

DADAAB RETURNEE CONFLICT ASSESSMENT

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PREPARED FOR DANISH DEMINING GROUP (DDG)
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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This conflict assessment was implemented as part of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) funded and Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Danish Refugee Council (DRC) implemented project: 'Promoting Durable Solutions through Integrated Return, Reintegration and Resilience Support to Somali Displacement affected Populations'. The project aims to support conditions conducive for safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration of Somali refugees. The project was implemented between October 2016 and June 2017.

The Conflict Assessment was implemented by the Danish Demining Group (DDG), under the supervision of Mads Frilander. The principal investigator and author of the study is Ken Menkhaus, and he alone is responsible for any errors or misinterpretations in the report. He and Ismahan Adawe formed the research team that conducted fieldwork for this study in Mogadishu, Kismayo, Baidoa, and Nairobi in December 2016 and January 2017.

The analysis combines existing studies and reports collected in a literature review with over 60 field interviews, as well as a survey carried out in Kismayo. The interviews were semi-structured in format, some held with key informants and others with focus groups of men and women representing host communities, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and returnees. The survey was carried out by the company Researchcare Africa.

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ACRONYMS

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ISWA	Interim Southwest Administration
JISA	Jubbaland Intelligence and Security Agency
JSS	Jubbaland State of Somalia
JVA	Jubba Valley Alliance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SNA	Somali National Army
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GENERAL FINDINGS

- The anticipated return of up to 250,000 Somali refugees from Kenya into southern Somalia in 2017 or later is not expected to trigger or exacerbate large-scale communal or political conflict in the short term. But in the longer term the return will intensify pressure on some very dangerous and unresolved fault-lines in Somalia, related to land, identity, rights, and demography.
- The February 2017 ruling by a Kenyan court blocking closure of Dadaab refugee camp has slowed but not stopped the process of repatriation. But the Kenyan government has a variety of means at its disposal to create "push" factors to incentivise return, even if the camps are not formally closed. Reduced rations and basic services are leading Somali families to continue to repatriate in 2017.
- The March 25 IGAD "Nairobi Declaration on Somali Refugees" could constitute a major policy shift if fully implemented, and offers Somali refugees options in Kenya beyond camp life.
- The impact of the returnees will be felt almost entirely in a few urban centres of southern Somalia, especially Kismayo. Their return will accelerate an already dramatic rate of urbanisation in contemporary Somalia, and highlight sensitive conflict issues related to exclusivist clan claims on Somalia's cities.
- The return is occurring in a challenging and non-permissive environment in southern Somalia. Al Shabaab continues to hold the rural areas where most of the refugees originate. Much of the region remains chronically insecure. Urban unemployment is exceptionally high. And a severe drought has impacted the main areas of return.
- The prospect of an AMISOM withdrawal in 2018-20 will create new uncertainties over security in areas of return.
- Many of the returning refugees are members of the Digil-Mirifle clan and/or are Somali Bantu from Lower Jubba, Middle Jubba, of Bay regions. They are socially and politically weak groups. They pose little immediate threat to existing power relations in cities such as Kismayo and Mogadishu, which are dominated by more powerful clan-families (the Darood clan-family in Kismayo, the Hawiye clan family in Mogadishu). But the returnees will be more vulnerable to predation.
- The returnees will accelerate a major demographic shift in Mogadishu and Kismayo, increasing the percentage of Digil-Mirifle and Somali Bantu residents. Chauvinistic elements in the dominant clans could press for forced evictions of Digil-Mirifle and Somali Bantu to their "home territories."
- This demographic challenge exposes the fact that Somalia's current political order has never resolved fundamental debates over identity and territory in the country. Right by blood – membership in a clan – dominates discourse over who may live and claim access to protection and resources in Somalia's major cities. In Kismayo and Mogadishu, this means that the returnees of Digil-Mirifle and Bantu identity will be exchanging refugee status in Kenya for status as "guests" with limited rights in their own country.
- The returnees are also helping to expose the fact that the designation "IDP" carries a very different meaning in Somalia then it does in international humanitarian parlance. In Somalia, IDP is code for a Somali from a low status group who is living in a city dominated by a more powerful clan and who is poor and squatting or renting in a slum.
- The vulnerability of the returnees is magnified by the fact that many of the returnee households are female-headed.
- Humanitarian aid has long been a major target of diversion and corruption, especially when that aid is directed at socially weak groups. Assistance aimed at returnees will be no exception.
- Where aid programmes for the returnees gives them a significant if temporary advantage over host communities and IDPs, communal tensions could spike.
- Local government officials in all of the main areas of return are likely to try to leverage the returnees in order to demand more aid programmes from the international community.
- Employment will be a source of competition between returnees, IDPs, and host communities.
- Returnees may seek to use their financial packages to purchase land in areas of return, but this will vary by location. High land prices in Mogadishu will make it difficult to afford there; land prices in Kismayo are high but possibly within reach; land in Baidoa is affordable and already returnees are purchasing plots

there. In Kismayo and Mogadishu, disputes over urban real estate are endemic and sometimes deadly. The returnees will face real risks of being dispossessed of land they have purchased.

- The risk of some returnee youth being recruited into Al Shabaab is real. Predatory or abusive behaviour by members of host communities against the returnees, played out along clan lines, will create grievances easily tapped by Al Shabaab.

KISMAYO

- Kismayo will feel the general impact of the returnees more than any other location, as the total number of returnees – expected at 80-90,000 – could nearly double the city's current population. This will increase demand for basic consumer goods, land, potable water, and access to basic services like education and health care. As of June 2017, an estimated 57,000 returnees have arrived in the city, including 24,000 in the first half of 2017.
- Since the take-over of the city by the Ras Kamboni militia in 2013, and the ensuing rise of the Jubbaland state administration, the city has enjoyed improved security. The city's security reflects a "victor's peace" by one clan, but it has been a relatively generous victor's peace, in which other clans have been allowed to reside and resume business, take positions in the local administration, and enjoy representation in the regional government. Political stability in Kismayo involves a delicate political balancing act by the authorities to keep a potentially fractious group of clan constituencies minimally satisfied with the status quo.
- The Jubbaland security forces and its intelligence agency are effective and feared, and have kept the city largely safe from Al Shabaab terror attacks. This has come at a cost of free and open political discourse. Returnees may not be in a position to speak frankly about their situations.
- In the short-term, the returnees will not impact Kismayo's security or foment serious communal conflict.
- Local businesses and landowners are likely to benefit from the influx of newcomers; poorer households will suffer from increased prices of land, rent, and possibly basic consumer goods.
- The returnee arrival could eventually transform clan demographics in Kismayo, creating a situation in which the empowered Darood clan-family could be outnumbered by the weaker Digil-Mirifle and Bantu.
- The mainly Digil-Mirifle and Bantu returnees will join an existing population of Digil-Mirifle and Bantu in Kismayo, which constitute a large IDP population residing in over 40 IDP camps, all crowded slums with temporary or sub-standard housing.
- In the long-term, the existence of a large population of Digil-Mirifle and Bantu crowded in slums and IDP camps and treated as an underclass will constitute a dangerous underlying source of conflict and an easy recruiting tool for Al Shabaab.
- Few of the returnees are original residents of Kismayo. Most are from the Jubba Valley, Dinsor (Bay region), or Gedo region. Most are expected to stay in Kismayo permanently rather than attempt to continue to their rural home areas.
- Of all the major areas of return in Somalia, Jubbaland authorities have been most engaged in preparing for the returnees, including allocation of a large stretch of government land on the outskirts of the city for a new "village" where at least some returnees will be provided lots of land and homes.
- The most likely source of tensions, based on our survey data, is between existing IDPs and returnees in Kismayo. Local authorities, especially clan elders, are also concerned about the possibility of communal tensions arising from what may be perceived as disproportionate assistance going to returnees in a context of considerable hardship among local IDPs and the host community.

MOGADISHU

- Mogadishu and its immediate environs are the site of chronic low level insecurity punctuated by periodic major terrorist attacks. The attacks, mainly targeting international and government installations and hotels and restaurants frequented by government officials, do not constitute a major threat to returnees and IDPs, who generally live far from these sites. Returnees and IDPs are, however, very vulnerable to criminal violence and predation by uncontrolled security forces.
- The returnees pose very little threat of exacerbating or triggering communal violence in the short term, as they are unarmed and mainly from weaker clans.
- Security in Mogadishu has generally been commoditised, with residents paying for protection in one form or another.

- A proposed drawdown of AMISOM forces in coming years will have disproportionate impact on Mogadishu, and could facilitate expansion of direct Al Shabaab control into parts of the city.
- Mogadishu currently houses an exceptionally high number of IDPs – about 369,000 – of whom nearly half are Digil Mirifle and/or Bantu.[1] Because of high costs of rent and land, most of the returnees will end up locating into one of the more than 1,000 IDP settlements in and around the city.
- Returnees will tend to seek residence in IDP camps where family and/or fellow sub-clan members are located for support and security.
- IDPs have been a lucrative and valued commodity in Mogadishu, as bait to attract humanitarian aid which can be partially diverted by IDP camp managers.
- Some camp managers, in anticipation of returnees carrying resettlement cash, have evicted IDPs to make room for the returnees.
- Corruption is high in Mogadishu and government agencies focused on the returnees and IDPs are no exception.
- Mogadishu is sufficiently large that it can absorb the returnees without the kind of dramatic impact it is likely to have on Kismayo's land values and access to services and jobs.
- Land prices are very high in Mogadishu, and title to land is chronically contested. Returnees from weak social groups run a strong risk of losing plots to land-grabbing if they attempt to buy land.
- Mogadishu's government officials are generally not as preoccupied with the returnees as are officials in Kismayo and Baidoa.
- Returnees who end up pushed into the peri-urban IDP camps, especially those in the Afgoye corridor, will be more vulnerable to Al Shabaab taxation, recruitment, and intimidation.
- The new mayor of Mogadishu is currently driving changes in district level administration and security that could, if successful, produce an improved formal security sector across the city, which will be of considerable benefit to returnees.

BAIDOA

- Baidoa city has not been the site of significant political or communal violence and is relatively stable. There is little risk that their return will exacerbate conflicts or trigger communal violence.
- The city is surrounded by countryside in which Al Shabaab operates with varying degrees of freedom.
- Baidoa is the least problematic location for the returnees. Returnees heading to Baidoa are all from the local clan-family in the area, the Digil-Mirifle, and so will be treated as full-fledged citizens, not outsiders or guests with limited rights.
- The main concern expressed by Interim South West Administration (ISWA) officials and clan elders is that the timing of the returnees is exceptionally poor and an unmanageable burden, due to the impact of the drought and the spike in numbers of destitute rural dwellers now moving into Baidoa.
- Because cost of land and living is low in Baidoa compared to Mogadishu and Kismayo, returnees to Baidoa are able to purchase land or rent homes without difficulty.
- Limited options for education and employment in Baidoa have already led to some secondary migration by youth returnees to Mogadishu.
- The main longer-term security threat in Baidoa is the prospect of an AMISOM withdrawal and ensuing Shabaab advances into larger towns and even Baidoa itself. It is not clear, however, that Ethiopian forces would withdraw entirely from the area even if AMISOM as a peacekeeping force does.

SHABAAB-CONTROLLED HINTERLAND OF SOUTHERN SOMALIA

- Most of the returnees are originally from rural farming and agro-pastoral communities in southern Somalia. Intention surveys suggest that a significant percentage of the returnees are originally from a cluster of districts in or near the Jubba Valley – especially Jamaame, Jilib, Buaale, Saakow, Bardhere, and Dinsoor. Those are all areas controlled by Al Shabaab.
- Returnee reluctance to return directly home is the result of a combination of concerns – fear of Al Shabaab forcibly recruiting their young men or executing returnees suspected as collaborators and spies; lack of any basic educational and health services in these remote rural settings; information that their farmland has been occupied and claimed by armed newcomers; and, after years in Dadaab's quasi-urban setting, a reluctance to return to farming as a livelihood.

- Of those who have returned to Al Shabaab controlled area and then fled, at least a few have had family members killed as suspected spies, while others encountered more mundane problems related to livelihoods.
- Al Shabaab has a reputation for enforcing fairer land ownership and rights than do other local authorities, and so some returnees may opt to proceed directly to their farms in hopes that Al Shabaab will adjudicate any land disputes in their favour.
- In the event the Jubba valley and other areas of rural southern Somalia are opened to large scale returns, conflicts over land are likely to intensify, as empowered outsiders seek to engage in land grabbing.
- Current government negotiations with a former Al Shabaab leader, Mukhtar Robow, could lead to improved security in parts of rural Bakool region where Robow retains command of some militia.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- The impact of returnees will vary significantly by area of return. Policy responses must be tailored to each local context.
- Kismayo will be under the most pressure from large-scale refugee returns, and so should be a top priority for targeting of assistance.
- International donors should support and encourage Somali political and civic leaders to resolve, in legislation, the question of residence and citizenship rights for Somalis in each federal state and city. Otherwise the returnees risk become a permanent underclass with no political rights in the cities where they are relocating. The citizenship status of returnees in areas of return will become a very sensitive conflict trigger if direct, universal elections are held in 2020.
- Local administrations must prioritize the establishment of more robust, trusted, and enforced land titling systems and mechanisms for land dispute resolution, and ensure that their systems and laws are compatible with national land legislation. Land disputes are explosive in Somalia's main cities.
- Jubbaland authorities should prioritize the development of policies and enforcement mechanisms to prevent land-grabbing and manage endemic land disputes in the Jubba valley, in anticipation of that territory being liberated from Al Shabaab. Returnees are major stakeholders in how land claims and disputes are managed in the Jubba valley.
- Urban planning and expansion of critical infrastructure such as potable water and sanitation systems are critical, especially in Kismayo, which is poised to nearly double its population if the full number of returnees relocate there. This needs to be a top priority for both regional authorities and external donors.
- Basic social services such as education and primary health care need to be expanded to reduce the risk of competition and conflict between returnees and host communities.
- Regional authorities and civil society leaders in Kismayo and Mogadishu should consider public awareness campaigns designed to provide host communities with accurate information about the returnees, create a welcoming environment for returnees, and combat discriminatory or predatory behaviour towards returnees from weak or low status social groups.
- The international community needs to revisit how it defines, understands, and interacts with IDP camps in Mogadishu and Kismayo.
- External actors should continue to provide support and encouragement to the Kenyan government's new commitment to integrate Somali refugees into Kenyan society. Any slowdown in repatriation of Somalia refugees will help to buy time to better prepare for the returnees and reduce potential conflict pressures their return could produce.

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the expected impact of the return of up to 260,000 Somali refugees on conflicts and social and political tensions in Somalia. The purpose of the report is to provide Somali authorities and international humanitarian actors with guidance to ensure assistance to and policies toward returnees are conflict-sensitive and do not accidentally trigger violence.

It includes assessment of the wider political and socio-economic impact the returnees may have, on the assumption that those factors may have important indirect consequences for conflict dynamics in Somalia.

In February 2017, as this research was being conducted, a court ruling temporarily suspended the proposed closure of the Dadaab camps, where 260,000 Somali refugees reside. That ruling has brought a partial reprieve to all parties concerned, but has not stopped repatriation. Pressures on and incentives to the refugees to return remain in place, and large flows of returnees into Somalia are expected over the course of 2017 and 2018, regardless of the legal disputes over when and if Dadaab camp can be closed. Repatriation is already well underway; between December 2013 and June 2017, 66,200 refugees have returned from Kenya to Somalia, with 26,900 returning in the first six months of 2017.[2]

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed methodology. It was based on an initial literature review of existing studies and surveys. Fieldwork was then conducted in Kismayo, Mogadishu, and Baidoa, involving over 60 key informant and focus group interviews of government officials, local and international NGO officials, returnees, IDPs, and host community representatives. Additional interviews were conducted in Nairobi. This round of fieldwork informed the questions which were then asked in a survey of a sample of 392 residents, IDPs, and returnees in the city of Kismayo, where the majority of refugees are opting to return to. The survey was carried out for DDG by Researchcare Africa.

1. CONTEXT ANALYSIS

SOMALI REFUGEES AND DADAAB CAMP

Over a fifth of the entire Somali population is displaced, either internally or as refugees.[3] Somali refugees have arrived in waves to Kenya and other neighbouring countries over the past 25 years. The first and largest wave arrived following the outbreak of civil war, state collapse, and famine conditions in 1991-92. A second wave was produced during the heavy insurgency and counter-insurgency fighting in Mogadishu in 2007-2008. A third, large wave arrived as a result of the 2011 famine in southern Somalia. Most of estimated 1.5 million Somalis who have fled the country since 1991 and who today either are resettled in third countries (forming Somalia's large diaspora), or who live in refugee camps, passed through Kenya.

Dadaab was created in 1992, in a remote area of Garissa County near the Somali border, and was originally intended to house 90,000 refugees. The actual number of refugees living there has always been far higher. The size of the camp peaked during the 2011 Somali famine at 519,000 people, making it the third largest city in Kenya and the largest refugee camp in the world.[4] It now comprises five camps - Dagahaley, Hagadera, Ifo, Ifo II and Kambioos. By the end of 2013, the population of Somalis in Dadaab was 391,000. As of February 2017, due to the first wave of repatriation, it houses 257,000 Somalis.

Not all Somali refugees in Kenya reside in Dadaab. About 20% of Somali refugees in Kenya, and perhaps more, are outside Dadaab, either at Kakuma refugee camp in Turkana county, or in Nairobi and other cities.[5] Somalis with financial means or family connections have been able to relocate directly to Nairobi and seek housing there. Those who remain in Dadaab are typically poorer or with fewer social connections on which to draw.

Since the early 1990s, none of the three preferred durable solutions for the refugees has been viable. Security and livelihood conditions in Somalia have remained poor, so voluntary repatriation – the optimal solution - has not been attractive. A 2016 survey found that 74% of the refugees do not want to return to Somalia, citing insecurity and lack of services and livelihoods.[6] Despite pressures and incentives to return, only 24,630 refugees repatriated to Somalia from Dadaab in the first nine months of 2016.[7] The second option, third country resettlement, has been possible in recent years for only a small fraction of the refugees.[8] On average, 2,000 people per year are selected for third country resettlement, but as the birth rate in the camps is 1,000 per month, the camp population is growing even with resettlement and even if no new refugees arrive. Finally, local integration in Kenya has not been a politically attractive option for the Kenyan government, though a fraction of the refugees have intermarried or found other means of establishing residency in Kenya. The result has been the "warehousing" of the refugees at Dadaab, in difficult conditions, for quarter of a century.[9] Most of the population of Dadaab has lived their entire lives in the camp: 58.4% of the camp residents are under the age of 18.[10] Some are third generation, grandchildren of the first wave of refugees.[11]

Conditions at Dadaab are harsh, and sometimes insecure. But for most of the Somali refugees, especially those from weaker clans and social groups like the Somali Bantu, and those from subsistence farming or pastoral households, the basic amenities of Dadaab – shelter, education, food rations, and basic health care – are a step up from the extreme poverty and chronic insecurity of southern Somalia. Predictably, some local Kenyan Somalis sought to register as refugees to access those services, creating confusion over citizenship now that the refugees are being pushed to repatriate to Somalia.

Over the years, Dadaab has grown into a virtual city, and an important commercial hub in northeast Kenya.[12] Many refugees find work in the large informal economy in the camps. The World Bank describes it as "tantamount to a free trade zone connecting tax-free contraband from Dubai through Kismayo to Dadaab and surrounding points."[13] The camps have produced both economic opportunities and headaches for the residents in Garissa county who host the refugees.

