



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

### GENERAL OVERVIEW

Clan tensions resumed between Sool, Sanag Clan militias (SSC), including Dhulbahante clan militias and Somaliland forces in Buuhoodle district of Togdheer region after the Somaliland military launched an attack against the SSC militias and captured Buuhoodle town. The fighting resulted in a number of civilian casualties and over 2,000 displacements mainly within Buuhoodle district. Reports suggest that the majority of IDPs returned to their villages when the fighting ended.

Following the tensions in Buuhoodle, the Somaliland forces were deployed in parts of Sool region to prevent Dhulbahante clan members from declaring a separate clan administration in the area, which could be perceived by Somaliland authorities as prejudicial to Somaliland's sovereignty. Following the deployment, members of the Dhulbahante clan demonstrated in favour of creating a separate administration in Laas Canood town, but were faced with a police crackdown. Reports indicate that four civilians were wounded and over 60 people were arrested and detained by the Somaliland security forces.

Fighting between Al Shabaab forces and forces supporting the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) continued in the Jubas, Middle Shabelle, Banadir, and Gedo regions resulting in displacement of people and an unknown number of civilian casualties. While the majority IDPs from Gedo, Middle and Lower Juba regions fled to border towns or crossed over to Kenya to seek protection and humanitarian assistance, IDPs from Afgooye and Banadir region moved to various districts of Mogadishu.

Despite the Al Shabaab retreat from Belet Weyne district of Hiraan region, armed confrontations erupted between the two TFG allied forces; the Shabelle Valley State (SVS) militias and Ahlul Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) due to territorial claims over Belet Weyne district. Furthermore, the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) advanced towards Bulo Burto district of Hiraan in an apparent attempt to prevent Al Shabaab infiltration and to prepare for another anti-Al Shabaab offensive. Reports suggest that an unconfirmed number of residents moved out of Bulo Burto fearing possible new clashes. In light of the current political tensions in Belet Weyne, further military advancement by ENDF is likely to result in increased competing territorial claims between various fractions including SVS, TFG and ASWJ and subsequent insecurity-related displacement from Hiraan region.

The Population Movement Tracking (PMT) data indicates that over 6,100 refugees returned from Ethiopia and Kenya to their places of origin in Bay, Bakool, and Gedo and Banadir regions in January. Over the past two weeks, the number of refugees returning from Kenya and Ethiopia has increased with some 3,300 refugees arriving in Somalia compared to approximately 2,700 people arriving during the first two weeks of January. In addition to taking advantage of prosperous *Deyr* seasonal rains in Somalia and revive their agricultural activities in their places of origin, the refugees stated that ‘lack of livelihoods’, ‘delay in registration’ and ‘insecurity’ in the refugee camps are the main reasons for their return. Armed bandits roaming the unofficial border crossing routes pose major protection risks to refugees trying to cross the borders.<sup>1</sup>

## MOGADISHU (BANADIR)

*During the reporting period, fighting intensified<sup>2</sup> in Dharkenley, Heliwa and Yaqshiid districts, resulting in TFG forces regaining areas of influence within the capital; at the same time approximately 3,000 displacements mainly from Dharkenley and Heliwa districts to other districts of Mogadishu were recorded.<sup>3</sup> The fiercest clashes took place in Dharkenley district resulting in over 1,100 displacements.<sup>4</sup> Despite the full takeover of Heliwa and Yaqshiid by the TFG and AMISOM, it is likely that non-conventional guerilla-style attacks by Al Shabaab will continue in the capital, increasing the risk of humanitarian law and human rights violations against the civilian population.*

*A number of civilian casualties were reported during the past two weeks both due to increased fighting between Al Shabaab and TFG/AMISOM, as well as infighting between different components of the TFG. The medical organization, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) announced the closure of two of its centres in Hodan district following the killing of two of its staffs in late December 2011. The prevailing insecurity continues to restrain the work of humanitarian agencies and consequently the provision of basic services.<sup>5</sup>*



- A ten year old girl was killed and a nine year old boy was wounded when heavy clashes erupted between AMISOM forces and Al Shabaab in Dharkenley district of Mogadishu. The child was referred to the hospital.<sup>6</sup> (23 January)
- A TFG soldier who had been sentenced to death for the unlawful killing of a fellow soldier was publicly executed by firing squad in Hodan district.<sup>7</sup> (23 January)
- A man was shot dead by men dressed in TFG military uniform in the Jungal neighbourhood of Yaqshiid district after he allegedly refused to hand over his mobile phone to the soldiers. The perpetrator escaped.<sup>8</sup> Between July 2011 and January 2012 PMN and other sources reported 13 similar incidents of criminal activities perpetrated by TFG soldiers.<sup>9</sup> (18 January)
- Reports indicate that over 150 men and boys fled Balcad district of Middle Shabelle region and arrived in various districts of Mogadishu after Al Shabaab demanded that all males participate in the ‘holy war’ against the TFG and allied forces.<sup>10</sup> (18 January)
- One civilian was killed and at least one other was injured in cross fire when TFG forces exchanged fire at a market in Hodan district, allegedly due to conflicting claims over control of parts of Hodan district. Five similar cases have so far been recorded in Mogadishu since 1 January 2012.<sup>11</sup> (14 January)

