

# Somalia: Security Situation





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Cover photo: Somali Government determined to assert control as Shabaab militants make gains - Somali National Army trainee soldiers take part in military drills in Hiilweyne training institute in a military base north of Mogadishu on 21 April 2025. Credit: Ed Ram, © Getty Images, 2025, <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/somali-national-army-trainee-soldiers-take-part-in-military-news-photo/2211342923?adppopup=true>

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# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Contents .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Disclaimer.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Glossary and abbreviations.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Methodology.....	11
Defining the terms of reference.....	11
Collecting information.....	12
Quality control.....	12
Sources.....	12
Datasets.....	13
Illustrative security incidents.....	15
Structure and use of the report.....	15
Note on transliteration .....	16
Clan maps .....	16
<b>Map of Somalia .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>1. General description of the security situation in Somalia .....</b>	<b>18</b>
1.1. Recent political and security developments.....	18
1.2. Armed actors and relevant developments.....	21
1.2.1. Territorial control maps .....	21
1.2.2. Al-Shabaab control areas, presence, and influence .....	23
1.2.3. Updated list of main actors .....	27
1.3. Conflict layers and main developments.....	33
1.4. Recent overall security trends .....	38
1.4.1. Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties .....	38
1.4.2. Conflict-related displacement .....	42
1.4.3. Other impacts on civilian life.....	44
1.5. Criminality.....	46
1.6. Death penalty, arbitrary arrests and detentions, corporal punishments, prison conditions.....	48
1.7. Checkpoints and road security in Somalia .....	50







<b>2. Regional security situation and trends .....</b>	<b>54</b>
2.1. Jubbaland .....	54
2.1.1. Gedo .....	54
2.1.2. Middle Juba .....	60
2.1.3. Lower Juba .....	64
2.1.4. Jubbaland - Checkpoints and road security .....	70
2.2. South West .....	70
2.2.1. Bakool .....	70
2.2.2. Bay .....	76
2.2.3. Lower Shabelle .....	81
2.2.4. South West - Checkpoints and road security .....	86
2.3. Benadir and Mogadishu .....	87
2.3.1. Security Situation .....	87
2.3.2. Benadir and Mogadishu - Checkpoints and road security .....	94
2.4. Hirshabelle .....	95
2.4.1. Hiraan .....	95
2.4.2. Middle Shabelle .....	100
2.4.3. Hirshabelle - Checkpoints and road security .....	105
2.5. Galmudug .....	106
2.5.1. Galgaduud .....	106
2.5.2. Mudug .....	111
2.5.3. Galmudug - Checkpoints and road security .....	115
2.6. Puntland .....	116
2.6.1. Nugal .....	116
2.6.2. Bari .....	120
2.6.3. Puntland - Checkpoints and road security .....	124
2.7. Sool, Sanaag and SSC-Khatumo .....	125
2.7.1. Sool .....	125
2.7.2. Sanaag .....	131
2.7.3. Sool, Sanaag and SSC-Khatumo - Checkpoints and road security .....	135
2.8. Somaliland .....	135
2.8.1. Awdal .....	135
2.8.2. Wogoyi Galbeed .....	138





2.8.3. Togdheer.....	141
2.8.4. Somaliland - Checkpoints and road security.....	145
<b>Annex 1: Bibliography .....</b>	<b>146</b>
Maps.....	146
Oral sources, including anonymised sources .....	146
Public sources.....	147
<b>Annex 2: Terms of Reference.....</b>	<b>212</b>





# Disclaimer

This report was written according to the [EUAA COI Report Methodology \(2023\)](#).<sup>1</sup> The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care within a limited timeframe. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

‘Refugee’, ‘risk’ and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither EUAA nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 11 April 2025. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the [Introduction](#).

