

# Mission Atlas Project

## Africa

### Somalia

#### SNAPSHOTS OF SOMALIA

##### Basic Overview

**Country Name:** Somalia (previously known as the Somali Republic)

**Country Founded in:** 1 July 1960 (British Somaliland acquired its independence from the UK in June of 1960 and Italian Somaliland from Italy in July of the same year. British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland merged to form the Somali Republic.)

**Population:** 8,591,629. This number was listed as the population in 2005; however, this estimate was based on a census taken back in 1975. Nomadic and Refugee movements, due to warfare and famine, make the taking of another accurate census difficult.



**Government Type:** There is no permanent national government. Somalia is currently in a state of anarchy, but could be described as a transitional government.

**Geography/Location in the World:** Somalia is located in Eastern Africa and borders both the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean (10 00 N, 49 00 E). It is joined by Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. The total area of 637,657 sq km. makes it just slightly smaller than the state of Texas.

The land is mostly flat with little variation. In the northern section of Somalia, however, there is a small area of plateaus that give rise to the rolling hills of this area.

The climate is very dry and harsh and only 1.67% of the land is arable.

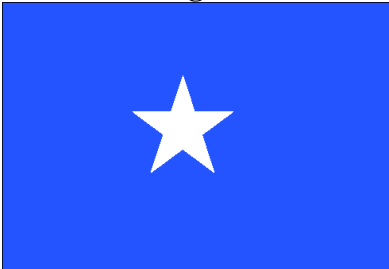
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/so.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics\\_of\\_Somalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Somalia)

**Number of People Groups: 18**

(<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php> & <http://www.peoplegroups.org/>)

**Picture of Flag:**



**Religion Snapshot**

**Major Religion:** The major religion in Somalia is Islam, which is practiced by at least 99.95% of the population and is declared to be the official religion. The majority of these Muslims practice Sunnism, one of the two main branches of Islam.

**All religions:** In all only 0.04% is Christian.

Groups within the Christian faith reveal 0.03% is Orthodox Christians and 0.01% is Unaffiliated.

The remaining .01% of the population consists of very small communities of Hindus, Catholics, and other Christian denominations.

**Government Interaction with Religion:**

In Somalia, Islam has been declared the official religion. Many instances of severe persecution of Christians have occurred among the Somali people. In 2001, Somali was ranked as 25<sup>th</sup> on the persecution index of the world.

(“Operation World,” p. 575)

## **COUNTRY PROFILE FOR SOMALIA**

**Country**

Somalia (previously known as the Somali Republic)

(<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/so.html>)

**Demographics**

The population of Somalia reached 8,591,629 in 2005. This number was listed as the population; however, this estimate was based on a census taken back in 1975. Nomadic and Refugee movements, due to warfare and famine, make the taking of another accurate census very difficult.

Of this total population, 44.5% consisted of people between birth and the age of fourteen, 52.9% were ages fifteen to sixty-four, while the remaining population, those over sixty-four, was 2.6%. These statistics show a general life expectancy being around forty-eight years of age. This life expectancy is the same for males and females, the ratio being nearly one for one for nearly all stages of life. The population growth was reported at 3.38% in 2005.

Somalia has one of the highest child mortality rates in the world. Around 10% of children die at birth and 25% of those who survive, die before the age of five.

It is estimated that 70% of Somalis live in rural areas as nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists. The remaining 30% of the population are either crop farmers or inhabitants of the urban centers of Mogadishu, the capital, or other cities such as Hargeysa, Kismaayo, or Marka.

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/so.html>

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761554555\\_2/Somalia.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761554555_2/Somalia.html)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somalia#Economy>

## **Language**

Thirteen living languages are used in Somalia. The official language is Somali.

Other national languages include Arabic, English, and Italian; however, Italian is not listed as being one of the thirteen languages in Somalia. The remaining ten languages are tribal languages used in various parts of the country.

These are Boni, Boon, Dabarre, Garre, Jiiddu, Maay, Mushungulu, Oromo (Borana-Arsi-Guji), Swahili, and Tunni.

Arabic, Standard is an Afro-Asiatic language of Semitic origin. It is spoken by a very small percentage of the population. Most Somalis have very limited ability, if any at all, to speak Arabic. Arabic is not even used as a medium of communication on the governmental levels.

English is an Indo-European language. It is used more in northern Somalia than in the other regions within the country.

Somalia has two languages that are Niger-Congo languages. The first of these is Mushungulu, which is spoken by 20,000 to 50,000 people in southern Somalia. The Mushungulu speakers do not mingle with other people groups within Somalia.

Consequently, the women do not learn Somali, and only some of the men learn Maay or Somali as a second language.

The second Niger-Congo language in Somalia is Swahili. About 40,000 people in Somalia speak this as their first language. There are several other people groups that speak Swahili as their second language.

The rest of the languages spoken in Somalia are Afro-Asiatic of Cushitic origin. These include Boni, Boon, Dabarre, Garre, Jiiddu, Maay, Somali, Oromo (Borana-Arsi-Guji), and Tunni.

The first of these, Boni, is spoken by a very small community of people in southern Somalia.

Boon is similar to Somali. There are very small numbers of Boon speakers and the majority of them are over sixty years of age. This is due to the fact that the Boon language has been blending with other neighboring languages.

Dabarre is spoken by the Dabarre clan of South-Central Somalia. It is estimated that anywhere from 20,000 to 50,000 people speak this language. It is considered to be very distinctive.

Garre is spoken by 50,000 or more people in the same area that Dabarre is spoken. These people consider themselves to be one with the Garreh in Kenya. However, these groups now speak different languages from one another.

Jiiddu is a very distinct language and is similar to neither Somali nor Tunni. It is similar to the Digil dialects of languages and is spoken by 20,000 to 60,000 people in Somalia.

Maay is spoken by 500,000 to 1,000,000 people. It may also be an incorporation of more than one language. It has a very different sentence structure and phonology from Somali, thus the Somali language is very difficult for Maay speakers to understand.

Somali is the largest language in Somalia and is spoken by 5,400,000 to 6,700,000 people in the country. Northern Somali is the basis of Standard Somali, which is used in primary education. Standard Somali is readily understood by the Benaadir Somali speakers, but is difficult for the Maay and Digil speakers to understand.

Oromo Borana-Arsi-Guji is spoken by over 41,000 people in Somalia. Most of these speakers live in southern Somalia.

Tunni is spoken by 20,000 to 60,000 people in Somalia. It is very distinct from Somali or Jiiddu and is similar to the Digil languages.

([http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=SO](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=SO)); ("Ethnologue Languages of the World," p. 381-383); ([http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761554555\\_2/Somalia.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761554555_2/Somalia.html))

## **Society/Culture**

Somalia, unlike most of the African nation-states, essentially has only one ethnic group. This group is united by the common Somali language, Islamic beliefs and practices, the occupation of animal husbandry, a long history of inhabiting the Horn of Africa, and the common belief that all Somali speakers are descendants of a common ancestor. Despite the unity, there is much warring and strife between many of the smaller clans within this ethnic group.

Somalia has a population of over 8 million people. Of this 8 million, over 85% of them are the Somali people. The other 15% is composed of the Bantu, Arab, and other non-Somali people. Even this small percentage of the population has, to some degree, assimilated into Somali life and culture.

The Somalis are believed to be descendents of Noah's second son, Ham. Therefore, they are classified as being a Hamatic people with a Cushitic culture. Also, their lineage shows a mixing of people from Africa's equatorial lakes region, along with pastoral groups from the north, and migrants from the Arabian Peninsula, Persian Gulf, and Southeast Asia region.

There are two main clan families within the Somali ethnic group. These are the Samaal and the Saab, both of which have many sub-clans. The Samaal are typically nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists, while the Saab are principally farmers and sedentary herders. Outside of these two main clans is the small community of Bantu speaking people, along with the non-indigenous Arab, Italian, British, and Indian population.

The Somali language is an Eastern Cushitic language and is spoken by all Somalis. It does, however, have many different dialectal differences.

The official state religion of Somalia is Islam. Nearly 100% of the entire population is Sunni Muslim. Although the Somali follow many of the practices associated with Islam, they are not as traditional as most Muslims. They practice praying five times a day, abstain from eating pork and drinking alcohol, and permit men to marry up to four wives at one time. The women, however, are not required to wear veils or cover their entire bodies while outside the home.

The Somalis also incorporate into Islam a belief in the spirit world. They believe in a jinns, or spirit, which can be either good or evil. They believe this spirit must be appeased in order to prevent harm coming to themselves, their families, or their clans. They employ the use of specialists to "fight" off the jinns through prayer, exorcisms, and animal sacrifice.

The major holidays of the Somali people revolve around the practices of Islam. One of these important celebrations is the Id al Adha, or the sacrificial feast. This celebration is to commemorate Ibrahim's offer to sacrifice his son, Ishmael, to God. This festival

occurs on the tenth day of the twelfth Muslim month. On this day, Muslims offer public prayers and sacrifice many animals.

Another important festival is Ramadan. During this time, Muslims do not eat or drink during the daylight hours. After the completion of the month long fasting for Ramadan, the Muslims celebrate Id al Fitr, or the breaking of the fast. It is a time of celebration, whereby Muslims put on their finest clothes, exchange gifts, and attend public prayer.

Within the Somali culture, there are certain rights of passage, each one calling for another time of feasting. One of these times is at the birth of a child. Depending on the wealth of the family, one or more sheep or goats will be killed to celebrate, as well as to announce the important event and to validate the family's role in the clan. Although a boy child is more highly valued than a girl, there is a time of feasting for the birth of either.

Another rite of passage practiced by most people in the Horn of Africa is circumcision of the males and a clitoridectomy of the females. These practices are done to show that a male or female has reached adult status in society. These genital operations are typically performed during childhood. Most women in Somalia have had a clitoridectomy, which is practiced to ensure their virginity.

The men of Somali culture are expected to recall past events in their lives, tell heroic tales of their patrilineal ancestors, and recite passages from the Koran at feasts associated with rights of passage. The men also dance and sing. This is typically done by the unmarried males in their 20s. During these sexually charged dances, the men often slash their arms and legs with knives to show their bravery. These acts, very important for the Somali people, leave dramatic scars but do not permanently harm the young men.

Marriage in Somali culture is also another time for great feasting. Marriage typically occurs for the men when they are in their late twenties and for the women around age thirteen. It is considered a union of families as much as it is considered a union of two individuals. Both sides of the family are involved in this union. The groom's family will provide a bride-price consisting of camels, cattle, sheep, and goats, which are given to the bride's family. The bride's family will gather together items necessary for family life, such as a portable house, cooking utensils, bed, mats, ropes, skins, etc, which they will present to the new couple.

Nearly 90% of the Somali people are nomadic herders and live in small villages in the rural areas of Somalia. They live in small portable homes made of sticks and hides known as aqals. Some might even live in mundals; a more permanent structure, that is made of mud and topped with a thatched roof. The people in the rural areas rarely have access to electricity, clean running water, paved roads, or public services.

The remaining 10% of the population that lives in the cities work as shopkeepers, traders, craftsmen, or government officers. They live in more permanent dwellings and have access to electricity, running water, paved roads, hospitals, and markets. Since the war, many of these amenities are no longer available to the Somali city-dwellers.

The focus of family life in Somalia centers on the care for the family's herds. The number of animals a man has is said to determine his wealth in Somali culture. Therefore, the goal of most men is to have more than one wife, so that he can have several children who can care for more animals. Polygamy is very common among the Somali as is divorce. Each wife raises her own children in her own home, separate from that of her husband. Family structure is based on patrilineal descent.

Daily family life places a clear division on labor based on gender. Men and boys care for the animals, while the women and girls complete domestic tasks in and around the home. The men are often gone for months at a time in search of water and food for their herds. During this time, women are responsible for the home and may even relocate their housing to be nearer to the men and the herds.

The clothing of the Somali people is greatly influenced by the hot and dry climate. Men traditionally wear mawhees, or a long piece of lightweight cloth, which is worn as a skirt. They wear a lightweight shirt with their mawhee, along with a turban during the heat of the day. Women wear a dress that covers their body from their shoulders to ankles. Women also carry a shawl with them to cover their heads in the presence of a non-family male and to keep warm when the temperatures fall during the evening time.

Grains and vegetables are the everyday food staples of Somali life. Both sorghum and corn are locally grown and imported and are the most common food. Meat is also of great importance in Somali culture, but it is only eaten around special occasions. The grains are typically all cooked together into a porridge which is eaten from a common bowl with only the right hand and no utensils. When meat is consumed, it is placed on top of the cooked grain. Men and women often eat separately.

There are many foods that are considered to be delicacies in the Somali culture. These are the camel's hump, sheep's tail, goat's liver, and camel's milk. Camel's milk is drunk more frequently by unmarried males who care for the camels. The other delicacies are only eaten on special occasions.

Very few children, especially those in rural areas, receive an education. Children in urban areas have greater opportunities to go to school, but many no longer can due to the closing of most schools as a result of the civil war in the 1990s. The only schools existing today are the Koran schools, which are run by Sheikhs, or Muslim holy men. Many of these schools have expanded their curriculum to provide a broader education to account for the closing of the other schools.

