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2.1.3. Socioeconomic indicators

(a) Economic overview and food security

Mogadishu being the largest city in Somalia and featuring the port as major economic hub exhibits the largest growth opportunities. Economic growth is hampered by increasing costs for land and property, and scarcity of water.952 Land and property prices in Mogadishu are generally high. Disputes over land titles are common. Some hold titles since the time of President Mohamed Siyad Barre [1969-1991]. Others grabbed land in the context of the civil war (1991-). Hagmann et al. (2022) reported that Al-Shabaab gains influence as effective adjudicator of land conflicts in the capital. 953Electricity access is near universal in Mogadishu, but electricity prices are relatively high (ca. 0.4 USD/kilowatt). Electricity provision is organised by oligopolistic cartels.954 The unreliability of water supplies is affecting 53 percent of firms in Mogadishu.955Still, in Mogadishu the productivity level for all types of entrepreneurial businesses is high in comparison to other places in Somalia.956

Most businesses in Mogadishu are small and have one to five employees. One quarter in fact only employs the owner. Only seven percent have more than 20 employees.957 Most business are in service provision.958 Two-thirds of firms are estimated to be informal. Informality affects tax collection, worker security, and the potential for businesspeople to engage in long-term investment.959 Even among formal businesses, half are micro enterprises of no more than five employees.960 Women rarely own large formal businesses. Yet, among the informal and formal micro businesses, they hold a large share, especially in food production and tea shops.961 The biggest market in Mogadishu is Bakara market. It hosts more than 20 000 indoor businesses housed in some 7 000 buildings in addition to numerous outdoor businesses.962 Besides, Mogadishu port is a major business hub. Moreover, telecommunication and mobile banking have a huge monthly turnover, with 70% of Somalis regularly using mobile money services.963 Most revenue for the Somali government is collected in Mogadishu.964 Al-Shabaab is another crucial actor in this domain, with interests primarily in revenue generation. It collects its own taxes in the city.965 Al-Shabaab taxes businesses, but also private persons e.g. building houses.966

○ (b) Housing and shelter

Mogadishu is characterised by socio-spatial and economic differentiation.967 Security and area of residence are connected. In the secure zone near the airport rent prices are highest.968 This is where government institutions, foreign embassies and international organisations are concentrated.969 Government officials, diaspora members, foreigners, and business people mostly reside here. In the outer districts, the level of insecurity is high. Criminal gangs operate there.970 Also Al-Shabaab has a clandestine but effective presence there.971 A one to two bedroom apartment (including bathroom, kitchen and living room) in one of the new apartment houses in the secure zone near the international airport costs 700 to 1200 USD/month.972 In the districts Abdulaziz, Hawl Wadaag, Hodon or Waberi, where many young professionals reside, it is slightly cheaper. Apartments with up to four bedrooms in this area cost some 300 to 700 USD/month.973 Families with two to three children live here, if they have a middle-class income, as well as young professionals who frequently share flats, before they get married. Poorer people reside in outer districts like Karaan, Yaqshid and Kahda. There one pays 90-250 USD/month for either a small stone house with two to three bedrooms or, at the cheap end, a shack (*jingad* in Somali). In the cheapest parts of Daynile or Kahda one can get a shack for 50 USD/month. Below that come the IDP camps, often situated at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum.974

Those who own houses or land are usually from the dominant groups in Mogadishu, including particularly Hawiye. Many others do not own land or houses.975 The income of many inhabitants is rather low. Thus, many people remain tenants for a long time.976 The housing situation is aggravated by constant movement from rural areas to Mogadishu.977 Additionally, climate change including more frequent droughts and floods foster rural to urban migration. This puts pressure on the already marginalised areas, where IDPs and the poor reside, and increases the need for humanitarian assistance in Mogadishu.978

