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The Galgale In Somalia: Third-class citizens in their homeland



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AMISOM	Africa Union Mission for Somalia
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IEDs	.....	Improvised Explosive Devices
MP	.....	Member of Parliament
NGOs	.....	Non-Governmental Organizations
OCHA	.....	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
TFG	.....	Transitional Federal Government
UIC	.....	Union of Islamic Courts
UN	.....	United Nations
UNHCR	.....	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee
UNPOS	.....	United Nations Political Office for Somalia
USA	.....	United States

The Galgale (Galgala or Galgalo) are described in the UN OCHA report 2002 as making up 0.2% of the population of Somalia. They were, at that time, found in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Gedihir within the Middle Shabelle region and worked using the traditional skills of woodcraft and pastoral activities. The Galgale used to be treated as part of the Midgan clan*, however the Galgale generally consider themselves to be a separate clan and this issue is hotly disputed, even by the Galgale themselves.

1. Introduction and Background

1.0 Introduction

This report focuses on the security, social and economic situations of minorities in South Somalia and the Galgale clan in particular, with a main emphasis on the situation of the Galgale in Mogadishu. The report also describes conflict negotiations and clan protection in the current situation. The purpose of this report on minorities is not to further divide the Somali people; but to illuminate their suffering, which all endure, albeit differently.

1.1 Methodology

The background information for this report comes from a variety of sources in order to give a balanced and representative overview of the predominant issues. The resources used include case studies and interviews with Galgale clan members, undertaken specifically for this report, and publicly available information in the form of written publications and web-based material.

Information for the case studies and interviews was gathered during a fact-finding mission in Mogadishu from 09-16 April, 2012. All interviewees were informed that the information would be published. Although the majority gave their consent, there were many who were concerned to protect their identities and preferred not to be mentioned by name or function. However they agreed to participate anonymously. To protect their anonymity they have been omitted from the references list.

1.2 Country Context

Somalia's history since independence has been fraught with episodes of political instability and human rights abuses prompted by the dictatorial regime, coups and clan-based rebel militias. Since the dictator Siad Barre was deposed in 1991,

the country with its population of approximately 9 million has been without a functioning government. Several reconciliation and peace negotiations have succeeded only in providing temporary reprieve.

Despite progress at the political level, the general security situation in Somalia remains volatile. In mid-September 2011, it was estimated that about 8 000 Somalis had been killed as a result of the conflict since the beginning of 2010. Many were civilians caught in the crossfire between the insurgents and the Western-backed Transitional Federal Government forces.

The absence of strong Transitional Federal Government control in most areas of the country has permitted banditry and criminality to thrive. While the Somali people continue to face persistent drought and conflict, the global economic crisis during the last year has exacerbated their distress. The unprecedented increase in global food and fuel prices has contributed to an alarming rise in prices in Somalia. According to the UN, 1.3 million Somalis are internally displaced, and more than three million are in need of humanitarian assistance.

1.3 Current Security Situation in Mogadishu

For the past two decades, Mogadishu has been a lawless, bloody battleground controlled by warlords. The extremist al-Shabaab movement, an offshoot of al-Qaeda, entered the city five years ago and took over most of it in 2009, forcing many citizens to find homes elsewhere in Somalia or abroad¹.

A few hours in Mogadishu is all it takes to realise, with a jolt, just how little space the human body needs to survive. Across a narrow seafront road, there is a camp for people fleeing the drought and the fighting which has grown up in the sandy nothingness. From a distance, it looks like rows of colorful eggs decorated by children. But these tiny domed huts – smaller than some Wendy houses – are strictly functional. They are made of cloth, plastic, cardboard, old sacks or canvas moulded around frames of spindly sticks. To say they are crammed together would be an understatement².