The telling of stories, particularly those of the patrilineal ancestors, is a large part of Somali culture. Ceremonial feasts and certain right of passage, the men will tell such stories. Storytelling promotes unity among the members of the clan.

Soccer is a very popular sport in Somalia. It is, by far, the most widely played sport. Typically, it is only those in the cities who get to engage in such activities. The young men in the rural areas have little free time and cannot participate in such a sport.

The Somali are quite proficient in crafts and produce wooden utensils, leather goods, woven mats, ropes, knife blades, and arrow points. These crafts are not strictly a work of art; rather, they all serve a utilitarian function.

All areas of Somali life and culture have been impacted by the repeated wars and starvation. It is estimated that over 50,000 people have died in fighting. Another 400,000 have died of starvation. Although the conditions are still bleak in Somalia, a time of rebuilding and healing is underway.

(<http://www.joshuaproject.net/countries.php>); ([WorldMark Encyclopedia of](#)

Cultures and Daily Life, p. 386-390);

(<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/so.html>); ([World Mark Encyclopedia of the Nations: Africa](#), p. 447-457); ([http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=SO](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=SO))

## **Government**

On July 1, 1960, Somalis celebrate their independence. It was in June of 1960 that Italian Somaliland acquired its independence from Italy. That following month, British Somaliland broke free from the UK. The two then merged to form the Somali Republic.

From July of 1961 to October 1969, Somalia's government functioned as a parliamentary democracy based on the separation of powers' principle. The army seized power in 1969 and Major General Siad Barre was elected as president. A constitution was approved in January 1979 by the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party and was ratified by referendum on August 25<sup>th</sup> of the same year.

The end of the year in 1979, Somalia was functioning under the constitution they had adopted. This constitution called for the executive power to be held by a president, who was head of the state as well as the leader of the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party, the sole political party. The president was nominated by the party's Central Committee and elected by the people to serve for a seven-year term.

During this time, the legislative power was held by the Peoples' Assembly, which consisted of 177 people. Of these 177 people, 6 were elected by the president while the others were popularly elected. Each member served five-year terms.

The judicial power within Somalia resided in the several different courts. On the national level, there was Supreme Court. Below the Supreme Court were two courts of appeal and eight regional courts.

In January of 1991, the entire government was overthrown and Somalia was left in a state of civil war without any clear governmental authority. After the collapse of the Somali



government, organized factions rallied around military leaders who took control of Somalia. There then began a long period of chaos, destruction, and bloodshed.

Since 1991, there has been much effort put toward national reconciliation, but nothing has been successful. Even today, various Somali groups continue to try to control the national territory. This has only led to more fighting, wars, and a continued state of anarchy.

The condition in Somalia led to the United States' intervention in the early 1990s. This operation was followed by the United Nations' Operation in Somalia, which ended in 1994. Also in the mid-1990s, Ethiopia hosted several Somali peace conferences. The governments of Egypt, Yemen, Kenya, Italy, Djibouti, and other African organizations also played a role in attempting to bring the Somali factions together.

Somalia is currently divided into 18 regions and 84 districts. These regions help with administration for the region until a proper government can form. They are Awdal, Bakool, Banaadir, Bari, Bay, Galguduud, Gedo, Hiiraan, Jubbada Dhexe, Jubbada Hoose, Mudug, Nugaal, Sanaag, Shabeellaha Dhexe, Shabeellaha Hoose, Sool, Togheer, and Wogoovi Galbeed.

Within each of these regional divisions the governments vary. In the northwest provinces of the republic, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal was selected by elders in the community to be the president of the "Republic of Somaliland" in 1991. In 1994, the northeast region of Somalia declared itself to be autonomous and became known as Puntland. Abdullahi Yusuf was elected as president over this region. These two northern regions are the only sections of Somalia that have made strides towards the formation of a legitimate government.

In 2003, the Transitional Federal Government was formed and it is now the only entity in Somalia claiming to represent the country as a whole. The organization is based in Nairobi, Kenya, because it is fearful to return back to the Somali capital of Mogadishu. This Transitional Federal Government has ambassadors in a few countries and also represents Somalia in the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, and the Arab League.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761554555\\_4/Somalia.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761554555_4/Somalia.html)

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/so.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics\\_of\\_Somalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Somalia)

[\(WorldMark Encyclopedia to the Nations: Africa, p. 451-452\)](#)

## **Economy**

Somalia is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Much of the economy has been absolutely devastated by the continuous civil wars within the country. Until these conditions improve, it is unlikely that Somalia will see any economic relief in the near future.

Somalia has very few natural resources. The grasslands are suitable for livestock and the fertile land around the Juba and Shabeelle Rivers is fertile enough for agricultural crops. Mineral resources, such as petroleum, copper, manganese, gypsum, iron, marble, salt, tin, and uranium, have not been utilized.

Agriculture is very important to Somali society. It is estimated that 70% of Somalis live in rural areas as nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists who depend on livestock for their livelihood. The remaining 30% of the population are either crop farmers or inhabitants of the urban centers of Mogadishu, the capital, or other cities such as Hargeysa, Kismaayo, or Marka.

In 2004, the GDP was at \$4.597 billion, which was a growth rate of 2.8%. Of the GDP, 65% came from agriculture, which includes the production of cattle, sheep, goats, bananas, sorghum, corn, coconuts, rice, sugarcane, mangoes, sesame seeds, beans and fish. A total of 10% of the GDP came through the industry of sugar refining, textiles, and wireless communications. The remainder and vast majority of the GDP came through services, which accounts for 25%.

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/so.html><http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somalia#Economy>[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761554555\\_2/Somalia.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761554555_2/Somalia.html)

### **Literacy**

In 2001, 37.8% of Somalia's total population, ages 15 and over, was considered to be literate. In a further breakdown of percentages, 49.7% of males and 25.8% of females tested to be literate.

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/so.html>

### **Land/Geography**

Somalia is located in Eastern Africa and borders both the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean (10 00 N, 49 00 E) and is joined by Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. It has a total area of 637,657 sq km, making it just slightly smaller than the state of Texas.

The northern part of Somalia is rather hilly, which is in great contrast to the rest of the country, which is mostly flat with little variation. The altitude ranges from anywhere between 3,000 to 7,000 feet in this area. Just past the plateaus in the north are the plains in the south. Here the average altitude is less than 180 meters.

The Juba and Shabelle Rivers originate in the highlands of Ethiopia and flow across Somalia towards the Indian Ocean. The Shabelle River does not reach the Indian Ocean except for seasons of high rain. The tropical river basin around the Juba River is the greenest part of Somalia. Most of the farming and wildlife of the area is concentrated around this river.

The climate is very dry, harsh, and only 1.67% of the land is arable. Major climatic factors include a hot climate year-round, seasonal monsoon winds, irregular rainfall, and reoccurring droughts. Maximum daily temperatures range from 85 to 105 degrees Fahrenheit. The minimum temperatures are anywhere from 60 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit. During the two monsoon seasons, from October to November and March to May, the average temperatures are slightly milder due to the sea breeze.

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/so.html>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics\\_of\\_Somalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Somalia)

## **History**

The ethnic Cushites from southern Ethiopia were the original settlers of the Somali region, occupying the coastline in as early as AD 100. This area eventually became known as Punt, or “God’s Land,” by the Egyptians. The inhabitants were referred to as the Black Berbers. The Ethiopian kingdom of Aksum eventually extended to include Somalia. The Aksumites ruled from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.

These early villages along the coast put the Somalis in contact with Muslim Arab traders. The Somalis were one of the first people to convert to Islam on the continent of Africa. By the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Arab traders established the city of Zelia in northern Somalia, now known as Saylac, which became a central trading hub for many centuries. Both Chinese and Greek merchants then began to frequent the Somali coast in search of giraffes, leopards, and tortoises.

In 1414, the Ethiopian king, Yeshaq I, launched a war against both Somalia and Djibouti. The Somali king was captured and executed. The Somalis lived under Ethiopian rule for around a century before retaliating against Ethiopia. In 1530, under the leadership of Ahmed Gragn, Muslim armies marched into Ethiopia with the vision of completely annihilating all Ethiopians. Their plans were interrupted when a Portuguese expedition group formed a Portuguese-Ethiopian alliance with the Ethiopian Christians and defeated the Muslim army in February of 1543.

The Portuguese, during this same time, established a textile manufacturing plant, the first major economic colony in Somalia. It was not long before Somalia was captured by the Ottoman Turks, who ousted the Portuguese colony and claimed control over the entire Horn of Africa. The Ottoman power was fairly modest and was in decline by the 1850s.

By the eighteenth century, the Somalis had firmly established their culture in pastoral nomadism and the Islamic faith. The rise of European Imperialism in 1875 did little to change these two factors in their way of life. Britain, France, and Italy all made territorial claims on the peninsula. From approximately 1891 to 1960, the Somalis were separated into five smaller Somalilands.

British Somaliland was located in north central Somalia. From this point, the British colonies operated as the “gatekeepers” of the Red Sea. French Somaliland was located in the east and southeast portions of Somalia. The French were interested in Somalia’s coal

deposits as well as disrupting British ambitions to construct a transcontinental railroad along Africa's coast. To the south was Italian Somaliland. It was the largest European claim in the country, but was the least significant. Ethiopian Somaliland became known as the Northern Frontier District of Kenya.

In 1960, Italian and British Somaliland merged into a single independent state known as the Somali Republic. On July 1, 1960, Somalia was granted independence by the UN Trusteeship Council, where the Somali people elected their first president. The Somali Republic was a model of democratic governance in Africa, despite territorial disputes with Ethiopia and Kenya and power struggles between the Italian and British administration. Public bitterness, however, was widespread among the Somali people.

In 1969, Major General Mahammad Siad Barre seized power of Somali Republic in a bloodless coup. He established a military dictatorship which lasted for twenty-one years. He also led Somalia in a war against Ethiopia over the Ogaden region of Ethiopia in 1977. This dictatorship both divided and oppressed the Somali people, causing inter-clan strife and bloodshed. In 1991, Siad Barre's socialist regime ended with the collapse of the Somali state. His regime was replaced with armed clan militias who began fighting one another for political power.

A year following Barre's overthrow, over 50,000 people were killed through fighting and another 300,000 died due to starvation when food could not be distributed in the war-ravaged nation. On December 9, 1992, U.S. Marines, along with UN peacekeeping forces, entered Somalia to attempt to restore order. Although order was not restored, many people were saved from famine by the international relief effort.

Despite many attempts to unite the Somali people, great divisions arose within Somalia. In the northwest provinces of the republic, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal was selected by elders in the community to be the president of the "Republic of Somaliland" in 1991. In 1994, the northeast region of Somalia declared itself to be autonomous and became known as Puntland. Abdullahi Yusuf was elected as president over this region. These two northern regions are the only sections of Somalia that have made strides towards the formation of a legitimate government.

In 2003, the Transitional Federal Government was formed and it is now the only entity in Somalia claiming to represent the country as a whole. The organization is based in Nairobi, Kenya, because it is fearful to return back to the Somali capital of Mogadishu. This Transitional Federal Government has ambassadors in a few countries and also represents Somalia in the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, and the Arab League.

<http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-11945.html>

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761554555\\_5/Somalia.html#p24](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761554555_5/Somalia.html#p24)

<http://www.answers.com/history%20of%20somalia>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Somalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Somalia)

## **Christian History**

Christian history in Somalia first began in 1881 with the arrival of the Catholic missionaries. A Catholic Church was established that same year, but the majority of its members were predominantly foreigners from Italy. In 1995, only 200 of those following the practices of Catholicism were Somalis. In more recent years, the Catholic Church has lost its missionary role due to the government's prohibition of evangelical activity in Somalia. The Catholic Church still continues on with its social and charitable work in the country.

In 1898, Protestantism first appeared in Somalia with the work of Swedish Lutheran missionaries. These missionaries worked in the area of education, medicine, and agriculture. By 1935, they had baptized 350 Christians, mostly from the Bantu slave tribe. After World War I, Italy assumed control of the area and disrupted the work of the Swedish missionaries. Indigenous Christians of that area either lapsed back into Islamic practices or fled to India. Few retained their Christian commitment.

After World War II, Protestantism was revived with the arrival of the Mennonites and the Sudan Interior Mission in the early 1950s. These groups, like the Catholics, were limited to social service in their work. They gradually lost their rights and freedom to work within Somalia. In 1976, the remaining missionaries were forced to leave the country. Only a handful of Somali believers, who were associated with these groups, still continue to meet together and worship.

The Orthodox presence in Somalia began in the 1960s with the influx of Ethiopian refugees. By 1995, there were over 100,000 Orthodox Church members. All of these were from the Amhara tribe. Even today, the members of this tribe follow Orthodoxy and are under the patriarchs of Ethiopia.

The Anglican Church appeared in Somalia in the 1970s. This small community consisted of mostly expatriates. They met in private homes and are believed to be attached to the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East.

Although Christian influence began many years ago, there has been a lack of conversions due to the great strongholds of Islam in this area. Islam is the state religion of Somalia. Governmental power has done nothing but make it even more difficult for Christians to survive under such closed conditions.

