

# **MICRO CON**

**A MICRO LEVEL ANALYSIS  
OF VIOLENT CONFLICT**

## **Leaving Mogadishu: The War on Terror and Displacement Dynamics in the Somali Regions**

**MICROCON Research Working Paper 15**

**Anna Lindley**

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## **Leaving Mogadishu: The War on Terror and Displacement Dynamics in the Somali Regions<sup>1</sup>**

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**Abstract:** This paper goes beyond commonly invoked macro-political explanations for conflict-related migration, offering a micro-analysis of the causes and processes of flight from Mogadishu in the last two years. It explores how particular interactions between people, their resources, and their structural contexts produce migration, and shape the process of migration. Based on qualitative research with people from Mogadishu seeking refuge in self-declared Somaliland, the paper illuminates some of the micro-level, human consequences of the ‘war on terror’ in the Somali regions.

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**Figure 1. Map of Somalia**



## **INTRODUCTION**

Violent mass conflict disrupts the lives of millions of people around the world each year. Analysis and conflict resolution and prevention programmes are commonly driven by regional, national and international perspectives. But to understand some violent conflict situations, and to design successful policies to prevent or respond, it is important to go beyond the macro-level, to explore the micro-foundations – the individual, household and group interactions leading to and resulting from conflicts (MICROCON 2006). This is perhaps particularly important in the context of protracted crises, where there are often complex and rather localised conflict dynamics.

Migration is a common result of violent conflict, with people moving within the affected area or country, and across borders to neighbouring countries or further afield. This paper focuses on the causes and processes of migration in the Somali regions of the Horn of Africa, which have witnessed particularly dramatic patterns of movement. The field research focused on a particular fragment of the wider picture, through research with a small sample of people from south-central Somalia (mainly Mogadishu) seeking refuge in Somaliland (mainly Hargeisa). The analysis seeks to explore people's often deeply personal accounts of life in conflict and the causes and processes of their migration, while at the same time locating these micro-level realities in the context of the wider local, national, regional and global political economies in which they occur.

The Somali territories cover a large part of the Horn of Africa, reaching into present day Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti. The Republic of Somalia has effectively split into three main parts. In the north west Somali regions, the Republic of Somaliland was established in 1991. It has remained largely peaceful since 1997, with large-scale refugee repatriation, and hosts people seeking refuge from the southern Somali regions and the Somali region of Ethiopia, and labour migrants from elsewhere in the Horn of Africa and further afield. The northeastern regional state of Puntland, established in 1998, is relatively stable and has seen some post-conflict reconstruction, limited return migration, and the arrival of displaced people from south-central Somalia and the Somali region of Ethiopia. Bosasso port has become a

major transit point for Africans seeking a passage to Yemen and onward. In the war-torn south-central regions, the ousting of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) by Ethiopian and Transitional Federal Government forces has not brought peace, with remnants of the ICU mounting a vigorous insurgency campaign. Fighting in Mogadishu displaced over 870,000 people in since January 2007 (some two thirds of the city's population), and 1.1 million people are internally displaced within south-central Somalia (NGO statement 2008).

There are important reasons for studying migration in the Somali regions. The protracted nature of the civil war has led to displacement on a massive scale, and the recent intensification of violence in the south-central regions between the 'national' government and the Islamic Courts has led to a significant acceleration of movement, suggesting that south-central Somalia is likely to continue to generate significant and complex migration patterns in the short and medium term future. What are the causes of this massive movement and how can they be addressed? How should the urgent humanitarian challenges this raises be tackled?

This research focused on two conceptual and empirical challenges. First, there has been somewhat of a tendency, understandable amidst the human devastation provoked by violent mass conflict, towards accepting macro-political explanations of the causes of migration – anyone leaving a conflict-affected area might be presumed to be leaving because of the conflict. But as both growing research on livelihoods in conflict situations and historical observation of the Somali case suggest, migration is in fact one of several strategies that people use to survive and cope during times of relative stability as well as conflict. Micro-level research allows us to explore in detail how particular interactions between people, their resources, and their structural contexts produce migration. For example, on one level, the question of why people have been leaving Mogadishu since 2006 has an obvious answer. But on another level, many of the people we spoke with had lived their entire lives in one of the most insecure urban environments in the world, finding ways to negotiate daily dangers. They are witnesses to the last two decades of insecurity, but their voices are rarely heard. To understand the massive recent exodus, we have to listen to how the conflict and other factors impinged on everyday life and how this changed over time.

The second conceptual and empirical challenge that this research attempted to address was the process of migration – what happens between the decision to leave and someone settling somewhere else. This is often overlooked in studies of migration, including forced migration, because it is seen as an in-between stage. But the Somali case illustrates very clearly that how people move from decision to actual departure, how they chart and navigate routes through war-torn and politically troubled territories, and their experiences on the road, are not only the a rich subject for empirical enquiry, but are also of wider conceptual significance. That it is not possible for the vast majority of young people in Mogadishu to go to Canada and become a doctor, despite such dreams and aspirations being endemic, is due to a range of intervening factors that shape the process of migration and help us to explain its eventual outcomes.

Before outlining the research methods, the next section explores key conceptual issues regarding migration dynamics in contexts of conflict.

## **CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND: MIGRATION IN CONTEXTS OF CONFLICT**

Migration theories have generally developed to explain people migrating to seek better economic opportunities,<sup>3</sup> with fewer attempts to theorise migration associated with violent conflict in the country of origin. There is a tendency for scholars to stop at macro-level explanations of the causes of ‘forced migration’: there was a conflict in the area, so people fled. Indeed, refugee movements are often seen as singular and unpredictable occurrences in contrast to labour migration which is seen to be governed by social forces that are somewhat regular and amenable to theoretical analysis (Zolberg *et al.* 1989). Much attention has been paid to the causes of conflict and its processes, on one hand, and on the other hand, to the impact of conflict-related migration on the lives of the people involved and the new environments in which they find themselves. But the interface between conflict and migratory processes has been

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<sup>3</sup> See neoclassical push-pull explanations (e.g. Todaro 1969), the ‘new economics of labour migration’ household-oriented model (e.g. Stark and Bloom 1985), dual labour market theory focusing on host country demand (e.g. Piore 1979), historico-structural explanations (e.g. Sassen 1988) and migration network and transnationalism theory (e.g. Boyd 1989 and Smith and Guarnizo 1998).

less closely scrutinised. This may be in part because we are so used to treating conflict-affected countries and forced migration as exceptional phenomena, as separate cases from so-called ‘normal’ developing countries or ‘mainstream’ economic migration – despite the fact that refugees currently represent some 12 per cent of international migrants (UNHCR 2008). The few sociological attempts to theorise the causes of migration in contexts of conflict have emphasised two main issues.

First, there has been close attention to the interplay between structure and agency. Zolberg *et al.* (1989) focused on the concept of migration in response to life-threatening violence, i.e. life including biological existence and social existence (and basic material and organizational conditions necessary to maintain them), and clear and immediate physical violence (and coercive circumstances with similarly threatening effects), and thus emphasising the structural contexts that force migration. In contrast, Richmond (1994) drew on Giddens’ structuration theory - emphasising the duality of social structure as at once making social action possible, and at the same time being created by social action<sup>4</sup> - to develop a model of international population movements ranging from reactive to proactive migration. Building on this, Van Hear (1998) represents migration as different spatial movements along a force-choice continuum, suggesting that migration is determined by a combination of ‘root causes’ or structural factors which predispose a population to migrate (e.g. macroeconomic disparities between home and host countries); proximate causes or factors that bear more immediately on migration (e.g. economic downturn); precipitating factors, which trigger decision to depart (e.g. factory closure); and intervening factors, which enable, facilitate, constrain, accelerate, or consolidate migration (e.g. transport networks and immigration regimes). These models, in using the idea of a continuum, tend to deconstruct the common dichotomy between ‘forced’ and ‘voluntary’ migration in favour of a more nuanced and gradated conception of the factors that limit choice. Turton (2003) however suggests that even the notion of a continuum fails to really capture the role of human agency and the variable dynamics of how individuals, families and groups respond to such predicaments as purposive actors. He

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<sup>4</sup> Contrasting with structural analysis (which emphasises the structure of social relations) and methodological individualism (claiming that only individuals and their psychological predispositions are real).

points out that even in the most constrained of circumstances, people exercise agency and struggle to maintain some area of individual decision making.

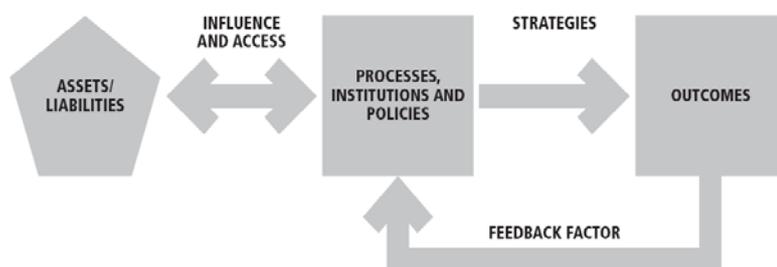
A second theme in the critical literature has been the intertwining of political and economic elements in the causes of migration in contexts of conflict. This complexity is often crudely reduced in the popular tendency to associate forced migration with political motives and voluntary migration with economic motives, fuelled by the emphasis on civil and political rights in the influential 1951 Refugee Convention (Hayden 2006). In fact, of course, the forces behind migration very often have *both* economic *and* political dimensions. At the macro-level, the political and economic elements of instability are often closely interwoven, and at the micro-level, threats to lives and livelihoods are closely related (Castles and Van Hear 2005, Lautze 1997). The relationship between conflict and migration has also been tested using econometric approaches in several macro-level cross-country studies, which overall, emphasise the role of political violence and civil war as the main reasons why people flee (Schmeidl 1997; Moore and Shellman 2004). However, recent microeconomic analysis of data from Aceh and Nepal demonstrate that socio-economic factors - the nature of production in the area, the household's possession of location-specific non-saleable assets versus saleable assets, the existence of various types of community organisations – can also contribute to determining out-migration from conflict affected areas, Czaika and Kis-Katos 2007, Engel and Ibañez 2007, and Williams 2008a and b). All this points to the need for a more 'social-ecological' approach (Williams 2008b: 33) to understanding migration in contexts of conflict, taking into account physical security, but also economic social and psychological well-being.

How can we capture this interplay between structure and agency, and the political and economic dimensions of life in research on migration in contexts of conflict? Everything points to the usefulness of a micro-level approach. There has long been recognition that while it is important to develop a broad macro-level understanding of the nature of violent disorder in the contemporary world, there is also a clear need for fine-grained case studies of conflict as experienced by families and communities (Richards 1996). In the absence of detailed contextual analysis of the micro-foundations of conflict, humanitarian action and political intervention designed to

resolve conflicts often gets ahead of understanding, sometimes with disastrous results (Goodhand 2000).

Recent work on livelihoods in conflict situations provides a promising conceptual approach and methodology for considering the dynamics of conflict-related migration, acknowledging both people's agency and the importance of broader structural factors. In brief, livelihoods analysis, initially used in poor rural settings, focuses on the capabilities and resources people possess ('natural, physical, human, social and financial assets') and how these are mobilised, and mediated by the wider governance environment ('policies, institutions and processes' such as social relations, informal and formal institutions and organisations), to formulate a means of living. This is represented diagrammatically in Figure 2 (see also Chambers and Conway 1992; DFID 1999; Ellis 2000). Migration is one such livelihood strategy.

**Figure 2. A livelihood model for conflict settings**



Source: Lautze and Raven Roberts 2006.

Early work on livelihoods in crisis- and conflict-affected settings was mainly carried out by applied organisations seeking to target relief, and some of it was criticised for being too micro-level and neglecting the wider context. Conflict researchers have emphasised the importance of a political economy-informed analysis, which emphasises the distribution of power and wealth and how these relationships change over time, and brings to light how conflict transforms (rather than simply destroying) society, causing people to adapt behaviour and livelihoods to survive, cope or sometimes even thrive in conflict-affected areas (Collinson 2003, Longley and Maxwell 2003, Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2006). Such an approach also shows how

livelihood systems are both the target of violence as well as fundamental to shaping the production of social change and violence.

