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3.8. Individuals involved in clan disputes

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: October 2025

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI report: Country Focus 2025, 1.5., 1.5.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Clan conflicts can be triggered by various reasons, including access to resources, competition over land, access to jobs and markets, political competition, insults and breach of women's or other vulnerable persons' protection status. Clan conflicts can be settled through traditional reconciliation mechanisms based on customary law. Inter-clan conflicts and rivalries have substantially increased across Somalia during the past two years (March 2023 - March 2025).

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Acts to which individuals involved in clan disputes could be exposed are of such severe nature, that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, incidents reported included clashes, various forms of clan related violence, as well as 'revenge killings' in the context of *diya* or *mag* (blood compensation). Additionally, women can play a very specific role in peace-making between lineages of clans. In order to stabilise a peace agreement between groups, sometimes one or several unmarried girls from the family of the killer(s) are given by the elders for marriage to the injured group. In the reference period, women were directly targeted in the context of acts of clan revenge on several occasions. Perceived acts of humiliation deriving from clan conflicts or linked to any other triggers of feud/conflict can result in revenge killings.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for individuals involved in clan disputes **in the whole of Somalia, including South-Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland**, to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Gender and age**: men have a higher risk, as they are mostly the ones directly involved in clan (or lineage, or family) conflicts. Individuals between 15 and 40 years old are mostly those directly involved in clan (or lineage, or family) conflicts. Children and men around 15 and 25 years old would typically be mobilised by elders to form lineage or clan militias, engage in attacks or put up defence positions. Women, children

and elderly are traditionally referred to as ‘sacrosanct’ in clan conflicts. However, they can still be incidental victims of attacks or subject to direct acts of targeting or indiscriminate violence.

- **Being considered a priority target**: perceived perpetrator of humiliation would be at higher risk. Men of the immediate patrilineal kin of a person who killed another person are priority targets, but depending on the social standing of the killed person, also others from the patrilineal kin-group of the killer, who hold a similarly high social status, can become priority targets.

- **Clan affiliation**: Clan status and power determine the level of ‘blood compensation’ or revenge, with victims of minority or marginalised clans ‘worthing’ less in comparison to powerful clans. As a result, members of marginalised clans are more vulnerable to violence, as their clans may lack the influence or capacity to seek justice or retaliation, reducing the deterrent effect for potential perpetrators. Furthermore, if majority groups clash with minority groups, it is more likely that women are harmed by majority clan militias, as a display of superiority.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

In case of inter-clan disputes, where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated, it may be for reasons of **race/nationality**. Alternatively, clan members involved in intra-clan disputes may also have a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of **membership of a particular social group**, based on their common background that cannot be changed (i.e. being a member of a clan under the threat of clan revenge) and due to the fact that clans are known and have a distinct identity in the surrounding society.

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