(“Operation World,” p. 575) (“World Christian Encyclopedia,” p. 672-673)

## **Religions**

**Non-Christian** (99.95%---“[Operation World](#)”)

Islam:

The vast majority of the population in Somalia are Muslims who practice Sunni Islam. This is the largest division of Islam, encompassing 80-90% of all Muslims worldwide. Islam is discussed below, but first it is important to note that many people groups within Somalia still continue to practice some of their old tribal beliefs, such as animism, simultaneously with Islam. Such practices result in something known as Folk Islam.

Animism is the belief of the existence of a very active spirit world that inhabits natural objects and afflicts mankind. Much time and energy is put into appeasing these spirits to alleviate fear of harm from them. This can be seen by the wearing of protective jewels, the calling of spiritual community leaders to perform services to ward off the spirits, or even the worshiping of the spirits through festivals, rituals, etc. A few parts of the culture of some Somali groups show a strong belief in the spirit world. These beliefs are incorporated into the beliefs and practices of Islam.

Islam spread from its home base in the Arabian Peninsula nearly 14 centuries ago and now has encompassed many different peoples, languages, religions, and cultures. The word “Islam” means “submission” to the will of God. Those who submit to obeying his laws are guaranteed to live an eternal and enjoyable life in paradise. Those who accept Islam are called Muslims.

Muslims believe the law of Islam was revealed to Muhammad, a prophet for Allah, or God. Muhammad is not believed to be divine in nature, rather, is believed to be the last of a long line of prophets that began with Adam, and includes Abraham, Noah, Moses, and Jesus.

Muhammad, Muslims believe, revealed the Word of God which shows the oneness of God. Muhammad’s beliefs were spoken in a time and a land of great idolatry. The heart of Muslim belief, also known as the shahada, is the oneness of God. It states that “there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of God.”

Mecca, Islam’s holiest city, is located in Saudi Arabia and is the birthplace of Mohammed. Muslims face Mecca during their daily prayers and every Muslim believes that they should make a least one pilgrimage to Mecca in their lifetime.

The Qu’ran (Koran) is the holy book in which Mohammed recorded his revelations. All of his opinions and decisions are called hadith, or traditions. The group of the hadith is called the sunna. Those who accept most of the sunna, are known as Sunni Muslims. The majority of the Muslims today are known as Sunni Muslims, one of the two main branches of Islam.

Islam is founded on three key elements. The first element is revelation, or the belief that God has revealed Himself to Muhammad. Confession is the second element, which requires that Muslims confess that there is only one God. The third and final element of Islam includes the duties that a believer must perform and the laws they must follow in order to enter paradise. Muslims believe that God will weigh each person’s good and bad

deeds on the Day of Judgment and decide one's final destination—whether it be heaven or hell.

Four principle duties, along with the confessional aspect of the three elements, make up the five pillars of Islam. These four duties include praying, giving alms, fasting, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca. All Muslims, regardless of their location or ethnic group, accept these basic duties, although they may interpret the details and degree of performance differently.

The duty of prayer, or salat, is the supreme duty and a very disciplined ritual for Muslims. Most Muslims recognize the obligation to pray five times a day while facing Mecca. They believe these prayers can be voiced directly to God without the use of intermediaries. Prayer, they believe, involves the cleansing of the body and should be done especially on Fridays, the chief day of prayer in the Muslim culture.

The giving of alms, or zakat, requires a Muslim to give an annual payment, known as an alms tax, to the poor. Such voluntary charity increases a Muslim's chances of going to heaven.

The duty to fast, Muslims believe, is a demonstration of one's faith. This fasting takes place during the month of Ramadan, or the nine Muslim months. One of the primary rules during this time is to refrain from eating and drinking from sunrise to sunset.

The final duty is a pilgrimage, or Haj, to Mecca, preferably during the month of Hijja. At Mecca, Muslims perform rituals at the Kaaba, a stone considered holy since the days of Abraham. The hajji, or people who actually make this pilgrimage, return home with a strengthened Islamic faith and a greater sense of the community nature of Islam.

One further duty, considered an additional pillar by some, is the jihad, or holy war. This "exertion" calls Muslims to protect their faith, overcome nonbelievers, and purify the practices of the followers who have fallen away.

Islamic law, also known as Shariah, means the "straight path." It is derived from the Koran, the sunna, and the opinion of jurists and judges. Islamic law can be seen at various levels of society.

There are major events in Muslim life, such as festivals and commemorations. One of these important celebrations is the Id al Adha, or the sacrificial feast. This celebration is to commemorate Ibrahim's offer to sacrifice his son, Ishmael, to God. This festival occurs on the tenth day of the twelfth Muslim month. On this day, Muslims offer public prayers and sacrifice many animals.

Another important festival comes the night after the completion of fasting for Ramadan. It is called Id al Fitr, or the breaking of the Fast. It is a time of celebration whereby Muslims put on their finest clothes, exchange gifts, and attend public prayer.

Maulud al-Nabi, the birthday of the Prophet, is yet another time of celebration. It takes place on the twelfth day of the third Muslim month. Muslims also observe the Laylat al-Miraj, the night that Mohammed died and ascended into heaven.

## Hinduism

Only very small communities of people within Somalia practice Hinduism. Hinduism has its origin in India and is very diverse in its philosophy and cultural practice. It is characterized by a belief in reincarnation and a supreme being, which has many forms and natures.

## **Protestant/Evangelical/Pentecostals** (.01%---“[Operation World](#)”)

It is possible that a few Somalis are Protestant, Evangelical, or Pentecostal. At this time, it is not known what denominations might exist or the number of adherents there might be. There is .01% of the population that claims to be unaffiliated.

## **Catholics/Orthodox Churches** (.04%---“[Operation World](#)”)

### The Ethiopian Orthodox Church

The Eastern Orthodox Church is a small Christian denomination in Somalia. It is practiced chiefly by the Amhara people. For the nationals, faith in the Orthodox Church infiltrates every part of their culture.

The church is defined as being Christian, but the majority of their practices are not biblical. The Orthodox canon includes books unique to the people’s tradition and the people consider them to be true, as is the Bible. The church discourages the reading of Scriptures by the common man. Due to illiteracy and a lack of Bibles in circulation, the Orthodox Christians in Somalia still do not have much exposure to the Word of God.

The church services are conducted in Ge’ez, much like the Catholic Church used to conduct services in Latin. It is considered to be a “holy language,” but it is not understood by the general population. The priests who speak Ge’ez have merely memorized their parts for the church service.

It is not uncommon to see religious paraphernalia being sold in and around the church. These items are sold with candles and pictures of Mary and the saints. Orthodox beliefs are very rigid and law-oriented and include worship rituals, fasting, prescribed prayers, and devotion to saints and angels. Children are baptized at birth, the boys after forty days and the girls after eighty, indicating that the males have greater value.

### Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church a religious group that follows the faith, doctrine, and system of the Roman Catholic Church.



("Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey" p. xxvii-xxxix)(<http://www.answers.com/Ethiopian%20Orthodox%20Church>) ("**Operation World,**" p. 575)

## **People Groups**

### ***Introduction***

Somalia has an extraordinarily complex social system. Although the entire country of Somalia is essentially composed of one ethnic group, the Somali people, there are many sharp clan divisions which have led to the warring factions that divide Somalia today. Until 1992, all of the Somali people were listed as being one group. After researchers were able to gather more information on the different languages in Somalia, many of the languages were reclassified and new people groups were noted.

The current warlike conditions in Somali, coupled with the nomadic nature of the people, has made people group profiling extremely difficult. To further complicate matters, many of the people groups within Somali speak more than one language. Over time, there has also been an assimilation of cultures which has led to a melting-pot illustration in the Somali culture.

For organizational purposes, language will be one of the chief factors used to indicate a separate people group in this document, even if this group is similar in culture to their neighbors. Also, there will be a few clan and grouping descriptions as well, because oftentimes several people groups are called by one specific name due to a common geographical location, occupation, or culture. Within each people group, clan, or grouping description, the first paragraph will explain the location of each group within the social system, followed by alternate names and the profiles of each group.

Before studying each individual people group, it is important to first gain an understanding of the breakdown of the different groups, sub-groups, clans, and people groups in Somalia.

Somali society is divided into two main groups. The first group is the Somali people which compose nearly 85% of the over 8 million people that live in Somalia. The second group includes all of the immigrants from other parts of Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. This group makes up the remaining 15% of the population.

The first and larger Somali group is broken down into two sub-groups: the Samale and the Sab. This division is based on the patrilineal ancestry of the two sub-groups. A Somali's ability to trace their lineage gives them both a sense of pride and identity.

The people of the Samale sub-group reside in Northern Somalia, engage in nomadic pastoralism, and make up a group five times as large as their Sab counterparts. They are known as the Samale due to their ability to trace their patrilineal ancestry back to Samaale, the mythical founding father of Somalia. The Samale sub-group is further divided into four main clans. These clans are the Dir, Isxaaq, Daarood, and Hawiye.

The Dir and Isxaaq clans speak Northern/Standard Somali, while the Daarood and Hawiye speak various Somali dialects in addition to Northern/Standard Somali. The Dir clan can be found throughout Somalia, while the Isxaaq and Daarood are located in Northeast Somalia. The Hawiye are found in Central-Southern Somalia.

Although there are four separate clans within the Samale sub-group, all of these clans are referred to collectively as the Somali people. Due to the indistinguishable cultural characteristics, geographical location, and the common language among each clan, the Samale sub-group will be referred to as the Somali people in the profiling. No clan within this group will be noted from this point forward.

The people of the Sab sub-group chiefly reside in Southern Somalia. They are a relatively small group that is sedentary farmers. The Sab, unlike the Samale, are unable to directly trace their lineage to Samaale, but they still identify themselves as being Somalis. Due to this inability, clans within the Sab group are often seen as being a lower “caste” in Somalia. The Sab sub-group is further divided into two main clans. These are the Digil and Rahanwiin clans.

The Digil clan speaks many different Somali dialects that have many Somali-Rendille language characteristics. These dialects are often referred to as Southern Somali. The Rahanwiin speak the Maay language. Both of them have a hard time understanding Northern/Standard Somali. Both of these clans reside in Southern Somalia and also speak Central Somali.

Although there are two separate clans within the Sab sub-group, this entire group is often referred to as the Digil-Rahanwiin people. There will be a grouping description for these two clans as well as separate profiles for each people group within this clans that speak a different language. Oftentimes, there will be great similarities among the different groups, but it is important to note their language differences is indicative of different history and identity regardless of the current similarities among them and their clans.

The remaining 15% of the population is composed immigrants from parts of Africa, Europe, and the Middle East. These roughly include the Bantu, Oromo, Arab, and English-speaking groups. The Bantu and Oromo-speakers live in farming villages in Southern Somali. They are believed to be descendents of the slaves that were imported into Somalia during the 19<sup>th</sup> century to assist the Somalis in farming. The Arabs and British typically live in or around the cities where they own shops and other small businesses.

Below is a listing of several different people group profiles in Somalia. Language will be the primary factor separating these groups, due to the fact that people groups are often referred to by the language with which they speak. At the beginning of each people group profile will be a description of the exact hierarchal location of the particular group in society. The first descriptions will be of clans and larger groupings in society. Those that follow will be specific people group profiles of smaller groups within those clans depending on the language they speak. There will be some overlap due to the common

ethnicity of the peoples of Somalia and the lack of accurate information available on the people.

<http://countrystudies.us/somalia/37.htm>

<http://www.pcg.org.uk/Somalia-Where%20Clan%20Families%20Rule-2001.pdf>

<http://www.forcedmigration.org/guides/fmo016/fmo016-4.htm>

[http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show\\_language.asp?code=SOM](http://www.ethnologue.com/14/show_language.asp?code=SOM)

<http://orvillejenkins.com/profiles/>

## **Representative People Groups**

*Somalia*

*\_Somali Group*

*\_\_\_Sab Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Digil-Rahanwiin Grouping (includes both the Digil and Rahanwiin Clans)*

*\_\_\_Samale sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Somali Grouping (inclusive of all four clans within the Samale Sub-group)*

*\_Immigrant Group*

*\_\_\_African Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Gosha Grouping (collective name for all of the Bantu-speaking Peoples)*

## **11952**

### **Digil-Rahanwiin (2,015,874)**

*Somalia*

*\_Somali Group*

*\_\_\_Sab Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Digil-Rahanwiin Grouping (includes both the Digil and Rahanwiin Clans)*

The entire country of Somalia is composed of two main groups, the Somali people and the immigrants from other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. The Somali people are the largest ethnic group in Somalia, as well as one of the most uniform populations in the entire continent of Africa. The Somali are divided up into two main sub-groups, the Sab and the Samale. Within each of these sub-groups are various clans and people groups within those clans.

Within the Sab sub-group are both the Digil and Rahanwiin clans. Oftentimes all of the people groups within these clans are referred to collectively as the Digil-Rahanwiin people due to their common geographical location, occupations, and cultural identity. This is similar to how the Somali clan name is used to define many people groups due to their similarities.

Rahanwiin can also be spelled Rahaweyn or Rahanwin, depending on which Northern Somali term is used. The term Mirifle is often used interchangeably with Rahanwiin. It is not uncommon to hear this grouping of people referred to as the Digil-Mirifle. The

term Mirifle is also used as a substitute for the Dabarre people, which is a group within the Digil clan.

