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4.2.2. Criminal violence

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Security 2025, 1.3., 1.5.; Country Focus 2025, 1.10.2.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Criminal violence in Somalia is widespread and deeply rooted in the country's fragile governance and security structures. In 2023, Somalia ranked 13th out of 54 African countries for criminality and had the world's highest score for extortion and protection racketeering, mainly by non-state armed groups like Al-Shabaab and ISS. The criminal economy thrives amid weak institutions, corruption, and low public trust in law enforcement, perpetuating insecurity and violence across the country.

Major crimes include arms trafficking, human smuggling and trafficking in human beings, forced child labour- particularly among IDPs and minority groups- and extortion targeting civilians, businesses, NGOs, and humanitarian actors. Extortion through the use of 'taxes' has been imposed not only by Al-Shabaab (see also 3.4. Individuals refusing to pay 'taxes' to Al-Shabaab), but also by other groups and militias. In the reference period, various incidents, including shootings, killings, and beatings, were triggered by disputes over 'taxes or money extortion'. Reported perpetrators include government institutions, local administrations, ISS, clan militias, individual soldiers and *mooryaan* or bandits, depending also on their area of operations. Crimes, such as arms trafficking, trafficking in human beings, and smuggling are also pervasive in Somalia. Smuggling, often perceived as a legitimate income source, frequently transitions into trafficking in human beings involving forced labour and sexual exploitation. Youth gangs, such as *ciyaal weero*, are active in Mogadishu, engaging in robbery, assault, and looting. Criminality is driven by non-state actors, clan-based militias, and even state-embedded actors. Criminal networks, often intertwined with political actors and Al-Shabaab, control smuggling routes and illicit trade, including charcoal, frankincense, and gold, sometimes resulting in violent disputes.

Personal circumstances such as: the home area of the applicant as well as his/her gender, being in an IDP situation, belonging to a minority are to be taken into account for the assessment of real risk of criminal violence. A real risk of a violent crime, such as abduction, murder, robbery and violence related to trafficking in human beings and forced child labour would meet the requirements under Article 15(b) QD/QR. Where there is no nexus to a reason for persecution under the refugee definition, but there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for the individual to

face violent crime, this risk would qualify under Article 15(b) QD/QR.

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