

Security on the Move – Research Brief No.2

Creating Satellite Towns: Displacement and Resettlement in Bosaaso

(March 2019) This research brief summarises key findings from the 2017-2019 Security on the Move research project. Funded by DFID and ESRC, Security on the Move focused on the perspectives and experiences of displaced people who have settled in four Somali cities: Baidoa, Bosaaso, Hargeisa and Mogadishu. These four cities fall under different political administrations, but share two core characteristics: First, they are growing rapidly in terms of size and density, and second, an important driver of this growth is large scale in-migration caused by forced displacements. Although many issues relating to the economic and social precarity of displaced people are shared across the cities, there are important differences in regard to the historical experiences of ‘camp urbanisation’ and local and international efforts to manage patterns of settlement. This research brief focuses on the experiences of displaced people in the port city of Bosaaso, commercial capital of the Puntland State of Somalia.



Resettlement area; Photo taken by Nuuraw in Bosaaso

Key findings

- A distinctive and separate new cluster of settlements for displaced people has emerged on the edge of Bosaaso. Such re-settlement schemes were cooperatively designed and implemented by international organisations and the local government and contribute to sub-urbanisation.
- Although many displaced people felt they had benefited from these resettlement initiatives (for example through acquisition of housing and land tenure) there remains insufficient access to basic services, particularly in regards to education.
- Many interviewees who now reside in these areas did not directly benefit from the ‘incremental tenure’ pro-

grammes. Risks of further displacement remain, alongside issues of inadequate housing and shelter.

- Precarity is fostered by a lack of paid jobs, and an increasingly competitive market for casual labour.
- Women often bear a much larger economic burden of provision for their families and domestic violence is prevalent.
- People in the new suburbs belong mainly to clan groups that are not dominant in Bosaaso. Spatial segregation along clan-lines brings a risk of future conflict.

City Background

From the civil war of the 1980s onwards, Bosaaso was largely spared the mass violence that affected many other cities. The city evolved into the international

trade hub of the autonomous Puntland State of Somalia, which was formed in 1998. Bosaaso is characterized by a growing international trade economy. Much of the labour power behind the physical and economic growth of the city was provided by displaced people. The majority of these people initially hailed from clans fleeing early/mid 1990s civil war violence in the south, including many un-armed groups that have historically been racially or culturally discriminated against. After 2006, increasing numbers of people from what is now the South-West State of Somalia were arriving in Bosaaso, escaping from intensified fighting and consecutive droughts.

of the city and the eastwards expansion of housing, largely made up of resettlements.



Central/Eastern Bosaaso 2003

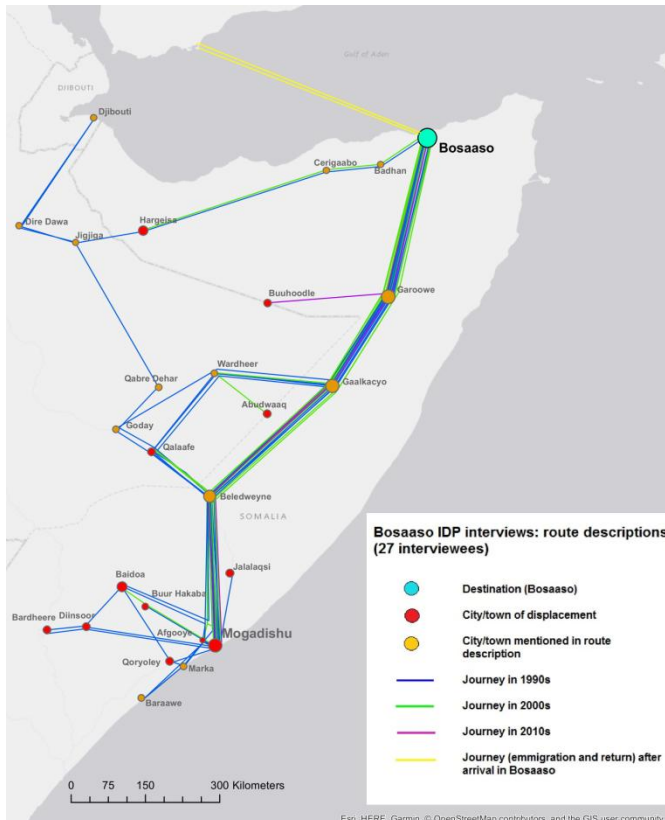


Central/Eastern Bosaaso 2017: suburbanisation through resettlement initiatives

Between 2005 and 2014, an initiative by the Bosaaso municipality and international actors, central among them UN Habitat, resettled around 1700 households to land at the eastern edge of the city, beyond a new bypass road. Based on an incremental tenure model whereby beneficiaries gain full ownership of the land/property after continuous residence for 15 years, the settlers were provided permanent (stone) or semi-permanent (corrugated metal) houses. A new set of neighbourhoods has emerged at the eastern edge of the city. The new settlements are linked to the city by the bypass road and physical and social infrastructure. Police stations, health centres, schools and mosque, were constructed for what evolved into a cluster of suburban neighbourhoods – or a satellite town in itself.

Research methods and participants

In total, in 2017/2018 the Security on the Move research team interviewed 120 men and women (the majority of whom were displaced people) of different ages and clan backgrounds across the four cities. It provided displaced 40 people (10 in each city) with cameras which they used to document their everyday



Map: Peter Chonka

Bosaaso has been an attractive destination for displaced people from all over Somalia for a variety of reasons. Its growing import/export economy is a draw to those seeking work in the city, many of them as casual laborers in the port, the construction industry, or domestic services. Bosaaso port is located at the end of an important economic and trade route leading from the south-central regions. Many people arrived in Bosaaso with the intention of taking advantage of the port's maritime connections across the Gulf of Aden to Yemen, seeking opportunities in the Arabian Peninsula or moving further towards Europe.