The Digil-Rahanwiin people are found primarily between the Shabeelle and Jubba Rivers in the Lower Jubba Valley of central Somalia. This group includes all of the Maay-speaking people as well as some people groups that speak some of the Somali dialects that in previous years were classified as Maay dialects. Due to the fact that many of these people speak the Maay language or something that sounds similar, these groups are sometimes collectively referred to as the Maay people.

The Maay language is an Eastern Cushitic language. Since it is a language of Southern Somalia, it has more Somali-Rendille language characteristics than the Northern Somali language.

Earliest evidence indicates that Somali history dates back to 1000AD. It is believed that the Digil-Rahanwiin people were among the first waves of Somaloids that settled in Southern Somalia. This group most likely originated in the southern highlands of what is now Ethiopia.

The Digil-Rahanwiin are very similar to the Afar people from of the north. They are typically tall and slender, with skin tones varying from jet black to light brown. Their faces are generally long and oval, with straight noses.

Most of the Digil-Rahanwiin people are nomadic herdsman, who spend the majority of their time in rural areas migrating with their camels, sheep, and goats. They live in portable huts that can be easily packed up and transported from place to place. These are typically made of bent saplings which are covered with animal skins or woven mats.

A Digil-Rahanwiin village will usually consist of several related families. These encampments are enclosed by thorn hedges to provide protection from intruders and wild animals. Their huts are arranged to surround the cattle pens.

Digil-Rahanwiin men are responsible for caring for the herds, including the migration and trading of their herds. Women take charge of domestic duties, such as caring for the children, building the home, milking the animals, and preparing the meals.

Life for the Digil-Rahanwiin can be quite difficult, particularly with the harsh climate and limited availability of land suitable for grazing. This requires them to frequently relocate. When migrations occur, the entire extended family unit will move and spread evenly across their new land, ensuring that everyone has enough water and pasture for their herds.

The Digil-Rahanwiin's diet consists of dairy, corn, rice, and some other vegetables. The chewing of gat, a stimulant, is also done frequently by the Digil-Rahanwiin.

Today, the Digil-Rahanwiin are 100% Muslim. They are often very orthodox in their religious practices, but few of them actually have a deep understanding of Islam. They do believe that after death all men will be required to give an account of their actions. They believe that this judgment will be based of their works and their knowledge of the Koran. They also believe that Jesus was merely a prophet, and not the Son of God. This belief has led most of these people to consider Christians to be inferior to themselves.

Islamic law permits a man to have up to four wives. When a man has more than one wife, the wife will live in her own hut where she will raise her own children. Divorce is very high among the Digil-Rahanwiin people, as it is among many peoples of this area. When a divorce takes place, the children are divided up by gender. The women will keep the girls, while the men will take the boys.

The Digil-Rahanwiin people were impacted greatly by Italian control over the region from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s. When British Somaliland in Northern Somalia unified with Italian Somaliland in the south, the Digil-Rahanwiin people became greatly disadvantaged under the new leadership and political structure. The Digil-Rahanwiin joined with other clans that felt oppressed and organized the Rahanwiin Resistance Army (RRA) who has since been in a guerrilla war with the leaders in the north.

There are currently no ministry tools available for the Digil-Rahanwiin in their language of Maay.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=105958&rog3=SO>  
<http://orvillejenkins.com/profiles/> ([http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia))

## **11954** **Somali (6,753,053)**

*Somalia*

*\_Somali Group*

*\_\_\_Samale Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Somali Grouping (inclusive of all four clans within the Samale Sub-group)*

The entire country of Somalia is composed of two main groups, the Somali people and the immigrants from other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. The Somali people are the largest ethnic group in Somalia, as well as one of the most uniform populations in the entire continent of Africa. The Somali are divided up into two main sub-groups, the Sab and the Samale. Within each of these sub-groups are various clans and people groups within those clans.

The Somali are one of the most homogenous people groups in all of Africa. There are over ten million of them in existence, scattered across the Horn of Africa. They all speak a common language, have a common faith, and share a similar heritage. The majority of the Somali people reside within Somalia, although there are groups that live in neighboring countries, including Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. The name Somali, is

derived from the words “so maal,” which literally translates to mean “go milk a beast for yourself.” Although this sounds rather harsh, it is an expression of hospitality.

The Somali converted to Islam around 1550, due to the influence of Arab traders. The majority of Somali are Sunni Muslims. In the cities, Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood groups have appeared, which push for more orthodox forms of Islam. Their beliefs and traditions also incorporate many of the practices of pagans. The Somali believe that there is a supreme male “sky god.” They also believe in the spirit world. They perform rituals and make animal sacrifices to appease their gods. The villagers also turn to the wadaad, or religious expert, for blessings and other help.

The Somalis consider themselves to be warriors. The women are often left alone to care for the family’s herds so that the men can train to become more effective fighters. They are very individualistic people who often find themselves in conflict with other clans. Such conflicts have resulted in tens of thousands of deaths.

Among the Somali, there are four main clans, the largest two being the Somaal and Sab people. The Somaal are primarily nomadic shepherds, while the Sab are farmers or craftsmen. The Somali have very sharp divisions along these clan lines. There are often fights between clans which result in many deaths.

The nomadic Somalis live in easily portable huts that are made of wooden branches and grass mats. The more settled farmers live in permanent round huts that are six to nine feet high. The diet of the nomads consists of milk, meat, and wild fruits, while the farmers enjoy a more rich diet including maize, beans, rice, eggs, poultry, bananas, dates, mangoes, and tea.

The family is considered to be the basic building block of Somali society. Respect for elders is paramount. Under Muslim law, each man has the right to be married to up to four women. In these communities, the divorce rate is very high. It is the mother’s responsibility to raise the children, however, the father takes part in their religious training.

Within each clan is a nuclear family system consisting of a husband, wife, and children. The typical family will own some goats, sheep, and camels. The more camels a man has, the greater his prestige. A large quantity of food is also a status symbol among the clans. For this reason, the Somali hold periodic banquets for their relatives and friends. At these banquets, the frequency in which they occur, the number of people invited, and the quality and quantity of food determines a family’s prestige.

To deal with the heat of this area, the Somali wear clothes draped over their bodies like togas. These clothes are typically very bright in color.

There are Bible portions, the Complete Bible, Jesus Film, Christian radio broadcasting, and gospel audio recordings available in Somali.

[http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p\\_code/437.html](http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p_code/437.html)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia)

**11943**

**Gosha (129,799)**

*Somalia*

*\_Immigrant Group*

*\_\_\_African Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Gosha Grouping (collective name for all of the Bantu-speaking Peoples)*

The Gosha people are an African sub-group who are believed to be of Bantu origin. The Gosha live in the Jubba Valley of Somalia and into the Mandera District of Kenya.

The word Gosha comes from the Somali words “reer goleed,” which means “people of the forest.” This term applies to many non-Somali peoples of Bantu backgrounds that dwell in the fertile farmlands of the lower Jubba Valley. The Somali often look down on the Gosha and often refer to them as “jareer”, meaning “hard hairs.” The Somali consider themselves as “jilec”, or “soft hairs.” Italian and British colonial administrators also reinforced this mentality by continuing to refer to all former slaves as one social unit.

Around the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Somali people imported slaves from the southern Africa Bantu regions of Tanzania and Mozambique. Between 1800 and 1890, it is estimated that as many as 50,000 slaves were imported to work the fields in the upper Shabeelle River area. As many of the slaves escaped, they relocated to the Jubba River valley. By 1900, there were over 40,000 slaves that had established themselves in this area.

In 1900, there were Abolition decrees across Somalia. This led to the immigration of another 30,000 Bantu-speaking people. Over the years, the Gosha developed trading relations with the Swahili people and established clan relationships with the Digil and Rahanwiin clans.

Many of the Gosha lost their Bantu languages. Today, many Gosha speak Maay or Garre. Some of the Gosha retained their language of Zigula, their mother tongue. Today, Zigula is known as Mushungulu, and is spoken by 20,000 to 50,000 Gosha in Somalia today. This group is known as the Mushungulu people. Many of the Gosha also speak Swahili as a trade language.

The majority of the Gosha accepted Islam in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They are also considered to be members of the Digil and Rahanwiin clans. Although they have adapted many aspects of the Somali culture, they still follow many practices of their Bantu origins. Their marriages are different, as are some of their animistic practices and dances.

Animistic practices were one of the reasons that the Gosha were enslaved. Historically, the term “kafir,” or infidel, was applied to animistic groups and it was an excuse for the

Muslim to enslave them. Today, the Gosha are no longer referred to by that term, but they are called “black,” a term used to distinguish foreign peoples and denote inferiority. The Somali use this term for the Gosha regardless of their actual skin color.

A popular dance among the Gosha, which is similar to the Somali cult practices, is the “lumbe.” It is a possession dance whereby the Gosha seek to placate spirits. Oftentimes, specialists within Gosha culture are paid by possessed people or families to help placate these spirits. It is reported that possessed people often speak in Swahili.

There are currently no ministry tools available for the Gosha in their language of Maay, Mushungulu, or Garre.

[\(http://orvillejenkins.com/profiles/\)](http://orvillejenkins.com/profiles/)  [\(http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia\)](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia)  
 [\(http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hadraawi/message/18\)](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hadraawi/message/18)  
 [\(http://www.orvillejenkins.org/peoples/somalibantu.html\)](http://www.orvillejenkins.org/peoples/somalibantu.html)

### **Specific People Group Profiles**

#### *Somalia*

##### *\_Somali Group*

##### *\_\_\_Sab Sub-group*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Digil Clan*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Dabarre (Mirifle) People*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Jiiddu People*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Tunni People*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Rahanwiin Clan*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Digil-Rahanwiin/Maay People (description also included in clan profiling)*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Garre People*

##### *\_\_\_Samale Sub-group*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Four Clans (all very similar)*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Somali People (description also included in clan/group profiling)*

#### *\_Immigrant Group*

##### *\_\_\_African Immigrants*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Mushungulu People*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Swahili, Bantu People*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Amhara People*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Boni, Aweera People*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Midgan, Ribbi People*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Boon People (nearly extinct)*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Borana People (Oromo, Borana-Arsi-Guji Speakers)*

##### *\_\_\_Middle Eastern Immigrants*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Baloch, Southern People*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Indo-Pakistani People*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Yemeni Arab (Arab, Ta'izz-Adeni) People*

##### *\_\_\_\_\_Juba Somali People (they possibly belong under the African Immigrants)*

##### *\_\_\_European Immigrants*



\_\_\_\_\_ *British People*

**11948**

**Dabarre (26,879)**

*Somalia*

\_\_ *Somali Group*

\_\_\_ *Sab Sub-group*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Digil Clan*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Dabarre People*

The Somali are divided up into two main sub-groups, the Sab and the Samale. Within each of these sub-groups are various clans and people groups within those clans. Within the Sab sub-group is the Digil clan. The Digil clan includes the Dabarre speakers, who are often referred to as the Dabarre people.

The Dabarre people are located in between the Jiiddu and Tunni Rivers of southern Somalia in the richest agricultural land in the country. Their language of Dabarre is also referred to as Af-Dabarre, which is from the Afro-Asiatic language family. Many of the Dabarre also speak Arabic.

The Dabarre are also known as the Mirifle people group. Mirifle is a word used interchangeably with Rahanwiin, the second clan within the Sab sub-group. Oftentimes, these two clans are referred to as the Digil-Rahanwiin. All people falling under either of these two clans are often called the Digil-Rahanwiin people. It is the Dabarre's association with the Rahanwiin that has given them the alternate name Mirifle. Their culture, language, and religion is very similar to that of the Afar and Beja in the neighboring countries of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The Dabarre people are primarily farmers. They grow bananas, which are their chief commercial crop, sugarcane, corn, sorghum, beans, sesame, and fruits. Farming is a very organized system among the Dabarre. Men are recruited by chiefs in the village to work the land on the special "work days" that the chief appoints. These men bring gifts and coffee to their chief and the chief pays and feeds the men for their work.

Men also engage in herding cattle and sometimes camels. These animals provide milk, meat, and skins for the Dabarre people. The Dabarre are also known to fish and hunt. The women of this culture help the men in the fields and grind grain for flour. Although these women are not considered a part of the work groups, they are expected to assist the men in their work.

The Dabarre dwellings are round huts made of mud with grass roofs that are cone-shaped. The hut itself is divided, either by a curtain or branch partition, allowing for the men and women to sleep separately. The man sleeps on the side facing the door, while the wife sleeps in the more secluded side. The wealthy Dabarre will often have a porch attached to their hut's entrance.

Each Dabarre family is dominated by the male head of the household. In society, the villages are ruled by a group of elders from each family who meet with the head of the village. Important decisions are made by this council.

The Dabarre clothing consists of cotton cloth they obtain through trade or in production on local looms. Their dress is typically white or gray and resembles a Roman toga. They saturate their clothes in butter to protect them against the damp or cold. The Dabarre sometimes wear sandals, but are often barefoot. The women of this culture wear pearls, leather, or silver necklaces along with bracelets and anklets.

