

Dadaab comprehensive intentions and cross border movement monitoring

Dadaab Refugee Complex, Garissa county, Kenya, December 2019

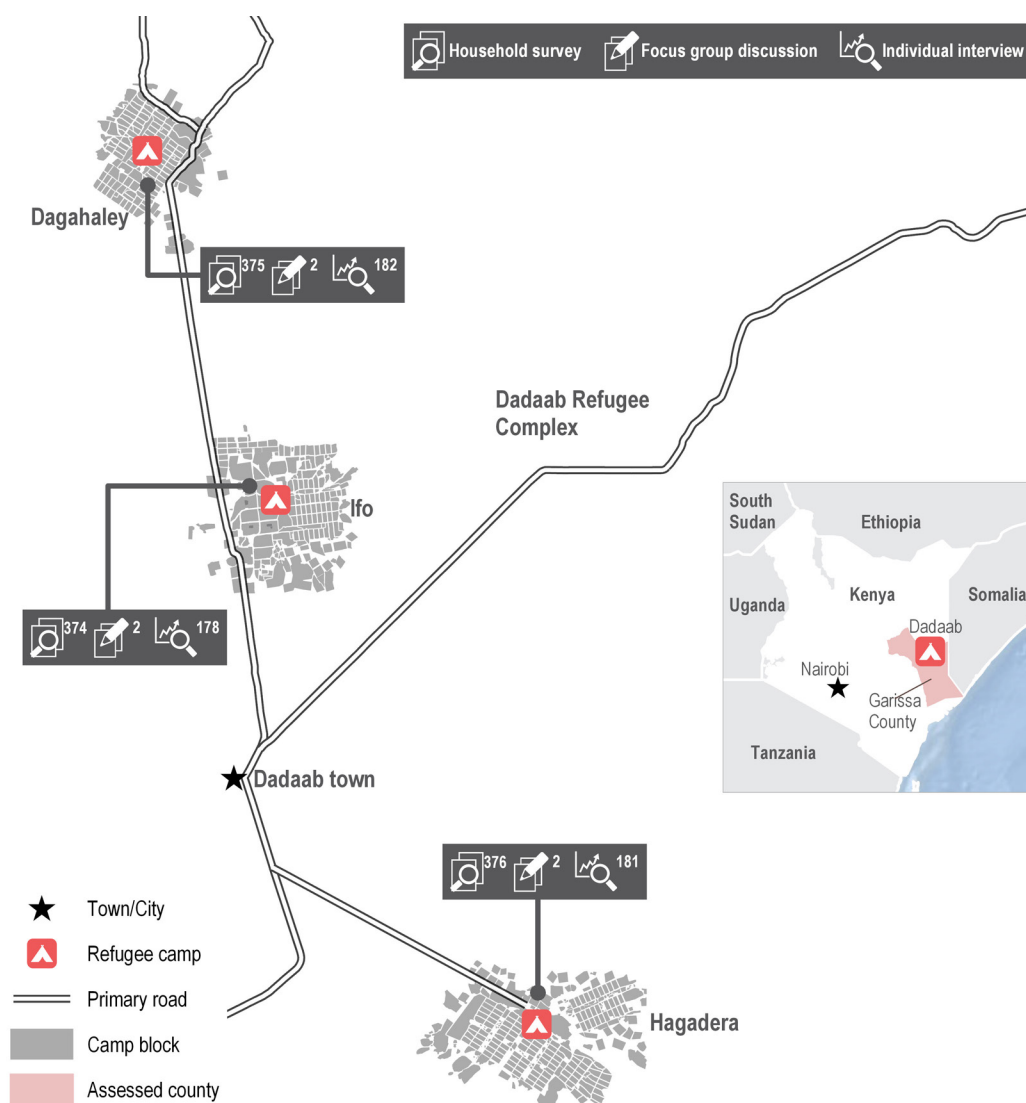
Background

As of November 2019, a total of 217,108¹ mostly Somali refugees reside in Dadaab refugee complex (Dagahaley, Hagadera and Ifo). Above 80% of households (HH) have lived in Dadaab for over eight years. With humanitarian funding significantly reduced in the last few years, there is a need to continue understanding the future return intentions and movement patterns of vulnerable refugees. This information is essential to inform prioritization and identification of vulnerable populations. Since May 2017, REACH has worked with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and humanitarian partners in Dadaab on developing tools and methodologies for data collection and analysis of needs in Dadaab refugee complex. In July 2019, REACH conducted an intentions survey² in Dadaab refugee complex where 52% of HHs reported that they were not willing to return to their country of origin mainly due to fear of conflict and insecurity. Despite the ongoing voluntary repatriation (volrep) programme by the Government of Kenya with support from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there were reported spontaneous returns to Somalia which ended up coming back to Dadaab². This situation overview presents findings of comprehensive intentions and cross border movement monitoring conducted in December 2019 across the three camps of Dadaab refugee complex.

