



HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER
Speaking for those who are not heard



HARGEISA'S UNRECOGNIZED IDPs

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Human Rights Centre

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgment.....iii
Executive Summary.....1
Recommendations.....5
Methodology.....6
Context.....4
Land ownership.....6
Sources of income.....6
Limited access to government services.....7
Discrimination.....12
Somalian citizens: not recognized.....12
About Human Rights Centre.....13

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HRC is also grateful to the residents in Istanbul (Naaso-hablood B) IDPs center who welcomed us and shared their experience and stories to include in this report. Thank you very muc

Executive Summary

This report, which is based on a research done in a small IDPs centre located in the east of Hargeisa, gives useful information on the situation of the IDPs in Somaliland. The data gathering was made in Naaso-hablood B IDPs centre (known famously as Istanbul by the residents). The monitors and volunteers of Human Rights Centre have interviewed 76 residents who live in the centre.

The report highlights the poor conditions of the center in terms of the limited or absent government services such as health, sanitation, education, food and protection, as well as the challenges in land ownership and severe level of poverty. The people live in a land owned by a private citizen who threatens eviction, prohibits digging toilets or any form of permanent structure. There are no schools and health posts. The people in the IDPs centre came from different places, but those from Somalia (South Central Somalia) face peculiar challenges as their status is not clear.

Recommendations

To the government of Somaliland

- Provide the necessary services to Naaso-hablood B (Istanbul) IDPs centre and the other IDPs centres in Somaliland. These services include health, education, security, legal, protection, sanitation etc.
- Re-locate the residents in Istanbul IDPs centre to a land to live with a registration and facilitate and coordinate to build shelters that are in conformity with standards;
- Carryout urgently a wide-ranging assessment that covers all areas and sectors and be capable of identifying the assistance and protection of all vulnerable groups;
- Implement national policies relating to IDPs and also clarify the legal position of the people from Somalia (South Central Somalia).

To the humanitarian organizations/institutions

- Provide the highly needed assistance to the people in Istanbul IDPs centre and other IDPs centre;
- Recognize the peculiar situation of the people from Somalia (South Central Somalia).

Methodology

This report is based on a fact-finding mission made by volunteers and monitors of Human Rights Centre who visited the camp on 17 March and 10 May 2018. In the first visit, a general assessment was made. Afterwards set of interviews were prepared. The monitors and volunteers interviewed 76 people who live in the Istanbul IDPs camp by using questions that were prepared. Sixty-five (65) of the interviewees were women and eleven (11) were men.

The National Displacement and Refugee Agency (NDRA) calls the IDPs centre as Naaso-hablood B. however, it is generally known as Istanbul, and it is the later name which is used in this report.

Context

In the year of 1991, Somaliland declared restoration of independence from Somalia. Somaliland and Somalia united in 1st July 1960 after they gained independence from Britain and Italy, respectively. Since 1991 Somaliland has been functioning separately, without international recognition. Somaliland held series of elections since 2001 when a constitution was approved by the people in referendum. Subsequently, elections of local councillors, president and parliamentarians were held from 2002 to 2017.

Somaliland covers an area of 68, 000 sq miles with about 3.5 million citizens whom majority are in the rural areas.¹ The life expectancy is estimated by UNDP in 2008 as 50 years old for males and 55 for females.² The country is poor and its main source of income is livestock exportation.³

Istanbul IDP camp is located in east of Haregeisa especially in Moalin Haruun district. The population consists of 500 households which came roughly from 12 different places in Somaliland, Somalia and Yemen.⁴ The first of them came to the place about 8 years ago. Majority of the population in the IDPs are women. The community are extremely vulnerable, not only as IDP but as persons. Interviewed residents told HRC that there are people with mental illness who do

¹ <http://unpo.org/members/7916> last retrieved 6th November 2015

² <http://unpo.org/members/7916>

³ <http://www.doingbusiness.org/Reports/Subnational-Reports/hargeisa>

⁴ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp residents

not receive medical support.⁵ They are held in the camp and some of them are chained.⁶

The people who live in the IDPs camp came from different places in Somaliland, Somalia and Yemen. This below table shows places they came from based on the total 76 people interviewed for this report.

Place	Percentage	Displaced by
Rural areas in Marodijeeh	52%	Droughts
Rural areas in Togdheer	17%	Droughts
Somalia (South-Central)	6%	Civil war
Rural areas in Saahil	14%	Droughts
Rural areas in Awdal	9%	Droughts
Yemen	2%	Civil war

⁵ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp residents

⁶ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp residents

Land ownership



The camp is located in a land owned by a private citizen. They are not allowed to build anything permanent on it, except Somali traditional houses “BUUL.” Toilets are forbidden.⁷ As a land owned by a private citizen they can be evicted anytime. They live in a constant fear of eviction.

Sources of income

The camp is far from the city, Hargeisa. The residents are forced to come to the city to seek job or beg at the streets. Those who work

⁷ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp resident

complain harsh working conditions with very minimum wages. In a time, inflation and currency depreciation is high, the people in the IDPs center suffer and are the poorest of the poor. Additionally, all necessary services are not available in the camp.⁸ As explained below the IDPS suffer crimes, water shortages, poor sanitation, lack of health facilities and absence of schools.⁹

Limited access to government services

7.1 Water and Sanitation

The IDPs camp does not have water tanks or taps. Water is supplied by private water tanks that has to be paid. A jerrycan costs 2,000 Somaliland Shillings.¹⁰ The camp lacks toilets.¹¹ The land is owned by a private citizen who prohibits digging toilets. Residents use open places as toilets, posing health and security threats. The camp is located in low land area where floods flash during rainy seasons. This causes deceases.

