst the IDP population means that many young IDPs, particularly in the districts in the periphery (Dayniile, Kahda), are recruited into neighbourhood gangs. Massive security operations targeting youth gangs would mean higher proportion of IDP youths arrested and convicted.²⁴⁹

On the other hand, Zakia Hussen points out that IDP populations are ‘at the crosshairs of government security operations against Al-Shabaab’ as well. IDPs from rural areas who fall under the militants’ control are often viewed more suspiciously. In particular, during the cordon-and-search operations, IDP youths who lack proper identification or clan protection in Mogadishu are more likely to be detained for long periods at the CID or Godka Jilacow until their backgrounds are verified.²⁵⁰ In 2024-2025, when Al-Shabaab had regained territory and reverted the 2022-2023 federal military gains, military operations switched from the battlefield to security sweeps in the capital with NISA conducting mass arrests to root out sleeper cells in Mogadishu - leading to delayed detentions and overcrowding at the Godka Jilacow detention centre.²⁵¹

More in general, Abdirizak notes that a considerable number of detainees held in Mogadishu’s prisons are individuals accused of, or convicted of, terrorism-related offences. Their arrest

²⁴⁴ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026

²⁴⁵ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026

²⁴⁶ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026; Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026

²⁴⁷ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026; see also UNHCR and FGS, Internal Displacement Profiling Mogadishu, April 2016, [url](#), pp. 6, 41-42

²⁴⁸ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026

²⁴⁹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026

²⁵⁰ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026

²⁵¹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026; see also OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 5



stems from security operations conducted in areas previously influenced or controlled by Al Shabaab.²⁵² Based on OPR, these areas would include Bay, Bakool, Hiraan, Middle and Lower Shabelle regions.²⁵³ Zakia, notes that, during the 2022-2023 SNA major offenses against Al-Shabaab, there was a significant spike in detentions, where thousands of suspects were captured and transferred to Mogadishu leading to prison overcrowding.²⁵⁴

3.4. Prison conditions and treatment of detainees in Mogadishu

A study conducted by Saferworld in the period 2018-2021, with Police Advisory Committees (PACs)²⁵⁵ visiting detention facilities (prisons, police stations, sub-police stations, CID sites, and traffic stations) across three cities in Somalia (Mogadishu, Baidoa, and Kismayo), resulted in 1 026 visits (and 94 failed one, 46 of which rejected). The study found that prison cells are generally overcrowded throughout Somalia. This has ‘devastating consequences on prisoners’ lives’, because it results in, among others: shortages of bedding and food, sharing of cells and other areas between juveniles and adults as well as men and women, increased risk of diseases, and increased risk of violence, including sexual assault and rape.²⁵⁶

Focusing on the general prison conditions in Mogadishu, the most outstanding issues include, in terms of infrastructure and management:

- **infrastructure:** most correctional facilities in Somalia are in urgent need of renovation,²⁵⁷ being in ‘serious disrepair’²⁵⁸ or ‘extremely poor state’.²⁵⁹ The MCP is a notable example of establishment dating back to colonial times and extensively damaged.²⁶⁰ The recently inaugurated MPCC represents an exception within this context;²⁶¹
- **management** and record keeping: administration and record keeping are inadequate with lacking policy and legal frameworks for manual and digital record keeping. While manual records are still predominant, correctional officers lack the necessary specialised training;²⁶²

²⁵² Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026

²⁵³ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 5, 9

²⁵⁴ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026; OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 5

²⁵⁵ Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. 6

²⁵⁶ Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), pp. 9, 11-12

²⁵⁷ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 8; Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. 13; see also UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 8-9, 13

