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2.2.3. Socioeconomic indicators

○ (a) Economic overview and food security

Hargeisa is the central economic hub of Somaliland, in combination with the port of Berbera and the 'Berbera Corridor' running through Hargeisa into Ethiopia (and vice versa).1049 The economy of Hargeisa is mainly based on small to medium scale enterprises which cover 77% of the total employment in the city.1050 Trade and commerce are important aspects of the city's economy. Informal trade in the region and across borders plays an important role.1051 Most of these businesses have been noticeably established within the last five to ten years, indicating a relatively recent surge in entrepreneurial activity.1052 Also specialised construction skills, livestock rearing and remittances provide income for families in Hargeisa.1053 Central for the local economy are various markets, such as the livestock market, the bustling central market (Waheen Markat), the agriculture market, the electronics market and some others.1054 DRC (2024) reported that balance between formal salaries (36%) and SMEs (49%) points to a mixed economy with contributions from both structured employment and entrepreneurial endeavours. 'Agriculture and livestock products contribute minimally (2%) to the district's economy, and 7% of the income is generated through diverse activities beyond the primary ones.'1055

On the one hand, the economy in Hargeisa is booming. In the region, the city has 'the highest average income of $806, followed by Wajaale at $766 […], and Berbera at $737.'1056 Notably, IDPs and refugees (e.g. from Ethiopia or Yemen) have a much lower average income. The pattern is only around 150-200 USD, which shows the level of vulnerability of these groups in the city. 1057On the other hand, even though there are no recent reliable data, the unemployment rate in Hargeisa is high. Especially young people suffer from unemployment.1058 The factors causing that include nepotism, clannism, poor educational system, and high youth population.1059

The purchasing power of the local population in Hargeisa is primarily focused on basic commodities.1060 Electronics and hygiene items are mainly imported via Berbera. Food and perishable commodities come predominantly from Ethiopia.1061 A recent (2024) study on food insecurity of primary school children found: 'The overall prevalence of household food insecurity among school adolescents in Hargeisa City was 59.21%. This finding is much higher than the national prevalence of household food insecurity, which is 53%.'1062

The economy is challenged by the generally poor public infrastructure including roads and garbage collection. Electricity is mainly privately-owned. The government-owned Hargeisa Water Agency is providing water in public taps, still, water is scarce in Hargeisa.1063

○ (b) Housing and shelter

Most people in Hargeisa live in stone houses. Poor people live in shacks. The rent prices for houses vary depending on the size of the house and if it entails a courtyard and if it is connected to the water pipe-network. The cheapest houses can be found in Ahmed Dhagah district, sub-district Sinai. There a four-bedroom house without courtyard and tap-water would cost around 200 USD/month. The most expensive houses are typically found in Ibrahim Koodbuur district (e.g. in sub-district Jigjiga Yar), where a four-bedroom house with courtyard and tap water could cost up to 500 USD/month.1064 A shag with two rooms, in which a poor family can take shelter, can be rented for 80-100 USD/month.1065

○ (c) Hygiene, water and sanitation

Water is generally scarce in Hargeisa.1066 The government-owned Hargeisa Water Agency provides public taps.1067 Most houses do not have water delivered in pipes. In 2023 it was found that 'less than 25% have access to tap water. [… The] distribution system does not allow an equitable distribution of water. The distribution system works

with gravity.’1068 Most people in the city must fetch water from public tabs or wells, or receive water by trucks.1069 In poorer neighbourhoods like Daami, Digaale, Malawle, and the State House, were many minorities and also IDPs reside, water provision is especially limited. Throughout the city, the main sources of water in Hargeisa are public taps, donkey carts, and water tanker trucks, with public taps accounting for 18 %, water trucks for 48 %, donkey carts for 19 %, and other sources for 15 % of the water provision.1070 The water infrastructure in Hargeisa is not in line with the growth of the city’s size and population.1071 Water for a family of 8-9 people (which is normal in Hargeisa) living in one household costs around 25-30 USD/month. The water delivered to households, e.g. by trucks, is fit for human consumption.1072 The affordability of water is a concern for many residents in Hargeisa.1073 Waste collection, transport and disposal are the responsibility of the Municipal Council of Hargeisa. Waste is dumped in specific dumping sites.1074 Garbage collection is not always functioning well.1075

○ (d) Health care

A specialised source reported that Hargeisa features one referral public hospital, eight private hospitals, twenty-five private clinics, and ten public Maternal and Child Health centres (MCHs).1076 Another source mentioned twenty-four hospitals, 97 health centres and 162 health posts serving the entirety of the population.1077 The main public hospital is Hargeisa Group Hospital (HGH). It has six main departments, 30 service sections/units, and approximately 700 employees. Every day, ‘HGH receives and serves around 260 patient visitors, including approximately 20 women in labour and delivery.1078 There is no admission fee for the public hospitals. Only some medication and some dressing materials need to be paid. If someone needs to stay in the hospital, overnight is free but food has to be provided by relatives or friends.1079 The IOM found in 2022: ‘There are also free and state-run Mother and Child Care centres designed to provide essential services such as nutrition and free delivery to many of the neighbourhood communities in Hargeisa.’1080 Those who can afford it, however, prefer private hospitals. Well-known private hospitals in Hargeisa are Gaargaar, Manhal, Haldoor, Hussein Deeqle and Edna Aaden Hospital. The admission and treatment fees in those private hospitals are considerable. In some, admission and treatment for some smaller issues cost 50-100 USD, depending on the issues. Operations and stationary treatment are more expensive.1081

○ (e) Education for children

Sources vary on the number of schools in Hargeisa. One source mentions that Hargeisa 'has twenty-one governmental primary schools, fourteen private primary schools, eighteen kindergarten schools, and six boarding schools.'1082 Another source speaks of 'nearly 350 schools (32% of the total schools in Somaliland) in Hargeisa.'1083 Schooling for children costs in Hargeisa. Public schools are officially free of charge, but practically the teachers actually collect monthly fees to upgrade their meagre salaries. Public schools cost around 10 USD/child/month. Private schools cost between 20 USD (elementary level) and 50 USD (secondary level) per child per month. Koranic school (*malcaamad*) costs around 10 USD/month/child.1084

○ (f) Means of basic subsistence and employment

The salary level in Hargeisa is generally rather low. A watchman earns 100 USD/month. A cleaner earns 50-80 USD/month. A soldier or policeman without rank earns 150-200 USD/month plus food allowances. A middle-ranking officer earns up to 500 USD/month. A teacher at a public school has a basic salary of around 120 USD. He/she collects additional fees from the children. Depending on the size of the class a public school teacher earns between 250 and 300 USD a month. A teacher at a private school earns around 400 USD.1085

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