A marriage in Dabarre culture cannot take place until a young man first obtains the consent of his parents and the girl's parents. He must then pay a bride-price to the woman's family. If this price is satisfactory, there will be an engagement that will result in marriage. Under Islamic law, the Dabarre are allowed to have up to four wives. Each of these wives will occupy their own hut where they will raise their own children.

The man in this society is responsible for his wife. His entire family is also considered responsible. If a woman is murdered, her husband and his family will resort to blood-vengeance.

All of the Dabarre are Muslim. They consider Christians to be inferior. The Dabarre believe Jesus was a prophet, but not God's Son. They also believe that every man will have to give account for their actions here on earth. Few Dabarre have a deep understanding of their faith.

The Dabarre do not have any Christian resources available to them to them in their language of Dabarre.

[http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p\\_code5/2475.html](http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p_code5/2475.html)

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia)

**11951**

**Jiiddle (23,186)**

*Somalia*

*\_Somali Group*

*\_\_\_Sab Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Digil Clan*

*\_\_\_\_\_Jiiddle People*

The Somali are divided up into two main sub-groups, the Sab and the Samale. Within each of these sub-groups are various clans and people groups within those clans. Within the Sab sub-group is the Digil clan. The Digil clan includes the Jiiddle speakers, who are often referred to as the Jiiddle people.

The Jiiddu, are located in between the Jiiddu and Tunni Rivers of southern Somalia in the richest agricultural land in the country. They speak Jiiddu, or Af Jiiddu, which is a very distinct language of a Digil dialect. It has a very different sentence structure and phonology from Somali. Many of the Jiiddu also speak Arabic as a secondary or trade language.

The Jiiddu culture, language, and religion is very similar to that of the Afar and Beja in the neighboring countries of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The Jiiddu people are primarily farmers. They grow bananas, which are their chief commercial crop, sugarcane, corn, sorghum, beans, sesame, and fruits. Farming is a very organized system among the Jiiddu. Men are recruited by chiefs in the village to work the land on the special “work days” that the chief appoints. These men bring gifts and coffee to their chief and the chief pays and feeds the men for their work.

Men also engage in herding cattle and sometimes camels. These animals provide milk, meat, and skins for the Jiiddu people. The Jiiddu are also known to fish and hunt. The women of this culture help the men in the fields and grind grain for flour. Although these women are not considered a part of the work groups, they are expected to assist the men in their work.

The Jiiddu dwellings are round huts made of mud with grass roofs that are cone-shaped. The hut itself is divided, either by a curtain or branch partition, allowing for the men and women to sleep separately. The man sleeps on the side facing the door, while the wife sleeps in the more secluded side. The wealthy Jiiddu will often have a porch attached to their hut’s entrance.

Each Jiiddu family is dominated by the male head of the household. In society, the villages are ruled by a group of elders from each family who meet with the head of the village. Important decisions are made by this council.

The Jiiddu clothing consists of cotton cloth they obtain through trade or in production on local looms. Their dress is typically white or gray and resembles a Roman toga. They saturate their clothes in butter to protect them against the damp or cold. The Jiiddu sometimes wear sandals, but are often barefoot. The women of this culture wear pearls, leather, or silver necklaces along with bracelets and anklets.

A marriage in Jiiddu culture cannot take place until a young man first obtains the consent of his parents and the girl’s parents. He must then pay a bride-price to the woman’s family. If this price is satisfactory, there will be an engagement that will result in marriage. Under Islamic law, the Jiiddu are allowed to have up to four wives. Each of these wives will occupy their own hut where they will raise their own children.

The man in this society is responsible for his wife. His entire family is also considered responsible. If a woman is murdered, her husband and his family will resort to blood-vengeance.

The Jiiddu are a Muslims. They consider Christians to be inferior. The Jiiddu believe Jesus was a prophet, but not God's Son. They also believe that every man will have to give account for their actions here on earth. Few Jiiddu have a deep understanding of their faith.

The Jiiddu do not have any Christian resources available to them.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=104266&rog3=SO>

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia)

**11955**

**Tunni (26,879)**

*Somalia*

*\_Somali Group*

*\_\_\_Sab Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Digil Clan*

*\_\_\_\_\_Tunni People*

Within the Sab sub-group is the Digil clan. The Digil clan includes the Tunni speakers, who are often referred to as the Tunni people.

The Tunni are located in between the Jiiddu and Tunni Rivers of southern Somalia in the richest agricultural land in the country. They speak Tunni, or Af-Tunni, which is very distinct from either Somali or Jiiddu. It is considered to be a dialect of the Digil languages. It is in sentence structure and phonology from Somali. Many of the Tunni also speak Arabic as a secondary or trade language.

The Tunni culture, language, and religion is very similar to that of the Afar and Beja in the neighboring countries of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The Tunni people are primarily farmers. They grow bananas, which are their chief commercial crop, sugarcane, corn, sorghum, beans, sesame, and fruits. Farming is a very organized system among the Tunni. Men are recruited by chiefs in the village to work the land on the special "work days" that the chief appoints. These men bring gifts and coffee to their chief and the chief pays and feeds the men for their work.

Men also engage in herding cattle and sometimes camels. These animals provide milk, meat, and skins for the Tunni people. The Tunni are also known to fish and hunt. The women of this culture help the men in the fields and grind grain for flour. Although these women are not considered a part of the work groups, they are expected to assist the men in their work.

The Tunni dwellings are round huts made of mud with grass roofs that are cone-shaped. The hut itself is divided, either by a curtain or branch partition, allowing for the men and women to sleep separately. The man sleeps on the side facing the door, while the wife

sleeps in the more secluded side. The wealthy Tunni will often have a porch attached to their hut's entrance.

Each Tunni family is dominated by the male head of the household. In society, the villages are ruled by a group of elders from each family who meet with the head of the village. Important decisions are made by this council.

The Tunni clothing consists of cotton cloth they obtain through trade or in production on local looms. Their dress is typically white or gray and resembles a Roman toga. They saturate their clothes in butter to protect them against the damp or cold. The Tunni sometimes wear sandals, but are often barefoot. The women of this culture wear pearls, leather, or silver necklaces along with bracelets and anklets.

A marriage in Tunni culture cannot take place until a young man first obtains the consent of his parents and the girl's parents. He must then pay a bride-price to the woman's family. If this price is satisfactory, there will be an engagement that will result in marriage. Under Islamic law, the Tunni are allowed to have up to four wives. Each of these wives will occupy their own hut where they will raise their own children.

The man in this society is responsible for his wife. His entire family is also considered responsible. If a woman is murdered, her husband and his family will resort to blood-vengeance.

The Tunni are a Muslims. They consider Christians to be inferior. The Tunni believe Jesus was a prophet, but not God's Son. They also believe that every man will have to give account for their actions here on earth. Few Tunni have a deep understanding of their faith.

The Tunni do not have any Christian resources available to them.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia)

## **11952**

### **Digil-Rahanwiin/Maay People (2,015,874)**

*Somalia*

*\_Somali Group*

*\_\_\_Sab Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Digil and Rahanwiin Clans*

*\_\_\_\_\_Digil-Rahanwiin/Maay People*

The entire country of Somalia is composed of two main groups, the Somali people and the immigrants from other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. The Somali people are the largest ethnic group in Somalia, as well as one of the most uniform populations in the entire continent of Africa. The Somali are divided up into two main

sub-groups, the Sab and the Samale. Within each of these sub-groups are various clans and people groups within those clans.

Within the Sab sub-group are both the Digil and Rahanwiin clans. Oftentimes all of the people groups within these clans are referred to collectively as the Digil-Rahanwiin people due to their common geographical location, occupations, and cultural identity. This is similar to how the Somali clan name is used to define many people groups due to their similarities.

Rahanwiin can also be spelled Rahaweyn or Rahanwin, depending on which Northern Somali term is used. The term Mirifle is often used interchangeably with Rahanwiin. It is not uncommon to hear this grouping of people referred to as the Digil-Mirifle. The term Mirifle is also used as a substitute for the Dabarre people, which is a group within the Digil clan.

The Digil-Rahanwiin people are found primarily between the Shabeelle and Jubba Rivers in the Lower Jubba Valley of central Somalia. This group includes all of the Maay-speaking people as well as some people groups that speak some of the Somali dialects that in previous years were classified as Maay dialects. Due to the fact that many of these people speak the Maay language or something that sounds similar, these groups are sometimes collectively referred to as the Maay people.

The Maay language is an Eastern Cushitic language. Since it is a language of Southern Somalia, it has more Somali-Rendille language characteristics than the Northern Somali language.

Earliest evidence indicates that Somali history dates back to 1000AD. It is believed that the Digil-Rahanwiin people were among the first waves of Somaloids that settled in Southern Somalia. This group most likely originated in the southern highlands of what is now Ethiopia.

The Digil-Rahanwiin are very similar to the Afar people from the north. They are typically tall and slender, with skin tones varying from jet black to light brown. Their faces are generally long and oval, with straight noses.

Most of the Digil-Rahanwiin people are nomadic herdsman, who spend the majority of their time in rural areas migrating with their camels, sheep, and goats. They live in portable huts that can be easily packed up and transported from place to place. These are typically made of bent saplings which are covered with animal skins or woven mats.

A Digil-Rahanwiin village will usually consist of several related families. These encampments are enclosed by thorn hedges to provide protection from intruders and wild animals. Their huts are arranged to surround the cattle pens.

Digil-Rahanwiin men are responsible for caring for the herds, including the migration and trading of their herds. Women take charge of domestic duties, such as caring for the children, building the home, milking the animals, and preparing the meals.

Life for the Digil-Rahanwiin can be quite difficult, particularly with the harsh climate and limited availability of land suitable for grazing. This requires them to frequently relocate. When migrations occur, the entire extended family unit will move and spread evenly across their new land, ensuring that everyone has enough water and pasture for their herds.

The Digil-Rahanwiin's diet consists of dairy, corn, rice, and some other vegetables. The chewing of gat, a stimulant, is also done frequently by the Digil-Rahanwiin.

Today, the Digil-Rahanwiin are 100% Muslim. They are often very orthodox in their religious practices, but few of them actually have a deep understanding of Islam. They do believe that after death all men will be required to give an account of their actions. They believe that this judgment will be based of their works and their knowledge of the Koran. They also believe that Jesus was merely a prophet, and not the Son of God. This belief has led most of these people to consider Christians to be inferior to themselves.

Islamic law permits a man to have up to four wives. When a man has more than one wife, the wife will live in her own hut where she will raise her own children. Divorce is very high among the Digil-Rahanwiin people, as it is among many peoples of this area. When a divorce takes place, the children are divided up by gender. The women will keep the girls, while the men will take the boys.

The Digil-Rahanwiin people were impacted greatly by Italian control over the region from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s. When British Somaliland in Northern Somalia unified with Italian Somaliland in the south, the Digil-Rahanwiin people became greatly disadvantaged under the new leadership and political structure. The Digil-Rahanwiin joined with other clans that felt oppressed and organized the Rahanwiin Resistance Army (RRA) who has since been in a guerrilla war with the leaders in the north.

There are currently no ministry tools available for the Digil-Rahanwiin in their language of Maay.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=105958&rog3=SO>)

<http://orvillejenkins.com/profiles/>) ([http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia))

**11949**

**Garre (67,195)**

*Somalia*

*\_Somali Group*

*\_\_\_Sab Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Rahanwiin Clan*

## Garre People

The Somali are divided up into two main sub-groups, the Sab and the Samale. Within each of these sub-groups are various clans and people groups within those clans. Within the Sab sub-group is the Rahanwiin clan. The Rahanwiin clan includes the Garre speakers, who are often referred to as the Garre people.

The Garre are located in both Somalia and Kenya, and even some small communities can be found in Ethiopia. They are believed to have originated in Ethiopia and were among one of the many sub-groups of the Oromo people. However, the Garre have since assimilated into the Somali culture and have strong clan affiliations with the Digil-Rahanwiin. The Garre who live in the Somalia region are located along the Upper Jubba River, just between the Webi Gestro and the Webi Mana.

The Garre are very similar to the Afar people from of the north. They are typically tall and slender, with skin tones varying from jet black to light brown. Their faces are generally long and oval, with straight noses.

The Garre language is also known as Af-garre. It is reported to be linguistically close to Boni, a Rendille-Boni language. Many Garre in Somalia speak Maay as their mother tongue. Garre in Kenya, along with the Ajuuraan people, speak an Oromo language named after them: Garre-Ajuuraan. In addition to Garre, many also speak Arabic as a secondary trade language.

Most Garre are nomadic herdsman, who spend the majority of their time in rural areas migrating with their camels, sheep, and goats. They live in portable huts that can be easily packed up and transported from place to place. These are typically made of bent saplings which are covered with animal skins or woven mats.

A Garre village will usually consist of several related families. These encampments are enclosed by thorn hedges to provide protection from intruders and wild animals. Their huts are arranged to surround the cattle pens.

Garre men are responsible for caring for the herds, including the migration and trading of their herds. Women take charge of domestic duties, such as caring for the children, building the home, milking the animals, and preparing the meals.

Life for the Garre can be quite difficult, particularly with the harsh climate and limited availability of land suitable for grazing. This requires the Garre to frequently relocate. When migrations occur, the entire extended family unit will move and spread evenly across their new land, ensuring that everyone has enough water and pasture for their herds.