- One civilian was killed when an armed confrontation broke out between members of the TFG police and TFG military in Wadajir district of Mogadishu after the TFG police attempted to prevent the soldiers from collecting illegal taxes from public transport. <sup>12</sup>(14 January)

## NORTH-WEST (AWDAL, WOQOOYI GALBEED & TOGDHEER)

*During the reporting period, fighting resumed between SSC Clan militias, including Dhulbahante militias and Somaliland forces. The fighting resulted in a number of civilian casualties and over 2,000 displacements. A report indicates that approximately 1,100 people were displaced to various small villages within Buuhoodle, including Hamar Lagu Hidh, Bali Cad, Dan-Dan, Goonle, Coodanle, while 900 people crossed the border into Ethiopia. Nevertheless, the majority of the people, particularly those who had crossed the border returned to their villages later. Peace reconciliation initiatives are currently underway in Buuhoodle, with elders and religious leaders.*<sup>13</sup>



- One civilian was killed and two others were wounded in Dhiif area of Widh Widh town, Buuhoodle district when the Somaliland police fired at a group of people protesting against the Somaliland administration in the area. <sup>14</sup> (25 January)
- At least five civilians were killed and 13 others wounded when fighting erupted between SSC militia and Somaliland forces in Buuhoodle district. <sup>15</sup>(15 January)

## SOOL & SANAG

*Clan tensions in Buuhoodle district of Togdheer have spilled over into Sool region. The Somaliland forces fired at two separate public gatherings in Laas Canood where people were demonstrating in support of the creation of a separate clan administration in the area.*



- One civilian was reportedly killed and at least eight others wounded when the Somaliland police opened fire at protesters in Las Canood district of Sool region. Over 60 people were reportedly arrested during the incident. <sup>16</sup> (21 January)

## NORTH-EAST (MUDUG, NUGAAL & BARI)

*Humanitarian staffs in Puntland continue to work despite the heightened risk of kidnapping and murder. During the reporting period two such cases were reported.*



- A man working for a local human rights organization was shot and killed by unidentified man after he left a local mosque in Dalqarnayn area of Gaalkacyo town, Mudug region. The perpetrator fled. The reason behind the killing is unknown. This is the second time in the past three weeks that humanitarian staffs have been assassinated by unknown group. <sup>17</sup> (18 January)

- An Oromo refugee was shot and killed by unidentified armed men in Gaalkacyo, Mudug region, when he attempted to notify a local khat seller that the men were trying to steal from his shop. The perpetrators fled.<sup>18</sup> (18 January)
- A German-American engineer was kidnapped by armed militiamen, believed to be pirates in South Gaalkacyo, Mudug region when he was on his way to the airport. His whereabouts are currently unknown.<sup>19</sup>(21 January)

## HIRAAN & GALGADUUD

*Concerns among the civilian population continued to grow in Hiraan region due to increased tensions in the region in the past two weeks. Fighting resumed between the Shabelle Valley State (SVS) militias and Ahlu Sunna Wa Jamah (ASWJ) forces in Belet Weyne district over political control of the district. In the meantime, on 14 January Ethiopian and TFG allied forces in Belet Weyne started moving towards Bulo Burte district of Hiraan region in an apparent attempt to prevent Al Shabaab infiltration, and to prepare for new offensives.<sup>20</sup> A bomb explosion in Belet Weyne added to the already tense situation in the district, resulting in closure of businesses and restricted movements.<sup>21</sup> It is not clear who was behind the attack. A report also suggests that military forces in Belet Weyne are further deteriorating the protection environment by stealing from and harassing civilians in the district.<sup>22</sup> If the current tense situation in the region persists it is expected that it may result in large-scale displacement of populations in the coming weeks.*



- On 24 January a large explosion took place near the former District Commissioner's headquarters in Belet Weyne town, inciting fear among the civilian population and resulting in the closure of all businesses, and severely impeding the movement of civilians. The number of casualties is yet to be confirmed.<sup>23</sup>(24 January)
- A report indicates that the Al Shabaab administration in Ceel Dheer district of Galgaduud region ordered the local residents to pay approximately an additional 370.000 USD to support their military effort in the area.<sup>24</sup>(20 January)
- At least one civilian was severely injured when a landmine targeting an Ethiopian vehicle exploded in Belet Weyne town of Hiraan region. More than 8 people were arrested following the incident.<sup>25</sup>(19 January)
- Eight passengers travelling on board a bus en route to Mogadishu were reportedly shot at and injured by an Al Shabaab militia in Dhusamareeb district of Galgaduud region, after the driver refused to stop the bus. The victims were admitted to Dhusamareeb hospital for treatment.<sup>26</sup>(14 January)