The combination of chronic insecurity and poor livelihood prospects in Somalia, and the availability of basic services and security in Dadaab, have produced a situation in which few refugees desire to return to Somalia. The 2013 UNHCR analysis which served as the Tripartite Agreement strategy for repatriation of Somali refugees summed up the constraints bluntly:

> The issues which continue to overshadow large-scale voluntary return and reintegration in Somalia are: (1) continuing insecurity and control of territory by Al Shabaab in many parts of the country, particularly in South Central regions; (2) limited presence and capacities of government institutions in many areas; (3) limited access by humanitarian and development actors; (4) lack of a clear multi-year national or regional development framework within which sustained investment in economic recovery can take place; (5) limited livelihood opportunities; (6) lack of basic services such as health and education; (7) poor infrastructure; and (8) low levels of international funding focused on early recovery and development.[14]

In a 2014 UNHCR intention survey, 97.4% of Dadaab refugees said they did not intend to return to Somalia.[15] By August 2016, that number shifted, with 74% stating they were not willing to return – still a large majority of the refugee population.[16]

KENYAN REFUGEE POLICIES

The Kenyan government has sought to accelerate Somali refugee repatriation since 2013, after the first of a series of major Al Shabaab terrorist attacks in Kenya. Those attacks raised Kenyan fears that the refugee camp was linked to Al Shabaab's network, operations, and recruitment inside Kenya, and prompted a heavy-handed Kenyan security sector response against Somalis and Somali-Kenyans in general.[17] Fears that Dadaab is "a nursery for Al Shabaab" are generally not borne out by evidence – the Al Shabaab network in Kenya operates independent of Dadaab, and terror suspects have mainly been recruited from among Kenyan Somalis, not refugees in Dadaab.[18] Critics argue that the refugees are being scapegoated by Kenyan leaders.[19]

The initial policy to accelerate voluntary repatriation came in the form of a Tripartite Agreement between Kenya, the Federal Government of Somalia, and UNHCR in November 2013, just two months after the deadly Westgate Mall attack by Al Shabaab. Following a shocking massacre of 148 Kenyan students by Al Shabaab at Garissa University College in April 2015, Kenyan political leaders demanded that UNHCR close Dadaab in three months. Deputy President William Ruto warned UNHCR that if it failed to close the camps and repatriate the refugees, "we shall relocate them ourselves."[20] Under international pressure, the Kenya government extended the deadline, but then in May 2016 announced that the camp would be completely closed, first in November 2016, then by May 2017.[21] It then took a series of steps, including disbanding of the Department of Refugee Affairs, reduction of refugee services, and a public affairs campaign to pressure and cajole the refugees to return to Somalia. Misinformation and a climate of uncertainty about whether monetary support packages would remain available if refugees did not return right away induced close to thirty thousand to return in 2016.[22]

The Kenyan government, and UNHCR, came under heavy criticism from refugee and human rights groups for policies that appeared to some to be creating "push" factors that were coercing refugees into returning to Somalia against this preferences, which would be in violation of international humanitarian law.[23] Other critics added that the policy of pressuring refugees to return would hand Al Shabaab a public relations coup and thousands of potential recruits if returnees have no prospects for employment. The impact of the closure became a major topic of debate and media attention.

On February 9, 2017, a Kenyan high court blocked the Government's directive to close Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps by a fixed date, arguing that it violated the Kenyan constitution and international humanitarian law.[24] The Kenyan government said it would appeal the ruling on national security grounds. The period since 2013 has demonstrated that the Kenyan government has many means at its disposal to create a variety of pressures on the refugees to discourage them from staying in Kenya. These steps can be taken with or without a formal directive to close the camp. If the government is determined to close the camp, it possesses the means to make that happen informally. The court only ruled against the fixed date for camp closure.

However, the government appeared to reverse its position when on 25 March 2017 it signed the IGAD "Nairobi Declaration for Durable Solutions for Somali Refugees and Reintegration of Returnees to Somalia." This declaration commits IGAD member states to search for durable solutions for Somali refugees, including maintaining asylum space, expanding training for job skills, and most notably to "progressively advance

alternative arrangements to refugee camps and facilitate the free movement of refugees and their integration into national development plans and access to services."[25] If implemented, this pledge would offer welcome new options for Dadaab residents.

Whether the Kenyan government will continue to pursue a policy of pressured returns or will embrace the new direction suggested by the Nairobi Declaration remains unclear. It is possible that it could pursue both at the same time: that is, initiate a more relaxed policy toward refugee integration in Kenya outside the camps while still creating pressures on refugees to leave the camps. If the government's ultimate goal is the closure of the camps, these policies would not be in contradiction. It is noteworthy that the government is no longer registering new arrivals from Somalia or processing asylum claims.[26] In any case, humanitarian aid agencies and Somali authorities must continue to prepare for a likely influx of returnees over the course of 2017 and 2018.

REGIONAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORIGINS OF THE SOMALI REFUGEES

The Somali population at Dadaab includes a range of Somali groups, from all clans and most regions of the country.

Knowing which clans the refugees are identified with is critical for anticipating the impact of their return inside Somalia, as well as their levels of protection or vulnerability once repatriated. Unfortunately, this vital piece of information is a matter of some uncertainty and debate. This is in part because direct survey questions about clan identity are sensitive and subject to manipulation. In some situations, Somalis are disinclined to self-report clan identity out of a sense of nationalism or fear the information will be misused. In other cases, especially when population numbers are likely to be associated in some way with increased access to representation or resource allocation, attempts will be made to inflate one's clan's numbers.[27]

Two sources of information point to very different conclusions about the clan make up of Dadaab.

The first, the UNHCR 2014 Intention Survey, reports the following clan composition among the Somalis in Dadaab: Darod (30%), Ogaden (26%), Hawiye (11%), Rahan-weyn (8%) and Somali Bantu (7%).[28] There are several reasons to treat this survey result with extreme caution. First, the numbers only add up to 82%, and no explanation is given for the missing 18%. Then there is a major error in the categorization of the clans. The Ogaden are one of several clans within the Darood clan-family, not a separate clan.[29] Either they are being double-counted in this survey, in which case only 4% of the refugees are non-Ogaden Darood, or the Darood constitute an overwhelming 56% of all Dadaab refugees, which flies in the face of other evidence. Finally, the identity of Somali Bantu is not mutually exclusive with identity in a Somali clan – some Somali Bantu have "stand-alone" identities outside a Somali lineage, but others have been adopted into a Somali lineage, especially in the Digil-Mirifle.[30]

A second, alternative means of estimating refugee clan composition is by deduction, using a combination of region of origin, self-reported livelihoods, and thick anecdotal evidence from the areas of return. This approach appoints to a very different conclusion – namely, that the majority of the refugees are from the Digil-Mirifle clan-family and/or the Somali Bantu.

Of the 327,320 Somali refugees in Dadaab in April 2016, UNHCR reports that 75% (247,150) were from a very concentrated area of southern Somalia – the Middle and Lower Jubba regions, and Gedo region (see Map 2). Most of the population of these three regions reside in villages or towns along the Jubba River valley, and are subsistence farmers. The vast majority of subsistence farmers in the Jubba valley are Digil-Mirifle and/or Somali Bantu. Of the remaining refugees, 23,688 are from Bay region, which is almost entirely populated by the Digil-Mirifle clan. This only adds to the percentage of refugees who are Digil-Mirifle and/or Somali Bantu.

Information in areas of return (where over 30,000 refugees have already returned)[31] confirms that most returnees are in fact from one of these two groups. Local officials and aid agencies assume as much, and discuss the returnees as being primarily Digil-Mirifle. Some politicians in Kismayo and Mogadishu worry aloud about the demographic impact such a large influx of Digil-Mirifle will have on local politics (discussed below). Issues related to language – the Digil-Mirifle speak a distinct dialect of Somali called Af-Maay – have also arisen in liaising with returnees, which points to their clan identity. In addition, the wave of 2016 returnees have self-reported their home of origin, and most are from Lower and Middle Jubba (see Map 3).

Finally, UNHCR surveys have found that two-thirds of the refugees who returned to Somalia in 2016 had arrived in Dadaab between 2010 and 2012, escapees from the 2011 famine.[32] The vast majority of the 2011 famine victims who fled to Dadaab came from the Jubba Valley and the western portion of Bay region (Dinsoor).[33] That would make most of that cohort Digil-Mirifle or Bantu.

Survey research in Kismayo conducted for this analysis queried a sample of 131 returnees there, as well as IDPs and residents. Over half of the IDPs self-reported as Digil-Mirifle, Bantu, or other minority group, but surprisingly found that among the first wave of returnees in 2016-2017, only 10% were Digil-Mirifle or Bantu.[34] If accurate, this data could mean that the first wave of Dadaab returnees was composed mainly of Somalis from major clans with better social capital on which to draw in Kismayo, while weaker groups are opting to hold off. In fact, this was precisely what Somali Bantu representatives claimed in our interviews. They noted that the risks of return were far greater for minority groups, which were tending to hang back in Kenya in larger numbers as a result. Alternatively it could mean the percentage of Digil-Mirifle and Bantu in Dadaab are less than officials and community leaders in Kismayo and Mogadishu assume.

In sum, this analysis acknowledges continued uncertainty and mixed evidence regarding the clan composition of the returnees, but argues that the most persuasive on-the-ground evidence supports the position that the majority of the refugees are Digil-Mirifle and/or Somali Bantu. Because both the Digil-Mirifle and Bantu are treated as lower-status groups by dominant clan-families, they enjoy less protection and have more limited claims to resources. This has very important implications for returnees and their local impact, a claim which is central to much of the subsequent analysis in this report.[35]

LIKELY AREAS OF RETURN

Intention surveys by UNHCR suggest that three urban centres, Kismayo, Mogadishu, and Baidoa, are going to absorb nearly all of the returnees, at least in the first phase of their relocation, with Kismayo taking by far the most. A majority of the returnees originated from other places besides Kismayo, Mogadishu, and Baidoa – most fled rural agricultural or pastoral zones in southern Somalia.[36] They are opting to repatriate to these three cities for multiple reasons: because their home areas in southern Somalia are under the control of Al Shabaab (see Map 1); to use the cities as a transit area while they explore options to return home; or because they intend to settle permanently in an urban area. Though the returnees interviewed for this study reported a strong preference to return to their villages once safe to do so, many Somali observers suspect that returnees will become permanent fixtures in Somali urban areas. Subsistence level farming and pastoralism are difficult livelihoods under mounting stress in southern Somalia, and not an attractive option. While in Dadaab, refugees have grown accustomed to an urban environment and access to basic services that would not be available in rural southern Somalia, and so are likely to prefer to stay in Kismayo, Mogadishu, or Baidoa.

Depending on choices made by refugees, Kismayo is expected to absorb 100,000 or more of the returnees, while Mogadishu will receive about 50,000, and Baidoa 24,000. Kismayo could end up with even more, if current trends continue: of the 27,000 refugees returning to Somalia in the first six months of 2017, 87.2% have opted for Kismayo, a larger percentage than was initially projected (in a 2016 UNHCR survey, 73% of respondents in Dadaab identified Kismayo as their intended place of return).[37]

These three areas of return (all treated in detail in chapter 3 of this study) are very distinct, and will face very different challenges in absorbing the returnees.

CASH AND OTHER ASSISTANCE TO RETURNEES

Cash and material assistance to the returnees by UNHCR has been criticized as too little by some observers and too much by others. Financial support to the returnees has been modified over the past year, so there has been no uniform return package, a fact which has led to some local confusion and false rumours. In general, each Dadaab returnee receives a one-time US$200 “reinstallation grant” upon arrival in Somalia (no ceiling for families), and a subsistence allowance of US$200 per household for six months, for a total of US$1,200 per household. In addition, some returnee families receive allowances for the construction of a house or purchase of land, and some have been eligible for vouchers to cover costs of school fees.

This level of aid is far greater than any assistance to IDPs, drought victims, and the general poor in Somalia, and is a considerable sum of money by local standards. For that reason concerns have been raised that the financial and other support provided to returnees could become a potential source of resentment and friction with host communities as well as IDPs in the areas of return. This could be especially sensitive given the current severe drought and growing prospect of tens of thousands of destitute drought victims flooding into southern Somali cities. If returnees are seen as being provided far more aid than drought victims, tensions will spike. Fairness in aid allocation has long been a topic of sensitivity in Somalia, and one that can produce violence against recipients as well as aid agencies. It is worth noting that even staff in some international humanitarian organisations in Somalia and Nairobi expressed frustration that the returnees were the target of so much support at a time of urgent needs and famine-like conditions in parts of Somalia.

On the other hand, refugee advocates argue that the financial support to returnees will quickly run out in the relatively expensive cities of Kismayo and Mogadishu, and as that the cash will not be sufficient to purchase real estate, the returnees will end up living in the already packed IDP camps as the latest addition to Somalia's urban poor. There are also concerns that returnees may be targeted by criminals who are aware they hold cash.

SECURITY CONTEXT

More detailed assessments of security and conflict trends are provided in Chapters 2 and 3 of the study. For the purposes of this introduction, a few key observations are front-loaded:

- The FGS is still very much a failed state. Formal security forces are only able to provide basic protection to communities in a handful of locations. For most Somalis, protection is provided through clan affiliation and the deterrent effect of the threat of revenge attacks, by paid private security, and/or by recourse to customary or Islamic law administered by clan elders and clerics.
- The commoditisation of security means poor Somalis are much more vulnerable to threats of predation and assault.
- Members of weak or low-status clans enjoy less protection, especially when living as a minority or as guests in territory dominated by a more powerful clan.
- Because most of the returnees are from these weak social groups and are (in the case of Kismayo and Mogadishu) returning to cities dominated by major clans, they are likely to be vulnerable to predation. At the same time, they are also less likely to be viewed as a threat, so the risk of their return triggering armed communal conflict is relatively low.
- National and regional security forces vary in professionalism. In some locations, the security sector is largely unpaid, poorly controlled, and predatory, and hence distrusted by the population.[38] Their predatory behaviour includes extortion, theft, and sexual assault.[39] Far from serving as a source of protection, they are a threat to IDPs, returnees, and other socially vulnerable groups. In other locations, local security is relatively good, and returnees face lower threats of violence and predation.
- Al Shabaab - controlled areas of southern Somalia are generally zones of high levels of security and protection thanks to Al Shabaab's harsh imposition of sharia law. But returnees face other security threats in those zones, most notably the prospect of young men being forcibly conscripted into Al Shabaab, and in some cases forced marriages imposed on young women.[40] Returnees accused of being spies have also been beheaded. Al Shabaab taxation of local populations is quite high and very onerous as well. As a result, few refugees are willing to risk returning directly into Al Shabaab-controlled areas.

POLITICAL CONTEXT

The refugees will be returning to a country in a period of political transition. A lengthy and corruption-plagued indirect election process in 2016 and early 2017 has produced a new bicameral Parliament and the election of a new President, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmajo." The formation of a new government – including the naming of Prime Minister and cabinet members – preoccupied the political elite during the first half of 2017. The administration will have limited time and capacity to address the returnee problem during 2017 and possibly longer.

Farmajo comes into office with a strong reputation for administrative competence and anti-corruption credentials, raising hopes that the administration will be a viable partner and facilitator in assistance to returnees and other humanitarian and development efforts.

Farmajo inherits a dysfunctional, failed state which competes with a range of armed sub-state and non-state actors for influence. The FGS during 2012-2016 was characterized by four years of political paralysis and in-fighting. The capacity of the civil service he will preside over is very limited. The government provides very few services, has only a limited capacity to influence politics beyond the capital, and is unable to control its own security sector, which answers to clan military commanders. Corruption has been a problem of such vast proportions that the country is fairly described as a kleptocracy.[41] The federal government and Benadir regional administration have both struggled to establish authority over Mogadishu's seventeen districts, which are under the control of district commissioners, some of whom operate their districts as fiefdoms.[42] The new Mayor of Mogadishu is making moves to consolidate security sector operations in the city and reduce the autonomy of district commissioners, but it is too soon to tell if this initiative will succeed. Most core functions of the state – provision of security, basic health and education services, provision of power, justice – are either privatised or are provided by customary clan authorities or religious leaders.

Regional member states have been formed in the past several years in southern Somalia. For returnee policy and programming, some of these regional authorities are likely to play a more direct role than the federal government. Their capacity is generally weak, but some are demonstrating growing governance skills in their areas of control. These administrations are assessed in chapter 3.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

The social and cultural context into which the refugees are returning is critical to appreciate in order for aid agencies to avoid errors that could produce risks of harm to returnees or conflict in the host community.

Social stratification in Somali society is ubiquitous but is often hidden from the view of international aid actors, whose local partners in government and civil society may have reasons to downplay these social hierarchies. Direct reference to these stratifications by outsiders can be sensitive. But they are critical to understand as they generally shape access to resources, including foreign aid. A disproportionate percentage of the victims of the 1991-92 and 2011 famines were from low status groups.

Social stratification in southern Somalia has multiple dimensions, and includes:

- The Somali Bantu. This group occupies the lowest rung of Somali society and has been most prone to abuse and denial of access to resources. They are physically identified by hair type ("hard hair" or *jareer*) and most though not all are descendants of East African slaves held in the 19th century on Somali plantations in the Lower Shabelle. Some Bantu have been adopted into Somali lineages – mainly Digil-Mirifle clans - while others maintain identities outside of the Somali family. Those in Somali lineages may be afforded somewhat better rights and access but are still highly vulnerable. They constitute the poorest social group in Somalia. Areas of return in the Jubba Valley are heavily populated by the Somali Bantu. In Jubbaland, the Somali Bantu have recently fissured into smaller tribal groupings, as part of a bid to demand greater representation and resource access for each tribe. At least for now, this trend is having the effect of reducing enthusiasm for the generic group designation of "Somali Bantu." It has also led to a proliferation of new, rival tribal "Sultans" among the Somali Bantu.[43]
- Coastal non-ethnic Somali citizens. The Bajuni, Barawan, and Benadiri populations are associated with the Swahili and Indian Ocean littoral communities that have populated coastal East African port cities for well over one thousand years. They are culturally and linguistically distinct from Somalis, and are not part of a Somali lineage. These groups were heavily targeted for looting and assault in the 1991-92 civil war, and though in more recent times they have negotiated protection arrangements with more powerful Somali clans, they have limited ability to claim political rights and access to resources. This group's engagement with coastal commerce, and their familial links to populations in coastal Kenya and beyond, afford them more wealth as a group than many Somalis, but not political power.
- Low-caste sub-clans. Within each Somali clan exist low-status lineages, usually associated with certain forms of manual labour (hair-cutting, pottery-making, smithing), that are deemed unacceptable to other Somalis. These groups go by various names, including yibir, midgaan, and tumal. Their access to resources allocation within the clan is variable.
- Digil-Mirifle clan family. One of the four main clan-families in Somalia, the Digil-Mirifle have historically been viewed as weak and low-status because of the clan's association with sedentary agriculture and agro-pastoralism in the inter-riverine region. The clan's territory was repeatedly overrun and occupied by Darood and Hawiye militias in 1991-92, and most of the victims of 1991-92 and 2011 famines were Digil-Mirifle. Most of the IDPs in Mogadishu and Kismayo are Digil-Mirifle. The group speaks a distinct

dialect, Af-Maay. The relative position of the Digil-Mirifle in national politics has improved significantly since 1995, but they are still a more vulnerable group as IDPs and returnees outside of their home areas.

An important aspect of Somali society's resilience is the powerful, non-negotiable obligation to help one's kinsmen in times of need. This enables resources to flow to the most needy and constitutes a life-saving social security net. But this obligation does not extend beyond one's clan. That can matter when humanitarian or other assistance is channelled through local formal or informal authorities controlled by clans that are not the primary intended targets of the aid.

Claims of primacy to resource access on the part of empowered local or "indigenous" clans are captured in the Somali notion of *guri* and *galti*, or "indigenous" and "guest." The specific terms of *guri-galti* relations vary from place to place and change over time. Generally, guests are understood in this discourse to have less than full rights to political power, economic resources, land, and jobs. In some cases, the *galti* or guests can be from the dominant local clan but from another region of the eastern Horn of Africa. In Gedo region, for instance, Marehan from central region who have relocated to Gedo are viewed as *galti.* In some instances, including the two just referenced above, the *galti* become the most dominant group, which can create chronic tensions within the clan. Much of the long saga of insecurity and splits in the Marehan clan in Gedo region, dating back to the mid-1990s, can be traced to *guri-galti* tensions. Al Shabaab makes good use of this fault line. In Kismayo, members of the Ogaden clan coming from eastern Ethiopia or northern Kenya to claim jobs in the government or development agencies are also viewed locally as *galti.* Revealingly, in survey research carried out for this study, only 33% of the respondents in Kismayo of any clan reported that Kismayo was their place of origin – fully two-thirds reported a place of origin elsewhere, making Kismayo a city dominated by *galti*.[44] This could have seismic political implications down the road.

