

RIGHTS & REPRESENTATION

# A safe haven for Somalis in Uganda?

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## Key points

- There are growing numbers of Somali migrants in Uganda, where a Somali community has existed since colonial times.
- Changes in the wider pattern of migration among Somalis in East Africa are driven by pressure on Somali refugees in Kenya and a more favourable legal framework for refugees in Uganda.
- Ugandan security forces and Somali community leaders share intelligence to minimize the risk of attacks on Ugandan troops in Somalia and of terrorism in Uganda.
- Uganda has emerged as a haven where Somalis can accrue financial, legal and educational assets which facilitate physical and social mobility.
- As the Somali community in Uganda has expanded business has grown, and clan-based Somali student unions have emerged where political aspirations are cultivated.

## Introduction

In recent years, a growing number of Somali refugees have moved to Uganda, settling in some areas of the capital Kampala or in the Nakivale refugee camp, located in the south of the country. According to Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), the main administrative body which deals with refugee affairs, the number of registered Somali refugees in the country increased to 41,515 in the year to March 2014. The influx rose from 27,143 in December 2012 and 8,239 in 2008.<sup>1</sup> The overwhelming majority were previously refugees



*The Horn of Africa (Der Spiegel)*

in neighbouring Kenya. Once they reached the border, they re-applied for refugee status in Uganda. Others have applied as refugees in Uganda for the first time, after illegally venturing through Kenya from Somalia. This number does not include Somalis with foreign and Somali passports based in or regularly travelling to Uganda.

This briefing examines the emergence of the Somali migration route to Uganda and its significance in the long history of Somali migration in East Africa. It discusses the factors underlying the decision-making processes of Somali refugees in relation to cross-border movement. And it asks whether the Somali flows to Uganda are a short-term trend in response to a deterioration in living conditions and security in Kenya—the main recipient of Somali displaced people since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991—or whether they are part of a larger phenomenon, the formation of a diaspora with a longer time horizon.

The new pattern of mobility may reflect an idea of mobility not only as a coping strategy, but also as an investment of resources in the expectation of a return. This return can take the shape of assets—legal documents such as identity cards and academic qualifications, but also hard currency derived from business opportunities—which enables both physical and social mobility. Indeed, the dynamics informing the pattern of movement



examined here relate not only to security needs but also to aspirations and desires in a multifaceted Somali refugee populations of entrepreneurs and prospective students.

This analysis of the growing Somali diaspora in Uganda thus questions assumptions about conflict-related displacement, suggesting that they may oversimplify the phenomenon by adopting a monolithic view of refugees.

## New patterns of movement

Somali migration across East Africa is not a new phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> The novelty of this steady influx to Uganda lies in the key drivers of migration at regional level: the growing pressure on Somali refugees in Kenya, where state security concerns have increasingly permeated public discourse on refugee issues; Uganda's 'progressive and human rights oriented'<sup>3</sup> refugee legal framework, based on the 2006 Refugee Act and implemented in 2010; and ease of access to neighbouring areas, particularly the Uganda–Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) borderland, Rwanda and, until recent upheavals, South Sudan, where fresh business opportunities have drawn the interest of resourceful refugees. But also to Somalia, thanks to direct flights connecting Entebbe to Mogadishu and to a visa policy which allows Somali passport-holders to re-enter Uganda.

These drivers define the socio-political landscape through which Somali refugees navigate, according to individual skills and aspirations but also pre-existing configurations of power, often based on clan. As this briefing argues, in recent years Uganda has become at one time a safe haven in troubled times and a place where many refugees from Somalia wait for resettlement to a third country, advance their education, manage their business in the region and closely follow Somalia's winding path to recovery.

This briefing first describes the background against which this Somali route to Uganda has emerged, providing an overview of Somali mobility across East Africa and of the deterioration of Somali refugees' living conditions in Kenya. Next, it describes the Somali presence in Uganda, briefly retracing its historical origins and the development of Kisenyi, as a new 'Little Mogadishu' in the heart

of the Kampala. Then, it narrows the focus on the current situation, analysed in the light of the legal framework which regulates the rights of refugees in Uganda, and on the heterogeneous—in terms of aspirations and legal status—population which makes up the Somali diaspora in urban Uganda, with a focus on students and businesspeople. Eventually, it discusses the implications of this growing Somali presence in Uganda for Somalia.