¹ Report: Mogadishu quality of life improves after al-Shabaab pushed out- Feb, 2012
http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/02/07/feature-01

² Report: After the famine: Somalia's refugees ponder their future -Guardian Jan, 2012
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/30/somalia-famine-aid-refugees-shabaab>

African Union troops, known as Amisom, and Somali government soldiers control most of the city. The city is no longer a battlefield since al-Shabaab withdrew most of its fighters last August, ending much of the ferocious gun battles and shelling that used to echo through the city, however the danger has gone underground. Al-Shabaab militants plant improvised explosive devices (IEDs), explode car bombs and carry out hand-grenade attacks. Their targets are the Somali soldiers and Amisom forces, but caught up in the attacks are thousands of displaced homeless people, who seem to have filled every spare nook and cranny in Mogadishu, and live with this terrorization every day. The original residents of Mogadishu also have to get on with life too amid these attacks³.

The situation is still so volatile that security officers at the airport brief visiting foreigners, including journalists, on the latest attacks and the overall security situation of the city.

Apart from the al-Shabaab suicide bombs, there are also freelance militia carrying out attacks of rape and looting. In Last August, armed men wearing uniforms of Somali Transitional Federal Government soldiers killed 10 civilians and injured 19 others in the Hodan district. The imposters also looted around five trucks carrying food and other types of humanitarian assistance⁴. However, there are clear signs that the security conditions in Mogadishu have markedly improved, though they are still far from safe.

The recent improved security conditions have made it possible for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Britain's Foreign Secretary William Hague to make historic visits to Mogadishu, and the UN Political Office for Somalia(UNPOS) was also able to relocate to Mogadishu after being based in Nairobi for the past 17 years⁵.

³ Report: After the famine: Somalia's refugees ponder their future -Guardian Jan, 2012
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/30/somalia-famine-aid-refugees-shabaab>

⁴ Report: At least 10 killed in Somali refugee camp fire -
<http://af.reuters.com/article/commoditiesNews/idAFL6E7J51C220110805>

⁵ Report: Mogadishu quality of life improves after al-Shabaab pushed out- Feb, 2012
http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/02/07/feature-01

1.4 Somali Minorities

Somali clans are divided into five main clans: four major clans and a group of minority clans known as ‘clan five’. As currently used by both Somalis and foreigners, the term “minorities” refers to any clan or community that does not belong genealogically to one of the four major “noble” clan families of Darod, Hawiye, Dir (including Isaaq) and Rahanweyn.

The minority groups such as the Gaboye, Tumul, Yibir and Galgale are ethnically associated with the Samale, which forms another dominant clan in Somalia. However, cultural stigma and traditions have excluded them as outcasts from the Samale clan. They survive by activities such as blacksmithing and shoemaking, as well as being hunter/gatherers. Other minority groups not associated with the Samale include Bantu, Reerhamar, Bravenese and Bajuni. All the minority groups have traditionally been placed at the lower end of Somali society and are subject to societal discrimination in urban centers from other clan groups and harassment where no patron clan protection exists, particularly in rural areas⁶.

1.5 Clan Protection

Individual security in traditional Somali society was dependent on the clan’s ability to pay compensation (i.e. the “Diya”) and to defend itself in the event of attacks. This situation has not changed much in modern times, and the clan has remained the safety net of the Somali population since the collapse of the government institutions in 1991. Vulnerability and protection in Somalia are therefore closely linked to a clan’s strength⁷.

In Somali society weak clans or groups have traditionally been able to seek protection from and affiliation to the dominant clans in a specific area.

⁶ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “A study on minorities in Somalia”, 2002 - http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1504_1236341950_somalia-minorities.pdf

⁷ Gundel, J. (2006, November). The predicament of the ‘Oday’. The role of traditional structures in security, rights, law and development in Somalia. Nairobi: Danish Refugee Council & Novib/Oxfam. Available at http://www.logcluster.org/som/infrastructure-communication-various/Gundel_The%

However, affiliation to a dominant clan does not necessarily provide protection and while clans are still important, it is evident that clan loyalty is becoming superseded by political, ideological and international conditions.

Most of the minority groups have been assimilated into other more powerful clans with whom they live. However, this strategy worked only for the Midgan, Madhiban and Ashraf groups which have traditionally had a strong connection with local Somali clans. The Galgale in Mogadishu and Shabelle regions is one group whose situation appears to have worsened. This clan constitutes a small group of people who have been suppressed throughout history by all factions championing the war in Somalia, and whose voices have never been heard by the world⁸.

