

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1081
Land:	Somalia
Kilde:	The Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland (RDC)
Titel:	COI query response. Somalia – Information on Sheekhaal minority group and their treatment
Udgivet:	22. maj 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	27. august 2024

RESEARCHED AND COMPILED BY THE REFUGEE DOCUMENTATION CENTRE OF IRELAND ON THE 22 MAY 2024

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COI QUERY RESPONSE

SOMALIA – INFORMATION ON SHEEKHAAL MINORITY GROUP AND THEIR TREATMENT

In August 2023, the *European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)* states that: “Sheikhal are not one but several groups, with different cultures and dialects. [...] The Sheikhal are scattered in different districts and regions of the country, e.g. Mogadishu, Belet Weyne, Jowhar, Middle and Lower Juba and Gedo. The main Sheikhal branches are the Jasira, the Gendershe, the Loboge, and the Aw Qutub. In the Somali parliament, three seats are reserved for Sheikhal clan, through the Hawiye clan family. ... While some Sheikhal groups are politically strong, others are marginalised. The Gendershe and Jasira groups have the position of marginalised minority groups, whose members predominantly reside in Mogadishu and south of the city, and who have been marginalised and oppressed by majority group militias after the outbreak of the civil war in 1991. In contrast, the sub-clans Loboge and Aw Qutub have a more ambiguous position. Older reports indicated that the Loboge had been allies of some Hawiye, had their own militia in the early 1990s and they had engaged in fighting. The Aw Qutub had suffered some discrimination or harassment in Somaliland from the dominant Isaaq clan, being suspected of disloyalty to the Somaliland state after 1991.”¹

In September 2022 the *UNHCR* points out that: “Many of the Sheikhal have reportedly affiliated with the Hawiye majority clan and benefit from that clan’s Protection...”²

The *European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA)* in September 2021 reported that: “Luling in her 'Report on the Shiikhal' (2009) mentioned that Sheikhal are not one 'but several groups, with different cultures and dialects. The word is simply the local plural of "sheikh", and signifies a lineage who have

¹ European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) (23 August 2023) EUAA Country Guidance: Somalia - Common analysis and guidance note (August 2023) [3. Refugee status]

² UNHCR (September 2022) International Protection Considerations with Regard to People Fleeing Somalia, p.74

an inherited religious status.' As main Sheikhal branches she indicates the Jasira and the Gendershe which she connects to the 'light skinned' Benadiri population, the Loboge (which are adopted into the Herab section of the Hawiye), and the Aw Qutub who can be found in north-western Somalia (today's Somaliland) and Ethiopia."³ The report further states that: "The Sheikhal are 'scattered in different districts and regions of the country.' Accordingly, they reside in Mogadishu, Belet Weyne, Jowhar, Middle and Lower Juba and Gedo. Some Sheikhal also live in Region 5 of Ethiopia."⁴ The report further states that: "The Sheikhal are 'scattered in different districts and regions of the country.' Accordingly, they reside in Mogadishu, Belet Weyne, Jowhar, Middle and Lower Juba and Gedo. Some Sheikhal also live in Region 5 of Ethiopia."⁵ The report also notes that: "Hawiye, had their own militia in the early 1990s and they engaged in fighting. In the Somali parliament, among the 33 seats reserved for members of the Haiwye clan-family, three are reserved for Sheikhal. Still, they do not feature at the same level as majority groups. Luling mentioned that Sheekhaal/Looboge are also known as Martiile 'the guests' among Hawiye. They were at one point allied with General Aideed during the first years of civil war in southern Somalia."⁶

Another report from the *European Asylum Support Office (EASO)* in July 2021 states that: "The Sheekhaal, are a kind of trans-clan lineage. This means that they live amongst numerous 'major' clans from the North and the South of the Somali area. They have the special status of 'religious clan' that gives them a prestigious aura, and are often included as Hawiye."⁷

Horn Observer in June 2021 points out that: "Activists and political leaders on Thursday accused the minister of petroleum to forcefully and illegally trying to grab extra seats for his Sheekhaal clan, which is already enjoying holding of another Banadiri seat that the minister took by force in 2016."⁸