²⁵⁸ Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. 13

²⁵⁹ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 9

²⁶⁰ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 8

²⁶¹ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 9

²⁶² OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 8



- staff's (lack of) **qualifications** and ad-hoc training: as of June 2023, the MoJCA reported that Custodial Corps counted a total of 6 800 staff members, about 2 800 of which were deployed in Banadir, and with women representing about the 15 % of them. However actual figures and staff/prison population ratio are contested. Moreover, recruitment procedures are largely informal, based on recommendations, and lack formal prerequisites. Similarly, staff training is not standardised and prison specific. There is a significant level of illiteracy among the staff members;²⁶³

Living conditions: general living conditions in the Somali prisons are considered, 'below international standards' or 'substandard',²⁶⁴ generally 'poor',²⁶⁵ or 'mostly inhumane', while they also violate international human rights laws due to overcrowding.²⁶⁶ Most facilities lack appropriate bedding, and over 60 % of them lack sleeping amenities.²⁶⁷ Poor ventilation and lack of natural lightening are also widespread issues.²⁶⁸ Reported issues regarding living conditions in Mogadishu prisons include:

- **overcrowding:** prison cells generally suffer from overcrowding issues in Somalia, with MCP being a notable example.²⁶⁹ Overcrowding affects the Godka Jilacow Prison (The Hole), the CID, and the smaller detention centres as well, where pre-trial detainees are forced into limited space.²⁷⁰ The Saferworld study indicates that the rapid urbanisation and the high concentration of IDPs and returnees in urban areas such as Mogadishu resulted in high criminality rates and thus had substantial impact on overcrowding.²⁷¹ The government's anti-AI-Shabaab campaign unleashed in 2022 also contributed to this issue;²⁷²
- lack of **segregation** between male and female inmates: while cells for male and female inmates are usually separated, no adequate segregated areas – such as bathrooms, toilets, or private areas – are provided to women;²⁷³ it is highly likely that women prisoners

²⁶³ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 11-12

²⁶⁴ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 3, 7

²⁶⁵ The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia's Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 49-52

²⁶⁶ CSHRDs and Horn Afrik News Agency, Somalia: Patterns of unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment, November 2022, [url](#), p. 13

²⁶⁷ Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. 14; OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 10

²⁶⁸ Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. 14; OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 8, 10, 24

²⁶⁹ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. II, 9; Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), pp. ii, 4, 12-13

²⁷⁰ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-4, 9; see also The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia's Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 49-52

²⁷¹ Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. 13

²⁷² OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 9; see also Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026

²⁷³ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 15; Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), pp. 17-18



and detainees come into contact with men prison officers and police personnel without women prison officers or police personnel present;²⁷⁴

- lack of **separation** among prisoners: prisons in Somalia, including the MCP, often do not separate adult from juvenile offenders, pretrial detainees from convicted prisoners, as well as minor offenders from serious crimes, such as murder or terrorism;²⁷⁵
- access to **food**: various sources note that the government supplies food only to prisons and CID sites,²⁷⁶ while families are supposed to provide for food supplies in the District Police Stations.²⁷⁷ In practice, according to Zakia Hussen, food and water provisions in prisons in Mogadishu is a hybrid between government provisions and heavy reliance on family and clan networks.²⁷⁸ While the government, through the Somali Custodial Corps, provide basic rations consisting of beans, rice porridge, for the majority of the prisoners the primary source of quality food is through their families bringing hot pots or dry goods to the prison gates.²⁷⁹ In this vein, Abdirizak Farah Mohamed points out that access to adequate food for those who have no relatives in Mogadishu or financial resources might be problematic.²⁸⁰ Zakia Hussen adds that inmates with little to no family ties - particularly IDPs - rely solely on government provisions or the generosity of other inmates. And this also makes prisons fertile ground for criminal recruitments particularly of IDPs in exchange for food and funds.²⁸¹

In general, according to various sources, inmates in Somalia receive insufficient food, in terms of both quality and variety, with many cases of anaemia and lack of vitamin A. Rates of acute malnutrition and severe micronutrient deficiencies are high.²⁸² Abdirizak Farah Mohamed confirms that some detainees struggle with the meals provided because the food may not meet basic nutritional needs or may not be suitable for individuals with specific health conditions.²⁸³