One social feature of southern Somalia with major significance on community resilience in the face of drought, displacement, or other humanitarian pressure is the apparent weakness of mutual support obligations among the sedentary farming communities, mainly the Digil-Mirifle and Bantu. This alleged weakness is relative to the very powerful mutual assistance obligations within the mainly pastoral clans. This phenomenon is poorly understood and understudied, and more a matter of "conventional wisdom" among Somalis, so care must be taken with this claim. The empirical basis for the claim rests on two sets of observations – first, the fact that most of the famine victims in 1991-92 and 2011 were from Digil-Mirifle and Bantu farming communities (suggesting less robust community resilience),[45] and second, collected anecdotal observations by Somalis over time that these historically agricultural communities simply cannot call on one another for help at the level other Somalis expect from their kinsmen. To put it another way, the claim is that the Digil-Mirifle and Somali Bantu farmers are poorer in social capital than are other Somalis.

If this observation is accurate, it has major implications for the returnees, most of whom are from these "poor in social capital" groups. They will have less access to shared information about local conditions, opportunities, and risks; less of a social safety net to fall back on if they come into severe hardship; and less resilience as a group in the face of systemic pressures like drought or armed conflict.

There are several potential explanations for the alleged poverty of social capital among the southern Somali farming communities. One explanation is material – that the inter-riverine farming communities are the poorest group in Somalia, and so simply have fewer resources to share among themselves in times of difficulty. A second is mode of production. While farming and agro-pastoral villages in southern Somalia (and elsewhere) have a wide array of mutual support and self- help systems, they tend not to be as extensive and intensive as the bonds of mutual self-help among pastoral kinsmen, where gifts to restock herds lost to drought or other misfortune is both common and vital for collective survival. Finally, some suggest that the Digil-Mirifle simply have weaker kinship identity than do the other, mainly pastoral Somali clans. Digil-Mirifle and Somali Bantu place a good deal of emphasis on their village or town as a source of identity and obligation, and somewhat less so on their clan. The Digil-Mirifle clan-family historically was constructed heavily on absorption of members of other clans in-migrating to the inter-riverine areas, and that fact could also contribute to a weaker sense or corporate identity and obligation to the adopted lineage.[46] Whatever the explanation, aid agencies should be aware of the possibility of weaker social capital and hence comparatively less robust resilience on the part of returnees from Somalia's agricultural communities.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT

One of the biggest structural challenges to successful refugee repatriation is the extraordinary level of poverty and underdevelopment in Somalia. Rural southern Somalia in particular is a zone of chronic food insecurity and malnutrition and almost non-existent basic services. As harsh as conditions are in Dadaab refugee camp, the reality is that the camp has been a significant step up for the poorest Somalis from rural southern Somalia.

Subsistence farming in the riverine and inter-riverine areas of southern Somalia, and pastoralism and agro-pastoralism in the rangeland, have been under profound stress since the outbreak of civil war in 1991. Even in years of plentiful rainfall, the rural areas features distressingly high levels of malnutrition and poverty. Insecurity in much of rural southern Somalia has contributed to low production and is a push-factor in its own right. All this has produced a large "urban drift" of destitute pastoralists and farmers into Somali cities, and is the main explanation why Somalia has an annual urbanisation rate over 4%.[47] This also explains why, despite results in intention surveys that suggest most returnees hope to eventually relocate to their rural homes, most will likely stay in the cities.

Somali cities feature greater wealth and purchasing power, but also exceptionally high levels of unemployment – estimated at 65%.[48] Youth unemployment in Somalia is estimated at 68% - the highest in the world.[49] Returnees will be hard pressed to find sustainable livelihoods in the urban centres. Somalia's major cities are also relatively expensive compared to the countryside, which will add to the financial stress felt by the returnees. The informal sector dominates Somalia's urban economies, and is a source of casual and periodic labour for the urban poor.

More fortunate households in Somalia have a relative living abroad in Somalia's large diaspora. The diaspora is under a powerful obligation to remit as much money as it can to extended family back home. Somalia's economy is heavily dependent on remittances, which have been estimated at $1.5 billion per year but which, according to the IMF, may actually exceed $2.3 billion annually.[50] Most (though not all) of those remittances are sent to urban households. Most importantly, most of the extended families enjoying access to remittances are from the most powerful clan-families who have been better positioned to underwrite the sending of family members overseas. Socially marginalised groups, including many of the returnees, do not have family in the diaspora, and so miss out on a major safety net in the Somali economy.

Because of such high youth and urban unemployment and because of the high status enjoyed by diaspora members in Somali society, thousands of youth attempt to travel to Europe or North America each year, despite the dangers and expense. This outmigration in search of a better life, known as *tahriib*, is a big business involving human traffickers and others. Young returnees coming from Dadaab will find themselves returning to a country that many of their cohorts are actively trying to leave.

THE 2017 DROUGHT AND ITS IMPACT

The severe drought afflicting much of Somalia in 2016-17 is at the time of this writing, threatening to become a famine. Over six million Somalis – more than half the population of the country – is in need, of which 3.2 million are considered to be in a state of crisis and emergency.[51] An estimated 714,000 Somalis have been displaced by the drought since late 2016.[52] Most of those destitute drought victims are now entering Somali towns in search of food and shelter from relatives or aid agencies. The drought is most severe in the northeast of Somalia (Puntland and eastern Somaliland), but is affecting the entire eastern Horn of Africa. Two hotspots for extreme food insecurity exist, in northeast Somalia and in Bay region and southern areas of Bakool region (see Map 6). Both of those areas are now categorized as Phase 4, or emergency levels – one level before famine.[53]

The epicentre of the humanitarian emergency in southern Somalia is in roughly the same area hit by the 2011 famine, and the area of origin of many of the current returnees. If pressed to return in 2017 they will be moving back into precisely the kinds of conditions that forced them to flee in the first place.

The scale of this humanitarian emergency is likely to dwarf the returnees as a priority issue for local officials and international humanitarian actors. The needs of the drought victims will be far more urgent than those of the returnees, and we should expect that local actors will be preoccupied with what could become famine response. Some aid agencies and local officials interviewed for this study openly complained about the imbalance between assistance to returnees and aid to drought victims.

Of the three main areas of return, Baidoa will feel the effect of the drought more than will Kismayo or Mogadishu, although by mid-2017 Kismayo was experiencing an influx of drought victims from the Jubba Valley. Baidoa is likely to become the top location for drought victim movement in search of help. The ISWA is calling on the international community to suspend movement of returnees to Baidoa for this reason.

SOMALI NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The scale of both the returnees and the existing IDP population in Somalia ought to make them equally prominent topics in the recently released Somali National Development Plan 2017-19. That is not the case. The aspirational document only includes a brief section on IDPs and returnees (pp 151-56), and devotes almost all of its attention to the plight of IDPs. Revealingly, returnees are treated as a variation of IDPs, not as a group with very distinct challenges.

Where returnees are covered, the document calls for integration of returnees and access to services and jobs for returnees. There is no call for a return of repatriated refugees to their home areas; the report is realistic about the likelihood most returnees will go to, and stay in, large urban areas. The position of the development plan is at odds with the attitudes of some leading political and community figures calling for returnees to go to their home areas.

CORRUPTION AND AID DIVERSION

Somalia has a long and unhappy history of corruption and in particular diversion of humanitarian aid, the latter dating back to the post-Ogaden War refugee camps in the 1980s. The cartels which work to divert humanitarian aid are robust, and will certainly be attentive to opportunities to exploit the return of the Dadaab refugees. A review of US Food for Peace programmes in the 1990s identified Somalia as the site of the worst diversion of aid in the programme's history.[54] Food aid diversion in the Somali civil war of 1991-92 was a major cause of the famine which led to the deaths of 250,000 people; the predation by militias was also one of the main reasons for the massive armed UN humanitarian intervention in 1993. Over the past several decades, a well-honed and sophisticated system of aid diversion has developed in the country, implicating local government officials, business contractors, port managers, NGO employees, local militias, international aid agency personnel, and even Al Shabaab.[55] The humanitarian aid itself is only a small part of the resources targeted for embezzlement. Contracts, rentals, security, employment, fees and licenses, refugee identity cards, and other assets associated with foreign aid are all targets of corruption. Aid agencies are also routinely targeted for extortion, typically in the form of protection payments, for the right to continue operating inside Somalia. Kleptocratic behaviour extends to the highest levels of government, where it was on full display during the 2011 famine that claimed 260,000 lives.[56] This is of concern in the current context, where aid agencies are under pressure to work through rather than around government agencies that are in some cases weak and/or corrupt. The fact that the new President, is promising a vigorous anti-corruption campaign is somewhat reassuring, but it will take time to reverse an ingrained culture of government corruption.

Less is known about corruption at the regional state level, at which the authorities are likely to be most directly involved in managing returnee policies and issues. But fragmentary evidence suggests corruption could be a crippling problem for some regional authorities too. On the other hand, regional state authorities are looking to build up their legitimacy among their constituencies, and so may be more inclined to exercise better stewardship of humanitarian assistance passing through their areas of control. The single most important variable on this count is the clan affiliation of authorities and the targeted population. Authorities sharing the same clan identity as returnees will be under greater pressure to ensure delivery of aid. Authorities with no clan links to returnees will be under no such pressure.

Corruption also implicates non-state actors, most notably the "black cats" or IDP camp managers who use IDPs to attract and divert aid. The abuses meted out by these gatekeepers has been well-documented.[57] Efforts have been made to work with the more responsible camp managers in order to create pressure on all camp managers to respect the rights of IDPs, but predatory behaviour remains a problem.[58] At a minimum, IDPs have been "commoditised" by entrepreneurs operating private IDP camps for profit. Because many to most returnees will seek shelter in IDP camps, the behaviour and interests of IDP camp gatekeepers will be a problem of direct relevance to programmes seeking to assist and support returnees.

AL SHABAAB

Al Shabaab holds or operates freely in most of the rural zones of southern Somalia where most of the refugees originated from (see Map 1). Al Shabaab controlled areas of southern Somalia are generally zones of high levels of security and protection thanks to the group's harsh imposition of sharia law. But, as noted above, returnees face other security threats in those zones, most notably the prospect of young men being forcibly conscripted into Al Shabaab.[59] Returnees have also been accused of being spies by Al Shabaab. Al Shabaab has been ambivalent in its statements about returnees, viewing them as both a potential opportunity and threat.

Barring a collapse of the group or some other "black swan" scenario, Al Shabaab is very likely to continue to maintain control of much of rural southern Somalia for the next few years. There is a possibility the group will be driven out of parts of the Jubba valley by an AMISOM-led offensive, but even in that event it will retrain a presence in the remote hinterlands of the region, and will still have networks of operatives in areas nominally controlled by the government.

The group derives most of its revenue from taxation/extortion of Somali citizens and businesses. The group's strong capacity to tax most Somalis in south-central Somalia, and even in Kenyan border towns, means that it is very likely that returnees will find themselves in contact with the group, and may be put under pressure to pay taxes on humanitarian support provided to them.

Al Shabaab's terror attacks have not to date specifically targeted IDP camps or other areas where returnee are likely to cluster, and it is unlikely to do so in the future.

Al Shabaab continues to reject direct international NGO operations in its areas of control, and views humanitarian aid agencies with suspicion – as spies for the West, or as part of a conspiracy to undermine Somali food production and perpetuate dependency on outside aid.

A critical aspect of Al Shabaab's continued ability to operate and recruit in much of the Jubba Valley is its successful strategy of exploiting and appropriating the grievances of marginalised social groups. Because most of the returnees are from weak and low status groups, they could become easy marks for Al Shabaab recruitment if they are mistreated or abused upon their return.

Al Shabaab faces its own internal divisions that bear monitoring in possible areas of refugee return. At the time of this writing, a former deputy commander and original founder of Al Shabaab, Mukhtar Robow (estranged from the group since 2013), began negotiations with the FGS, at the same time the US government withdrew its reward for his capture. If Robow and the FGS reach an agreement, his complete defection from Al Shabaab could lead to the loss of a quarter or more of the Al Shabaab fighters who had remained under his command. Other Al Shabaab fighters from Robow's clan-family, and Digil-Mirifle, could be induced to defect as well, further weakening the group in Bay and Bakool regions. This development has major implications for returnees and could improve access and security in parts of rural Bakool and Bay regions.

INTERNATIONAL AID AGENCY PRESENCE AND CAPACITY

International programming to support efforts to mitigate the impact of returnees on local host communities in southern Somalia will be constrained by a number of factors, most notably lack of full access to the main areas of return. Most access limitations are linked to poor security. Rural areas of return in most of southern Somalia are, with few exceptions, no-go areas for international agencies due to continued Al Shabaab presence. Some small towns in many rural areas have been recovered from Al Shabaab but are enclaves with limited international aid presence. The three main cities which will host the majority of the returnees, Kismayo, Mogadishu, and Baidoa, are zones where international agencies operate, but with significant security restrictions. The anticipated redeployment of AMISOM forces starting in 2018 will add to uncertainties over security in the main urban centres.

Access in southern Somalia has worsened considerably since the mid-1990s, a trend that pre-dates the rise of Al Shabaab. International aid agencies have coped with limited access in a number of ways, including outsourcing of aid delivery to local private contractors, working through local NGO partners, direct cash transfers using remittance companies, vouchers, reliance on third party monitoring, and other adaptations. Predictably, none has been without problems, though some appear to fare better than others.[60]

Among the most difficult problems to manage in providing effective assistance to Somali returnees in relatively non-permissive environments include the following:

- Security restrictions. Sharp restrictions on movement by international and national staff are in place in the main areas of return and limit capacity to meet with key stakeholders, engage with the community, and monitor and evaluate.
- Monitoring capacity. Southern Somalia has been dubbed by some critics as an "accountability free zone" because of sharp limits on monitoring capacity. Monitoring is still possible, but faces serious challenges.
- Targeting of beneficiaries. A long-running humanitarian challenge in southern Somalia for international aid agencies has been problems associated with targeting at need or vulnerable populations. Targeted aid produces disputes, jealousies, and fraudulent claims, and can lead to local violence. But universal aid is costly. Because the returnees are beneficiaries of cash assistance that, while very modest for their long term needs, is quite substantial by local standards (especially in Kismayo and Baidoa), the risk of producing a backlash with the targeted assistance is not inconsequential.
- Predation. Weak social groups targeted for humanitarian aid are very often preyed upon by more powerful militias. International aid agencies face great challenges ensuring aid will remain with returnees from weak social groups.
- Weak institutional memory. The international aid agency presence in southern Somalia has had very limited presence in most areas over the past 15 or so years, and relatively few aid agency personnel have served in country for a significant amount of time.
- Capture. Aid agencies sometimes run the risk of coming under the de facto control of a particular clan or faction in its areas of operation. When that occurs, critical information is filtered and aid agency personnel can be blinded to how aid and other resources are being distributed.
- Counter-terrorism laws. Since 2001, national legislation in a number of countries, most notably the USA, threatens heavy penalties for any provision, intentional or not, of material benefit to designated terror groups. In Somalia, Al-Shabaab has been designated since February 2008 by the US government, and other have followed suit. For aid agencies operating in Somalia, especially in areas known to have an active Al Shabaab presence, these counter-terrorism laws are potentially major impediments to engagement. As noted above, Al Shabaab possesses a robust capacity to "tax" (divert, typically via extortion) almost all resources introduced into southern Somalia, whether aid, remittances, government salaries, contracts, or even military assistance to the Somali National Army. This places almost every international actors operating in southern Somalia at risk of violating counter-terrorism laws. In 2011, counter-terror legislation was one of several factors blamed for inadequate international response to the famine.[61] Today, although humanitarian actors have been reassured by Western embassies that they will not be snared by these laws if operating in good faith, concerns over vulnerability to charges of material support to Al Shabaab remain.[62]

REFUGEES, IDPS, AND IDENTITY POLITICS

Somalis have been displaced by armed conflict, ethnic cleansing, and humanitarian crises in extraordinary numbers since 1988. Some households have been displaced from their home areas for a quarter of a century, raising the question of whether they can still be considered displaced. Prior to the 2016-17 drought, UNHCR estimated that 1.1 million Somalis, or close to 10% of the population, are internally displaced. Severe drought conditions have triggered a new wave of 700,000 displaced persons since late 2016, raising the number of IDPs to as many as 1.8 million.[63]

Displaced persons from major clans tend to find accommodation with extended kin, and after a time are simply considered residents of the cities in which they settle. By contrast, Somalis from poorer, weaker social groups - such as the Digil-Mirifle and the Somali Bantu – constitute the bulk of total IDPs in southern Somalia. They are much more likely to cluster in IDP camps in cities such as Mogadishu and Kismayo, where they are making up a larger and growing percentage of the total urban population. They continue to be identified locally, and continue to self-identify as IDPs even after residing in these cities for over a decade. The displaced self-identify as IDPs because the label offers some hope of being targeted for humanitarian aid. Aid agencies identify them as IDPs as a way to target assistance to a group that is widely considered to be among the most vulnerable in Somalia. Local host communities apply the label to them for very different reasons – as a way to mark them as guests, or *galti*, not *degan*, or residents. As IDPs, they are viewed as

possessing rights to resource access and political rights in their "home" regional state, not in the host city. It is frequently suggested, in places like Mogadishu, Kismayo, and Puntland, that steps should be taken to require IDPs to "go home." In Mogadishu, IDPs have been subjected to forced eviction. In Puntland, for a time official government policy treated IDPs from southern Somalia as aliens, to be screened, given special identity cards, and in some cases evicted.

This politicised use of the designation of IDP is critical and under-appreciated. In a context where several of southern Somalia cities are increasingly populated by waves of Digil-Mirifle and Bantu drifting in from rural areas, the IDP label may provide them access to humanitarian resources, but denies them political rights. The dominant political discourse in Somalia on land, right, and identity privileges the notion of *U dhasheey*, or rights by blood (*jus sanguinis*). That is, cities and territory in Somalia are viewed by many as "belonging" to one clan; others may live there, but on negotiated terms, with limited claims to resources and power.[65] In the case of Mogadishu, for instance, a dominant discourse among some Hawiye clan-family members is that the capital is a Hawiye city. Likewise, in Kismayo, the currently dominant discourse is that the city is a Darood clan-family city, and more specifically for the group now in power there an Absame clan city. These are very contested narratives – other clans make historical claims to these urban areas, while still others argue that rights should be extended based on other logics – *Ku dhasheey* (rights by birth), or rights by national citizenship (i.e. the nationalist position that all Somalis should enjoy full rights anywhere they choose to live in the country).

The problem with the *U dhasheey* discourse that dominates Somali politics today is that the IDPs are very unlikely to return to rural areas of southern Somalia. They are very likely to constitute a permanent fixture in Somalia's main cities, whether the host community likes it or not. If they are permanently denied full citizenship rights in these cities, and continue to be labelled as IDPs indefinitely to justify that exclusionist position, Somalia's main urban areas risk looking uncomfortably similar to apartheid South Africa's townships, where slum-dwellers are used as a pool of cheap labour, are defined along ethnic or tribal lines, and are assigned citizenship and rights in a distant homeland.

If instead the IDPs are accorded full citizenship rights in the cities and regional member states where they have relocated to, their sheer numbers will challenge the claims of dominant host communities on the host city. IDPs already constitute about 25% of the Mogadishu population, and probably even a greater percentage of the population of Kismayo.

The returnees from Dadaab will have a substantial impact on this already fragile demographic situation. In Kismayo, returnees could conceivably lead to a situation in which Digil-Mirifle and Bantu IDPs match or outnumber the population of the dominant clans residing in the city. In Mogadishu, their presence will not have such a dramatic impact, but will drive up the percentage of Digil-Mirifle and Bantu IDPs there still further.[66] In survey research conducted for this study, over half of the IDPs surveyed reported being a member of a minority group: Digil-Mirifle, Bantu, or Bajuni.[67]

Why is this potentially politically explosive? In the event that Somalia succeeds in moving toward universal, direct election of political candidates in 2020 or later, and if Somali constituencies engage in ethnic block voting (as they have done in Kenyan counties and in Somaliland), these new demographic realities could produce uncomfortable election results and challenge the narratives of dominant clans about their hegemony in and claims on major cities.

URBANISATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Dadaab refugees will be returning to urban centres in Somalia that are already experiencing exceptionally high levels of growth rates. Somalia's urban annual growth rate is 4%, among the highest in the world.[68] Today, 42% of the total Somali population is urban, a major demographic shift for a previously very rural society.[69] The returnees will intensify this trend, especially in smaller urban areas like Kismayo. They will be settling in cities with already large populations in peri-urban areas, with overstretched infrastructure and basic services, and with rising real estate prices.

LAND AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Land access is a top priority for returnees and a major source of tension and conflict across southern Somalia.[70] Land values in urban and peri-urban space are very high, and hence are one of the most coveted resources in the country. At the same time, land title governance is a broken system. Government registration

records of urban land titles are either lost or in private Somali hands and kept abroad, where those in possession of the records charge fees to verify claims. Occupation, sale, and resale of property since 1991 has made it difficult to provide original ownership. Deaths of original land owners in the diaspora lead to multiple competing claims by their surviving kin. False documentation is ubiquitous, so possession of a deed is no guarantee of ownership. False claims on real estate are very common, especially during sale of the property, and forces the buyer to pay out costly compensation that is really a disguised form of a nuisance tax. Corrupt local courts cannot be counted on to resolve disputes fairly. And serious land disputes can and do result in violence. One of the top causes of homicide in Hargeisa, and otherwise peaceful city, has been real estate disputes. The importance of threats of violence in resolving land disputes has benefited stronger clans at the expense of weaker clans unable to mount a credible threat. The returnees fall into this latter category and so will be very vulnerable to land grabs if they attempt to buy real estate. This observation is borne out across the country, even in relatively lawful Somaliland. There a recent survey found that "those who belong to a marginalized group are more likely to encounter issues with land ownership." This included the poor, women, low status clans, and IDPs.[71]

GENDER DIMENSIONS

There is overwhelming evidence to support the observation that female returnees from weak or marginalised social groups will be the most vulnerable to a variety of forms of predation. The most immediate is the threat of physical and sexual assault; those who find themselves in IDP camps or otherwise without the protection of a more powerful group will be vulnerable. Though sexual assault is said by some to be somewhat less chronic in Mogadishu's IDP camps today than in the past, it is still a serious danger.[72] Another recent study confirms that female IDPs are exceptionally vulnerable to loss of property.[73]

Available UNHCR data do not indicate that a large percentage of returning households are female-headed; of those refugees expressing a willingness to return however, adult women considerably outnumber the men, 58% to 42%, suggesting that female single headed households will count as a significant category of the returnees.[74] Women traveling and then resettling alone with their children constitute an especially vulnerable group. Despite access to universal education in Dadaab, female refugees of all age groups possess less education than males, with high percentages in possession of no formal education. The only exception is females aged 12-17; most of that cohort has at least some education, and almost as much as males of that age-set.[75] This means that the adult female returnees will be consigned to unskilled labour, and hence will be very likely to end up in IDP camps when their funds run out. The teen female returnees will stand the greatest chance of securing semi-skilled or skilled employment, if those jobs are available in sufficient numbers.

YOUTH DIMENSIONS

The returnees are disproportionately young. Of those expressing willingness to repatriate, 60% are under age 18; 36% are between the age of 18-59, and those 60 and older comprise the remaining 4%.[76] Most of these youths have been at Dadaab since 2011; the younger half of those under 18 will have no living memory of life in Somalia.

As noted above, most of this age-set has had access to at least some education; some possess high school diplomas, and will speak English, the language of instruction in Dadaab, reasonably well. This could give them advantages for job prospects locals will not have, though many of the best jobs in Kismayo are currently being picked up by Somali Kenyans and Somali Ethiopians who are not refugees, and whose English language and technical training is superior to both that of the locals and the refugees.

There is some speculation that the young Digil-Mirifle and Somali refugees raised in cosmopolitan Dadaab will be much less willing to accept the social stratification and marginalisation assigned to them upon their return to Somalia. Whether this is true or not remains to be seen. If they are in fact resistant to the kinds of discrimination and second class citizenship they are likely to encounter in Kismayo or Mogadishu, they could become an attractive target for a range of expressions of resistance, including Al Shabaab.

2. SOUTHERN SOMALIA CONFLICT ANALYSIS

This chapter focuses attention on conflict patterns in the main areas of refugee return in southern Somalia – Mogadishu, Kismayo/Lower and Middle Jubba, regions, and Baidoa/Bay and Bakool regions. Understanding the existing conflict dynamic and the fault-lines that could produce armed violence in these areas is critical to anticipate potential impact of the returnees in these zones.

CONTEXT OF ARMED CONFLICT AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Southern Somalia is not in a state of civil war, but suffers from chronic levels of insecurity and violence. One obvious reason is the lack of capacity of government authorities at the central or regional level to provide reliable security and rule of law. Armed non-state actors – various clan militias, Al Shabaab, private security forces, gangs, and paramilitary groups formally hatted to the government but acting independently of any governmental authority – all possess the ability to employ violence to whatever ends they seek.

This "not war not peace" situation is one that Somali civilians have learned to cope with. Adapting to such a highly insecure environment requires possession of extensive and up-to-date knowledge about armed groups, their behaviour, and their areas of activity. Newcomers like returnees from Dadaab will be at a distinct disadvantage, at least in the first weeks and months of their return.

In the main areas of return, returnees will encounter state security personnel – police, soldiers, and special forces – but these expressions of the formal security sector will not necessarily provide the protection the returnees may expect. Most security sector personnel across southern Somalia go unpaid for long periods of time, due to gross corruption in the government. This incentivises them to engage in predatory behaviour against local communities, especially socially weak groups.

The security context into which the refugees are returning is likely to change significantly in the next few years, thanks to the planned withdrawal of AMISOM forces between 2018 and 2020. The details of this redeployment are still under discussion, and efforts are being made to create incentives for them to stay in some capacity, but it is likely that at a minimum the presence of AMISOM will shrink. That will place greater pressure on the Somali security sector to protect key installations. At present, the Somali security forces at the federal and regional level are not capable of replacing AMISOM. This could create a security vacuum which Al Shabaab exploits, producing higher levels of urban insecurity than is the case at present.

Conversely, a planned military offensive against Al Shabaab in the Jubba Valley could liberate some of the homelands where most of the returnees fled. It is unlikely that many returnees would rush back to their farms in this instance – the risks of reversals in security would be high – but in the longer term this could produce some opportunities to access, rent, or sell their farmlands.

TYPES AND INTENSITY OF ARMED VIOLENCE

Rates and lethality of armed violence in Somalia have grown since 2012. In the 12 month period before and after the declaration of the FGS in 2012-13, the number of armed incidents per month nationally ranged from 80 to 230, and reported fatalities ranged from 100 to 600 per month.[77] But by 2015, the total number of armed incidents increased from 234 to 316 per month, peaking in March 2016 at 346. They generally fall into one of three categories.

Terror attacks. Terror attacks by Al Shabaab in 2012-2013 ranged between 5 and 22 per month, none producing more than a handful of casualties.[78] But they increased significantly thereafter, averaging 81 per month in 2015, peaking in March 2016 at 116 attacks.[79]

Al Shabaab's attacks have increased in lethality as well as frequency. Though most of its daily attacks are low-level – typically grenade or mortar attacks, assassinations, or use of improvised explosive devices – it has since 2014 launched "complex terror attacks" at a rate one to three per month. These attacks usually involve a vehicle borne improvised explosive device at the gate of the intended target, followed by an attack within the compound by gunmen. These attacks have targeted both hard targets, such as Villa Somalia and the Mogadishu International Airport, as well as softer targets, principally hotels and restaurants popular with

Somali politicians and foreign guests. Civilian casualties are common in these attacks, but returnees and IDPs are not specifically targeted.

The number of major terror attacks conducted by Al Shabaab fell off somewhat in mid-2016, possibly as a result of intense pressure and setbacks the group has faced at the hands of stepped up counter-terrorism operations by both Somalia forces and external military actors. It has been under intense pressure in its stronghold, the Jubba river valley, thanks to "Operation Jubba Corridor." It has been hit with heavy losses by US aerial strikes in support of Somali armed forces and AMISOM.

The principal risk posed by Al Shabaab to returnees is assassination, targeting returnees who are believed to be spies. A number of returnees, mainly those seeking to return to farms in Al Shabaab-controlled areas, have found themselves facing this accusation. A second threat is forced conscription of young men. This has already occurred to some returnees transiting by land from Dadaab to Kismayo. A third risk, and one that worries local authorities the most, is Al Shabaab recruitment of returnee communities.

Communal clashes. Clashes involving rival clan militias remain the single most common form of armed conflict in Somalia, typically comprising 35% to 40% of total security incident per month.[80] Most of these clashes are localised, and typically are driven by land disputes, spiralling revenge killings that elders have been unable to mediate, or resource disputes (employment, checkpoints, etc.). The more dangerous tend to be those that are manipulated by political elites and have their origins in contestation over political authority and control of major sources of rent and revenue. Most of these are now in rural areas; communal clashes on a significant scale have been relatively uncommon in major urban areas where returnees are most likely to relocate.

Nonetheless, returnees stand a greater chance of being drawn into communal clashes, both as targets and as combatants, than they do becoming part of Al Shabaab violence. The growing number of returnees risks putting pressure on local communities in places like Kismayo, where resentments toward the returnees could lead to sporadic communal clashes.

Criminal violence. Criminal violence in Somalia gets far less attention than communal, political, and terrorism related violence, but is the third most common source of security incidents nationally and has trended upward in recent years. Crime and criminal violence appears to be related to exceptionally high rate of urban youth unemployment.[81] Spikes in crimes rates are occurring alongside a worrisome rise in gang formation and activity in parts of the country. Though the gangs have generally not yet been drawn into politically-instigated violence, their proliferation renders Somalia more susceptible to political or communal violence, and has led to a sharp increase in rape, street violence, and armed robbery.[82]

Violent crime is by far the greatest threat to returnees. If left confined to crowded IDP camps with no prospects for employment, it is possible some returnee youth could turn to violent crime and gang formation themselves.

REGIONAL PATTERNS OF ARMED VIOLENCE AND TENSIONS

Hotspots of communal violence wax and wane across southern Somalia, but some zones have been more prone to chronic insecurity than others since 2015. A number of fault-lines exist in these areas that merit close attention for the impact that the returnees could have on them.

Jubbaland. Four distinct security zones currently exist in Jubbaland State of Somalia (JSS). Each will interact with the returnees in very different ways.

1. *Kismayo*. Kismayo city is by far and away the most important site in Jubbaland for measuring the impact of returnees, since the city is or will be the site of relocation for most of them. For much of the past 25 years Kismayo and surrounding countryside have been among the most chronically contested and violent in the entire country. But with capture of the city by Ahmed Madobe's Ras Kamboni militia in 2013, the declaration of a Jubbaland Charter and interim authority in 2013, and the gradual consolidation of political control of the city by the JSS since that time, insecurity of all types has dramatically fallen in the city.

   This has mainly been attributed to the effectiveness of the JSS security sector, most notably the intelligence branch, JISA, which monitors the city and its population more robustly than arguably any

other local armed authority in Somalia except Al Shabaab. In addition, the fact that the Jubbaland authorities have made the city open to all former residents, from a variety of previously quarrelling clans, has reduced the risk of clan-based clashes over the city for the time being. In a 2016 survey of public attitudes in Jubbaland, Saferworld found that "66 per cent of survey participants stated that security had improved since 2013 and 68 per cent attributed this directly to the Jubbaland Administration. Security was the one area that even those critical of the Jubbaland Administration identified as a positive contribution that the new FMS had brought about."

The presence of Kenyan AMISOM forces, and US military support, has also made it more difficult for Al Shabaab to launch major attacks against the city and kept the group on the defensive in the Jubba areas.

Over the past two years, a number of attacks involving grenades or IEDs have occurred in the city, but these have been low in number and lethality. Engagements between JSS security forces (the *darawish*, or rapid deployment force) and Al Shabaab have occurred much more frequently in the Kismayo hinterland, which the JSS does not fully control. Some assassinations have also taken place in the city. But communal clashes have been rare. This is good news for the returnees.

The relationship between Al Shabaab and elements of the JSS are complex and have the potential to produce unpredictable security situations. At least some degree of collusion has occurred between elements in the JSS, Al Shabaab, and the Kenyan Defence Forces involving charcoal exports.[84] Other "understandings" or quid pro quos may be at play in Kismayo and the hinterland as well, and these make predicting security environments very difficult.

Kismayo's current political settlement is fragile and must cope with several fault-lines, any of which could conceivably be exploited to produce insecurity. The main one is, of course, the enduring threat of Al Shabaab attacks; the JSS and Kenyan forces stationed in Kismayo are top targets of the group. The potential for a major terrorist attack in the city always exists. A second are potential regional rejectionists. The most prominent of these in the past was Col. Barre Hirale, a Marehan political figure who held Kismayo as leader of the self-declared Jubba Valley Alliance (JVA) from 1998 to 2006, and who militarily opposed Madobe and his administration as recently as 2015. This armed rejectionist movement was animated by clan divisions – Hirale represents the interests of some Marehan claimants on Kismayo, while Madobe represents Ogaden clan interests.[85] The two clans have been major protagonists in the long-running conflicts over control of Kismayo since 1991. Opposition to Madobe's, and Ogaden, control of Kismayo was so strong it led to a temporary alliance of expedience between Hirale's militia, the SFG, and Al Shabaab in 2013.[86] That coalition, and the threat it posed at the outskirts of the city, has since dissipated. For now, Hirale has been side-lined, and some of his militia integrated into JSS security forces, and while not all Marehan may be happy about the political dispensation in Kismayo, they are able to live and do business there, and pose no immediate threat of defection.[87] The fact that the new President of the FGS, Abdullahi Farmajo, is Marehan may also be diverting some of the clan leadership's energies toward Mogadishu.

Other groups with varying degrees of animosity toward the JSS include some Digil-Mirifle intellectuals and politicians, who have argued that the Darood political domination of JSS masks the demographic reality that the Digil-Mirifle are the largest constituency in Jubbaland (a claim that is impossible to confirm as no demographic surveys by clan have taken place in JSS). This group pushed for Jubbaland to become part of a six region federal state called Southwest Somalia, a bid that failed. The Digil-Mirifle currently do not pose any armed rejectionist group, but their relative representation in JSS will be an important factor in maintaining the political settlement. If direct, universal elections are held in JSS in the future (they are slated for 2019, but this is unlikely), some of these demographic claims will be put to the test, and the large number of Digil-Mirifle returnees will become a political factor and possible source of tensions.

Sub-clan rivalries within the large Absame or Kumade clan[88] are another chronic fault-line in Kismayo, and are arguably the most challenging to manage. Today, Madobe's large Mohamed Zubeir sub-clan is politically ascendant in the JSS. Other Kumade sub-clans, such as the Aulihan, have periodically been rivals of the Mohamed Zubeir in the region. At present, the alliance between the two is firm, but the relationship could be tested. Intra-Kumade and Darood clan political rivalries in northern Kenya, where contestation over control of Garissa county can produce armed clashes (an immediate concern with Kenyan elections slated for August 2017), have the potential to spill over into Kismayo.

In the event of an AMISOM withdrawal in coming years that includes Kenyan forces redeploying across the border, the JSS security forces appear to be better placed to hold key installations from Al Shabaab attacks than most other government-affiliated armed forces in southern Somalia. They are more frequently paid, better disciplined, and enjoy better intelligence thanks to the effectiveness of the JISA. They also enjoy direct support from US military advisors, including aerial attack support. But there is no question that an AMISOM withdrawal would constitute a real test of the JSS security sector and a situation Al Shabaab would try to exploit.

2. *The Jubba valley – Lower and Middle Jubba.* All of the Jubba valley from Jamaame district to Saakow is in the hands of Al Shabaab. The valley is currently the site of the only towns of any size that the group has had sustained control of since 2013 – Jamaame, Kamsuma, Jilib, Buale, and Saakow. The group has come under several drone and other targeted aerial attacks in and around the valley, but otherwise has not been threatened. An offensive up the Jubba valley by AMISOM has often been discussed, but has yet to materialise. In consequence, the river valley has had little insecurity to deal with. Al Shabaab keeps a firm grip on armed mobilisation in the valley, so communal tensions that may exist are generally kept bottled up. Criminal violence is difficult to track due to lack of access to the valley, but is believed to be very low. Al Shabaab has a reputation for managing land disputes, one of the most common sources of insecurity in high value irrigable riverine area, with professionalism and firmness.

   The main source of insecurity is Al Shabaab arrests and executions of residents they believe to be spies. This has been a particular problem for the small number of returnees from Dadaab who have dared to venture back home to their farms; anecdotal evidence collected from returnees who fled back to Kenya suggests at least in some cases Al Shabaab has targeted a family member as a suspected spy. A more common threat posed by Al Shabaab is forced recruitment of young men, who are then put into high risk terrorist operations.

   What is not known at this time is whether and to what extent local populations in the valley will welcome liberation from Al Shabaab if AMISOM launches an offensive, or if they will fight alongside Al Shabaab. Each of the many communities will have its own calculations about whether incorporation into the JSS administration will advance or harm their interests. Risk management is very likely to dominate those calculations.

3. *Pastoral hinterland of Lower and Middle Jubba region.* Most of the main towns in this area are under the nominal authority of the JSS, but are largely left to local clan authorities to govern. Al Shabaab units move freely through this territory, taxes commerce on the main roads leading to Kenya, launches ambushes on AMISOM convoys, and occasionally takes towns and settlements. Many of the clashes pitting AMISOM and JSS darawish forces against Al Shabaab have taken place in this setting, and many of the US air strikes against Al Shabaab have occurred in this zone as well. Insecurity in this expansive pastoral area only affects the returnees inasmuch as many must pass through the area by land from Dadaab to get to their areas of return. Some are stopped, questioned, or taxed, and in some cases young men have been forcibly conscripted.

4. *Gedo region.* All major towns in Gedo region are under the control of anti-Shabaab, nominally pro-JSS and pro-FGS authority. The western border areas of Gedo are patrolled by Kenyan AMISOM forces, and the northern border areas patrolled by Ethiopian AMISOM forces. Despite this heavy military presence, or perhaps because of it, the region is beset by chronic armed violence. Al Shabaab is very active in the region, launching lethal attacks against Kenyan forces and pro-government targets, as well as cross-border attacks. Assassinations are common as well. Finally, the region is the site of numerous, deep, unresolved clan and sub-clan conflicts. These include Garre-Marehan contestation over business and territory in El Wak, Marehan-Digil Mirifle contestation over territory from Luuq to Bardhere on the east bank, and intra-Marehan sub-clan tensions over power and resources. Only a small percentage of the returnees intend return to Gedo region, but those who do will be relocating into a complex and difficult security environment. Notably, some of the returnees who relocate to Bay or Bakool region and find it untenable will seek to travel through Gedo region to reach refugee camps in Doolow, Ethiopia – a path some are already reportedly taking.

Baidoa/Bay and Bakool. Baidoa, provisional capital of ISWA,[89] is the intended site of return for 24,000 of the refugees. Almost all of those refugees were originally rural dwellers in farming areas of Bay and Bakool, and almost all are from the Digil-Mirifle clan-family, which predominates in those two regions. The

security situation in this zone varies considerably between the main urban areas controlled by the ISWA and protected by Ethiopian AMISOM forces, and the countryside, which is under the loose control of Al Shabaab.

1. *Baidoa.* Baidoa city is under the control of ISWA security and AMISOM, and has been a relatively safe city over the past few years. Communal violence has been rare, and violent crime is generally low. Al Shabaab has successfully launched some terrorist attacks in the city but these have not occurred on a scale or frequency as in Mogadishu. Political assassinations, either by Al Shabaab or others, have taken place. Returnees to Baidoa are all members of the local Digil-Mirifle clan-family and so enjoy added protection on that count. Returnee have not reported significant security concerns in Baidoa.