Fine-grained case studies of migration dynamics in conflict settings are few and far between (rare examples are Young 2006 and Lubkemann 2008), as conflict researchers often do not follow the pathways of people moving out of the conflict situation, and forced migration researchers tend to focus rather on the post-migration situation of affected people. But a political economy-informed livelihoods lens can also be used to analyse the causes and processes of migration in conflict settings (Collinson 2007). Migration may be a side effect of a conflict, or the result of deliberate war strategies aimed at displacing people or undermining the self-sufficiency and productivity of particular groups (Lautze 1997). As in peaceful contexts, migration might be expected to reflect and in turn affect patterns of inequality and power relations in the place of origin. At a broader level, Castles (2003) emphasises the importance of not treating forced migration as a string of unconnected emergencies but seeing it in the context of wider processes of global change and North-South relationships. Understanding how people try to find a means of living in the context of wider policies, institutions and processes that constrain and enable their actions provides crucial insights into displacement dynamics. How do the external (underlying, proximate, precipitating or intervening) factors prompting migration interact with the agency of the people involved (expressed through a livelihoods lens as their capabilities and resources)?

This analysis can also be extended to consider the process of migration, which has often been overlooked, because it is seen as an in-between phase. But journeys – what happens between deciding to leave and arrival elsewhere - can be a particularly important part of the story in several ways. First, how people begin their journeys is part of understanding the causes of migration – even after having made (in principle) a decision to move, people will not necessarily find it easy to migrate, and may find that intervening factors will facilitate or constrain their intended movement. Moreover, while more ‘anticipatory’ movement may be carefully planned as Kunz points out, when the journey begins in a more precipitous fashion, decisions regarding initial or secondary destinations are often made after people have already hit the road. As with other times in life, travellers have resources and capabilities that they will

mobilise in different ways to survive and negotiate the distance to a place of safety. Second, the wider structural environment enables and constrains mobility in particular ways. The geography of conflict, as well as immigration and refugee regimes can shape migration pathways, often complicating migration. Migration antecedents – tried and tested mobility strategies, well-worn labour or refugee migration pathways, diasporic geography and contacts – can influence migration pathways in important ways (Van Hear 1998). Third, the process of migration can condition settlement processes. People sometimes experience hardship, danger and trauma on the journey that adds further weight to their decision to leave and seek safety elsewhere, and can become an important aspect of their fear of return. The collective journey can become an important aspect of identity in exile. It is important to remember that for many conflict-affected people, despite apparently having settled elsewhere, their journey is not yet over in their heads. Many long for an eventual return. Others, particularly those living in camps hoping for resettlement, see their present residence as a stopping point on the way to a better place (Horst 2006).

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

In light of the considerations outlined above, the research sought to answer two main questions:

### **Why are people leaving Mogadishu and other parts of south-central Somalia?**

What are the underlying structural factors, proximate, precipitating and intervening factors? What is the role of local/international governance mechanisms in causing migration?

**How does migration occur?** What choices are available, to whom, at what stages? What kinds of journeys do people make? How is movement governed by local/international actors?

This paper is based on qualitative research carried out in Somaliland in June-August 2008 (following a preliminary visit in December 2007), mainly in Hargeisa, the main destination, with visits to Burco, Berbera and Wajaale. The research was carried out with the assistance of four assistants (two local and two originating from Mogadishu)

who participated in a three-day training and were closely supervised during the fieldwork. The research used four main methods:

**Individual interviews** - 21 people (13 women and 8 men), mainly from Mogadishu, participated in the individual interviews. There were identified via research assistants' personal social networks, or by meeting in the street, public transport or workplaces. Of relevance to this paper, the participants were asked about:

- the general economic, social and political situation in Mogadishu and major changes in the last 5 years
- their own life situation in the last 5 years, including any changes
- how they came to the decision to leave
- their journey and any challenges that they met on the way

**Focus groups** - 17 south-central Somalis (10 women and 7 men) participated in 4 focus groups, organised with the help of local organisations supporting migrants, street contacts, and the research assistants' social contacts. Generally the focus groups were facilitated by one research assistant and another was responsible for tape-recording and note-taking. Refreshments and bus fares were provided. The focus groups discussed with participants similar issues to those addressed in the interviews, although in more general terms. Most interviews and focus groups were tape recorded and translated and transcribed into English, although a few (where the participant preferred) were recorded in hand-written notes. The data was coded and analysed using the NVivo qualitative data analysis software.

More information about research participants, the ethical principles guiding the research and various issues that arose during the fieldwork, is given in the Appendix. In recruiting research participants, we were not seeking a representative sample of people from Mogadishu in Hargeisa, but rather a broad balance in terms of gender, age and previous socio-economic situation. Around three fifths were woman and two fifths were men and most were in their teens, twenties or thirties. As we shall see, their economic situation in Mogadishu ranged from among the poorest to very prosperous. We also spoke with people of a range of Hawiye sub-clans, including Habar Gedir, Abgaal, Murursade and Sheikhal, as well as minority groups Bantu and

Reer Banadir.<sup>5</sup> It is important to acknowledge that those participating in this research in Hargeisa represent a small sub-group of all those leaving Mogadishu, but by including a people of a broad range of demographic, economic and clan characteristics in the research, and combining with analysis and information from other secondary and primary sources (see below), it is possible to deduce some key aspects of out-migration dynamics from Mogadishu.<sup>6</sup>

**Consultations** - People with particular knowledge of different aspects of migration and related processes, including government officials, international agencies, local and international development NGOs assisting migrants in Somaliland, and private sector entrepreneurs (including money transfer, airlines, lodges and hotels), were consulted in person and by telephone and email. Representatives of more than 30 relevant organisations were consulted.

**Analysis of Population Movement Tracking data** – in mid-2006, this system was set up by UNHCR in collaboration with local NGOs, to provide information on population movements within the Somali regions. Local NGOs were identified, trained and supported by UNHCR to monitor key locations, including settlements of internally displaced people (IDPs), bus stations, and crossroads. Monitors report on IDP movements on a daily basis using a standard form, and the data is consolidated at local and UNHCR level into a central database. The system cannot provide reliable total numbers of internally displaced people in any one location, but it does provide reliable indicative information on overall trends and patterns of movements, and key issues confronting IDPs.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Although we did not ask people their clan as this was seen as a sensitive question, in some cases the participants offered the information and in others the research assistants knew or had some idea of their clan.

<sup>6</sup> Due to security problems, there has been no comprehensive survey of Mogadishu residents and their migration patterns, or of displaced populations, which means that quantitative analysis of the determinants of emigration is not currently possible.

<sup>7</sup> Some may have moved before the system was set up; some may have simply disappeared into the community and not been recorded by the PMT monitors; and some may have subsequently moved on from their initial destination to other places in Somalia or abroad. See UNHCR 2007a.

## **STRUCTURAL ENVIRONMENT: CHANGING LANDSCAPES OF VIOLENCE AND THE ENCROACHMENT OF THE WAR ON TERROR**

This section documents underlying structural changes in Mogadishu and participants' observations regarding the changing landscapes of violence during the civil war, while following sections explore how people reach the decision to migrate and the process of migration. The broad political economy might be seen as laying the groundwork for migration, impinging on different people's lives in different ways.

Most research participants had remained in south-central Somalia throughout this period, and were asked about how the general situation in Mogadishu had changed in the last five years. They all spoke of two main shifts, firstly with the rise of the Islamic Courts, and secondly with their overthrow and the arrival of the TFG, backed by Ethiopian troops. We will start the story, however, somewhat earlier, because it is important to view the violence of the last two years in a historical perspective, particularly as this is sometimes overlooked in the international community's responses to the Somali situation, which recently have been heavily framed by the need to respond to urgent humanitarian challenges and the geopolitics of the 'war on terror'. A historical perspective is also important to demonstrate how migration has always been an aspect of Somali society - from the age-old and enduring mobility of the nomadic pastoralists, to jet-age asylum-seekers and transnational entrepreneurs – and to show continuities and changes over time.

### **State-building and collapse**

Traditionally stateless, Somalis are an ethnic group - defined in terms of shared language, religion and socio-political organization through clanship - but have never formed a single polity (Lewis 2002). Somali people are concentrated in an area in the Horn of Africa that stretches from the far north east corner into modern day Djibouti, the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and northern Kenya, and have a strong and enduring tradition of nomadic pastoral migration. Arab and Somali regional migration brought Islam and linkages into wider trading networks. In the 1800s and early 1990s, Britain, Italy, Ethiopian and France brought various parts of the Somali regions under colonial rule, complicating later attempts at state-building. The Republic of Somalia was created in 1960 from the union of the Italian-administrated UN Trusteeship to the south and the newly independent British Somaliland to the north. During the first

decade the civilian government remained heavily reliant on budgetary support from other countries, with growing public discontent at visible corruption and the over-centralisation of power on the southern capital, Mogadishu (Lewis 2002). Like many post-colonial capitals, there were high levels of urbanisation in the early post-independence period.

General Mohamed Siyad Barre came to power in a coup d'état in 1969, expounding 'scientific socialism', and launched a central economic planning process. Despite some early successes, Cold War patronage - first Soviet then later American – fuelled domestic clientelism underneath the regime's nationalist rhetoric (Samatar 1988). As Barre consolidated power around the Marehan, Ogaden and Dublahante branches of the Darod family, rebel movements formed in response to discontent and repression of Majerteen communities in the north east (Somali Salvation Democratic Front, 1979) and Isaq communities in the north west (Somali National Movement, 1981). Following attempts at liberal reforms in the 1980s, the Somali state sank into economic and political crisis, with little control of the shrinking formal economy, dwindling aid, and costly counterinsurgency operations in the north west. Under Barre, the major migration patterns were the movement of Somali workers to the oil-rich Gulf states, and the arrival of well over half a million Somali refugees from the Ethiopian Ogaden region in the late 1970s (Jamal 1988, Kibreab 2004, Brons 2001).

Civil war broke out in 1988, with the government responding to cross-border SNM attacks with savage reprisals against Isaq civilians in the the north west, destroying Hargeisa and Burao by aerial bombardment, killing more than 50,000 people. In 1989, the United Somali Congress (Hawiye based) and the Somali Patriotic Movement (Ogaden based) were established and in January 1991, the USC ousted Barre from Mogadishu and appointed an interim government. The insurgent groups failed to agree on the formation of a new government, leading to devastating violence and political fragmentation.

### **Civil war in Mogadishu**

In the early 1990s, in Mogadishu and elsewhere, opposing militia looted homes and businesses, robbed, kidnapped, raped and killed people associated by clan with opposing factions and minority groups. The population was further decimated by

famine in 1991-92 and was the scene of flailing humanitarian efforts and a catastrophic UN intervention in 1993 by US and other forces (de Waal 1997). Borders proliferated within the Somali Republic after the collapse of the state, constraining travel by land through the territories governed by competing factions.

The southern and central areas were controlled for much of the 1990s and first half of the 2000s by multiple non-state actors - warlord and factional rule drawing on clan-based military support, and later on councils of elders, municipal administrations and Islamist groups also came to control parts of the territory. Localised systems of governance have, in some places and at some points in time, provided a surprising degree of stability, despite the absence of the state:

Notwithstanding the general perception of Somalia as “anarchic”, basic law and order is in fact the norm in most locations... much of the Somali countryside - especially Somaliland, Puntland, and pockets of southern Somalia - is safer for local residents than is the case in neighbouring countries. There are, to be sure, shifting zones of very dangerous banditry and criminality in places like Jowhar, the lower Jubba valley, and parts of Mogadishu. It is also true that both Somali nationals and foreigners associated with an international organization or a profitable business are frequent targets of kidnapping for ransom, especially in Mogadishu. But it is important not to confuse the security problems of international aid agencies with security problems for average residents. (Menkhaus 2000: 9)

Analysis of the cross-border livestock trade, Mogadishu’s trade economy, the banana trade, and the expansion of telecommunications demonstrates that the economy has provided relatively buoyant in some ways, particularly in Mogadishu (Little 2003, Marchal 2000 and 2002, Hansen 2007, World Bank 2005, Websersik 2005). Many commentators ironically describe the civil war as a radical structural adjustment programme: it liberalised foreign trade, freed exchange rates, eliminated subsidies, deregulated national markets, drastically downsized the public sector and privatised parastatals. The private sector’s successes in this environment for some time seemed to offer Somalia’s only ‘good news’ story.

The above aspects of political order and economic opportunity lead to what Little (2003) called the ‘dilemma of representation’ regarding Somalia during this period. It translated into the incongruous outcome that despite witnessing some of the more devastating violence and direst economic hardship experienced in the contemporary world, ‘some parts of Somali society enjoy better human security today than they did in the Barre era, despite state collapse.’ (Samatar 1994: 8). It has led some commentators to wonder whether these half-statuses (the not peace/not war situation in many areas, the not official/not unofficial economy) are be more than a transitory stage but rather the defining characteristics of the contemporary era in Mogadishu and the Somali regions (Little 2003, Hagmaan and Von Hoehne 2008, Bradbury 2008). Rather than being a ‘complex political emergency’ on the way to state reconstruction, the Somali regions may be an example instead of non-state but nevertheless durable ‘emerging political complexes’ that so confound peace and development specialists (Duffield 2001).