Alternatively, many detainees rely on internal prison restaurants or external food suppliers, but these options are often unaffordable.²⁸⁴ A typical meal from an external restaurant costs around 5 USD, while meals from internal prison restaurants can cost more than that.²⁸⁵ According to OPR, often prisoners are even required to purchase food from

²⁷⁴ Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. 17

²⁷⁵ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 13-14

²⁷⁶ Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. ii, 15; OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 11

²⁷⁷ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-4,

²⁷⁸ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026; see also Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026

²⁷⁹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026

²⁸⁰ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026

²⁸¹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026

²⁸² OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 10-11; see also Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. ii, 15

²⁸³ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026

²⁸⁴ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026; see also OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 9-11

²⁸⁵ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026



restaurants located within the prison premises, which are run by prison officials. Those refusing to do so may undergo punishment, including solitary confinement under torture-like conditions.²⁸⁶

- **access to **water**:** access to clean drinking water is an issue of concern in the prison system,²⁸⁷ with inmates often required to pay monthly charges in order to access it.²⁸⁸ According to Saferworld's research conducted across prison facilities in three cities (including Mogadishu), in 2022 88 % of the observed detention centres had potable water, while 12 % had unclean drinking water.²⁸⁹ Prison facilities often rely on borehole wells for water provision. However, their frequently needed maintenance is often neglected;²⁹⁰
- **access to **healthcare**:** access to adequate healthcare is an issue of concern across the prison system in Somalia, with health services inadequate or unresponsive.²⁹¹ Main challenges, notably in the Mogadishu prisons, include: poor access to medication and medical care, often any at all; limited number of qualified medical personnel, often lacking training and regular salary; lack of medical supplies and equipment for first aid and for the nursing staff; overcrowding, lack of sanitation and isolation often resulting in the spreading or the outbreak of communicable diseases; lack of an ambulance for transporting inmates.²⁹² Only few prisons across Somalia have on-site medical facilities, and when they do, they often lack the equipment and the (human) resources to treat the full spectrum of needs.²⁹³ In CID sites resources for healthcare are 'markedly' insufficient, with extensive concerns about mental health issues;²⁹⁴
- **sanitation and hygiene:** 80 % of detention facilities across Somalia are considered 'unacceptable' due to inadequate hygiene;²⁹⁵
- **diseases and causes of death:** inmates are often victims of scabies, ringworm, hepatitis A and B, H. pylori infections, tuberculosis, STIs, pneumonia, and anaemia.²⁹⁶ The primary causes of death include transmissible diseases such as tuberculosis and cholera, along with insufficient food supplies and violent confrontations. Since the beginning of 2019,

²⁸⁶ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 9-11

²⁸⁷ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 8; CSHRDs and Horn Afrik News Agency, Somalia: Patterns of unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment, November 2022, [url](#), p. 13

²⁸⁸ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 11-12

²⁸⁹ Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. ii, 15

²⁹⁰ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 8

²⁹¹ Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), pp. 15; OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 9-10

²⁹² OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 9-10; see also Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), p. ii, 13, 15-16; CSHRDs and Horn Afrik News Agency, Somalia: Patterns of unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment, November 2022, [url](#), p. 13

²⁹³ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 9

²⁹⁴ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 4

²⁹⁵ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 10

²⁹⁶ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 10



OPR has confirmed a total of 137 deaths in prisons and detention facilities located in Mogadishu.²⁹⁷

Reported violations during arrest and detention:

- **apprehensions:** individuals in Mogadishu can be apprehended by the police and the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA), and can be held in police stations, CID, Godka Jilacow, as well as private residences. In the last few years (2019 – 2024), apprehended people were mostly identified as suspected AS members, journalists, or members of youth gangs (*Ciyaal Weero*). On various instances there were allegations of unjust apprehension and detention;²⁹⁸
- **arbitrary arrest and detention:** there are widespread reports of arbitrary (unwarranted) arrests and detentions carried out by government security forces, allied militias, and regional authorities, often using allegations of affiliation with Al-Shabaab as their basis.²⁹⁹ Individuals are detained without proper justification, particularly those accused of terrorism, those showing support for AS, those opposing the government, or those just critical of it, notably journalists.³⁰⁰ According to Zakia Hussen, people detained at Mogadishu's prisons facilities and establishments – apart from MCP - are mixed, with some convicted and some awaiting conviction and/or trial dates, or held for investigation purposes.³⁰¹ According to Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, a licensed Somali lawyer, most individuals detained in these establishments are held without legal basis. While arrests must generally be carried out with a warrant - exception made for the limited circumstances provided under Articles 34–39 of the Somali Criminal Procedure Code - many detainees are held unlawfully, he adds. In many cases, their constitutional rights as accused persons are not protected and are frequently violated during law-enforcement operations;³⁰²
- **Prolonged pre-trial detention** and (lack of) access to a **fair trial:** despite Constitutional safeguards, many detainees are not brought to court within the 48 hours limit,³⁰³ and do not have access to a legal counsel, while they are also denied access to bail.³⁰⁴ In some instances, influential figures such as security personnel, judicial officers, politicians, and clan elders exert pressure to secure the release of preferred detainees. Lack of

²⁹⁷ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 13

²⁹⁸ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 19-20

²⁹⁹ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 16-17; see also The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia's Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 33, 47-48

³⁰⁰ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 16-17

³⁰¹ Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview and email exchange, 11, 24 March 2026

³⁰² Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026; see also The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia's Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 33, 47-48

³⁰³ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Email exchange, 25, 29 March 2026; see also OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 17-18

³⁰⁴ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 17-18; see also The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia's Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 33-39



independence, widespread corruption, and clan-politics severely affect the functioning of the judiciary in Somalia.³⁰⁵ As a result pre-trial detention is often prolonged, with many inmates facing years of detention without trial, some wrongly detained post-bail, others still in detention despite having completed their sentences, or still in detention after three years for minor offenses, such as 10 USD worth;³⁰⁶

- **torture**, inhuman and degrading treatment: the Somali security forces - which include the SNA, the SPF, the NISA, and the Custodial Corps - they all routinely engage with torture practices, as well as cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment of detainees and suspects,³⁰⁷ among others in the context of counter-terrorism efforts or operations.³⁰⁸ A culture of impunity for torture and other forms of ill-treatment persists in Somalia.³⁰⁹ Reports indicate that inmates endure constant abuse and daily torture in Godka Jilacow, including inhuman and degrading treatment, in order to coerce them into confession;³¹⁰ the use of torture has been reported as well at the level of CID,³¹¹ District Police Stations, and NISA undisclosed detention sites across Mogadishu, also with instances of sexual violence and murder.³¹² Coerced confessions also involve minors, who are reportedly forced into providing written or recorded confessions under duress.³¹³ Reports of solitary confinement practices include undressing, food and water deprivation, limited sunlight, and inhuman sleeping conditions.³¹⁴ Lacking Somalia a specific anti-torture legislation, judicial authorities do not punish acts that could be classified as torture.³¹⁵

³⁰⁵ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 17-18; see also The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia's Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 37-39

³⁰⁶ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 18-19

³⁰⁷ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. i, 15; see also Saferworld, Detainee and detention centre conditions in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa, January 2022, [url](#), pp. 2, 4, 6; CSHRDS and Horn Afrik News Agency, Somalia: Patterns of unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment, November 2022, [url](#), pp. 4-6

³⁰⁸ The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia's Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 44-45, 47-48

³⁰⁹ The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia's Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 58-62

³¹⁰ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 3, 17

³¹¹ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2024, [url](#), p. 15; OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 17

