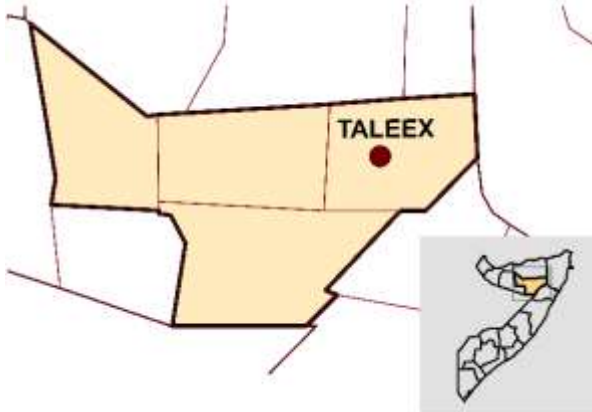


## Access Brief, June 2017

### Taleex, Sool



#### Overview

Taleex District is one of the four main districts that constitute Sool Region, and it is one of the oldest towns in the region. The town Taleex itself is home to several historic forts and structures dating back to 1900s and even earlier. Of these, there are five forts erected by Sayyid Muhammed Abdullah Hassan's former Dervish State leader in present-day Sool and Sanaag. The largest of these castles was built around Dervish tombs by Turkish and German engineers, the biggest of which belong to Sultan Nur Ahmed

Aman and Carro Seed, the mother of the Dervish leader.

After the independence of Somalia Taleex used to be a small town, where livelihoods mainly relied on livestock rearing. It was administratively governed from Garowe and the town was upgraded to full district in 1972 by Siyad Barre's regime. The population was estimated at 73,529 people according to the UNFPA in 2014, of which nearly 60,000 in rural districts and over 13,500 in the district capital, but that seems a high estimate. FAO's FSNAU estimated the population at slightly under 30,000 in 2004, while the UNDP came with a figure of 25,354 in 2005, which, corrected with a 3% yearly growth rate, would amount to 35,385 in 2017.

The district covers 13 villages where the local populations depend on livestock rearing with shifting cultivation in Xalin village taking advantage of the natural water stream where they plant cereals and vegetables that are sold in Taleex and nearby villages. All the inhabitants are from Dhulbahante mainly from Nuur-Ahmed sub clan. The district has 11 dry bed rivers with relatively steep banks which in the rainy seasons become watercourses that feed south-east grazing land of the district. The rest of the area is grass land with scattered bushes and shrubs, called the Nugaal plateau. The district has two hot/rainy seasons in March-May and September-November, while dry/cold seasons (hot in the daytime and cold at night) are June-August & December-February.

Taleex hosts the governor and the police elements of the newly appointed Somaliland region called Xaysimo, formerly known as Taleex district. The humanitarian NGOs operations in the region are very limited and are run by national staff based in the village with frequent travel. The town has insufficient power source with short period of time from 6pm to midnight and the scarce water is provided by water tankers from some long-distance boreholes. The hospital was built by Somalia government and functioned only since a couple of months in 2017, due to the drought stricken AWD outbreak that affected the local pastoralists.

## Getting there

Road	Distance & Time	Safety	Comments
Hargeisa – Burco – Laas Caanood – Faleeryaale – Buuhoodle	693 km 10.45 hours	Good, SPUs required up to Laas Caanood and normal Somaliland police Dhulbahante/Nuur-Ahmed clansmen will be taken from Laas Caanood to Taleex for inter-nationals based on the authority official's arrangements.	There are stretches with many potholes between Hargeisa and Berbera but the scenic road into the mountains from Berbera to Sheikh and onwards to Burco is in good condition. Burco has several good hotels (Egal, or Plaza) with internet and good roadside restaurants. Burco–Laas Caanood = 4 hours (240 km) with tarmac road which is in good condition. If you need to stop on this road, the preferred option is Hotel Isha in Caynabo, which is halfway (between Burco and Laas Caanood and about 120 kms drive from Burco), while Sool Safari Hotel in Oog village next to Caynabo town is another option. In fact, these hotels are better than those of Laas Caanood. Between Caynabo and Laas Caanood, there is a stretch of the road called 'Dahabshiiil' because of the multiple cases of banditry that had happened there in the past years and this year. Local drivers always try to avoid being on this stretch late in the afternoon or in the early morning. SPUs from Hargeisa can be used until Laas Caanood. The road condition from Laas Caanood to Taleex via Faleeryaale or Garac-Lagu-Dhal villages is half tarmac and half rough and desert roads but Gambade route through Arooley village is shorter and much safer compare to the latter once. During the dry season, it can be terribly dusty, and after rains it can become very muddy. All the area is considered as disputed areas, it remained as hostile and battlefield but safe by locals. Somaliland control taleex and its route up to Gambade village while Puntland control the route from Tuka-Raq to Faleeryaale or Garac-Lagu-Dhal villages. These roads are somehow safe and no immediate threats except the clan-conflicts in Taleex and its surroundings.
Garowe – Faleeryaale or Garac- Lagu-Dhal – Taleex	138 km 2 hours	Good, SPUs or normal police from Puntland Dhulbahante residents in Taleex is required from Garowe to Taleex for inter-nationals	From Qardho and Garowe the trip can be shorter with less kilometers and risks of prearranged attacks compared to the trip from Laas Caanood. The latter road from Laas Caanood and this road, both road conditions are poor beyond the tarmac road. During the dry season, it can be terribly dusty, and after rains it can become very muddy. There is high clan conflict particularly along this way. SPU police or local militia from Puntland Dhulbahante Nuur-Ahmed residents can be used from Garowe to Taleex.