Since 1991, Somalia has witnessed diverse migration patterns. Nomads have continued their cycles of pastoral migration, adapting to changing ecological and political circumstances. People have moved short distances within and between cities and rural homelands, or from more troubled to quieter regions, to escape violence. People have also fled to neighbouring countries, forming a large regional diaspora, both encamped and self-settled in urban areas, and some formed sizeable refugee communities in Western Europe and North America. Some have returned to the more stable self-declared Republic of Somaliland and to a lesser extent to the autonomous regions of Puntland. Meanwhile, emigration from across the Somali regions continues in response to insecurity, chronic political uncertainty, and limited economic opportunities. The first mass displacement was to Ethiopia and Djibouti as a result of the war in the north-west in 1988-1991. There was a second massive population movement in the wake of escalating violence in the southern areas and the collapse of the state in 1991, with hundreds of thousands of people fleeing to Kenya and Ethiopia.

Participants described the period in Mogadishu before the rise of the Islamic Courts as characterised by generalised insecurity, but with somewhat predictable elements. This in part explains why the official recorded refugee population reached a peak of over 800,000 in 1992, then steadily declined after the mid-1990s. People generally agreed

with the viewpoint expressed that: 'Although there was a civil war in the country, it was nothing like what we are facing currently.'<sup>8</sup> Participants spoke of warlords and the division of Mogadishu into clan territories, and sporadic fighting between these factions:

Sometimes I wanted to visit my relatives and could not go because there were warlords everywhere. Every clan had its place. If you enter another clan's area then they might kill or kidnap you... Sometimes the fighting only lasted ten or fifteen minutes, because the fighting wasn't heavy at that time...<sup>9</sup>

However, as the statement above also indicates, participants broadly saw these dangers as negotiable, by avoiding by avoiding particular areas, and being aware of what was going on. More emphasis was laid, instead, on the problems of general lawlessness and crime, and economic challenges. Particular mention was made of the problem of the *mooryan* (a derogatory term referring to armed groups of young men prone to criminal predation on civilian population). They complained about the frequently high cost of water and other basic goods during their period. Yet, at the same time, they emphasised how life went on – as one NGO worker put it: 'Life in Mogadishu is time bomb, you are always worrying that sometime or another it will explode. It is the poor who suffer the most, but no one seems to notice that, and everyone just goes about their everyday life.'<sup>10</sup>

As this quote also suggests, people's experiences of this period varied considerably depending on their position in society, and their economic, social and political resources. Research participants were drawn from a spectrum of occupations, from porters, rubbish collectors, domestic workers, construction workers, tea sellers, students, school teachers, shopkeepers, to gold sellers, engineers, money transfer workers and traders. While all of the interviewees had found ways to negotiate and survive the insecure urban environment of this period, some people clearly fared rather better than others. For example, minority groups such as the Somali Bantu were particularly vulnerable, without access to strong clan protection: one woman

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<sup>8</sup> Focus Group 2, July 2008

<sup>9</sup> Interview 11 (man in his 20s)

<sup>10</sup> Interview 18 (NGO worker in his 40s)

explained 'We owned a small piece of land in Hodan neighborhood and but it doesn't belong to us anymore. It was taken over by a Hawiye family and since we are Bantu we can't go and claim it.'<sup>11</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, some people were clearly doing well out of insecurity: as one young woman put it, 'All those warlords, their children are in prestigious schools and they are living a luxurious life and they never worry about what is happening to the civilians of Somalia, they are so selfish and greedy and they only think about themselves.'<sup>12</sup> Less dramatically, several of those interviewed were clearly part of Mogadishu's prosperous Hawiye business class, using clan connections and economic muscle to thrive in an otherwise challenging context.

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<sup>11</sup> Interview 2 (domestic workers in her 20s). Smaller Somali groups include the Somali Bantu or Goshu, the Benadari, the Gaboye (earlier known as the Midgan), Tumal and Yibir. At local level, some are affiliated to one of the large clans for protection. Known as 'dadka tiradaya' (minorities – although this is a relatively recent translation of western NGO-speak) they have generally held low social status and suffered discrimination and in some cases slavery (Minority Rights Group International 1997)

<sup>12</sup> Focus Group 2, July 2008

### **The rise of the Islamic courts**

The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was formed in Kenya in 2004, the most recent of fourteen attempts to re-establish a government since 1991. Formed in exile, and intended to be a government of national unity, the TFG finally convened in Baidoa in early 2006.

However, relocation to the capital was prevented by disagreement between the TFG and the 'Mogadishu group' a powerful alliance of businessmen, faction leaders, clan elders from the locally strong Hawiye/Habar Gedir sub-clans (ICG 2008; Menkhaus 2008). The TFG was hampered by serious internal dissent and defections of Mogadishu-based parliamentarians and ministers and its territorial control was limited to two provincial towns.

Over the course of a decade or so, configurations of power in Mogadishu had shifted considerably, challenging the power of the Hawiye warlords. Popular support for factional leaders was weakened by their failure to provide basic services and rule of law, and the rise of a powerful business elite able to buy off militia as private security forces (ICG 2006). Meanwhile, the long-standing network of *sharia* courts, grew in strength, fuelled by funding from Mogadishu's business community to resolve disputes and deal with chronic lawlessness, providing the basis for a broad based Islamist movement known as the Islamic Courts Union, with its own militia (Barnes and Hassan 2007).

Amid growing tensions and violence between the Islamists and the warlords in 2006, the US government, which had long been trying unsuccessfully to get hold of suspected terrorists believed to be hiding with hard-line Islamists, took the opportunity to back prominent factional leaders in an 'Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism' (Menkhaus 2008). The Islamists won a decisive victory in June 2006, after serious fighting: for the first time since the state had collapsed, the capital was ruled by a unified administration, which rapidly expanded its control to the border with Puntland in the north and with Kenya in the south (ICG 2006).

Major changes ensued in Mogadishu. Clan militias were disarmed or brought under the Courts' control, dramatically increasing civilian security, Mogadishu's air and

seaports were re-opened for the first time since 1995, and the Courts initiated a popular urban clean-up programme. Meanwhile potential critics were intimidated, and religiously conservative social policies were imposed in some neighbourhoods by local clerics, such as the closure of cinemas, banning of mixed sex social gatherings, and outlawing of the stimulant khat (Menkhaus 2007).

Research participants described the period during which Mogadishu was governed by the Islamic Courts Union in overwhelmingly positive terms. They emphasised what the Islamic Courts proceeded to do in terms of improving the urban environment ‘for the people’. First, they began to combat crime and violence in the city:

‘When the ICU came into the country they made safety and peace for the citizens a priority. They made sure that every robber gave up his gun, all the video spots were closed, every khat seller stopped selling poison to the people, everything was calm and quiet. And it was really what the people we were looking for after living in war for 17 years. It was like Allah answered all our prayers...’<sup>13</sup>

All this created, participants said - one after another, in elated terms - a sense of unusual ‘normality’, a sense that things were how they should be, that there was, at last, a government.

The only time we had peace and stability is when the ICU was in control, if you saw that period, everything was running the way it was supposed to run, and it was six months of heaven and we were really blessed.<sup>14</sup>

Good things happened when the ICU took over Somalia and tried their best to bring things back to normal... and they succeeded at that and within six months you could see the changes and how things were going on flawlessly.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Focus Group 2

<sup>14</sup> Focus Group 1

<sup>15</sup> Focus Group 2

[When] the ICU came to Mogadishu, we got the relief of peace, a kind of peace we never saw since 1990.<sup>16</sup>

When I finished school, the ICU were capturing control of Mogadishu, clearing the thieves and putting them in jail, just like a government. It was like there was a government in Mogadishu. The Islamic Courts were working well...<sup>17</sup>

Many participants emphasised the economic impact of the stability achieved. People were able to get on with business, at all hours of the day (where previously business tended to operate only during daylight hours): 'Economically when the ICU was there, at least the business were functioning and running normally and the businesses were booming and doing very well, it was stable.'<sup>18</sup>

Only two participants expressed reservations about the Islamic Courts during this period, complaining that they were not religious in their actions, their provocation of Ethiopia got Somalia to its current mess (see below), and that they forcibly recruited young men into their militia.<sup>19</sup>

### **An Ethiopian-backed Transitional Federal Government**

We will never know how the ICU would have governed the southern Somali regions given time. Its emergence as a potential precursor of a strong Islamic irredentist state in Somalia, combined with increasingly bellicose statements vis-à-vis the Ogaden from its more hardline wing (led by Hassan Dahir Aweys) alarmed the Ethiopian government; Western governments generally did not want to see a strong Islamist state in Somalia; the US government's frustration about what it saw as the ICU's non-cooperation over terrorist suspects mounted (Menkhaus 2008). In December 2006, at the invitation of the Transitional Federal Government, and with US diplomatic support, Ethiopian troops mounted an offensive against the Islamic Courts which succeeded in dislodging their forces from Mogadishu. Many of its leaders and fighters

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<sup>16</sup> Focus Group 4

<sup>17</sup> Interview 15 (man, teenager)

<sup>18</sup> Focus Group 2, July 2008

<sup>19</sup> Some young men had been hiding to avoid conscription. Focus Group 3, July 2008; Interview 11 (man in his twenties)

fled south or abroad. The TFG, with help from the UN, particularly UNDP, began attempts to establish government offices and institutions.

But it did not take long for opposition to rally. The opposition that emerged was not one organisation, but a range of fragmented groups coalescing around Hawiye clan militia, ICU militia, and the hardline jihadist Al-Shabaab group (ICG 2008). Opposition factions carried out numerous and damaging attacks on TFG and Ethiopian installations in Mogadishu and elsewhere and the civilian neighbourhoods surrounding them; murdered and threatened aid workers, civil society leaders, and ordinary people they claim were acting in ways complicit with the TFG, including by trying to prevent opposition groups from launching attacks from their neighbourhood that would incite reprisals against civilians; and organised a series of suicide bombings in Puntland and Somaliland in October 2008 (HRW 2008, AI 2008a). They recruited through a mixture of persuasion, cash offerings and intimidation (ICG 2008, HRW 2008).

Numerous sources now document that the TFG and its Ethiopian allies responded to opposition attacks in ways that have caused severe suffering to civilians, deeply alienating many residents of Mogadishu (AI 2008a, ICG 2008, Menkhaus 2008, HRW 2007 and 2008). By the end of 2007 government sources said that 80 per cent of the country was still outside government control (BBC 2007). At the end of 2008, all the major towns in south-central Somalia were controlled by various fragments of the insurgency, except Mogadishu (where there were also parts effectively off limits to TFG forces and their Ethiopian allies) and Baidoa (ICG 2008).

Research participants' accounts of life in Mogadishu during 2007 and the first half of 2008 emphasised three key, interlocking structural aspects: life-threatening violence and urban insecurity, economic disruption, and geopolitical machinations.

First, they spoke of direct and life-threatening violence and more general urban insecurity. The quality of the violence in Mogadishu and its humanitarian consequences changed dramatically in the last two years, leading some aid workers to talk about 'an emergency within an emergency' (Noor 2007). A recent report by

Human Rights Watch describes the changed patterns of violence in Mogadishu in the last two years:

The bombardments are largely indiscriminate, lobbed into densely populated neighbourhoods with no adequate effort made to guide them to their intended targets. Insurgents lob mortar shells from populated neighbourhoods that crash through the roofs of families living near TFG police stations and Ethiopian bases. Ethiopian and TFG forces respond with sustained salvos of mortar, artillery, and rocket fire that destroy homes and their inhabitants near the launching points of the fast-departed insurgents... TFG security forces and militias have terrorized the population by subjecting citizens to murder, rape, assault, and looting. Insurgent fighters subject perceived critics of TFG collaborators – including people who took menial jobs in TFG offices or sold water to Ethiopian soldiers – to death threats and targeted killings. The discipline of Ethiopian soldiers in Somalia has broken down to the point where they increasingly are responsible for violent criminality. Victims have no way to file a complaint – the TFG police force has itself been implicated in many of the worst abuses, including the arbitrary arrests of ordinary civilians to extort ransom from their families. (HRW 2008: 4)

It seems that a key element is the unpredictability of violence, which makes it hard to adapt to or negotiate, and contrasts with earlier years when patterns of violence had settled into some regularity. For much of this period, when conflict broke out, people knew which areas to avoid, they knew it would be temporary, and they knew where they fitted in the power configurations in Mogadishu. Research participants described a dramatic deterioration in civilian security since the arrival of the TFG: many said that everything was turned ‘upside down’. Strong themes in their accounts were a sense of disorientation at the changing political and geographical configurations of power and at the new technologies of war being deployed, and significant urban insecurity:

There is a huge problem in Mogadishu and total chaos, everyday there is fighting and can hear rockets every hour of the day, with a reason and without.

