

# Dadaab comprehensive intentions and cross border movement monitoring

Dadaab Refugee Complex, Garissa county, Kenya, July 2019

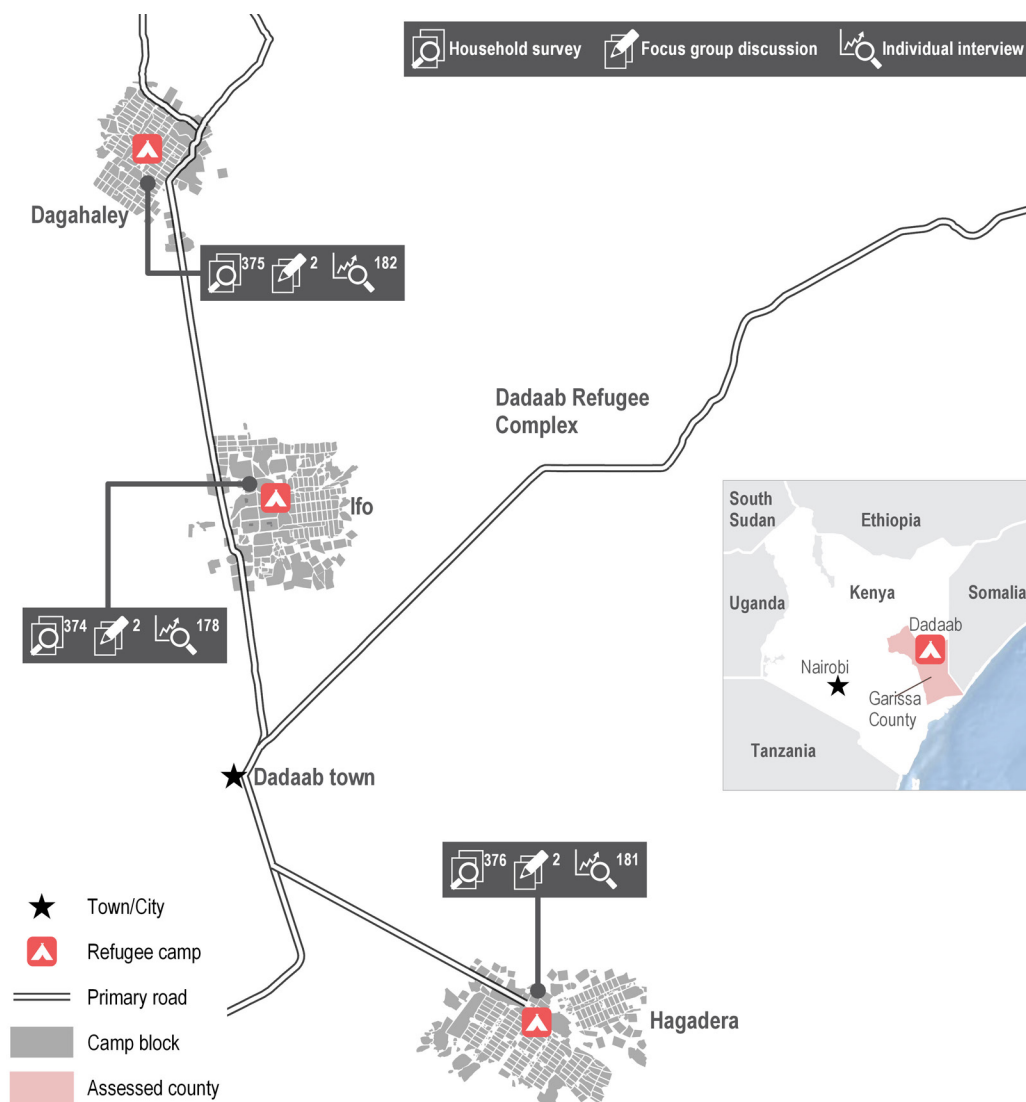
## Background

As of May 2019, a total of 211,544<sup>1</sup>, mostly Somali refugees reside in Dadaab camps. Since May 2017, REACH has worked in collaboration with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and in support of camp management and operational partners in Dadaab to provide information and guidance on developing tools and methodologies for data collection and data analysis in Dadaab refugee complex (Dagahaley, Hagadera and Ifo) and along the Kenya-Somalia border. With continued conflict, instability and drought causing new displacement in Somalia, there is a need to strengthen the knowledge of future return intentions and movement patterns of the refugee population in Dadaab and along the Kenya-Somalia border. In addition, due to reduced humanitarian funding in Dadaab and a recent announcement by the government of Kenya to close Dadaab refugee camps, this information is essential to inform prioritization and identification of vulnerable populations. In February 2019, REACH conducted an intentions survey in Dadaab refugee complex where a high proportion of Somali refugees (46%) said that they were not willing to return to their country of origin mainly due to fear of conflict. Despite the ongoing voluntary repatriation programme by the Government of Kenya with support from UNHCR, there were reported spontaneous returns to Somalia and re-returns to Dadaab<sup>2</sup>. This situation overview presents findings of comprehensive intentions and cross border movement monitoring conducted in July 2019 across the three camps of Dadaab refugee complex.

## Key findings

- 35% of households (HHs) said that they will not return to their country of origin while only 4% said that they were certain to return. The proportion of HHs that were certain to return has decreased slightly since the February 2019 assessment.
- The main push factors from Somalia reported by HHs include fear of conflict, actual conflict, fear of insecurity, drought and lack of livelihood opportunities in Somalia. The main reported pull factors to Dadaab were lack of conflict in Dadaab, law and order, availability of humanitarian aid, access to refugee registration and availability of income opportunities. The reported push and pull factors are similar to the ones mentioned by HHs in the February 2019 assessment.
- Focus group discussion (FGD) participants said that they were not intending to return to Somalia due to instability and insecurity in Somalia, and because they were waiting to be resettled to other countries.
- 11% of individual interview respondents revealed that they were leaving Dadaab due to potential closure of the camp while 58% of them were going to visit their family members who live in Somalia.
