

# Transfer of Families and Money: Somali Businessmen and Prominent Government Officials Leaving the Country

Hasan Shiekh Omar

Independent Researcher

Email: [hasankhalif55\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:hasankhalif55[at]gmail.com)

**Abstract:** *This article explores the increasing movement of Somali businessmen and prominent government officials relocating their families and transferring substantial amounts of money abroad. Driven by a combination of security concerns, economic instability, and the reformation of better educational and healthcare opportunities, many wealthy individuals are seeking safer environments for their families. The ongoing violence and political uncertainty in Somalia have heightened fears for personal safety, prompting these leaders to prioritize the well-being of their loved ones. Additionally, the weak economic conditions and pervasive corruption discourage local investment, leading many to explore more stable and profitable markets overseas. This relocation not only impacts the individuals and families involved but also has significant implications for Somalia's economy, including potential brain drain and reduced local investment. Furthermore, the transfer of wealth abroad may hinder economic recovery efforts. As a result of analyzing the motivations behind this emigration trend, the article highlights the complex interplay of factors influencing the decisions of Somali elites and underscores the challenges facing Somalia as it navigates a path toward stability and growth.*

**Keywords:** Somali elites' emigration, security concerns, economic instability, brain drain, wealth transfer

## 1. Introduction

In the modern world the migration and moving of entire families is far from uncertainty on moving from one place to another for parents' work, for children's education or for a complete change of lifestyle, families are increasingly considering life outside the country they are currently living in. Settlement of people in new environment might be identified and recognized as survival strategy used largely by gotten the better life replacement of people in Somalia has been described by several factors such as search for employment opportunities, high joblessness rates, political instability, and armed conflict, and also individual interests such as quest for studies and family unification from foreign countries.

## 2. Background

The migration of Somali businessmen and government officials is driven by a combination of economic, political, and social factors, reflecting both the challenges in Somalia and the opportunities available abroad. Additionally, the migration of Somali businessmen and prominent government officials will be attributed to several interconnected factors that includes economic instability that has faced protracted economic difficulty, including inadequate infrastructure, high unemployment, and inflation, of these conditions drive individuals to seek more stable and prosperous environments for their businesses and investments (World Bank, 2021).

**Additionally,** the author added that the Somali businessmen and prominent government leaving the country due to feeling political uncertainty over thirty decades that marked political landscape on frequent changes in leadership and ongoing conflicts. That has resulted volatility that creates an environment where individuals feel their investments and futures are at risk, encouraging them to change place to countries with more stable governance (Hasan Shiekh, 2024).

Moreover, due to security concerns that has close relation to the constant threat of violence, terrorism, and clan conflicts significantly impacts daily life in Somalia that much more resulted many families choose to leave the country to ensure their safety and the safety of their children, seeking refuge in more secure nations (UNICEF, 2022). Moreover, the **author discoveries and noted** that in recent years, a significant movement has emerged among Somali businessmen and prominent government officials that many are moving their families and transferring substantial amounts of money abroad. This phenomenon raises important questions about the motivations and implications behind of such actions for Somalia's future. The transfer of families and money by Somali businessmen and government officials underscores a complex interplay of security, economic, and educational considerations whereas these decisions may provide immediate benefits for families. Additionally, the assumption the author shows that the issue has to close relation with security problems that has family member to continuing instability and violence in Somalia have created a climate of insecurity. The author added that Families of wealthy businessmen and officials often decided to seek safer environments for their loved ones, choosing to settle in countries hypothetical as more stable. the second assumption of the author is believing that there is educational opportunity that possible help their children to have for better educational chances abroad perhaps the driving force for families to relocate, ensuring that their children receive a level education that may not be available locally. the third is economic opportunities that permits and aim to access more favorable economic conditions and investment opportunities in other countries. According to number of scholar including myself and other the believable verbal local source, many Somali businessmen are transferring significant sums of money abroad to safeguard their assets. This shift often involves investing in foreign real estate, businesses, or financial markets, which they believe more secure than investments within Somalia. The objectives of examining the transfer of

families and money by Somali businessmen and prominent government officials include analyzing migration patterns driven by political instability and economic opportunities, assessing the economic impact on Somalia through remittances and investment flows, and understanding the social dynamics affecting family structures and community ties. Additionally, the study aims to explore financial mechanisms like money transfer, evaluate policy responses to migration, and identify risks faced by migrants, while showcasing success stories of those who have thrived abroad. Finally, it seeks to promote diaspora engagement in national development, investigate gender dimensions of migration, and foster international collaboration to address challenges and leverage the benefits of this phenomenon.