It just looks like a jungle with no law or order. The TFG instead of solving problems made everything worse, I really don't know what is happening.<sup>20</sup>

But now nothing is in order if you work or not you will get looted by the TFG and the Ethiopians plus the thieves, you will never know who to avoid or hide from.<sup>21</sup>

Life in Somalia was unbearable, there was death on daily basis and we couldn't survive there anymore where there are rockets going over your head, rape, kidnapping and killings. It's a ruthless situation that makes even the stones weep...<sup>22</sup>

Ethiopians set fire to everything they come across or thought that the insurgents could hide in - houses, farms, offices, shops and even food stores and the animals that belong to the poor nomads.<sup>23</sup>

[Ethiopian troops] made problems for women going to other places, for example their jewellery and mobiles would be taken by thieves (but they would be less likely to rob men). They killed lots of men saying that they supported the Islamic Courts. These problems are still continuing.<sup>24</sup>

Now you can see small groups being created calling themselves funny names and hiding behind a fake story by saying they are going to free the land from the foreigners. Is it really what they are doing? Because all I am seeing is killings of innocent civilians that had nothing to do with all of this.<sup>25</sup>

A second theme in participants' accounts was the economic disruption caused by the violence. Some aspects of this are well-documented by humanitarian relief organisations which estimated that within the first six months of 2008, the number of

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<sup>20</sup> Focus Group 2, July 2008

<sup>21</sup> Focus Group 2, July 2008

<sup>22</sup> Focus Group 1, July 2008

<sup>23</sup> Focus Group 1, July 2008

<sup>24</sup> Interview 4 (woman in her twenties)

<sup>25</sup> Focus Group 2, July 2008

people requiring emergency livelihood and humanitarian support increased by 40 per cent, to 35 per cent of the population (Holleman 2008). Around 21 per cent of the urban population in south-central Somalia are thought to be facing either acute food and livelihood crisis (i.e. highly stressed and critical lack of food access with high and above usual malnutrition rates and accelerated depletion of livelihood assets) or humanitarian emergency (i.e. severe lack of food access with excess mortality, very high and increasing malnutrition, and irreversible asset-stripping) (Holleman 2008). This is partly a result of how the violence and civil insecurity has disrupted economic activities, trade and transportation networks. Participants described how the changing environment hindered economic activity, and their attempts to get on with everyday life amidst the turmoil:

For example in a certain day I woke up early, prayed and got ready for schools then on the way I saw many people killed and so many barriers. Sometimes it got worse and the Ethiopians killed people for no reason.<sup>26</sup>

I can say that life in Somalia was better when the ICU was in charge. Then, we were working freely, no one stole from us or looted us out of our money or belongings. Now we have to bribe the government police in order to stay safe or not to be searched by the Ethiopian troops. If it happens and they arrest you, you have to pay them an amount money - \$200 or \$300 - and most of us don't even have it. It is just like a jungle with no law or order in place. You have to think before you make any move or improvement to your life situation.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, the printing of Somali Shillings, largely to fund the conflict, has increased the money supply, dramatically decreasing the value of the shilling to the dollar (by about 50 per cent in Mogadishu between January and July 2007), resulting in hyperinflation, exacerbated by high global food and fuel prices (with reported price increases of 200 per cent to 700 per cent in six months) (Holleman 2008). As one participant put it:

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<sup>26</sup> Focus Group 3, July 2008

<sup>27</sup> Interview 21 (woman in her forties, NGO worker)

Somalia is not doing well when it comes to economy. Nothing is stable or solid, exchange rates fluctuate on a daily basis and the dollar exchange rate is high compared to the Somali shilling. The situation is worsening everyday and there are no government regulations to maintain or supervise the economy.<sup>28</sup>

All in all, participants' accounts tend to support the analysis that 'The escalating conflict, civil insecurity and instability in Somalia are not only directly leading to human suffering... but are fuelling an economic crisis which is beginning to have a wider and devastating impact on the broader population.' (Holleman 2008)

Finally, participants also emphasised the geopolitical drivers of the changes they have seen in Mogadishu in recent years. People in Mogadishu are well aware that their city has become, more than for many years, a theatre where external actors are also playing out their hostilities, as summarised in a recent report by the International Crisis Group (ICG 2008). The Ethiopian government wants to destroy the ICU and the interest groups on which it draws support, and prevent the rise of a strong central or Islamist state that would revive claims on the Somali-inhabited Ethiopian Ogaden region and support armed insurgencies in Ethiopia. The US's priority appeared to be to extract suspected terrorists, with secondary aims of preventing the emergence of a strong Islamist government, and maintaining strong relations with Ethiopia as a stable and reliable regional ally (ICG 2008; Menkhaus 2008). Controversially, US has launched military strikes against suspected extremists in Somalia with considerable 'collateral damage' in January 2007 (near Ras Kamboohi, missing the target but killing 30 civilians), March 2008 (Dhobley, missing the target and killing four civilians) and May 2008 (Dhusamareb, killing Aden Hashi Ayro, a Shabaab leader, and 15 others). The Eritrean government continues to support hardline Islamist elements in an attempt to undermine its long-standing enemy Ethiopia. The European Union has remained focused on humanitarian issues and financial support to the TFG, facing criticisms that it has not used its potential leverage to curb excesses emanating from parts of the TFG. It is not clear what the impact will be of Saudi Arabia's recent increased engagement with Somalia – \$1 bn for reconstruction has been promised,

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<sup>28</sup> Interview 20 (woman in her 40s, tea seller)

and could wield influence as the home of the Wahabi Islam popular among the radical elements of the opposition. Overall:

Key players with strategic involvement in the region like the US and the EU failed even to condemn the abuses as they were happening, remarking only on obstruction to humanitarian relief. As has been the case for more than a decade, the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Somali civilians was met with almost total silence. (HRW 2008: 35).

Against this background, a strong theme in participants' accounts was deep anger at the Ethiopian intervention and condemnation of the ignorance, apparent indifference or complicity of the international community in the face of the grotesque wrongs they had witnessed. For example:

When the ICU left the country, everything collapsed into chaos, you could witness a rocket fall on a neighbour's house leaving no survivors, you could see a 13 year old girl admitted to hospital because she had been raped by a group of Ethiopian troops and she is suffering major injuries and there is no medicine around to help her survive. If you want the truth... Mogadishu isn't the same anymore and it looks like no one who cares what is happening there. Maybe because we are Muslims and a lot of things are happening to Muslim people around the world and no one cares that this is happening again in a Muslim country. But we believe in Allah and one day all of these things will be history inshallah.<sup>29</sup>

In Somalia the international community seems to be enjoying the situation, no one is responding, even our Muslim fellows aren't responding... there are a few foreigners that are enjoying our suffering, they can write and document things but where is the outcome? Why are we not seeing results? They had been saying that the situation is going to get better with the Ethiopian troops arriving but it was much better when the Islamic Courts were in charge even if

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<sup>29</sup> Focus Group 2, July 2008

some don't like to hear it. Everyone knows, the fact is they made massive changes that no one else had managed in all those years of civil war.<sup>30</sup>

Bringing Ethiopians to Somalia... was adding oil to the fire. As everyone knew that Somalis and Ethiopians were never good friends... also the TFG is not improving the situation in Somalia... It is the civilians who are really suffering. The vulnerable and poor don't even think to leave the country and at the end of the day they are the ones who die with no one caring. There are factsheets that state how many people are dying in Somalia and how many till today left the country to look for a safer place, knowing that some countries are not welcoming them, but who can blame them...<sup>31</sup>

Every morning you will hear of stories where the TFG and Ethiopian troops had raped this, or looted that, or even slaughtered and killed some. I myself witnessed in Baidoa hospital a case of a girl of 15 years old who had been raped by a group of Ethiopian troops. The hospital couldn't heal her and she eventually died because of her injuries.<sup>32</sup>

The situation provoked young people who split into groups, giving themselves fake identities like Al-Shabaab. This brought the eyes of the outside world to us, saying that we are one of the biggest countries hosting the terrorist cells, bringing outside interference in our affairs, saying that they are helping the current Administration to establish itself and gain control in the country.<sup>33</sup>

This situation remains unresolved. Exiled ICU leaders established an umbrella group with non-Islamist Somalis known as the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS). Led by moderates Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed (former ICU) and Sharif Hassan (former TFG), the ARS negotiated the Djibouti Agreement with the TFG in July 2008, calling for a cessation of hostilities, deployment of a UN peacekeeping force, and withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. However, the Djibouti process has stalled

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<sup>30</sup> Interview 4 (woman in her twenties)

<sup>31</sup> Interview 20 (woman in her forties, NGO worker)

<sup>32</sup> Interview 20 (woman in her forties, NGO worker)

<sup>33</sup> Interview 1 (woman in her 30s, exbusinesswoman)

due to the refusal by Al-Shabaab and hardliner Eritrea-based ARS members (led by Hassan Dahir Aweys) to participate, and the limited control of the more moderate ARS wing of the numerous opposition groups in Somalia (Menkhaus 2008). Meanwhile, divisions between President Abdullahi Yusuf and his supporters and Prime Minister Nur ‘Adde’ Hassan Hussein, reached a climax at the end of 2008, with the Darod president dismissing the more moderate Hawiye prime minister and then resigning under pressure from Parliament (ICG 2008). Following the resignation of Abdullahi Yusuf, former president of the TFG, withdrawal of Ethiopian troops, and the inauguration of the moderate Islamic Courts’ leader Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as president, some of the internally displaced have reportedly returned in 2009 to Mogadishu. But the new president will have to navigate complex political challenges – including political entrepreneurs, clan tensions, extremist militant groups and international pressures – to secure peace in the city.

### **DECIDING TO LEAVE: THE DISMEMBERING OF DAILY LIFE**

There have been important structural upheavals in Mogadishu and shifting landscapes of violence in the last couple of decades, with particularly dramatic changes within the last five years. This provides the backdrop to migration, shaping underlying predispositions to migrate. Figure 3 suggests that internal population movements in the period January 2007 to May 2008, which peaked in March/April 2007 and October/November 2007, roughly correlate with bouts of violence in Mogadishu, tending to support macro-political explanations of migration.<sup>34</sup> March 2007 marked the Ethiopian forces’ first major offensive against opposition strongholds in northern Mogadishu, and mid-September marked a renewed bout of ferocious fighting and bombardment following an Al Shabaab mortar attack on Mogadishu’s international airport and the AMISOM base in Mogadishu, affecting the area around Bakara market particularly badly (HRW 2008). More broadly, the official number of registered Somali refugees grew by 82,936 in 2007 alone, bringing the total to 422,161 (UNHCR 2008).

This macro-political explanation for recent migration is certainly persuasive. However, they tell us little about how people came to the decision to leave, or about

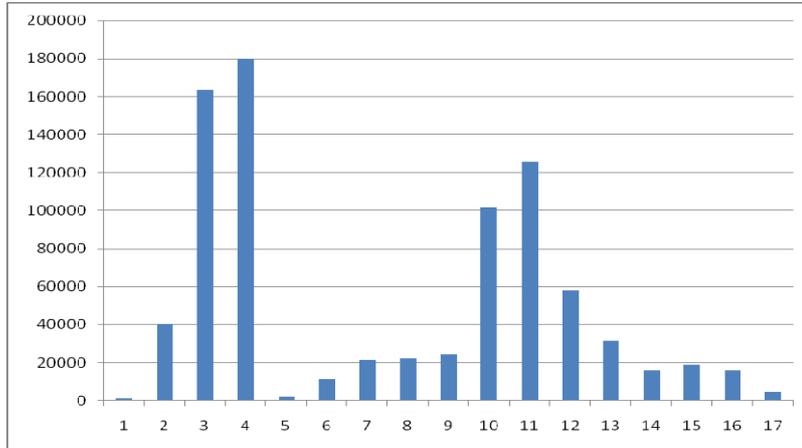
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<sup>34</sup> For the reasons indicated earlier, these figures should only be taken to indicate broad trends in movement, rather than precise numbers.

their journeys out of Mogadishu. The structural context may impinge on individual's lives in a variety of ways, and incite a variety of responses

Given the resilience and ability to adapt that has been exhibited by this urban population that has weathered nearly two decades of civil war, what was it about the last two years that has prompted so many people to leave? How did the structural environment described above impinge on the everyday lives of individuals and families, and interact with personal capabilities and resources, and how did migration come to seem like the optimal response? What were the proximate causes that translated wider structural changes into more personal impacts on people's lives and the factors that precipitated the decision to migrate? Participants were asked to describe important changes in their lives in the last five years and how they came to make the decision to leave. Three main types of changes that might be described as proximate causes or precipitating factors - loss of human capabilities, loss of physical and financial assets, loss of socio-political protection – are each explored below.

