

2.1.1. Overview

Mogadishu is the most populous city in Somalia.⁸⁸⁰ In early 2025, ca. 2 846 000 people are living in the city.⁸⁸¹ It consists of 20 districts. The old ones are: Wadajir, Dharkenley, Daynile, Wardigley, Hawl Wadaag, Waberi, Hamar Jajab, Hamar Weyne, Bondere, Karaan, Yaqshid, Huriwaa, Kahda, Hodan, Shibis, Abdulaziz, Shangani.⁸⁸² Recently, in May 2024, three new districts were added: Gubadley, Darussalam, Garasbaaley.⁸⁸³ Mohamed Ahmed Amiir is the current mayor of Mogadishu and Governor of the Benadir Regional Administration.⁸⁸⁴ As of February 2022, Benadir Region was the only region in Somalia completely controlled by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). Mogadishu hosts the FGS. Its international airport and port are the country's largest two revenue sources. Mogadishu is the only city where the FGS collects taxes.⁸⁸⁵

In Mogadishu, the government depends heavily on thousands of African Union (AU) forces stationed there, protecting the airport and other strategically important locations. The SNA and the Somali police are sometimes acting as clan militia, not as a national force.⁸⁸⁶ Al-Shabaab has officially withdrawn from Mogadishu in mid-2011. Yet, the militant extremists have a sizable clandestine presence in the city. Al-Shabaab's 'secret police' called Amniyat has repeatedly infiltrated government and security agencies (see also [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#), 2023, Chapter 2.3.2).⁸⁸⁷ The group's presence in Mogadishu allows it to penetrate even the best-secured targets in the city.⁸⁸⁸ Al-Shabaab operates in Mogadishu, collecting taxes on large and small businesses on the big markets of the city, and also from individuals building houses or shops. Those who refuse to pay have to fear reprisals by the group, including attacks on their lives.⁸⁸⁹ Al-Shabaab can even summon people in Mogadishu it wishes to interrogate, if, for instance, a case is pending before an Al-Shabaab court outside of Mogadishu and a witness residing in the city is required. Al-Shabaab still has the capacity to call upon people (literally, using their phones) in Mogadishu to follow their orders and many people comply, also out of fear of reprisals.⁸⁹⁰ In many places, CCTV cameras have been installed.⁸⁹¹ Prof. Roland Marchal reported in March 2025 that there is more surveillance in the capital city.⁸⁹² However, there are still bombings and assassinations happening for which Al-Shabaab is responsible. Many people also do not know who to trust.⁸⁹³ For more information on Mogadishu overall security situation see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation, May 2025](#).

Security conditions in the city differ from one neighbourhood to another. Peripheral and semi-peripheral neighbourhoods are considered more insecure than highly protected zones near the international airport and in the centre.⁸⁹⁴ However, it is also true that areas in which government offices or African Union infrastructure is located, or where officials spend time, are prime targets for Al-Shabaab attacks.⁸⁹⁵

○ (a) Demographics and clan composition/distribution

Mogadishu is inhabited largely by Hawiye from the clans Abgaal, Habar Gedir and Murosade. Besides, certain minority groups such as Reer Hamar are traditional inhabitants of the city.⁸⁹⁶ Moreover, members

from many other Somali clans reside in Mogadishu as students, professionals, business people or government workers.⁸⁹⁷ Mogadishu is ‘not as segregated by clan as other areas of Somalia’. Still, clan membership is important. Hawiye clan holds the most powerful positions.⁸⁹⁸ Minority group members and members of other clans face exclusion and discrimination.⁸⁹⁹ Particularly in the oldest quarters Shangani and Hamar Weyne, Reer Hamar- which consist of many small groups, see [section 1.4 Minorities](#) - have their ancestral homes.⁹⁰⁰

Mogadishu is also hosting a considerable IDP population. Based on UNOCHA data, at the end of 2024, out of 3 812 registered IDP sites across the country, Mogadishu hosted 2 057 sites, with an overall population of more than 1 160 million people.⁹⁰¹ Most IDPs come from neighbouring regions such as Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle, while some come also from Bay region.⁹⁰² Most IDPs in Mogadishu reside in the districts Daynile, Hodan and Kahda.⁹⁰³ Some live in camps while many live in informal sites. Most of these sites are found in Daynile (1 091), and in Kahda (966).⁹⁰⁴ Many IDPs do not belong to dominant clans in Mogadishu and thus cannot rely on effective clan support when needed. They do not have a power base in the city.⁹⁰⁵