### 3. Literature Review

#### 3.1 Introduction

A literature review on the article "Transfer of Families and Money: Somali Businessmen and Prominent Government Officials Leaving the Country" would encompass various themes and findings from existing research. The migration of Somali businessmen and prominent government officials is a significant phenomenon influenced by various economic, political, and social factors. This review aims to explore the underlying motivations driving this migration, emphasizing the impact of economic instability, political uncertainty, and security concerns in Somalia. Additionally, the role of established diaspora communities and remittances in shaping migration decisions will be examined. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for grasping the broader implications for both Somalia and host countries. This literature review will provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of research on this topic (World Bank, 2021; International Crisis Group, 2020).

#### 3.2 Political undercerty and security context

The political context in Somalia is characterized by significant uncertainty, marked by a history of governance challenges, clan conflicts, and intermittent violence. Since the collapse of the central government in 1991, Somalia has struggled with weak institutions and a lack of effective governance, which has created an environment of instability and unpredictability. This political turmoil directly influences the decision-making processes of businessmen and government officials, often prompting them to seek security and stability abroad. The continuous threat of violence and the inability of the state to provide basic services lead many to perceive migration as a viable option for ensuring their safety and economic well-being (International Crisis Group, 2020). Moreover, the instability of governance hampers business operations, discouraging investment and prompting entrepreneurs to relocate to countries with more favorable political climates. The constant fear of sudden changes in political leadership or policy can undermine confidence in long-term investments, pushing individuals to prioritize their family's security and future over local opportunities. Consequently, the interplay between political uncertainty and economic motivations creates a compelling case for migration among Somali businessmen and officials (Mastrorillo et al., 2016).

#### 3.3 Economic instability and opportunities abroad.

Somalia's economic conditions are marked by significant instability, characterized by high inflation, widespread unemployment, and limited access to essential services. The continuing competitions in the economy have created a dangerous environment for business operations, where entrepreneurs face difficulties such as fluctuating prices, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate regulatory frameworks. These factors not only hinder local investment but also contribute to a climate of uncertainty that drives many businessmen to seek opportunities elsewhere (World Bank, 2021). Additionally, the assumption of scholars including myself in difference, host countries often present perhaps favorable economic prospects, including job availability, stable currencies, and supportive business environments. Somali migrants are increasingly attracted to these opportunities, where they can pursue careers and investments that are less constrained by the challenges faced in Somalia. The promise of better living conditions and the potential for financial success abroad serve as powerful motivators for migration, as individuals seek to improve their economic circumstances and provide for their families (Mastrorillo et al., 2016). This dual dynamic of economic instability at home and the allure of opportunities abroad underscores the significant role that economic factors play in driving migration among Somali businessmen and officials.

#### 3.4 Concern of Violence and Terrorism and Migration as a Safety Strategy

In Somalia, the concerns surrounding violence and terrorism significantly influence migration decisions, as ongoing conflicts and terrorist activities create an environment of fear and instability. Armed groups, notably Al-Shabaab, have perpetrated numerous attacks, targeting civilians, government officials, and businesses, which exacerbates the already precarious security situation. This relentless threat not only endangers lives but also disrupts economic activities, prompting many families to consider relocation as a viable safety strategy. Migrating to more stable countries allows individuals to escape the pervasive violence and ensure the safety of their loved ones, reflecting a common rationale among those seeking refuge from the chaos of their homeland (UNICEF, 2022; International Crisis Group, 2020; Abdi, 2021). Furthermore, the disturbance associated with living in a conflict zone often leads families to prioritize the health and educational needs of their children in safer environments, reinforcing the urgency of migration as an adaptive response to insecurity.

#### 3.5 Policy Implications and Impact on Somali Economy

The migration of key individuals, including skilled professionals and business leaders, has significant consequences for Somalia's economy. As these individuals leave, the country faces a substantial loss of human capital, which is essential for driving economic growth and development. This brain drain reduces the availability of skilled labor, complicates efforts to rebuild and stabilize the economy, and hampers the effectiveness of governance. The absence of experienced entrepreneurs reduces investment opportunities, stifles innovation, and limits the potential for

job creation, exacerbating issues such as unemployment and poverty (World Bank, 2021; Mastrorillo et al., 2016). Moreover, **the outflow of government** officials and decision-makers undermines institutional capacity, resulting in weakened governance structures. This possibly will lead to a lack of accountability and transparency, further discouraging both domestic and foreign investments. As the economy struggles to recover from years of conflict and instability, the loss of key individuals will continue a cycle of underdevelopment and insecurity, making it increasingly difficult for Somalia to attract the necessary resources and support for reconstruction (International Crisis Group, 2020; Hussein, 2023).