- The majority (83%) of HHs who reported having members that had returned to Somalia said that those members had not registered for voluntary repatriation (volrep) with UNHCR or Kenyan authorities, just like 87% of individual interview respondents.
- Only intending to return temporarily, fear of losing refugee status and procedures taking too long were commonly reported reasons for not registering for volrep programmes, as reported by HHs, individual interview respondents and FDG participants.
- FDG participants reported various protection issues experienced by persons in transit, including rape, threat by armed groups, beating, robbery, harassment by drivers and conductors, separated individuals and children traveling alone.

## Map 1. Data collection locations



1. UNHCR Statistics package, May 2019

2. REACH Intentions monitoring, July <https://bit.ly/2HsbQSG> and November 2018 <https://bit.ly/2ToPOol> and February 2019 <https://bit.ly/2v8r7it>



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### Methodology

The assessment used a mixed methods approach with both qualitative and quantitative data collection. HH interviews were conducted in Dadaab refugee complex between 3 and 12 July 2019. HHs were sampled at camp level, using a stratified random sampling strategy, to reach a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. A total of 1125 HHs were interviewed. To be able to monitor movement patterns along the Kenya-Somalia border, 541 individual interviews were conducted between 15 and 17 July 2019 at 3 bus termini<sup>3</sup> across the three camps in Dadaab complex (Hagadera, Ifo and Dagahaley main bus terminus) with purposively sampled people who were intending to cross the Kenya-Somalia border. In addition, two FGDs, one with women and one with men, each with ten participants per group were conducted in each camp between 3 and 5 July 2019. These FGD participants had either crossed the Kenya-Somalia border themselves or had information about people who had crossed the Kenya-Somalia border in the six months prior to the FGD. The data collection locations are shown on map 1.

### Population movement and displacement

The first major displacement from Somalia to Dadaab refugee complex happened in 1991, when refugees fleeing the civil war in Somalia started to cross the border into Kenya. A second large influx occurred in 2011, when 130,000<sup>4</sup> refugees arrived, fleeing drought and famine in southern Somalia. Since then, there have been pockets of displacement into Dadaab refugee complex from Somalia as well as cyclical movements, where returnees come back after previously returning to Somalia.

At Dadaab bus termini, where individual interviews were conducted, most of the interviewed individuals were Somali and were heading to lower Juba, Banadir, Bay or middle Juba regions in Somalia. The most common border crossing points that they mentioned were Dhobley, Liboi and Dadajabula. The most common routes used by refugees from Dadaab when returning to Somalia are shown on map 2.