**Figure 3. Arrivals of people from Mogadishu elsewhere in Somalia Jan 2007 - May 2008**



Source: Population Movement Tracking Data, UNHCR

### **Human capabilities: family deaths, injuries, arrests and departures**

Human capabilities were defined by early livelihood theorists as what people can do or be, and the ability to find and make use of livelihood opportunities and cope with stress and shocks (Chambers and Conway 1992). Later models use the term ‘human

capital' or 'human assets' to capture a similar idea, and emphasise the people at a household's disposal as labour resources, as well as their skills, knowledge, ability to work, or health. Many research participants' human capabilities and resources were subject to change in ways that had prompted their migration.

Several research participants had lost immediate family members in the violence (spouses, parents, siblings, children). Three participants lost most of their family when their homes or friends' homes were hit by mortars or rocket fire. Three participants lost family members where they were shot in the street by Ethiopian or government troops, or in the crossfire between the opposition and government / Ethiopian forces. Two women left following the arrest of male family members in Mogadishu. Three female interviewees after their husbands fled Mogadishu separately, leaving them as female-headed households. In addition, several participants mentioned assaults or health problems sustained by themselves or immediate family members as a result of violence – including injuries resulting from beatings, temporary loss of hearing, rape, loss of limbs, malaria, and people losing their minds. The rate and types of injuries have changed, according to a medic at a Mogadishu hospital:

The injuries and profile of the injured are different from the usual violence in Mogadishu, which is usually injuries of individuals from light weapons. Different weapons are being used than before. At the hospitals you see injuries from tank shells, mortars, Katyusha rockets. It's urban warfare in the middle of the city...You see whole families at the hospitals, because the shells are landing on homes. The scenes at the hospital are horrible: children with legs and arms amputated, people with intestines coming out and with head injuries. (HRW 2008: 41)

Deaths, departures and incapacity of various kinds disrupted the human capabilities of the families affected, irredeemably changing the nature of family life. Such changes can have a huge emotional, economic and security impact on those left behind. For some the death of family members was a proximate cause that set the scene for eventual migration, for others it immediately precipitated migration, as for example with Abdi (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Case Study: Abdi**

Abdi's father was a construction worker and his mother worked washing clothes for the neighbours. He finished Koranic school aged 15, towards the end of 2006, when the ICU was still in control. The first day he went with his parents to enrol in school, everyone was sent home because the teachers feared that fighting was going to break out. The next day there was no fighting, so they went back and he enrolled. While they were waiting for the bus home, around midday, fighting broke out in the street, hand grenades and shooting. He had hit the floor to avoid the bullets, but his dad was standing in the middle of the road shouting for his wife. Abdi found his mother writhing on the ground. She had been shot in the head, he could smell the blood and began to vomit. His father was frantic, there was no car to take her to hospital, she was bleeding badly and died after fifteen minutes. His father was shouting for help but there was none. The fighting continued around them. His father said we've got to stay, otherwise the dogs will eat her. A passing ICU technical refused to help, saying they were busy trying to clear the area of *mooryaan*. Around 4pm the fighting stopped and a lot of vehicles passed taking injured people to hospital. He went to a substation to call their neighbours who came with a car and took them home. The following day his mother was buried. He was awake all night crying. As the Ethiopians advanced towards Mogadishu, the principal brought forward their exam. He hardly cared when his school closed because was so happy to get his exam certificate. The next day the Ethiopians entered Mogadishu. The fighting was heavier than he had ever heard in his life, with different mortars than they were used to. They could not sleep. The next day his father went to retrieve some building materials from Bakara market, but on the way back Ethiopian troops stopped him, perhaps thinking he had a gun in his heavy bag. They shouted at him in their language but he didn't understand so he kept walking. Then one shouted 'Stop!' He did and a bullet came from somewhere and tore through his thigh. The troops shouted at him to go home. He reached the house and but died of the injury soon after. Later Abdi's uncle explained that his father had asked him to look after Abdi and help him finish school, and offered to help him leave Mogadishu and go somewhere else - Puntland, Hargeisa or Beled Weyne. He chose Hargeisa. He was glad to leave. His uncle took him to the Daallo airline office and got a ticket and passport, and told Abdi he'd arranged for a friend to help him in Hargeisa, and to phone if he needed money. He packed his bags, said goodbye to the neighbours, and his uncle drove him to the airport. As they waited, he could still hear the fighting. He could hardly believe it was possible to leave, and then he saw the plane arrive.

In the final days before departure several young men and women in our sample went to great efforts to obtain exam certificates. This did not apparently delay the timing of their departure, which was largely a family decision based on other factors, but their personal concern and emphasis on this issue in their description of their final days in Mogadishu was striking. Like Abdi, many young people derive great pride and satisfaction from continuing their education, developing their academic capabilities in a challenging context, and have hopes that this investment of money, time and effort will serve them in the future. In December, some institutions in Mogadishu brought forward exams in anticipation of the conflict, and many students faced an anxious few days hoping that they would not have to leave before they were given their certificate, precious evidence of their human capital. Hassan (Figure 5) is one such example, and his narrow escape is worth relating in some detail because it also illustrates the build up of tension and the generalised insecurity on the streets of Mogadishu during this period.

**Figure 5. Case study: Hassan**

Hassan lived with his parents and siblings, and his Dad sold clothes in Bakara market. He had been doing some courses in English and Maths after finishing Koranic school. When they heard that the Ethiopian troops were close to Mogadishu, his father ignored the news and just got on with his job. His mother, who liked to hear what was going on at home and abroad, was glued to the radio. She told him to stop going to school because it wasn't safe, but he was worried he would not get his certificate if he left before the end of the course. Fortunately, the principal let him take the exam early and he passed, and they told him to collect his certificate on Saturday, 'But on Wednesday the Ethiopian troops entered Mogadishu. I heard guns and everything but all I could think about was my certificate and how could I get it. From Wednesday to Saturday there was fighting. My mother was saying don't go anywhere because the police will kill you.' He secretly jumped out of the window and went to his school. Because of the fighting there were no buses so he ran there by way of the side streets. On the way he saw a tank in the road and saw Ethiopian troops shooting at people... Eventually he reached the school in Towfiq area. It was closed but the two watchmen there who let him in. The Ethiopian troops came closer. A landmine exploded close to the gate of the school, so they Ethiopians thought there were ICU militia inside. They came over the walls and shot one of the watchmen. Terrified, Hassan ran up to the roof of the school to hide but the troops saw him and shot at him. They missed, and he fell to the floor, sweating and thinking that his mother did not know where he was, and no one would know if he died there. The troops kicked in the doors to the school and were shooting, looking for people, money or documents, setting fire to things. When they left, he and the second watchman who had also been hiding covered up the watchman's body. The other watchman told him not to go anywhere until the fighting had finished. But he was thinking of his mother and whether she was alive or dead and decided he would go home. He ran out into the street, but one of the Ethiopian troops shot at him so he fell to the ground and pretended to be dead. He could see dead people in the street. Another person was lying close by and his blood was running towards him - he thinks the troops thought that it was his blood. He finally opened his eyes and saw there was no one left, and got up and started running again. He saw other people also leaving the area so he walked with them as far as Afgoye. Finally, after a few weeks sleeping rough near the bus station, and asking everyone he met from Mogadishu whether they had seen his family, he was reunited with them.

**Physical and financial resources: occupation, confiscation, destruction**

Beyond human capabilities, there are also more concrete resources that are used to secure a means of living, both physical (structures, infrastructure and equipment used for production, and housing, and domestic tools and stocks) and financial (money – from cash on hand, to savings, to other easily marketable stores of value, including jewellery, livestock, or even weapons). The way that the conflict impinged on these was another major factor driving migration.

Four participants reported that they were forced to leave their homes when they were occupied by Ethiopian troops, and two that their homes had been destroyed by mortar. Six explicitly mentioned that some or all of their other business or personal property had been confiscated by government or Ethiopian troops prior to their departure. Many more people mentioned examples of this happening to other people that they knew. There were some instances of forced evictions as the TFG conducted operations in particular areas (OCHA 2007b).

Although those who were already poorly off were affected by the confiscation and destruction of property, in many ways the better-off made richer pickings for the various troops, militia and bandits, neatly illustrating how during conflict what have hitherto been livelihood assets can become liabilities (Lautze and Raven-Roberts 2006). After the political tables turned in Mogadishu in late 2006, many of those who had been doing well under the Islamic Courts were brought low. For example, Naema, the wife of a *Qaadi* (judge) in the Islamic Courts led a good life, living with her husband and children in a big house which they owned, with several vehicles and servants. One day in January 2007, her husband left the house, dressed in the Islamic way, and Ethiopian troops shot him in the street.<sup>35</sup> Shortly after, the house was occupied by Ethiopian troops, who beat her children and herself badly before throwing them out on the street. All their vehicles were taken, some by the government and others hit by a mortar. After this one of her children was hit by a bullet on the way to school. She fled Mogadishu with the children to seek refuge with rural relatives.<sup>36</sup> In this case the family's links with the ICU made them particularly vulnerable.

While many businesspeople had weathered previous crises by shutting up shop and staying out of harm's way, adapting activities, or buying protection, many found that the situation in 2007 made it impossible to continue. For example, Khadra, a successful shopkeeper in Bakara market lived with mother and her own family, for whom she provided, and owned property and several vehicles. When the Ethiopian troops came to Mogadishu she moved her family from her neighbourhood to north Mogadishu for safety,<sup>37</sup> and later heard that she had lost her business merchandise and capital, houses (some demolished in the battles between the opposition and TFG/Ethiopian forces, others occupied by Ethiopian troops) and vehicles. She heard that the Transitional Government and the Ethiopian troops took them to use as

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<sup>35</sup> See also other reports of TFG / Ethiopian troops targeting people wearing Islamic dress (HRW 2007), but it is also possible in this case that he was specifically targeted as linked to the Islamic Courts – the interviewee was unsure.

<sup>36</sup> Interview 5 (woman in her forties, small trader)

<sup>37</sup> We think that this was because she was from a Hawiye clan strong in north Mogadishu, and this was one of the parts of the city where resistance to the TFG / Ethiopian advance was strongest (HRW 2007)

weapon-carriers, and decided that there was nothing to keep her in Mogadishu anymore.<sup>38</sup>

The widespread looting of businesses and other institutions by freelance militia, as well as the warring parties, also had a more general effect on market activity. As the militia fled, and businesses and institutions like schools and universities closed for periods, or definitively, many employees lost income. While Bakara Market, the biggest Somali market and the heart of Hawiye economic power, has continued to operate, it is in a dangerous area and was frequently been the epicentre of battles between the opposition and the TFG (ICG 2008). It seems likely – although difficult to state confidently from our interviews – that the disruption to trade routes and changing patterns of demand caused by the civil insecurity was a further factor in the decisions of some businesspeople to leave Mogadishu.

### **Losing socio-political protection: daily danger and impeded livelihoods**

Another theme emerging in participants' narratives of how they came to decide to leave was the loss of socio-political protection. Socio-political assets – which can sometimes turn into liabilities, especially in conflict settings - include membership of particular groups, access to community decision-making processes, ability to appeal to authorities for justice and security, et cetera, that can be used to further one's livelihood strategies. As patterns of power in Mogadishu were contested and reconfigured, people who had managed to negotiate the risks of life in Mogadishu before and during the Islamic Courts found themselves in new situations which required reconfigurations of their livelihood systems in many ways, including by adopting migration as a livelihood strategy.

Those witnessing the growing frequency of death and disaster among their neighbours, extended family and clan networks, began to fear that the same could happen to them if they stayed. This was the case even among those from prosperous families that had hitherto led relatively comfortable lives in Mogadishu. For example, Fadumo, who had worked for a decade as a successful goldseller, living in Wardhigley district, owning several houses and vehicles. Her houses and vehicles

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<sup>38</sup> Interview 1 (woman in her thirties)

were occupied or confiscated by Ethiopian troops. Her husband left for Europe, and the last she heard he had reached only as far as Libya. Four cousins and other family members were killed in the fighting. Other relatives went on *tahrib*, others were imprisoned by the TFG. After all this she decided to take her children and sister away and flew to Hargeisa in October 2007.<sup>39</sup>

For women, exposure to increased risk of rape and assault against the background of generally increased urban insecurity, often contributed to the decision to depart. For some women, membership of particular groups had previously provided a degree of protection from rape. A young woman explained that she, her sisters, and her mother left their thriving business primarily out of fear of rape or assault:

We were rich with lands... My father died in 1991 at the start of the civil war, and we were four daughters and my mother. My mother had shops and we used to help there, we used to go to school and we were really doing well... The ICU understood why we should work outside our houses as women. We had no men to help us or bring food to our table. And you could travel carefree around the city... But after the arrival of the Ethiopians, we couldn't come out of our houses... The shops were taken over the TFG and we couldn't stay there any longer. My mum decided to leave for our sake as girls - we were hearing about rapes and how the Ethiopians make excuses to come into your house by saying that they are searching for the insurgents and that's how they get into houses of the civilians and they start doing their horrible things - raping, killings and slaughtering all that under the name of protecting us from the ICU! This a change - at least while we were only Somalis we never worried about that ever, everyone knows each other and we were respected among the community.<sup>40</sup>

Suaad, previously a businesswoman in Bakara market in Mogadishu, explained that although she had managed to maintain a viable livelihood following her husband's killing in crossfire between the ICU and Ethiopian forces, she felt that she and her son

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<sup>39</sup> Interview 3 (woman in her 20s)

<sup>40</sup> Focus Group 2, July 2008

were personally insecure, both as visible minority members and herself also as a woman. It was a considered, regretful, organised departure.