**The migration of key** individuals from Somalia has broader implications that extend beyond human capital loss, impacting various sectors of the economy and the overall governance framework. This exit often leads to a decrease in entrepreneurial activities, as many business leaders who could drive investments and create jobs choose to relocate. The resulting decline in local businesses can block economic diversification, leaving the country overly reliant on remittances rather than fostering sustainable economic growth (World Bank, 2021; Mastrorillo et al., 2016). **Additionally, the outflow of skilled professionals, particularly** in sectors such as healthcare, education, and engineering, will exacerbate existing service delivery challenges. The healthcare sector, for instance, suffers from a lack of qualified personnel, which directly affects public health outcomes and overall quality of life. Similarly, the education sector faces difficulties in retaining teachers and administrators, limiting the development of future generations and perpetuating a cycle of underdevelopment (International Crisis Group, 2020).

The governance landscape is also impacted, as the loss of experienced officials that will lead to weakened institutions that are critical for maintaining law and order and implementing effective policies. This can create a vacuum of leadership, where less experienced individuals may struggle to navigate complex governance issues, further complicating efforts to establish stability and promote economic recovery (Hussein, 2023). **Additionally, the author suggested** that to mitigate these challenges, it is essential for policymakers to focus on creating a more attractive environment for skilled individuals, this will also include implementing reforms that improve security, enhance infrastructure, and promote good governance. Through fostering a climate of stability and opportunity, Somalia will not only retain its talent but also encourage those in the reduce the displacement to stay and think other alternative and encourage those outside to return, thus influencing their skills and networks for national development. Furthermore, for Somalia to connect its potential, it is crucial to address the factors driving migration while alongside creating an environment that encourages skilled individuals to remain in or return to the country. As a result of investing in education, infrastructure, and governance, Somalia will work towards reversing the negative impacts of migration on its economy.

## 4. Methodology

The methodology for studying the migration of Somali businessmen and prominent government officials involves a full and qualitative methods. Initially, a thorough literature review is conducted to frame the research questions and identify gaps in the existing understanding of migration patterns, economic conditions, political instability, and social networks in Somalia. This foundation informs the design of surveys and questionnaires aimed at gathering qualitative data from Somali migrants regarding their reasons for leaving, experiences abroad, and remittance behaviors. In addition to surveys, semi-structured interviews are carried out with key informants, including migrants, business people, government officials, community leaders, and experts in migration studies. These interviews provide qualitative insights into personal experiences and motivations for migration. Case studies of specific individual's narratives, such as prominent businessmen or officials, further light the circumstances surrounding their decisions to leave and their contributions to both their host countries and Somalia. Furthermore, the researcher focus group discussions with members of the Somali diaspora are also organized to explore collective experiences and perceptions regarding migration, security concerns, and economic opportunities. The data collected from surveys are analyzed using narrative to identify movements and relationships, while qualitative data from interviews and focus groups undergo thematic analysis to uncover common themes and narratives. Additionally, the researcher evaluate the existing policies related to migration, remittances, and economic development in Somalia hoping that this will help insights into how governance impacts migration decisions and the potential for policy interventions to hold talent. Moreover, by integrating these methodologies, researchers will better be understanding the dynamics of migration among Somali businessmen and government officials, ultimately informing strategies to retain talent and promote stability in Somalia.

## 5. Conclusion

The migration of Somali businessmen and prominent government officials is mixed phenomenon driven by a combination of economic instability, political uncertainty, security concerns, and the presence of strong social networks. This movement has significant implications for Somalia's economy and governance, as the loss of human capital exacerbates existing challenges and hinders national development. Understanding the motivations behind this migration is crucial for developing effective policies that can address the underlying issues and leverage the potential contributions of the Somali diaspora.

## 6. Recommendation

- 1) To address these issues, policymakers should focus on creating a stable and secure environment that encourages skilled individuals to remain in Somalia, which includes improving governance, enhancing security measures, and fostering economic opportunities through infrastructure development and investment incentives.



