

March 2022

Country – capital	Federal Republic of Somalia – Mogadishu Self-declared Republic of Somaliland (in the north)
Population and ethnic groups	Estim. 12-15 million. Ethnic groups: Somali 85%, Bantu and other non-Somali 15% (incl. 30,000 Arabs) ¹ . Somali social organisation based on clan system
Geography	Eastern Africa, bordering Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean, east of Ethiopia
Languages – official / lingua franca	Somali (official), Arabic (official – mostly in northern Somalia and coastal towns), English, Italian ²
Writing system	Somali (af-Soomaali) Latin alphabet (since 1972) ³
Education and literacy	> 3 million children don't go to school (poverty, insecurity, high school fees, household/labour demands). Esp. girls and IDP children low attendance. ⁴ Lack of (esp. female) teachers. Nomadic children often lack education. ⁵ Education opportunities outside major urban areas are very limited. Primary education (age 6-10): 4 years taught in Somali. From grade 2, English is a second language subject. Middle education (age 11-14): 4 years teaching Somali, Islamic studies, English, maths, science, social studies, geography and history. Secondary school (age 15-18) same subjects. Non-formal vocational education. Tertiary education: university and special education for dropouts. ⁶
Religions	Sunni Muslim Islam (official) ⁷
Conflict history and overview	1991 collapse of Mohamed Siad Barre's authoritarian government, leading to cycles of clan-based internal conflict and displacement that has fragmented the country for almost three decades. Islamist terrorist group Al-Shabaab took control of large parts of southern Somalia, leading to continuous fights with AMISOM and governmental forces. An internationally-backed federal government was set up in 2012, but fighting continues till now. 2020: Al-Shabaab still controls part of the south and intensified its attacks. Conflict and violence related to upcoming elections and power control.
Humanitarian situation	Large-scale poverty and highly precarious conditions regarding employment, housing, food and water supplies. Violent conflicts, droughts and floods, lead to displacements, food insecurity, and increasing vulnerabilities. High malnutrition and poor health care. Increased child marriages as coping strategy. Somali cities are receiving large waves of forcibly displaced people and rural-urban migrants, leading to increased land prices and competition for resources. ⁸ 6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2020. ⁹
Human rights situation	Ongoing conflicts between government, clan militias, Al-Shabaab, resulting in numerous deaths, injuries, displacements of civilians. Government forces accused of unlawful killings, torture and cruel treatment, arbitrary detention; no freedom of press, speech, assembly and movement. Grave abuses by militias and Al-Shabaab (targeted and extrajudicial killings, terrorist attacks, abductions, tortures, rapes, child soldiers, attacks on UN and NGOs humanitarian aid). Widespread corruption. COVID-19 exacerbated already pervasive sexual and gender- based violence. ¹⁰ Barely functional judiciary, widespread impunity. ¹¹
Situation of women FGM – early marriages	Maternal mortality 692 deaths per 100,000 live births. FGM prevalence in women aged 15–49 is 99.2%, in younger generation slightly lower; majority Type III (infibulation/ Pharaonic) but increasingly Type I-II (Sunni). Mostly performed at age 10-14. ¹² Early and forced marriage widespread, a.o. in Al-Shabaab areas. Widespread sexual and gender-based violence, also by security forces. ¹³
Situation of LGBTI	LGBTI/ same-sex activities prohibited. State law: punishable by max 4 3 yrs prison; strict Sharia law: death penalty ¹⁴ . Widespread social stigma against LGBTI, no LGBTI organisations. ¹⁵
Asylum / migration / internally displaced persons (IDPs)	About 2.9 million IDPs within Somalia. Over 750,000 refugees in neighbouring countries. ¹⁶ Malta Somali sea arrivals in 2020: 205, 2021: unknown Malta Somali asylum applicants in 2020: 147, 2021: about 100. ¹⁷

- ¹ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/somalia/#people-and-society>; <https://www.worlddata.info/africa/somalia/index.php>
- ² <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/somalia/#people-and-society>
- ³ <https://omniglot.com/writing/somali.htm>
- ⁴ <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/somalia-2020-human-rights-report.pdf>
- ⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/somalia/education>
- ⁶ <https://www.scholaro.com/pro/Countries/Somalia/Education-System>
- ⁷ <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/somalia/#people-and-society>
- ⁸ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/somalia/document/2022-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview-0>
- ⁹ <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/somalia>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/somalia-2020-human-rights-report.pdf>
- ¹¹ <https://403.074.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/20190910-SOMALIA-LEGAL-COUNTRY-PROFILE.pdf>
- ¹² <https://www.28toomany.org/country/somalia/>
- ¹³ <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/somalia-2020-human-rights-report.pdf>
- ¹⁴ <https://ilga.org/state-sponsored-homophobia-report>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/somalia-2020-human-rights-report.pdf>
- ¹⁶ <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/somalia-refugee-crisis-explained/>
- ¹⁷ <https://www.unhcr.org/mt/figures-at-a-glance>

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This factsheet was compiled by Adri van den Berg for BDE. Adri worked for many years as a Country of Origin Information (COI) researcher, her final post before retiring being with the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in Malta.