The Garre diet consists of dairy, corn, rice, and some other vegetables. The chewing of gat, a stimulant, is also done frequently by the Garre.



Today, the Garre are 100% Muslim. They are often very orthodox in their religious practices, but few Garre actually have a deep understanding of Islam. They do believe that after death all men will be required to give an account of their actions. They believe that this judgment will be based of their works and their knowledge of the Koran. They also believe that Jesus was merely a prophet, and not the Son of God. This belief has led most Garre to consider Christians to be inferior to themselves.

Islamic law permits a man to have up to four wives. When a man has more than one wife, the wife will live in her own hut where she will raise her own children. Divorce is very high among the Garre, as it is among many peoples of this area. When a divorce takes place, the children are divided up by gender. The women will keep the girls, while the men will take the boys.

There are currently no ministry tools available for the Garre in their language of Garre.

[http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p\\_code3/2482.html](http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p_code3/2482.html)<http://www.orvillejenkins.com/profiles/somalikenya.html> (“The Peoples of Africa: An Ethnohistorical Dictionary,” p.186)  
[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia)

**11954**

**Somali (6,753,053)**

*Somalia*

*\_Somali Group*

*\_\_\_Samale Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Four Clans (all very similar)*

*\_\_\_\_\_Somali People (description also included in clan/group profiling)*

The Somali are divided up into two main sub-groups, the Sab and the Samale. Within each of these sub-groups are various clans and people groups within those clans.

The Somali are one of the most homogenous people groups in all of Africa. There are over ten million of them in existence, scattered across the Horn of Africa. They all speak a common language, have a common faith, and share a similar heritage. The majority of the Somali people reside within Somalia, although there are groups that live in neighboring countries, including Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. The name Somali, is derived from the words “so maal,” which literally translates to mean “go milk a beast for yourself.” Although this sounds rather harsh, it is an expression of hospitality.

The Somali converted to Islam around 1550, due to the influence of Arab traders. The majority of Somali are Sunni Muslims. In the cities, Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood groups have appeared, which push for more orthodox forms of Islam. Their beliefs and traditions also incorporate many of the practices of pagans. The Somali believe that there is a supreme male “sky god.” They also believe in the spirit world. They perform rituals and make animal sacrifices to appease their gods. The villagers also turn to the wadaad, or religious expert, for blessings and other help.

The Somalis consider themselves to be warriors. The women are often left alone to care for the family's herds so that the men can train to become more effective fighters. They are very individualistic people who often find themselves in conflict with other clans. Such conflicts have resulted in tens of thousands of deaths.

Among the Somali, there are four main clans, the largest two being the Somaal and Sab people. The Somaal are primarily nomadic shepherds, while the Sab are farmers or craftsmen. The Somali have very sharp divisions along these clan lines. There are often fights between clans which result in many deaths.

The nomadic Somalis live in easily portable huts that are made of wooden branches and grass mats. The more settled farmers live in permanent round huts that are six to nine feet high. The diet of the nomads consists of milk, meat, and wild fruits, while the farmers enjoy a more rich diet including maize, beans, rice, eggs, poultry, bananas, dates, mangoes, and tea.

The family is considered to be the basic building block of Somali society. Respect for elders is paramount. Under Muslim law, each man has the right to be married to up to four women. In these communities, the divorce rate is very high. It is the mother's responsibility to raise the children, however, the father takes part in their religious training.

Within each clan is a nuclear family system consisting of a husband, wife, and children. The typical family will own some goats, sheep, and camels. The more camels a man has, the greater his prestige. A large quantity of food is also a status symbol among the clans. For this reason, the Somali hold periodic banquets for their relatives and friends. At these banquets, the frequency in which they occur, the number of people invited, and the quality and quantity of food determines a family's prestige.

To deal with the heat of this area, the Somali wear clothes draped over their bodies like togas. These clothes are typically very bright in color.

There are Bible portions, the Complete Bible, Jesus Film, Christian radio broadcasting, and gospel audio recordings available in Somali.

[http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p\\_code/437.html](http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p_code/437.html))

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>)[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia))

**11953**

**Mushungulu (23,186)**

*Somalia*

*\_Immigrant Group*

*\_\_\_African Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Mushungulu People (these people are apart of the larger Gosha Grouping)*

The entire country of Somalia is composed of two main groups, the Somali people and the immigrants from other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. The Gosha people are an African sub-group who are believed to be of Bantu origin. The Gosha live in the Jubba Valley of Somalia and into the Mandera District of Kenya. The Mushungulu speakers are a smaller people group within the Gosha group that still speak their native tongue.

The word Gosha comes from the Somali words “reer goleed,” which means “people of the forest.” This term applies to many non-Somali peoples of Bantu backgrounds that dwell in the fertile farmlands of the lower Jubba Valley. The Somali often look down on the Gosha and often refer to them as “jareer”, meaning “hard hairs.” The Somali consider themselves as “jilec”, or “soft hairs.” Italian and British colonial administrators also reinforced this mentality by continuing to refer to all former slaves as one social unit.

Around the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Somali people imported slaves from the southern Africa Bantu regions of Tanzania and Mozambique. Between 1800 and 1890, it is estimated that as many as 50,000 slaves were imported to work the fields in the upper Shabeelle River area. As many of the slaves escaped, they relocated to the Jubba River valley. By 1900, there were over 40,000 slaves that had established themselves in this area.

In 1900, there were Abolition decrees across Somalia. This led to the immigration of another 30,000 Bantu-speaking people. Over the years, the Mushungulu developed trading relations with the Swahili people and established clan relationships with the Digil and Rahanwiin clans.

Many of the Gosha lost their Bantu languages. Today, many Gosha speak Maay or Garre. Some of the Gosha retained their language of Zigula, their mother tongue. Today, Zigula is known as Mushungulu, and is spoken by 20,000 to 50,000 Gosha in Somalia today. Many of the Gosha, including the Mushungulu, also speak Swahili as a trade language.

The majority of the Mushungulu accepted Islam in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They are also considered to be members of the Digil and Rahanwiin clans. Although they have adapted many aspects of the Somali culture, they still follow many practices of their Bantu origins. Their marriages are different, as are some of their animistic practices and dances.

Animistic practices were one of the reasons that the Mushungulu were enslaved. Historically, the term “kafir,” or infidel, was applied to animistic groups and it was an excuse for the Muslim to enslave them. Today, the Mushungulu are no longer referred to by that term, but they are called “black,” a term used to distinguish foreign peoples and denote inferiority. The Somali use this term for the Mushungulu regardless of their actual skin color.

A popular dance among the Mushungulu, which is similar to the Somali cult practices, is the “lumbe.” It is a possession dance whereby the Mushungulu seek to placate spirits.

Oftentimes, specialists within Mushungulu culture are paid by possessed people or families to help placate these spirits. It is reported that possessed people often speak in Swahili.

There are currently no ministry tools available for the Mushungulu in their language of Mushungulu.

(<http://orvillejenkins.com/profiles/>) ([http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia))  
(<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hadraawi/message/18>)  
(<http://www.orvillejenkins.org/peoples/somalibantu.html>)

## **11942** **Swahili, Bantu (43,005)**

*Somalia*  
*\_Immigrant Group*  
*\_\_\_African Sub-group*  
*\_\_\_\_\_Swahili, Bantu People*

The Swahili, Bantu of Africa people have a very complex origin that cannot be easily described by ethnologists. It is believed that the Swahili people are a conglomeration of many different African tribes and other foreign immigrants.

In the second century, Bantu-speaking people from Northern Congo came to the East African coast and intermarried with the groups of hunters and Cushitic shepherds who lived there. Other migrations from other people groups, such as the Persians, Indonesians, and Portuguese, also joined these coastal people and adopted parts of their culture and language. This led to the assimilation of many people groups into a developing Swahili culture.

The name Swahili means “coast.” It was given to several people groups that shared a common culture, language, and religion. Over the years, many of these Swahili groups have relocated to different parts of the coast. Since their migrations, these groups have formed their own dialects and cultural variations. Although still apart of the larger Swahili group, these people prefer to be known by their respective local settlements.

The Swahili economy has been based on commerce for nearly 2,000 years. These people work as cross-national merchants. They trade spices, slaves, ivory, gold, and grain. The upper class Swahili manage small businesses, do clerical work, and teach in the area schools. Some of them own plantations that provides for their income and food supply. The lower class Swahili are typically farmers. They grow rice, sorghum, millet, and maize.

Islamic practices play a large role in Swahili life. Such practices influence dietary laws, rules of dress, social etiquette, laws concerning divorce, marriage ceremonies, and both birth and death rituals are governed by Islamic tradition. The main building in each town

is the mosque, where the male members of society pray five times a day with special prayer meetings on Fridays. Such Islamic influence can be seen in the family units as well. Society highly values well-mannered and respectful children. Young boys are even sent to Islamic schools where they study the Koran.

The Swahili people have been impacted by the Western culture. Most children attend non-religious schools in addition to Islamic schools to receive a Western-style education. Modern medical clinics have also been built in some areas. The arrival of televisions in the cities has also exposed many Somalis to Western culture. Even the Somali women are more independent and involved in both the economic and social realms of society than in previous times.

Swahili culture has also been influenced by the Northeast Bantu, Arab, Asian, Persian, and Indian cultures. This has made their culture very unique. The Swahilis can be easily distinguished from other people groups. The Asian influence can be best seen in Swahili art, such as in their rugs, silk, porcelain, and jewelry. It can also be seen in their architecture.

Also strictly Muslim, the Swahili also hold to many of their traditional tribal beliefs and practices. They believe that both a good and evil spirit world exists. They also believe in supernatural powers, like that of a witch or a sorcerer.

The Swahili people are also very superstitious. This can be seen in many of their beliefs. For example, the Swahili believe that earthquakes are caused when a cow moves its horns. They also believe that thunder is the sound of God speaking with the angels. For the Swahili, lightning is a sign that God will send rain and food that year.

There is the complete Bible available in Swahili. There are also many evangelism resources, the Jesus Film, Father's Love Letter, Christian radio broadcasting, scripture audio recordings, gospel audio recordings, and various books and printed matter available.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>)

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia)) (*"The Peoples of Africa: An Ethnohistorical Dictionary," p. 539*)

**00000**

**Amhara (73,000)**

*Somalia*

*\_Immigrant Group*

*\_\_\_African Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Amhara People*

The Amhara are an ethnic group that are found primarily in the Ethiopian highlands and on into Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia. They are semi-nomadic people, whose ancestry is most likely linked to tribes from what is now modern day Yemen.

Life for the Amhara is not easy. The men spend the majority of the day farming, while the women work at the home and children tend to the flocks. Nothing in this society is wasted. Even dried dung from the farm animals is used as the primary cooking fuel.

The staple food for the Amhara is the injera bo wot, which is made from grain, called teff, and a pepper sauce made from beans or meat. The entire process for making these foods is very difficult and time-consuming.

The girls of this society normally marry around age fourteen. The groom is typically three to five years older than the girl. Marriages are negotiated by the families, followed by a civil ceremony to seal the contract. The women are paid housekeeper's wages and are not eligible for any inheritance. The children of the marriage, however, are qualified for the inheritance.

Most of the Amhara are Christian and follow the strict teachings of the Orthodox Church. They believe that to be Amhara is to be Christian. They base many of their beliefs in practices that are not grounded in scripture. They practice baptism as an entrance into the church and as a means of salvation. Boys are baptized on the fortieth day after birth, while girls are baptized eighty days after birth.

The church also places extreme significance upon fasting. It is a great source of pride for the Orthodox Church because it distinguishes them from other churches and religions. The faithful in the church fast 250 days per year, while a "good" Christian is expected to fast a minimum of 180 days per year.

There are currently Bible portions, the complete Bible, evangelism resources, Jesus Film, God's Story Video, Christian radio broadcasting, scripture audio recordings, gospel audio recordings, and books/printed matter all in the Amharic language.

<http://strategyleader.org/profiles/amhara.html>  
<http://www.joshuaproject.net/languages.php?rol3=amh>

**00000**

**Boni, Aweera (80)**

*Somalia*

*\_Immigrant Group*

*\_\_\_African Sub-group*

**\_\_\_\_\_Bonni, Aweera People**

The entire country of Somalia is composed of two main groups, the Somali people and the immigrants from other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. There are several groups that now reside in Somalia that originated in other parts of Africa. One of these people groups is the Bonni, Aweera people.

The Boni, Aweera, along with other tribes of Africa, are referred to as the “bushmen,” because they are the remnants of Africa’s oldest cultural group. They are also referred to as the San, or the term Khoisan. They are typically very small in stature and have light yellowish skin. Over the years, the Boni, Aweera have survived with a high level of genetic purity due to their ability to utilize environments that are unsuitable for farming by engaging in hunting and gathering. Most Boni, Aweera are no longer hunters and gatherers, rather they engage now in farming.

The Bushman of Africa came from as far south as Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe and as far north as Libya, Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia. Originally, they were hunters and gatherers, their diet consisting of berries, nuts, roots and melons. The women gathered the plant food, while the men hunted with poisoned arrows and spears. This hunting and gathering society remained unchanged until very recently with the arrival of agriculture.

