



This update provides information on the protection environment in Somalia, including apparent violations of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law as reported during the last two weeks through the IASC Somalia Protection Cluster monitoring systems. Incidents mentioned in this report are not exhaustive. They are intended to highlight credible reports in order to inform and prompt programming and advocacy initiatives by the humanitarian community and national authorities.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

During the past two weeks, various factors, including insecurity, lack of livelihood and a reduction in heavy rainfalls have resulted in numerous families who had recently fled the famine to Kenya and Ethiopia, returning to Somali border towns of Dhobley, Belet Hawo and Dollow.¹ Population Movement Tracking (PMT) data indicates that over 1,200 refugees returned from Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya due to ‘lack of livelihoods’, ‘delay in registration’, and security crackdowns by the Kenyan security forces in search of Al Shabaab infiltrators in the camps. According to PMT data, refugees returning from Ethiopia however, were generally returning in order to cultivate their land.²

As tensions rise in the Jubas and Gedo regions, local inhabitants continue to suffer from the effects of the air strikes and the ongoing insurgency, resulting in forced displacement, and limited access to humanitarian assistance³ and medical facilities.⁴ Despite the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces taking control of Tabta and Qooqani towns of Afmadow district in late December, the security situation in the area remains volatile as Al Shabaab continues to engage in guerrilla-style warfare. Furthermore, air strikes have been reported, particularly in the port city of Kismaayo, and in Afmadow and Garbaharey, resulting in displacement and at least 40 civilian casualties.⁵

Following the latest round of fighting between Al Shabaab and forces supporting the TFG in Lower and Middle Juba, Gedo and Hiraan regions, the PMT system recorded over 6,000 displacements during the reporting period with over 4,000 people displaced from Belet Weyne district of Hiraan region alone. While the majority of IDPs returned to their homes following Al Shabaab’s retreat from Belet Weyne⁶, over 2,000 people were displaced within Middle and Lower Juba and Gedo regions due to fear of possible new air strikes and continued fighting.⁷ Reports indicate that the majority of IDPs who fled are women and children, while men stay behind to guard family assets.

As the war rages on, IDPs and refugees continue arriving in Somali border towns, looking for humanitarian assistance and protection. However, reports indicate that the border towns constitute a transit point for many IDPs, en route to their places of origin in Bay, Bakool and Banadir regions.⁸ In light of the current situation in both Somalia and Kenya, including increased insecurity in the IDP camps, and possible increased frequency of military operations to unseat Al Shabaab, a possible scenario

of increased cross-border movements, as well as increased influx of people arriving at the border towns from inside Somalia is to be expected in weeks and possibly months to come.

While Al Shabaab continues to face military pressure from three fronts, a number of sources⁹ suggest that the group has stepped up recruitment of fighters, including children, by encouraging local residents, clan elders, parents and teachers to join the “holy war” against the infidels.

MOGADISHU (BANADIR)

During the reporting period, heavy fighting resumed between Al Shabaab and TFG/AMISOM forces in Heliwa, Karaan, Dharkenley and Hawl Wadag districts of Mogadishu. In addition, there were at least eight hand grenade and improvised explosive device (IED) attacks.¹⁰ The fiercest clashes took place in Karan and Heliwa districts.¹¹ The numbers of civilian casualties are yet to be established.

The renewed Al Shabaab recruitment campaign to conscript men and boys into their ranks in Bay, Bakool, Hiraan and the Middle and Lower Juba regions resulted in an increased number of men and boys fleeing to Mogadishu. Reports indicate that clan elders in the above mentioned southern regions have been instructed to recruit soldiers and to participate in fighting against Kenyan and Ethiopian forces. Businessmen have also been required to provide financial support to fight the TFG and its allied forces.



- Three civilians were severely injured when Al Shabaab attacked AMISOM forces in Wahara Market area in Heliwa district of Mogadishu.¹² (11 January)
- At least two civilians were injured when two unidentified perpetrators hurled hand grenades at the UN Compound in Wajiid district of Mogadishu. ¹³ (10 January)
- Two civilians were reportedly caught in cross fire and killed in Hamar Weyne district of Mogadishu after TFG police forces ordered gunmen dressed in TFG military uniform to lay down their weapons.¹⁴ Between July and December 2011 PMN and other sources reported 14 similar cases of civilians getting caught in cross fire between TFG forces in 2011. (10 January)
- Three civilians were killed and an unknown number injured when armed confrontations took place between eight TFG soldiers in Dharkenley district of Mogadishu apparently due to a dispute over dismantling of a check point in the area.¹⁵ (8 January)
- PMN and PMT data suggest that approximately 70 men and boys arrived in Mogadishu from Wajiid district of Bakool due to fear of being forcefully recruited as fighters by Al Shabaab.¹⁶ (8 December)
- An IDP woman and her daughter living in Baadbaado IDP Camp, Dharkenley district of Mogadishu were raped by four alleged members of the TFG police, when they were sleeping in their shelter. The four men were part of the camp’s security detail.¹⁷(8 January)
- Two khat sellers were killed and one other was injured after they got into an argument with a man dressed in a TFG military uniform who later escaped. ¹⁸ Between July and December 2011 PMN

and other sources reported 12 similar incidents of intentional killings perpetrated by men dressed in TFG uniform.(3 January)