2. Findings and Analysis

2.1 The Current Galgale Situation

The situation for the Galgale in Mogadishu, Gedihir and Kismayo has remained unchanged for the past 21 years. Torture, killing, rape and discrimination against the poor and persons with disabilities have been consistently reported. Social constraints create obstacles to inter-marriage, and access to work is restricted to traditional jobs – normally those enjoying the lowest social status and pay. In a context of total breakdown of law and order, lack of protection from clans excludes them even from this shelter provided by customary law⁹.

In the current situation, people throughout society can be affected – grenades and bombs do not discriminate. However the minorities are caught in the crossfire between insurgents and government forces and, in contrast to many more privileged citizens, they do not have alternative places to live in Somalia ¹⁰.

As mentioned above, without appreciable religious, linguistic and cultural unity within Somalia, clan loyalties have emerged as the most important political factors in Somali politics.

⁸ Focus group discussion held in Mogadishu, Somalia, April 14, 2012. The group included Mowliid Ma,ane (Somali MP), Ahmed Muse Riirash, and Daahir Nour Farah.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ interview with Mohamoud Ahmed Osman, Mogadishu, April 09, 2012

Whether an area is controlled by the current Transitional Federal Government or the hard line al-Shabaab extremists, the reliance on clan identity remains the only effective means of protection in Somalia, despite the improved security in some areas of the country. Thus the continuing lack of major clan support and military weakness has left the Galgale disproportionately subject to killings, torture, rape, and looting of land and property, which are carried out with impunity by faction militias and majority clan members. Many Galgale families continue to live in deep poverty and suffer from numerous forms of discrimination and exclusion¹¹.

2.2 Armed Conflict

The situation of minority groups deteriorated when the armed conflict broke out in Somalia in 1991. Some minorities, such as the Galgale, Gaboye and Yibir were perceived as enemies because of their working relationship with the Siad Barre regime. They therefore suffered grievous human rights violations, which included extra-judicial killings, appropriation of lands and properties and forced displacement to Internally Displaced Person (IDP)'s or refugee camps situated along the Somalia-Ethiopia border¹².

The Galgale people in Mogadishu and Gedihir (in Jowhar) suffered brutal reprisals from the Abgal clan with whom they lived. These reprisals took place at the beginning of the 1991 war. During the last days of his rule, Siad Barre misused the Galgale community by arming them against the Abgal. Following his defeat, the Abgal killed many Galgale and forced many others to abandon their houses. There are now nearly 5,000 Galgale IDPs in Kismayo and elsewhere. It is important to note, that since the Galgale identify themselves with the Majerten sub-clan, they have received minimal clan support from the Darod clan in Kismayo¹³.

The security conditions of the Galgale have remained consistently low; even when the Union of Islamic Courts were in power in 2006 they did not manage to make any real changes for the Galgale in Mogadishu.

¹¹ Interview with Ali Egal Habaneh (former Police Officer) Mogadishu, April 10, 2012.

¹² UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "A study on minorities in Somalia", 2002

¹³ Ibid

2.3 Military Weakness

Most minorities have no weapons or military traditions. Thus they are largely defenseless and for this reason they have had little recourse against the successive waves of militiamen and bandits that scoured the country¹⁴.

In times of war - when force is paramount, communities without weapons, allies or connections enjoy little respect or status, and there is evidence that minorities' persons and property are treated with disdain. There are indications that as the various militias continue to infiltrate the districts where minorities live these groups have been forced to move¹⁵. For example, the Abgal has looted most of the Galgale lands in Gedihir and thus fewer than 20 families now live in Gedihir with their land still intact, and most of these are dependent on relationships with the Abgal clan.

2.4 Social Isolation

In Somali society, married women traditionally have served to link the clans of their fathers and brothers - to which they always belong - with those of their husbands (to which the children always belong). Most nomadic clans practiced some form of exogamy-marriage outside the clan in order to help strengthen alliances with "outsiders". Wives were even exchanged between clans and clan sections that were prone to fight over water and pasture (like the Habr Gedir Saad and the Majerteen Omar Mahmud, or the Habr Gedir Ayr and the Marehan in central Somalia). These ties helped to mediate disputes between clans, since there would always be families with in-laws on the other side with an interest in peaceful resolution of conflicts¹⁶. However, Galgale had few marriage or kin ties to members of major clans, which minimized their support from noble clans.