The Boni, Aweera are not considered a tribal group, because they do not have a paramount leader, nor do they have rigid ties of kinship. Rather, the Boni, Aweera have a loosely knit family culture whereby decisions are made by universal consensus. The opinion of each person in the society is weighed by their level of skill and experience.

The Boni, Aweera are generally nomadic, governed by the proximity of other families and clans. A typical Boni, Aweera territory will be up to a 25 mile circle, or large enough to ensure adequate food and water for all the people. The Boni, Aweera got their name from the Somali term “boni,” which means “one without possessions.”

Due to the efficient utilization of a hunter and gatherer society, there are very distinct roles and responsibilities for each person in society. Such organization is essential for survival. Despite the sexism in surrounding cultures, among the Boni, Aweera, women are considered of importance, particularly in their area of expertise in food gathering.

The Boni, Aweera’s believe in a mythical being who is not only the creator, but one that plays tricks on people. This being is known as Kaggen, or Cagn. Some bushman also believe in a greater and lesser god. The greater god they believe is associated with life and the rising of the sun, while the lesser god brings illness and death in life. Some of the religious leaders in society try to access these lesser gods by going into trances and altered states during ritual dances.

These dances for healing and for rain are rituals in which everyone participates. The women will typically sit around a fire, sing, and clap their hands. The men dance around the women, first in a clockwise circle and then the reverse. As the intensity of the dance increases, the men reach altered states of consciousness into a spirit realm where they plea for the sick souls.

Depictions of these dances can be seen in some rock art left behind by the bushmen. In this artwork, the dancers are often depicted in a strange bent over posture. It was later explained that these dancers often experience a great deal of pain during the dances.

They say that it is due to the contractions in the stomach muscles when the potency starts boiling during their spiritual exercises. Their noses will also begin to bleed when this happens.

Many occurrences in life the Boni, Aweera believe to be of supernatural significance. Many of these occurrences revolve around birth, death, gender, rain, and weather. For example, they believe that a person is born with good or bad rain-bringing abilities and that when they die, this ability is reactivated. The Boni, Aweera also believe that humans and animals used to be indistinguishable, but after a second creation humans were separated from all animals where they were educated in a social code.

They also believe that death is when the soul goes back to dwell in the great god's house in the sky. They do not believe, however, that the soul of the dead person is totally gone from the present world. Rather, they believe that the spirit can still influence the living. The people are very concerned when a religious leader or witchdoctor dies, because they believe that their wandering spirit is a danger to those still living.

Over a thousand years ago, the Boni, Aweera were invaded by Bantu herders and even more recently, white colonists. The Boni, Aweera faced great discrimination by both of these groups. They were evicted from their homeland, were oppressed, and even murdered in mass numbers. All of these factors reduced their numbers from several million to only 100,000. Today, these people believe themselves to be very primitive and they desire to be more like the other tribes. Many of them do not have any land rights and continue to be oppressed.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=101604&rog3=SO>

<http://www.cpsu.org.uk/downloads/Sheila%20Dutton.pdf>

**00000**

**Midgan, Ribí (6,100)**

*Somalia*

*\_Immigrant Group*

*\_\_\_Middle Eastern Sub-group*

**\_\_\_Midgan, Ribí People**

There are several groups that now reside in Somalia that originated in other parts of Africa. One of these people groups is the Midgan, Ribí people.

The Midgan, Ribí, along with other tribes of Africa, are referred to as the "bushmen," because they are the remnants of Africa's oldest cultural group. They are also referred to as the San, or the term Khoisan. They are typically very small in stature and have light yellowish skin. Over the years, the Midgan, Ribí have survived with a high level of genetic purity due to their ability to utilize environments that are unsuitable for farming by engaging in hunting and gathering. Most Midgan, Ribí are no longer hunters and gathers, rather they engage now in farming.



The Bushman of Africa came from as far south as Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe and as far north as Libya, Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia. Originally, they were hunters and gatherers, their diet consisting of berries, nuts, roots and melons. The women gathered the plant food, while the men hunted with poisoned arrows and spears. This hunting and gathering society remained unchanged until very recently with the arrival of agriculture.

The Midgan, Ribí are not considered a tribal group, because they do not have a paramount leader, nor do they have rigid ties of kinship. Rather, the Midgan, Ribí have a loosely knit family culture whereby decisions are made by universal consensus. The opinion of each person in the society is weighed by their level of skill and experience.

The Midgan, Ribí are generally nomadic, governed by the proximity of other families and clans. A typical Midgan, Ribí territory will be up to a 25 mile circle, or large enough to ensure adequate food and water for all the people.

Due to the efficient utilization of a hunter and gatherer society, there are very distinct roles and responsibilities for each person in society. Such organization is essential for survival. Despite the sexism in surrounding cultures, among the Midgan, Ribí, women are considered of importance, particularly in their area of expertise in food gathering.

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<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=101604&rog3=SO>)

**00000**

**Boon People (less than 100 in existence today)**

*Somalia*

*\_Immigrant Group*

*\_\_\_African Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Boon People*

The entire country of Somalia is composed of two main groups, the Somali people and the immigrants from other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. The Boon People originated in other parts of Africa before settling in the Somali region.

Today, there are very few Boon speakers. It is estimated that there are less than 100 of these people in existence today. The ones that do exist are believed to all be above 60 years of age. The remainder of the Boon population has fully assimilated into Somali culture and languages. Currently, there are no known ministry tools available to reach these people.

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia)) (“Ethnologue Languages of the World,” p. 381-383)

**00000**

**Borana People/Oromo, Borana-Arsi-Guji Speakers (41,000)**

*Somalia*

*\_Immigrant Group*

*\_\_\_African Sub-group*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Borana People/Oromo, Borana-Arsi-Guji Speakers*

The entire country of Somalia is composed of two main groups, the Somali people and the immigrants from other parts of Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. The Borana people originated in other parts of Africa, specifically in and around Kenya and Ethiopia, before some of them came to settle in Somalia.

In Somalia, there are currently over 41,000 Oromo, Borana-Arsi-Guji Speakers. It is unknown what people groups in Somalia speak this language. It is very possible that some of the Garre may speak dialects of the Oromo language. The Borana People of Ethiopia and Kenya speak this language. It is very possible that some of them have crossed over their borders and account for the 41,000 people who speak this language. However, it is also possible that there are other unnamed groups within Somali that speak this language.

This is the link to information on the Borana People of Africa:

<http://www.geocities.com/orvillejenkins/profiles/borana.html>

Regardless of whether it is these people who speak this language in Somalia or other groups, it is important to note that this language is spoken in the country. Also, sources show that the Oromo speakers are concentrated in Southern Somalia.

There is a Bible, the Jesus Film, a radio broadcast, and other gospel recordings available for the Borana People in Oromo, Borana-Arsi-Guji.

(“Ethnologue Languages of the World,” p. 381-383)

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia)

**00000**

**Baloch, Southern (7,000)**

*Somalia*

\_\_\_\_ *Immigrant Group*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Middle Eastern Sub-group*

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Baloch, Southern People***

The Southern Baloch are originally from Iran, right on the Iran-Pakistan border. There are over a half million Southern Baloch in Iran, but over eight million in the larger Baloch community. There are other Baloch groups, separated by the language they speak. These languages have been divided into Eastern, Western, and Southern Baloch.

There is a small community of Baloch, Southern in Somalia. Their numbers total near 7,000. However, very little is known about the Baloch, Southern lifestyle within Somalia. The description that follows will be of the Baloch, Southern in Iran. However,

there will still be many similarities between the Baloch of Iran and those who now reside in Somalia.

The name “Baloch” has several different meanings. Some say that it means “nomad”, while other still claim it comes from an old Persian word meaning “the cock’s crest.” Their history is also rather mysterious. Some believe that their origins can be traced back to Nimrod, Noah’s grandson. Others disagree. Research does show, however, that they first migrated to Iran during the Moghul period of the twelfth century. Their territory became known as “Balochistan.”

The Southern, Baloch follow a strict honor code known as the Balochmayar. This code indicates that they should always be hospitable and merciful, deal honestly with each other, and should offer refuge to strangers. The Southern Baloch also have an extensive list of songs and poetry, which has helped to preserve their heritage over the years.

Baloch society is dependent on a combination of farming and semi-nomadic shepherding. The harsh climate, however, has made their life difficult and many young men have since moved to other cities in search of work. Perhaps that is how the Baloch, Southern came to live in Somalia.

The Baloch society is organized into clans based on family lines and tribes defined by territory. Male elders in the village are the head of the tribal units. They typically live in mud houses that are clustered around the local chief’s home. During the winter time, the Baluch live in less permanent dwellings, such as tents, were they can easily travel great distances.

It is believed that the Baloch used to be followers of Zoroaster before they came to Islam and became Sunni Muslims. The religious practices of the Baloch are very private.

The Jesus Film and the New Testament has been translated into Baloch, Southern. There is a very high illiteracy rate among them and there has been no mission work among them. At this point, there are no known believers among them.

[http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p\\_code/1468.html](http://www.ksafe.com/profiles/p_code/1468.html)

[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia)

**00000**

**Indo-Pakistani (7,000)**

*Somalia*

*\_Immigrant Group*

*\_\_\_Middle Eastern Sub-group*

*\_\_\_\_\_Indo-Pakistani People*

The Indo-Pakistani people are originally from the Indian subcontinent. They now occupy many parts of the world. In many countries, these people follow Hinduism, while in others, specifically on the Arabian peninsula, practice Islam.

For most of them Hindi is their native tongue, although many Indo-Pakistanis also speak the language of the nation where they currently live. Indo-Pakistani is a general term to describe these people, although many of them are actually Gujarati, Hindi, or Punjabi.

The Hindu life has traditionally been dominated by a rigid caste system of social classes. These caste lines are typically drawn along occupational units. Each caste is then divided into sub-castes and even smaller social classes. These groups are strict, for one cannot change the caste in which they were born. Their entire life, the Indo-Pakistanis are forced to work and marry only within their class. Typically, the wealthier casts are the ones who immigrate to other countries to establish their own businesses.

The highest Hindu caste is the Brahmins, who consist of the religious and scholarly of society. Through British influence in India, however, other castes have also been given the opportunity to receive an education. Indo-Pakistani groups outside of India exhibit these evidences of British influences more than those in India do. Many of them even wear western clothing.

Some Indo-Pakistanis retain many parts of their culture. Many men still wear their dhotis, while women wear their saris. They also continue to eat their native Indian foods. Indo-Pakistanis are known to eat meat with their meals, although the Hindu religion commands vegetarianism.

Indo-Pakistanis in the Arabian Peninsula have been subjected to strong Islamic influence. They are required to follow Islamic law. Women in particular are required to wear chadors, or the loose fitting black robes that cover the entire body, while they are in public and during the Muslim month of Ramadan. Those in Djibouti, however, are allotted considerable freedom and most Indo-Pakistanis practice Hinduism.

Hindus worship many gods and goddesses, making them polytheistic. Among the many gods they worship is Brahman, the creator of the universe; Vishnu, the preserver; and Shiva, its destroyer. Shiva's wife is known by four different names. She is either called Durga or Kali, the goddess of motherhood, or Parvati or Uma, the goddess of destruction.

Hindus believe in reincarnation, or that the souls of humans or animals live innumerable lives in different bodies. The level to which a soul moves depends on whether the person or animal has lived a good or an evil life. If they lived a good life, the soul will be born into a higher state. If they have lived an evil life, the soul will be reborn into a lower state. This cycle continues until the soul achieves spiritual perfection.

In Hindi, there are many ministry tools available. There is the complete Bible, evangelism resources, the Jesus Film, God's Story video, Father's Love Letter, Christian

radio broadcasting, scripture audio recordings, gospel audio recordings, and various books and printed matter.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=104026&rog3=SO>

**11956**

**Yemeni Arab (13,439)**

*Somalia*

*\_Immigrant Group*

*\_\_Middle East Sub-group*

*\_\_\_Yemeni Arab People*

Yemeni Arabs have their origins in Yemen in the Middle East.

Yemeni Arabs, also known as Djibouti Arabs or Taizzi-Adeni, dwell along the coastal waters of the Indian Ocean. They live in villages, yet, they are very tribal in nature. They have a total of over 1,700 tribes that are ruled by sheiks, or Arab chiefs who are considered to be experts in Islam. Their villages are set up in such a way that they can be easily defended. They also control all the goods and people who pass through.

In recent years, many of the Yemeni Arabs have settled into mountain villages. There they raise grains, vegetables, coffee, melons, dates, mangoes, and pomegranates. They also have domestic animals to provide both milk and eggs for their family.

The Yemeni Arab community breaks down into four classes of people. The first of these is the Sayyid, or the wealthy, who trace their descent back to the grandson of Muhammad. There is also the Qatani, or tribesmen, and the Shafi'ite who are townsmen employed as merchants, artisans, and craftsmen. Finally, there are the Akhdam, who are the slaves in society.

The homes themselves are usually elaborately decorated "town houses," equipped with artistic brickwork around the windows, carpet in the house, and mattresses and cushions lining the walls to lean up against while sitting. It is customary to leave your shoes at the door before entering the house.