### People on the move

Only 16% of the individuals interviewed at the bus termini reported to be in transit together with their HH members. This is consistent with findings from the previous cross border movement assessment conducted in February 2019<sup>6</sup>, when 18% of the individuals interviewed reported that they were traveling with their HH members. However, overall, 30% of individuals reported traveling together with different vulnerable people, including elderly persons, pregnant or lactating women, separated children, as well as physically disabled persons.

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the interviewed individuals were males, 73% of whom reportedly traveled alone. This is consistent with the reports of FGD participants, who reported that most people returning to Somalia were middle aged men returning to seek job opportunities or higher education, or to do farming. According to FGD participants, women were more likely to return to join relatives or to conceal unwanted pregnancy, and children reportedly went to Somalia during holidays to visit relatives.

Most individuals (94%) interviewed at the bus termini reported being in possession of identity documentation, mainly refugee Alien ID cards that were issued by the Government of Kenya.

### Push and pull factors

From the HH level interviews, 65%<sup>5</sup> of HHs reported that they left their areas of origin due to fear of conflict, 64%<sup>5</sup> said that they left due to actual conflict in the community of origin or surrounding areas while 56%<sup>5</sup> had left due to fear of insecurity. Participants in FGDs reported conflict in Somalia, lack of education services and lack of livelihood opportunities as their main reasons for departing from Somalia.

Most HHs reported lack of conflict (83%), availability of law and order (73%), availability of humanitarian aid (44%), the possibility to attain refugee or asylum status (43%) and availability of income opportunities (35%) as major factors that pulled them to Dadaab from their areas of origin. Others came to Dadaab to access education services (28%) and access health services (22%). FGD participants largely mentioned availability of law and order and availability of humanitarian assistance as the main pull factors for coming to Dadaab. Other FGD participants said that people came to Dadaab because their friends or relatives live there.

FGD participants reported that some people were leaving Dadaab, mainly due to lack of job opportunities. They also reported that most men were returning to Somalia to check on their property, to do farming or to join the military. On the other hand, women were going to Somalia to conceal unwanted pregnancy, to get married or to unite with relatives living in Somalia.

#### Top 5 push and pull factors for displaced HHs in Dadaab refugee complex<sup>5</sup>

##### Push factors from Area of origin

- 1 Fear of conflict
- 2 Actual conflict in community of origin
- 3 Fear of insecurity
- 4 Drought
- 5 Lack of livelihood opportunities

##### Pull factors to Dadaab

- 1 No conflict in Dadaab
- 2 Law and order
- 3 Availability of humanitarian aid
- 4 Access to refugee registration
- 5 Availability of income opportunities

### Spontaneous returns to Somalia

Most of the spontaneous returns to Somalia are seemingly intended to be temporary, since many of the interviewed returnees reportedly had plans to come back to Dadaab. Of the HHs who reported having members that had returned to Somalia (7%), 83% said that these members did not register for voluntary repatriation with the UNHCR or Kenyan authorities because they had planned their return to be temporary, or because they feared to lose their refugee status if they would have registered." Individual interviews at the bus termini concurred with this, as the majority (87%) of people leaving Dadaab had not registered for voluntary repatriation. Nine percent (9%)<sup>5</sup> of individual interview respondents reported that they had not registered for voluntary repatriation because it takes the UNHCR and the authorities too long to provide voluntary repatriations applicants with a return package and transport to Somalia. In addition, FGD participants revealed that people would not register for voluntary repatriation because they are waiting to be resettled to other countries, while other people possess Kenyan national identity cards, and hence are not eligible for volrep registration.

3. These are designated locations in the camps where there are vehicles that take people to Somalia and other locations

4. UNHCR: <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/dadaab-refugee-complex>

5. Households could select multiple answers

6. February cross-border assessment <https://bit.ly/2GkTyyL>



### Key transit and border crossing points

#### Dhobley, Somalia

Dhobley, Somalia is a strategic and major border crossing point between Kenya and Somalia. It is located along the Kenya-Somalia border, 245 km from the port town of Kismayo and 90 km from Dadaab refugee camps. FGD participants mentioned Dhobley as the most preferred transit point between Kenya and Somalia due to its accessibility, closeness to Dadaab camps and availability of transportation. The presence of reliable authorities and security, also makes it a preferred transit point for most people. Ninety-one percent (91%)<sup>7</sup> of individual interview respondents reported that they intend to stop in Dhobley before proceeding to their final destination.

