

# Security on the Move – Research Brief No.1

## Displacement, Insecurity and Camp Management in Baidoa

**(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 settled in four Somali cities: Baidoa, Bosaaso, Hargeisa and Mogadishu. These four cities are 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 displacement. Although many issues relating to the 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 camps and other settlements. This research brief focuses on the experiences of displaced in Baidoa, the capital city of the South West State of Somalia.



(IDP camp on city's outskirts. Photo taken by Mumino in Baidoa)

### Key findings

- Camp settlement in Baidoa largely takes place along clan lines.
- Many displaced people lack access to basic services, and depend on humanitarian aid.
- Precarity is fostered by a lack of paid jobs, and an increasingly competitive market for casual labour.
- The lack of labour regulations (or the failure to implement them) makes displaced vulnerable to many forms of exploitation.
- Women often bear a much larger economic burden of provision for their families.
- Domestic violence is prevalent.
- Property rights and rising land prices affect displaced people, their relations with camp ‘gatekeepers’, and wider patterns of urbanisation in the city.

### City Background

Baidoa was labeled the ‘city of death’ when the combination of drought and civil war violence in the early 1990s killed hundreds of thousands of people in Somalia. In the mid-1990s, the city became the capital of an administration established by a local clan militia. Although this initially had popular support, by the early 2000s it had come to be characterized by factional in-fighting. From 2007 until 2012, the city was controlled by Al Shabaab. Although they withdrew from Baidoa, the Islamist militia still has a presence in many of the surrounding rural areas and poses a security risk to the city. In this volatile context, Baidoa has over recent years experienced large scale in-migration of people fleeing from violence, thirst and hunger, as well as heavy Al Shabaab taxation. Baidoa is now the political centre of the South West State, a federal member state of the Somali Federal Republic. Security in the city has improved in recent years and the urban economy is

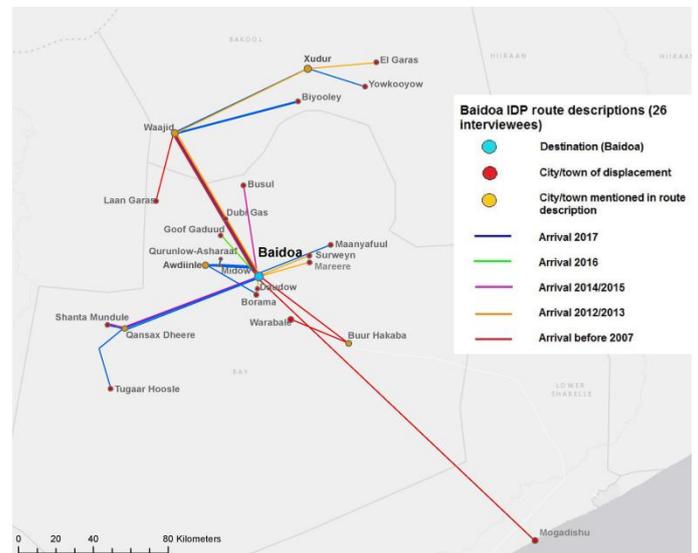
growing. This, along with increased humanitarian activities, have served as ‘pull factors’ for displaced people to come to the city in search of safety, aid and economic opportunities. The satellite images below show the growth of Baidoa between 2004 (top) and 2018 (bottom). Although there are IDP camps all around the city’s outskirts, there has been particular growth of these settlements near the airport (south west in images) and on the northern outskirts.



Baidoa 2004/2018. Source: Google Earth

### 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 lives. The photos in this brief were taken by those displaced people. As the adjacent map shows, the people interviewed in Baidoa had mainly been displaced from the rural regions of Bay and Bakool, though one was a returnee from the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya. Interviewees arrived in Baidoa between 1 month and 7 years prior to the interviews. However, the overwhelming majority had arrived between 8 months and 2 years ago. Many of the interviewees had been previously displaced.



Map: Peter Chonka

### Research findings

**Many displaced people in Baidoa lack access to basic services such as housing, water, sanitation, healthcare and education.** Interviewees emphasised the struggle to get water, the lack of sanitation, and un-hygienic living conditions. Traditional Qu’ranic schools (*Dugsi*) are held in open spaces without facilities, and many people often cannot even afford to send their children to these types of schools. Child labour is rampant, and girls often have to take care of younger siblings

**Many people are dependent on humanitarian aid.** Aid flows have become an important, but irregular and unreliable part of the livelihoods of many people. People move between camps to receive food vouchers or cash. Information flows are inconsistent, and at times aid stops without people being informed. The practice of establishing ‘rice huts’ appears pronounced in Baidoa: this involves locals agreeing with camp managers to set up huts in the camp in order to benefit from humanitarian assistance without actually living there.