Yemeni Arabs are very social people. Time with friends and relatives over daily coffee is very typical. Besides coffee, their diet consists of wheat bread and porridge made with boiled meat.

Among Arabs, there are many different classes which are usually determined by the type of clothing worn. Yemeni Arab tribesmen can be easily distinguished from others. The women wear veils at all times while the men wear daggers.

The majority of Yemeni Arab marriages are monogamous even though Muslim teaching permits them to have up to four wives. In more recent times, there has been an increase

in “love” marriages as opposed to the traditional arranged ones. By age nine, young girls are considered ready for marriage.

The vast majority of Yemeni Arabs follow the teachings of Islam. In fact, about half of them consider themselves to be Zaydis Muslims, while 40% are Shafi’ites, and 5% are Ismaili. The Zaydis sect of Islam is considered to be quite fanatical. Most of the followers of this sect are warriors and perceive all wars to be a manifestation of Jihad, or holy war.

Besides the Muslim teachings, Islamic laws also greatly influence the lives of the Yemeni Arabs. Their Islamic communities are patrilineal, meaning that inheritances are passed down through the males. Females are also valued for their ability to bear children. In Muslim society, children are considered to be the families’ greatest asset. Preservation of their people is also very important, as seen with laws only allowing marriages to take place inside their own group.

There is currently only one gospel audio recordings available in the Arabic, Taizzi-Adeni Spoken language.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>

**42803**

**Juba Somali (23,186)**

*Somalia*

*\_Immigrant group*

*\_\_\_Middle Eastern sub-group (or possibly the African sub-group)*

*\_\_\_\_\_Juba Somali People*

There is conflicting information revolving around the origin of the Jubba Somali people.

Some sources say that the Jubba Somali is simply another name for the people of the Jubba River. Jubba Somali would then be a term, such as Gosha, that includes several other groups such as the Mushungulu and other groups of Bantu or Swahili-speaking origins. If this is true, then there is not need for a Jubba Somali profile. However, other sources indicate that the Jubba Somali originated in the Middle East.

Regardless of their origin, the Jubba Somali have basically assimilated into Somali culture. They even have strong clan affiliations with the Digil and Rahanwiin. They even speak the Maay language. They live along the western border of Somalia where they inhabit the fertile regions around the Wabi Shabelle tributary.

If the Juba Somali is indeed an Arab group, they would be one of the smaller ones in Somalia. Despite their size, they have successfully maintained their tribal affiliations. They typically have one of two types of settlements. Sometimes the Juba Somali live in large, clustered villages, while other times they live in a chain of small huts that occupy the land nearest the waterways.

Their settlements area very structured. Their homes are often made of mud, equipped with a flat roof and one interior room. Some homes will even have thatched roofs that extend out to make porches. Families will typically have more than one of these houses. All of them will be enclosed by walls made of mud or thorns.

If the Juba Somali do not have a home made in this style, their dwelling will typically be a Sudanese-style. These homes will also be one room, with a cone-shaped thatch roof. The house itself will either be made of mud or thatch.

The Juba Somali are known for their agriculture. Like other Arab groups, they grow wheat, vegetables, and coffee. They are also able to grow melons, dates, mangoes, and pomegranates in this are of Somalia. They also keep some domestic animals to help supply the communities with milk and eggs.

Marriage for the Juba Somali is typically endogamous, meaning that it takes place only within their own clan. They also are monogamous, meaning that husbands have only one wife. In the past, marriages used to be arranged, but today it is acceptable for an individual to choose their own mate.

Children are seen as the greatest asset in Juba Somali culture. The family inheritance is passed down from the fathers to sons. Boys always inherit more than girls. The value of women in society is seen in their ability to bond families through the act of marriage and their ability to bear children.

The social life of the Juba Somali is also very important, as it is for other East African Arabs. Daily, members in the community will meet with one another to drink coffee.

Juba Somali maintain the Arab tradition of having different social classes in society, despite the teaching of Islam. These different classes can be seen in the distinguishing factors in their dress. In their culture, women do wear veils, both at home and while outside. The Juba Somali also follow other strict Muslim teaching that are from the Koran.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=105958&rog3=SO>[http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=Somalia](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Somalia) (<http://www.orvillejenkins.org/peoples/somalibantu.html>)

**00000**  
**British (300)**

*Somalia*  
*\_\_Immigrant Group*  
*\_\_\_\_European Sub-group*  
*\_\_\_\_\_British People*

There are still communities of English people that live within Somalia as a result of Somalia's colonization by Britain.



There are many ministry tools available in English.

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=102927&rog3=SO>

### **Missiological Implications**

1. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek to meet the physical needs of the peoples of Somalia as an expression of the Love of Christ.

The people of Somalia are a hurting people. All of their lives, they have known much war, hunger, thirst, and pain. They are a people desperate to know of the love of Christ. With strongholds rooted deeply in the Islamic faith, missionaries will need a platform from which to work, as well as fresh, inventive ideas as they examine the history and culture of the people and search for bridges to share the gospel. One of the most effective ways to sharing the gospel in this culture will be a living gospel of action in line with words of truth. A physical gospel will be integral to penetrating the hearts of the people.

2. Evangelical Christians and Churches should find ways to actually live among the peoples in order to demonstrate God's love and Christian principles

Living alongside these people in the sometimes harsh conditions of this region and helping them meet their own needs is one avenue with which to share the gospel. These people physically hunger and thirst. The love of Christ must first be shown by meeting these needs before words of truth can truly become alive to them. Only 31% of Somalia's population has access to safe water. By beginning a water project that provides both clean, safe drinking water and reliable water sources would be very beneficial for these people.

3. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek to share health care with the peoples of Somalia

Health care is also a great need in Somalia. Around 75% of the population is afflicted with intestinal parasites. Bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, typhoid fever, hepatitis A and E, malaria, and dengue fever, are all great health concerns of the people. The vast majority of the population does not have access to adequate health care. They also have a great need for health education across all topics from general hygiene to the prevention of the spread of AIDS. Having been under previous European rule, most Somalis, especially the Swahili people group, would respond positively to most aspects of health care.

4. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek ways to contribute to the economic opportunities in Somalia

Christians could help Somalis to develop new and better business ventures. Somalia is one of the world's poorest and least developed countries. Around 75%

of the country's labor force is dependent on agriculture and only 1.7% of the land is arable and only 0.3 % is irrigated. Overgrazing, deforestation, and drought further complicate their means of survival. The vast majority of the population could benefit from new business ideas that would open up more jobs for these people. The Swahili people would be particularly receptive to a project such as this. Through mission efforts of this nature, doors will be open to share about God the Provider.

There is also a great need for aid workers, with government permission, to work in construction, humanitarian aid, and community development programs in Somalia. The entire population of Somalia is suffering due to the fighting, famine, and death. It is estimated over 300,000 people have been killed. Even today, there are hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees in neighboring countries and around the world.

5. Evangelical Christians and Churches should consider using some forms of Bible Storying as a proclamation means in Somalia.

Bible Storying would also be an effective tool in this oral culture. Every ceremonial feast among the Somali people includes storytelling, with a particular emphasis to the telling of heroic tales of their ancestors. To have a mission worker craft a storying set alongside Christian national partners would be a great ministry opportunity. It would also begin to break down the strong prejudice that Christianity is incompatible with nomadism.

6. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek ways to alleviate the negative opinions that Muslims in Somalia and other nations have concerning Christianity

Christians need to show Muslim people that Christianity is not oppressive. From the time that the Ethiopian Christians invaded Somalia in the 1400s, the Muslim people began associating Christianity with oppression. It will take many years of hard work coupled with a loving spirit to break down these sharp prejudices.

7. Evangelical Christians and Churches should develop approaches to the Islamic peoples of Somalia that would avoid the many barriers to their considering the Message.

The Bantu people in Somalia could be to approaches that appeal to the traditional religion aspects of their beliefs and lives. Nearly 100% of Somalia follow Islamic practices, many of the people groups there, specifically those of Bantu origin, were not originally Muslim. Even today, it is believed that these previous slaves use Islam simply as a "cover" religion and culture. It is necessary to be aware of Islam and its implications on these people, but it will also be helpful to study the traditional religions of the Bantu people, because their animistic religion still is at the heart of their beliefs. In the Swahili cultures one sees the beginnings of tendencies to deviate from these Islamic cultural norms. In Swahili society, the

women are becoming more independent and are involved in the economic and social aspects of society.

Among the Muslim faith, there is great importance placed upon the hierarchy of the family, namely the submission of those subservient to the head of the home. Among Somalis a strong emphasis continues on segregated worship for men and women. Not only are these two points of culture important for knowledge of cultural norms, but it also can be an open door, say for an evangelical couple, to display a Christian version of love and servitude. Evangelists also need to be aware of the importance of men ministering to men and women to women among the Muslims.

The Islamic faith has failed the Somali people. Conflict between two powerful Sufi brotherhoods has contributed to many of Somalia's problems today. Somalia is considered the most lawless country in the world. Violence, intolerance, and a lack of love between the warring Muslim groups open the door for the impact of Christianity on the people. These facts show the possible openings for evangelism among the Somalis.

Evangelism in Somalia should seek to provide help for converts who may face persecution from family and others if they become Christians. There is great antagonism towards conversions from the Islamic faith. Somalia is ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in the persecution index of the world. Muslims who convert to Christianity can lose their family, honor, job, or even life. The Somali church has been driven underground and a number of believers have been martyred. Christian missionaries need to be prepared to confront the forces of evil as well as be willing to endure the hardships that will inevitably come to the Christians of this area. New converts will need training on how to face these difficulties in righteousness.

Various sources contribute methods of witnessing to followers of Islam. Training evangelists should train in the use of these methods.

8. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek to involve some of the Somali Christians who are living in exile as evangelists to return to Somalia and evangelize their peoples.

An estimated 3.5 million Somalis live in lands immediately surrounding Somalia (Ethiopia 2.8 million, Kenya 511,000; Djibouti 192,000). As many as 2,000 Somali Christians may exist globally. Many of these are now refugees. Any one of these refugee groups could be a beginning point for a movement to evangelize Somalis and lead them to return to Somalia to evangelize their people. It is important to keep this in mind when evangelizing. Trained and motivated, these believers could be a vanguard for reaching the land and its people.

9. Evangelical Christians and Churches should seek to make written and oral resources available to the peoples of Somalia

Most Somalis have little or no access to the Bible and little ability to read it if it were given to them. Giving instruction on reading in both their heart language and the English language for the people who are not or have not been in school can be a great tool in preparing hearts to hear the gospel message as well as providing a legitimate platform for mission workers.

The Swahili people are particularly receptive to learning in Western schools. To one day have many indigenous Christians who can read from their copy of the Word, in their language to their own people, will do nothing but foster the reproducibility of the Message across grave cultural barriers.

To combat the problem of literacy in the mean time, there is a great need for more or better Christian radio broadcasts for the people. Evangelistic groups would most likely be unable to have much to do with the radio broadcast, but they could help cast a vision for the national believers to reach many for Christ through the air waves.

Translation projects among many of the people groups remains a tremendous need. Many of the groups have no Christian resources at all available in their language. Any way that a missionary could help assist in translation would facilitate this process.

10. Evangelical Christians and Churches should pray for the people of Somalia, the Christians among them, the unsaved, and the circumstances.

Intercession will be the key to reaching these people with the gospel of Christ. Evangelists should not set foot on Somali soil without having established a good prayer network back home. Prayer also will be key in the development of a Christian work and will be the door through which Christ will move in the hearts of the people.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761554555\\_2/Somalia.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761554555_2/Somalia.html)

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/countries.php>

[\(Operation World, p. 575\)](#)

[\(WorldMark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, p. 386\)](#)

<http://orvillejenkins.com/profiles/gosha.html>

### Pictures

Pictures are located in Shortcut to Maps/MapsII/Valerie/SOMALIA/People Pictures.

### Links

#### News:

<http://allafrica.com/somalia/>: top news stories

<http://www.banadir.com/index.shtml>: news site

[http://www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=Horn\\_of\\_Africa&SelectCountry=Somalia](http://www.irinnews.org/frontpage.asp?SelectRegion=Horn_of_Africa&SelectCountry=Somalia):  
United Nations news site

**Overview:**

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country\\_profiles/1072592.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1072592.stm): BBC country profile  
[http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in\\_depth/africa/2004/somalia/default.stm](http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/africa/2004/somalia/default.stm): more in depth information by  
BBC on Somalia  
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/so.html>: CIA Factbook overview  
<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/sotoc.html>: Library of Congress overview  
<http://www.country-data.com/frd/cs/sotoc.html>: Based on the Federal Research Division of the Library  
of Congress.

**Directories:**

<http://search.looksmart.com/>: search engine that connects to other Somalia links  
<http://dmoz.org/Regional/Africa/Somalia/>: search engine that connects to other Somalia links  
<http://www.sul.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/africa/somalia.html>: site with many links  
[http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Country\\_Specific/Somalia.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Country_Specific/Somalia.html): African Studies Center site.  
<http://dir.yahoo.com/Regional/Countries/Somalia/>: Yahoo directory site

**Other:**

<http://www.mogadishuuniversity.com/index.html>: Somalia's website for Mogadishu University