   A combination of a sizable influx of destitute rural dwellers seeking relief from the severe drought and returnees from Kenya could put new pressures of real estate availability, raise land values, and increase land disputes, but to date there is adequate land in peri-urban zones of the city.

   A withdrawal by Ethiopian AMISOM troops in coming years would be a game-changer for security in the city, potentially rendering it much more vulnerable to Al Shabaab attacks or even a take-over.

2. *Other urban areas of Bay and Bakool*. A number of provincial towns - such as Dinsoor, Rahole, Wajid, and Hoddur - have been recovered from Al Shabaab by ISWA and AMISOM forces, but nearly all are encircled by territory in Al Shabaab's control and so constitute enclave towns. Al Shabaab imposes a "soft blockade" on most of them – allowing some traffic to get through, with goods and people taxed and closely inspected. Other towns face a hard blockade in which goods and people can only get through by air or with use of AMISOM armed convoys. As a result, goods flowing between countryside and the towns is very limited. This makes it very difficult to sustain livelihoods in these towns, and has sharply limited the number of returnees willing to relocate there. A few towns have been largely emptied of adult males by Al-Shabaab, leaving a population of elderly, women and children. All of the towns are also subject to periodic Al Shabaab attacks.

3. *Countryside.* Almost all of the countryside of Bay and Bakool is beyond the control of ISWA and is either controlled or patrolled by Al Shabaab. This area is the site of chronic armed clashes involving Al Shabaab, AMISOM forces, and ISWA security forces. Ambushes or convoys on connector roads are common. Al Shabaab inflicts harsh punishment on villagers who attempt to move agricultural goods into blockade towns, and executes clan elders and others they suspect of colluding with the ISWA, FGS, or AMISOM. Pastoralists and farmers are taxed as well. In a couple of locations, sub-clans have taken up arms against Al Shabaab in anger at the taxation of their livestock herds, leading to a cycle of killings.

   As noted above, current negotiations between a former Al Shabaab deputy commander, Mukhtar Robow, and the FGS have the potential to alter the security environment in parts of rural Bakool region where Robow retains a loyal Al Shabaab force. Robow is believed to command as much as a quarter of the total Al Shabaab fighters in Bay and Bakool.[90] He split with Al Shabaab leader Ahmed Godane (now deceased) in a bloody 2013 internal feud, and has since been in limbo, divorced from by Al Shabaab but still considered loyal to it. As the most senior Digil-Mirifle figure in Al-Shabaab and an original founder his defection could spark a significant defection by Digil-Mirifle fighters from Al Shabaab. This would have dramatic impact on security and access to rural Bay and Bakool.

Mogadishu and the Afgoye Corridor. Greater Mogadishu or Benadir region is the site of the highest rates of armed insecurity in the country, and has held that distinction for years. But not all parts of the city are equally insecure, and not all residents face the same level of security threats. Heliwaa and Yaqshiid districts on the northern edge of the city have generally suffered from the greatest number of armed incidents, in part because those areas of the city remain poorly governed, and are contested between the FGS and Al Shabaab networks. Other districts in the capital such as Waberi are more secure from violent crime but, because they are home to international agency compounds, government buildings, and popular hotels and restaurants, tend to bear the brunt of periodic terror attacks. With the possible withdrawal of AMISOM forces starting in 2018, security in the capital could deteriorate and present Al Shabaab with increased targeting opportunities.

Areas of the city where returnees are most likely to cluster – IDP camps – are generally in better-protected neighbourhoods, and IDP camps are not targets of Al Shabaab terror attacks.

Armed criminality, ranging from armed robbery to assault to assassination, is a major source of insecurity in much of Mogadishu. Some of these crimes are committed by security forces. Vulnerability to this type of violence depends in large part on social status – residents from strong clans, and with enough assets to provide private security for themselves, are generally more secure. Poor residents from weak clans are much more susceptible to armed robbery and assault; if they are female, they are even more vulnerable.

The returnees relocating to Mogadishu are too small in number to affect conflict and violence dynamics in the capital in any appreciable way. If chronically mistreated and marginalised, returnee youth could be attracted to Al Shabaab recruitment. This is of particular importance in the Afgoye corridor, an "exurb" of Mogadishu along the highway from Mogadishu to Afgoye. This area became a concentration of a large number of IDP camps in the 2007-08 fighting in Mogadishu, and today is a site for a growing number of IDPs and poor who cannot afford housing costs in Mogadishu. The Afgoye corridor is also known for being an area where Al Shabaab is active, especially at night.

DRIVERS OF ARMED CONFLICT

Structural conflict drivers. A fragile elite compact has reduced levels of communal and political armed conflict in southern Somalia in recent years, but the area remains very susceptible to insecurity and backsliding. The underlying or structural drivers of conflict in southern Somalia are well known and have been the discussion of numerous conflict analyses. They include:

1. Ethnic mobilisation. Clans can be mobilised to fight over pastoral resources in rural areas. More often, elite competition over political positions, control of state rents, and business are the drivers of clan mobilisation for conflict. In some cases these political elites are in distant cities or foreign capitals, leading Somalis to refer to this as "remote control war."
2. Political exclusion/marginalisation. When clans and communities are cut out of or marginalised in political settlements over resources and power, this increases the odds of recourse to spoiler behaviour, including political violence. Southern Somalia is replete with cases of ethno-hegemony at the regional or city level, producing grievances that are easily tapped – especially by Al Shabaab, which frequently forges tactical alliances with aggrieved or marginalised lineages. The claim of *looma dhama* – "not inclusive" – is often a prelude to conflict.[91] Exclusion and clan hegemony over valuable urban centres is a particularly sensitive issue, as is the wider question of rights and citizenship in newly created federal states.
3. Resource scarcity. Even when elite compacts are relatively fair, resources are extremely scarce in impoverished Somalia, and communal competition for access and control of resources intense. In rural areas, this expresses itself in clashes over rangeland and water, and is intensified in periods of severe drought. In urban settings, it can include violent disputes over contracts, jobs, business competition, checkpoints, and lucrative political posts. Foreign aid is often a target of this competition.
4. Land. One of the most dangerous flashpoints of conflict across all of Somalia is contested claims on valuable urban land. Titling systems were flawed and corrupt before the civil war; records have been lost since the war; and 25 years of state collapse, land-grabbing, buying and selling, and the rise of a political economy of bogus land claims have created systemic tensions and confusion over land ownership. The exceptionally high value of some pockets of urban real estate dramatically increases the stakes in laying and maintaining claim to land. Land disputes are a leading cause of homicide in cities. The influx of returnees in large numbers to urban centres will aggravate this conflict issue. IDP camps where many returnees will end up are vulnerable to forced relocation, and the possibility of violent resistance, as the land on which the IDP camps are built increases in value. This has already begun in Mogadishu and is likely to intensify there and expand to Kismayo in the future.
5. State fragility. The state's very limited capacity to enforce law and order and provide basic security to its citizens is a major source of vulnerability to political violence and armed conflict. The ubiquity of armed non-state actors in Somalia is a consequence of state weakness, and is both a source of protection for some and added insecurity for others.
6. Borders. Somalia's newly created regional federal states involve a number of disputed borders that have been flashpoints of armed clashes.

7. Federalism. The federal nature of the FGS remains contested and renders parts of the country more vulnerable to armed violence. One of the more dangerous aspects of federalism is the prospect of gradual expansion of federal state authority into areas where the federal state is not fully accepted. At present, the very weakness of most of the newly created federal states reduces risk of conflict over their claims of authority.
8. Unemployment and demographics. As noted above, Somalia is experiencing exceptionally high fertility rates, high urbanisation rates, and high urban unemployment. The combination is a recipe for youth frustration and renders young adult males susceptible to recruitment into a variety of armed groups, from gangs to clan militias to jihadi movements. Refugee returnees will only add to this population of frustrated urban youth unless major economic expansion and job creation occurs.

Precipitating factors or conflict triggers. Of the many triggers that can produce armed violence in southern Somalia, these are most relevant to the returnees:

1. Crime and revenge killings. When clan elders are unable to use customary law to manage a communal dispute related to a crime, retaliation is common, and these can lead to cycles of communal violence. A single poorly managed crime can trigger years of sporadic violence that in some cases expends into fully-fledged communal wars. The returnees will generally lack the standing of strong clan elders and *xeer* or customary law that can help peacefully manage disputes in areas where they return. This increases the odds of their involvement in acts of revenge.
2. Election/selection processes. Moments when individuals are elected, selected, or appointed to office involve intense elite competition and high tensions that can trigger politically-motivated violence.
3. Job and contract allocation. Lucrative contracts or well-paying jobs are a source of contestation and can lead to political violence.
4. Aid distribution. Efforts to target humanitarian and development aid to the most vulnerable and needy populations can, in certain circumstances, trigger violence when groups feel they have been bypassed.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO CONFLICT PRESSURES

The various pressures that returnees will place on areas of return will test the resilience of host communities. The good news is at present the three main areas of return all have demonstrated improved capacity to resist calls to armed violence, at least at the level of communal clashes. Mogadishu, Kismayo, and Baidoa all face a variety of threats to security, but communal clashes have been much less common in recent years.

With the return of the Dadaab refugees, this resilience to conflict pressures will be mainly put to the test in Kismayo. There, the sheer number of returnees relative to the total population, and the very limited availability of potable water, social service, jobs, and real estate will put pressure on host communities and risk creating resentments towards the returnees. Three factors will be critical in strengthening resilience to conflict in Kismayo. The first is economic expansion. The port city possesses considerable potential for economic growth as a regional and transit entrepot. Rapid economic growth there will increase employment opportunity and reduce tensions over jobs. Kismayo faces a number of serious constraints to economic growth –such as energy costs, weak land titling, and other factors that local authorities are well aware of. If those can be addressed, pressures created by the returnees will be mitigated. Second is the degree of commitment of leading civic figures, including clan elders, to integrating the returnees and embracing a vision of Kismayo as a cosmopolitan city. This could have a powerful impact in reducing odds of communal clashes related to returnees. Conversely, if parochial and exclusionary discourses about who has the right to live in Kismayo prevail, odds of communal violence increase. As is the case with Mogadishu, at present both cosmopolitan and clannish discourses are in circulation in Kismayo about rights, identity and residence. Finally, the commitment of the JSS to prevent and manage tensions related to the returnees will be critical.

HOST COMMUNITY AND IDP ATTITUDES TOWARD RETURNEES

A critical variable impacting whether returnees will or could spark local tensions and even conflict is the attitude of IDPs and host communities in areas of return. Because Kismayo is the main areas of return, a survey was conducted there on local attitudes towards the returnees. Our findings were generally but not entirely reassuring. Among the IDP population, 63% report that they welcome the returnees, while

25% report mixed feelings and 5% are unhappy about the returnees. Younger, female, and educated IDPs were much more likely to report positive feelings toward the returnees. Attitudes varied considerably by district, with two – Farjaano and Dalxiiska - registering, much higher levels of negative attitudes towards the returnees. If accurate, this suggests that local governments and aid agencies need to be attuned to very localised conflict and competition issues relating to the returnees. Attitudes among IDPs also varied by clan and ethnic identity. Darood IDPs all registering high positive attitudes toward the returnees, while Bantu, Sheekal and Gaaljeel clans reported more negative attitudes.[92]

Among the “host community” (non-IDP residents of the city), 60% welcome and refugees, 31% have mixed feelings, and only 2% express unhappiness about them. The only category of host community that expressed high levels of mixed feelings were those who self-described as having only vocational training; they possibly fear job competition from returnees who had access to vocational training in Dadaab.[93]

3. RETURNEE IMPACT ANALYSIS: MAIN FINDINGS

The anticipated return of up to 250,000 Somali refugees from Kenya into southern Somalia in 2017 or later is not expected to trigger or exacerbate large-scale communal or political conflict in the short term. But in the longer term the return will intensify pressure on some very dangerous and unresolved fault-lines in Somalia, related to land, identity, rights, and demography.

The impact of the returnees will be felt almost entirely in a few urban centres of southern Somalia, as few of the returnees will settle in rural areas from which they originally came. Their return will accelerate an already dramatic rate of urbanisation in contemporary Somalia, and highlight sensitive, unresolved conflict issues related to claims on Somalia's cities.

The return is occurring in a challenging and non-permissive environment in southern Somalia. Al Shabaab continues to hold the rural areas where most of the refugees are originally from, and harasses, blocks, or taxes the flow of commerce to some towns held by the government. Terrorism attacks, especially in Mogadishu, are commonplace. Southern Somalia is not currently plagued by large-scale communal or political violence, but much of the region remains chronically insecure. The FGS completed a lengthy and contentious election process in late 2016 and early 2017 and will be preoccupied with forming a new government during the first half of 2017. Urban unemployment remains at exceptionally high levels. And a severe drought is threatening to produce a major humanitarian crisis, and has already produced a spike in urban drift on the part of destitute rural dwellers.

A critical medium-term security threat that could affect all major areas of return is the increasingly likely prospect of a withdrawal by AMISOM sometime over the 2018-2020 period. If the SNA is not considerably strengthened by then, towns and key installations could fall to Al Shabaab, creating general levels of insecurity, displacement, and new refugee flows out of Somalia that will impact returnees as well as host communities.

The returnees will settle in cities with large existing populations of IDPs, most of whom have far less access to international assistance than will the returnees. The disparity between aid targeting returnees and aid to other populations in high need (IDPs, drought victims) will be a major local preoccupation and in some areas a significant source of tension.

Most of the returning refugees are members of the Digil-Mirifle clan and/or are Somali Bantu - both socially and politically weak groups. As noted above, this profile matters greatly in how their return will impact local security and conflict dynamics. Their relative weakness means they pose little immediate threat to existing power relations in cities such as Kismayo and Mogadishu, which are dominated by more powerful clan-families (the Darood clan-family in Kismayo, the Hawiye clan family in Mogadishu). Accordingly, the returnees to Kismayo and Mogadishu will be more vulnerable to predation and will have less access to protection, rights, and opportunities than members of locally dominant clans. The main security threat associated with the returnees will be shouldered by the returnees themselves.

The fact that most of the returnees are Digil-Mirifle and/or Bantu, and are returning mainly to Kismayo and Mogadishu, accelerates a major demographic shift with long-term implications for Somalia. The Digil-Mirifle constitute most of the very large population of IDPs already in Mogadishu and Kismayo, and the returnees will expand those numbers further. This will throw into question the prerogatives claimed by politically dominant clans in those cities, especially if and when universal elections are held. The Digil-Mirifle could come to possess demographic numbers that pose a challenge to dominant clans in those cities. Chauvinistic elements in the dominant clans could press for forced evictions of Digil-Mirifle and Somali Bantu to their "home territories."

The demographic challenge intensified by the returnees exposes the fact that Somalia's current political order has never resolved fundamental debates over identity, rights, and territory in the country. Somalis continue to make claims and counter-claims over rights to live and enjoy full citizenship in different regions of the country by invoking the competing logic of rights by blood (*U dhashey*), rights by birth (*Ku dhashey*), and rights by national citizenship. Right by blood – membership in a clan – dominates discourse over who may live and claim access to protection and resources in Somalia's major cities. In Kismayo and Mogadishu,

this means that the returnees of Digil-Mirifle and Bantu identity will be exchanging refugee status in Kenya for status as “guests” with limited rights in their own country.

The returnees are also helping to expose the fact that the designation “IDP” carries a very different meaning in Somalia then it does in international humanitarian parlance. In Somalia, IDP is code for a Somali from a low status group who is living in a city dominated by a more powerful clan and who is poor and squatting or renting in a slum. They retain the label of IDP even if they have resided in the city for 20 or more years, as some have. Destitute Somalis from higher status clans are never considered IDPs – this is a label carried mainly by the Digil-Mirifle and Somali Bantu. The fact that many to most returnees are expected to end up as “IDPs” once their financial support runs out underscores how the IDP designation is viewed and used locally.

The vulnerability of the returnees is magnified by the fact that a majority of the returnee households are female-headed. Female headed households from weak clans and social groups will be much more prone to predation, including sexual assault. The fact that most of the returnees are originally rural dwellers who have never been to or lived in Mogadishu or Kismayo increases their vulnerability in those cities even more.

Humanitarian aid has long been a major target of diversion and corruption, especially when that aid is directed at socially weak groups. Assistance aimed at returnees will be no exception. Somali government officials, militias, IDP “camp managers” and others will seek to position themselves as unavoidable intermediaries between aid and the returnees. The election of Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed “Farmajo” as FGS President may be an opportunity to reduce aid diversion, as Farmajo has a track record of promoting accountability and combatting corruption.

Where aid programmes for the returnees gives them a significant if temporary advantage over host communities and IDPs, communal tensions could spike. Security incidents targeting the returnees as well as the aid agencies are possible.

Unscrupulous IDP camp managers – so-called “black cats” – have already shown signs they will evict IDPs to make space for returnees with more resources. This pattern of secondary displacement of IDPs will create grievances that Al Shabaab could exploit (see below).

Local government officials in all of the main areas of return are likely to try to leverage the returnees in order to demand more aid programmes from the international community. This is likely to take the form of suspensions of movement of returnees into their areas until aid is secured for infrastructure and other desired projects.

Employment will be a source of competition between returnees, IDPs, and host communities. The returnees will possess varying levels of formal education thanks to schooling in Dadaab camps, and may in consequence constitute unwanted competition for professionals in the host community. This will be a welcome new source of labour for businesses, but could work against local labourers.

Returnees may seek to use their financial packages to purchase land in areas of return, but this will vary by location. High land prices in Mogadishu will make it difficult to afford there; land prices in Kismayo are high but possibly within reach; land in Baidoa is affordable and already returnees are purchasing plots there. In Kismayo and Mogadishu, disputes over urban real estate are endemic and sometimes deadly, and often resolved in favour of claimants from more powerful groups. The returnees of Digil-Mirifle or Bantu identity will face real risks of being dispossessed of land they have purchased. Cheaper land is typically found in peri-urban areas of cities where competing claims on land are most contentious.

The risk of some returnee youth being recruited into Al Shabaab is real, given the combination of high unemployment and lack of educational opportunities in areas of return. Predatory or abusive behaviour by members of host communities against the returnees, played out along clan lines, will create grievances easily tapped by Al Shabaab.

4. IMPACT IN MAIN AREAS OF RETURN

KISMAYO

Kismayo city has a long history of cosmopolitanism. Starting in the 19th century it was a port city in which a wide number of communities – Bajuni, Arab, Swahili, Indian, Bantu, and various Somali clans - resided together. But since 1991 it has been one of the most contested and war-torn cities in Somalia.

Since the take-over of the city by the Ras Kamboni militia in 2014, and the ensuing rise of the Jubbaland state administration, the city has enjoyed a much greater level of peace and stability. This is not a "consolidated peace" – it is the product of a military victory and as such enshrines in Kismayo the political power of one clan, the Absame. But it has been a relatively generous victor's peace, in which other clans have been allowed to reside and resume business, take positions in the local administration, and enjoy representation in the regional state parliament and as representatives of the Jubbaland state in the national upper and lower houses of Parliament.

The current state of stability is in part a product of effective local security and intelligence by the Jubbaland security sector, and in part a reflection of a delicate political balancing act meant to keep a potentially fractious group of clan constituencies minimally satisfied with the status quo.

In the short-term, the returnees are not likely to have a significant impact on that stability, as they are mainly from weak clans and will not be in a position to make robust claims on power and resources.

Clan fault-lines, based on very different narratives about who has claims on the city and seaport revenues, remain the principal danger. Those fault-lines could in the future be successfully exploited, both by disgruntled political figures and by Al Shabaab. In the past a significant level of tactical and tacit collusion has occurred between Al Shabaab and unhappy clan/political leaders over Kismayo.

Though Kismayo is currently one of the most stable urban locations in southern Somalia, it remains an enclave city, surrounded by countryside in which Al Shabaab moves freely and taxes or harasses vehicle traffic.

Kismayo will feel the general impact of the returnees more than any other location, as the total number of returnees – expected at 80-90,000 – could nearly double the city's current population. This will increase demand for basic consumer goods, land, potable water, and access to basic services like education and health care. Already over57,000 have arrived in the city.