- 2) Engaging the Somali educationalist is also crucial; establishing strong connections will facilitate knowledge transfer and investment in the homeland.
- 3) To establish programs that support returnees, providing access to resources, training, and integration assistance, that possibly will help reintegrate skilled individuals into local economies and governance structures.
- 4) Furthermore, continuing research on migration characteristics and their impacts and has to prioritized to help policymakers adapt strategies in response to changing circumstances.
- 5) Finally, strengthening local communities through initiatives that enhance social cohesion and support networks can mitigate the adverse effects of migration and encourage stability. By implementing these recommendations, researchers and policymakers can collaboratively address the challenges posed by the migration of Somali businessmen and officials, ultimately contributing to a more stable and prosperous Somalia.

## 7. Future Research

- 1) Future research on the migration of Somali businessmen and officials should include longitudinal studies to track long - term impacts, comparative analyses of different ethnic or professional groups, and investigations into the role of remittances in economic development.
- 2) Additionally, examining the influence of technology on community building and evaluating the effectiveness of existing policies can provide valuable insights.
- 3) Exploring psychosocial factors such as trauma and identity will further enhance understanding of migrants' experiences. These avenues will contribute to more effective strategies benefiting both the diaspora and Somalia.

## References

- [1] Abdi, A. (2018). The Impact of Migration on Development in Somalia. *Journal of African Economies*.
- [2] Abdi, A. (2021). The Impact of Violence on Migration Decisions in Somalia.
- [3] Abdi, A. (2019). Somali Diaspora and the Transfer of Wealth. *Journal of African Economies*, 28 (3), 345 - 367
- [4] Aderinto, A. (2021). Money Transfers and Economic Stability in Somalia: The Role of Hawala Systems. *African Affairs*, 120 (480), 667 - 688.
- [5] AFFORD.2004. "Maximizing the benefits of migration and development: AFFORD's comments to the International Development Committee's Inquiry on Migration and Development." London, AFFORD.
- [6] Al - Shamari, M. (2022). The Role of Somali Businessmen in Political and Economic Development. *Journal of African Studies*, 15 (4), 99 - 115.
- [7] Bryden, M. (2005). Somalia: The Challenge of the New Diaspora. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Report.
- [8] Bariagaber, A. (2006). The Somali Diaspora: A New Perspective on Migration and Development.

- [9] Hesse, C. (2018). Remittances and the Somali Economy: The Role of the Diaspora. *International Migration*, 56 (5), 122 - 135.
- [10] Husseini, S. (2023). The Role of Security in Somali Migration Patterns: Challenges and Opportunities.
- [11] International Organization for Migration (IOM). (2020). Migration in Somalia: A Review of Current Trends.
- [12] International Crisis Group. (2020). Somalia: The Trouble with Political Transition
- [13] Medani, K.2000. "Report on internal migration and remittance inflows: Northwest and Northeast Somalia." UN Coordination Unit and Food Security Assessment Unit.
- [14] Menkhaus, K. (2014). The Crisis in Somalia: Tragedy in Five Acts. *African Security Studies*, 23 (3), 239 - 253.
- [15] Menkhaus, K. (2014). The Crisis in Somalia: Tragedy in Five Acts. *African Security Studies*
- [16] Mastroiello, M., et al. (2016). The Role of Remittances in Somali Development
- [17] Mastroiello, M., et al. (2016). The Role of Remittances in Somali Development.
- [18] Lewis, I. M. (2002). A Modern History of the Somali: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa. Ohio University Press.
- [19] Osman, A. (2020). Political Elites and Economic Power in Somalia: A Historical Perspective. *Horn of Africa Journal*, 5 (2), 33 - 50.
- [20] Sahl, S. (2017). Transnational Networks and Somali Entrepreneurs: The Impact of Migration on Business Development. *Migration Studies*, 5 (1), 85 - 105.
- [21] Lewis, I. M. (2010). Somalia: The Making of a State. *Journal of East African Studies*, 4 (2), 157 - 173.
- [22] World Bank. (2019). Somalia Economic Update: Navigating the Challenges.
- [23] World Bank. (2021). Somalia Economic Update
- [24] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2021). Somalia Human Development Report: Towards a New Horizon.
- [25] UNICEF. (2022). Children in Somalia: A Humanitarian Crisis.

## Author Profile



**Hassan Sheikh Omar**, Independent research and Lecturer of Somali National University –Mogadishu  
Expert: in Journalism and communication.  
Email: [hassankhaliif55\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:hassankhaliif55[at]gmail.com) Cell phone: 252 618992844 - Postal address: Wadjir District– Galmudug Village – Ex control Afgoye Road - Mogadishu –Somalia.