Other border crossing points mentioned by individual interview respondents were Degelema, Tuula Barwaqo, Dadajabula, Hamey, Bulahawo and Liboi. Dadajabula, Hamey and Liboi are located on the Kenya side of the border.

#### Bus termini, Dadaab

There are at least six bus termini inside the Dadaab refugee complex, where returnees to Somalia are transported using buses, lorries and private cars. Some of the vehicles at the termini take people to locations inside Somalia, including Kismayo, Mogadishu and Doolow. Other vehicles only reach the Kenya-Somalia border at Dhobley. These bus termini are located inside the camps, making it easier for passengers to access them. Participants in FGDs in Dadaab said most refugees prefer using these termini for temporary and spontaneous returns.



A bus picking up passengers at Hagadera bus terminus. Photo credit: REACH

### Conditions of movement

#### Means of Transport

Buses, lorries and taxis (four seater cars) are the main means of transport at the bus termini in Dadaab. FGD participants revealed a high reliance on these means since they were deemed cheaper and readily available by the people in transit. The vehicles that leave the bus termini in Dadaab take travelers to border crossing points, including Dhobley. Most of the passengers pay for their transport using money obtained from remittances, and from the sale of valuables such as non-food items and shelter materials. FGD participants revealed that some travelers who can not pay for their transport are helped by relatives, clan members, the community, mosques or by the volrep programme, to facilitate their journey.

Individuals interviewed at bus termini reported that, at Dhobley, most people intend to continue their journey by road transport, though a few people reported planning on using internal flights from Dhobley to continue their journey. Sixty-four percent (64%) of individuals interviewed used their own money to pay for their journey while 23% reportedly borrowed money to fund their journey.

#### Challenges in Transit

FGD participants said that persons in transit face restrictions by local authorities and threats by armed groups, as well as beating, rape and harassment by drivers and conductors. They also reported that people in transit experience hunger and thirst during the journey and are exposed to the hot sun. To avoid the harsh weather, people prefer to travel in the morning and evening.

Sixty-one percent (61%) of individual interview respondents reported that the cost of transport is usually high. Other respondents reported that fear of being attacked by armed groups and robbery were the main challenges experienced during transit. An individual interview respondent said, "There is serious insecurity on the roads to Somalia."

#### Protection risks and vulnerabilities en route

Participants in FGDs reported cases of rape during transit. In addition to this, some FGD participants reported that they had heard of, or witnessed, persons that were separated from their families during transit. Some of the reported problems experienced by the separated members include stress, loneliness and mental health issues. They also reported that some of these separated members were receiving tracing services from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Other separated families were receiving support through remittances from relatives living abroad, and separated children were receiving child care from relatives.

FGD participants also reported cases of children under the age of 18 traveling alone at the transit points. These children were reportedly heading to Somalia in search of labor opportunities like shoe shining jobs, some of them were reportedly running away from schools in Dadaab while others were misled by smugglers. Individual interview respondents reported traveling with different vulnerable people too, including elderly persons, pregnant and lactating women, separated children, as well as physically disabled persons.

7. Households could select multiple answers



### Movement Intentions

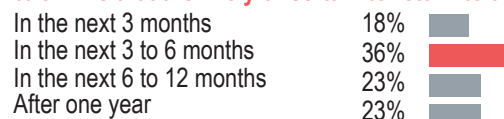
#### Likelihood of return

Only 4% of HHs reported being certain to return to their country of origin<sup>8</sup> and 6% were likely to return. From the previous assessment conducted by REACH in February 2019 in Dadaab, 6% of HHs were certain to return to their country of origin<sup>8</sup> and 12% were likely to return. This indicates a reduction in willingness of the refugees residing in Dadaab to return to their countries of origin<sup>8</sup>. Thirty-five percent (35%) of HHs were not willing to return to their country of origin<sup>8</sup>, while 38% stated that they would return if certain conditions were met. These conditions include the end of the conflict in Somalia and the availability of income opportunities and education services in Somalia.

