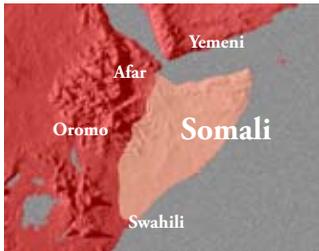
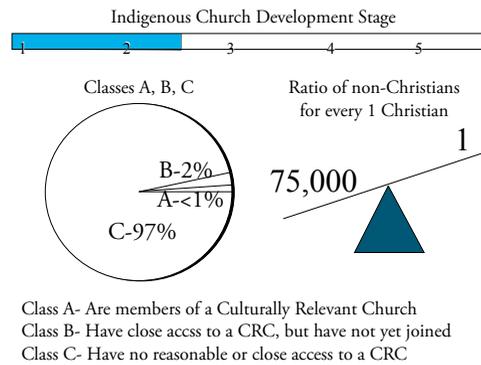


# Somali



## Quick Facts

**Population:** 15,000,000  
 Somalia: 9,000,000  
 Ethiopia: 4,000,000  
 Yemen: 700,000  
 Kenya: 500,000  
**Religion:** Sunni Islam  
**Believers:** 0.001%  
**Scriptures:** NT, OT  
**Ministry Tools:** JRGT  
**Church Status:** 2  
**Mission Status:** 2  
**MS Subgroups:** 150+



**Identity:** The Somalis are a Cushitic tribe, related to the Oromo, Afar and Beja. Somali tribes are divided into two major lineages called the Samale and the Sab. The Samale are nomadic pastoralists, and the Sab are cultivators and craftsman. The Samale rarely intermarry with the Sab, and they have formed their own autonomous country in the north, called Somaliland, though it is not officially recognized.

**Lifestyle:** The traditional Somali lifestyle has been severely interrupted by decades of civil conflict. Many remain proud of their identity as nomadic herdsmen. Population growth and modern influences have brought about a trend towards more sedentary pastoralism and farming. In the north, nomadism is more common than in the South where there has been mixing with sedentary Bantu tribes.

**Customs:** Somali clan structure is complex and is a major source of ten-

sion in the country. Loyalty to one's clan over-rides any loyalty to the government. Clan heirarchy in Somali society stems from the clan's ability to trace their origin to an important ancestor, such as from the Bible or the Quran. The British made use of this system to divide, conquer and rule the Somali.

**Religion:** Northern Somali tribes converted to Islam in the 10th century, through the influence of Arabic trading communities along the coast. By the 13th century, the entire tribe was Islamic. Sufi brotherhoods are strong, and two competing orders have contributed to Somalia's internal strife, in which 300,000 have died. This social chaos has caused many religious leaders to advocate a more orthodox Islam. Many such Islamists have migrated north to Somaliland where there is more stability.

**Christian Outreach:** Missionary work in Somalia has been largely non-existent for the last 30 years. However, it is

known that a few Somali believers are still meeting in at least five underground fellowships. SIM's Somali radio program based in Nairobi, Kenya has been virtually the only contact with the outside Christian world for many of these believers.

## How to Pray:

☞ Somalis must be won for Christ, clan by clan, and tribe by tribe. Pray for spiritual breakthroughs in each one, and for the conversion of entire households.

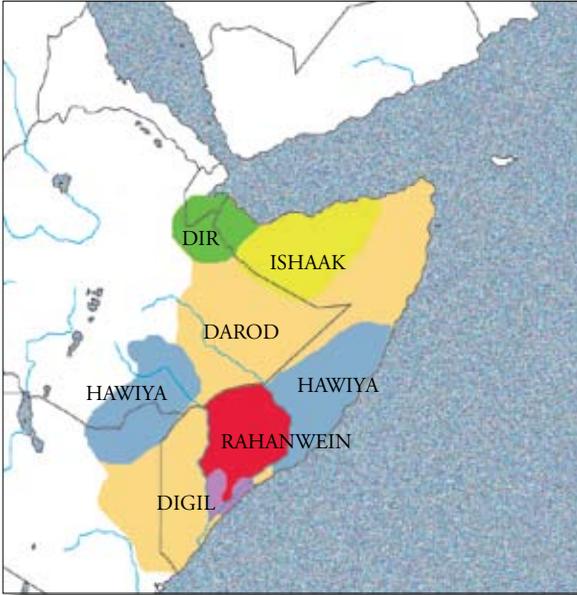
☞ Among the Degodia, a wealthy nomadic clan, several families have come to faith in Christ after hearing the gospel on cassettes. Ask God to bless the use of oral-media evangelism, especially among the illiterate.

☞ Over 400,000 Somali are in refugee camps in Kenya. Pray for effective ministry among them and training of leaders, evangelists and church-planters. Intercede for those who are called to return to Somalia, despite the dangers they will face.

☞ The Somali Bible is poorly circulated, and essentially "out of print." Few Somalis have ever read it. Pray that millions of copies might be printed and made available to every family.

**Every year 135,000 Somalis die without Christ.**

## MAJOR SOMALI SUB-GROUPS



Sub-Group	Population	% of Total
Hawiya	3,750,000	25%
Ishaak	3,300,000	22%
<i>Habar Awal</i>	990,000	30%
<i>Habar Yunis</i>	990,000	30%
<i>Habar Tojala</i>	825,000	25%
<i>Eidagalla</i>	330,000	10%
Darod	3,000,000	20%
<i>Dolbohanta</i>	2,100,000	70%
<i>Warsangeli</i>	600,000	20%
Rahanwein	2,550,000	17%
Dir	1,050,000	7%
<i>Isa</i>	577,000	55%
<i>Gadaburgi</i>	473,000	45%
Digil	450,000	3%

### HAWIYE

The Hawiye are the largest of the Somali “clan-families” and have at least 35 major sub-clans and hundreds of minor ones. They consider themselves one of the four “noble clans,” along with the Darod, Dir, and Isaaq. Like the other three noble clans, the Hawiye trace their ancestor to Irir Samale. They live primarily in central and southern Somalia, as well as in Ethiopia and Kenya. They tend to dominate the capital city of Mogadishu. One of the major Hawiye subgroups, called the Abgaal, forms the majority of the city, and has carried enormous political influence. The Abgaal sub-clan has itself over 27 other minor sub-clans. Lately they have been seeking to rally the other Somali-clans in an effort to drive out the Ethiopian army from Somalia.

### RAHANWEIN AND DINGIL

The Rahanwein and Digil are the southernmost Somali clans and speak a widely divergent dialect called Maay. This dialect has been classified by linguists as a separate, though closely related language to Somali. The Maay speaking clans are mostly agro-pastoralists, having given up the traditional Somali nomadic lifestyle generations ago. Today they live primarily between the Jubba and Shebelle rivers, where there is suitable soil conditions for farming. They are essentially marginalized by the four noble clans as second-class citizens, though they collectively represent about 20% of the Somali population. They are however ranked above such clans as the Midgan, Tumul and Yibir, which are occupational castes of metalworkers, tanners, etc.

### ISHAAK

The Ishaak are the major clan of north Somalia, who together with the Majeerteen clan (sub-group of the Harti clan, which is a sub-group of the Darod clan-family), rebelled against the central government after years of repression. When the central government collapsed in 1991 they formed their state into the Republic of Somaliland. They have developed a unique system of government that combines both Western-style democratic structure with their own clan-based political system. Their Senate consists of traditional elders, while their House of Representatives consists of elected legislators from three non-clan based political parties.