

SOMALIA REFUGEE

BVOR BACKGROUNDBERS



Photo by Dalmar Travels



B V O R B A C K G R O U N D E R S

SOMALIA'S RECENT HISTORY OF UNREST + DISPLACEMENT

Somalia is ethnically diverse with significant cultural and language differences between the various clans in the southern and central parts of the country. Much of the country is clan-based with Samaal being the dominant clan in the northern part of Somalia. The Samaal culture has become pervasive across much of Somalia, with their language being Somalia's official language.

Discrimination against minority groups is common throughout the history of Somalia and continues today. The civil war in the 1990s unleashed clan-based violence at a national level, exposing many minority groups to human rights abuses. Millions of Somalis were displaced during the civil war. Violence against minorities continues even after the civil war, including discrimination such as the prohibition on intermarriage and unequal social and political rights.

Somalia continues to be affected by armed conflict between the Somali government/pro-government militias and Al-Shabaab. While most of the human rights violations are committed by Al-Shabaab, state agents and clan militias are also involved in committing abuses against children, women, and human rights defenders.

In addition to the ongoing violence within the country, Somalia, along with neighbouring countries, was heavily affected by desert locust swarms during 2019 and 2020 which caused crop destruction and an increase in food insecurity, leading the government to declare a state of emergency in February 2020. Droughts and the locust infestation have caused a sharp decrease in crop production, estimated to be 50 to 70 per cent below the last 10-year average in January 2022.¹ By August 2022, Somalia was affected by a severe drought exacerbated by multiple failed rainy seasons. The drought has caused a severe deterioration in food security, access to water, and access to livelihoods across Somalia





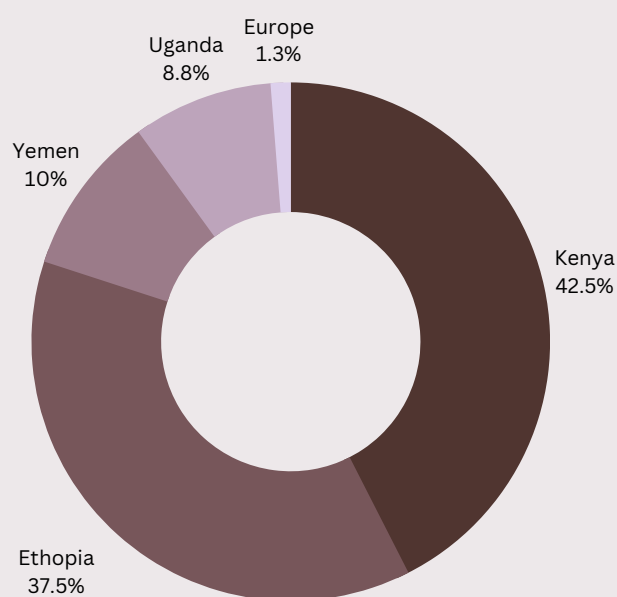
B V O R B A C K G R O U N D E R S

WHERE DO PEOPLE GO?

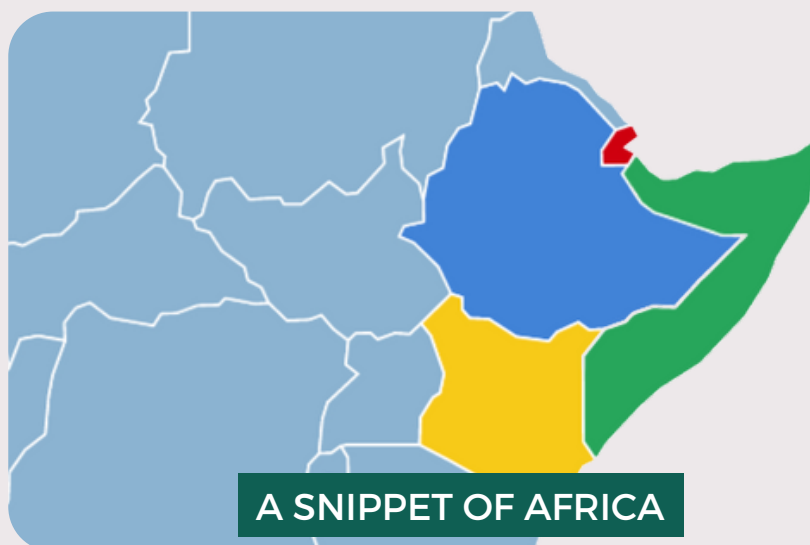
An estimated 2.97 million people are internally displaced in Somalia due to conflict and natural disasters; the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is one of the highest in the world. There are over 815,000 refugees who have left Somalia for the following countries. **(Refer to graph.)**

WHY CAN'T THEY STAY THERE?

Refugee women and girls who are displaced are vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence. Refugee children often struggle to access education, healthcare, and other basic social services and are vulnerable to forced marriage, family separation, gender-based violence and child labour.



Refugees fleeing Somalia may be at risk of persecution for reasons that are related to the ongoing armed conflict in Somalia, with clan-militias easily crossing borders to target people. Ongoing drought, famine, and economic instability in neighbouring countries make it hard for host countries to support refugees without significant international aid.



A SNIPPET OF AFRICA

EASTERN AFRICA ON THE TIP OF THE HORN OF AFRICA. SURROUNDED BY **DJIBOUTI**, **ETHIOPIA**, AND **KENYA**, ACROSS THE GULF OF ADEN FROM **YEMEN**. **SOMALIA** HAS THE LONGEST COASTLINE IN MAINLAND AFRICA ALONG GULF OF ADEN AND INDIAN OCEAN





B V O R B A C K G R O U N D E R S

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Blended Visa-Office Referred (BVOR) program helps to resettle refugees to Canada identified by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) as those who are the most vulnerable and most in need of resettlement.

The BVOR program is a partnership program between sponsor groups in Canada, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and the newcomers. IRCC provides up to six months of income support to the newcomers, while the private sponsors provide the start-up costs, remaining six months financial support, along with social and emotional support for the newcomers' first year in Canada.

For more information about the BVOR program, and to view profiles of refugees that urgently need to be matched with a sponsoring group, please visit our website or contact us via email.

Refugee Sponsorship Training Program

 BVOR@RSTP.CA

 416.290.1700
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 RSTP.CA

 **CCS**
Catholic Crosscultural Services

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