#### Reasons for return

Of all HHs that said that they were likely or certain to return to their countries of origin (10%), 31%<sup>9</sup> stated that they would do so due to concerns of potential closure of Dadaab camp. Another 22%<sup>9</sup> said that they were considering to return due to fear of conflict within the refugee camps. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of interviewed persons at the bus termini said that they were returning to Somalia to visit family or friends. FGD participants reported that most members considering to return would likely do so in order to reunite with family members and get return packages so that they would be able to pay debts that they owe vendors in Dadaab. FGD participants revealed that most men would return to do farming, to seek job opportunities and to seek higher education. FGDs also revealed that women returned to Somalia to reunite with family members and to conceal unwanted pregnancies. According to FGDs, youths were likely to return to Somalia to get married or to search for jobs and higher education, while children would reportedly go to visit other relatives during school holidays.”

#### % of HHs that are likely or certain to return to their area of origin in the following timelines:



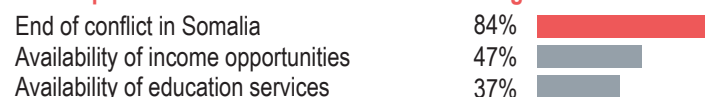
#### Barriers to considering return

Continued conflict, insecurity and drought in Somalia were the top reported reasons by HHs for not considering to return to their country of origin. FGD participants mentioned insecurity in their areas of origin as the main barrier preventing them from returning to their areas of origin. An FGD participant said, “my life will be in danger in Somalia.” In addition, some FGD participants said they would not return because they were waiting to be resettled to other countries, while others expressed concern about child recruitment by armed groups in Somalia.

#### Future return intentions

FGD participants reported that if a HH planned to return in the future, parents and young adults would return first to assess the situation in their areas of origin, while children would be left behind to continue accessing education in Dadaab. Girls who are married would also not accompany their parents to their areas of origin. Many FGD participants said that, if they were to return to their area of origin in the future, they would not do so through voluntary repatriation programmes. The most commonly reported reason they gave for this is that the process normally takes too long.

#### Main reported factors that would increase willingness to return for HHs in Dadaab:<sup>7</sup>



#### Information about potential areas of return

Half of the HHs in Dadaab reported receiving information about potential areas of return, mainly through radio or television, a friend or relative in their areas of origin, or the Refugees Affairs Secretariat (RAS). The most common topics about which HHs reportedly received information include access to shelter, security, access to education and health services. FGD participants mentioned that they needed more information about the availability of education services, the security situation, politics and elections, and clear information on health services for people with chronic illnesses.

### Conclusion

With continued conflict, insecurity and drought in Somalia, the majority of Somali refugees residing in Dadaab refugee complex are not willing to return to Somalia on a permanent basis, according to HH assessments in Dadaab. Findings from this assessment demonstrate an ongoing cyclical movement pattern between Dadaab and Somalia, with most people in transit going back to Somalia only temporarily. People on the move are often facing various challenges, including restrictions by local authorities, high cost of transport, as well as a lack of food and other basic services while in transit. In addition to these challenges, there are several protection issues affecting people in transit including rape, beating and harassment by drivers and conductors. Findings show a relatively large number of people traveling with various vulnerable persons, including elderly persons, pregnant or lactating women, separated children, as well as physically disabled persons. Findings from FGDs display different reasons for women to return to Somalia than for men. Men returned to seek for job opportunities, higher education or to do farming, while women returned mainly to visit their families or to get married. Findings from this assessment display the need for a further understanding of the protection concerns during transit and a more comprehensive analysis of the people moving spontaneously versus those moving through the voluntary repatriation programme. Moreover, the reduced willingness to return (when compared to the February 2019 assessment), which exists even despite the recent announcement by the Government of Kenya to close the Dadaab camps, urges the need to monitor the situation in Somalia more closely, especially in potential areas of return for refugees in the Dadaab camps.”

### ABOUT REACH

REACH is a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organizations, ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives, and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT). REACH facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts.