## Somali mobility in historical perspective

Mobility is often considered a deeply ingrained feature of the Somali culture and society, and is still used in defining current coping strategies.<sup>4</sup> Most literature derives this argument from the pastoralist livelihoods practiced since pre-colonial times by Somali-speaking groups moving through the dry lands of the Horn of Africa in search of pastures and sources of water for their herds. However, over time, others from the Somali territories, mainly from urban coastal areas, have pursued different migration projects, embedded in colonial armies or as seafarers, students or labourers in the Gulf oil industry in the 1970s.<sup>5</sup> Other communities, particularly those settled along the rivers Jubba and Shebelle and living off farming or small-scale livestock keeping, have a very limited history of mobility, at least prior to the outbreak of the Somali conflict in 1991. However, at the regional level, nomadic groups have established a broad presence, throughout the colonial partition of the region and the subsequent independence period. Since the Republic of Somalia was born out of the merger of British Somaliland and *Somalia Italiana*, irredentist claims over the Somali population scattered across Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya have affected regional relations, resulting in tensions and wars, most notable the 1963 *Shifto Wars*, still haunting Kenyan relations with Somali citizens. At the same time, clan affiliations across state borders have proved a critical safety net in troubled times. This aspect became particularly significant as the Somali state began to crumble during the 1980s and eventually collapsed in 1991. Mass displacements initially occurred in the northern regions, ravaged by the war between the central government and the Somali National Movement (SNM), and eventually



to central and southern Somalia, following the overthrow of Somali president Siad Barre and the eruption of an internecine conflict.

The ensuing humanitarian crisis displaced scores of people, who crossed into Kenya and sought shelter in humanitarian camps or urban centres. In general, refugees without resources headed towards the camps while those who were able to secure their properties in advance or could rely on kin in Kenya resettled in urban centres. A major pole of attraction was Nairobi's Eastleigh suburb. Previously a residential area for Indian and Somali Kenyans, the neighbourhood has acquired a distinct Somali identity during the 1990s, to the point of being dubbed 'Little Mogadishu'. The steady flow of refugees initially fostered a hospitality economy, drawing a growing number of Somali Kenyans and Somalis from the diaspora, but also Kenyans and ethnic Oromo and Borana. As many refugees were granted resettlement to a third country, money transfer operators (MTOs) proliferated in the neighbourhood to facilitate the flow of remittances to those still in wait. These MTOs not only provided a crucial service to households but also enabled Somali entrepreneurs to raise capital for investment.<sup>6</sup> The economic dynamism of Eastleigh was embodied by the shopping malls which became the neighbourhood's landmarks. With the protracted humanitarian crisis in Somalia, Eastleigh consolidated its position as a hub of the transnational Somali diaspora, attracting refugees waiting to be resettled, businesspeople and students from both Somalia and the former North Eastern Province. From here, trade networks connected East Africa to China through Dubai and India, but also Kenyan markets to the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps. Goods not provided by the humanitarian agencies were shipped to the camps while others were purchased from the refugees and put on the market. The opacity of the local economic dynamics earned Eastleigh a controversial reputation as a business district 'built on trade, tax evasion, smuggling and regional connections'.<sup>7</sup>

## Pressure mounts

Since the onset of the Somali conflict, advocacy organizations have criticized the Kenyan

authorities for the treatment of Somali refugees. Despite the political prominence acquired by many Somali Kenyans during the Kibaki presidency (2002-2013), the business success of the Somali diaspora in Kenya made refugees increasingly appealing to corrupt police, who indiscriminately targeted their victims as 'walking ATMs'. Moreover, the degradation of security in Somalia following the Ethiopian invasion in 2006 that continued to displace people, the rise of al-Shabaab, its regional threat and growing insecurity in the borderlands and in the Dadaab refugee complex, increased the risk of a spill over of the Somali conflict into Kenya. Following a number of attacks against Kenyan police, foreign humanitarian workers and tourists, the Kenyan government launched Operation *Linda Nchi* (Protect the Country) in October 2011, officially to strike al-Shabaab strongholds in southern Somalia and prevent terrorist infiltrations into Kenya. Instead, the operation achieved the opposite, triggering a spiral of terror attacks, for which al-Shabaab claimed responsibility, in the Kenya-Somalia borderland areas and in Nairobi, and fuelling suspicion on the part of some Kenyans towards the Somali refugee population. Since then, security concerns have increasingly seeped into refugee policies, to the point where public discourse in Kenya has conflated the two issues. Somali refugees were increasingly portrayed by Kenyan politicians and media as a potential fifth column of al-Shabaab.<sup>8</sup>