³¹² OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 4

³¹³ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 21

³¹⁴ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 11

³¹⁵ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 5



3.5. Further challenges faced by vulnerable, minority groups and IDPs

In Somalia, members of marginalised clans and groups are particularly vulnerable to torture and gender-based violence,³¹⁶ including in prisons and detention facilities.³¹⁷ The judicial and correctional environments are ‘prone to corruption’ and are ‘heavily influenced by clan-based politics’. This often results in illegal detention of individuals from minority groups, with many of them unjustly held in detention or convicted.³¹⁸ According to the NRC, lack of civil registration and other legal identity documents among IDPs engender protection concerns, particularly for women and children. Being unable to prove their identity ‘when stopped by police creates risks of arrest and detention’.³¹⁹

Limited resources and lack of clan support further exacerbate minority groups’ marginalisation and affects their ability to seek justice or redress. Besides, it further impacts their living conditions while in detention. Many members of minority and marginalised groups are also IDPs living in Mogadishu, who experience intersectional forms of discrimination.³²⁰

In the period 2020-2024, female inmates, including girls and children, accounted for 95 % of the survivors of reported GBV incidents while in detention.³²¹ Of these, about 75 % originate from IDP communities. Documented acts of GBV in detention include rape, gang rape, and sexual assault.³²²

Children associated with Al-Shabaab, or suspected of being associated with the militant group, are treated as adult criminals regardless of their particular status. Whether they surrender, are captured, or apprehended in the course of mass arrests or military operations, notably in Mogadishu, they are typically transferred to NISA’s custody. While their treatment might be inconsistent - depending on family and clan ties, which play a crucial role - during their detention they may be forced to provide written or recorded confession under duress,

³¹⁶ The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia’s Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 54

³¹⁷ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 12

³¹⁸ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 12

³¹⁹ NRC, “Who are you?” Linkages between Legal Identity and Housing, Land, and Property Rights in Somalia, November 2022, [url](#), pp. 1, 5

³²⁰ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 12-13

³²¹ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 14; see also The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia’s Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 55

³²² OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), p. 14; see also The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia’s Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 27



they may undergo physical abuse akin to torture, or they may be tried and sentenced by military courts, always without proper independent oversight.³²³

While in detention, people without support from their family or clan often lack access to sufficient medical services.³²⁴ Children who reside in prison with their mother experience the same living conditions and encounter similar healthcare challenges. Being their healthcare a responsibility of their mother's relatives, they might be unable to afford it, while the prison establishment does not step in.³²⁵

³²³ OPR, Annual report assessment on human rights violations in Mogadishu prisons and detention facilities, December 2025, [url](#), pp. 20-22

³²⁴ The Advocates for Human Rights, CSHRDS, and World Coalition, Somalia's Compliance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 22 August 2025, [url](#), para. 27

³²⁵ UNSOM, Prison conditions in Somalia, July 2024, [url](#), p. 5



4. IDs and access to services

According to the 2022 Somali Integrated Household Budget Survey, less than 16 % of the Somali population have some form of identification: 4.1 % of the adult (15+) population owns a passport, while another 11.3 % own another form of identification, such as identity cards or birth certificates.³²⁶

In line with that, based on UNHCR RMS data from 2024, a mere 16 % of all surveyed IDP populations at country level possess a form of legally recognised identification.³²⁷ IDPs have the lowest birth registration rates, with only 8.2 % of children under 5 years registered.³²⁸ Within this context, a recent survey conducted by the NRC, found that a ‘staggering’ 98 % of the surveyed minority and marginalised IDP populations in Mogadishu completely lacked any form of legal identity and civil documentation, including birth, marriage, divorce, and death registration.³²⁹

For this and other reasons, this section - while it addresses access to ID cards in general - should be read in conjunction with the situation of IDPs and as a complement to the preceding chapters.