Key findings

- A higher proportion (16%) of HHs reported that they were likely or certain to return to their country of origin as compared with the assessment conducted in July 2019² where only 10% of HHs were certain or likely to return to their country of origin. **Seventy per cent (70%) of these HHs cited potential closure of the camp as the main reason.** In addition to potential closure of the camp, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) participants also reported fear of being relocated to Kakuma and desire to be reunited with their family members in Somalia as major reasons for considering to return to their areas of origin.
- Half of the HHs reported that they would return to their country of origin if the conflict ended and if income opportunities as well as education and health services became available. **The proportion of HHs that would return to their country of origin if certain conditions were met has significantly increased from 38% to 50% since July 2019²** mainly because there has been increased rumors of potential camp closure and relocation of non-Somali refugees to Kakuma refugee camp. Some FGD participants reported that they would prefer to return to their country of origin instead of being relocated to Kakuma refugee camp.
- Alien Identity Card (ID) is the top reported ID possessed by HH members in the camps and individual interview respondents at the bus termini in Dadaab. **Almost a quarter (23%) of the HHs reported that the alien ID cards of at least one member of their HH had expired at the time of data collection.** Forty-four per cent (44%) of these, reported that their sim cards had been deactivated by the service providers as a consequence. This reportedly was a challenge for HH members to access mobile banking services which is the most commonly used mean of money transfer in the camps.
- The majority (85%) of individual interview respondents reported that they had not registered for volrep with UNHCR or Kenyan authorities mainly because they returned to Somalia temporarily and did not want to lose their refugee status.
- FGD participants reported various protection issues experienced by persons in transit, including rape, beating, robbery with violence and harassment by drivers and touts. They also reported that pregnant or lactating women, chronically ill persons, elderly people and children aged below 18 years were travelling alone.

Map 1. Data collection locations



1. UNHCR Statistics package, November 2019

2. REACH Intentions monitoring, July 2018 <https://bit.ly/2HsbQSG>, November 2018 <https://bit.ly/2ToPOol>, February 2019 <https://bit.ly/2v8r7it> and July 2019 <http://bit.ly/2YSF1Wo>



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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 from 25 November to 4 December 2019. HHs were sampled at a camp level, using a stratified random sampling strategy, to reach a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. A total of 1,125 HHs were interviewed. To be able to monitor movement patterns along the Kenya-Somalia border, 540 individual interviews were conducted between 20 and 22 November 2019 at 3 bus termini³ across the three camps in Dadaab refugee complex (Dagahaley, Hagadera and Ifo and 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 25 and 27 November 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 130,000⁴ 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, Gedo or Bay 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

A higher proportion (35%) of individuals interviewed at the bus termini reported to be in transit together with their HH members but in July 2019² assessment, only 16% of the individuals were in transit with their HH members. Generally, 48% of individuals who were traveling together with their HH members reported that some of the HH members were persons with specific needs, including elderly persons, chronically ill persons, mentally disabled persons, physically disabled persons as well as pregnant or lactating women.

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of the interviewed individuals were men and 72% of them 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 join the military and to do farming. According to FGD participants, women were more likely to return for marriage purposes and children reportedly went to Somalia during school holidays to visit relatives.

The individual interview respondents reported that the roads were impassable and the cost of transport had been doubled due to the heavy rains that were being experienced. They also had to use long routes which increased the time spent for the journey. FGD participants also reported that the roads were impassable due to the heavy rains.

Push and pull factors

More than half (57%) of the individual interview respondents reported that they were leaving Dadaab to go and visit their family or friends in Somalia. Almost a quarter (23%) of the respondents cited potential closure of the camp as the reason for leaving the camp while 15% of the respondents said that they were going to Somalia for business purposes. FGD participants reported that some people were leaving Dadaab, mainly due to lack of job opportunities, to visit friends or relatives, to seek health and education services, to check on their property like livestock and to do farming.