○ (c) Hygiene, water and sanitation

In the expensive neighbourhoods in the secure zone, many houses and apartments are connected to the water system through pipes. The tap water is used for cooking and washing. But it is not considered clean enough for direct human consumption, at least by people with middle class or high income.[979]Yet, poorer people are also drinking tap water.[980]Better off people buy bottled water or get it delivered in larger quantities (e.g., up to 40 litre bottles) into their houses or apartments.[981] There are also some wells in the city where people can drink water.[982] Monthly costs for tap water depend on consumption. Several sources questioned about their regular water costs mentioned that a household of six people (grown-ups and children) would pay between 20 and 30 USD/months for the tap water. Clean water for human consumption is extra.[983]

Hagmann et al. (2022) found that '[w]ater delivery and consumption patterns reflect existing urban inequalities.'[984] While piped water is available in the better off (and more secure) districts, people in poorer and outer (and more insecure) districts have to rely on shallow wells, water kiosks, water trucks or donkey carts. The latter are used where roads and access are particularly bad.[985]

In neighbourhoods near the Indian Ocean wells cannot be used because of salinity.[986] Urban flooding in combination with shortcomings in the sewage system planning and the malfunctioning waste management system produce problems regarding water supply and consumption in Mogadishu. Human waste and other waste not professionally deposed contaminates floodwaters which again pollutes the groundwater and wells.[987] IDPs are most vulnerable to water shortage and water pollution. In the past, urban flooding had also very negative effects, especially on IDPs.[988] On the other hand, at the beginning of 2022 only 30 per cent of IDP sites in Benadir/Mogadishu had access to water nearby.[989]

○ (d) Healthcare

The Danish Immigration Service (DIS) found in 2024 that the ‘majority of hospitals and clinics in the country is located in the Banadir region and therefore Mogadishu has more hospitals and clinics than any other of the federal member states’.990In early 2025, some 18 larger hospitals exist in Mogadishu, including Benadir, Medina and De Marino (aka Martino) Hospital, which are public, and Aden Adde, Kalkal, Somali Sudanese, Ummo, Digfer (aka Erdogan), Yardimeli, Jazera, Dufle, Fiqi, Dalmar, Forlanini, Habeeb, Liban, Shaafi and Hodon Hospital, which are private. Digfer/Erdogan and Yardimeli Hospital are Turkish-owned. They are built on public land which has been provided for free by the government. The services are slightly cheaper than in fully private hospitals.991Forlanini, Habeeb and Digfer/Erdogan have psychiatric wardens. Medina Hospital is mainly used by the police forces but offers also some services to general public.992The Danish Immigration Service (DIS) in its 2020 study on health care in Mogadishu, that used ‘a sample of six health care facilities’, found that the hospitals in Mogadishu (which were in the sample) had a capacity of between 25 and 200 beds, except for the public Benadir Hospital, which had ca. 500 beds.993Therefore, the number of beds of all hospitals in Mogadishu is likely to be higher. The public hospitals in Mogadishu are officially ‘free of charge to the patients, including the poor and displaced populations.’994Yet, the DIS found in 2024 that ‘there may be “informal fees” and other costs, which may hinder poor people from accessing health care.’995

There are contradictory statements on the fee/non-fee involved with public hospitals in Mogadishu. Fadumo, who is a medical professional who studied medicine in Mogadishu and works as surgeon, mentioned that there is no admission fee for Benadir and De Marino Hospital. Treatment including inpatient treatment is free of charge. However, the medical supply of the public hospitals is limited. If a patient needs medication or dressing material or any other help that is not available, he/she has to pay it privately.996Ahmed, who works as laboratory supervisor in Yardimeli Hospital, mentioned that, in early 2025, the public hospitals in Mogadishu started demanding admission fees of around 3 USD.997

The quality of healthcare services in Mogadishu (and elsewhere in Somalia) is poorly controlled. Private hospitals generally offer better services. Their costs are considerable.998This starts with admission fees between 7 and 13 USD (just to see a doctor). Stationary treatment varies between ca. 20 USD/night in Yardimeli Hospital, 30 USD/night in Aden Adde, and 50 USD/night in Digfer/Erdogan Hospital.999Prices for treatments vary greatly, depending on the complexity and time of treatment. For instance, a small ambulant treatment for an abscess that needs a minimal surgery may cost 50 USD plus follow-up medication. A caesarean section costs between 250 and 300 USD. An orthopaedic fixation costs between 1 000 and 1 500 USD. An operation for breast cancer in Erdogan Hospital including follow-up treatment of some weeks costs

around 8 000 USD.[1000]Many specialised treatments like dialysis, organ transplantation, more complicated reconstructive/plastic surgery, and treatment for some specific types of cancer, are not or only very limitedly available (in Mogadishu and across Somalia).[1001]Costs for some specialised treatment can be so expensive that these treatments are only available to the rich.[1002]Complicated cases must be treated outside of the country, e.g. in Kenya, on the Arabic peninsula or in India. Costs for such treatments are private.[1003]

