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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. [461](#) According to MEDA's 2025 report, groups belonging to the Benadiri spectrum are Gameedle, Shanshi, Moorshe, and Bravanese. [462](#) 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 Khalfo, 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'alín 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). [463](#)

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. [464](#) 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. [465](#) 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. [466](#)

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). [467](#) It is perceived

to sound 'softer' than the Somali spoken in central and northern Somalia.[468](#) 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.'[469](#) 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.[470](#)

According to the Minority Empowerment and Development Agency (MEDA) Report 2025, Benadiri number approximately 500 000.[471](#) The Benadiri people are typically either urbanites or farmers (e.g., around Afgoye in Lower Shabelle region, some 30 kilometres west of Mogadishu).[472](#) Along the coast they are known for their trade and commerce.[473](#) During the civil war they suffered exploitation at the hands of clan militias.[474](#) Their situation has improved in recent years. In urban settings, especially in Mogadishu, Benadiri people can get access to education.[475](#) 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).[476](#) There are other Benadiri in government today. Inter-marriage between Benadiri and other Somali clans is not restricted.[477](#) Still, in everyday life, members of the Benadiri groups are considerably less powerful than members of dominant clans and face socio-political exclusion.[478](#) For more details, see section 4.2. of the EUAA COI Report Somalia: Targeted Profiles, published in September 2021.

(b) **Tunni, Eyle, Geledi and Begeledi**

Tunni, Eyle, Begeledi, 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.[479](#) Still, some particular groups within Rahanweyn have a position akin to minority groups in some regards.[480](#) 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.[481](#) 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.[482](#)

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.[483](#) Eyle are known for their distinct language. They are generally considered to be part of the broader Benadiri group. They face socio-political marginalisation.[484](#)

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.[485](#) Geledi and Begedi typically reside in Lower Shabelle region, especially in and around Afgoye. They are usually farmers and/or traders.[486](#) For more details, see section 4.2. of the [EUAA COI report Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#), published in September 2021.[487](#)

□ (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.[488](#)

- [461](#)

Interview with Markus Hoehne, Somalia researcher, 9 March 2025

- [462](#)

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

- [463](#)

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

- [464](#)

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

- [465](#)

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

- [479](#)

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

- [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

- [483](#)

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

- [484](#)

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

- [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](#)

- [488](#)

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

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