In December 2012, the Kenyan Government issued a directive, subsequently rejected by the High Court of Kenya, to enforce its hitherto loosely applied encampment policy for urban refugees. In Eastleigh, Somali entrepreneurs lamented a sharp drop in the turnover and an adverse business climate. Tensions remained high, with sporadic eruptions of violence.<sup>9</sup> This violence gained global stage in September 2013, when al-Shabaab gunmen raided an up-market shopping mall in Nairobi's Westlands, an area mostly frequented by upper-class Kenyans and expatriates. The attack ended after a four-day siege by the Kenyan security forces in which over 60 people lost their lives.

Pandering to widespread anti-Somali feelings among the general public, on 10 November 2013

the government of Uhuru Kenyatta, the government of Somalia and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) signed an agreement which establishes the legal framework for the repatriation of more than 500,000 Somali refugees living in the country.<sup>10</sup> The move fostered the ethnic profiling of the Somali population in Kenya and implicitly gave police free rein to harass and extort money from refugees.<sup>11</sup> Amidst communal tensions in the coastal region,<sup>12</sup> belligerent op-eds<sup>13</sup> and diplomatic rows between the Kenyan and the Somali government,<sup>14</sup> the security situation deteriorated between March and June 2014. Following a spate of attacks in Mombasa and Nairobi, the government launched the Operation *Usalama* Watch (Peace Watch). In the course of a security swoop across Kenya, the police arrested over 4,000 people, restricted the movement of refugees to camps and began deportations to Somalia.<sup>15</sup> As pressure mounted on the Somali refugee population, many made their way to Uganda, while al-Shabaab launched new attacks in Lamu County, Kenya, in June 2014.

## The route to Kampala

To understand the dynamics shaping the increasingly busy route to Uganda, it is useful to trace the development of the Somali community in there, and to identify the factors which have made the country an increasingly attractive destination for the Somali diaspora. In the past, Uganda has had a marginal position in Somali migration patterns. It has often, however, provided safe haven during troubled periods in Kenya. For instance, in 1989, a screening to determine citizenship status in Kenya prompted the flight of almost 15,000 Somalis to Uganda, particularly truckers and transport entrepreneurs, who obtained temporary political asylum from the Ugandan government.<sup>16</sup>

As the Somali government collapsed, most of these Somali Kenyans returned to Kenya, anticipating business opportunities arising from the incipient refugee flow. At the same time, in 1994, the Ugandan government allowed UNHCR to settle recently arrived Somali refugees in Nakivale refugee camp, but not in urban centres.<sup>17</sup>

However, refugees with connections and resources were able to settle in Kampala and Jinja. There, a small but well-integrated Somali Ugandan community had been present since the early twentieth century, when soldiers from northern Somalia embedded in the British army arrived. In the late 1970s, a Dhulbahante Imam from Northern Somalia, Sheik Abduhani, was granted a concession to build a mosque in Kisenyi, a shabby and ill-famed area of Kampala's Mengo municipality, in the heart of the Ugandan capital, mostly inhabited by menial workers at the nearby Owino market. Because of his connections with local authorities, Sheik Abduhani was a reference point for other Somalis—mainly from Darood Harti clans—who were interested in launching entrepreneurial activities in Uganda. One of them was Ahmed Omar Mandela, owner of the Mandela Group—a cars and trucks spare parts company established in the 1980s—and later of the fuel supply company City Oil and the Java Café chain. In 2004, Ahmed Omar Mandela was appointed Minister of State for Management and Development of the Royal Treasury of the Buganda Kingdom, an achievement which still today young Somalis, particularly from Northern Somalia, in Uganda regard with pride.

Somali refugees who moved from Nakivale to urban centres were mostly from Darood Harti and Isaaq clans. Although driven by the belief that being registered in a refugee camp would speed up the resettlement process—unfounded according to UNHCR officers—many opted for the capital, where livelihood opportunities were greater. Between 1992 and 1994, a larger Tawheed mosque with an annexed *madrasa* was built with the contributions of the fledgling business community. Kisenyi's mosque had a pivotal role in knitting together the Somali community in Uganda. On top of that, the neighbourhood offered the most affordable accommodation in the vicinity of the Central Business District, despite poor infrastructure and widespread petty crime, and allowed easy access to bus and truck terminals. Here, young refugees would hope to find employment in the transport sector, where Somali tycoons, such as Omar Mandela and Hussein Shire, owner of bus company Gateway, were very influential. The first Somali hotels, shops and