Local businesses and landowners are likely to benefit from the influx of newcomers; poorer households will suffer from increased prices of land, rent, and possibly basic consumer goods.

The returnee arrival will also transform clan demographics in Kismayo, creating a situation in which the empowered Darood clan-family could be outnumbered by the weaker Digil-Mirifle and Bantu. This will exacerbate tensions over rights and "citizenship" in Kismayo and Jubbaland, especially if universal elections are held in the future.

The mainly Digil-Mirifle and Bantu returnees will join an existing population of Digil-Mirifle and Bantu in Kismayo, which constitute a large IDP population there. Some of these IDPs have lived in Kismayo since 1991. Over 40 IDP camps, all crowded slums with temporary or sub-standard housing, exist in Kismayo and are where most of the poor Bantu and Digil-Mirifle reside. Returnees who exhaust their finances will end up joining the ranks of the IDPs in these camps.

In the long-term, the existence of a large population of Digil-Mirifle and Bantu crowded in slums and IDP camps and treated as an underclass will constitute a dangerous underlying source of conflict and an easy recruiting tool for Al Shabaab.

Few of the returnees are original residents of Kismayo. Most are from the Jubba Valley, Dinsor (Bay region), or Gedo region. Most are expected to stay in Kismayo permanently rather than attempt to continue to their rural home areas. This is a source of concern among some leaders of clans that consider themselves indigenous to Kismayo.

Of all the major areas of return, Jubbaland authorities have been most engaged in preparing for the returnees, including allocation of a large stretch of government land on the outskirts of the city for a new "village" where at least some returnees will be provided lots of land and homes.

Local authorities are principally concerned with the possibility Al Shabaab will either recruit from or infiltrate the returnees. They note that at present the Jubbaland security forces know the local community well and hence can prevent Al Shabaab from operating in the city. The addition of 80,000-90,000 newcomers mainly from non-Darood clans will stretch their ability to engage in community policing.

Local authorities, especially clan elders, are also concerned about the possibility of communal tensions arising from what may be perceived as disproportionate assistance going to returnees in a context of considerable hardship among local IDPs and the host community. This is reflected in the decision to allocate half of the plots of land in the new "village" to IDPs and host community residents.

Local authorities are well aware that they hold leverage with the international community and Kenyan government on the acceptance of returnees, and have shown indications that they hope to pressure donor states to significantly increase funding for general infrastructure and social service in the city.

Because only a minority of returnees will be able to secure plots of land in the new village under construction, some will look to purchase land in the peri-urban areas of the town. The local administration has not yet succeeded in developing a reliable system of land titling and registration, and urban and peri-urban land disputes are endemic. Returnees affiliated with weak social groups who purchase land will be very vulnerable to predatory land claims.

Returnees with English language education from Dadaab will pose competition for professional jobs in Kismayo which could produce tensions with local professionals.

The market for manual labour in Kismayo appears to be at least partially controlled by labour unions or cartels serving no other purpose than to appropriate a portion of manual wage labour for intermediaries.

A "wild card" development in Kismayo is the possible Jubbaland offensive by AMISOM forces in 2017. If the offensive occurs it could open up the Jubba Valley for returnees whose original home is there. But such an offensive could also open up the valley to a rush to claim valuable riverine land by empowered clans in Kismayo, which would create dangerous conflicts over land and play into Al Shabaab's hands.

Another wildcard is the prospect of a partial or total AMISOM withdrawal from Somalia in the next 3-4 years, which would test the ability of the Jubbaland security forces to defend the city from Al Shabaab.

MOGADISHU

Mogadishu and its immediate environs are the site of chronic low level insecurity punctuated by periodic major terrorist attacks. The attacks, mainly targeting international and government installations and hotel and restaurants frequented by government officials, do not constitute a major threat to returnees and IDPs, who generally live far from these sites. Returnees and IDPs are, however, very vulnerable to criminal violence and predation by uncontrolled security forces.

Episodic political and communal clashes occur between clan paramilitaries operating as security units for district commissioners, but no large scale warfare has erupted in Mogadishu since the AMISOM-Al Shabaab battles of 2007-2011.

The returnees pose very little threat of exacerbating or triggering communal violence in the short term, as they are unarmed and mainly from weaker clans.

Security in Mogadishu has generally been commoditised, with residents paying for protection in one form or another.

A proposed drawdown of AMISOM forces in coming years will have disproportionate impact on Mogadishu, and could facilitate expansion of direct Al Shabaab control into parts of the city.

Mogadishu currently houses an exceptionally high number of IDPs – about 369,000 – of whom nearly half are Digil-Mirifle and/or Bantu.[94] Because of high costs of rent and land, most of the returnees will end up locating into one of the more than 1,000 IDP settlements in and around the city.

Returnees will tend to seek residence in IDP camps where family and/or fellow sub-clan members are located for support and security.

IDPs have been a lucrative and valued commodity in Mogadishu, as bait to attract humanitarian aid which can be partially diverted by IDP camp managers, the most exploitative of which are known locally as “black cats.” Returnees locating to IDP camps will be vulnerable to this exploitation.

Some camp managers, in anticipation of returnees carrying resettlement cash, have evicted IDPs to make room for the returnees.

Corruption is high in Mogadishu and government agencies focused on the returnees and IDPs are no exception. Aid to the returnees could get entangled in political contestation over rival government authorities seeking to position themselves as intermediaries in aid flows to the returnees.

Mogadishu is sufficiently large that it can absorb the returnees without the kind of dramatic impact it is likely to have on Kismayo’s land values and access to services and jobs.

Land prices are very high in Mogadishu, and title to land is chronically contested. Returnees from weak social groups run a strong risk of losing plots to land-grabbing if they attempt to buy land.

The long-term presence of a large population of IDPs and returnees in Mogadishu will pose a demographic threat to the politically dominant Hawiye clan, especially if and when direct elections are held. Attempts to expel or relocate the returnees and IDPs to their “home” areas could occur.

Mogadishu’s government officials are generally not as preoccupied with the returnees as are officials in Kismayo and Baidoa.

Returnees who end up pushed into the peri-urban IDP camps, especially those in the Afgoye corridor, will be more vulnerable to Al Shabaab taxation, recruitment, and intimidation.

BAIDOA

Baidoa city has not been the site of significant political or communal violence and is relatively stable. There is little risk that their return will exacerbate conflicts or trigger communal violence.

The city is surrounded by countryside in which Al Shabaab operates with varying degrees of freedom.

Baidoa is the least problematic location for the returnees. Returnees heading to Baidoa are all from the local clan-family in the area, the Digil-Mirifle, and so will be treated as full-fledged citizens, not outsiders or guests with limited rights.

The main concern expressed by ISWA officials and clan elders is that the timing of the returnees is exceptionally poor and an unmanageable burden, due to the impact of the drought and the spike in numbers of destitute rural dwellers now moving into Baidoa.

Because cost of land and living is low in Baidoa compared to Mogadishu and Kismayo, returnees to Baidoa are able to purchase land or rent homes without difficulty. Their financial support from UNHCRR will last considerably longer in Baidoa. The relative privilege that the financial return package affords them stands in contrast to the much more limited assistance available to destitute drought victims and poor host community residents, and could be a source of resentment locally.

The President of ISWA, Sharif Hassan, has publicly stated that he wants returnees to go directly to their original places of residence, and not Baidoa town, for reasons that were not shared. This is impractical since most of the areas or origin as controlled by Al Shabaab, and the statement raised concerns that the ISWA administration would not support returnees to Baidoa. However, in a subsequent an interview for this study he indicated he has no objections to their settling in Baidoa.

Limited options for education and employment in Baidoa have already led to some secondary migration by youth returnees to Mogadishu.

The main longer term security threat in Baidoa is the prospect of an AMISOM withdrawal and ensuing Shabaab advances into larger towns and even Baidoa itself. It is not clear, however, that Ethiopian forces would withdraw entirely from the area even if AMISOM as a peacekeeping force does.

AL-SHABAAB-CONTROLLED HINTERLAND OF SOUTHERN SOMALIA

Most of the returnees are originally from rural farming and agro-pastoral communities in southern Somalia. Intention surveys suggest that a significant percentage of the returnees are originally from a cluster of districts in or near the Jubba Valley – especially Jamaame, Jilib, Buaale, Saakow, Bardhere, and Dinsoor. Those are all areas either entirely controlled by Al Shabaab or where Al Shabaab controls most of the countryside surrounding liberated towns.

These districts are heavily populated by the Somali Bantu, an ethnic minority group which has been acutely vulnerable to predation by all sides in Somalia's long civil war. It can be assumed that most of the returnees from these districts are Somali Bantu.

Few returnees originally from these rural zones will actually return to their homes at this time; most will relocate to Kismayo or Mogadishu, and Digil-Mirifle from these districts may opt for Baidoa. Their reluctance to return directly home is the result of a combination of concerns – fear of Al Shabaab forcibly recruiting their young men or executing returnees suspected as collaborators and spies; lack of any basic educational and health services in these remote rural settings; information that their farmland has been occupied and claimed by armed newcomers; and, after years in Dadaab's quasi-urban setting, a reluctance to return to farming as a livelihood. Residents of Dinsoor town express reluctance to return there despite its status as a liberated city because it is surrounded by Al Shabaab and cut off from commercial flows.

Our fieldwork confirmed that at least some returnees from the Jubba valley have attempted to reclaim their homesteads and farms in Shabaab-controlled areas. There is no data on how many have done so, only anecdotal evidence, and the only returnees who can be interviewed are those who went home and then fled back to Dadaab or to cities like Kismayo, and therefore do not constitute a representative sample.

Of those who have returned to Al Shabaab controlled area and then fled, at least a few have had family members killed as suspected spies, while others encountered more mundane problems related to livelihoods. Some lost their land to squatters; others could not cultivate their land right away because it had been abandoned and was overgrown. Those individuals ended up working as sharecroppers on others' land, and were unable to earn enough income to live.

Al Shabaab has a reputation for enforcing fairer land ownership and rights than do other local authorities, and so some returnees may opt to proceed directly to their farms in hopes that Shabaab will adjudicate any land disputes in their favour. Returnees may also calculate that their financial resettlement package from UNHCR will last much longer in their rural home areas than it will in expensive cities, where most will exhaust their funds and become destitute IDPs.

In the event the Jubba valley and other areas of rural southern Somalia are opened to large scale returns, conflicts over land are likely to intensify, as empowered outsiders seek to engage in land grabbing. While some returnees from these areas may opt to return, the paucity of services and the low profits to be made from subsistence agriculture make it unlikely that most will ever return, even if land disputes are successfully managed. They are more likely to seek sharecropping arrangements or sell the land.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

IMPACT OF RETURNEES ON CONFLICT DYNAMICS

In the short-term, the anticipated return of up to 250,000 Somali refugees from Kenya into southern Somalia in 2017 or later is not expected to trigger or exacerbate large-scale communal or political conflict. The returnees are mostly from weak social groups that do not pose an immediate political or security threat to host communities. The returnees will not tip the scales of militia balances of power or make strident demands on access to local resources. They are generally viewed as *meskin* – "harmless," "defenceless," or "a poor soul" – a person without protection in difficult circumstances.

In the short term, the principal way in which returnees could trigger conflict is by inadvertently posing as competitors with host communities for valued local resources. These could include competition for skilled and unskilled labour; access to basic services such as schools; access to water; and competition for urban real estate. Any conflict arising from competition over these resources would likely be very localised and episodic. They would mainly put the returnees in conflict with other disadvantaged groups, namely the IDPs, and the main victims would likely be the returnees.

Conflicts could also occur as a consequence of local anger over perceived favouritism towards returnees in aid allocation. The fact that returnees are receiving financial and other aid packages that, however modest, are far greater than what IDPs, current drought victims, and the general poor in southern Somalia could ever hope to get in assistance could result in jealousies, assaults, and even organised protests. But this is also likely to be localised and episodic, and is also avoidable if aid programmes are tailored to account for wider needs in the community.

In the longer term, the returnees will intensify pressure on some very dangerous and unresolved fault-lines in Somalia. In Mogadishu and Kismayo, the returnees will force the question of citizenship in cities and in newly created regional member-states. The question of who has the right to live where in Somalia – the *U Dhashey/ Ku Dhashey* debate over rights by birth, by blood, or by national citizenship – has never been resolved in post-war, federal Somalia.[95] It is arguably the single most important outstanding reconciliation topic in the country. The arrival of up to two hundred thousand returnees to Kismayo and Mogadishu, carrying lineage identities that are not those of the locally dominant clans, will alter local demographics and force a conversation about citizenship, rights, and identity in a Somalia where cities and regional member states are viewed as the domains of particular clans.

The returnees are also part of a much larger demographic shift with potentially seismic impact in Somalia. To the extent that most of the returnees are Digil-Mirifle or Somali Bantu, their return to Kismayo and Mogadishu will highlight the fact that these two social groups in Somalia are larger in number then was previously thought. In Mogadishu, they will add to an already large population of Digil-Mirifle most of whom live in IDP camps. In Kismayo, they could turn the city into one in which the politically dominant Darood clan is a numerical minority. In the event universal elections are held in the future, this could be very consequential.

HIGH REGIONAL VARIATION OF RETURNEE IMPACT

The above analysis of the three main areas of return—Kismayo, Mogadishu, and Baidoa — points to the fact that returnee impact on local politics and conflict dynamics will vary significantly by location. Conflict sensitive strategies to assist returnees will have to be tailored to each local situation. If not, they risk initiating aid interventions that trigger communal tensions and place both returnees and host communities at risk.

Tailored strategies for each location will require close contextual knowledge, which is difficult for organisations to develop and maintain given ongoing security restrictions and the relative isolation that those restrictions can impose on aid agency personnel. Agencies and personnel new to the Somali scene will be at particular disadvantage. The risk of "capture" of aid agencies by local mediating entities with interests in harnessing aid for their own parochial interests increases in contexts where aid agencies have limited networks in and access to the local community.

The most effective tactics for coping with this condition is pooling of information by agencies working with returnees in a given area; possession of strong and knowledgeable national staff who are in a much better position to understand local context; and partnership with local authorities committed to helping the returnees. Local authorities in southern Somalia vary in their commitment to ensuring effective aid to returnees. Some will be valuable partners; others will be looking to divert aid.

In Kismayo, the returnees will have the biggest impact on all aspects of life – from real estate values to the labour market to access to social services to town demographics. The sheer number of expected returnees could double the city's total population and put intense pressure on already strained access to potable water. Urban planning will be an urgent priority. The city could conceivably go from being a predominantly Darood-inhabited city to one in which the Darood are a demographic minority. Not surprisingly, local government and civil leaders in Kismayo are very attentive to the arrival of the returnees. Local authorities there have also been the most proactive, setting aside land for a planned village on the outskirts of town to increase plots for both returnees and others in town.

Mogadishu's size, and the manageable number of returnees planning to return there, give it a robust capacity to absorb the returnees without major repercussions. The main concern there is the high cost of real estate, and the limited space in current IDP camps. Competition for housing could trigger tensions with the large IDP community in Mogadishu. Mogadishu officials were not preoccupied with the returnees; their biggest concern about the returnees, and one shared by Kismayo authorities, is the possibility Al Shabaab will recruit among the returnees or infiltrate them. The prospect of prolonged unemployment, discriminatory attitudes toward returnees by dominant clans, and predatory behaviour toward returnees by government security forces could turn some returnee youth to Al Shabaab.

Baidoa is the one main area of return where refugees are returning to a town which is controlled and populated by their own clan-family, the Digil-Mirifle. This dramatically reduces odds of communal tensions, and will at least marginally increase use of social networks as basis for support. There are no major concerns with returnees triggering conflict in Baidoa. Land is relatively inexpensive and abundant, and real estate disputes far less common than in Mogadishu or Kismayo. Returnees will come to Baidoa as a relatively privileged class (at least temporarily), as their financial assistance packages will go a long way in Baidoa. The main short-term concern in Baidoa is the fact that destitute victims of drought are coming into the city in growing numbers and are the main preoccupation of local authorities and the local community.

STAKEHOLDERS: WINNERS AND LOSERS IN REFUGEE REPATRIATION

The mass return of refugees to Somalia will produce net benefits for some groups, net costs to others, and a set of actors who may win or lose out depending on how returnees are managed. Mapping the positive and negative impact of the returnees on these actors will help anticipate potential conflict triggered by their return.

Net beneficiaries include:

- *The Digil-Mirifle* clan and Somali Bantu. These communities will benefit politically in the longer-term with the sizable increase in their numbers in urban centres. This will be particularly true if and when universal elections are held.
- *Businesses.* The influx of 250,000 returnees, each with cash assistance for six months, will provide a solid boost to retail sales for as long as the cash lasts.
- Landlords and landowners. Demand for rental property, and in some cases demand for peri-urban land for sale, will spike with the return of 250,000 refugees. With tight supplies in Mogadishu and Kismayo, rent and property values are likely to rise.
- *"Black cats".* IDP camp managers will benefit from the influx of returnees, many of whom will either immediately relocate to IDP camps or eventually find their way there once their funds are used up. The unscrupulous camp managers, or "black cats," are most likely to try to take advantage of the returnees and their cash.

Net losers include:

- *IDPs.* Existing IDP populations will face competition for unskilled jobs, access to basic services, and

housing in IDP camps. Some IDPs have already been evicted by camp managers (leading to "secondary displacement" in Mogadishu – see below) who are making space for returnees who possess greater capacity to pay.

- *Skilled labourers in host community*. In Baidoa and Kismayo, local skilled labourers may find themselves losing out to returnees possessing English-language education from Dadaab refugee camp.
- *Most returnees.* Some returnees will build a new life in Somalia, but the expectation is that most will end up exhausting their UNHCR financial package and end up in the IDP camps alongside other poor Digil-Mirifle and Somali Bantu. They will no longer have access to free food rations, basic medical care, and education for their children. They may also be less secure than they were in Dadaab.
- *Returnee women*. Female heads of households among the returnees face by far the greatest burdens upon return to Somalia. Their challenges are treated below.

Finally, the impact on some actors will be variable, depending in large part on the effectiveness of integration and protection of the returnees:

- *Al Shabaab*. If returnees face chronic predation by security forces or criminal elements in Mogadishu and Kismayo, and suffer from high levels of unemployment and poverty, youth returnees may be tempted to join Al Shabaab, and Al Shabaab will enjoy tacit support from aggrieved returnees.
- *Federal Government of Somalia.* For the new administration of President Mohamed "Farmajo," the handling of both the drought response and the returnees will be an early test. If the government is able to curb corruption and show itself to be an effective facilitator of aid, and is able to provide protection to returnees, its credibility among Somalis will soar. If it oversees wholesale diversion of humanitarian aid and permit security forces and black cats to prey on returnees, it will be viewed as a continuation of the failed and corrupt administrations of its predecessors.
- *The city of Kismayo.* The potential doubling of the size of Kismayo town with the arrival of the returnees could push the site either into a state of crisis or begin a period of rapid expansion and growth. This will depend largely on the capacity of the Jubbaland administration to engage in effective urban planning, land titling, expansion of services, and promotion of a vision of a cosmopolitan commercial city.

IMPACT OF CONFLICT DYNAMICS ON RETURNEES

None of the three main areas of return are sites of large-scale communal or political violence at this time. Nonetheless, the main types of violent conflict in these areas will create risks for returnees.

The ongoing insurgency by Al Shabaab puts all returnees at risk. The principal threat, and one most feared by returnees, is forced recruitment by Al Shabaab of young returnee men and boys. Returnees traveling by land from Dadaab to Kismayo are especially vulnerable to forced conscription, as all vehicles are stopped at Al Shabaab checkpoints on the route. Some are intentionally avoiding that route to get to Kismayo. But Al Shabaab is in a position to forcibly conscript returnee youth in Mogadishu, too, especially in the IDP camps along Afgoye road, where government forces have tenuous control by day but where Al Shabaab moves freely at night. If youth returnees face prolonged unemployment and harassment or predation by government security forces and clan paramilitaries in their area of return, they may also freely opt to join Al Shabaab as a source of employment or resistance or both.

