

1.4.2. Ethnic minorities

☐ (a) Bantu/Jareer

Bantu/Jareer, sometimes also called 'Jareerweyne' or 'Gosha', live mainly in southern Somalia, along the Jubba river. They also have a presence in Bay region. They are partly descendants of slaves imported from the area of today's Tanzania to southern Somalia in the 19th century. Many Somali-Bantu still speak their original (Bantu-)languages or a version of them.^{[431](#)} There are Ki-Zigula speakers and Af/Ki-Mushunguli speakers in Jilib and Jamame districts of Lower Juba, but also in Mogadishu, Kismayu, and Baidoa, because of migration to these urban areas.^{[432](#)} Lamberti, a linguist known for his extensive research on Somali dialects, found that Mushungul-speakers resided mainly in and around Jamame in Lower Jubba. Af-Mushunguli is a Bantu language. Many Af-Mushunguli speakers also speak Af-Maay, which is a particular dialect of Somali typically not understood by Af-Mahaa speakers.^{[433](#)} Jareer residing in Bay region also speak Af-Maay.^{[434](#)} They are also known for specific cultural practices like music, dance, and agriculture festivals.^{[435](#)}

MEDA estimated that Bantu/Jareer 'number around 1 to 1.5 million people, mostly concentrated in the Lower Shabelle, Juba, and Bay regions.' They live mostly in agricultural areas and work as farmers.^{[436](#)} They suffered greatly from massive (racialised) discrimination and exclusion throughout the 20th and early 21st century.^{[437](#)} Somalis often use the derogative term 'jareer' - referring to 'curly hair' - as insult. Members of majority clans distinguish themselves as 'Arabs' or 'high-born', distinct from the 'African'-looking and low-born Somalis. They use also the term 'adoon' meaning 'slave' to define Bantu/Jareer.^{[438](#)} Bantu/Jareer suffered from dis-appropriation of their farms during the land-reforms in Somalia in the 1970s.^{[439](#)} In the 1990s their land and storages were looted by clan militias.^{[440](#)} In the view of the Bantu/Jareer activist Omar Eno, speaking out at a conference in the early 1990s, the Bantu/Jareer were reduced to slave status in Somalia.^{[441](#)}

Bantu/Jareer primarily engage in agriculture, cultivating e.g., maize, cassava, and rice. 'They are also involved in fishing and livestock herding to a lesser extent. Their agricultural activities have been central to their livelihoods, but they often lack the land rights and resources enjoyed by more dominant clans.'^{[442](#)}

MEDA recently found that Bantu/Jareer children 'experience significantly lower school enrolment rates (ranging from 28 % to 40 %). Barriers such as poverty, lack of educational infrastructure in rural areas, and cultural barriers often contribute to these low rates.'^{[443](#)} They are treated as second-class citizens.^{[444](#)} Their population size is likely much larger 'than that reflected by their representation in government under the 4.5 formula', which favours the majority clans.^{[445](#)} They still face land grabs and forced displacement due to lack of political influence.^{[446](#)} Discrimination also continues in IDP camps, where Bantu are discriminated and their women lack (clan) protection.^{[447](#)} Lack of societal and political participation and protracted discrimination 'pushed some Bantu youth into joining al-Shabaab.'^{[448](#)} For further details, see section 4.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.^{[449](#)}

☐ (b) Bajuni

Bajuni are a specific ethnic group residing along the coast around Kismayo and on several islands off the Kismayo coast, such as Koyama, Chovai, and Chula.⁴⁵⁰ They speak their own language, Ki-Bajuni, which is a Bantu language close to Ki-Swahili.⁴⁵¹ Bajuni also reside across the border at the coast of northern Kenya.⁴⁵² Their culture is influenced by the Swahili and Arab traders.⁴⁵³ Bajuni residing along the coast or on the Bajuni islands engage in fishery. Some also engage in trade and agriculture.⁴⁵⁴ Bajuni, like other coastal communities practicing fishery, ‘suffer from reduced fish stocks due to environmental degradation.’⁴⁵⁵

Bajuni have long been marginalised by the dominant Somali clans in the region.⁴⁵⁶ Today, some Bajuni reside also in Mogadishu. In urban settings, they enjoy higher levels of healthcare access.⁴⁵⁷ In general, the Bajuni are a very small ethnic group of around 10 000 to 15 000 people.⁴⁵⁸ The Somali government recently estimated that Bajuni constitute 0.2% of Somali population.⁴⁵⁹ As in other cases mentioned above, demographic data in Somalia have, in the absence of reliable and recent census data, to be considered with caution.⁴⁶⁰ For more details, see section 4.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.

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