REACH activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. For more information, please visit our website: [www.reach-initiative.org](http://www.reach-initiative.org) You can contact us directly at: [geneva@reach-initiative.org](mailto:geneva@reach-initiative.org) and follow us on Twitter @REACH\_info.

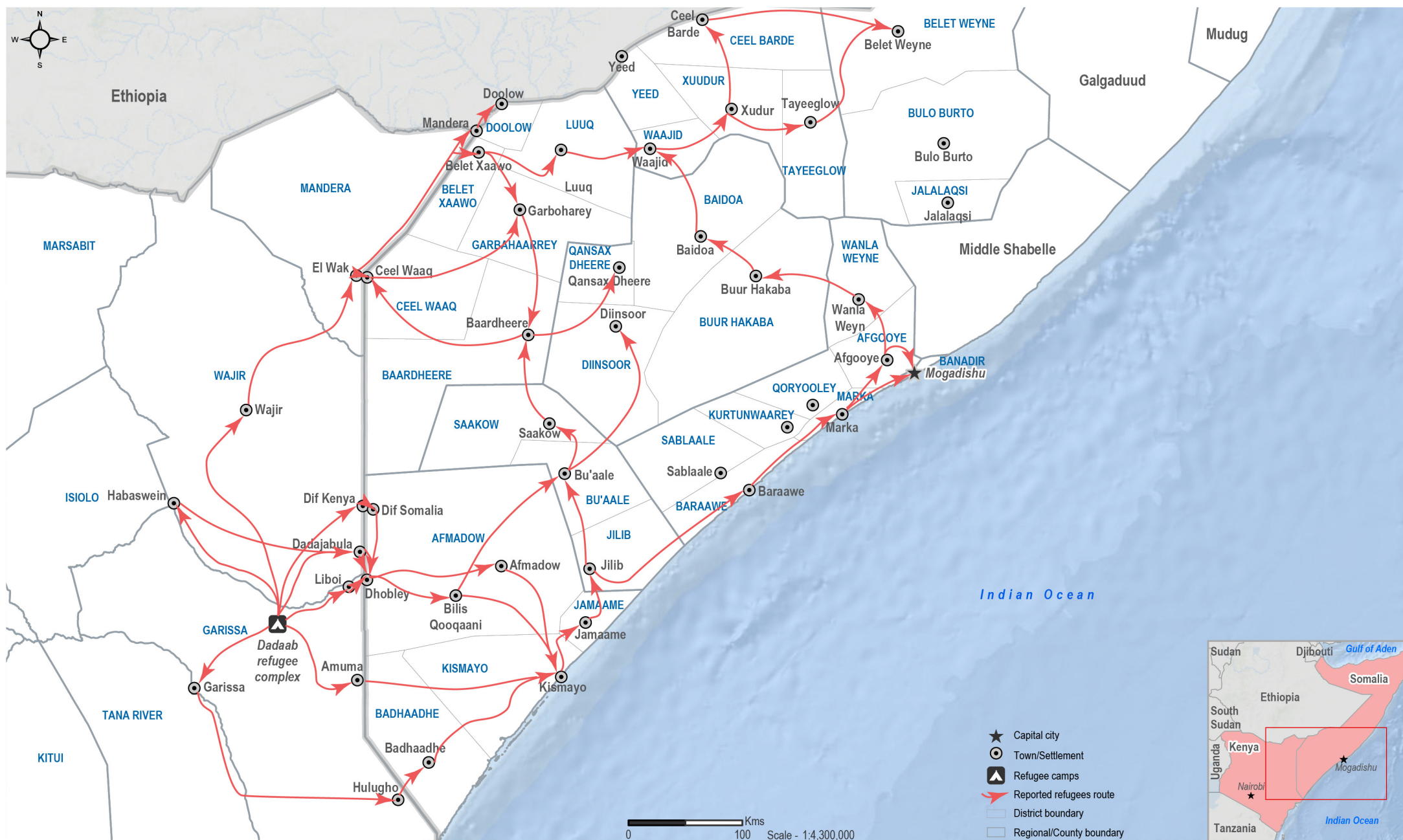
8. 94% of HHs reported that Somalia is their country of origin and 4% reported Ethiopia as their country of origin

9. Households could select multiple answers



# Map 2. Commonly used routes from Dadaab to Somalia by refugees

July 2019



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