Complex terror attacks usually target high visibility hotels and government installations that are not near the neighbourhoods and IDP camps in which returnees are likely to reside. But the returnees will not be immune from the risk of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, especially in Mogadishu, where the majority of complex terror attacks occur. It is also the case that several recent car and truck bombs by Al Shabaab have been detonated in general market areas populated by average Somalis.[96]

In the event a returnee or returnees are implicated in an Al Shabaab attack or other acts of violence, it is possible that the entire community could be scapegoated, with attacks on entire IDP camps. As the refugees learned in Kenya, political figures can see profit in scapegoating IDPs and refugees to mobilise their base.

An outbreak of sustained fighting in one of the areas of return could lead to displacement of large numbers of returnees. This is of particular concern in the Afgoye corridor, which is both a major site of IDP camps and a zone of contestation between Al Shabaab and the government.

VULNERABILITY OF RETURNEES

The above analysis reinforces the finding that most of the returnees are vulnerable on multiple counts. They are refugees "returning" to cities most have never set foot in before, with all of the disadvantages that entails. In Kismayo and Mogadishu, they will be treated as *galti* ("guests" or "outsiders") with limited ability to make claims to jobs and resources. For the majority of returnees who are Digil-Mirifle or Somali Bantu, they have the added disadvantage of affiliation with low status, politically weak groups and as such are more susceptible to predatory behaviour by local armed groups. For female heads-of-households returning from Dadaab, vulnerability is even greater. Most will end up in poorer neighbourhoods or IDP camps, which are generally located in peri-urban outskirts of cities. The peri-urban areas are always more exposed to crime and Al Shabaab infiltration. In the event armed conflict breaks out for whatever reason, the returnees will be in a poor position to protect and defend themselves.

SECONDARY DISPLACEMENT ISSUES

Several IDP camp managers in Mogadishu have already evicted IDP population in order to make room for the returnees, whom they expect will be caring financial assistance packages and hence will be more lucrative tenants. This has produced a wave of secondary displacement. There is no indication at this time that secondary displacement will trigger or aggravate conflicts, but it is adding to the misery of IDPs in Mogadishu, and is accelerating an already worrisome trend toward forcible eviction of IDPs on government or high-value urban land.[97] The brutally of some of these forced evictions, some directed by high-ranking government officials, generates deep grievances that can be exploited by Al Shabaab.

IMPACT OF RETURN ON WOMEN

Female returnees, especially heads of households, face tremendous challenges. They will have to run a household while working in the informal sector and, in most cases, serving as principal or sole breadwinner in the family.[98] Depending on location, they may have less physical protection than in Dadaab, and will be more vulnerable to extortion and sexual assault. And they will face great challenges parenting if returnee children cannot attend local schools due to cost or availability. Research on the impact of the war on Somali men note that the prolonged refugee experience in Dadaab, during which time Somali men have been unable to play the role of provider, has had a negative effect. Many males have become addicted to the mild narcotic drug qat, leaving their wives the full burden of running the household.[99]

IMPACT OF RETURN ON YOUTH

As noted above, the majority of the Somali refugees at Dadaab – 58%, according to the latest UNHCR data – are under the age of 18. This large cohort of young people have either grown up in Dadaab, or, if they arrived during the 2011 famine, have lived there for 5 years. Their worldview and expectations will have been shaped by life in Dadaab, which, for all of its hardships, constituted a large, cosmopolitan quasi-city with educational opportunities and relative security. The Dadaab youth may not be prepared to accept some of the social realities – including discriminatory attitudes toward Digil-Mirifle and Somali Bantu - that they will encounter back in Somalia. The likely combination of unemployment, lack of access to education, poverty, discrimination, and predation they encounter risks generating deep grievances among a group that, unlike their elders, may not be as willing to tolerate it. Over time, this could render some of this large cohort recruitable individuals for Al Shabaab.

RESIDENCE AND CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS

The returnees will force Somali leaders to confront the sensitive issue of identity rights, and citizenship in the new federal structure of Somalia. This will not be an easy task, and will require national as well as regional dialogue. International donors should support and encourage Somali political and civic leaders to resolve, in legislation, the question of residence and rights for Somalis in each federal state and city. Otherwise the returnees risk becoming a permanent underclass with no or few political rights in the cities where they relocate. The citizenship status of returnees will be a very sensitive issue and potential conflict trigger if direct, universal elections are held in 2020.

LAND TITLING AND LAND DISPUTE MECHANISMS

The volume of returnees will put still more pressure on an already very volatile conflict issue – land claims and land disputes in urban centres. Local administrations must prioritize the establishment of more robust, trusted, and enforced land titling systems and mechanisms for land dispute resolution, and ensure that their systems and laws are compatible with national land legislation. Land disputes are explosive in Somalia's main cities. In Jubbaland, where many returnees are smallholders with land along the Juba river, authorities should prioritize the development of policies and enforcement mechanisms to prevent land-grabbing and manage endemic land disputes in the Jubba valley, in anticipation of that territory being liberated from Al Shabaab. Returnees are major stakeholders in how land claims and disputes are managed in the Jubba valley. Authorities should be encouraged to explore mechanisms that actually work, not just those which look good on paper. Hybrid systems or land dispute management, involving combinations of formal government authorities, clan elders, clerics, and others who enjoy legitimacy and trust in the local community, should be explored. Stiff penalties on clear instances of land-grabbing and bogus land claims will serve as a deterrent on that abusive behaviour.

URBAN PLANNING

The influx of such a large number of returnees is already placing enormous strains on cities such as Kismayo, where urban infrastructure is very weak. Robust urban planning and expansion of critical infrastructure such as potable water and sanitation systems are critical and cannot be delayed. Basic social services such as education and primary health care are also high priorities in order to reduce the risk of conflict between returnees and host communities over access. Urban planning which allows for the rational expansion of cities into peri-urban zones is a matter of urgency as well. This is mainly a responsibility for regional and municipal authorities, but international development agencies are well-placed to provide expertise and resources to help southern Somalis peacefully manage the rapid expansion they are already experiencing.

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

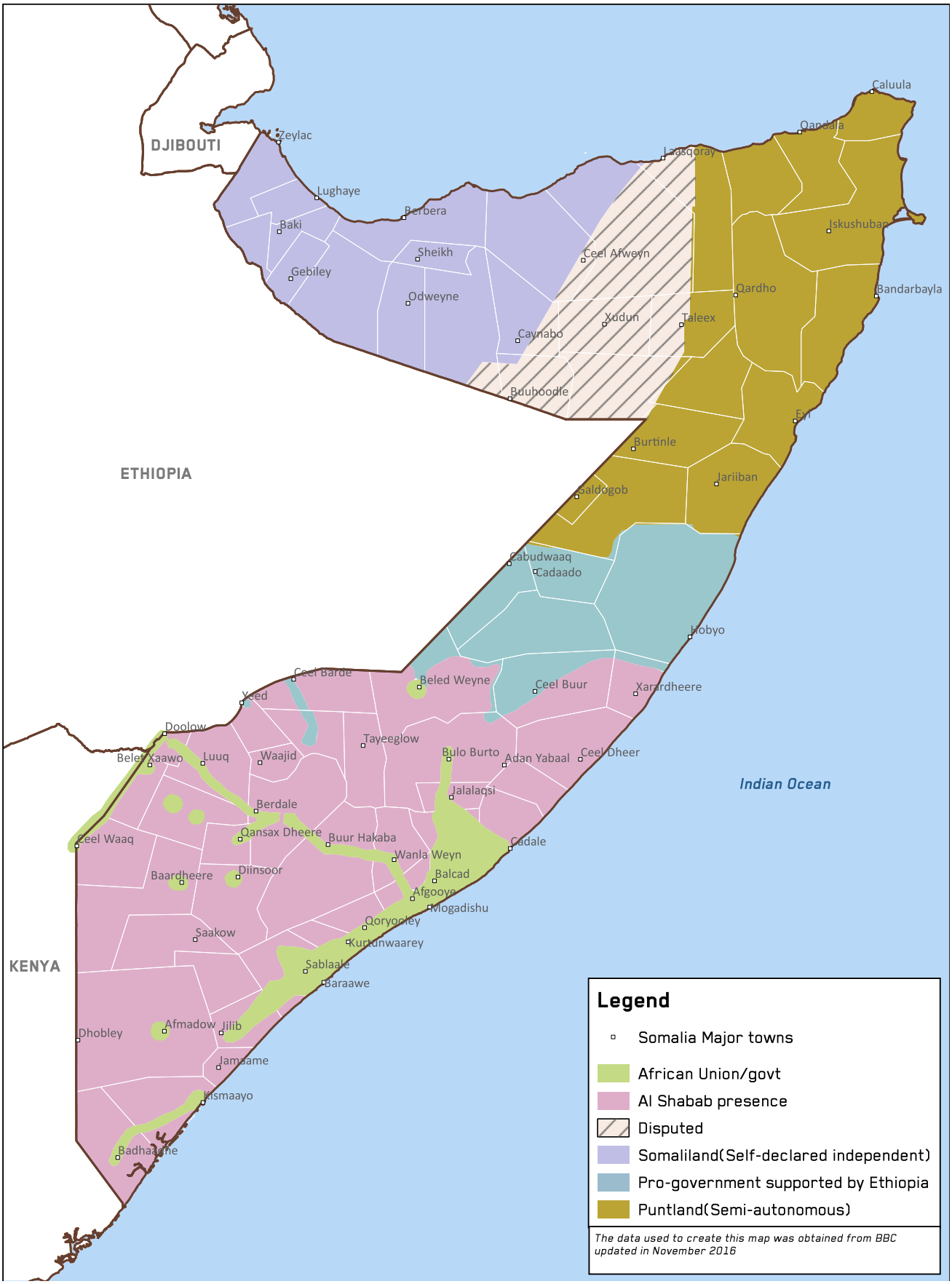
Regional authorities and civil society leaders in Kismayo and Mogadishu should consider public awareness campaigns designed to provide host communities with accurate information about the returnees, create a welcoming environment for returnees, and combat discriminatory or predatory behaviour towards returnees from weak or low status social groups. The latter is especially important in order to dampen land-grabbing and other abuses of returnees which could produce violence or drive returnees to Al Shabaab.

REVIEW OF IDP DESIGNATION AND IDP CAMPS IN THE SOMALI SETTING

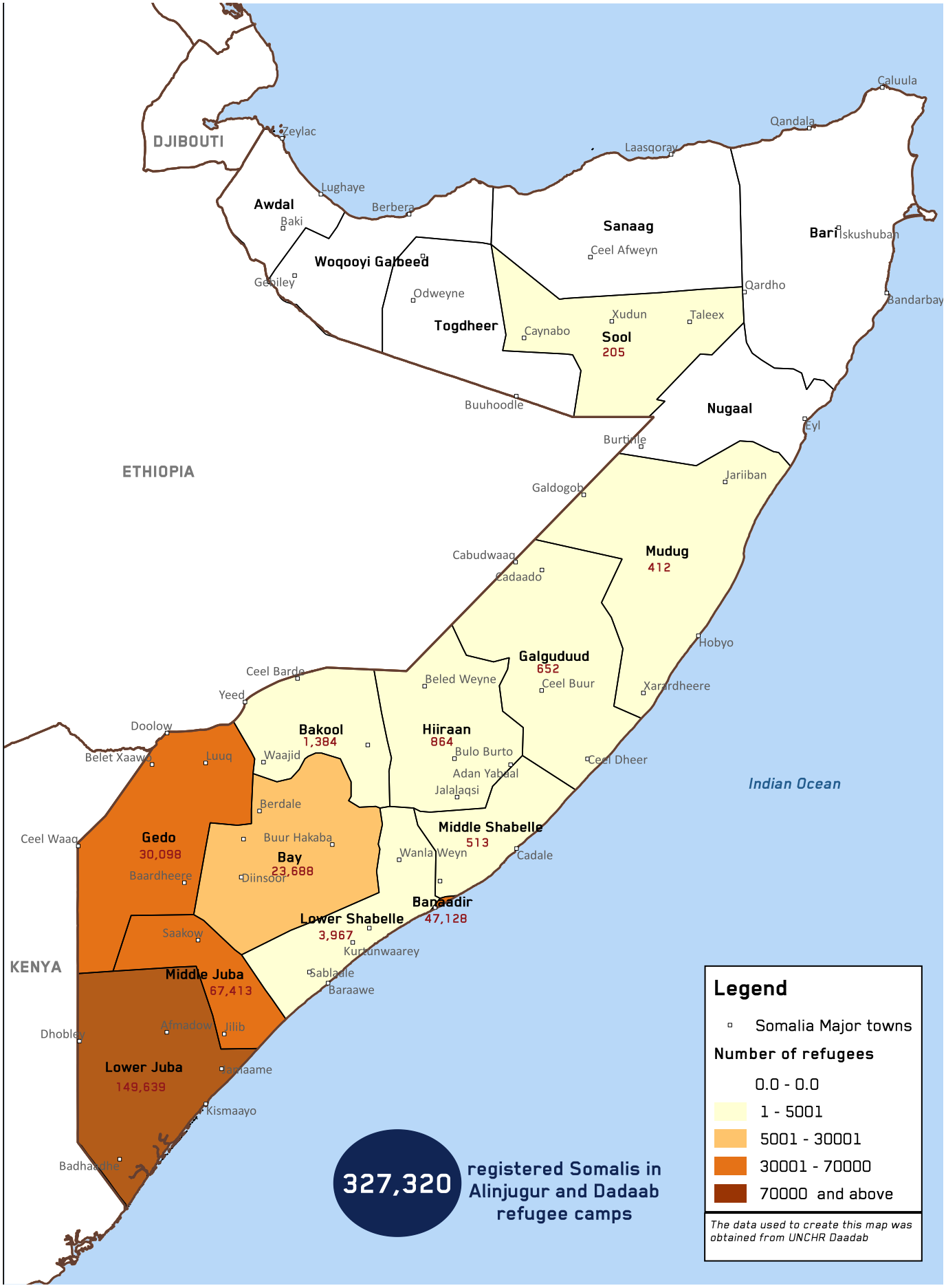
The gap between how the designation of IDP is understood by external donors and humanitarian agencies and how the label has been instrumentalised for very different purposes by local Somali actors is untenable. External aid that is unaware of the usage of the label "IDP" in the Somali context risks reinforcing some very undesirable social and political dynamics in Somalia's major urban centres. Somali cities will never achieve sustained peace if large sections of the residents are segregated in slums along ethnic lines, used as a pool of cheap labour, assigned "citizenship" in a distant clan homeland, and thereby denied political rights by dominant local groups. To the extent that returnees from low status social groups end up being reclassified as IDPs in Somalia by seeking shelter in IDP "camps," their return unavoidably forces this issue. International donors and Somali authorities must review and come to terms with the actual role IDP camps are playing in Somalia's cities today.

ANNEX / MAPS

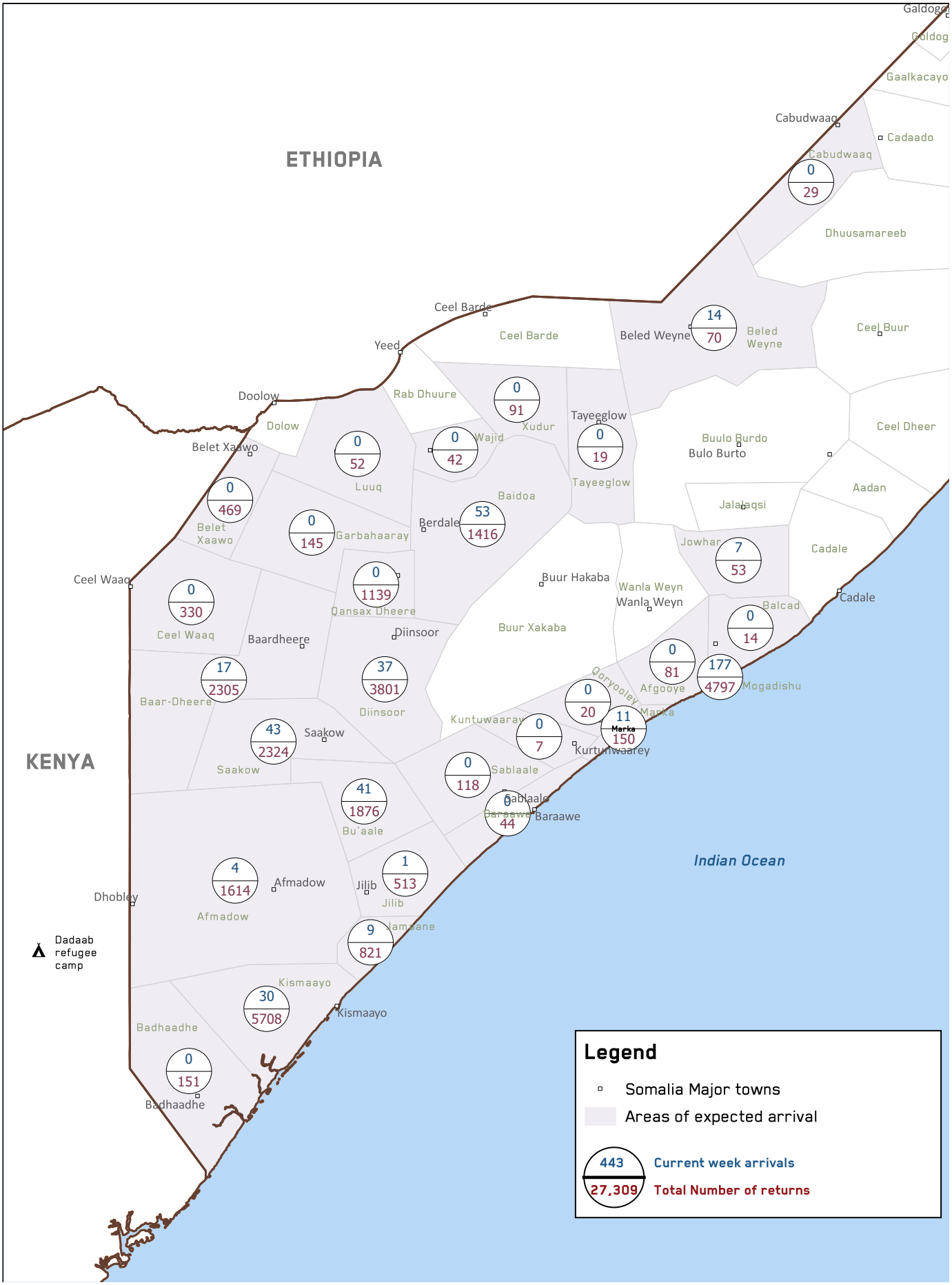
MAP 1 / SOMALIA: AREAS OF CONTROL



MAP 2 / REGIONS OF ORIGINS OF SOMALI REFUGEES



MAP 3 / INTENDED AREAS OF REFUGEE RETURN - SEPTEMBER 2016



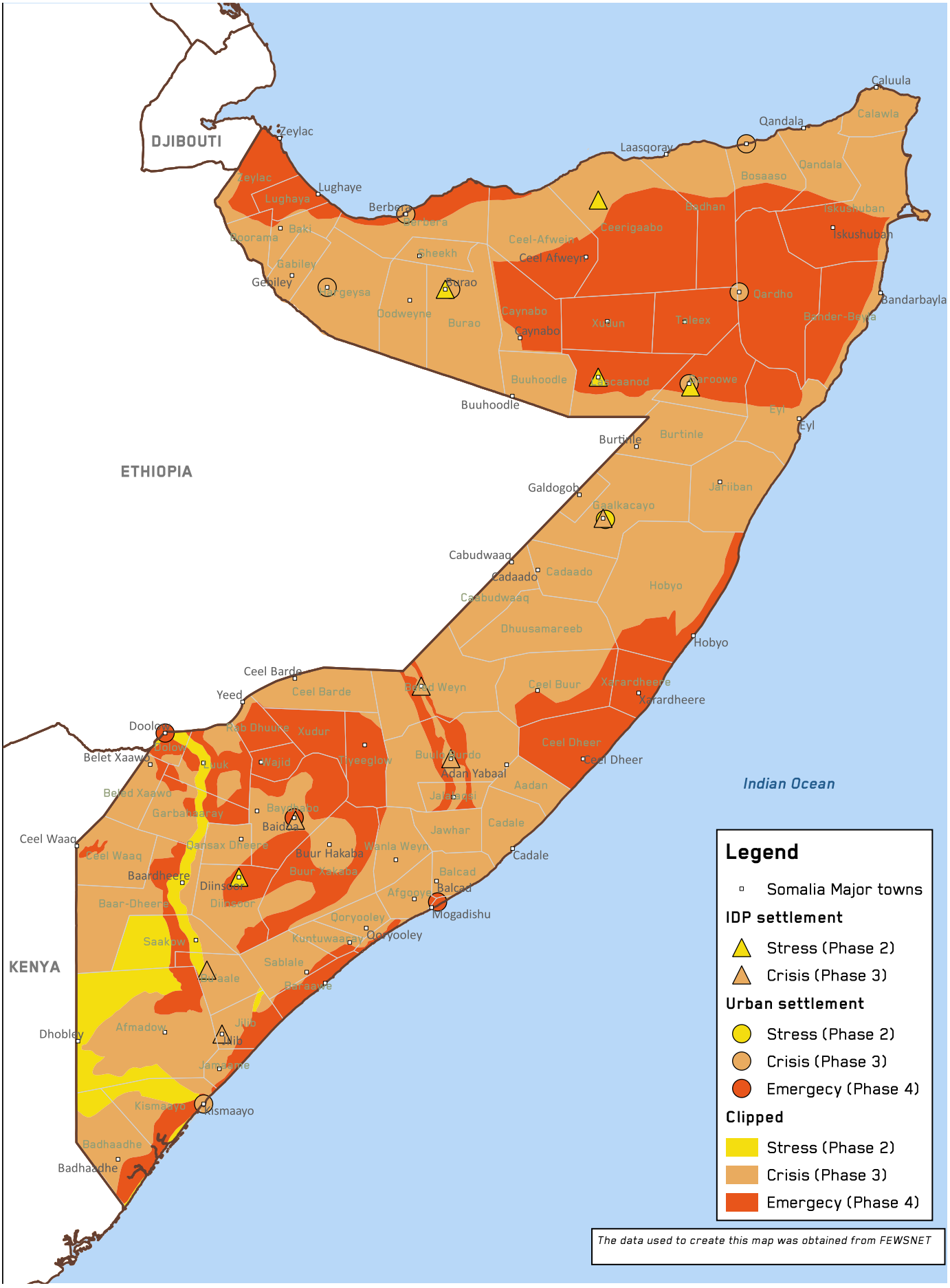
MAP 4 / KISMAYO TOWN DISTRICTS



MAP 5 / IDP CAMPS IN KISMAYO TOWN



MAP 6 / FOOD INSECURITY EMERGENCY IN SOMALIA



ENDNOTES

[1] Erik Bryld, Christine Kamau, and Dana Sinagallia, "Gatekeepers in Mogadishu," (Copenhagen: Tana Copenhagen, 2013), p. 24.

