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3.1.4. Civilians perceived as 'spies' by Al-Shabaab

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: October 2025

This sub-profile refers to civilians accused by Al-Shabaab of spying for the government, for ATMIS/AUSSOM or other international actors and/ or for FMS forces or administrations.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Country Focus 2025, 1.6.4.; Targeting 2021, 6.3.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which civilians perceived as ‘spies’ by Al-Shabaab could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. Al-Shabaab considers ‘spying’ for the government (or foreign powers) as a crime punishable by death. Civilians and businesspeople suspected of spying for different actors, such as the government, international actors, including the US forces, regional and federal security forces, and regional and federal intelligence agencies, were targeted and executed, mostly with public executions, as warning examples, and on various occasions abducted.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

In **South-Central Somalia, a well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated** in the case of civilians perceived as ‘spies**’** as they were targeted and executed on various occasions during the reference period. As reported in 2021, the level of proof before executions was reportedly quite low and no access to a lawyer was allowed.

In **Puntland**, Al-Shabaab has lower operational capacity, with stronger presence in the northern parts (see map). Therefore, the home area of the applicant should be taken into account as a risk-impacting circumstance.

In **Somaliland**, Al-Shabaab has very limited operational capacity and in the reference period no incidents against civilians perceived as ‘spies’ were reported. Therefore**, a well-founded fear of persecution** for civilians perceived as ‘spies’ in **Somaliland would in general not be**

substantiated.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **religion** and/or **political opinion**. Al-Shabaab perceives individuals of this profile as supporters or collaborators of its political opponents and, by extension, infidels.

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