Most HHs reported lack of conflict (87%), availability of law and order (75%) and availability of humanitarian aid (45%) as major factors that pulled them to Dadaab from their areas of origin. Individual interview respondents who had gone back to Somalia since first arriving in Dadaab reported that they returned to Dadaab mainly to be with their family or friends and due to lack of conflict in Dadaab. 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 of its nearness to the Kenya-Somalia border, their friends or relatives live there, increased security and the availability of basic services like health and education. FGD participants reported the main reasons for leaving Somalia were clan conflict, attack by armed groups, civil war and lack of basic services like education.

Top 3 push and pull factors for displaced HHs in Dadaab refugee complex⁵

Push factors from Area of origin

- Fear of conflict
- Actual conflict in community of origin
- Fear of insecurity

Pull factors to Dadaab

- 1 No conflict in Dadaab
- 2 Law and order
- 3 Availability of humanitarian aid

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. Forty-two per cent (42%) of the 3% of HHs that had reported having members that had returned to Somalia, mentioned that a member had since come back. However, 64% of the 42% of HHs that had a member who came back to Dadaab reported these trips were temporary. Individual interviews at the bus termini concurred with this, as the majority (85%) of people leaving Dadaab had not registered for volrep 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. In addition, FGD participants revealed that some people would not register for volrep because they are awaiting to be resettled to other countries, there is insecurity in Somalia and it takes too long before the applicants of volrep are provided with return package and actual transportation. On the other hand, a FGD participant said, "my preferred area of return is not facilitated." This showed that some people would like to register for volrep but they are not able to access this process because it is only available to the Somali

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 and Liboi, Kenya

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. Ninety-one per cent (91%)⁷ of individual interview respondents reported that they intend to stop in Dhobley before proceeding to their final destination. Liboi is a town in Kenya at the border of Kenya and Somalia and is located about 78 km from Dadaab and only 12 km from Dhobley. Sixty-two per cent (62%)⁷ of individual interview respondents reported that they intended to stop in Liboi before proceeding to their final destination. FGD participants mentioned Liboi and Dhobley as the most preferred transit points between Kenya and Somalia due to their accessibility, closeness to Dadaab camps, availability of transportation and presence of reliable authorities and security. Other border crossing points mentioned by individual interview respondents were Degelema, Tuula Barwaqo, Dadajabula and Hamey.

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. Although, due to the heavy rains and flooding in the camps, the cost of transport has increased and roads are impassable hence the number of people travelling has reduced significantly.



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, more secure, easily accessible and readily available. 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, savings, borrowed money and from the sale of valuables such as ornaments and livestock. Most (95%) of the individuals interviewed at bus termini reported that most people intended to continue their journey by road transport, though a few people reported planning to use internal flights from Dhobley to continue their journey. Seventy-two percent (72%) of individuals interviewed used their own money to pay for their journey while the rest reportedly borrowed money to fund their journey or friends or relatives paid for their transportation participants reported that most of the people preferred to travel in the morning or evening because the weather is conducive at that time, there are limited checkpoints, there is no restriction by security officers and transport is available.

Challenges in Transit

FGD participants said that persons in transit face restrictions by local authorities and harassment by drivers and touts as well as beating, rape, robbery with violence and clan-related conflict at the transit points. FGD participants also reported that due to the poor conditions of some vehicles and roads, it takes them long duration of travel before reaching their destinations. Lack of Identity documentation and movement pass is also a major challenge to the people in transit. Seventy-seven per cent (77%) of individual interview respondents reported that the cost of transport is usually high. An individual interview respondent said, "due to the rains, transport cost is high." Other respondents reported that fear of being attacked by armed groups and impassable roads were the main challenges experienced during transit. Another individual interview respondent said, "the security is poor and should be improved."

Future of the camp

In the last month prior to data collection, the Government of Kenya together with UNHCR began the process of identifying the refugees who were of Kenyan origin so as to deregister them as refugees and allow them to regain their Kenyan citizenship. FGD participants reported that some members of the community were going through this process. Some of non-Somali refugees were relocated to Kakuma in September 2019⁸ while other HHs were resettled to other countries and some Somali refugees have voluntary repatriated to Somalia. All these developments in Dadaab have caused fear, anxiety, uncertainty and rumors of camp closure as reported by FGD participants. The proportion of HHs that reported being certain or likely to return to their areas of origin or cited conditional return had increased to 66% from 48% as reported in the assessment conducted in July 2019². Some FGD participants reported that in the event the camp is closed, they would return to their country of origin. Others reported that they would remain in Kenya and settle within the host community while some people did not know what they would do. A FGD participant said, "i am confused I don't know what to do."

