

Baligubadle

Key Findings from the 2015 DCSA Report



The Observatory for Conflict and Violence Prevention (OCVP), based in Somalia/Somaliland, was established in 2009 as a non-political, non-denominational, and non-governmental organization with the goal of organising and supporting initiatives that promote peacebuilding, security, safety and sustainable development across all regions of Somalia. As a part of its efforts, the OCVP conducts ongoing District Security and Conflict Assessments (DCSAs) in order to obtain feedback at the community level in relation to four thematic areas: security; governance; justice; conflict and violence. The assessments are conducted using a mixed-method approach, including a household survey of district residents along with focus group discussions and key informant interviews with community representatives and key stakeholders in the local provision of governance, security and justice. (To find out more about the DCSAs, visit www.ocvp.org.) The second DCSA for the district of Baligubadle was conducted in May 2015.

The district of Baligubadle is located in the north-western part of Somaliland, approximately 65 km away from the capital, Hargeisa. The town straddles the border with Ethiopia and was previously a part of the Maroodi Jeeh Region. During the 1980s, Baligubadle served as the ground for Somali National Movement (SNM) resistance in their uprising against President Siad Barre. When former President Dahir Riyale announced the creation of seven new regions in 2008, Baligubadle was named the administrative capital of one of them - the region of Hawd. However, at the time of data collection, the statuses of these declared regions had yet to be ratified by law. The District has a Local Council who are elected to serve for a period of five years.



Source: Baligubadlemedia.com

During the year leading up to assessment, Baligubadle was generally regarded as being very safe. Less than one in ten household survey participants reported witnessing any incident of conflict or violence during this time. There was widespread awareness of the formal governance, security and justice systems. However, traditional systems continued to play a leadership role and provide services to the community, including services in the areas of security and justice provision. Notably, however, there was little mention of religious leaders and elders proved to be the informal entity that residents relied on most. Nonetheless, the formal institutions were generally more highly regarded and overall, the majority of respondents expressed high levels of trust in the formal systems that were assessed. In addition, most respondents perceived that there had been an improvement in the performance of each of these entities when compared with the previous year.

▪ Governance

In keeping with Baligubadle's classification as a Grade C District under the Regions and Districts (Self Management) Law of Somaliland, the town has a Local Council, which comprises thirteen (13) elected members. All respondents in the household survey were aware of the Local Council and the majority of these persons were able to state at least one service which the council provides. However, approximately one in five respondents declared that the council did not provide any services (14%) or that they did not know any of the services that were provided by the council (7%). Further to this, only a little more than one-quarter of respondents (27%) stated that they were aware

of communication channels with the Local Council and an even smaller minority of 5% had participated in any government consultations in the year leading up to the assessment. This low level of participation in consultations was despite the stipulation in the Regions and Districts Law, which governs the Council, that there should be a meeting between the local government and the community at least once every three months. Nevertheless, most respondents demonstrated awareness of issues facing the community. Poor infrastructure (68%), poor health facilities (58%), shortage of electricity supply (40%), and poor sanitation (27%) were identified as some of the main community challenges.

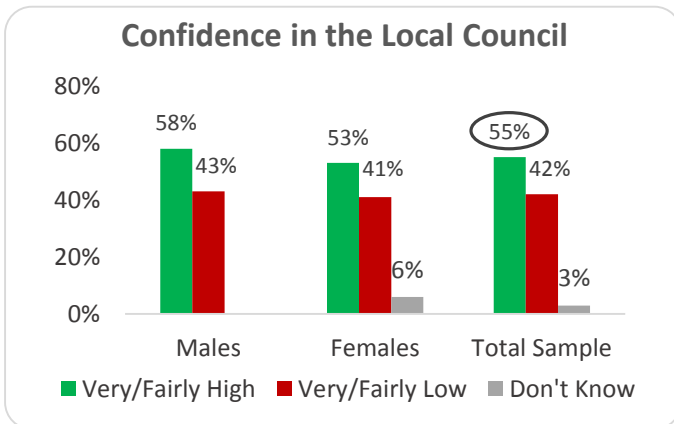


Areas of concern for the community identified by respondents in the household survey

Governance providers posited that poor coordination among local authorities as well as lack of communication with the community presented obstacles to fulfilling the Council’s mandate. Few discussants also accused the Local Council of mismanagement of public offices and lack of professionalism, including frequent absences from office. In addition, budgetary constraints was identified as a key challenge to effective service delivery by the council. There were complaints that the central government was not fairly supplementing the budgets of the respective districts in the region. In particular, Baligubadle had been classified as a “green” or “self-sufficient territory”; this meant that they were not regarded as a priority area for relief operations, thereby reducing the level of aid or support that was potentially available to them. Despite the constraints, the majority of respondents maintained that it was important to elect local government representatives (71%). This was thought to have a positive influence on the level of support that the council received as elections were perceived to add checks and

balances to the system of governance. In particular, it was perceived that elections would serve to reduce the influence of the clan in the affairs of the local government. However, in spite of this, more than one quarter of respondents (28%) did not agree that it is important to have elected officials.

When asked about the level of confidence that they had in the Local Council, more than one half of respondents (55%) stated that they had fairly or very high levels of confidence, whereas more than two in every five respondents (42%) expressed low or very low levels of



confidence, and 3% did not provide a definitive response.

▪ Security

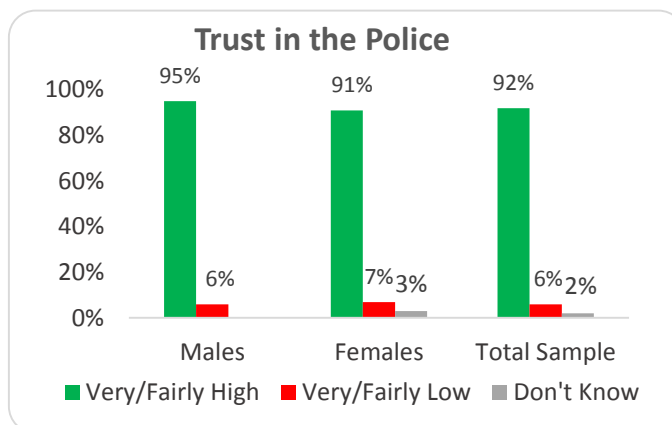
The police were the main security providers in the district of Baligubadle. They were supported by several other entities, including the Office of the Governor, the Local Council, Village Committees and a Morality committee of reputable elders and religious leaders known locally as ‘Gudiga Wanaag farista iyo xumaan reebista.’ In addition to these institutions, the local community also worked closely with the police on matters pertaining to security. Nearly all respondents (99%) in the household survey acknowledged the presence of the police in the district. The majority (82%) also estimated that the closest police station was within 20 minutes’ walking distance from their homes.

Overall, respondents declared that they have fairly or very high levels of trust in the police (92%). Further to this, the police was identified as the most trusted security provider for responding to crime and violence (94%), with

most respondents stating a preference for reporting security issues such as civil matters (68%), petty crimes (83%), and serious crimes (94%) to the police. Although mentioned to a lesser extent, the court, the Local Council, and traditional elders were named among the entities to which respondents would prefer to report each of these types of crimes. The police's fast response was most frequently cited as the reason for trust in the police ahead of other entities. Accessibility, unbiased enforcement and respect were also mentioned as reasons for this selection.

There were conflicting views regarding whether the number of police was sufficient to meet the needs of the local population in the district. The Police Commissioner was of the opinion that the police representation in the district was adequate. However, several discussants argued that the number of police

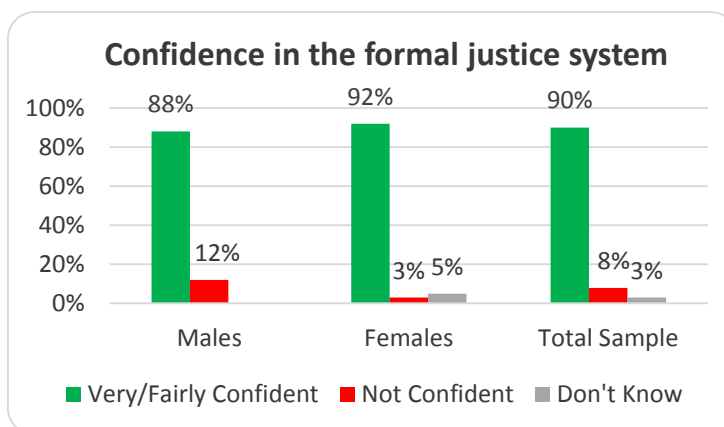
deployed in the district was not enough. One of the issues that gave rise to this opinion was the absence of the military to deal with border-related issues given the district's location along the border with Ethiopia. While Ethiopian troops were credited for collaborating with the local police in addressing crime, there were some issues, including alcohol use, which they were accused of overlooking (as they did not regard it as a crime). Few discussants also accused the Ethiopian soldiers of entering Somaliland territory as they wished owing to the known absence of military troops or substantial police presence on the Somaliland side of the border. Overall, however, there was no major concern relating to security in the district. There was also a positive perception of police performance, with nearly nine in every ten respondents (88%) stating that police performance had improved over the past year. Only a marginal 2% of respondents perceived that there had been a decline in the performance of the police during this period.



Justice

The court in Baligubadle was regarded as a combined District and Regional Court while, largely due to the district's unofficial status as a region, appeals continued to be referred to the Court of Appeal in Hargeisa. A single room had been allocated for the court(s) in the office of the Governor. This resulted in staff having to step out whenever a judge was handling a case. However, at the time of the assessment, a businessman from the community had recently constructed a new building for the court though the building had not yet been furnished.

Nearly all the respondents in the household survey (99%) acknowledged the presence of the court(s) in the district and the majority (56%) estimated that the court was less than 20 minutes away from their homes by foot. Approximately 15% of the respondents also stated that they had used the court in the twelve months leading up to the assessment. Characteristic of the justice system in Somaliland, elders and religious leaders, who were regarded as traditional justice providers, as well as committees, such as the District Morality Committee, also played a role in justice provision. Reported use of these providers relative to court was comparatively low, with 4% of respondents stating that they had consulted traditional elders on a matter of justice in the last twelve months. None of the respondents reported use of any other entity for the purpose of justice during this time. While similar cases were brought to both formal and informal justice providers, discussants pointed out that the type of case



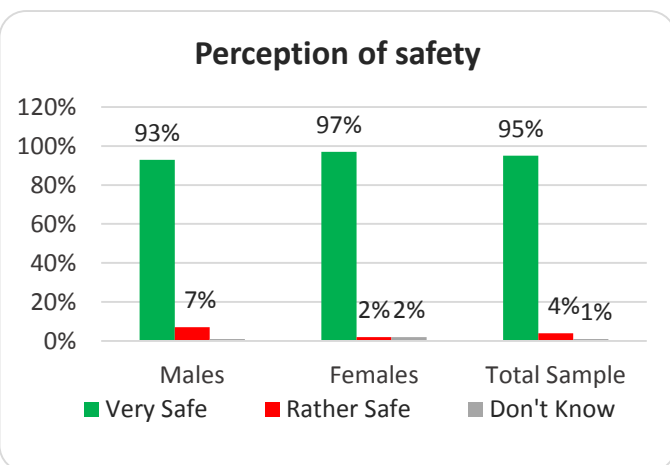
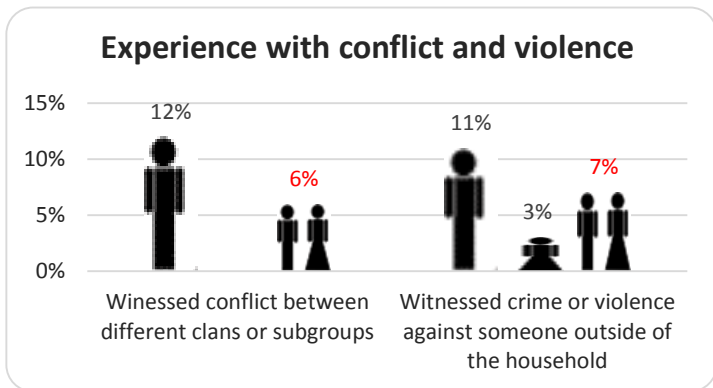
often influenced the choice of justice provider. In particular, cases which required legal enforcement, such as criminal cases, would be referred to the courts. Other cases, such as matters dealing with inheritance were more likely to be addressed using Shari’ah or traditional mechanisms. Nonetheless, the formal and informal systems often worked together, sometimes even referring cases to each other. Respondents who had used the courts or elders in the past year had referred cases relating to land disputes, household violence and youth violence to both, while they had referred cases relating to business disputes and assault only to the court.

When asked about who they trusted most to solve cases, the court was the clear leader, having been identified by a little less than three-quarters of respondents (73%). Approximately 22% also mentioned traditional elders and a marginal 2% mentioned religious leaders. Fair judgements, fast decisions, and accessibility were the most frequently cited reasons for selection of the court, whereas independence from politics, reliability and also accessibility were the top reasons for choice of elders. Those who identified religious elders as their most trusted justice provider (n = 2) attributed this to their reliability.

Overall confidence in the formal justice system was high, with 65% of respondents declaring that they were very confident in this system, and another 25% stating that they were fairly confident. Further to this, the majority of respondents also held a favourable opinion regarding the progress of the courts. More than three-quarters of the respondents (77%) felt that the performance of the courts had improved whereas only 4% of respondents felt that there had been a decline in its performance when compared with the previous year.

Conflict and Violence

Baligubadle was said to have been peaceful with no major incidents of conflict or violence in the year preceding the assessment. Approximately 15% of respondents stated that they were aware of clan or group conflict in the area within this time; however, only 6% stated that they had witnessed any such conflict. Notably, only males reported that they had witnessed conflict between clans or groups. With respect to crime and violence, approximately 7% of respondents stated that they had witnessed crime or violence against someone outside of their household in the stated period. Experience with crime and violence was also higher among males. Approximately 11% of males compared with 3% of females stated that they had witnessed an incident of crime or violence in the past year.



rather safe.

Competition over resources, such as land and water, and youth violence were identified as the leading causes of conflict and violence in the district. The district’s proximity to the Ethiopian border also presented challenges as it relates to criminal activity such as the use of alcohol. Rape, although not a widespread problem, was also identified as an area of concern and cause of insecurity. The local conflict resolution mechanisms were, however, considered to be effective in helping to curtail and even prevent conflict. Therefore, despite these issues, none of the respondents felt unsafe. A vast majority of respondents (95%) indicated that they felt very safe in the district, while 4% stated that they felt