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<sup>1</sup> EUAA, EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, [url](#)





## Glossary and abbreviations

Term	Definition
<b>ACLED</b>	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
<b>AFRICOM</b>	United States Africa Command
<b>AMISOM</b>	African Union Mission in Somalia
<b>AS</b>	Al-Shabaab, militant Islamist organisation in Somalia
<b>ASWJ</b>	Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'ah, the multi-clan armed Sufi group
<b>ATMIS</b>	African Transition Mission in Somalia
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AUSSOM</b>	African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia
<b>AWD</b>	Acute Watery Diarrhoea, cholera
<b>BRA</b>	Benadir Regional Administration
<b>CFR</b>	Council on Foreign Relations
<b>CID</b>	Criminal Investigation Department
<b><i>Danab</i></b>	Special operation unit within the SNA trained by the US AFRICOM
<b><i>Darwish, Dervish</i></b>	State level armed forces/militias/paramilitary/special police
<b>DSA</b>	Detailed site assessment
<b>ENDF</b>	Ethiopia National Defence Forces
<b>FGS</b>	Federal Government of Somalia
<b>FMS</b>	Federal Member State



<b><i>Gorgor</i></b>	Special operation unit within the SNA trained by Türkiye
<b>HIPS</b>	Heritage Institute for Policy Studies
<b>HSM</b>	Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of Somalia
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IED</b>	Improvised Explosive Device
<b>INSO</b>	International NGO Safety Organisation
<b>IPC</b>	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
<b>IPIS</b>	International Peace Information Service
<b><i>Isbaaro</i></b>	Somali for checkpoint
<b><i>Isbaaro soo booda</i></b>	Somali for pop-up checkpoint
<b>ISIS or ISS</b>	Islamic State in Somalia
<b>JISA</b>	Jubbaland Intelligence and Security Agency
<b>KDF</b>	Kenya Defence Forces
<b><i>Macawisley</i></b>	Communal militia, community defence forces
<b><i>Mooryaan</i></b>	Somali for bandits
<b>NRC</b>	Norwegian Refugee Council
<b>NISA</b>	National Intelligence and Security Agency
<b>PMPF</b>	Puntland Maritime Police Force
<b>PRMN</b>	Protection and Return Monitoring Network
<b>PSF</b>	Puntland Security Forces
<b><i>Sadat</i></b>	Turkish private military company





<b>SHDS</b>	Somali Health and Demographic Survey
<b>SHCC</b>	Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition
<b>SNA</b>	Somali National Army
<b>SSC</b>	Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn
<b>SSC-K</b>	Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn – Khatumo Administration
<b>UNHCR PRMN</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Protection & Return Monitoring Network
<b>UNSOM</b>	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
<b>UNSOS</b>	United Nations Support Office in Somalia
<b>UNOCHA</b>	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene







# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant information for the assessment of applications for international protection, including refugee status and subsidiary protection. Moreover, the report is intended to inform the update of EUAA's country guidance on Somalia (2025).

The report provides an update on and mapping of the security situation at both country and regional level, namely for the 18 administrative regions foreseen by the Somali provisional constitution as they existed before 1991.<sup>2</sup> The report builds upon preceding EUAA COI reports, notably the [Somalia: Security Situation](#) from February 2023,<sup>3</sup> but also [Somalia: Security Situation](#),<sup>4</sup> [Actors](#),<sup>5</sup> [Targeted profiles](#),<sup>6</sup> and [Key socio-economic indicators](#),<sup>7</sup> which were published in the period July-September 2021.

The report provides an overview of the main security trends and conflict dynamics at country level in the reference period (1 April 2023 - 30 March 2025). Additionally, the report provides an update on the main changes regarding state and non-state (armed) actors and their control areas or presence during the same reporting period. For the full overview of these actors see the report on [Somalia: Actors](#).<sup>8</sup> Finally, the report engages with conflict dynamics and security developments at the regional level. In this section, it provides information about incidents and their impact on civilian life, including conflict related-humanitarian issues.

## Methodology

### Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference of this report build on previous EUAA reporting on the same topic, internal and external consultations with experts, the EUAA COI network members, and draw from the relevant most recent literature on the topic. Additionally, national asylum authorities of EU+ countries<sup>9</sup> belonging to the Country Guidance Network on Somalia were surveyed on their needs and their input was taken on-board in the design of these terms of reference. Feedback and suggestions were then formulated into the final version that can be found in [Annex 2: Terms of Reference](#).

The reference period for this report is from 1 April 2023 to 30 March 2025, but also includes general information to provide background and contextual information to the current situation. The drafting period finished on 11 April 2025, peer review occurred between 14 and 23 April 2025, and additional information was added to the report as a result of the quality review

<sup>2</sup> Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 1 August 2012, [url](#), Art. 49 (5), 72

<sup>3</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>4</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 24-26

<sup>5</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#)

<sup>6</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>7</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>8</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#)

<sup>9</sup> EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland



process during the review implementation up until 30 April 2025. The report was internally reviewed subsequently.