○ (b) Humanitarian situation overview

Somalia, and notably Mogadishu, depends almost entirely on foreign aid to assist IDPs,⁹⁰⁶ the most vulnerable group in the capital. They usually lack social capital to find support, jobs, housing, and get access to health care. There is no effective public support network. Many IDPs sustain themselves by daily labour, or they are dependent on support by relatives (e.g., from abroad) or humanitarian assistance.⁹⁰⁷ IDPs are in a subordinate and marginalised position throughout Mogadishu. Many choose to stay close to their informal settlements. They typically cannot claim urban land rights or protection from encroachment or forced eviction.⁹⁰⁸ For the year 2024, some 197 000 eviction cases affecting IDPs were documented in Somalia, primarily in Mogadishu and surroundings.⁹⁰⁹ IDPs in Mogadishu are in many camps dependent on informal camp or settlement managers. They act as gatekeepers providing land, basic services (e.g. water and sanitation) and some protections ‘in exchange for either cash – typically between \$15 and \$20 each month – or a proportion of humanitarian assistance – up to 60% in some cases.’⁹¹⁰

[880](#)

Mohamed Adam, Mogadishu’s Spiraling House Rents: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions, 29 January 2023, [url](#)

[881](#)

Mogadishu, Somalia Metro Area Population 1950-2025, [url](#) ; World Population Review: Mogadishu, [url](#)

[882](#)

Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 10

[883](#)

SMN, Mogadishu Expands as President Recognizes Three New Districts, 20 May 2024, [url](#)

[884](#)

BRA, Mohamed Ahmed Amiir, 2024, [url](#). By law, the Mayor of Mogadishu also holds the title of Governor of Benadir Regional Administration (BRA)

[885](#)

Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 9; see also SPA, Examining Somalia's New Sales Tax, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 1, 7

[886](#)

Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 6

[887](#)

Williams, Wendy (March 2023): Reclaiming Al Shabaab's Revenue. Africa Center for Strategic Studies, [url](#), p. 3

[888](#)

ACLED 1 March 2024: Al-Shabaab's Infiltration of a Military Base in Mogadishu and Somaliland's Conflict. [url](#)

[889](#)

Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report — Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 37; Amina, Telephone interview, 24 June 2024. Amina is a Somali scholar with focus on social science research based in Mogadishu

[890](#)

Siyaad, Telephone interview, 8 August 2024 and 28 March 2025. Siyaad is a medical laboratory supervisor in Mogadishu. Originally from northern Somalia he relocated to Mogadishu in 2013

[891](#)

Fayza, Telephone interview, 16 January 2025

[892](#)

Roland Marchal, Telephone interview, 26 March 2025

[893](#)

Fayza, Telephone interview, 16 January 2025

[894](#)

Mohamed Adam, Mogadishu's Spiraling House Rents: Causes, Consequences, and Possible Solutions, 29 January 2023, [url](#)

[895](#)

Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 24 March 2025

[896](#)

EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 13-15

[897](#)

Siyaad, Telephone interview, 8 August 2024

[898](#)

Afyare A. Elmi, and Faisal N. A., Mogadishu: City report, August 2024, [url](#), p. 10.

[899](#)

Zakia Hussen, Telephone interview, 8 April 2025

[900](#)

Adam, A., Benadiri People of Somalia with Particular Reference to the Reer Hamar of Mogadishu, 2011, [url](#), p. 107

[901](#)

EUAA analysis based on UNOCHA, Humanitarian Data, Somalia CCCM IDP Site Master List, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

[902](#)

Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 12

[904](#)

EUAA analysis based on UNOCHA, Humanitarian Data, Somalia CCCM IDP Site Master List, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

[905](#)

Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 12

[906](#)

AP, US aid freeze paralyzes NGOs working to help millions of internally displaced people in Somalia, 12 February 2025, [url](#); see also New Humanitarian (The), The government view on ending Somalia's humanitarian aid 'trap', 6 August 2024, [url](#); SATG, Rethinking Humanitarian Aid in Somalia: From Dependency to Sustainable Solutions, January 2025, [url](#)

[907](#)

Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), pp. 13-17

[908](#)

Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p.21

[909](#)

UNOCHA 2025: Humanitarian Need and Response Plan Somalia 2025, [url](#), p. 49

[910](#)

Crawford, N., at al., The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, April 2024, [url](#), p. 22