**Economic precarity, a lack of job opportunities and labour regulations were emphasized by interviewees in all cities, including Baidoa.** Displaced people are a large part of the workforce for fast growing cities such as Baidoa. All interviewees relied on petty entrepreneurial activities or casual labour: women often go from door to door to get day jobs in laundry, as cleaners or housemaids. Men (and in some cases also women) work as porters or try to get work at one of the many construction sites in the cities. But as one of the interviewees in Baidoa described: “workers are too many, they are like goats that go for grazing”. Competition is high and people need per-

sonal or clan connections to get access to the labour market. City newcomers often lack these connections. Casual workers face many forms of exploitation. Women experienced harassment when working in households, and many have been affected by delayed or denied payment. Men work in construction without safety regulations. If they get injured during their work, they neither receive medical care nor compensation. Again, while labour regulations may exist, there are few institutions equipped or willing to support people if these labour rights are violated.

In order to supplement small incomes from work in the city, many displaced people in Baidoa maintain close connections with the rural areas they have come from. Although people have often fled to the city because of high agricultural taxation by Al Shabaab, people may move back and forth to engage in farming activities. Many displaced people in Baidoa established small farms at the camps outskirts or worked as labourers on farms of others.

**Experiences of displacement affect men and women differently.** Women are often bearing a much larger economic burden of provision for their families. They often work more for less pay, and have additional responsibilities for child care, water collection, and other housework. Men are often not able to provide for their families. Many men also struggle to find meaning in this new urban form of life. Sickness and mental exhaustion among men seem normalised. Domestic violence is prevalent in the camps.

**A fundamental issue for all interviewees concerns property, especially with respect to the regulation of land, housing and camp settlement.** Interviewees in Baidoa acknowledged the hard work of camp managers (also labelled 'gatekeepers'): for example, their initial support in helping to construct shelter, attempts to keep the camps clean and in a decent condition, and the mediation of conflicts. Gatekeepers play a continuous role in attracting international aid. If this is secured, the gatekeepers take a percentage, a practice regarded by NGOs as diversion of aid.

Real estate and land prices are rising in Baidoa, an indication of the city's development and growth. Land prices are a problem for the displaced – as they can result in evictions, many of them conducted without proper notice and often with violence.



Photo: Timiro, Baidoa, water collection

### **In perspective: comparison with and lessons from the other project cities**

Mogadishu has had a longer continuous history of large scale in and out migration of displaced people in the 2000s, and cycles of camp evictions have been particularly acute there. Pushed to the city's outskirts, displaced people described how they have contributed to the development of the land: clearing it of rubble and bushes, establishing their huts, attracting businesses. Madrassas and mosques then open, electricity connections are established and water points created. The more the camps have been connected to the city, the more the value of the land has risen and evictions again became likely. With urban growth in Baidoa, there is a danger that similar patterns of violent eviction (already in evidence) will intensify.

(Re)settlement initiatives in Bosaaso and Hargeisa have helped to mitigate against the cycles of evictions that characterize Mogadishu, creating new neighborhoods or satellite towns on the edge of the cities. There are plans for similar initiatives in Baidoa. These schemes in Hargeisa and Bosaaso were clearly appreciated by many resettled people, and the pro-vision of title deeds for property acquired through these schemes gave some people a sense of greater security. However, such schemes were not entirely beneficial for the displaced people involved. For example, the establishment of settlements far away from the city is

likely to exacerbate the social divide between 'locals' and displaced 'outsiders' in Bosaaso, while in Hargeisa the lack of roads and transport links to the new settlements cuts people off from the city's labour market. New settlements in Bosaaso have become economic hubs in their own right and they continue to attract more displaced people who are not beneficiaries of incremental tenure schemes (giving ownership of land to recipients after a period of uninterrupted settlement). People who are not included in these incremental tenure schemes continue to face

familiar risks of eviction. In many cases, 'semi-permanent' housing was provided without full consultation with settlers. This often took the form of uncomfortable and impractical corrugated iron sheet houses. Furthermore, some services designed for the new settlements (particularly education) have proved not to be sustainable, and the non-attendance of children in schools continues to be extremely high. Long-term city and humanitarian planning needs to address these issues from the outset, in order to ensure genuine benefits for vulnerable in-migrants.

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. Similar exhibition launch events will be held in Oslo (February 28), London (March 14), and Nairobi (April). For full details of the project and these events see here: <http://securityonthemove.co.uk/events/> For any questions regarding this research brief please contact either [Jutta.bakonyi@durham.ac.uk](mailto:Jutta.bakonyi@durham.ac.uk); [peter.chonka@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:peter.chonka@kcl.ac.uk); [manedle100@gmail.com](mailto:manedle100@gmail.com) or [kirsti.stuvoy@nmbu.no](mailto:kirsti.stuvoy@nmbu.no).



The Mayor of Baidoa speaks at the exhibition launch event in the city, January 2019