¹⁴ UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "A study on minorities in Somalia", 2002 - http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1504_1236341950_somalia-minorities.pdf

¹⁵ Report : Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada- Victims and Vulnerable Groups in Southern Somalia

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,IRBC,COUNTRYREP,SOM,,3ae6a8092,o.html>

¹⁶ Report: Conflict, security and clan protection in South Somalia LANDINFO – 12.

NOVEMBER 2008 http://www.landinfo.no/asset/784/1/784_1.pdf

2.5 Political Representation

The minority groups in Somalia have been discriminated against and excluded by government, both directly and indirectly for centuries. The Somali custom and practice of Second Class Citizenship puts the minority groups at the bottom of Somali social structure¹⁷.

The long civil war has ensured that the practice of Second Class Citizenship in Somalia remained strongly alive. This oppresses, humiliates, discriminates, isolates and treats the minority groups as outcasts. Unfortunately, this wrongful social practice continues to be strong in Somalia and excludes minority groups, such as the Galgale people, from any political participation and representation in the country¹⁸.

However, after a long struggle, minority groups like Ashraf, Madhiban, Bantu, Banadiri, and Bajunis have at least one member in the current Transitional Federal Government. For example, the current speaker of parliament, Sharif Hassan, is from the Ashraf clan, and the deputy minister of commerce and industry is from the Madhiban¹⁹.

Minority clans receive 62 seats of the current 550 parliament members under the 4.5 clan-quota formula. According to the formula 122 seats are allocated to each of the the four major (so called “noble”) Somali clans (the Darod, Dir, Hawiye, and Rahanweyn). The remaining 62 seats are divided up among the minority clans, however there is no single Member from Galgale group in the parliament²⁰.

Therefore the Galgale clearly qualify as third class citizens in their homeland, since they are not only a minority in the noble clans but also among the minority clans.

¹⁷ Report : Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada- Victims and Vulnerable Groups in Southern Somalia

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,IRBC,COUNTRYREP,SOM,,3ae6a8092,o.html>

¹⁸ Interview with Mohamed Ismael Gulaid, Mogadishu, Somalia , April 10, 2012.

¹⁹ Interview with Abdilahi Ga'al Ayrow, Mogadishu, Somalia , April 12, 2012.

²⁰ Focus group discussion held in Mogadishu, Somalia, April 14, 2012. The group included Mowliid Ma,ane (Somali MP), Ahmed Muse Riirash, and Daahir Nour Farah.

2.6 Limited Support Networks beyond their Home Communities

The continuous discrimination against Galgale, including exclusion from all government positions and overseas scholarships, coupled with their limited exogamy-marriage outside their clan, meant that few Galgale have established substantial family networks in other parts of Somalia or beyond its borders. Most of them have lost their local productive assets and have no one to rely on for material assistance, and if displaced from their homes, they have nowhere to go except refugee camps. The few prominent religious and business families in Mogadishu are a small exception. As they are historically linked to the international world by trading interests they have been able to move to wealthier and safer countries, most notably Kenya²¹.

2.7 Access to Justice

The minorities of Somalia do not have access to justice. The Transitional Federal Government's judicial system lacks the capacity and expertise to deal with war crimes and crimes against humanity.

For most people, justice is largely conducted at local and clan levels with little supervision from the state. The law is a mixture of jurisprudence inherited from colonial times, Sharia and customary law. These are implemented inconsistently which restricts access to justice, particularly for women. Somalia retains the use of the death penalty but the extent of its usage is not known.

In areas that are under al-Shabaab's control, members of Galgale are often denied access to justice. Moreover they receive disproportionate punishments for alleged crimes. Irrespective of being guilty or not, individuals are often coerced into admitting to the crime. Punishments include public floggings, amputations and executions. For instance, in October 2011, two teenagers accused of spying were shot to death in Kismayo by a firing squad. Residents were ordered to watch the killing.

²¹ Focus group discussion held in Mogadishu, Somalia, April 14, 2012. The group included Mowliid Ma,ane (Somali MP), Ahmed Muse Riirash, and Daahir Nour Farah.