Money Transfer Operations (MTOs) opened in Kisenyi. Somali businessmen were able to benefit from the liberalization policies implemented by the Ugandan government in the 1990s, particularly in capital-intensive businesses such as fuel supply. Raising capital through transnational networks, they arranged large purchases of petroleum in the Gulf, from where it was shipped to Mombasa. Then, it travelled to Eldoret through a pipeline and by trucks to Uganda. Fuel companies and ancillary service providers gradually became major employers for Somalis in Uganda. Arrivals of refugees from Kenya continued through the 2000s, although not continuously. Uganda was generally considered only a profitable market for big businesses, while most refugees were discouraged by the lower salaries than in Kenya. However, this disadvantage was gradually offset by the increasing cost of living in Nairobi and by a changing regional political configuration.

## A new Little Mogadishu

Two thousand and six was a watershed, for both the refugee policy in Uganda and developments in Somalia. On 24 May, the Ugandan parliament passed a new Refugees Act which repealed the previous Control of Alien Refugees Act (CARA), which had been in place since 1964 and was an object of criticism from the UNHCR and other advocacy organizations. The new law, tabled in 1998, was praised as ‘progressive [and] human rights and protection oriented’.<sup>18</sup> Embracing refugee definitions in conformity with the 1951 Convention, of which Uganda is a signatory, the 2006 Refugee Act allowed refugees the right ‘to an identity card or travel document, to remain, to non-discrimination, to administrative assistance, to freedom of religion, to freedom of association, to access the courts, and to freedom of movement.’<sup>19</sup> Moreover, it recognized ‘rights in respect of which refugees must receive treatment in accordance with “aliens generally in similar circumstances”’: rights regarding moveable and immovable property, the transfer of assets, public education above the elementary level, self-employment, liberal professions, and wage-earning employment.<sup>20</sup> As for the right of association, the Refugee Act states clearly that refugees ‘have a right of association as regard non-political and

non-profit making associations and trade unions<sup>21</sup>—a provision which would pave the way, as discussed later, for vibrant Somali student activism. Although the act was not set to enter into force until 2008 or be operationalized in 2010, its approval contributed to building trust between the Ugandan state and the refugee population.

Also in 2006, Somalia experienced a renewed outburst of violence as the Western-backed Ethiopian army invaded the country to counter the advance of the Islamic Courts Union. The resulting fighting triggered a fresh wave of displaced people—both within Somalia and outside—and a large number of refugees poured into the Dadaab refugee complex and Eastleigh. The Ugandan media began turning their attention to the local urban Somali community<sup>22</sup>—increasingly so as the government of Yoweri Museveni was discussing the deployment of the Ugandan People’s Defence Force (UPDF) to Somalia—which the Somali community in Kisenyi supported.<sup>23</sup> In March 2007, the first Ugandan troops were deployed to Somalia under the command of AMISOM—a move to which al-Shabaab responded by threatening to strike targets in Uganda unless it withdrew its troops from Somalia.<sup>24</sup> This prompted the Ugandan army to publicly call on the Somali population to cooperate with security agencies.<sup>25</sup> The threats became reality on 7 November 2008 when a bomb was detonated in Kisenyi, killing two.<sup>26</sup> The Ugandan government—particularly the OPM and the Ministry of Internal Affairs—intensified the collaboration with the Somali Community Association in Uganda (SCAU) to monitor the burgeoning Somali refugee population,<sup>27</sup> but also to collect intelligence on the Somali theatres of operation of the UPDF troops. The authority of the SCAU was not acknowledged by all Somali refugees in the country as it was dominated by Somalis from South-Central Somalia, while Northerners were active in large businesses and were mostly connected to the Somali Ugandans.

Following the implementation of the Refugee Act in 2008, a growing number of Somali refugees crossed the border from Kenya to Busia and Malabo. They settled in Kisenyi and Nakivale refugee camp, following registration with the SCAU in order to be pre-screened by the security officer of the association.