## LOWER & MIDDLE SHABELLE (SHABELLE HOOSE & DHEXE)

*Residents of Middle and Lower Shabelle continue to face human rights violations by the authorities on a daily basis including killing, restrictions on the freedom of movement and limited access to humanitarian aid. On 22 January Al Shabaab authorities imposed a night curfew starting in Afgooye town resulting in movement restrictions and closure of all businesses in town.<sup>27</sup> (22 January)*

*Al Shabaab continued stepping up its conscription of fighters, including children to join the “holy war” against the TFG allied forces. A number of sources suggest that approximately 150 men and boys, mainly from Lower and Middle Shabelle fled to Mogadishu to escape recruitment by Al Shabaab.*

## BAY, BAKOOL & GEDO

*The trend of Somali refugees returning from Ethiopia to border town of Dollow, Gedo region continued during the reporting period. According to PMT data over 1,500 refugees arrived in Dollow during the past two weeks with the aim of going back to their districts of origin to farm their land. The majority of the interviewed refugees stated that they had left part of their families behind and were returning on a ‘temporary basis’, stating that they would return to Ethiopia after the harvest, as they feared the consequences of increased tensions in Bay and Bakool and Gedo regions. Armed clashes between Al Shabaab militias and anti Al Shabaab forces also intensified in Garbaharey district of Gedo region.*

## LOWER & MIDDLE JUBA (JUBA HOOSE & DHEXE)

*Since the official closure of the Kenyan-Somali border in 2006, IDP families /refugee returnees crossing the border using unofficial routes have been at risk of numerous protection violations including theft, extortion, gender based violence and harassment by both armed forces and gunmen on the journey between Liboi and Dadaab.*



*Throughout the reporting period, air strikes bombarded several villages of Afmadow district of Lower Juba region including Hayo and Jana Abdalla.*

- A man accused of selling khat was severely beaten and later arrested by Al Shabaab in Farajano area of Kismaayo town, Lower Juba region.<sup>28</sup> (24 January)
- According to witnesses, at least five civilians belonging to the same family, including four children were killed when air strikes hit a house in Jilib town, Middle Juba region.<sup>29</sup> (15 January)
- A mother and her child were killed when strikes landed on Bulo Haji village, Kismaayo town of Lower Juba region.<sup>30</sup> (18 January)
- At least nine people were killed when air strikes landed on Afmadow town of Lower Juba region.<sup>31</sup> (17 January)

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- <sup>1</sup> UNHCR Internal report
- <sup>2</sup> Guardian News, *Somalia fighting intensifies as African Union troops make gains in Mogadishu*, 21 January, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/21/somalia-fighting-mogadishu-african-union>
- <sup>3</sup> Report by IASC protection cluster partner received on, 31-2 January 2012
- <sup>4</sup> Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld
- <sup>5</sup> BBC News, *Somalia: MSF shuts two big medical centres in Mogadishu*, 19 January, available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16630838>
- MSF News, *MSF closes its largest medical centres in Mogadishu after killings*, 19 January, available at <http://www.msf.org/msf/articles/2012/01/msf-closes-its-largest-medical-centres-in-mogadishu-after-killings.cfm>
- <sup>6</sup> Reports received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 24 January
- <sup>7</sup> Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld
- <sup>8</sup> Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld
- <sup>9</sup> Reports received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 20 January
- <sup>10</sup> Reports received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 19 January
- <sup>11</sup> Reports received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 16 January
- <sup>12</sup> Reports received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 16 January
- <sup>13</sup> Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 26 January
- <sup>14</sup> Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 25 January
- <sup>15</sup> Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 18 January
- <sup>16</sup> Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 22 January
- <sup>17</sup> Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 18 January
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- <sup>20</sup> Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 14 January 2012
- <sup>21</sup> Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 15 January 2012
- <sup>22</sup> Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 17 January 2012
- <sup>23</sup> Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 24 January 2012
- <sup>24</sup> Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld
- <sup>25</sup> Report received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 18 January 2012
- <sup>26</sup> Report recorded by organization conducting security analysis in Somalia. Source name withheld
- <sup>27</sup> Shabelle News, *Al-shabab imposes curfew on a town in southern Somalia*, 22 January, available at <http://www.shabelle.net/article.php?id=14695>
- <sup>28</sup> Reports received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 25 January
- <sup>29</sup> Reports received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 15 January
- <sup>30</sup> Xinhuanet News, *Somalia to investigate deadly airstrike: PM*, 18 January, available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-01/18/c\\_122603701.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-01/18/c_122603701.htm)
- <sup>31</sup> Associated press, *Witness: bombing raid kills 'at least' 9 in strategic southern Somali town of Afmadow*, 17 January, available at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/kenya-somali-insurgent-information-war-heats-up-over-claims-of-dead-children/2012/01/16/gIQAbRU12P\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/kenya-somali-insurgent-information-war-heats-up-over-claims-of-dead-children/2012/01/16/gIQAbRU12P_story.html)
- Reports received from IASC Protection Cluster Partner on 17 January