2.8 Access to Basic Needs

As the result of more than 20 years of civil war, much of Somalia's infrastructure for health, education and other basic needs has been destroyed. Even where there are some facilities, all health and education facilities in Mogadishu, and in other parts of Somalia, are owned by individuals. Because of this and the financial and social status of the Galgale, they experience numerous difficulties when it comes to accessing health care services, education, and housing²².

There are some areas where the UN and international NGOs provide free health care and education. However, free access to humanitarian aid agencies is frequently cut off by the continuous civil war and the continuing displacement and movement of the vulnerable groups like Galgale further obstructs the provision of regular access to free health care and education or follow up services.

Most of the Galgale families we met in Mogadishu neither have their own houses nor are they able to pay rent, and they generally live in makeshift houses made of mud huts and plastic tents.

2.9 Access to International Aid

The Galgale have had no share in the billions of dollars in aid donated to Somalis by the international community, especially the food aid given to the Somalis during the drought and famine seasons.

Almost all the Galgale members living in the Mogadishu IDPs mentioned that they received less or no food aid at all during the last nine months when the famine in the country was at its peak.

One of the major forms of aid the country has received recently (apart from food) were Turkish scholarships, whereby over 1300 scholarships were given to Somalis. However, the scholarships were distributed based on individuals' kinship to officials in the administration.

²² Internally displaced persons: Combined report on Somalia
UNCU / UN-OCHA , 2002 - www.somali-jna.org/downloads/ACF1E6.doc

None of the Galgale members were awarded a scholarship. This was not due to a lack of education among the Galgale but is part of the continuous systematic abuse of the minority people of which the Galgale are members. The current scholarships provided by Turkey are awarded in the same prejudicial manner²³.

A father of three students whom we interviewed in Mogadishu complained about the way scholarships had been managed. He criticised the selection process, questioning the authority's claim to have marked the exams of five thousand students within hours without indicating if computers had been used – especially as the availability of such technology is not likely²⁴.

2.10 Occupations

Some traditional occupations died out in the last 21 years of the civil war. For example Galgale can no longer benefit from their once main source of income of woodcarving since the current global economic crisis and drought in the country affected people's purchasing power

Furthermore, some majority clan members who are themselves struggling economically have moved into occupations formerly held exclusively by Galgale groups, such as shoe-making, woodcarving, and construction²⁵. Thus, Galgale did not only lose their monopoly over their traditional trades but generally unable to find replacement employment.

The few educated members of the Galgale can find work in any chosen field, but most work available to the majority of Galgale members is in manual and service jobs, such as market-selling and trading, slaughterhouse work, domestic work, cooking and selling tea²⁶.

²³ Report: Somali Scholarships: Fraud, Bribery And Opportunities Lost
<http://www.thereporterethiopia.com/Politics-and-Law/somali-scholarships-fraud-bribery-and-opportunities-lost.html> - 13 August 2011.

²⁴ Interview with Suleiman Nour Guleid, Mogadishu, Somalia , April 13, 2012.

²⁵ Interview with Fu'ad Hassan Omar , Mogadishu, Somalia , April 09, 2012.

²⁶ Interview with Waris Mohamoud Osman, Mogadishu, April 9, 2012.

2.11 Remittance

Remittance is a major source of income for most of the Somali families. Some even rely on it for their livelihood. However, there are relatively less members from Galgale in the Somali diaspora compared to the other minority groups²⁷. The reason for this is that the international NGOs, including UNHCR, gave little or no attention to the Galgale in the refugee camps of Kenya and Ethiopia, from where many Somali refugees were taken to developed countries. Another major reason, as found in our research was that most of the Galgale have no financial means to go outside the country or even reach the refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia²⁸.

3.0 Case Studies

The purpose of this part of the report is to present the experience of some Galgale families, who suffer almost all forms of major crimes and discrimination experienced by the minority groups in Somalia. These cases illustrate the extreme suffering endured as a result of crimes including rape, killing and looting.

3.1 The Case of Aamina Duale Muse

Aamina Duale, is a 58 years old mother who has lost almost all members of her family and property in the last two years.