On 11 July 2010, the cooperation between Ugandan government and the Somali community—often outspoken in supporting the Ugandan mission in Somalia<sup>28</sup>—was further tested when 74 people were killed by three bombings in Kampala—one in Kabalagala's Ethiopian Village, a venue packed with football fans watching the World Cup Finals, and twin blasts in Nakawa's Kyadongo Rugby Club.<sup>29</sup> Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attacks, which stirred fears of ethnic profiling among the Somali population.<sup>30</sup> However, the consequences were limited: the OPM strengthened the vetting procedures for new arrivals from Somalia, requiring applicants to refugee status intending to live in an urban site to be accompanied by a guarantor at the Old Kampala police station for further verification. This provision, before being dropped in 2013, yielded a number of arrests, but the positive response of the Ugandan authorities strengthened the perception that Uganda was a friendly place for Somalis. Among the new arrivals in Kampala there were particularly youths, attracted by the greater freedom of movement and by the possibility to pursue higher education in Ugandan institutions. Refugees were entitled to the same fees of Ugandan citizens in both public and private universities, where numbers had skyrocketed since late 1990s. Moreover, student cards had the same legal value as UNHCR issued IDs, thus providing an additional document which many young refugees were eager to obtain as an alternative to the refugee card. The fact that the most popular degrees were in business, development studies and public policy reflected the likeliest career trajectories for Somalis in East Africa. Somali student unions were established to help prospective and current students from the same clan to settle in the new country, providing information through Facebook.

## Regional connections

The Somali presence increased in Kabalagala, Kasanga, Mengo Rubego, where universities such as Kampala International University, Cavendish and St. Lawrence are located. However, Kisenyi remained the centre of the Somali community in Kampala. This became more conspicuous with the opening of shops and eateries with a clear Somali

connotation. At the same time, a Somali refugee business community began to emerge. Somali businessmen financially supported student associations or offered scholarships to students from their own clan, mainly with a view to trustworthy individuals to employ, but also to create bonds of loyalty and groom future political leaders. Daily bus connections between Eastleigh, Nairobi's 'Little Mogadishu', and Kampala's counterpart, and the growth of mobile phone based money transfer services, sustained small trade in a wide range of goods, from camel milk to clothes. Yet high fees for commercial licenses—of around US\$2,000—meant only those who could raise the capital and could rent a shop could set up in retail business. Instead, rising business opportunities in neighbouring countries turned Kampala into a regional hub from which to operate across borders.

An important destination was South Sudan which, since independence in 2011, had seen a large availability of hard currency brought in by international organizations, NGOs and foreign companies, attracting Somali businessmen who started investing heavily in construction and trade, particularly in the capital, Juba, and in Bor, in Jonglei State. Kisenyi became a transit point for trucks coming from Mombasa and passing through Nairobi to South Sudan. However, in June 2013, following the decision of the South Sudanese Central Bank to limit the provision of hard currency to commercial banks, many Somalis reduced their investments in the country lest they should get stuck with South Sudanese Pounds (SSP). The decision was subsequently reversed in November but, after violence broke out in South Sudan in December 2013, the flight of Somali businessmen accelerated. Around 500 Somali citizens were flown to Mogadishu by the Somali government,<sup>31</sup> but the majority moved to Kampala from where they continued to run their businesses.

Rwanda and the DRC also drew growing interest from the Somali diaspora. In both francophone countries, the linguistic barrier and insecurity, discouraged permanent settlements. Yet, in the case of Rwanda, Paul Kagame's government adoption of English as another official language of the country facilitated access for Somali entrepreneurs. In general, Kampala provided a

central location in the region from where Somalis could manage an extensive network of business services, mainly long-haul transport and fuel supply. This network straddled the continent reaching as far as Zambia and Kisangani in the DRC—where some were engaged in timber extraction and trade.

An especially significant international connection, though, was with Somalia. Following the election of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as president on 10 September 2012, Uganda started accepting the TFG-issued Somali blue passport at its borders, becoming the first country since 1991 to do so. The document was issued either in the Somali capital or at the Embassy of the Republic of Somalia in Kampala. On 8 July 2013, Air Uganda began operating between Entebbe and Mogadishu, being the second national air company, after Turkish Airlines, to re-establish the connection with the Somali capital. This assisted many in the Somali diaspora—with either Somali or foreign passports—to travel from Entebbe to Mogadishu and back for the first time in many years, often on reconnaissance trips to meet relatives, check on family's properties and pursue business opportunities. Somali refugee entrepreneurs based in Kenya also benefited from the greater ease to travel back and forth between Entebbe and Mogadishu, travelling to Uganda as refugees and then to Somalia as Somali citizens. When returning to Nairobi as refugees became more difficult, some decided to resettle in Kampala. The Somali population became more heterogeneous, encompassing not only students but also families. As Kenya intensified the deportations to Somalia, many flew back from Mogadishu to Entebbe, this time not as refugees but as Somali citizens.

