

**Report by: Irene Tulel: Country Coordinator**  
**Rukiya Abdulrahman: Assistant Country Coordinator**

## **Background**

Al-Shabaab militia is an opposition and the strongest militia group within the lower and middle Jubba regions of Somalia. Apart from its strong-hold and militiabase in Kisimayo town, Al Shabaab operates within Doble, Afmathow, Qoqani, Taabta, Raskamboni, Baddada, Bardera, Sakku, Jilib and Jamame towns in Jubba regions as well as in parts of Garba-Harrey, Luuq, Doolo, El-Wak, Beled-Hawa towns in the Gedo region.

Al-Shabaab claims to be a religious-based group (Islam) but its rightful links to Islam is contested. It is rather clan-based with its members or armed militia within Jubba regions are mainly from Mohamed-Zubeir, Aulihan and Bah-Gerri sub-clans of the Ogaden clan while the ones at Gedo region are from the Marehaan clan.

The Ogaden clan members who live in the afore-mentioned towns within Jubba regions are also confirmed to be living within Garissa county and Wajir South constituency in Northern Kenya. The Aulihan sub-clan predominantly inhabits Lagdera and Dujis constituencies in Garissa County while in the Mohamed-Zubeir and Bag-Gerri sub-clans live in Wajir South and Habaswein districts and Wajir town within Wajir County. Mohamed-Zubeir, the dominant clan members at Diff-Kenya and Diif-Somalia are in anyway not in support of Al-Shabaab.

Kisimayo port is Al-Shabaab's main source of income with other sources such as Somalis in Diaspora, taxations of goods, foodstuff, spare parts and cross-border business and forceful collection of Zakaat from all settled and pastoralist communities within the afore-mentioned regions.

It's also alleged that Al-Shabaab has a strong network, sympathizers, financiers and agents within and outside Kenya. Mandera and Garissa Counties and Eastleigh centre in Nairobi are the identified major hideouts of the Al-Shabaab's main sympathizers, financiers and agents. But there have been claims of presence of few agents in Wajir.

Al-Shabaab has been for long terrorizing innocent pastoralists and aid workers within Somalia but of late its members have illegally crossed the border to Kenya and extended its evil acts. Within the month of October 2011, the Al-Shabaab militiamen crossed over to Kenya's territory and kidnapped two foreign aid workers from IFO refugee camp and a tourist in Lamu. This has not only provoked Kenya as a nation but the international community's too.

This is happening while the Government of Kenya continues its engagement and support to TFG towards ensuring stable peace and government in Somalia.

## **Current Situation**

- ✓ The government of Kenya has declared and waged total war on Al-Shabaab. Contingent of Kenya's defense force in the interior of Somalia. Kenya's action is not only welcomed and supported by its citizens but also Somali TFG and its people and the international communities.
- ✓ There were reported incidents of the Al-Shabaab's young fighters at Taabta and Qoqani towns of Somalia surrendering themselves to Kenya military and TFG soldiers.
- ✓ Although there is presence of strong security personnel and intensified security patrols along Kenya-Somali border, pastoralist communities on both sides are living in fear.
- ✓ Kenyan troops are continuously gaining victory, community support and recognition in all their action and strategies within Doble, Taabta and Qoqani towns of Somalia.

## **Implications**

- Fleeing Al-Shabaab members might use Lagdera, Wajir South and Dujis constituencies and Habaswein, Garissa, Wajir and Mandera towns and all the refugee camps in the Northern region to hide, as there key hideout areas.
- High possibility of more youths from the Ogaden clan in Wajir South constituency and Garissa County to join Al-Shabaab militia group with intention to support their clan members at the border towns of Somalia.
- There are great predictions of suicide bombing activities initiated in Nairobi, Garissa, Wajir and Mandera. The bombing is likely to target key government institutions like offices and military bases
- While looking at the interests of their kinsmen and clan members in Somali, the North Eastern parliamentarians from the Ogaden clan might lobby for parliamentary support asking for the stoppage of the military operation Somalia and return of Kenyan troops.
- Serious proliferation of SALWs and high influx of refugees from Somalia into Northern Kenya.
- Fleeing armed men from Al-Shabaab might cross over to Kenya and start highway banditry along Mandera-Wajir- Garissa highway.
- Lack of motivation of Somali TFG soldiers might hamper and affect Kenya's strategic plans

## **Recommendations (to all actors including active and relevant CSOs, CBOs and the CEWERU)**

- ❖ Kenyan troops in collaboration with Somali TFG soldiers continue with their operation until they capture Kismayo city.
- ❖ The Government of Kenya to initiate simultaneous security operations at Wajir, Mandera, Garissa and Eastleigh, targeting suspected Al-Shabaab sympathizers, financiers and agents and ensure their arrests.
- ❖ Government of Kenya through deployment of more troops to Somalia to lobby for and encourage the AU and IGAD members to support and join the war on Al-Shabaab.
- ❖ DSICs and DPCs along the Kenya-Somali border to conduct continuous community sensitization and awareness creation public barazas on security updates and government position on Kenya's security and the war on Al-Shabaab militia group
- ❖ Communities in North Eastern region to stay vigilant, network with government security arm and the DPCs through community security surveillance and information gatherings.
- ❖ Pastoralist communities in North Eastern region - Kenya should provide relevant information on suspects and suspicious activities, illicit arms traffickers, conflict early warning indicators and Al-Shabaab related incidents/cases.
- ❖ Police should intensify security at all the police check points through thorough inspections of all passengers and vehicles travelling along the Mandera –Wajir – Garissa and Moyale – Marsabit –Isiolo highways
- ❖ Government of Kenya to establish more vigilant and intensified security mechanisms along its borders with Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda, Sudan and Tanzania and in all the refugee camps in Northern Kenya.