

## 1.4.3. Minority clans

### □ (a) Benadiri/group in the local context

The term Benadiri derives from the Persian word for 'port, harbour' (bandar). In the Somali setting it refers to a conglomerate of different groups that usually reside along the so called Benadir-coast between Mogadishu, Merka, Barawa, and up to Kismayo.<sup>461</sup> According to MEDA's 2025 report, groups belonging to the Benadiri spectrum are Gameedle, Shanshi, Moorshe, and Bravanese.<sup>462</sup> This, however, seems to be a rather limited description. According to Anita Adam, who has conducted the so far most comprehensive research on Benadiri (in Mogadishu), the following groups belong to this conglomerate: Bandhawow aka Bandhabow (consisting of various sub-lineages including Amin Khalfu, Bahar Sufi, Quruwaay, Oontiro, Sheebo, Ahmed Nuur, Gudmane and Ali Mohamed), Morshe (with the various sub-lineages including Reer Waamiin and Shukuureer), Iskashato (including the sub-lineages of Reer Sheikh Muumin, Indhaweyne, Askare, Shamsidiin, Aydaruusi, and Reer Manyo), Dhabarweyne (including the sub-lineages Abdi Yusuf, Oor Male, Habr Cayne, Qalin Shube, Shanshiye), Yakuub (with the sub-lineages Reer Ali Imaan, Faqi Ali, Abakarow, and Baa Fadal), Asharaf (with the lineages Hassan and Hussein each divided into various sub-lineages), Amudi (with the sub-lineages Omer Ma'alin Amuudi, Ahmed Amudi and others), Saddeh Geedi (with the sub-lineages Adan Dhere, Awareera, Reer Abdulle, Reer Sheek Salah, Indhaweyne, Reer Shiikh) and Reer Maanyo (comprising the sub-lineages Reer Ma'ow, Reer Shawish, Reer Umar, and Reer Aafi).<sup>463</sup>

The origin of many Benadiri groups goes back to travellers and traders who have come from the Arab Peninsula and Persia and have mixed with local Somalis.<sup>464</sup> Many (but not all) Benadiri are considered 'light-skinned' (Somali: gibil cad) and are, indeed, often visibly so, looking sometimes like people from Yemen or Iraq.<sup>465</sup> Some Benadiri, such as Asharaf/Hassan/Sarmaan, Bandhabow or Dhabarweyne are considered dark-skinned (gibil madow). Some, such as Asharaf/Hassan/Sarman, do not reside along the coast but mainly in the hinterland of southern Somalia, up to the Bakool region.<sup>466</sup>

Many members of Benadiri groups speak their own dialect of Af-Mahaa - considered as the standard Somali - called Af-Reer-Hamar or Af-Hamari (Xamaari).<sup>467</sup> It is perceived to sound 'softer' than the Somali spoken in central and northern Somalia.<sup>468</sup> Notably, Arabic, as second language, seems to be wider spread among Benaadiri-speakers than among other Af-Maha speakers. For many Benadiri, Arabic carries 'not only the weight of religious authority, but also implications of education, sophistication, and urbanity.'<sup>469</sup> Due to geographical proximity, Benadiri residing in Merka and surroundings, which is close to the Af-Maay dialect region, would often also speak Af-Maay.<sup>470</sup>

According to the Minority Empowerment and Development Agency (MEDA) Report 2025, Benadiri number approximately 500 000.<sup>471</sup> The Benadiri people are typically either urbanites or farmers (e.g., around Afgoye in Lower Shabelle region, some 30 kilometres west of Mogadishu).<sup>472</sup> Along the coast they are known for their trade and commerce.<sup>473</sup> During the civil war they suffered exploitation at the hands of clan militias.<sup>474</sup> Their situation has improved in recent years. In urban settings, especially in Mogadishu, Benadiri people can get access to education.<sup>475</sup> They also have gained some access to government institutions. For instance, Dr. Maryam Qaasim, a Benadiri woman born in Barawa, served in senior positions (including as minister, yet for a subordinate portfolio) in the Somali government (2012-2017).<sup>476</sup> There are other Benadiri in government today. Inter-marriage between Benadiri and other Somali clans is not restricted.<sup>477</sup> Still, in everyday life, members of the Benadiri groups are considerably less powerful than members of dominant clans and face socio-political exclusion.<sup>478</sup> For more details, see section 4.2. of the EUAA COI

Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles, published in September 2021.

