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Immigration and
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration
et du statut de réfugié du Canada

Somalia : The Hawrarsame clan, including its current situation and relationship with other clans (2005-2013) [SOM104765.E]

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview

Sources identify the Hawrarsame [also spelled Horarsame, Hawarsame] as part of the minority groups (US 19 Apr. 2013, 43; MRG 16 July 2009, 109; Education International 18 June 2007; Somalia-CEWERU Sept. 2013, 17) in addition to being, according to some of these sources, part of the low-caste clans within Somalia (ibid.; Education International 18 June 2007). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an anthropologist who is a senior researcher at the African Studies Centre of Leiden in the Netherlands, as well as a professor of African ethnic studies at VU University Amsterdam and who has published research on the genealogy of Somali clans, stated that the Hawrarsame "are a low-status subclan of the larger Marehan clan" (Anthropologist 26 Jan. 2014). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a political analyst with a specialized focus on Somalia, who is also the director of a research consulting company that provides analysis of complex political situations, including in Somalia, similarly said that the Hawrarsame are "a small or minority sub-clan within the Marehan clan family" (Political Analyst 29 Jan. 2014). Sources report the Marehan clan is a sub-clan of the Saade [also Sade] clan, within the Darood [also Darod] clan (Anthropologist 26 Jan. 2014; Somalia-CEWERU Sept. 2013, 15).

The anthropologist added that the Hawrarsame are composed of three "sub-subclans": Yusuf (or Reer Libow), Aadan Saleban, and Mahamud Saleban (Anthropologist 26 Jan. 2014). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Location

The Political Analyst stated that "[t]he Marehan are today mainly located in Gedo [also spelled Geddo] region and Abudwak district of Galgadud region" (Political Analyst 29 Jan. 2014). He added that "Marehan are also found in Ethiopia," but stated that he was unsure to what extent the Hawrarsame in particular are found in Abudwak and Ethiopia (ibid.). The anthropologist similarly stated that the Hawrarsame "live mainly in the Gedo and Jubba areas," and added that they also live partly "across the border in Southeast Ethiopia" (26 Jan. 2014).

According to the Political Analyst, the main locations where Hawrarsame live in Gedo region are "in Belet Hawo and Luugh [also spelled Luuq] districts and to a lesser extent in Dolo and El Wak" (29 Jan 2014). The anthropologist mentioned that, notably, Hawrarsame live "in and around Bullo Hawo [also spelled Beled Hawo, Belet Xaawo, Belet Hawa] town" [which is part of the Belet Hawo district] (26 Jan. 2014). The Political Analyst added that "naturally one may find small family groups of Hawrarsame elsewhere in Somalia and among the diaspora abroad" (29 Jan. 2014).

3. Relations with Other Clans

According to the Political Analyst, the Hawrarsame "will most likely be regarded as Marehan by other clan family groups;" he also said that the Marehan are seen "as the dominant clan" within the Gedo region (Political Analyst 29 Jan 2014). However, he added that the Hawrarsame appear to be "'isolated' or 'stigmatised' by the other Marehan sub-clans," noting that the Hawrarsame are, reportedly,

not allowed to intermarry with other Marehan sub-clans - a punishment imposed on the Hawrarsame [...] for a historical incident [that took place a] long time ago (possibly more than a hundred years ago) in which the Hawrarsame were seen as committing treason to the Marehan. (ibid.)

The anthropologist explained that, reportedly,

[t]he Hawrarsame were of "good descent," but in fact were disowned and acquired a "despised" status within the Marehan due to a historical event in the 14th century: a Hawrarsame man [...] killed the prestigious Darood leader (the "boqor") Mahamed Da'ud, and remarkably, the whole sub-clan of Hawrarsame was blamed. The Hawrarsame were then forced to pay "blood compensation" (in camels) for a long time, and [were] "cast out" of their previous noble status. The Marehan thus continued to reject them as part of the "noble," real Marehan-Darood. (26 Jan. 2014)

The US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2007* also notes that in Somalia, "[t]raditional judgments [have] sometimes held entire opposing clans or sub clans responsible for alleged violations by individuals" (US 11 Mar. 2008).