Partly as a result of conflict-induced migration, Bosaaso has grown rapidly. Satellite imagery of the city since 2003 clearly shows the broadening urban sprawl

lives. The photos in this brief were taken by those displaced people. All research participants from Bosaaso lived in the new eastern neighbourhoods, but only some had benefited from the incremental tenure schemes. The majority of interviewees had come from southern regions and hailed from various clan groups.

Research findings

People in the new settlements reported improved access to services. These included mother and child healthcare and policing. The settlements have transport links with the main town, and the economy of these settlements has grown with the opening of new markets and small-scale businesses.

Nonetheless, most displaced people face extreme economic pressure and continue to live in precarity.

Interviewees referred to unemployment and described their daily struggle for income. All interviewees relied on casual labour, and remained vulnerable to exploitation. Displaced people are a very important part of the workforce and contribute to the growth of the city. Their work, however, is casual, irregular and often not appreciated. Disruptions to the operations of the port in recent years have had a significant impact on displaced people who have traditionally sought day labour there. Many interviewees rely on scavenging from the rubbish dumps in and around the neighbourhoods. Child labour is prevalent, for example boys travelling into the main city to work as shoeshiners.



Photo, Yasiin: women collecting rubbish

People continue to lack access to some basic services, and interviewees emphasized education in particular.

Education facilities are limited and it appears that few children in the new neighbourhoods attend school regularly. Schools were initially established, but were not sustained. More common is at-

tendance to Quranic schools (*dugsi*) run privately in the neighbourhoods.

Experiences of displacement affect men and women differently.

Women are often bearing a larger economic burden to provide for their families. They typically work more for less pay, and have the additional responsibility of child care, water collection, and other housework. Men are often not able to provide for their families. Domestic violence is prevalent, often driven by family disputes over income and the use of and expenditure on khat by men. Many female interviewees were divorced or they and their children were abandoned by their husbands. Many interviewees felt that security had improved after their resettlement, and they often contributed to initiatives (like neighbourhood patrols) to maintain this. Nonetheless, experiences of crime and violence remain, including sexual violence. Attitudes towards increased proximity to police and other state security forces were mixed. Some interviewees emphasised the improvements this brought for their security, whilst others mentioned intimidation, for example when individuals linked to the police aggressively collect debts, and interviewees also reported violence by men in uniform against residents.

Property is fundamental to all interviewees, especially land and housing security.

Most interviewees had experienced prior evictions in Bosaaso. Some were concerned that informal agreements they had entered into for settlement in the new neighbourhoods were about to expire and expressed uncertainty about their future. Increasing real estate prices in Bosaaso are contributing to the growth of the new settlements. Evictions and resettlement of displaced people inside Bosaaso continues, re-settlers in the new neighbourhoods are often joined by relatives, and new arrivals continue to enter into informal rent and land-use agreements with land-owners and other re-settled people. These arrangements materialise in different types of housing with stone houses and metal huts intermingled with makeshift tents. New arrivals often set up tents, and continue to pay rent to landowners. Interviewees also noted the heat and discomfort of semi-permanent corrugated metal huts, often constructed with the support of humanitarian agencies.



Photo: Nuurow – stone and cardboard housing

The new cluster of displaced people’s settlements is spatially and socially separated from the main city.

The new settlements are overwhelmingly inhabited by people from southern regions, including minority groups that have been traditionally marginalised and discriminated against. Although many project interviewees talked about improvements in relations between locals and displaced people, the spatial segregation of in-migrants has the potential to cause problems and conflicts in the future. These risks are heightened by the continued activities of militias such as Al Shabaab or an Islamic State affiliate in Bosaaso

and its surroundings. In the past, Bosaaso’s security forces have associated certain southern clans with Islamist militants leading to indiscriminate arrests and even deportations.

In perspective: comparisons with and lessons from the other project cities

Compared to the other research sites, Bosaaso provides the clearest example of the ‘successful’ resettlement of displaced people to new neighbourhoods. International and local government initiatives have rehoused a large number of people. The new settlements emerged as a centre of gravity for subsequent arrivals of displaced people to the city. Although similar efforts have taken place in Hargeisa, these have been more dispersed and have included smaller numbers of people. In Hargeisa the camps for displaced have transformed over the years into informal settlements and remain part of the urban fabric of the main city. Many of the residents in these informal settlements belong to the dominant clan groups in Hargeisa, whereas in Bosaaso the majority of displaced people hail from southern clans. Greater efforts need to be made in Bosaaso to integrate people in the new neighbourhoods into local governance structures.

The experience of Bosaaso is instructive for policy makers in other cities. In Mogadishu and Baidoa, forced displacement and arrival continue, but coordinated re-settlement schemes have not yet taken place. The Bosaaso experience shows the necessity of close dialogue between international/governmental authorities and the intended ‘beneficiaries’ of resettlement scheme with respect to property arrangements, type of housing, and sustainable provision of services.

These research findings have been presented to local authorities, international humanitarian agencies, civil society groups and research participants in the four cities in a series of photo exhibitions and public debates in January 2019. For full details of the project and these events see here: <http://securityonthemove.co.uk/events/> Similar exhibition launch events will be held in Oslo (February 28), London (March 14), and Nairobi (April 03). For any questions regarding this research brief please contact either Jutta.bakonyi@durham.ac.uk; pe-ter.chonka@kcl.ac.uk; manedle100@gmail.com or kirsti.stuvoy@nmbu.no.