Before the war, Aamina, her husband and family lived a contented life together and were one of the few successful families among Galgale clan.

In 2010 her husband, Abdulahi Mohamed, was killed in Gedihir in a land-related dispute. In July 2011 Aamina's eldest son, Ahmed, was killed in the crossfire between al-Shabaab and the government forces, only seven days after the death of her son Ahmed, gangs raped her daughters-in-law in Mogadishu, this happened after gangs had looted them on several occasions.

²⁷ Interview with Mohamed Suleiman(not his real name), UNHCR staff, Mogadishu, Somalia April 13, 2012,

²⁸ Focus group discussion held in Mogadishu, Somalia, April 14, 2012. The group included Mowliid Ma,ane (Somali MP), Ahmed Muse Riirash, and Daahir Nour Farah.

They reported the incidents to the government, but although some gang members were arrested they were released within a month. A few days after this incident, al- Shabaab arrested her second son, Omer, supposedly for spying on Western countries and the government but, he was subsequently freed by the Amison troops.

Aamina pointed out that the rescue of her son by the Amison was the only help they have ever had from authorities, even though it was not an operation carried out specifically to free him, or other prisoners detained by al-Shabaab.

Aamina sold her house to pay for Omar's rescue,; however, the problems did not stop there. At the end of last month(March 2012), three armed men attacked her and her daughter in their home. They severely wounded her and killed her daughter.

Throughout the war, al Shabaab has recruited many students as soldiers in nearly all the schools across the country²⁹. Aamina's son, Omer, was teaching some of these students, and their families believed her son had assisted al Shabaab in recruiting them. When they heard of the deaths of some of their children while they were fighting for al Shabaab, these families attacked Aamina in revenge³⁰.

Out of fear, Aamina did not report the incident to the government - she had reported earlier incidents in 2011, and this had brought nothing but more problems than already existed³¹.

Aamina now lives alone with no husband, no children and no home, but with constant fear.

No apology, nor any amount of compensation, can recompense what Somali war victims, like Aamina, and their families have lost.

²⁹ Interview with Aamina Duale Muse, Mogadishu , Somalia April 15, 2012.

³⁰ Report: Human Rights Watch -No Place for Children Child Recruitment, Forced Marriage, and Attacks on Schools in Somalia- Recruitment of Children from Schools page 70, February 2012.-<http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/somalia.html>

³¹ Interview with Dahir Geedi Nour, Member of the Galgale Community in Mogadishu, Somalia, April 15, 2012.

3.2 The Case of Aisha Ibrahim Dhuhulow

Aisha Ibrahim Dhuhulow was stoned to death by a mob in a public execution after being found guilty of adultery by an Islamic court in the southern port city of Kismayo, which was taken over by the radical Islamists al Shabaab in August 2008.

She was buried up to her neck before a group of men in the crowd pelted her head with stones. According to human rights groups, it later emerged that she was only 13 and had been raped by three men.

Her father, Ibrahim Dhuhulow, said she had been walking some distance on her way to visiting her grandmother when she was raped by the three men in the Kismayo area. Following the assault, she sought protection from the authorities, who accused her of adultery and sentenced her to stoning to death³².

This incident highlights that the extreme vulnerability of Galgale in Somalia does not depend on where they live, but on who they are, as this incident happened in an area controlled by radical Islamists not by warlords or freelance militias.

3.3 The Case of Zahra Farah and Her Family

Maryan Elmi, aged 19 and Zahra's only daughter, burnt herself to death in Mogadishu after four men raped her, in our investigation we found that Maryan was not alone in her suffering, nor in the agonizing way she chose to die. According local witnesses, several other young women who belonged to Galgale had burned themselves to death in the last year alone³³.

Zahra, Maryan's mother, was also raped three years ago. "It is something that I will never forget," said Zahra Farah, aged 48 - but she was more traumatized by her daughter's rape. "I don't know why it is happening to us"³⁴.

³² Report: Teenage Somali rape victim stoned to death for adultery
<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/yo-rape-victim-stoned-to-death/story-e6frg6uf-1111117947483>

³³ Interview with Fatumo Nour, Human right Activits, Mogadishu, Somalia, April 16 , 2012

³⁴ Interview with Zahra Farah, Mogadishu, Somalia, April 16, 2012

Zahra's husband was killed in 2008 when militiamen broke into his house trying to loot it. When he tried to stop them, he was beaten with rifle butts, tied up and finally killed.