7. Households could select multiple answers

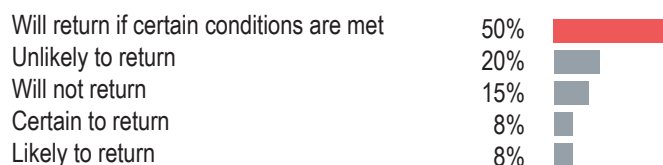
8. Relocation of non-Somali refugees from Dadaab to Kakuma <https://bit.ly/38ZGvjG>

Movement Intentions

Likelihood of return

A higher proportion (16%) of HHs reported being certain or likely to return to their country of origin⁹ compared to 10% who reported to be certain or likely to return from the previous assessment conducted by REACH in July 2019² in Dadaab. **Half of the HHs reported that they would return to their country of origin⁹ if the conflict ended and if income opportunities as well as education and health services became available.** This indicates an increase in the willingness of the refugees residing in Dadaab to return to their countries of origin⁹. FGD participants reported that there have been various activities in the camps including relocation of non-Somali refugees to Kakuma, deregistration of refugees who are Kenyans and slowed pace of relocation of the refugees to other countries. These activities have reportedly caused increased anxiety among camp residents and hence increased their willingness to return to their countries of origin⁹.

Likelihood of return to the country of origin:¹⁰



Reasons to return

Of all HHs that said that they were likely or certain to return to their countries of origin (16%), **70%⁹ stated that they would do so due to concerns of potential closure of Dadaab camp.** Almost half (47%) of the interviewed persons at the bus termini said that they were returning to Somalia to visit their family or friends while a quarter of them were returning to check on their assets. FGD participants reported that most community members considering to return would likely do so in order to reunite with family members or due to the potential closure of the camp. An FGD participant also said, "life in the camp is very difficult for me." FGD participants revealed that most men would return to do farming and to join the military. According to FGDs, youths were likely to return to Somalia to search for jobs, join the military or join their family members after completing school in Dadaab while children would reportedly go to visit other relatives during school holidays.

Future return intentions

Half of the HHs interviewed reported that they were willing to return to their country of origin⁹ if the conflict ended and if income opportunities as well as education and health services became available. FGD participants reported that people would return to their country of origin⁹ to get reunited with their friends or relatives or due to fear of being relocated to Kakuma refugee camp. Participants from FGD also indicated that in the event of camp closure, they would prefer to be allowed to settle within the host community in Dadaab or go back to their country of origin instead of being relocated to Kakuma. Only a quarter of the HHs reported that if they were to return to their area of origin in the future, they would not do so through volrep. The most commonly reported reason they gave for this is that the process normally takes too long.

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. Forty-four per cent (44%) of HHs reported that they were not considering return in order to allow their children to continue accessing education in the camp. FGD participants mentioned insecurity and lack of basic services such as education and health services in their areas of origin as the main barriers preventing them from returning to their areas of origin.

Information about potential areas of return

Sixty-two per cent (62%) of HHs reportedly received information about their 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 and access to education and health services.** FGD participants mentioned that they needed more information about the availability of basic services including health and education services and the security situation in their areas of origin. With the increased willingness to return to country of origin⁹, there is also increased need for information about potential areas of return. According to the assessment conducted in July 2019², only half of the HHs reportedly received information about their potential areas of return.

Conclusion

In September 2019⁸, a group of non-Somali refugees was relocated to Kakuma refugee camp and the process of deregistering refugees who are of Kenyan origin began in November 2019. These, compounded with the ongoing voluntary repatriation to Somalia of Somali refugees and resettlement to other countries, have reportedly caused fear and anxiety about the future of the camp and stirred up rumors of potential new uncertain developments in the camp that are unclear for the refugees. More HHs (66%) are now willing to return to their country of origin⁹. Although, there are other HHs that are not willing to return due to fear of conflict and armed groups in their areas of origin and to allow their children to continue accessing education. Findings from FGD reveal that the people who are not willing to return to their areas of origin would like UNHCR to accelerate the resettlement process for those who have been identified for resettlement and the Government of Kenya (GoK) to allow them to settle within the host community. Still, others would like the process of deregistration to be completed so that the refugees who are of Kenyan origin could regain their citizenship.

