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1.2.3. The situation of single and minority women, notably in IDP camps, or women and girls with lack of network support

More than 3.8 million people are displaced in Somalia, of whom 80 % are women and children, 229 who, according to the UN, are at risk of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and eviction.230 Minority women were described as among the ‘most marginalized people in Somalia’231 and as ‘particularly vulnerable’ to violence and abuse, including sexual and gender-based violence both from within their communities and by armed forces, militias and members of majority clans.232 For more information on minorities in Somalia, see also 1.4 Minorities.

In IDP camps, poor infrastructure, limited water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, and overall insecurity resulted in sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls by individuals in positions of control,233 with UNFPA noting that women and girls living in IDP camps were exposed to ‘heightened risks of GBV’.234 In 2023, the majority of cases of conflict-related sexual violence verified by UNSOM were against displaced women and girls.235 Among the women living in IDP camps in Mogadishu, based on a study and interviews conducted between September and November 2023, many women ‘expressed living with a preoccupying fear of sexual violence’ at work, while others noted incidents of harassment and violence they had experienced at work or on the way there.236

Canada’s IRB, citing UNICEF’s Chief of Child Protection in Somalia, reported in 2019 that family ties in Somalia were strong and that women who have lost husbands or fathers were taken in by their community who would act as a safety net; however, this only applied for the women who ‘"have broken no customary laws or norms"’. Women who broke social norms or customs or who were victims of rape or sexual violence were ‘left "at the whim" of society without effective policing, justice or welfare systems’, possibly being ostracised if they were from a minority clan in the area, divorced, or victims of rape.237 Single women in Somalia were described as ‘remain[ing] vulnerable’, particularly those living in IDP camps or at informal IDP sites, while being more in danger of experiencing sexual violence,238 while displaced women and girls in Baidoa, Qansax Dheere and Dinsor ‘raised concerns of men intruding in the evening with the intent to raping women, particularly targeting new arrivals and women without male protection,

whose men travels to rural villages for farming’.239

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  UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/426, 3 June 2024, url, para. 38

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  UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, url, para. 39

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  UNFPA Somalia, GBV Brief: January – March 2023, 1 May 2023, url, p. 2

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  UNOCHA, Somalia 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP), 30 January 2024, url, p. 15

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  UNFPA Somalia, GBV AoR Strategy: June 2024 - December 2025, 12 February 2025, url, p. 3; UNFPA, Overview of Gender-Based Violence situation in Somalia, Advocacy Brief, 2022, url , p. 3

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  UNFPA Somalia, GBV Brief: July – September 2024, 25 September 2024, url, p. 2

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  Crawford, N. et al, The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia, April 2024, Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) and ODI Global, url, p. 24

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  Canada, IRB, Somalia: Situation of women without a support network in Mogadishu, including access to employment and housing; treatment by society and authorities; support services available to female-headed households (2017-March 2019), 25 March 2019, url

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  The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, General country of origin information report on Somalia, June 2023, url, p. 53

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  UNFPA Somalia, GBV AoR Strategy: June 2024 - December 2025, 12 February 2025, url, p. 4

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