□ (b) Tunni, Eyle, Geledi and Begedi

Tunni, Eyle, Begedi, and Geledi are part of the Rahanweyn clan-family. Rahanweyn is divided into the clans Merifle and Digil, each being divided into various sub-clans and lineages. Rahanweyn have been marginalised until the early 1990s. From the mid-1990s onward, they gained power in south-western Somalia and today (early 2025) are not considered a minority group anymore.<sup>479</sup> Still, some particular groups within Rahanweyn have a position akin to minority groups in some regards.<sup>480</sup> Tunni are part of Rahanweyn/Digil. Some Tunni live as agriculturalists and pastoralists in the hinterland of the southern Benadir coast. Others are city dwellers and live in Barawa. They are traders and/or fishermen. A third group called Tunni Torre is composed of people of Bantu origin, possibly ex-slaves and/or former clients of other Tunni groups.<sup>481</sup> Those Tunni residing along the coast have cultural and linguistic ties to the Benadiri. Some Tunni would also speak Af-Maay. They face discrimination based on clan politics.<sup>482</sup>

The Eyle are part of Rahanweyn/Merifle. They are a small group of between 50 000 to 100 000 people who live primarily in the coastal areas of southern Somalia. They engage in fishing and animal husbandry.<sup>483</sup> Eyle are known for their distinct language. They are generally considered to be part of the broader Benadiri group. They face socio-political marginalisation.<sup>484</sup>

Begedi and Geledi are part of Rahanweyn/Digil. Still, they are often considered to be part of the Benadiri minority groups. Historically, particularly the Geledi were once powerful and had their own sultanate (until the mid-19th century). But during the civil war Geledi and Begedi were overrun and exploited especially by Hawiye clan militias who took control of their homeland.<sup>485</sup> Geledi and Begedi typically reside in Lower Shabelle region, especially in and around Afgoye. They are usually farmers and/or traders.<sup>486</sup> For more details, see section 4.2. of the [EUAA COI report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.<sup>487</sup>

□ (c) Shiidle

The Shiidle people are a small group in South Central Somalia. They are considered to be part of the broader Benadiri group. They have face social exclusion and discrimination within Somali society.<sup>488</sup>

<sup>461</sup>

Interview with Markus Hoehne, Somalia researcher, 9 March 2025

<sup>462</sup>

MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>463</sup>

Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), pp. 132-134.

<sup>464</sup>

MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 8 and 14

<sup>465</sup>

Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), pp. 51 and 116-123; Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

[466](#)

Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), pp. 154-157; Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

[467](#)

Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 111; Lamberti, M., Die Somali-Dialekte, 1986, p. 61-66

[468](#)

Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

[469](#)

Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 110

[470](#)

Hassan Deqa, Somali Dialects in the United States: How Intelligible is Af-Maay to Speakers of Af-Maxaa? 2011, [url](#), p. 5

[471](#)

MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 13

[472](#)

Sheekhnor Kaassim, Telephone interview, 2 April 2025. Sheekhnor Kaassim is a Benadiri elder based in the USA.

[473](#)

MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 8, 12 and 15

[474](#)

Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 248

[475](#)

MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 19

[476](#)

Hoehne, M. V., Telephone interview, 9 March 2025

[477](#)

Shamso Sheegow, Telephone interview, 1 April 2025. Shamso Sheegow is a Somali writer based in Sweden with extended contacts in Barawa. She runs an NGO supporting environmental projects in and around Barawa.

[478](#)

MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 8

[480](#)

Shamso Sheegow, Telephone interview, 1 April 2025

[481](#)

Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 243; Shamso Sheegow, Telephone interview, 1 April 2025

[482](#)

MEDA, Assessment Report on Minority Groups in Somalia, 27 February 2025, [url](#), p. 8; Shamso Sheegow, Telephone interview, 1 April 2025

[485](#)

Luling, V., Farmers from Arabia: The role of gibil cad groups in the interior of Southern Somalia, 2010, p. 314.

[486](#)

Sheekhnor Kaassim, Telephone interview, 2 April 2025

[487](#)

EUAA COI report Somalia: Targeted Profiles, September 2021, [url](#)