



INTEGRATED THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTRE

CENTRE INTEGRÉ D'ÉVALUATION DES MENACES

## \* INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT \*

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**AL SHABAAB'S RECRUITMENT OF YOUTHS FROM CANADA****Key Points**

- Islamist extremists are radicalizing and recruiting Somali-Canadian youths within Canada to travel to Somalia for jihad training.
- Somali youths, mentioned in media reports as having disappeared from Toronto in 2009.

## Introduction

1. This ITAC assessment examines the Canadian context and recruitment methods that may have been used by Al Shabaab to entice young Somali-Canadians to travel to Somalia for jihad training. The assessment draws upon a wide variety of unclassified information sources.

2. Al Shabaab, originally the militant youth wing of the Islamic Courts Union, emerged in 2006 as the principal Salafist extremist group in Somalia. On 2010 03 05, Canada designated Al Shabaab a terrorist group under its Currently Listed Entities.

## Background

3. There are reportedly between 150,000 to 200,000 ethnic Somalis in Canada. Media reporting indicates that many among those over the age of 30 maintain close ties to Somalia. However, Al Shabaab, which is translated as "The Youth", has focused its recruitment efforts on idealistic youths and, more recently, on Western youths.

4. According to a 2003 United Nations study, Somali youths in Western diasporas are often at odds with the Somali culture of their parents. Whereas Somali parents retreat into their own culture in the face of Western values, Somali teenagers struggling to assimilate often reject adult tradition and authority in the home. Such cultural dissonance, according to another study, is rampant in diaspora Somali communities in Toronto and elsewhere, and opens the door to dangerously powerful influence from peers.

5. In November 2009, media reporting indicated that five Somali-Canadian youths had disappeared from Toronto and were feared to have gone to Somalia to join Al Shabaab.