Zahra Farah lost their land during General Siad Barre's rule when the government confiscated land for state farms and the Galgale lands in Gedihir and Kismayo were often lost in 'land grabs' by majority members connected to the government or Siad Barre's clan.

Zahra was among hundreds of families who were forced to abandon their lands without compensation.

Fatumo Nour, an activist and member of Galgale clan, told us that freelance militia and government forces contributed to the increase in rape. According to her, there have been over 16 cases of rape and seven attempted cases recorded in last four months and she cautioned that there are many more that are not reported out of fear or ignorance³⁵.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

Governments are normally responsible for enforcing and binding international obligations to deal with war crimes and crimes against humanity. These include the right to life, which is violated by the displacement of people into situations without the basic necessities of life, and the right to choose one's place of residence. However, in Somalia where the state structures have collapsed and rebuilding has not yet fully started - in particular the police and judiciary, with the resulting breakdown of law and order - the major problem clearly lies in the lack of the support from other prominent members of Somali society.

Clan and religious leaders, intellectuals and other prominent members of society have played a prominent role in attempting to resolve conflicts and bringing the different factions together. Although their efforts have not succeeded in bringing a lasting solution to the Somali conflict, it is clear that the elders have been the only entity acting as government in the last 21 years

³⁵ Interview with Fatumo Nour, Human right Activits, Mogadishu, April 16, 2012

Elders have traditionally resolved conflicts, whether they were between sub clans or major clans, through the traditional problem-solving system in Somalia known as Xeer.

However, clan and religious leaders in Somalia have not only failed to eliminate discrimination and other harmful practices against the Galgale minority group. They have also failed through their unwillingness to respect the cultural and religious rules of the country. The focus of the social leaders in Mogadishu and surrounding areas was solely on the major problems of the country as a whole, and gave little or no attention to the suffering of the minority people who are facing the most extreme oppression from the whole of society.

Every member of the Galgale minority group we met with during our research was asked if they would stay in Somalia if it were to be constitutionally accepted that equal citizenship be offered to all Somalis, irrespective of their clan affiliation. Unanimously, they said that they did not believe this was possible in Somalia. Although they wanted to stay, every one of them said that the situation is still too dangerous. For many, the only solution is to find a way to get out of the country and settle overseas.

In addition to the general despair and fear felt by these minorities, there were several specific problems that they all shared regardless of whether they were displaced or not. These included:

- . lack of basic educational opportunities for their children;
- . lack of access to international aid and basic services;
- . lack of access to employment opportunities;
- . lack of integration into the broader community; and
- . a very high level of frustration at the lack of interest from the outside world.

4.2 Recommendations

Countries like the United States and Canada, as well as the European Union and the Commission for Human Rights, need to take the lead in putting pressure on Somali society and their leaders to incorporate minority groups into all levels of both the state and the peace-building process.

It would also be timely for the United Nations, because of its democratic maturity and the expertise it can bring to Greater Somalia, to devise a long-term refugee resettlement program for the Galgale community. And through this, to educate, train and integrate them into the larger Somali community so they are able to support themselves and hold their own in their homeland as well as actively participating in the development process of future Somali society as one among equals.

Finally, members of the minority groups themselves – particularly those of the Galgale community – need to think big and work to create an environment conducive to ridding themselves of their oppressive past. They need to be able to look forward to a positive future where they can play a respected and valued part in Somali society. For this to be possible members of the international community will have to play several important roles: strengthening the relationship between international aid agencies and Galgale groups; helping combat discrimination against them; and providing them with long-term --strategically-planned - training programs and capacity building programs. These would include refugee resettlement programs, scholarships, exchange programs, internships with various human rights activist organizations and so on.

This complex situation demands such a threefold approach, involving both the international community and the Galgale community themselves, as well as the co-operation of elders in Somali society. This co-operative strategy may be a positive way to transform their desperate situation from that of a third class minority to an integrated role in Somali society.

4.3 Acknowledgments

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