NORTH-WEST (AWDAL, WOQOYI GALBEED & TOGDHEER)



- A truck driver who was passing through a police check-point in Hargeisa, Woqooyi Galbeed region was reportedly shot dead by a Somaliland Police officer. The reason behind the shooting remains unknown. The perpetrator fled.¹⁹ (10 January)
- A child was severely injured when a mine located in a former compound of Somaliland Army in Odweyne district of Togdheer region exploded while he was playing with it.²⁰ (12 January)

NORTH-EAST (MUDUG, NUGAAL & BARI)

Between 7 and 8 January the Puntland security forces conducted a large scale security operation in Bosasso and arrested more than 200 people allegedly suspected of having links to Al Shabaab.²¹ During the past two weeks approximately 267 Ethiopian economic migrants reportedly crossed the Gulf of Aden from Bossasso, Bari region to Yemen in a search of a better life..

HIRAAAN & GALGADUUD

The most significant development in Hiraan and Galgaduud regions is the heavy fighting between forces affiliated with TFG, including Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), the Shabelle Valley State (SVS) militias, Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) and Al Shabaab militias in Belet Weyne district of Hiraan region. The fighting resulted in over 4,000 temporary displacements, mainly within Hiraan and the subsequent withdrawal of Al Shabaab from Belet Weyne district. PMT data indicates that the majority of IDPs returned to the town following the Al Shabaab retreat. The total number of casualties arising from the fighting is currently unknown. TFG and ENDF claimed they have full control of Belet Weyne. These claims were however rejected by the Shabelle Valley administration (SVA), a semi-autonomous administration controlling parts of central Somalia.²²



- A 10 years old boy was killed and two other passengers wounded by armed bandits manning a checkpoint in Mareer Guur area of Galgaduud region. The victims were travelling in a passenger truck from Bosasso to Belet Weyne when the bandits attacked them. The report suggests that banditry is on the rise in the area.²³ (8 January)
- Three men accused of being Al Shabaab members were reportedly summarily executed by Shabelle Valley State (SVS) militiamen in the centre of Belet Weyne town, Hiraan region.²⁴ (2 January)

LOWER & MIDDLE SHABELLE (SHABELLE HOOSE & DHEXE)

Residents of Middle and Lower Shabelle continue to face human rights violations by the authorities on a daily basis including killing, restrictions on freedom of movement and limited access to humanitarian aid. According to a report, the delivery of aid remains a major challenge in Middle Shabelle region due to security and logistical constraints put in place by the local Al-Shabaab authorities. In the past week, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) decided to temporarily suspend its distributions intended for 1 million people, after the Al-Shabaab authorities have reportedly blocked relief commodities from reaching the needy population since mid December 2011.²⁵



- Four civilians were killed and an unknown number of others injured when an Al Shabaab militia reportedly opened fire at civilians in Ceelasha Bihaya, Afgooye district, Lower Shabelle region. The perpetrator fled. The reason behind the attack is unknown.²⁶ (12 January)

- Al Shabaab forces in Ceelasha Bihaya area, Afgooye district reportedly arrested 30 businessmen for non-compliance with new tax demands to support the holy war. The authorities also warned businessmen against moving their businesses to Bakara Market.²⁷ (10 January)

BAY, BAKOOL & GEDO

During the past two weeks the influx of refugees returning from the camps in Ethiopia increased in Dollow, Gedo region with approximately over 700 returnees. Military tensions were reported in Luuq, Gedo region, and Xudur district of Bakool region and resulted in over 1,500 insecurity-related displacements mainly to Ceel Waaq, Belet Hawo and Bardheere districts of Gedo region. The majority of those arriving in the above mentioned towns are reportedly women and children.²⁸ In light of recent tensions in the area, new influxes to border towns could be expected in the coming weeks as people flee due to fear of attacks, and in search of humanitarian assistance.



- According to a report, on 9 January, Al Shabaab arrested an unknown number of pastoralists in Ted Village of Bakool region accusing them of being involved in the fighting that took place against Al-Shabaab on 7 January.²⁹ (9 January)
- Al Shabaab organized a demonstration in Baidoa town, Bay region against the Ethiopian and Kenyan intervention. During the demonstration the residents were instructed to participate in the fight against foreign forces and to support the holy war financially. Reports indicate that Al Shabaab ordered all transport and other businesses to close down prior to and during the event.³⁰ (9 January)
- 18 women married to TFG members were reportedly rounded up by Al Shabaab in Dinsoor district of Bay region and pressured to either leave the district or to divorce their husbands. The 18 women were taken to a public venue where their divorce was announced on the grounds that their husbands had become infidels by virtue of membership of the TFG.³¹ (9 January)
- Armed clashes broke out between pastoralists and Al Shabaab militias in Ted Village, Xudur district of Bakool region, after the pastoralists reportedly refused to pay taxes.³² (7 January)