## Conclusions

This briefing has traced the growth of the Somali presence in Uganda in the light of recent regional developments. It concludes by briefly examining the implications of this phenomenon for the region at large, and particularly for Somalia.

Uganda is the top troop contributor of AMISOM at the time of writing, with 6,223 soldiers deployed in some of the key flashpoints, such as Banadir, Lower and Middle Shebelle, Bay and Bakool<sup>32</sup>.

When UPDF troops were first deployed in 2007, Uganda was viewed by Somali warring parties as unbiased, not having a large Somali minority, nor direct stakes in Somali politics.<sup>33</sup> Discussing the reasons for Uganda's leadership role in AMISOM, analysts have suggested the policy was driven by a blend of concerns: fear of a 'domino effect' of instability in East Africa; a way to appease the Ugandan army, whose officers and privates would benefit from higher pay than at home, thus lowering the pressure of the armed forces on the regime; and desire to strengthen relations with the US and in general to bolster its international prestige.<sup>34</sup>

Following the 2010 Kampala bombings, Uganda's confrontation with al-Shabaab on Somali soil became a matter of national security. In pursuing this strategy, the Ugandan authorities have been unwavering in support for both legitimate institutions in Somalia and Somali grassroots organizations in Uganda. The seemingly liberal approach to the Somali diaspora in Uganda has its rewards, such as intelligence both in Uganda and in Somalia on potential threats to Ugandan civilian and military targets. Somalis in the diaspora have been regularly employed as consultants in 'cultural awareness' training for UPDF troops being deployed in Somalia, with US State Department funds. Additionally, Uganda has been able to utilize its leading role in the mission at an international level. For instance, in November 2012, Uganda threatened to pull its troops out of Somalia in retaliation for a UN report which claimed that its government was supporting the M23 rebels in the DRC.<sup>35</sup> In the following days, the Ugandan media dedicated coverage to the Somali diaspora in Uganda, particularly to those affiliated to SCAU, the Somali Community Association who voiced their concerns over the possibility of a Ugandan pull-out. As the diplomatic outcry over the report abated, Uganda continued to project its influence over the international mission in Somalia. On 15 May 2014, a United Nations Guard Unit of 410 UPDF soldiers, was deployed for the first time to protect UN personnel and installations in Mogadishu.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, the strained relationship between Kenya and Somalia made Uganda a regional partner of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's government. This became clear on 12

May when a large Somali delegation, including the President, the Minister of Defence and other top generals, travelled to Entebbe on the invitation of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni.

It is worth noting that the Somali population in Uganda is largely perceived—by Ugandans and Somalis alike—to be under the personal protection of President Museveni. Therefore their security is seen as inextricably bound to the power of the President or his son—Muhoozi Kaneirugaba, often tipped as a likely successor to his father. This is a source of anxiety for many long-term members of the Somali diaspora, who admit to having feared the end of the Museveni era during the 2011 elections. It is also a reminder that the current Ugandan refugee policy could come to an abrupt end. Aware of this possibility, the SCAU has been lobbying since 2007 to have Somalis recognized in the Constitution as a Ugandan tribe, supporting this claim through the argument that Somalis have been living in the Ugandan territory for a century.<sup>37</sup>

On top of that, a growing number of refugees, backed by the Refugee Law Project, a Ugandan legal advocacy organization, are seeking to become Ugandan citizens by challenging the Department of Immigration in court. They are demanding the implementation of a provision in the 2006 Refugee Act which grants Ugandan citizenship to those who fulfill a specific set of requirements.

The aspiration to possess legal documentation, and to establish a legitimate interface with the world, is a key driver of Somali migration patterns. As traditional Somali refugee havens grow hostile and Somalia remains volatile, Uganda has emerged a safe haven where Somalis can accrue assets—be they financial, legal, or academic—which facilitate physical and social mobility. But the case of the Somali diaspora in Uganda also offers insights into the relationship between the state security apparatus and refugee populations, and throws light on the stark difference between Uganda and Kenya, not only in relation to refugee policies but also to their geopolitical strategies in the region.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Uganda's Department of Refugees - Office of the Prime Minister