The *United Kingdom Government* mentioned a Judgement issued by the *Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber)* Appeal Number: PA/06843/2018 in 2018 which states that: "She went on to argue that the appellant's evidence was not inconsistent with the objective evidence. She referred for example to an information sheet from Refworld concerning the Sheekhaal clan which was quoted by the Secretary of State. It was to be noted that it was said there that whereas the Sheekhaal was spread throughout Somalian territory most were affiliated with the Hawiye clan but some members of the clan were nomadic and some lived in the coastal area and a third segment of the clan lived in eastern Ethiopia."⁹

The *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* in August 2016 mentioned that: "Sources report that Jubbaland is a region in Southern Somalia created in 2013 through a local initiative of 500 regional representatives (AMISOM n.d.; US 13 Apr. 2016, 28), though it was unrecognized by the federal government until August 2013. In a profile of Kismayo city, Jubbaland, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) states that Jubbaland consists of Gedo, Middle Juba, and Lower Juba [which are

³ European Asylum Support Office (EASO) (19 September 2021) EASO COI Report - Somalia: Targeted profiles (September 2021)

⁴ ibid

⁵ ibid

⁶ ibid

⁷ European Asylum Support Office (EASO) (6 July 2021) EASO COI Report - Somalia: Actors

⁸ Horn Observer (4 June 2021) Minister of petroleum and his clan associate accused of grabbing parliamentary seats from minority clans in Somalia

⁹ The United Kingdom Government (18 December 2018) PA/06843/2018

locations where Ajuran inhabit - see Section 1] and the "major clans" in the region are the Ogaden, Harti, Mirifle (Rahanweyn), Marehan, Galja'el, Sheekhaal, Awramleh, Jareer (Bantu), and Bajun."¹⁰ The report further states that: "According to International Crisis Group, "the possibility of a semi-autonomous state in the south of Somalia politically dominated by Ogaden may not be favoured by the minority, marginalised clans of north-eastern Kenya, such as the [Somali] Ajuran and Degodia" (15 Feb. 2012, 13). The Doctoral candidate indicated that "the Ajuuraan have long been in contestation with the Ogadeen in Somalia and in Kenya" as well as the Boran and other neighbouring communities (Doctoral candidate 31 July 2016). The same source stated that the Ajuran are "marginalised in the southern regions in Somalia, especially Jubbaland" (ibid. 20 Aug. 2016). He further explained that since the creation of Jubbaland in 2013, a Somali "mini-state" which he stated is "dominated by the Ogaadeen clan of the Daarood," many less powerful and less numerous clans in the region, such as the Sheekhaal, Gaalje'el, Awramaleh, Ajuuraan, and Degodiye, are subject to "political marginalisation and economic exclusion"¹¹

An undated document from *Minority Rights Group International* states that: "Minorities include 'Bantu' (Gosha, Shabelle, Shidle, Boni), occupational caste groups (Gaboye, Tumul, Yibir, other), Oromo and Benadiri Swahili-speakers (including Rer Hamar Amarani, Bajuni), religious minorities (Ashraf, Shekal, Christians)."¹² The document further notes that: "There are also small religious minority communities. The Ashraf and the Shekal are minorities within the majority religion of Islam. While they often experienced discrimination on the basis of their differing religious practices, Ashraf and Shekhal traditionally played important conflict-resolution roles, and were respected and protected by clans with whom they lived. However, some were badly affected by the civil conflicts of the 1990s and lost this customary protection, becoming targets for human rights abuses by clan militias and warlords. Ashraf claim descent from the Prophet Muhammad and his daughter Fatima, and believe they migrated to Somalia in the twelfth century. Ashraf from some areas are affiliated to and counted as Benadiri, while Ashraf living among Digil-Mirifle are affiliated with them as a sub-clan. Shekhal (also known as Sheikhal or Sheikash) are a similar dispersed religious community of claimed Arabian and early Islamic origin. Both Ashraf and Shekhal achieved political influence and success in education and commerce with Arab countries, yet they can still face discrimination and human rights abuses on account of their non-clan origins."¹³

¹⁰ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (31 August 2016) Somalia: Information on the Ajuran clan, including location, clan affiliation, and whether the clan is a minority; treatment of members; reports of armed clashes with the Ogaden clan; reports of targeting of members of the Ajuran by Al Shabaab (2014-July 2016) [SOM105590.E]

¹¹ ibid

¹² Minority Rights Group International (undated) Somali

¹³ ibid

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