News Published: 16 October 2025

Somalia: Updated EUAA Country Guidance highlights the country's territorial fragmentation



The EUAA has recently published updated Country Guidance on Somalia. Endorsed by the Agency's Management Board, the guidance represents the joint assessment of EU+ countries on possible international protection needs of Somali nationals. It is based on the Agency's latest Country-of-Origin Information (COI) and aims to foster convergence of asylum decisions at the EU level.

Since August 2023, Somalia has continued to be affected by various conflicts, the main one being between the Federal Government and the Islamist Salafi-jihadist armed group Al-Shabaab. Territorially, **the country remains highly fragmented**, consisting of South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland. This fragmentation is reflected in the content and type of protection that EU+ countries' national authorities should consider granting to Somali applicants, when faced with specific risk profiles. The EUAA Country Guidance on Somalia was developed based on the latest Country-of-Origin Information, published earlier this year.

EU countries have concluded that **journalists reporting critically on conflict actors** throughout Somalia are likely to qualify as refugees. In addition, and in South-Central Somalia, **other profiles such as prominent and high-ranking federal and state officials; electoral delegates; and humanitarian workers** are also likely to warrant international protection. In the case of such applicants from Puntland, an assessment of risk-

impacting circumstances is required, as this may affect the probability of their being granted refugee status. The **same profiles would likely not qualify** for refugee status, for those applicants from Somaliland however.

Moreover, in the context of a persistent and extremely high prevalence of female genital mutilation / cutting (FGM/C) in the country, **this update confirms the likely international protection needs of girls and, under certain circumstances, of women from Somalia**. However, the updated guidance provides a **differentiated analysis** depending on whether women and girls have already undergone FGM/C.

The updated Country Guidance also provides an assessment of the levels of indiscriminate violence across the country, for subsidiary protection purposes. Indiscriminate violence is widespread throughout the country, though to differing degrees. The level of violence is considered high in **Lower Juba Bay**, **Lower Shabelle**, **Benadir / Mogadishu, Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, Mudug, Galgaduud**. It is considered less high in **Gedo, Middle Juba, Bakool, Bari, Sool and Sanaag**. Finally, EU countries consider that there is no real risk of serious harm for a civilian in the regions of **Awdal, Nugal, Wogoyi Galbeed and Todgheer**. This stratified assessment should inform the granting of subsidiary protection by EU+ countries accordingly.

An internal protection alternative (IPA) might be applicable in Mogadishu, **though only in exceptional cases** , while it may also be **applicable in Garowe and Hargeisa** depending on the profile and individual circumstances of the applicant. **Clan affiliation is a crucial element** when considering the availability of IPA in all three cities.

Asylum applications by Somali nationals

Between April 2023 and March 2025, Somali nationals lodged nearly 38 000 applications for international protection in the EU+, a slight increase (+ 8 %) compared to the 2 years prior. The main receiving countries were **Germany** (34 %), **France** (16 %), and **Greece** (9 %). Together, the top three countries account for 59 % of all applicants. During this period, over 17 000 decisions were issued, with an EU+ recognition rate for Somali applicants of roughly 56 %. At the end of March 2025, there were over 16 000 cases still pending a decision at first instance.

Background

The country guidance documents provide country-specific, common analysis and guidance in relation to the assessment criteria of international protection needs established in the EU asylum acquis. In accordance with Article 11 of the EUAA Regulation, Member States have the obligation to take into account the guidance notes and common analysis when examining applications for international protection, without prejudice to their competence for deciding on individual applications.

Download the Country Guidance: Somalia, published on 2 October 2025.

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