4.1. Application process and identity verification

Established under the Identification and Registration Act, Law No. 009 of March 2023, the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) is Somalia’s institution responsible for managing the country’s comprehensive national identification system. As indicated by the WB NIRA support team, services are open to everyone, and anyone can choose to go to a registration centre.³³⁰ As of 1 April 2026, ‘registration and issuance of ID physical card [was] free of cost’.³³¹

NIRA is tasked with providing ‘every citizen and legal resident with a secure, verifiable identity’ through the issuance of a unique National Identification Number (NIN), also known as *Tirsi Aqoonsi* in Somali.³³² Among others, the system relies on advanced biometric technology, such as fingerprint and facial recognition.³³³

ID cards applicants rely on different ways to confirm their identity names, which encompass the formal means – e.g. passports, drivers licenses, birth certificates, education certificates –

³²⁶ Somalia, SNBS, 2022 Somali Integrated Household Budget Survey, 2023, [url](#), p. 12

³²⁷ UNHCR, Somalia - Annual Results Report, 2024, [url](#), pp. 10-11

³²⁸ UNHCR, Somalia - Annual Results Report, 25 May 2025, [url](#), pp. 10-11

³²⁹ NRC, Community-driven consultations on housing, land and property needs among minority, marginalised, and displaced communities in Mogadishu, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 8, 30

³³⁰ WB, Task team for SCALED-UP and SPRING projects - NIRA ID program support implementation, Email exchange, 1 April 2026

³³¹ WB, Task team for SCALED-UP and SPRING projects - NIRA ID program support implementation, Email exchange, 1 April 2026

³³² Somalia, NIRA – Background, n.a., [url](#)

³³³ Somalia, NIRA – National ID, n.a., [url](#)



and the more informal ways, including community confirmations,³³⁴ or ‘testimonial verification’ as worded by NIRA.³³⁵ NIRA frames testimonial-based verification as follows: ‘if an applicant cannot provide the necessary documents, they may provide a witness who is registered with the system and can vouch for their identity. Witnesses must be individuals of trusted status in the community, such as government employees or community leaders’.³³⁶ As to the formal means, as mentioned above, IDPs, who generally lack civil documentation, have the lowest birth registration rates.³³⁷

Against this framework, according to Abdirizak, the main issue with IDPs accessing ID cards relies in their widespread lack of official documents,³³⁸ while at the same time access to informal means of identification remains limited.³³⁹ According to Farhia Mohamud, there are cases where IDPs are unable to access NIRA ID cards because they cannot afford the standard 15 USD needed to issue a birth certificate – with a premium price of 15–30 USD for expedited service.³⁴⁰ At the same time, there are cases where a single IDP, who had managed to register through a birth certificate, can work as guarantor for many others while guaranteeing for their identity. Alternatively, the registered IDP may seek assistance from businesspeople, sheikhs or other community leaders as identity guarantors.³⁴¹

However, Abdirizak points out to another issue revolving around testimonial verification. Among other witnesses, elders, who can vouch for people in need of identification,³⁴² are reportedly required to be registered as guarantors at the ministry of interior,³⁴³ as also confirmed by a government source.³⁴⁴ Apparently IDPs do not have many registered elders available to vouch for them and their identity claims.³⁴⁵ According to Abdirizak, another option could be to ask camp managers.³⁴⁶ As of 1 April 2026, the WB’s NIRA support team was ‘not sure if registration [was] happening for the [IDP] segment yet’.³⁴⁷

³³⁴ WB, Task team for SCALED-UP and SPRING projects - NIRA ID program support implementation, Email exchange, 1 April 2026; see also Somalia, NIRA – National ID Registration, n.a., [url](#)

³³⁵ Somalia, NIRA – National ID Registration, n.a., [url](#)

³³⁶ Somalia, NIRA – National ID Registration, n.a., [url](#); WB, Task team for SCALED-UP and SPRING projects - NIRA ID program support implementation, Email exchange, 7 April 2026