## Collecting information

This report is mostly based on publicly available information in electronic and paper-based sources gathered through desk-based research, but it also relies on interviews with key informants.

Research on Somalia is challenging due to lack of reporting, security issues, and rapidly developing changes in the security situation. To partial compensation, this report also contains information from multiple oral sources with ground-level knowledge of the situation in Somalia who were interviewed or consulted specifically for this report. In some cases, sources were unwilling to go on record. The report also makes ample reference to previous EUAA reports and key statements contained there when still relevant.

Both interviewed and written sources used are referenced in the [Annex 1: Bibliography](#). Wherever information could not be found within the timeframes for drafting this report, this is stated in the relevant section of the report.

## Quality control

This report was written by the EUAA COI Sector and ACCORD in line with the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023)<sup>10</sup> and the EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2023).<sup>11</sup>

The report has been peer-reviewed by COI experts from Belgium and ACCORD as well as internally by the EUAA COI Sector. All the comments from reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report, which was finalised on 22 May 2025.

## Sources

In accordance with EUAA COI methodology, a range of different published documentary sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include: academic publications, think tank reports, and specialised sources covering Somalia; COI reports by governments; information from civil society and NGOs; reports produced by various bodies of the United Nations; Somali and regionally-based media.

In addition to using publicly available documentary sources, multiple oral sources, including experts who had contributed to previous production on Somalia, were contacted for this report. The types of oral sources contacted include: scholars, international experts, Somali experts, development practitioners, and sources based in Somalia with reliable knowledge of the situation on the ground. Some sources who were interviewed chose to remain anonymous for security reasons. Sources were assessed for their background, publication history,

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<sup>10</sup> EUAA, EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>11</sup> EUAA, Writing and Referencing Guide for EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports, February 2023, [url](#)



reputability, and current ground-level knowledge. They were interviewed in the period February 2025 – March 2025. All oral sources are described in the [Annex 1: Bibliography](#).

With regard to written sources of information, efforts were made to include Somali-language media sources in the research, including through the use of BBC Monitoring. Moreover, in some instances, reference was made to ‘Al-Shabaab-affiliated websites’ such as SomaliMemo or Calamada.<sup>12</sup> Although these sources were not used excessively, sources associated with armed groups should always be assessed with caution. Efforts were made to corroborate such information or cross-check with other sources. See [Annex 1: Bibliography](#) for additional details.

## Datasets

The report relies on different datasets with different topical/thematic focus.

### a) ACLED data on security incidents and estimated fatality data

Reliable data and sources on security incident and casualty recording in Somalia was limited and difficult to obtain.

Among other sources, data on security incidents were drawn substantially from publicly available curated datasets from the organisation **Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project** (ACLED).<sup>13</sup> ACLED collects data on violent incidents in Somalia, among other countries, coding each incident with the time and place, type of violent incident, the parties involved and an estimate on the number of fatalities. It also provides relevant breakdowns per region, actor, type of incident, and period. The information is collected in a database that is accessible via registration, searchable and kept continuously up to date.

ACLED codes security incidents as follows: battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians, riots, protests, and strategic developments.<sup>14</sup> For the purpose of this report the following type of events were included in the quantitative analysis and graphs of the incidents: **battles, explosions/remote violence, and violence against civilians**. Additionally, ACLED codes actors involved in security incidents as follows: Actor1 is the ‘named actor involved in the event’ and Actor2 is the ‘named actor involved in the event, while ‘[i]n most cases, an event requires two actors, noted in columns ‘ACTOR1’ and ‘ACTOR2’. However, event types ‘Explosions/Remote violence’, ‘Riots’, ‘Protests’, and ‘Strategic developments’ can include ‘one-sided events’.<sup>15</sup>

Characteristics and potential limits for COI use of ACLED data are:

1. Data primarily come from secondary sources such as media reports. Lack of or under-reporting might critically affect the depiction and the assessment of the situation on the ground. In the context of Somalia, for instance, the fact that large portion of the country are under the control of Al-Shabaab severely hinders media reporting activities. Adding to this,

<sup>12</sup> Security Council Report, November 2022 Monthly Forecast – Africa – Somalia, 31 October 2022, [url](#)

<sup>13</sup> ACLED, Data Export Tool, 4 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>14</sup> ACLED, Codebook, January 2021, [url](#), pp. 7-14

<sup>15</sup> ACLED, Codebook, January 2021, [url](#), pp. 5, 18





- the fact that mobile phones are not allowed in these same areas, because prohibited by the group, further signals the militant's group complete monopoly on information;
2. ACLED's database only provides figures of direct deaths or fatalities per event,<sup>16</sup> not of injured persons and casualties; indirect deaths resulting from security events, which in the relevant literature range in average between 3 and 9 more deaths per fatality, are also not taken into consideration;<sup>17</sup>
  3. ACLED's database does not distinguish between civilian and non-civilian fatalities;<sup>18</sup>
  4. all ACLED fatality figures provided in this EUAA COI report are estimates based on ACLED's methodology. In ACLED's codebook their methodology is explained;<sup>19</sup>
  5. the coding of events as 'Battles', 'Explosions', or 'Violence against civilians' is independent from their actual impact on civilians. While acts of 'violence against civilians' are always co-coded as 'civilian targeting',<sup>20</sup> 'explosions' may be or may not, depending on whether civilians were the main or only target;<sup>21</sup> 'battles' instead, never are,<sup>22</sup> despite the fact they are often about civilian targets in Somalia.<sup>23</sup>

When focusing on the **involvement** of specific actors within certain regions, the drafters based their analysis on all those incidents, where ACLED coded the relevant actor either as 'Actor1' or as 'Actor2'. This approach aims to illustrate the general level of involvement of the respective actors in the conflict without distinguishing between Actor1 and Actor2, as these categories, according to ACLED's methodology, do not indicate any differentiation in terms of content/semantics.

In various instances, particularly at general country level, whenever other sources on security incidents were available over the reference period, ACLED's data have been corroborated/contrasted with other data.

#### b) INSO CHDC data

In Somalia, data on civilian casualties and fatalities caused by security events are limited and rarely comprehensive. INSO is the International NGO Safety Organisation dedicated to humanitarian safety.<sup>24</sup> Along with the humanitarian data dashboard,<sup>25</sup> INSO provides data on security events and their impact on civilians in its Conflict and Humanitarian Data Centre dashboard, which covers a number of conflict settings across the world.<sup>26</sup> Based on INSO's methodology a security incident is: 'An Act, perpetrated by an Actor in a Location with an Impact. This corresponds to the CHDC Act categories of Attack, Confine, Theft or Threat only as they are the ones that actively cause harm. It includes all Actors, Locations and Impacts'.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 38

<sup>17</sup> Geneva Declaration Secretariat, Global burden of armed violence, 2008, [url](#), pp. 31-42

<sup>18</sup> ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 12, 16, 38

<sup>19</sup> ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 38

<sup>20</sup> ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>21</sup> ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 16, 23

<sup>22</sup> ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>23</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>24</sup> INSO, Who we are, n.a., [url](#)

<sup>25</sup> INSO, Humanitarian Data Dashboard, n.a., [url](#)

<sup>26</sup> INSO, Conflict Data Dashboard, n.a., [url](#)

<sup>27</sup> INSO, Terms and definitions, n.a., [url](#)



The EUAA could access the public version of the CHDC database, otherwise only available to registered partners, which offers high-level view of data only.

### c) PRMN data and UNOCHA CCCM data on displacements

In terms of UNHCR PRMN displacement figures, the drafters worked with the publicly available data at UNHCR's Operational Data Portal.<sup>28</sup>

In terms of IDP population distribution across regions and sites, the drafters worked with the publicly available UNOCHA CCCM dataset, as of December 2024.<sup>29</sup>

### d) NRC data on evictions

In terms of data on evictions, the drafters relied on data available via NRC's Eviction Information Portal. NRC defines 'forced evictions' as the 'removal against their will of people from their homes and/or land which they occupy, without any form of legal or other protection' (NRC, 1 July 2020, [url](#), p. 1).

## Illustrative security incidents

Based on UN data, ACLED data and local media consulted, the drafters conducted a selection of illustrative incidents per each administrative region (18 in total). This selection is not exhaustive and is meant to show examples of the nature and the intensity of the security incidents that have affected the civilian population during the reference period. When ACLED data were used for illustrative incidents, where possible, efforts were made within time constraints to identify the original source of the information referenced in ACLED's raw data files.

## Structure and use of the report

The report is divided into two parts: Section 1. General description of the security situation in Somalia, and Section 2. Regional security situation and trends.

- In Section 1, the report provides an update on main security and political developments that took place in Somalia during the reference period (April 2023 – March 2025). This section includes charts and analysis of aggregate data at country level about security incidents, conflict-related displacement, and other impacts on civilians' life, as well as a section on checkpoints and road security.
- In Section 2, the report provides an update on conflict dynamics, security trends and incidents at the regional level, for the 18 administrative regions foreseen by the Somali provisional constitution<sup>30,31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>29</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Data, Somalia CCCM IDP Site Master List, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>30</sup> Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 1 August 2012, [url](#), art. 49 (5), 72

<sup>31</sup> Please note that this partition, besides being the official partition for the Federal Government of Somalia, is widely used by national and international bodies, organisations, research institutes, and NGOs.



## Note on transliteration

In relation to transliteration of local language terminology used in this report, it is important to understand that a national orthography for the Somali language was codified relatively late by adopting a Latin script (21 October 1972). Nevertheless, even today, Somali lacks a commonly applied and binding orthography.

In this report, Somali-language names for places, clans and personal names usually follow Somali orthography: 'long vowels are indicated by doubling them', as in *Darood* or *Abbaan*, 'the Latin 'c' stands for a sound close to the Arabic ع (ayn), while 'x' denotes the strongly aspirated ح (ha)'.<sup>32</sup> However, given the fact that other sources adopt different conventions, the reader will sometimes find other forms of place, clan, and personal names in the text, including where direct citations are used or in references.

It is also important to note that Somalis, notably Somali men, are frequently better known by their nicknames than by their formal names. The same applies to public figures and politicians mentioned in the text, whose nickname is provided in quotation marks, such as in 'better known' or 'also known' as 'Qoor Qoor'.

## Clan maps

For clan maps please refer to the [EASO COI report Somalia: Security Situation](#) from September 2021.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Hoehne, M. V., *Between Somaliland and Puntland*, 2015, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>33</sup> EASO, *Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation*, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 17-19



# Map of Somalia



Map 1. Map of Somalia<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Map 1: UN, Somalia, Map No. 3690 Rev. 10, December 2011, [url](#)

# 1. General description of the security situation in Somalia

## 1.1. Recent political and security developments

This report updates and builds upon the previous [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023),<sup>35</sup> and [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021).<sup>36</sup> Ample reference is also made to other reports of the same package that provide for further context information and details, such as the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021),<sup>37</sup> and the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Targeted profiles](#) (September 2021).<sup>38</sup>

**Main political developments.** After assuming power in May 2022,<sup>39</sup> and launching the all-out war against Al-Shabaab in August the same year,<sup>40</sup> the second political cycle of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (HSM) started with promises of peace and reconciliation,<sup>41</sup> and raised expectations at country level.<sup>42</sup> However, his later political engagements with the constitutional amendments<sup>43</sup> and the linked One Person One Vote agenda<sup>44</sup> alienated political supporters and key stakeholders along the process, among others for lack of consultation and consensus-building,<sup>45</sup> while they diverted the country's attention from tackling more pressing security issues.<sup>46</sup> The Federal Government of Somalia's (FGS) unilateral political push towards the above-mentioned reforms,<sup>47</sup> which were in part adopted in March 2024,<sup>48</sup> also contributed to divide the President's own clan power base,<sup>49</sup> which otherwise had supported his political project in the beginning.<sup>50</sup> Among others, Puntland stopped to recognise the FGS as from 31

<sup>35</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>36</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>37</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 58-67

<sup>38</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>39</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2022/665, 1 September 2022, [url](#), para. 2

<sup>40</sup> VOA, Somalia's President Vows 'Total War' Against al-Shabab, 24 August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>41</sup> DW, Somalia's new president promises peace, 17 May 2022, [url](#); International Crisis Group, New President in Somalia, New Opportunity for Reconciliation, 27 May 2022, [url](#)

<sup>42</sup> Afyare A. Elmi, Can Somalia's Third Republic be saved?, 20 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>43</sup> SPA and Somali Dialogue Platform, The Constitutional Amendment Procedure, February 2024, [url](#); SPA, Review and analysis of the controversial national consultative council (NCC) agreement on elections, June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>44</sup> Somali Dialogue Platform and SPA, Addressing contentious issues on elections in the constitutional review process, March 2024, [url](#), pp. 4-6; SPA, Review and analysis of the controversial national consultative council (NCC) agreement on elections, June 2023, [url](#), pp. 12-13

<sup>45</sup> Afyare A. Elmi, Can Somalia's Third Republic be saved?, March 2025, [url](#), p. 4; SPA and Somali Dialogue Platform, Governance Brief 28 - The Constitutional Amendment Procedure, February 2024, [url](#), pp. 3-4; SPA, Review and analysis of the controversial national consultative council (NCC) agreement on elections, June 2023, [url](#), pp. 12-13

<sup>46</sup> Hiraal Institute, Escalation and adaptation – Assessing President Hassan Sheikh's War on Al-Shabaab, May 2024, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>47</sup> HIPS, 18 Months for fix Somalia's broken political trajectory, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 3-4; Hiraal Institute, Somalia's Shifting Sands: Unpacking The Tumultuous Times Of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's First Year, May 2023, [url](#), pp. 8-9; see also Horn Observer, First year of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's term: Political instability and a declining public trust – report, 15 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>48</sup> VOA, Somalia's Parliament Approves Historic Constitutional Amendments, 30 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>49</sup> Sahan, Somali Wire (The) - Somalia's Last Chance Saloon, Issue no. 806, 2 April 2025, n.a; Sahan, Somali Wire, "Bring the Ball Back to the Centre" – Clan, Politics and Consensus in Somalia, Issue no. 803, 24 March 2025, n.a

<sup>50</sup> Sahan, Somali Wire (The) - Somalia's Last Chance Saloon, Issue no. 806, 2 April 2025, n.a



March 2024,<sup>51</sup> while Jubbaland severed his ties with it in November 2024,<sup>52</sup> after the FGS contested the re-election of Madobe at the head of the regional state, which also led to a military confrontation between Jubbaland regional forces and federal security forces.<sup>53</sup>

In another development, in the Sool and Sanaag regions, which are contested between Puntland and Somaliland, a new administrative entity, Sool Sanaag Cayn-Khatumo state (SSC-K), was established in February 2023,<sup>54</sup> and also recognised by the FGS of Somalia as from October 2023,<sup>55</sup> after the militia of the locally dominant clan heavily clashed with Somaliland's security forces.<sup>56</sup> At the same time, at the beginning of 2024, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ethiopia and Somaliland further challenged the authority of the FGS and widened the distance between the two political projects.<sup>57</sup> As a reaction, the FGS threatened to expel Ethiopian armed forces from its soil, in a move that also triggered strong reactions from the concerned local communities in extended areas of the country.<sup>58</sup>

These and other political developments signal the chronic fragmentation and fragility of Somalia's political settlement.<sup>59</sup> Against this backdrop, at the end of 2024, the renewal of the African Union Mission in Somalia, rebranded AUSSOM, replaced a phasing out ATMIS (1 April 2022 – 31 December 2024), and was crucial to prevent a 'security vacuum'.<sup>60</sup> However, 'perennial funding challenges' undermined the financial sustainability of the mission, while at the time of writing there was still lack of clarity on its hybrid cost sharing mechanism.<sup>61</sup> After successfully unleashing its Shabelle offensive,<sup>62</sup> at the end of March 2025 Al-Shabaab group started to impinge on Mogadishu,<sup>63</sup> raising national security concerns.<sup>64</sup> By the same time, the FGS seemed incapable of exerting full control even in parts of capital.<sup>65</sup> It is against this backdrop that, at the end of March 2025, the state President, after having survived a major attack on his life some days earlier,<sup>66</sup> decided to call for a National Dialogue, with the aim to reunite all major political actors and opposition leaders against the common enemy.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Garowe Online, Puntland withdraws recognition of the Federal Government of Somalia, 31 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>52</sup> Reuters, Somalia's Jubbaland government suspends ties with federal administration, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>53</sup> Somali Digest (The), Jubaland Triumphs: How Reckless FGS Tactics Crumbled in Ras Kamboni, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>54</sup> SSC-Khatumo, Needs assessment report, December 2023, [url](#), pp. 12-14