- A man who had publicly declared his support for the recent Ethiopian offensive in Belet Weyne against Al Shabaab, was reportedly abducted from his house. His whereabouts remain unknown.³³ (6 January)
- Air strikes landed on Taraka and Faafax Dhuun villages of Bardheere district, Gedo region and resulted in a number of civilian casualties and over 300 displacements, mainly to other areas within the district.³⁴ (3 January)

LOWER & MIDDLE JUBA (JUBA HOOSE & DHEXE)

According to PMT data over 1,100 refugees arrived in Afmadow district of Lower Juba region from Kenya due to increased insecurity in the refugee camps and lack of access to humanitarian assistance. Heavy fighting broke out between the Kenyan forces and Al Shabaab militias in Afmadow district, resulting in over 600 displacements from the towns of Tabta, Qooqani, Afmadow and Kismaayo.³⁵ Many refugees who arrived from Kenya who originated from Bay, Bakool and Banadir regions were reportedly stranded in transit centres in Dhobley due to heavy fighting and found themselves in dire need of humanitarian relief.³⁶ If the current level of military tensions continue in southern regions of Somalia, returning home is unlikely for the stranded displaced families for the moment. As in Gedo, Bay, Gedo and Bakool regions, Al Shabaab in Afmadow district encouraged the local residents to take part what they call 'holy war'.³⁷



- According to witnesses, at least eight civilians, including a 17 year-old child were wounded when air strikes landed on Kudhaa coastal village, Kismaayo town, Lower Juba region. The victims were referred to the Kismaayo general hospital. The situation in the village remains tense.³⁸ (5 January)
- Two IDP men accused of spying for the Kenyan army were executed by Al Shabaab militants in Gubada village, Afmadow district of Middle Juba region.³⁹ (7 January)

¹ Shabelle News, *Somali refugees in Kenyan camps return home*, 11 January, available at <http://www.shabelle.net/article.php?id=14342>

² UNHCR internal report

Reports received from IASC Protection Cluster Partners, 2-10 January 2012

³ Reuters, *Somalia Islamists force ICRC food aid suspension*, 12 January, available at <http://af.reuters.com/article/somaliaNews/idAFL6E8CC3BO20120112?sp=true>

⁴ Voice of America, *Wounded in Southern Somalia Have Difficulty Reaching Medical Facilities*, 2 January, available at <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/east/Wounded-in-Southern-Somalia-Have-Difficulty-Reaching-Medical-Facilities-136528663.html>

⁵ ibid

⁶ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner, 2 January 2012
GlobalPost, *Al Shabaab pushed out of Beledwayne*, 3 January, available at <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/africa-emerges/somalia-news-al-shabaab-pushed-out-beledwayne>

⁷ AllAfrica, *Tension Runs High in Afmadow Town of Southern Somalia*, 5 January, available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201201050438.html>

⁸ AllAfrica, *Fleeing Families Stranded - Troubled At Kenyan Border*, 3 January, available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201201031286.html>

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- ⁹ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on Washington Post, *Somali militants gather, recruit outside town taken by Ethiopian forces*, 2 January, available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/somali-militants-gather-recruit-outside-town-taken-by-ethiopian-forces-calm-inside-town/2012/01/02/gIQAWqzsVP_story.html
- AllAfrica, *Tension Runs High in Afmadow Town of Southern Somalia*, 5 January, available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201201050438.html>
- ¹⁰ Report by IASC protection cluster partner received on, 31-2 January 2012
- ¹¹ Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld
- ¹² Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 10 January 2012
- ¹³ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 11 January 2012
- Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld
- ¹⁴ <http://shabelle.net/article.php?id=14325>
- ¹⁵ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 12 January
- Kulmiye News, *Street fighting kills three in Mogadishu*, 8 January, available at <http://www.kulmiyeynews.com/?nid=4958>
- ¹⁶ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner, 11 December 2012
- ¹⁷ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 13 January 2012
- ¹⁸ Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld
- ¹⁹ ibid
- ²⁰ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 12 January
- ²¹ Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld
- ²² Somalia Press, *Semi-autonomous region claims strategic town*, 2 January, available at <http://somalilandpress.com/somalia-semi-autonomous-region-claims-strategic-town-25774>
- ²³ Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld
- ²⁴ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 4 January
- ²⁵ ICRC, Somalia: ICRC temporarily suspends distributions of food and seed, 12 January, available at, <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/news-release/2012/somalia-news-2011-01-12.htm>
- ²⁶ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 13 January 2012
- ²⁷ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 12 January
- ²⁸ Internal UNHCR Report
- ²⁹ Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld
- ³⁰ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 13 January 2012
- ³¹ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 12 January 2012
- ³² Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 9 January 2012
- ³³ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 10 January 2012
- ³⁴ Reports received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 5- 10 January 2012
- ³⁵ AllAfrica, *Tension Runs High in Afmadow Town of Southern Somalia*, 5 January, available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201201050438.html>
- ³⁶ AllAfrica, *Fleeing Families Stranded - Troubled At Kenyan Border*, 3 January, available at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201201031286.html>
- ³⁷ UNHCR Internal report on 10 January
- ³⁸ Reports received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 6 January
- ³⁹ Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 10 January 2012