³³⁷ UNHCR, Somalia - Annual Results Report, 2024, [url](#), pp. 10-11

³³⁸ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Telephone interview, 1 April 2026; see also NRC, “Who are you?” Linkages between Legal Identity and Housing, Land, and Property Rights in Somalia, November 2022, [url](#), pp. 28-35, 36-37

³³⁹ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Telephone interview, 1 April 2026

³⁴⁰ Farhia Mohamud, Telephone interview and email exchange, 8 April 2026. Farhia Mohamud is a researcher and political/security analyst at Somali Public Agenda, a leading research organisation based in Mogadishu; see also NRC, “Who are you?” Linkages between Legal Identity and Housing, Land, and Property Rights in Somalia, November 2022, [url](#), pp. 31-34

³⁴¹ Farhia Mohamud, Telephone interview and email exchange, 8 April 2026

³⁴² NRC, “Who are you?” Linkages between Legal Identity and Housing, Land, and Property Rights in Somalia, November 2022, [url](#), p. 40; see also UNDP Somalia, Nabadon Mohamud, the Somali elder delivering justice on the ground, 27 March 2025, [url](#); Lifos, Somalia – Folkbokföring, medborgarskap och identitetshandlingar, 9 April 2019, [url](#), pp. 16-19, 24, 28

³⁴³ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Telephone interview, 1 April 2026

³⁴⁴ Osman, Interview, 10 May 2026. Osman works as an advisor to the current Somali government.

³⁴⁵ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Telephone interview, 1 April 2026; see also NRC, “Who are you?” Linkages between Legal Identity and Housing, Land, and Property Rights in Somalia, November 2022, [url](#), p. 41; Osman, Interview, 10 May 2026

³⁴⁶ Abdirizak Farah Mohamed, Telephone interview, 8 April 2026

³⁴⁷ WB, Task team for SCALED-UP and SPRING projects - NIRA ID program support implementation, Email exchange, 1 April 2026





Upon submission of an application and capture of biometric data, which includes fingerprints and digital photographs, applicants are issued a unique 11-digit National ID number at the end of a stepped process.³⁴⁸ The Somali ID card is available as a physical card, a digital ID wallet – *eAqoonsi* – or downloadable and printable verifiable credential- paper certificate with QR code.³⁴⁹

4.2. Cards issued and NIRA offices

As of November 2025, the NIRA had reportedly issued, free of charge, more than 1 million IDs nationwide, while other tens of thousand's applications were still pending.³⁵⁰ Still according to the WB, as of 31 March 2026, approximately 700 000 physical cards had been issued at country level, with most of them in Mogadishu, while another 600 000 plus registered biometrics were awaiting their deduplication by June 2026.³⁵¹

By November 2025, NIRA offices were operational in Benadir, South-West State, Hirshabelle, and Galmudug, but not in Somaliland, Puntland, and Jubbaland.³⁵² As of March 2026 they were operational in North-East State, notably in the capital, Las Anod, as well as in Buhodle and Huddun.³⁵³ According to the WB, as of 1 April 2026, registration was possible in several embassies as well.³⁵⁴

In Mogadishu, on 18 August 2025, NIRA launched its foundational ID mass registration campaign, focusing on the districts of Shangani and Boondheer, with the ultimate goal to register all '3.5' million Mogadishu's residents.³⁵⁵

4.3. Access to services

IDs are meant to establish not only legal identities but also to work as gateways to essential services, such as financial and social protection ones.³⁵⁶ A government directive, on 7 April 2025, mandated that all public services be tied to the National ID Card issued by NIRA.³⁵⁷ Reportedly, as of November 2025, more than 24 public and private sector services had

³⁴⁸ Somalia, NIRA – National ID, n.a., [url](#)

³⁴⁹ Somalia, NIRA – Identification, n.a., [url](#)

³⁵⁰ Somali Dispatch, National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) Announces Over One Million National ID Cards Issued, 25 November 2025, [url](#)