I didn't know what to do but I decided to keep running our business. I am considered a minority in Somalia, I am *hamar aad*. We are successful in business but we are an easy target for the Hawiye and the Harti and the Ethiopians, who seem to think we are Eritrean, I don't know what gave them that idea...<sup>41</sup> I was managing ok though, I was managing to take care of my son and I never went to ask for help from anyone, thank Allah. My family wasn't in Mogadishu – they went to Europe a few years ago. My husband's family is all abroad since the 1990s... and my brothers-in-law sent me a little money to help out... But if you can't go out to look for your daily bread it is a problem, if you can't sleep at night peacefully it's a problem, if you can't stop thinking of what might happen it's a problem - so you can see life in Mogadishu is a problem. And isn't for a day or two, it's constant, no rest, no day off. A situation that made me ask myself, am I going to make it and see my son grow up into a fine man or not?... And as I am *hamar aad* I kept asking myself am I going to get raped or kidnapped by the Ethiopians. This is a change because two years ago I wasn't worrying about my security or safety, and now I have to really worry about it seriously. I thank Allah that I didn't encounter any of the problems I feared, and I made it safely to Somaliland. After all I saw, I realised I couldn't go on like that for any more, I decided to leave for a safer place for my own and my child's sake. I had to think about it carefully, I didn't want to take any irrational decisions that I might regret later in life.<sup>42</sup>

For some people, the increased urban insecurity impeded their usual livelihood strategies. In particular, many participants mentioned how it became much riskier to move around the city – affecting everyone from large traders through to low-paid casual workers. For example, a former porter in Bakara market explained:

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<sup>41</sup> See also other reports of Ethiopian troops mistreating lighter-skinned Somalis, saying that they look like Eritreans (HRW 2008: 61).

<sup>42</sup> Interview 21 (woman in her 40s, tea seller)

I was living well before the Ethiopians came in but now everything is chaotic... We used to work late at night at Mogadishu port and we used to come back from work on foot to our houses when the ICU was in charge, and we never encountered any kind of problems all the way from the port to the place I live in. But now I wasn't even safe during the day, let alone at night. You have to be extra cautious of the TFG and Ethiopians on one side and the thieves and looters on the other side... I was living in an area called Hamar Weyn; I left for my safety... I am my parents' only son... it was my father and mother's request that I go somewhere safer, they were afraid that something might happen to me, like what happened to my other young friends.<sup>43</sup>

Another example is the situation of Farhan who said that he used to work collecting rubbish from neighbourhood houses for 2000 or 3000 Somali Shillings each time. He lived in Towfiq neighbourhood, near the crossroads, which was became a something of a flashpoint, with his father, also a rubbish collector and his mother, who worked as a cleaner in people's homes and sometimes as a porter. According to him, both their work and social possibilities dramatically contracted with the violence: 'The problem came when the Ethiopian troops arrived. Everything closed. No one was working, no one would come to visit you, you couldn't visit anyone else... My mother began to cry when we heard the mortars or the PM because she had a headache and complained she couldn't hear anything...'<sup>44</sup> After the fighting finished and the Ethiopians left they departed very quietly on their own, avoiding speaking with any neighbours, taking their life savings with them.

Some livelihoods became specifically politically dangerous. Opposition groups began to target anyone working for the TFG, even if only as a cleaner, and anyone suspected of assisting the government in any way (HRW 2008). NGO workers were particularly politically exposed: international aid organisations and their Somali civil society partners were targeted by some opposition groups for complicity with Western

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<sup>43</sup> Focus Group 2, July 2008

<sup>44</sup> Interview 12 (man, teenager)

backing of the TFG and counter-terrorism.<sup>45</sup> But it is often unclear where the threats are coming from – often clearly from insurgents, but other times people fear that the TFG is trying to silence them, or others are using the opportunity to settle old scores (HRW 2008). Two of our interviewees were people who had already lived many years in Kenya and Italy, part of the valuable if extremely limited reversal of the brain drain, educated people who had bravely returned to work in Somalia. Other NGO workers have a wealth of experience and local knowledge. Their frustration at leaving projects that may not now be completed was considerable, and the impact of the departure of locally respected, and often well-educated and outspoken civil society leaders further changes the political economy of Mogadishu.

For some, their migration was clearly prompted by one of the three types of factors (loss of human capabilities, physical/financial assets, and socio-political protection). But for many, different elements overlapped. As a refugee from Black Sea area interviewed by Amnesty International put it, ‘I cannot say in one story why I wasn’t safe, there are too many stories.’ (AI 2008a: 10).

It is important to note that many tried for periods to cope with and adapt in various ways to the challenges described, before deciding to leave the city: for example, according to the information provided by food security monitors, ‘Poor and middling households are becoming severely indebted, and are adopting extreme coping strategies, including skipping meals, begging, selling productive assets and out-migration (‘keenan’).’ (Holleman 2008). Local mobility, in particular, was key in people’s strategies for trying to cope with the conflict. At the most basic level, people tried to avoid being out in the street and avoid areas where there were armed men or fighting. However, as house-to-house searches for insurgents, rocket barrages and mortar bombardment of their neighbourhoods continued, and as urban guerrillas moved in and out of their neighbourhoods, even staying at home was not enough to avoid trouble. Several participants relocated within Mogadishu or the surrounding area before leaving, initially deploying old strategies of urban mobility to avoid areas affected by the violence. As the violence continued throughout the city, however, they

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<sup>45</sup> At least 29 humanitarian workers were killed in January to November 2008, 12 injured, 19 kidnapped and many more civil society and human rights activists and community leaders were also killed or threatened with death (NGO statement 2008; Amnesty International 2008b).

eventually decided to leave. For example, Halima's family, initially moved from their mixed neighbourhood to Xamar Weyne (a Reer Banadir area - her mother was Hawiye and her father was from the Reer Banadir minority). Her boss had been killed and the internet business where she worked trashed by Ethiopian troops, and her University had been closed and the students sent home. When it became clear that the situation was not improving, the family bought plane tickets to Somaliland in September 2007.<sup>46</sup> Khadra, the shopkeeper mentioned above initially moved her family to north Mogadishu away from the Ethiopian and government troops' strongholds, before deciding to move to Somaliland (see also HRW 2008, OCHA 2007).

The actual or threatened loss of human capabilities, as well as physical and financial resources, and socio-political protection, all affected research participants' livelihoods in direct ways that contributed to the decision to move. At the same time the process of reaching the decision to leave also points to the agency of those involved, both individually and in groups (of family members, neighbours and strangers) and their ability to influence their fate, albeit wedged between a rock and a hard place, in trying to adapt to the situation in various ways, in deciding (in some cases) when and under what conditions to leave, by making efforts to plan their movement ahead of time, and deciding where to go. This leads us into the process of migration.

## **JOURNEYS**

The process of migration from one place to another can be an important part of people's stories, and is too often over-looked, as simply the bit between 'why people left' and 'how they settled elsewhere'. Many people affected by conflict decide to leave for somewhere safer, but between the decision 'in principle' and its realisation or outcome lie the matters of actually embarking on the journey, routes taken and destination, and experiences on the way. Having made the decision to leave, prospective migrants negotiate several types of intervening factors that may enable, facilitate, constrain, accelerate, or consolidate migration (following Van Hear 1998). In some cases the proximate and precipitating causes of migration overlapped with the

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<sup>46</sup> Interview 4 (woman in her twenties)

intervening factors (for example, someone may decide to leave because of generalised insecurity but that may also prevent them moving around the city safely).

### **Embarking on the journey**

The time between the decision to leave and departure can be relatively condensed or more drawn out. Several participants stressed the people of Mogadishu did not expect the ICU, which seemed so strong, to be overcome, and so rapidly, which perhaps explains why there was not a massive anticipatory rush to leave. Having said this, as reports of the TFG / Ethiopian advance reached Mogadishu, some of our research participants had decided to leave if Ethiopian troops entered the city, based on fears of what would happen (derived from current political observations and old-timers accounts' of the fierceness of the Ogaden war), and had their decision rapidly consolidated by the violence that did in fact ensue. Many, particularly poorer people in neighbourhoods badly and suddenly hit by bouts of severe violence, embarked on a journey as soon as they had made the decision to leave, some literally running, having paused only long enough to get their money, and grab some spare clothes or food – a classic precipitous departure (Kunz 1973).

However, some of the participants had decided a few days, weeks or months previously that they should leave, but took some time to make their arrangements, out of necessity or preference. Some preferred to delay, gambling that (further) calamities would not befall them while they organised their departure, winding up their affairs (liquidating their assets for example by selling off merchandise; entrusting their business to a contact; arranging for relatives to live in their home). Some had a problem of involuntary immobility for various reasons. Violence could itself impede departure, as areas were locked down by troops for security reasons or searches and public transport out of the city dried up (OCHA 2007b). Some people in this position were temporarily impeded by outbreaks of violence in their area which meant they stayed at home for safety, until there was a moment when they could escape. For example, Farhan, the rubbish collector mentioned earlier, said that once his family decided that they had to leave Mogadishu, they were initially prevented by a crescendo of conflict:

We lived in Towfiiq neighbourhood, near to the crossroads, where there were Ethiopian troops, and the Islamic Courts were coming in silently to ambush them, when we were ready to leave we couldn't because some really heavy fighting began. My mother was in shock and could not speak, I thought she was dead, but my father told me she was just unconscious. The fighting came very close to us. The Ethiopians were using *kaare* [tanks], and the floor and the house shook every time they hit. We were terrified and we couldn't leave the house. There was no telephone and we did not have a mobile. In between the bouts of firing we would open the window and shout to the neighbours to find out what was going on... Then the Ethiopian troops started to come into people's homes and if they saw anyone over twenty they would say this one is with the Islamic Courts. Even sometimes they would just shoot at people in the street if they had a big beard, or had a *sunno* [prayer mark on the forehead] saying this one is Al Qaida. They would shoot you or take you away to Ethiopia. I saw that with my own eyes.<sup>47</sup>

Others simply did not have the money to leave. While the bottom line is that it is possible for most people to walk some 30 km to Afgoye, as many residents of Mogadishu have indeed done, it was dangerous and as time went it became clear that Afgoye itself might not be somewhere safe to stay. In order to travel safely to Afgoye or contemplate a longer journey, people needed money, and so some stayed to beg, borrow or scrape together meagre earnings to finance their journey:

I was brought up in Mogadishu and lived in Hamar Jadiid neighbourhood. I left Mogadishu after a rocket fell on my house and killed three of my kids, my husband, my brother and my brother in-law... my other two children were admitted to the hospital but I couldn't afford the medicines and the fees so I had to take them out. I started begging in Mogadishu but no one had any money and I came back empty-handed. It was a hard life and it wasn't getting better with Ethiopians and the TFG around and those small militia that loot the money we were making all day long... Two months after the death of my children and husband, I decided to leave Mogadishu and go to Beled Weyn...

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<sup>47</sup> Interview 12 (man, teenager)

But I couldn't leave immediately because I couldn't afford it, and I had two injured kids. I had nothing for them at all, no medication, no protection and no shelter for them. So I decided to stay a bit longer, to get money... after a while when things got heated again I did leave.<sup>48</sup>

Given this evidence, it seems likely that some people still in Mogadishu have in principle made a decision to leave, but are waiting for a suitable opportunity or moment to arise, constrained meanwhile by lack of money or other factors.

