Please cite as: EUAA, 'Guidance Note 5' in *CGS for TCDS*, November 2023.

Guidance Note 5

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: August 2023

This profile refers to civilians accused by Al-Shabaab of spying for the government, for ATMIS/AMISOM or other international actors, and for FMS forces or administrations.

This sub-profile should be read in conjunction with the 3.2.1. Overview.

COI summary

Al-Shabaab considers ‘spying’ for the government, for AMISOM or Western countries or FMS administrations and forces, as a crime punishable by death.

Religiously and politically motivated killings affecting civilians (men and women) affiliated with the government, AMISOM or other international actors (US Intelligence agencies CIA and FBI and the UK’s MI6), and FMS administrations continued during the reference period [Targeting, 6.3. pp. 92-94]. Examples of such incidents include: public executions in the cities of Saakow and Jilib of individuals accused of spying for the US, Kenya and NISA; the killing in Hiraan of several civilians accused of spying; execution of six men in the town of Buulay on accusations of spying on behalf of the Somali and US governments; in Lower Shabelle, the group executed several civilians it accused of spying. [Security 2023, 2.1.2., pp. 69-70; 2.2.2., pp. 94, 96; 2.2.3., p. 105]

Al-Shabaab has referred to espionage as the main reason for its executions. The level of proof required to proceed to an execution is ‘quite low’ and the accused are never allowed access to a lawyer. Executions are public in order to send a clear message of what would happen to anyone not complying with Al-Shabaab rules. Local residents are compelled to attend and watch the execution being carried out. When individuals are arrested for rebellion or alleged spying, intercessions by clan elders have had no impact, while they can be successful in other instances. Al-Shabaab has also executed some of its own members for alleged espionage. [Targeting, 6.3. pp. 92-94]

Conclusions and guidance

Do the acts qualify as persecution under Article 9 QD?

Acts reported to be committed against individuals under this profile are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. execution).

What is the level of risk of persecution (well-founded fear)?

In **South-Central Somalia** and **Puntland**, well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated in the case of civilians perceived as ‘spies’.

Despite the limited capacity of Al-Shabaab in **Somaliland**, civilians perceived as spies may be considered a priority target and the individual assessment should take into account risk-impacting circumstances such as: visibility of profile, area of origin, etc.

Are the reasons for persecution falling within Article 10 QD (nexus)?

Available information indicates that persecution of this profile is highly likely to be for reasons of (imputed) political opinion and/or religion.

See other topics concerning persons associated with the government of Somalia and/or international actors:

- 3.2.1. Overview
- 3.2.2. Federal and state officials
- 3.2.3. Members of the federal and state armed forces
- 3.2.4. Electoral delegates
- *3.2.5. Civilians perceived as ‘spies’ by Al-Shabaab*

© European Union Agency for Asylum 2026 | Email: info@euaa.europa.eu