

Work Permit Scandal:

\$21 Million Stolen,
25 Officials Face
Legal Action



Visit our website: mogadishu24.com
flow us on Twitter: [@Mog24News](https://twitter.com/Mog24News)

The Government has prosecuted 25 officials who are accused of embezzling \$21 million obtained from the work-permit of foreign workers and investors. These theft activities happened in the past 5 years starting from 2018 and involved key figures within the Ministries of Labour and Finance, as well as the Immigration and Naturalisation Agency.

How did the doubts and suspicions come about?

Over the course of the last three reports issued by the National Audit Office in 2019, 2020, and 2021, a lot of questions surrounding the origin and management of this particular income source have been raised. The outcome of these three reports concluded that no mistakes had occurred. However, after three days in office, the new Auditor General raised doubts upon delivering the reports of the preceding years.

Mogadishu 24 had the opportunity to read the original forms of collecting data and e-mail communications between suspected institution and the Office of the National Audit Office. Surprisingly, the Management Letter excluded the reports from 2019, 2020, and 2021. This showed that identified errors were addressed and resolved but not clearly stated," revealed an investigator from the National Audit Office, who preferred to remain anonymous.

After several meetings and consultations between the newly appointed Auditor and his team, the decision was made to proceed with a Forensic Investigation, a method infrequently employed within the country. This was the second forensic investigation held within the Somali Government, presenting an array of challenges. These included assembling a proficient and knowledgeable team, using the necessary legal frameworks, and securing the commitment of high-ranking officials prepared to address the upcoming political consequences.

Under the leadership of the Auditor General, a team of accomplished experts spearheaded the investigation. In the process, financial management system was established and activated to store financial data within pertinent research institutions.

Facts and Findings

About 40,000 foreign individuals are working in Somalia, with their numbers increasing. The projected revenue from visa extensions and work permits were estimated, but unfortunately, only \$20,000 contributed to the government treasury, while the remaining funds ended up in the hands of Government officials.

Key entities involved

01 Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

02 The Ministry of Finance

03 The Immigration and Naturalisation Agency

04 Central Bank of Somalia

These interconnected institutions facilitated the implementation of this elaborate theft plan, which has been regarded longest-lasting theft cases. The changes in the governing bodies and positions within these institutions did not halt the coordinated plans of the group involved in this scandal. Each newly appointed individual inherited a portion of the gains from their predecessor.

**What we are
fighting against is bigger
than corruption.”**

Ahmed Isse Gutale
The Auditor General



Main suspects

In Somalia's modern-day situation, this kind of corruption case involving such high-ranking officials is unprecedented.

Mohamed Aden Jimale Kofi	Former DG of Immigration Agency
Abdukadir Elmi Ali	Current DG of Immigration Agency
Abdirahman Ali Adle	Immigration Agency
Abdullahi Mohamed Ali	General Director of the Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs
Abdullahi Mohamed Osoble	Director Immigration Agency
Omar Mohamed Ali	Deputy Director at Immigration Agency
Sabir Hassan Abdinur	Head of Visa Issues Extension at Immigration Agency
Aden Mohamed Abdi	Manager at Checking Visa Extension at Immigration Agency
Abubakar Mohamed Ali	Manager of Tax Revenue at Airport for the Finance Ministry
Abdukadir Abdi So'dal Abtidon	Cashier at Central Bank
Mohamed Abdullahi Aden	Manager for the Central Bank at Airport office
Abdirahman Abdikarim Ibrahim	Head section at Ministry of Labour.
Abdullahi Dahir Wehliye	Cashier for CBS at Airport office
Abdiwahid Muhsin Ibrahim	staff at Ministry of Labour
Muhudin Hassan Juris 'Sabey	Tax Collection office for Ministry of Finance
Mohamed Idiris Ahmed	Head of Indirect Tax Collection Office for Ministry of Finance
Abukar Hassan Aden	Head Section at Immigration Agency
Osman Hassan Osoble	Deputy DG at Immigration Agency
Ja'far Mohamed Ahmed	DG at Ministry of Finance
Abdikafi Hassan Mohamed	Director of Admin & Finance for Immigration Agency
Mohamed Hussein Negeye	former officer at Immigration Agency
Abdikarim Abdullahi Abdi (Jiile)	former consultant at Immigration Agency
Abdalla Mohamed Ahmed	Director for IT at the Officer of Auditor General
Mohamed Ibrahim Ahmed	officer at Immigration Agency

The allegations against these officials, a majority of whom have fled the country, have generated huge political, tribal, and sectarian pressures. The Audit Committee and the President have overcome these pressures. In response, the President has addressed the media on five occasions to discuss this matter and send a collective message to the various groups who are representing the accused individuals.



How much did the embezzled money amount for?

As an example, consider the construction of the new immigration centre, which received contributions from various governments supporting Somalia. UNOPS and the government of Somalia inaugurated a new state-of-the-art headquarters facility for Somalia's Immigration and Naturalization Directorate (IND). **With \$6.8 million in funding from the governments of Denmark, Finland, Norway and the United Kingdom, UNOPS constructed the new IND headquarters as well as procured office and security equipment**

The IND of Somalia is a critical government institution, but until now had lacked an official permanent building from which to lead and manage immigration processes. Following its formal handover to the Somali authorities in November 2022, the building now hosts the IND's 260 Mogadishu-based staff who serves thousands of people daily.

Somalia's Economic Situation

By the year-end, Somalia is anticipated to experience debt relief, resulting in the suspension of over 70% of its budget subsidy. At present, the Somali government generates \$29 million monthly, a remarkable increase from the \$10-13 million recorded just a year ago. The government's aim is to generate nearly \$100 million by the end of this year, if facing a huge challenge.

Changes that occurred as a result of this scandal

The Visa extensions and work permit services, which contribute to the government's revenue, have achieved crucial improvement compared to previous months. This reflects the government's on-going efforts to combat corruption and the misappropriation of state funds.

Below is a concise overview presenting a comparison of government revenue derived from these two services over the last six months of 2023:

The government's robust efforts to combat corruption and prevent the misappropriation of government revenue have achieved results. This positive transformation shows the importance of officials working within revenue-generating sectors adhering to legal guidelines, accurately calculating, reporting, and efficiently managing funds.

This shows that the government can boost its income when these principles are followed. The additional revenue can then be directed towards public service provisions and addressing budgetary challenges faced by the government.

Social Trust:

Public views vary across three distinct categories: some show doubt and reservation, while others demonstrate resilience and hopefulness, and a segment actively seeks to expand their understanding. Information received from the president's office reveals that both the national audit and prosecutor's offices have received messages from the police, containing comprehensive information on corruption along with evidence that is expected to involve individuals in the ongoing investigation.

"Mogadishu 24" reported that the government's unwavering commitment and determination play a vital role in the progression of this case. Furthermore, in this specific case, the public has been well-informed and consistently updated about the proceedings. This extends to the live broadcast

1- Salaries for recognized employees who are actively present, registered, and receive their payments through their bank accounts. The payments are made at the end of each month and are sent directly from the central bank. This process involves verification by the Ministry of Finance, the Chief Accountant, and an auditor.

2- Payments given to competitive contract winners who have documented their participation, verified and completed their work, and ensured their rights before routing payments through bank accounts to the central bank.

Somalia's corruption falls into these two categories:

- 1- Revenue collection mechanism: Officials tasked with revenue collection have the authority to divert the collected funds away from the government treasury and use them for personal gain. Monitoring mechanisms are lacking or weak in the government institutions, as seen in the work permit scandal.
- 2- Ghost projects carried out by international organizations, where payments are made without clear purposes and lack of proper review process.

These matters come together as the president's often-stated: "There is a reliable system, but there are no reliable people." This shows the concept that Somalia's progress depends on revitalizing its institutional strength, strongly regulated by the rule of law, as the only route to an accountable government.



Understand Somalia better



Visit our website: mogadishu24.com



flow us on Twitter: [@Mog24News](https://twitter.com/Mog24News)