Familiarity with potential destinations and social networks also affected the speed with which people moved from decision to departure. Most of the research participants had lived their whole lives in Mogadishu and the surrounding area and just did not know where else they could go where they could find a means of living. As a result, several participants returned to Mogadishu after initially leaving, because they thought they would be better able to make a living there than elsewhere. One focus group participant explained:

At first I left for Afgoye and I stayed there for three months, but I had nothing to sleep on, or cook with. So I decided to go back to Mogadishu again and found a job as a housekeeper for some people which was good because there was nothing else I can do for living. I didn't want me and my children to die from hunger.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast, knowing people elsewhere appeared to consolidate the decision to depart, also influencing route-making, as we shall see below. Moreover, the departure of other people they knew helped to consolidate and accelerate decisions to leave: neighbourhoods across Mogadishu gradually became ghost towns as whole communities fled – particularly Hodan, Hawal Wadag, Towfiq, Huriwa, Hamar Jadid, Wardhigley and Gubta (Doyle 2008; HRW 2008; AI 2008a). For some young people, it began to seem that most of their peers had been killed, fled or gone for *tahrib* to Europe or the Middle East. The three Somali NGO workers interviewed had watched

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<sup>48</sup> Focus Group 1, July 2008

<sup>49</sup> Focus Group 1, July 2008

colleagues disappear in the face of death threats and assassinations before departing themselves.

### **Route-making**

The idea of route-making is used here for the process of planning and travelling from one place to another. Population Movement Tracking data, combined with insights from NGO workers and our research participants, point to several major routes taken by those leaving Mogadishu.

Many people initially fled to the areas surrounding Mogadishu. Some sought refuge with rural relatives, an age-old pattern for urban Somalis when the going gets tough. Large numbers of people initially moved to the Afgoye town, some 30 km away, where many remain, living in miserable conditions, left largely to their own devices, often subject to extortion and harassment, particularly if they are without clan-based protection (AI 2008a, Noor 2007).

Tens of thousands of people fled southwards, with the ICU militia's retreat in the direction of Kenya. Some sought refuge in southern towns, and their clans' stronghold areas. But against the background of on-going turbulence of this area, many tried to cross into Kenya. The Kenyan government closed the border in January 2007, based on concerns that fleeing ICU fighters and possibly Al Qaida operatives would end up in Kenya, jeopardising national security. This meant that people could no longer cross at Dhobley to the Liboi transit camp, but had to stay in Somalia or make the sometimes dangerous journey through the bush to the Dadaab camps, where they were sometimes denied assistance on account of their illegal crossing (AI 2007b). Nevertheless, 37,821 new refugees were registered in Kenya in 2007 (UNHCR 2008).

Meanwhile, travelling northwards, many Hawiye headed for their clan homelands, or urban centres less affected by violence, like Beled Weyne and Galkayo. Beled Weyne is on the road north from Mogadishu to the Ethiopian border, largely populated by Hawiye clans, and is an obvious route north and also a strategic location as on the supply route for Ethiopian forces. Several of our participants had stayed a few weeks or months in Beled Weyn, but moved on when the fighting between the Ethiopian/TFG soldiers and the insurgency got worse, saying that it was similar to

what was going on in Mogadishu. Internally displaced people were particularly vulnerable. In July 2008 Ethiopian forces withdrew from the town to road, leaving it to opposition groups (HRW 2008).

Galkcayo has also received large numbers of IDPs from Mogadishu. Some respondents that eventually ended up in Somaliland also stayed some weeks or months here. NGOs provided some assistance to the worse-off. But the situation here remained tense. Galkcayo is a divided city, where Hawiye sub-clans live uneasily alongside the Darod sub-clans which dominate to the north. The security situation in Puntland deteriorated since 2006, in part because of the allocation of Puntland troops to protect President Abdullahi Yusuf in the south. Moreover, political hostility towards the Hawiye clans makes life difficult there for many IDPs.

In this context, many travelled up to Bosaso with the aim of travelling on to Yemen on smuggler's boats. Others travelled to Ethiopia, where Teferi Ber refugee camp was re-opened to house the new refugees (nearly 10,000 arrived in 2007, UNHCR 2007b). Still others headed for Somaliland. From there, some moved to claim asylum in Ethiopia or Djibouti, some crossing to Yemen from Djibouti.

Who took which routes depends on a variety of factors. The varying routes taken by our research participants from Mogadishu to Hargeisa, ranging from direct plane flights to complex overland journeys, provides some useful insights into the factors that shape migration processes in the Somali regions. While some decided to go to Hargeisa before leaving home, some decided to go to Somaliland en route, having left Mogadishu initially hoping to find refuge in an intermediate location or undecided about where to go, and waited some time for an improvement in the situation before moving onwards. Regardless, the overland route most people had travelled to Hargeisa was via Afgoye, Beled Weyne, Galkcayo, Las Anod and Burao. Several intervening factors shaped their routes.

First, in terms of the wider structural environment, the geography of transport, conflict and borders played a key role in shaping routes taken. Most obviously, pathways northwards were shaped by where the roads lay, where they could rest, where they could arrange onwards transport. Thus people tended to travel by major roads, taking

transport from one major urban centre to another. There are also several companies serving the air route between Mogadishu and Hargeisa (although the TFG suspended flights in August 2007, temporarily preventing departures).<sup>50</sup> In addition, people's routes were shaped by the political geography of the conflict. While the Somali regions have during the civil war seen a proliferation of airlinks and telecommunications which facilitate mobility, but at the same time a proliferation of borders, as changing constellations of power, including new quasi states, claimed territory, complicating the ability of people to move to and seek refuge in other Somali territories. The political geography of the conflict was a key reason why many people went to Somaliland. The whole of the southern and central zone was affected by the conflict, and Puntland was seen as politically hostile to Hawiye clans, discouraging many of those fleeing Mogadishu from seeking permanent refuge there. Furthermore, news of international border closures, as well as preference for staying in Somalia rather than becoming a refugee in a different country, deterred some from making for neighbouring Kenya or Ethiopia. One young woman explained that when they decided to leave in late 2006, her father phoned some friends and was told that the Kenyan and Ethiopian borders was closed, but that the Somaliland border was open, so they loaded up a Toyota van with chairs and their mattress and set off for Somaliland.<sup>51</sup>

Second, the capabilities and resources of participants were mobilised in different ways to reach a place of safety. In terms of human capabilities, familiarity with mobility as a livelihood strategy appears to help, as well as general resourcefulness. As outlined earlier often tried and tested mobility strategies were deployed within Mogadishu and its surrounding areas, as a first step to try to cope with the situation. Travelling further afield, familiarity with other Somali towns and in general previous experience of travel seemed to help those in flight negotiate unfamiliar settings.

In terms of financial resources, again ready money was an important asset. Many of the poorest people found themselves walking large segments of the journey, working

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<sup>50</sup> Due to a row about Somaliland's threat to jail any Somalilanders applying for the new Somali passport (Somaliland Times 2007). Airline and airport officials in Hargeisa report that sometimes planes were going back to Mogadishu empty just to fetch out more people, but also report that flight have continued to take passengers to Mogadishu, mainly used by people with business to attend to.

<sup>51</sup> Interview 16 (woman in her twenties, nurse)

their way from place to place by doing casual jobs, or begging people for funds to move onwards. Having a certain amount of cash allowed people to book themselves on flights to Somaliland, buy or hire vehicles, or compete in the frantic rushes for bus stations and scrambles to hitch a ride on a truck. According to one focus group participant:

I came with my kids to here by a truck, the truck owners was asking for money, and all I had was 100,000 Somali shillings and a pair of earrings. I gave the truck driver what I had and asked him to take us to Bosaso, we went through Jowhar then Galkacyo and Bosaso. From Bosaso I begged the drivers there to take me to Burao and I got a decent driver who charged me nothing at all and he was so kind to me and brought me to Burao. From Burao I begged other drivers to bring me and the kids here to Hargeisa and I finally got a guy who agreed.<sup>52</sup>

Social connections also shaped routes, with people heading for destinations where they had

clanspeople or close relatives there from whom they hoped to gain assistance and protection, or having heard that there would be NGO assistance available. Relatively few of those interviewed in Hargeisa actually had close relatives in Somaliland prior to arrival (the Hawiye, Bantu and Reer Banadir do not traditionally live in Somaliland), but some more had a clansperson or an old friend there, or knew other people travelling there from Mogadishu.

However, it is important to note that family and clan mutual support networks came under considerable strain, and cannot provide adequately for all those needing help. For example, Naema, after her husband was shot (see above), initially fled to a pastoral area just outside Mogadishu where her family was from, and stayed with them. But then the Ethiopian troops attacked the area and her sister and her husband were killed. After about a month she met a friend of her husband who took her and the children, including her dead sister's orphans, to Afgoye. But there were a lot of

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<sup>52</sup> Focus Group 1, July 2008. Several other participants also mentioned the kindness of strangers in facilitating transport.

mosquitoes and the children got sick so she took them to Mogadishu, where one of her sister's children was hit by a mortar. They eventually found a truck which took them to an area where some other relatives lived, where for several months she worked tending their sheep and goats, but there was never enough food. Some relatives gave her some money to go to Galkcayo where she found a job as a domestic worker until she had enough money to get her and her children on a minibus to Hargeisa, where she knew no one, arriving in early 2008.<sup>53</sup> Her experience provides one example of the importance and at the same time the fragility of social networks that often came through in participants' accounts of the process of migration.

In some ways the story of route-making is also about information and expectations regarding destinations. Expectations of intended destinations – of peace, helpful relatives, NGO assistance – are often not fulfilled, which can lead to onward movement. While many were content to remain in Somaliland, others had decided that Somaliland might not be the end of the journey – people have moved on from there to Ethiopia and Djibouti, and sometimes onward further to Yemen and the Middle East or Europe. It remains to be seen how the resignation of President Yusuf, the departure of the Ethiopian forces, and the successes of different elements of the opposition forces will affect propensity to of people in Somaliland to return to Mogadishu.

### **Experiences on the road**

Beyond the process of moving from decision to departure and route-making, documenting people's experiences of their journeys is important in its own right as it is often an important moment in people's lives. While travelling, many of the participants were at their most vulnerable, and some described it as the worse time in their life. In the turmoil of the fighting, it was not uncommon for family members to lose each other, like Hassan and Maryan. Separation from family members could occur during precipitous departure, or mean that people stopped on their journeys to try to relocate their loved ones. One man explained that he had literally lost his children after his wife was killed by a rocket, and he did not know whether to trust the distant relatives who said they had found them in Afgoye. Another woman had heard

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<sup>53</sup> Interview 5 (woman in her 40s, small trader)

her eldest son who had been separated from them had made it as far as Burao and was trying to get money to bring him to Hargeisa. Several women said that their husbands had stayed behind or left for other places, within Somalia, or abroad.

Some endured considerable hardship, walking for days with no or little food or water, and one participant gave birth under a tree to a baby boy. People also suffered violence on the road. One young man lost two close family member who were killed on the road, and another woman lost her brother who was killed by a rocket when the conflict came to Beled Weyne. Sexual violence on the road appears to be very common, mentioned by several interviewees and focus group participants who had experienced, witness or heard of it happen. In all, three women research participants were raped. Box 6 provides a first-hand account of rape by TFG and Ethiopian soldiers in Beled Weyne. Maryan, by contrast, did not identify her assailants. She was still a student in Mogadishu and her family were comfortably off because her father worked abroad and sent them \$250 a month. In March 2007, her father and all her brothers and sisters were killed when a P10 [mortar] destroyed their house. She and her mother were out of the house at the time, and her mother lost her mind as a result of the shock. She went to stay with some neighbours and some clanspeople were trying to look after her mother, but after a few weeks they gave up and set her free and she disappeared. As the fighting was continuing, Maryan left Mogadishu with her neighbours. During that journey several armed men stopped their bus to extort money from passengers, and took some women, including herself. They shot two of the women, and they beat and raped her and then ran away. Maryan said she had wished she was dead but she survived, and made her way back to Mogadishu, where she found work as a maid for a family, and a few months later they took her with them to Hargeisa.<sup>54</sup>

A large number of research participants reported being stopped by bandits or corrupt soldiers along the way. This had long been the case, although the situation improved under the ICU, and significantly deteriorated under the TFG. It has been reported that as 2007 progressed, some drivers who because of their clan used to be able to move through some areas safely found that they too were increasingly vulnerable (AI

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<sup>54</sup> Interview 7, (woman in her 20s, domestic worker)

2008a). Displaced people, often carrying all their gold and cash, were like magnets for ambushes. Often women carried the cash secreted in their clothing, hoping that they were less likely to be searched, and hid their gold items in their hair. Many participants reported bribing their way out of a tricky situation with the various militia they encountered along the way: 'I had 400,000 Somali Shillings and nothing else and they took that from me with other belongings. I wasn't alone, I was with a group of people who came with me using the truck. We had to bribe the soldiers along the road to here because they said that if we don't pay them they are going to stop us.'<sup>55</sup> Those with some financial resources were better able to pay off the bandits, militia and soldiers that they encountered along the way.