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 You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter @REACH_info.

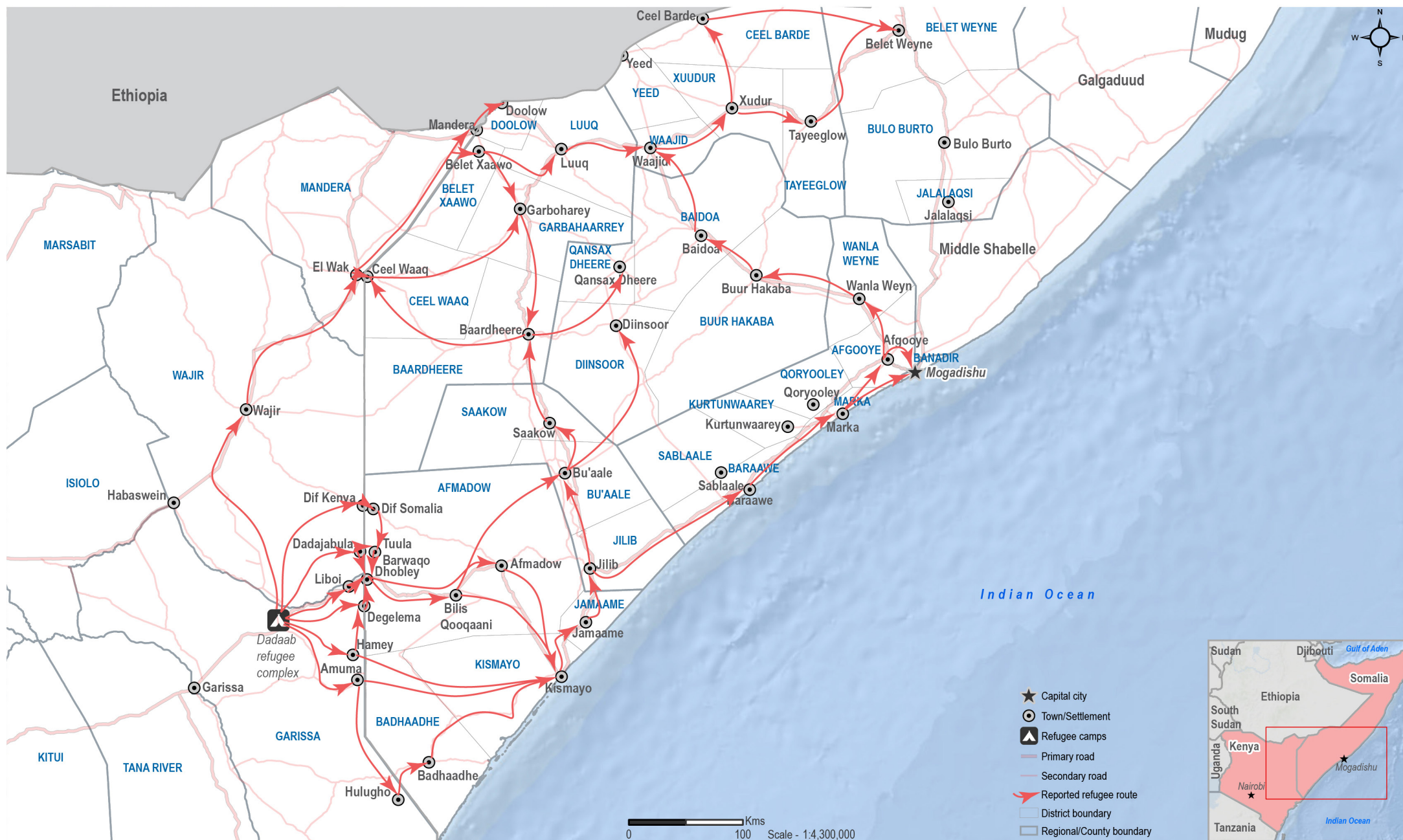
9. 94% of HHs reported that Somalia is their country of origin and 5% reported Ethiopia as their country of origin

10. The proportion exceeded 100% due to round numbers



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

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