The Somalia Conflict Early Warning Early Response Unit (Somalia-CEWERU), a national network of government and non-government stakeholders which shares information on potentially violent conflicts (CEWARN n.d.), produced a conflict mapping report in September 2013, funded by the governments of Norway and Switzerland (Somalia CEWERU Sept. 2013, 4), which indicates that the history of conflict in northern Gedo region has involved "major inter-Marehan clan conflict," including the Hawrarsame (ibid., 16).

4. Current Situation

According to the *Country Reports 2007*, in August of that year, "Hawrarsame Marehan subclan elders apprehended and handed over one of their kin for execution to the elders of the Rer-Ahmed Marehan subclan for allegedly killing a Rer-Ahmed Marehan subclan member" (11 Mar. 2008). Further details or corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

Regarding the current situation of the clan, the anthropologist stated that "[t]he Hawrarsame have been in a fairly vulnerable position as a more or less inferior subclan, because they could no longer count on assistance from other Marehan subclans in times of duress" (Anthropologist 26 Jan. 2014). He expressed the view that it "looks likely" that "this has extended into the present times of civil war and violence" (ibid.). According to Somalia-CEWERU, there are many conflicts in Gedo Region "caused by segregation and marginalization, and driven by inferiority-superiority complexes" and the targets of this "marginalization" include "non-Marehan subclans as well as the Hawrarsame and Fiqi Yaqub," both Marehan sub-clans that are "considered to be lower-caste groups" (Sept. 2013, 17).

The anthropologist stated that it is probable that "many [Hawrarsame] now live in areas still controlled by the radical Islamist group Harekat al Shabaab" also noting that some Hawrarsame "may also have become members of this movement, because it offered protection, some salary and a weapon" (Anthropologist 26 Jan. 2014). Corroborating information about Hawrarsame joining al-Shabaab could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources indicate that the town of Bulo Hawo is in an area where the Hawrarsame live (Anthropologist 26 Jan. 2014; Somali-CEWERU Sept. 2013, 22). Bulo Hawo is located near Somalia's border with Kenya, and has been a centre of fighting between pro-government forces and al Shabaab militants (*The New York Times* 6 Mar. 2011; UN 1 Mar. 2011; BBC 18 Oct. 2010). *The New York Times* reports that the town "has changed hands several times" (*The New York Times* 6 Mar. 2011). According to sources, fighting in March 2011 resulted in the displacement of "thousands" of people (ibid.; UN 1 Mar. 2011).

In September 2013, Somalia-CEWERU described Belet Hawa district as a "regional flash point" which has been the subject of "endless intra-clan conflict between Marehan sub-clans" since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991 (Sept. 2013, 16, 22). Somalia-CEWERU reports that the sources of the intra-clan conflicts have been over resources (wells, markets, checkpoints, food distribution centres), public land, access to the local administration, and external interference by neighbouring states (ibid., 22). The September 2013 report indicates that there are several "active" conflicts that have been "intermittent" since 1991 in Belet Hawa, Luugh, and Dolo districts of Gedo, between Hawrarsame and other Marehan clans such as Rer Ahmed and Ali Dhere

(ibid., 23). The report also indicates that in Tosiley, a town in Dolo, a "seasonal conflict" has been ongoing between Hawrarsame and Rer Ahmed regarding farm land, and that despite community arbitration, "peace has been stalled by the delayed payment of *diya* (blood money)" (ibid., 22). Further details and corroborating information on these intra-Marehan conflicts could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Oral sources: Attempts to contact a professor of anthropology at the Max Plank Institute of Social Studies, an independent researcher focused on Somalia, and a knowledge manager at the NATO Civil-Military Fusion Centre were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: AllAfrica; Afronline; ecoi.net; Factiva; Hiiran Online; *Jeune Afrique*; Somalia News; UK – Home Office; UN – Refworld.