Mental health care is very basic in Mogadishu (and across Somalia). Usually, only very severe conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are identified as mental disorders. Persons suffering from anxiety or depression are usually not diagnosed and treated. The number of psychiatrists and psychologists in Mogadishu is small. The infrastructure for mental health treatment is very limited. There is a huge stigma against people with mental health issues in Somali society.[1004]Besides, 'accessibility of treatments is challenging due to high costs and insufficient knowledge about patients' symptoms among health workers'.[1005]

○ (e) Education for children

In Mogadishu, there are many possibilities to study up to the tertiary level. However, curriculum standards vary, and there is often a lack of resources and equipment. There are public and private schools in Mogadishu.[1006] Those with sufficient income prefer private schools for their children. Private elementary and middle schools cost 25-30 USD/month per child. Private secondary schools cost 30-50 USD/months per child. The more expensive schools offer pick-up and delivery service and include meals for the children. Public schools are officially free of charge, but de facto cost some 10-15 USD/month per child. The quality of the public schools is considered low.[1007] For many poor people even the public schools are too expensive and they cannot afford to send their children to school in Mogadishu.[1008]

○ (f) Means of basic subsistence and employment

Finding a job in Mogadishu usually requires some support by relatives on the ground, or by government officials (who are also normally asked for support in their capacity as patrilineal relatives). Relatives who run a business are asked to employ their kin. Government officials who are representatives of their own clan or lineage are asked to pave the way into a lucrative job. People without any relevant social ties in Mogadishu face serious challenges getting a middle to well-paid job, regardless of their qualification.1009 Only international organisations managed by foreigners offer a neutral application process.1010 Salaries vary greatly across professions. The vast majority of inhabitants of Mogadishu earns low salaries as maids (50-100 USD/months), watchmen (100-150 USD/months), waiters (150-200 USD/months) or as simple soldiers or policemen (200 USD/months plus food allowances). A nurse earns some 200 USD/month when he/she is a beginner. A qualified nurse or any other experienced professional can earn 350 to 500 USD/months.1011 Higher ranking soldiers and police officers can earn between 300 and 500 USD/month (plus food allowances). A military or police general earns 1 000 USD/month (plus food allowances).1012 Government officials often seek to get several salaries to increase their monthly income. Among the top earners are those working for international organisations. Top salaries in Mogadishu can go up to 6 000 USD/month.1013

While there is a construction boom ongoing in Mogadishu, the general unemployment rate is still high, with the displaced and the urban poor severely lacking economic inclusion.1014 There is more poverty in Mogadishu than in other urban areas, likely because of the presence of many displaced persons. IDPs are among the poorest and most vulnerable populations.1015 Life is not very cheap in Mogadishu. Rents are higher here than elsewhere in Somalia. Additionally, electricity is expensive in Mogadishu. A family of six in a four-bedroom flat pays 25-35 USD/months for electricity. Besides, the cables are often old and/or not well-maintained. This sometimes leads to considerable losses and also to fires. Water needs to be paid. Food is not expensive if bought on local markets (and not in the supermarket).1016 One person living in the outskirts of Mogadishu, in a shack, still may have to pay 50-90 USD/rent per month, plus water and food (ca. 150 USD/month).1017 The minimum costs for survival (without humanitarian aid) would thus be around 200-250 USD/month for an adult. This does not include healthcare. This is more than unskilled workers would earn per month in Mogadishu. There are no public social services supporting the needy.1018 Many have to rely on help from relatives in the diaspora to make ends meet.1019

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