[2] UNHCR, "Somalia Situation 2017 Supplementary Appeal January-December 2017" (UNHCR, May 12, 2017), p. 11 http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Somalia%20Situation%20Supplementary%20Appeal%20-%20Jan-Dec%202017%20--%20May%202017.pdf; "UNHCR Repatriates over 67,000 Refugees to Somalia," Xinhua (27 June 2017).

[3] World Bank, "Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa," (Washington DC: World Bank, 2016), p. 20 https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22286

[4] UNHCR, "Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees from Kenya," (Nairobi: UNHCR, 2015), p. 4 http://www.unhcr.org/5616280b9.pdf ; Reuters, "Kenyan Court Says Closing Dadaab Refugee Camp Would Be Unconstitutional" (9 Feb 2017) http://news.trust.org/item/20170209103832-70enk/

[5] UNHCR, "Refugees in the Horn of Africa: Somali Displacement Crisis," Information Sharing Portal [Accessed Feb 18 2017) http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/region.php?id=3&country=110 . This figure does not include Somalis who are undocumented in Kenya and whose numbers may be substantial.

[6] Norwegian Refugee Council, "Dadaab's Broken Promise," (October 2016), p. 1.

[7] "Kenya Accused of Dumping Somali Refugees Back over the Border with No Support," *The Guardian* (20 October 2016) https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/oct/20/kenya-accused-of-dumping-somali-refugees-back-over-the-border-with-no-support

[8] Third country resettlement was far easier for Somalis with some financial means in the 1990s, but since that time immigration and asylum has become much harder, costs of travel to Europe or North America much higher, and the trip much more dangerous.

[9] Medecins Sans Frontieres, "Dadaab: Shadows of Lives" (MSF, June 2012) https://www.msf.org.uk/sites/uk/files/Shadows_of_Lives_Dadaab_report_201206144447.pdf

[10] UNHCR, "Refugees in the Horn of Africa: Somali Displacement Crisis," Information Sharing Portal [Accessed Feb 18 2017] http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/region.php?id=3&country=110

[11] UNHCR/IOM, "Joint Return Intention Survey Report 2014" (Feb. 2015), p. 22 http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Country%5B%5D=110&Search=intention+survey

[12] See Ben Rawlence, City of Thorns (New York: Picador, 2016).

[13] World Bank, "Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the Horn of Africa," (Washington DC: World Bank, 2016), p. 30 https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22286

[14] UNHCR, "Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees from Kenya," (Nairobi: UNHCR, 2015), p. 12 http://www.unhcr.org/5616280b9.pdf

[15] UNHCR/IOM, "Joint Return Intention Survey Report 2014" (Feb. 2015), p. 33 http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Country%5B%5D=110&Search=intention+survey

[16] Norwegian Refugee Council, "Dadaab's Broken Promise," (October 2016), p. 1.

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[18] International Crisis Group, "Kenya: Al Shabaab: Closer to Home" (Brussels: ICG Africa Briefing no 102, 25 September 2014).

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[22] Human Rights Watch, "Kenya: Involuntary Refugee Returns to Somalia," (September 14, 2016) https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/09/14/kenya-involuntary-refugee-returns-somalia

[23] See for instance Human Rights Watch, "Kenya: Involuntary Refugee Returns to Somalia," (September 14, 2016) https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/09/14/kenya-involuntary-refugee-returns-somalia; and Mark Yarnell, "Refugee Returns from Kenya to Somalia: This is About Fear…Not About Choice," Refugees International (November 2016) https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2016/somalia

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[26] Moulid Hujale and Karen McVeigh, "'I Feel Betrayed:' The Somali Refugees Sent from Safety into a War Zone," *The Guardian* (22 June 2017) https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/jun/22/betrayed-somali-refugees-kenya-dadaab-camp-sent-from-safety-into-war-zone

[27] The most notable example of inflation of numbers to maximize access to resources was the Kenyan 2009 population census, in which results from the Somali-inhabited Mandera county were believed to have been inflated by over one million, resulting in a prolonged and on-going court legal case. Population figures are an important component in the calculation of annual revenues provided to county governments from the central government. See Manase Otsialo, "Mandera Leaders Threaten to Quit Jubilee Over Census Row," *Daily Nation* (22 October 2015) accessed at http://allafrica.com/stories/201510220229.html

[28] UNHCR/IOM, "Joint Return Intention Survey Report 2014" (Feb. 2015), p. 22 http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/documents.php?page=1&view=grid&Country%5B%5D=110&Search=intention+survey

[29] The Darood clan-family is generally understood to be composed of three large clans, the Absame, Marehan, and Harti. The Ogaden clan is the largest lineage in the Absame clan.

[30] For an explanation of the complexities of the Somali Bantu identity, see Ken Menkhaus, "The Question of Ethnicity in Somali Studies: The Case of Somali Bantu Identity," in Milk and Peace, Drought and War: Somali Culture, Society, and Politics, edited by Markus Hoehne and Virginia Luling (London: C. Hurst and Co, 2010).

[31] UNHCR, "Weekly Update: Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees from Kenya (22 Sept 2016), p 1.

[32] UNHCR, "Weekly Update: Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees from Kenya (22 Sept 2016), p 2.

[33] Famine victims tended to flee in one of three directions, based mainly on proximity. Those in and near the Jubba valley fled west to Kenya; those in Bakool and Gedo region tended to flee across the Ethiopian border to refugee camps near Doolo; and those in the Shebelle regions tended to move to Mogadishu.

[34] Researchcare, "Survey Research in Support of Dadaab Returnee Conflict Assessment," (unpublished, 2017). The data from this survey are in the possession of DDG.

[35] Historically the Bantu, many of whom can trace their ancestry back to East African slaves held by Somali slave-owners in the 19th century, have been accorded the lowest status and are among the most vulnerable and abused social groups in Somalia. This includes the Bantu who have been absorbed into Digil-Mirifle clans. The Digil-Mirifle have historically been treated as lower status because of their identification with farming, which is seen as a low-status occupation in Somali culture. But the Digil-Mirifle's fortunes have improved politically over the past two decades, thanks in part to their improved militia capacity, and in part to the 4.5 formula of proportional clan representation, which has earned them seats in government. For more on the complex social stratification within southern Somali clans, see Lee Cassanelli, "Victims and Vulnerable Groups in Southern Somalia," (Ottawa: Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board, 1995) www.somali-jna.org/downloads/ACF638D.doc

[36] A UNHCR survey in September 2016 learned that about half of the returnees arriving in Kismayo and Mogadishu were not from those cities. Anecdotal evidence from the two cities suggests that the percentage is probably much higher. See UNHCR, "Weekly Update: Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees from Kenya (22 Sept 2016), p 5.

[37] "UNHCR Repatriates Over 67,000 Somali Refugees from Kenya," Xinhua (28 June 2017) http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/28/c_136399394.htm; UNHCR, "Weekly Update: Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees from Kenya" (22 September 2016).

[38] Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention, "Mogadishu 2014 Eastern Zone: Conflict and Security Assessment Report," (Mogadishu: OCVP, April 2014).

[39] Human Rights Watch, "Here Rape is Normal" (HWR, Feb 2014) https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/02/13/here-rape-normal/five-point-plan-curtail-sexual-violence-somalia

[40] United Nations, "Report of the Secretary General: Children and Armed Conflict" S/2016/360 (20 April 2016) para 118-118 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=s/2016/360&referer=/english/&Lang=E.

[41] See Abdirizak Fartaag, "Their Own Worst Enemy: How Successive Governments Plundered Somalia's Public

Resources and Why the World Looked On" (Mogadishu and Nairobi: Fartaag Research and Consulting, 2014); and the Enough Project, "Somalia Conflict" (Washington DC: The Enough Project, forthcoming 2017).

42 Ken Menkhaus, "Non-State Security Providers and Political Formation in Somalia," CSG paper no 5 (Waterloo: CSG, April 2016) http://secgovcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/NSSPs_in_Somalia_April2016.pdf

43 In interviews, Somali Bantu representatives explained that they are intentionally replicating strategies that they have observed among Somali clans and sub-clans – namely, elevating the status and legitimacy of a sub-clan identity in order to insist on that sub-clans right to a seat in government and places in the civil service.

44 Researchcare, "Survey."

45 Many will argue, with some justification, that the disproportionate percent of Digil-Mirifle and Bantu among the famine victims has nothing to do with mutual obligation networks and everything to do with political weakness and marginalization that allowed more powerful clan to prey to them.

46 I.M. Lewis, *A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa* 4th ed (Athens OH: Ohio University Press, 2003).

47 CIA, "The World Factbook" https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2212.html

48 Federal Government of Somalia, "National Development Plan, 2017-19," p. 2 http://mopic.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/SOMALIA-NATIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-PLAN-2017-2019FINAL14DEC.pdf

49 Daniel Costa-Roberts, "From Somalia to Spain: See How Youth Unemployment Compares Across The Globe," *PBS News Hour* (12 July 2015) http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/youth-unemployment-numbers/

50 Felix Njini, "IMF Says Donors May Partly Forgive Somalia's $5.3 Billion Debt," *Bloomberg* (19 February 2017) https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-02-19/imf-to-help-somalia-print-first-banknotes-in-a-quarter-century

51 OCHA, "Somalia: Humanitarian Snapshot," (7 June 2017) http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/somalia_humanitarian_snapshot_-_june_2017.pdf

52 *Ibid*. A half a million people have been displaced by the drought between February and June 2017. For February figures, see UNHCR, "Inside Somalia, Drought Displacement Growing" (21 Feb 2017) http://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/inside-somalia-drought-displacement-growing

53 OCHA, "Somalia: Humanitarian Snapshot," (10 Feb 2017) http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/somalia_humanitarian_snapshot_-_february_2017.pdf

54 Melissa Pailthorp, "Development Before Disaster: USAID in Somalia 1979-1990 (Washington DC: USAID, 1994). See also David Rawson, *The Somali State and Foreign Aid* (Washington DC: Foreign Service Institute, 1993).

55 For a summary of the literature on corruption in Somalia, see The Enough Project, "Violent Kleptocracy in Somalia," (forthcoming 2017).

56 Daniel Maxwell and Nisar Majid, *Famine in Somalia: Competing Imperatives, Collective Failures*, 2010-11 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 34-48; and Ken Menkhaus, "No Access: Critical Bottlenecks in the 2011 Somali Famine," Global Food Security special issue, vol 1, no 1 (2012), pp. 29-35.

57 Human Rights Watch, "Hostages of the Gatekeepers: Abuses of Internally Displaced in Mogadishu, Somalia," (New York: HRW, 2013).

58 Tana Copenhagen, "Engaging the Gatekeepers: On the Viability of Utilizing Informal Resources of Governance in Mogadishu," (Copenhagen: Tana Copenhagen August 2015).

59 United Nations, "Report of the Secretary General: Children and Armed Conflict" S/2016/360 (20 April 2016) para 118-118 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=s/2016/360&referer=/english/&Lang=E.

60 Maxwell and Majid, Famine in Somalia pp. 117-139.

61 *Ibid*.

62 Interview with US government official, March 2017.

63 Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, "Mixed Migration in the East Africa and Yemen Region" (April 2017), p. 3.http://regionalmms.org/monthlysummary/RMMS%20Mixed%20Migration%20Monthly%20Summary%20April%202017.pdf

64 UNHCR, "Somalia: Fact Sheet" (November 2013) http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR_Briefing_Sheet_Nov_2013.pdf; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, "Somalia: Over a Million IDPs Need Support for Local Solutions," (18 March 2015) http://www.internal-displacement.org/sub-saharan-africa/somalia/2015/somalia-over-a-million-idps-need-support-for-local-solutions/

65 Joachim Gundel, "The Predicament of the *Oday*: The Role of Traditional Structures in Security, Rights, Law, and Development in Somalia" (Nairobi: Danish Refugee Council, 2006).

[66] Nationally, the Digil-Mirifle may constitute a larger percentage of the total Somali population than is commonly believed. Joachim Gundel claims that they "may constitute at least 25 to 30 per cent of the full population," and adds that "the Bantus who are often referred to as small groups of perhaps 6 per cent may in fact constitute 20 per cent of the population, and in South-Central there may even be local districts where they form even 50 per cent of the local population. However, these groups are politically suppressed and "hidden away" in Somali figures which favour the nomadic clans." Joachim Gundel, "Clans in Somalia," (Vienna: ACCORD, 2009), p. 11 http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/90_1261130976_accord-report-clans-in-somalia-revised-edition-20091215.pdf

[67] Researchcare, "Survey."

[68] CIA "The World Fact-Book" https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2212.html

[69] Federal Government of Somalia, "Somalia: Population Estimation Survey 2014," (Nairobi: UN Population Fund, October 2014), p. 19.

[70] For detailed documentation of this crisis in Mogadishu, see Rift Valley Institute and Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, "Land Matters in Mogadishu: Settlement, Ownership, and Displacement in a Contested City" (Nairobi: RVI, 2017).

[71] OCVP, "Baseline Assessment on Land Ownership, Land Rights, and Land Conflicts in Somaliland," (Nairobi, OCVP, February 2014), p. 35.

[72] Human Rights Watch, "Here Rape is Normal:

[73] Norwegian Refugee Council, "Housing, Land, and Property Rights for Somalia's Urban Displaced Women," (Oslo: NRC, 2016).

[74] UNHCR, "Weekly Update: Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees from Kenya (22 Sept 2016),

[75] *Ibid*.

[76] *Ibid*.

[77] ACLED, "Country Report: Somalia," (UK: Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset, 2013) p 1. http://www.acleddata.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ACLED-Country-Report_Somalia_April-2013.pdf

[78] *Ibid*., p. 3. The largest total number of terrorist related causalities in any month in the March 2012-March 2103 period was 30.

[79] Figures calculated from multiple security monitoring reports on Somalia.

[80] Estimate derived from multiple security monitoring reports on Somalia.

[81] UNDP *Somalia Human Development Report 2012: Empowering Youth for Peace and Development* (Nairobi: UNDP, 2012) p. 63.

[82] Author's fieldwork, Hargeisa, January 2016; and data from multiple security monitoring reports on Somalia.

[83] Saferworld, "Forging Jubaland: Community Perspectives on Federalism, Governance, and Reconciliation" (Nairobi: Saferworld, April 2016), p. ii.

[84] This allegation was first made in UN Monitoring Reports on Somalia. For a recent expose, see Journalists for Justice, "Black and White: Kenya's Criminal Racket in Somalia," (Nairobi: Journalists for Justice, 2015). Admixtures of conflict and collusion between Al Shabaab and government authorities at the regional and federal levels appear to be the norm, not the exception.

[85] Importantly, and unsurprisingly, neither leader enjoys the full backing of their clans. Some Marehan groups disavow Hirale's quest to control Kismayo.

[86] Saferworld, "Forging Jubaland," p. 4.

[87] For a survey of attitudes toward Jubbaland State of Somalia across all three regions of the JSS, see Saferworld, "Forging Jubaland." It finds that respondents in Marehan-dominated district in Gedo region were far more likely to depict the JSS as "illegitimate" than other regional populations (p. 12).

[88] The Absame are a larger Darood clan including the Ogaden clan. The two are sometime used synonymously, because the Ogaden are such a large groups with the Absame. The term Kumade, which is a lineage level higher than Absame, is currently preferred by local authorities in the Jubbaland state, as it is more inclusive of some smaller clans. Until recently, usage of Kumade as a significant lineage identity was rare in the region. For a clan mapping of the Absame, see Jon Abbink, "The Total Somali Clan Lineage (second edition)" (Leiden: African Studies Centre, working paper # 84, 2009), pp. 18-19.

[89] The coastal city of Brava in Lower Shabelle has been slated to serve as capital in the future.

[90] Interview, US government official, June 2017.

[91] Ken Menkhaus and Ismahan Adawe, “Looma Dhama: Political Inclusivity in the Somali Urban Context,” UN Initiative on Peace and Reconciliation Research paper (forthcoming summer 2017).

[92] The sample size for this part of the survey is small so caution must be exercised in drawing conclusions. If accurate, this is likely to reflect greater anxiety over competition for housing and jobs on the part of the Bantu (by dint of being the poorest social category in Kismayo) and the Sheekal and Gaaljaal (as members of the Hawiye clan-family, which is in a weak position politically in the city at this time).

[93] Researchcare, “Survey.”

[94] Bryld *et al*, “Gatekeepers in Mogadishu,” p 24.

[95] The *U Dhashey*, *Ku Dhashey* debate is discussed in chapter 1.

[96] This includes the December 11 2016 truck bomb next to a market by the seaport that killed 29 and wounded 50, and the Wadajir market truck bomb on February 2017 killed at least 35 and wounded 45.

[97] Human Rights Watch, “Somalia: Forced Evictions of Displaced People,” (20 April 2015) https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/20/somalia-forced-evictions-displaced-people-0

[98] This is now the general pattern across Somalia. See “Somaliland Women Take on New Roles,” IRIN (3 May 2005) http://www.irinnews.org/feature/2005/05/03/somaliland-women-take-new-roles.

[99] Judith Gardner and Judy El-Bushra, “The Impact of War on Somali Men and its Effects on the Family Women, and Children” (Nairobi: RVI Briefing Paper, Feb. 2016), pp. 3-4 http://riftvalley.net/publication/impact-war-somali-men-and-its-effects-family-women-and-children#.WKtVZMIzWpo



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