<sup>2</sup> See Hammond, L. (2014) 'History, overview, trends and issues in major Somali refugee displacements in the near region.' New Issues in Refugee Research, Research Paper No. 268, UNHCR

<sup>3</sup> Refugee Law Project, Kampala, 'Critique of the Refugees Act 2006' (undated) 2 (RLP)

<sup>4</sup> See Horst, C. (2006) *Transnational Nomads: How Somalis Cope with Refugee Life in the Dadaab Camps of Kenya*, Oxford: Berghahn Books

<sup>5</sup> For an overview of Somali migrations, see Kleist, Nauja (2004): 'Nomads, Sailors and Refugees. A brief history of Somali migration'. *Sussex Migration Working Papers*(23), 1-14

<sup>6</sup> See Abdulsamed, F. *Somali Investment in Kenya*. Chatham House Briefing Paper, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Manson, K. 'Big Money in Little Mogadishu', *Financial Times*, 29 June 2012

<sup>8</sup> Okungu, J. 'Is Al Shabaab Head in Somalia or Nairobi?' *The Star*, 28 October 2011

<sup>9</sup> Teff, M. and Yarnell, M. (2013) *Kenya: Government Directive Leads to Severe Abuse and Forced Returns*. Refugee International, Field Report

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR. 'Tripartite Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Kenya, the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Governing the Voluntary Repatriation of Somali Refugees Living in Kenya, 2013', 10 November 2013

<sup>11</sup> 'Kenya: End Abusive Round-Ups', *Human Rights Watch*, 13 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/12/kenya-end-abusive-round-ups>

<sup>12</sup> Kenya terror charges after Mombasa police raid mosque, *BBC*, 03 February 2014

<sup>13</sup> 'Are we just going to sit around and wait to be blown to bits by terrorists?', *Daily Nation*, 20 March 2014

<sup>14</sup> 'Somali PM angry over diplomat's arrest in Kenya', *BBC*, 28 April 2014

<sup>15</sup> 'Kenya sends back 'illegal' Somalis after Nairobi raids', *BBC*, 9 April 2014

<sup>16</sup> *Daily Nation*, 'Somalis flee to Uganda', 15 December 1988

<sup>17</sup> Bagenda, E., Naggaga, A. And Smith, E. (2003) *Land Problems in Nakivale Settlement and the Implications for Refugee Protection in Uganda*, Refugee Law Project Working Paper No. 8

<sup>18</sup> Refugee Law Project, Kampala, 'Critique of the Refugees Act 2006' (undated) 2 (RLP).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*





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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> 'Uganda: Kisenyi - a Haven for Somali Tranquility Or Scams?' The New Vision, 27 September 2009

<sup>23</sup> Musamali, G. 'Uganda: Somalis Want UPDF Deployment' The New Vision, 12 January 2007

<sup>24</sup> Jaramogi, P. 'Uganda: Army Warns Somali on Terror', The New Vision, 12 October 2008

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Jaramogi, P. and Wagawulo, C. 'Uganda: City Explosion Kills Two in Kisenyi', The New Vision, 7 November 2008

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Mohamed Kalif Omar, Coordinator and Security Advisor Somali Community Association in Uganda

<sup>28</sup> Kajoba, N. 'Uganda: Somalis Commend Peacekeepers', The New Vision, 29 July 2009

<sup>29</sup> 'Somali link' as 74 World Cup fans die in Uganda blasts', BBC, 12 July 2010

<sup>30</sup> Wesonga, N. 2011, 'Uganda: Somalis Still Feel Safe in Country Even After Attacks', The Monitor 11 July

<sup>31</sup> 'Third flight carrying 200 Somali citizens arrive Mogadishu [sic] from South Sudan', Dalsan Radio 15 January 2014

<sup>32</sup> AMISOM. 'Uganda - UPDF' AMISOM, <http://amisom-au.org/uganda-updf/>

<sup>33</sup> Hansen, S.H. (2013) "Opposing interests? The geopolitics of the Horn of Africa" in Leonard, Emma & Gilbert Ramsay (Eds.). *Globalizing Somalia: Multilateral, International, and Transnational Repercussions of Conflict*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> 'Uganda threatens Somalia troop withdrawal', Al Jazeera, 02 November 2012

<sup>36</sup> UN. 'Somalia: UN deploys new special force to protect staff in Mogadishu' UN News Centre, 18 May 2014, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47820>

<sup>37</sup> 'Uganda: Somalis Demand Recognition' The New Vision, 28 October 2007



## Credits

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