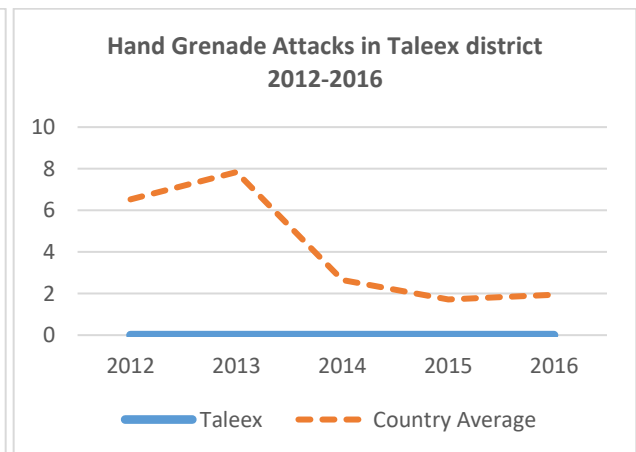
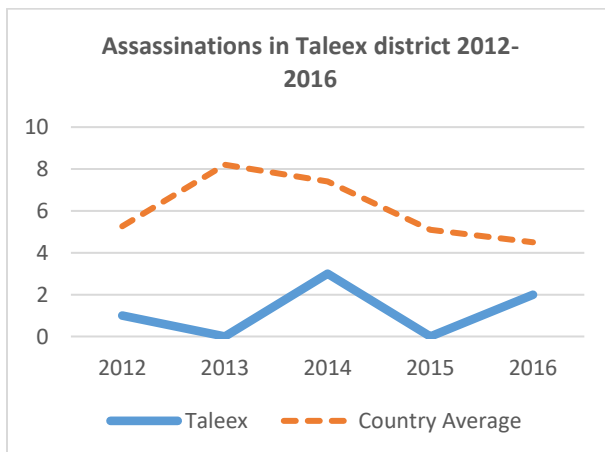
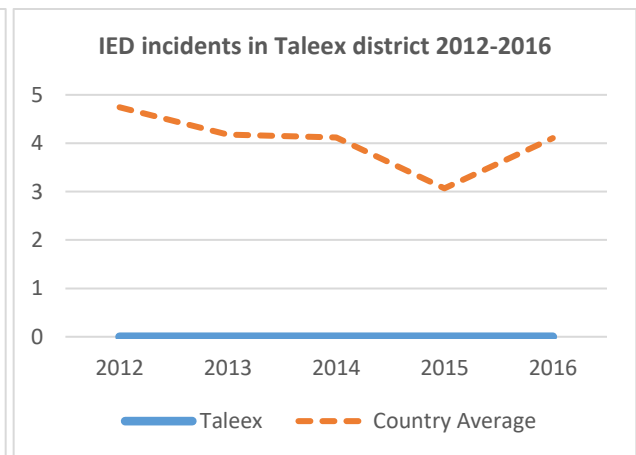
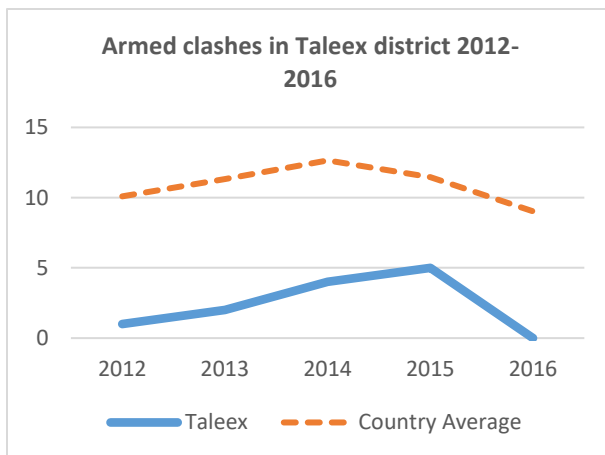
**By Air:** Planes can be chartered to land in Taleex which has an airstrip established by the Khatumo authority in collaboration with its diaspora community in 2013-2014. The airstrip is about 18km east from the village. Currently, Somaliland authority is controlling the area and any landing permissions can be obtained from the Somaliland governor. UNHAS however does not recognize the existence of this airstrip, probably because they never used it. Local sources admit that the airstrip has not been used in years, so it needs inspection.

## Lodging options

The accommodation of Taleex is very limited and has no hotels for visitors but residents can make accommodation arrangements for visitors upon demand. The Somaliland governor offered us the use of a recently built guesthouse. For hotels on the way see road descriptions above. Though other hotels exist in the city, they did not seem operational. NGOs can't accommodate visitors as they have no proper facilities in town. NGOs operating in Taleex district mostly prefer to have their accommodations in Laas Caanood or Garowe.

## Violence Trends

Taleex is quite safe but precautions must be taken. Banditry and extremism have not occurred but, in the current security vacuum, could arguably take place in the town and district. The most likely reason for conflict is posed by clan tensions between the two dominant clans of Dhulbahante (Farah-Ali & Samokab-Ali) which remained unresolved, but they would not target NGOs except through recruitment and procurement, which must be carefully balanced. The conflict between Somaliland, Khatumo and Puntland over who controls the territory remains unresolved but currently poses no threat. The most likely risks NGOs face are linked to the remoteness of the district and the lack of facilities (car breakdown, lack of communications coverage etc.)



As is depicted in the graphs above, violence levels in Taleex district are well below the national average. Armed clashes dipped to zero in 2016, majorly due to the cessation of active hostilities between Khatumo, Somaliland and Puntland. The tripartite conflict between these three actors accounted for 50% of the recorded armed clashes during the five-year period under review, with clan clashes making up the remaining percentage. There were no IED or hand grenade attacks in Taleex district in the past five years. Of the 6 assassinations recorded in Taleex district in the past five years, four of them occurred in Taleex town and all were motivated by clan revenge.

### Basic risk mitigation measures

NGOs planning a mission in Taleex needs to establish a comprehensive contingency plan before their mission. Communication equipment (VHF/ HF radios or satellite phone), first Aid kit, extra fuel and water are required, as well as 4wd vehicles in a good condition. They should meet INSO's field officer for a briefing and the Sool regional governor, regional police commander, Taleex/Xaysimo governor and the police commander for the arrangement of their missions.

Non-Somalis must take two armed escorts from Laas Caanood or from Garowe, requesting the local authorities in either place to provide armed police escorts from Dhulbahante local clans in Taleex. One can request the vehicle and SPU escort from Hargeisa, in case one has come from there, to wait in Laas Caanood. Foreigners without them will not be allowed through checkpoints on the main roads. The SPU escort or police escorts from Laas Caanood or Garowe must drive in front when passing through checkpoints. See the latest SPU regulations including daily rates.

Somaliland is currently the only security authority in Taleex, as neither Khatumo nor Puntland have presence in the area. The clan-based armed militias supporting those different administrations have bases outside the town.

### ANNEX 1: Contact List

Institution	Name	Position	Contact
Somaliland Gvt	Abdirashid Ahmed Mohamed	Governor of Xaysimo	
Somaliland Gvt	Saleeban Food Haji Diriye	Mayor of Taleex district	
Somaliland Gvt	Abdi Jama Bulaale	Police commander	
Somaliland Gvt	Muse	Deputy Police commander	
Khatumo Gvt	Mohamoud Jama Shacuur	Former Khatumo DC	
Puntland Gvt	Ahmed Roble Essa	Former Puntland DC	
Hospital	Mohamed Ali Mohamed	MCH in charge	
Elders	Abdirashiid Ali Shire	Chief Caaqil (Samokaab)	
Elders	Abdiqadir Abyan Koore	Chief Caaqil (Farah Ali)	
Elders	Axmed Awil Ismaciil 'Nacna'	The respected elder of Madhiban	
Elders	Ambashe Aw Siciid	The respected elder of Tumaal	