Participants described crossing numerous checkpoints within south-central Somalia and Puntland, manned by a mixture of TGG and Ethiopian troops, opposition groups, bandits or Puntland police. As illustrated above, these were sensitive places where they were vulnerable to theft and assault. However, a marked contrast was when people passed over the disputed border from Puntland into Somaliland. Some reported being stopped by Puntland troops who aggressively asked where they were from, but let them pass once convinced that they were displaced people from Mogadishu (rather than spies or defectors from Puntland or Somaliland). Most of the people reported being stopped on the Somaliland side of the border, on the road or in Las Anod, by Somaliland troops, but none reported mistreatment of any kind, and all said that the troops had advised them to move on to Burao where they were NGOs offering assistance to the displaced. Experiences like this seem to have a key impact on the feelings about settlement in Somaliland among travellers from Mogadishu, but this lies beyond the scope of this paper, which has focused on causation and processes of migration rather than reception and consequences (see Lindley 2009).

Again, there were sign of resourcefulness among travellers that helped them to negotiate the dangers of their journey. For example, people anticipated and tried avoid or accelerate through possible ambushes (in one case tricking the thieves by yelling that the Islamic Courts were coming just after them, which sent them scattering, because the thieves feared that the Islamic Courts militia might tackle them), although

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<sup>55</sup> Focus Group 2, July 2008

this was risky in case the ambushers shot at the tyres of the vehicle. Several participants described themselves as particularly lucky in getting help from strangers – this might also be seen as a sign of their own resourcefulness and ability to persuade.

Finally, another important factor mediating the journeys of research participants was travelling in groups, which helped reduce costs and risks. Some had rounded up their neighbours or clanspeople in Mogadishu and set off together, although their paths often subsequently forked. (However, a couple of interviewees chose to leave their neighbourhoods quietly, fearing to attract attention). Others met people along the way and joined forces. People often stayed alongside their fellow travellers in slum areas of the urban centres they reached, clustering together for some security. The collective experiences of having travelled from the same place and along similar routes appears to foster co-operation among those settling in Hargeisa.

In sum, travellers' descriptions of their journeys from Mogadishu point to several intervening factors - money, human capabilities, social capital and the geography of transport, conflict and borders. These mediated the process of migration in terms of the ability to depart; the timing and feasibility of travelling to different destinations, and the routes taken; and experiences on the road.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Migration should not be set apart from the broad array of livelihood-based coping, adapting and accumulating strategies that reflect the challenges of living in zones of dynamic and protracted conflict. This paper has explored how people who eventually left Mogadishu adapted to the changing structural contexts which they experienced, and how individuals and families reached the decision to leave, and their journeys.

The approach combats a tendency to see conflict as a single homogenous event, by emphasising the historically changing landscapes of violence in Mogadishu, and focusing on a particular place and time period within the framework of a wider and longer civil war. What comes through particularly strongly is way that international geopolitics has translated into everyday life in Somalia in recent years. Having failed

– expensively - to remake the Somali state in the early 1990s, the international community largely left Somalia to its own devices. Within this context, people remaining in Mogadishu rebuilt their livelihood systems with varying degrees of success and security. Multiple non-state or quasi-state systems of governance emerged, the most effective being Somaliland, Puntland, and localised administrations in the central-southern regions. The Islamic Courts were the most recent of these systems to come to the fore, with a particularly important and, according to the migrants we interviewed, broadly constructive impact in Mogadishu, providing a long-absent level of security. However, the war on terror and western fears regarding the links between terrorism and failed states brought Somalia back into the international spotlight and heralded renewed engagement. The US government’s attempts to send warlords to get terrorist suspects contributed to a backlash that propelled the rapid ascent and expansion of the Islamic Courts Union. Western and Ethiopian hostility to the possibility of an Islamic state in Somalia propelled the otherwise impotent TFG to Mogadishu, but in a familiar pattern, an internationally-facilitated government of national unity has failed so far to secure the city.<sup>56</sup> As Mogadishu convulsed with a vigorous and fragmented insurgency and particularly devastating counter-insurgency response, our research participants’ accounts suggest that a major shift occurred in everyday life, in terms of exposure to life-threatening violence, economic disruption, and widespread urban insecurity. The war on terror is therefore an important geopolitical key to the changing structural backdrop against which many have decided to leave Mogadishu in the last two years. However, it is not the full story when it comes to explaining out-migration.

The approach taken in this paper also sought to combat the common failure to explore the causes and processes of conflict-related migration, by exploring through micro-

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<sup>56</sup> Although regional security concerns prompted the Ethiopian alliance with the TFG, and Ethiopia has not been a simple puppet of US policy-makers in this respect (see ICG 2008, Menkhaus 2008), the Ethiopian backing of the TFG has the clear diplomatic support of the US (indeed it is hard to imagine that the Ethiopian government would have sent troops if opposed by its richer allies and donors) and the US has engaged in controversial military strikes in Somalia during the same period. At the time of writing, the question is whether Yusuf’s resignation and the new Obama administration may herald an opening for changes in patterns of internal and international relations. If so, it might be hoped that international actors engaging with Somalia might learn from failed attempts to obsessively remake a central state, and instead place more emphasis on engaging with alternative governance mechanisms operating in the Somali regions - as an actual and potential source of order and opportunities for battered communities to have a say in the way that they are governed.

level analysis the complex interactions between the shifting structural environment and different people's capabilities and resources. Based on the accounts of migrants in Somaliland, how people came to decide to leave Mogadishu may best be explained with reference to three broad sets of factors. First, changing human resources was a frequent cause of migration. People's emotional lives, their security, and their ability to pursue existing livelihood strategies were affected by the killing, injury or departure of family members. Migration experience, familiarity with specific destinations and personal resourcefulness and preferences also affected the process of migration. Second, loss of physical and financial resources also affected migration dynamics, according to those involved. The wholesale destruction or confiscation/occupation of homes, business premises, stocks and tools was often hard to overcome. Having ready cash was an important resource that facilitated the process of migration, and people often tried to convert their physical assets into cash before leaving Mogadishu. Finally, socio-political protection also as a result of changing power dynamics in Mogadishu was another important cause of migration, affecting physical security, with general ramifications for livelihoods, and exposing particular occupations to threat of violence. Social connections – specifically, the departure of social contacts from Mogadishu, and connections with people elsewhere – could encourage migration, and travel in groups was an important security device for some.

Not everyone has left Mogadishu. For security reasons, it was not feasible to conduct research in Mogadishu, but some insights into why people have *not* left were obtained from discussions with the research participants – many of whom were recent migrants who had themselves remained in Mogadishu until recently. In the turbulent structural context, it seems that staying put may be explained by personal preference in the face of danger, by some obtaining reasonable socio-political protection to secure their means of living, by people betting their lives against their livelihoods - or it may be involuntary, with people locked down by violence or the lack of migration-related capabilities and resources (see Lubkemann 2008 and Williams 2008a). These findings reinforce the claim that the experience of conflict is affected by individual characteristics, and extend this claim to the propensity of conflict-affected people to migrate (see also Williams 2008a).

The aim of this paper was to investigate how conflict causes migration, with the aim of contributing to a nascent ‘mobility-minded offspring of “crisis-sociology”’ (Lubkemann 2008: 469). The attempt to illuminate the micro-dynamics of life and how this leads to migration for a specific set of migrants, from a specific place in the Somali regions, and during a specific time-period, demonstrates that there is much to understand beyond the macro-political explanations frequently offered for conflict-related movement under the rubric of ‘forced migration’.

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## APPENDIX: RESEARCH METHODS

### Consultations

Type	Organisation	
Government-related	AMISOM	
	British Embassy in Addis Ababa	
	EC Liaison Office Hargeisa	
	Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK	
	Ministry of RRR, Government of Somaliland (Burco Office)	
	Ministry of the Interior (Central Office)	
	Immigration Department, Government of Somaliland (Central and Regional Offices)	
	NGOs / international agencies	Action Aid, Hargeisa
		Africa Educational Trust, Somaliland
		Amnesty International, East Africa
CCPRS		
Danish Refugee Council		
Gashan		
HAVOYOCO Hargeisa and Burco		
International Organization for Migration		
Norwegian Refugee Council		
Refugee Welfare Centre (Save the Children UK)		
Somaliland Youth Development Organization		
Swiss Group		
Protection Working Group and Protection Movement Tracking Co-ordination Group		
UNHCR Policy & Evaluation Unit, Geneva; Hargeisa Field Office; Nairobi Regional Office		
Voice of Somaliland Minority Women Organization		
Private sector	Dahabshiil Money Transfer Company	
	3 Hotels (Hargeisa)	
	3 Construction Companies (Hargeisa and Burco)	
	2 Airlines	
Other	1 Rubbish Collection Company	
	Academy for Peace and Development, Somaliland	
	ARECSEMED Leadership Seminar participants	
	Horn of Africa University	
	University of Hargeisa Legal Clinic	
Various researchers and consultants		

### Focus group participants

Group	Number of people	Gender
1	5	4F, 1M
2	4	2F, 2M
3	4	4M
4	4	4F

## Individual interviewees

	Group	Sex	Age	Arrival	Occupation	Pseudonym (if used in text)
1	S-C Somali	F	30s	2008	Exbusinesswoman	Khadra
2	S-C Somali	F	20s	2007	Domestic worker	
3	S-C Somali	F	20s	2007	Remittance reliant	Fadumo
4	S-C Somali	F	20s	2007	Former student	Halima
5	S-C Somali	F	40s	2008	Small trader	Naema
6	S-C Somali	F	30s	2007	Waiter	
7	S-C Somali	F	20s	2007	Domestic worker	Maryan
8	S-C Somali	F	30s	2007	Coffee shop	
9	S-C Somali	F	30s	2007	Unemployed	
10	S-C Somali	M	10s	2007	Shoeshiner	
11	S-C Somali	M	20s	2007	Unemployed	
12	S-C Somali	M	10s	2007	Unemployed	Farhan
13	S-C Somali	M	20s	2007	Waiter	Hassan
14	S-C Somali	M	20s	2007	Unemployed	Abdi
15	S-C Somali	M	10s	2008	Unemployed	Jama
16	S-C Somali	F	20s	2007	Nurse	Safia
17	S-C Somali	F	10s	2008	Cleaner	
18	S-C Somali	M	40s	2008	NGO worker	
19	S-C Somali	M	30s	2008	NGO worker	
20	S-C Somali	F	40s	2008	NGO worker	
21	S-C Somali	F	40s	2008	Tea seller	Suaad

## **Ethics and issues**

Four core ethical principles informed the research, which were extensively discussed with the Work Package leader and with research assistants during the training sessions and during the fieldwork.

- Anticipating and avoiding potential harms to research participants – the kinds of risks that participation in the research might entail were assessed in the training workshop and were deemed to be minimal, provided that rights to confidentiality and anonymity were carefully observed in the fieldwork process and after it.
- Negotiating informed consent – participants were read and then given a letter explaining the purpose of the research, the terms and the planned output. Research assistants were given a checklist to remind them of the importance and ways of ensuring informed consent which they were required to hand in after each interview (due to illiteracy and fear, the common idea of participants signing an informed consent form was not appropriate)
- Safeguarding rights to confidentiality and anonymity – this involved the research team respecting the privacy of individuals by not divulging personal details to people beyond the research team. The team did not record interviewees' full names in hard or soft copy notes, keeping hard copies of notes safely and destroying them after soft copies were made, and keeping soft copies under password protection. In the writing up of the research, names have been changed and details that could identify participants as individuals have been omitted or changed.
- Safety of research team – the researcher and Work Package leader, and later the researcher and the research assistants discussed the potential risks that might arise from doing the research, and discussed ways to avoid such risks, such as working in pairs, avoiding lone-working in inappropriate areas, and night-time working, the importance of a clear and consistent explanation of the research aims, and good communication among team members.

Issues arising during the research included occasional reluctance to participate, not generally due to fear of the authorities in Somaliland, but rather because of shortage of time and unfamiliarity with social research in general. A second key issue was the quality of data recording: while all the research assistants were enthusiastic and talented, the quality of the material collected varied considerably, depending on levels of skill and experience. In order to address these issues, careful individual and group debriefings were carried out and much of the translated notes were written up electronically in close co-operation with the researcher. The aim was to provide constant quality control, support and guidance and reinforce attention to detail.

## **GLOSSARY OF SOMALI TERMS**

keenan	out-migration
hamar aad	literally ‘white hamar’ – term used to refer to the
kaare	tanks
mooryaan	young freelance militia
Qaadi	judge (sharia court)
suno	prayer mark on the forehead
tahrib	migration (smuggling)

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AI	Amnesty International
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ARS	Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally displaced person
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees