



Somalia – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 16 May 2011

Information about people who are HIV+ in Somalia:

What level of treatment is available for people - is it easy to access and available to everyone?

Is there social stigma attached to people with AIDS/HIV+?

A report by the *United States Department of State* under the heading 'Prison and Detention Center Conditions' states:

"Prison conditions remained harsh and life threatening in all regions. Overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, lack of access to health care, and inadequate food and water persisted in prisons throughout the country. Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and pneumonia were widespread..." (United States Department of State (8 April 2011) *2010 Human Rights Reports: Somalia*)

In a section titled 'Women' it states:

"... In Somaliland and Puntland, international programs ensured that women were equally diagnosed and treated for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. There were limited programs in the southern and central regions, largely because of al-Shabaab's access restrictions on humanitarian agencies." (ibid)

In a section titled 'Other Societal Violence or Discrimination' it states:

"Persons with HIV/AIDS continued to face discrimination and abuse in their local communities and by employers in all parts of the country. UNICEF reported that persons with HIV/AIDS were subjected to physical abuse, rejected by their families, and subjected to workplace discrimination and dismissal. Children with HIV-positive parent(s) also suffered discrimination, which hindered prevention efforts and access to services." (ibid)

A report by the *United Kingdom Border Agency* under the heading 'HIV/AIDS' states:

"The United Nations Development Programme in Somalia (UNDP) in an article dated 13 December 2009 reported that:

"UNDP works closely with the three AIDS Commissions in Somalia, line ministries, networks of PLHAs as well as CSOs and other development partners to ensure a well coordinated and effective response to HIV & AIDS in Somalia. UNDP has been working on HIV & AIDS issues in Somalia for the last 5 years. UNDP will continue to support the implementation of the second National Strategic Framework for HIV & AIDS which covers the period 2009 – 2013.

"Most recently, UNDP Somalia has been supporting the three zonal AIDS Commissions – the Somaliland AIDS Commission (SOLNAC), the South Central

AIDS Commission (SCAC) and the Puntland AIDS Commission (PAC) - to finalize an HIV & AIDS Policy for each zone as well as an HIV/AIDS Bill in collaboration with Members of Parliament as well as each AIDS Commission.” (United Kingdom Border Agency (19 May 2010) *Country of Origin Information Report Somalia – par.25.06*)

This report also states:

“UNDP Somalia’s ‘Most at Risk Populations’ project seeks to reduce the vulnerability and risk of HIV transmission amongst high risk groups in Somalia, such as truck drivers, staff of uniformed services, Internally Displaced People (IDPs) and People Living with HIV & AIDS (PLHAs). The project uses behavior change communication to try and reduce the vulnerability of these groups to HIV transmission.

“At the beginning of this project, UNDP conducted a Training Of Trainers (TOT), focusing on peer education: there are now 574 Peer Educators in Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia, who have trained approximately 12,000 people on HIV Prevention, Stigma Reduction, Care and Treatment. In addition, three Peer Education Networks have been established (one in each zone) to support the work of all Peer Educators working in a particular zone.

“Currently, and because Somalia has a concentrated HIV & AIDS epidemic, the focus of this project is to conduct workshops for those populations which are at greatest risk of HIV infection.

“In order to implement this project UNDP has formed partnership agreements with three local NGOs, one in Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia.” (ibid) (par. 25.07)

A report by the *United Nations Security Council* under the heading ‘HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence’ states:

“The Transitional Federal Government, “Somaliland” and “Puntland” continue to work together on the Somali AIDS response. The response is on target to meet nationally and globally agreed universal access targets on integrated prevention, treatment care and support for all Somalis. In January, a joint delegation led by the Transitional Federal Government Ministry of Health and UNAIDS together with the Executive Directors of the “Somaliland”, “Puntland” and south-central AIDS Commissions attended a meeting organized by the World Bank and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development in Kampala to develop a regional strategy to fight AIDS.

The United Nations Population Fund launched an advocacy campaign in “Somaliland” in the light of the “Sixteen Days of activism against gender-based violence”. The campaign has symbolically linked the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, observed on 25 November, and Human Rights Day, observed on 10 December, to remind all of the daily violations of the human rights of women.” (United Nations Security Council (14 March 2008) *Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia –pg.13*)

A report by the *IRIN News* states:

“Hargeisa, 15 April 2010 (PlusNews) - A new programme is targeting about 800 primary and junior high school students in northwestern Somalia’s self-declared republic of Somaliland with HIV/AIDS messages for the first time.

"The children's ages range from seven to 19. Of course, most of them are not sexually active now - we targeted them for several reasons ... every student comes from a family and he will pass the message to his family. Also, they are the next generation at high risk of HIV," said Mohamoud Hassan Abdillahi, executive director of Somaliland Health and Social Care Organization (SOHASCO).

The messages, which SOHASCO hopes will eventually raise awareness in thousands of people, included information on how HIV is transmitted and how to prevent infection, as well as the extent of the epidemic in Somaliland; an estimated 1.4 percent of people are infected." (IRIN News (15 April 2010) *SOMALIA: HIV education goes to school*)

It also states:

"According to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), policies to reduce the vulnerability of children and young people to HIV cannot be implemented without the full cooperation of the education sector.

Although some of SOHASCO's messages could be perceived as stigmatising people living with HIV by their use of terms like "illegal sex", "immorality" and "adultery" to describe how HIV is transmitted, this is the only acceptable way of passing on such information in conservative, Muslim Somaliland. Messages intended to reduce stigma were also included." (ibid)

References:

IRIN News (15 April 2010) *SOMALIA: HIV education goes to school*

<http://www.irinnews.org/PrintReport.aspx?ReportID=88829>

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United Kingdom Border Agency (19 May 2010) *Country of Origin Information Report Somalia*

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<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/47e0d5fb2.pdf>

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United States Department of State (8 April 2011) *2010 Human Rights Reports: Somalia*

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154369.htm>

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any

particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

Amnesty International

Electronic Immigration Network

European Country of Origin Information Network (ECOI)

Freedom House

Human Rights Watch

IRIN News

Lexis Nexis

Refugee Documentation Centre Library

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

UNHCR Refworld

United Kingdom Home Office

United Nations Security Council

United States Department of State