7.2 Food

Right to food is a fundamental right under the international human rights law. The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has the physical

⁸ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp residents

⁹ There is no school at all at the centre

¹⁰ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp residents

¹¹ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp residents

and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement”¹² The interviewees told HRC that they are not provided food and they have to buy by themselves. Many of the people in the camp particularly pregnant and breast-feeding mothers, elderly and children are affected by chronic undernourishment.

7.3 Protection



The Istanbul IDPs camp is unstable. It has no police station and other government institutions. Crimes occur in the IDPs camp including rape, theft, and robbery¹³. Sexual and gender-based violence is under

¹²– General Comment 12 (CESCR)The right to adequate food (art. 11)

¹³ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp residents

reported¹⁴. In absence of a nearby police station and vulnerability, victims do not get justice.

Xaliimo (not her real name) is a mentally sick girl in Istanbul IDPs camp. She lost her mother and father a years ago. She had no one to take care of her. She was raped and did not report to authorities. Her case is not rare, according to the interviewees. Victims do not report, particularly if the perpetrator is from the IDPs camp. In absence of government presence, the people in the IDPs camp are not protected by a law. Women, children, people with disability and those who came from outside of Somaliland are more vulnerable for abuses¹⁵.

¹⁴ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp residents

¹⁵ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp residents

7.4 Shelter



All shelters of IDPs are Somali traditional houses (*aqalsomaali/buul*) that does not resist rain, hot or cold temperature. They are not allowed to build permanent structures.¹⁶ In absence of a proper shelter, the residents are also exposed to crimes and abuses.

7.5 Education

Education improves the lives of children and the economic and social wellbeing of society. It can lead to an increase in the productivity of

¹⁶ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp residents

labor, reduced fertility and, improved health, and it enables people to participate fully in the economy and the development of their societies.¹⁷ Also Somaliland constitution laid down that “the state shall pay particular attention to the advancement, extension and dissemination of knowledge and education as it recognizes that education is the most appropriate investment that can play a major role in political, economic and social development, and that the national policy is that primary education shall be free.”¹⁸ Istanbul IDPs camp does not have any school. The only education center that exist in this camp is one room madrassa “Quranic school” which being built by a charity organization.¹⁹

7.6 Health

The Constitution of Somaliland states that “the state shall have the duty to meet the country’s needs for equipment to combat communicable diseases, the provision of free medicine, and the care of the public welfare.”²⁰ There is no any health facility in the IDPs camp.²¹ Interviewees told HRC that they have to go the city to seek health services and that they have to pay it, which most of them cannot afford. In a place where there are 500 households, there are

¹⁷ UNICEF THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE PROTECTION, CARE AND SUPPORT OF ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN LIVING IN A WORLD WITH HIV AND AIDS

¹⁸ ARTICLE 15: Education, Youth and Sports. SOMALILAND CONSTITUTION

¹⁹ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp resident

²⁰ ARTICLE 17: Health, SOMALILAND CONSTITUTION

²¹ Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp resident

many health problems that exist, particularly those caused by poor sanitation and malnutrition.

Discriminations

There are four groups in the society that face discrimination in this camp; the people living with HIV/AIDS, persons with mental or physical disabilities, minority people, and people from Somalia²². The people from Somalia are seen as refugees by the government of Somaliland while the international organizations and agencies recognize them as IDPs. Their status is conflicted and that negatively affects their lives.

Somalian citizens: not recognized

The people who came from Somalia (South Central Somalia) are not recognized by Somaliland government as IDPs. International organization in their side do recognize them as IDPs. The difference put a vulnerable people in a legal vacuum. This affects their access to services, land ownership as well as documentation and legal papers.

²² Interview, 10 May 2018 Istanbul IDPs Camp resident

About Human Rights Centre

Background

The Human Rights Centre (HRC) is a non-profit organization established in January 2013 with the aim of contributing to the protection and promotion of human rights in Somaliland. HRC was founded by lawyers who are inspired by the Bill of Rights in the Somaliland Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is registered with the Somaliland government as a non-profit-making and non-governmental organization. HRC was formed to cover the need for documentation and advocacy on human rights to help maintain the gains made by Somaliland's nascent democracy. The central policy of Human Rights Centre is to create and foster a culture of voluntary human rights activism where committed human rights defenders with passion contribute to the protection, promotion and realization of human rights.

Vision

For Somaliland, place where human rights are protected, promoted, respected and fulfilled.

Mission

Human Rights Centre exists to defend and protect the rights of human beings in Somaliland.

Our Values

We uphold the values of honesty, justice, and integrity for all. We aim to work with transparency and accountability, commitment and discipline. We encourage creative participation understanding the need for sustainability and respect for all. We will continue to strive for impartially and independence while placing great value on confidentiality. We also appreciate the importance of volunteering which forms the foundations of our organization.



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