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integrated the system.³⁵⁸ Among these, the National ID card would be mandatory for applying for passports, also abroad,³⁵⁹ effective 1 September 2025;³⁶⁰ for air domestic travels,³⁶¹ effective 1 March 2026;³⁶² for banking transactions, effective 1 September 2025;³⁶³ for business services, effective 6 July 2025;³⁶⁴ for driver's licenses, and vehicle registrations.³⁶⁵ According to the WB NIRA support team, most banks are currently the biggest users – with, as of March 2026, over 23 000 electronic verification using ID for account opening and transactions - while other use cases are in business registration, education, and transport business.³⁶⁶

On 17 March 2026, Somalia's North-East State mandated all public and private service providers to require the national biometric ID issued by NIRA for access to services. The directive, taking effect on the same day, applied to various sectors including telecommunications, banking, government agencies, educational institutions, notaries and travel services, requiring identity verification through the federal system.³⁶⁷

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Annex 1: Bibliography

Maps

Map 1: UN (United Nations), Somalia, Map No. 3690 Rev. 10, December 2011, <https://www.un.org/geospatial/file/2276/download?token=1i3htsuM>, accessed 1 April 2026

Map 2 and Map 3: The built-up area of Mogadishu city in 2006 and in 2021, in Hassan, M.O.; et al., Urban Sprawl Patterns, Drivers, and Impacts: The Case of Mogadishu, Somalia Using Geo-Spatial and SEM Analyses, March 2023, <https://www.mdpi.com/2073-445X/12/4/783/pdf?version=1680168301>, pp. 7, 9. Maps reproduced with permission from the authors.

Map 4: UNOCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), IDP Camps Map, 25 May 2025, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/map/somalia/somalia-idp-camps-map-25-may-2025>, accessed 1 April 2026. Map reproduced with permission from UNOCHA.

Map 5: Verified IDP site in Mogadishu Dayniile and Mogadishu Khada, December 2024, CCCM Cluster Somalia, <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/808dae93-b8c6-48b9-bbbb-6730e2d5561c/Banadir%20IDP%20Site%20Verification%20-%20December%202024.pdf>, accessed 1 April 2026. Map reproduced with permission from CCCM Cluster Somalia.

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Bakonyi, J., Email exchange, 19 March 2026. Jutta Bakonyi is Professor in Development and Conflict in the School of Government and International Affairs at Durham University. She is a Somalia expert with focus, among others, on displacement and urbanisation dynamics in the country.

Farhia Mohamud, Telephone interview and email exchange, 8 April 2026. Farhia Mohamud is a researcher and political/security analyst at Somali Public Agenda, a leading research organisation based in Mogadishu.

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Dalmar, Email exchange 12 May 2026. Dalmar is a Somali expert on migration and return with focus on Mogadishu.

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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

Thematic Report: Mogadishu - Displacements, evictions, prison conditions, access to IDs

Reference period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 or earlier periods

- 1.1. Mogadishu demographics and clan composition
- 1.2. Internally Displaced People in Mogadishu
 - 1.2.1. IDPs in Somalia
 - 1.2.2. IDP sites in Mogadishu
 - 1.2.3. Recent movements
 - 1.2.4. Origin and composition
 - 1.2.5. Gatekeepers
 - 1.2.6. Access to basic needs and rights
- 1.3. Evictions and impacts on civilians
 - 1.3.1. Policy framework
 - 1.3.2. Evictions, drivers and late trends
 - 1.3.3. Recent instances in Mogadishu
 - 1.3.4. Impacts on the civilian population
- 1.4. Prison conditions and treatment of detainees
 - 1.4.1. Legal and policy framework
 - 1.4.2. Prison facilities in Mogadishu
 - 1.4.3. Prison conditions and treatment of detainees in Mogadishu
 - 1.4.4. Composition of prison population in Mogadishu
- 1.5. IDs and access to services
 - 1.5.1. IDs
 - 1.5.2. Access to services



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