<sup>55</sup> Somali Digest, Somali government makes a strategic move by recognizing SSC-Khaatumo, 19 October 2023, [url](#);

Horseed Media, Somali Federal Government Recognizes New SSC-Khatumo Administration, 19 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>56</sup> Hoehne, M. V., The Conflict over Lasanod: Long-term and immediate factors, June 2023, [url](#), pp. 2-3; Hiraal

Institute, Understanding the intricacies of the Las Anod conflict and the path to peace, May 2023, [url](#), pp. 4-5

<sup>57</sup> ISPI, On the Edge: the Ethiopia-Somaliland MoU, 30 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>58</sup> Horn Observer, Somali regional states oppose plan to remove Ethiopian peacekeepers, 6 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>59</sup> Afyare A. Elmi, Can Somalia's Third Republic be saved?, March 2025, [url](#), pp. 3-5; HIPS, 18 Months for fix Somalia's broken political trajectory, December 2024, [url](#), pp. 3-5

<sup>60</sup> ISS, Funding for Somalia's new AU peace mission hangs in the balance, 19 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>61</sup> ISS, Funding for Somalia's new AU peace mission hangs in the balance, 19 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>62</sup> Soufan Center (The), Between Islamic State and Al-Shabaab: An Embattled Mogadishu?, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>63</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Tightens Grip Around Mogadishu's Suburbs, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>64</sup> Sahan, Somali Wire (The) - Somalia's Last Chance Saloon, Issue no. 806, 2 April 2025, n.a; Sahan, Somali Wire (The) - Al-Shabaab and a 'Post-Jihadist' State, Issue no. 805, 28 March 2025, n.a

<sup>65</sup> BTI, Somalia Country Report, 2024, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>66</sup> AA, Somali president survives Al-Shabaab assassination attempt, officials say, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>67</sup> Sahan, Somali Wire (The) - Somalia's Last Chance Saloon, Issue no. 806, 2 April 2025, n.a; Hiiraan Online, Somali President invites political rivals to unite in counterterrorism and state-building efforts, 30 March 2025, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, Jubaland, Somali leaders back peace talks as Puntland remains silent, 30 March 2025, [url](#)



**Main security developments.** Based on ACLED data, in the period April 2023 – March 2025, Somalia has been the theatre of almost 6 000 reported security events, resulting in almost 15 000 estimated fatalities.<sup>68</sup> In the two preceding years, with a comparable number of security events – 5 724 – the number of estimated fatalities was substantially lower, around 11 450.<sup>69</sup> In the reference period of this report, the average number of security events per month was almost 250. With just a few exceptions, it remained constantly above 200 throughout the entire period, while it raised sensibly in July-September 2023 and February-March 2025, when it respectively reached almost 300 per month, and then peaked at 331 reported events in February 2025, as shown in [Figure 1](#) and [Figure 2](#) below. The resulting number of recorded fatalities peaked during the same periods. More than one third of all estimated fatalities recorded between April 2023 and March 2025 - about 5 800 out of 15 000 - were registered during the two intervals above, which corresponded with the following major military and security operations:<sup>70</sup>

- first, operation Black Lion, a renewed joint offensive against Al-Shabaab, unleashed in the period August-September 2023, notably in Galgaduud, Middle Shabelle, Hiraan and Mudug regions;<sup>71</sup> concomitantly with it, other intense armed interactions took place in Lower Shabelle, Lower Juba and Bakool regions in July-September 2023; these two sets of events alone resulted in more than 2 800 fatalities;<sup>72</sup>
- second, a renewed Al-Shabaab offensive against Government and allied forces, launched in February 2025 and still on-going at the end of March 2025, which took place notably in Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, and Lower Shabelle regions;<sup>73</sup> concomitantly with it, in Puntland the Hilaac offensive against ISIS was deployed in the al-Miskaad mountains in the Bari region during January and February 2025,<sup>74</sup> and was still on-going at the time of writing (April 2025). Almost another 2 000 fatalities were estimated to have been caused by the unleashing of these two other sets of operations in the period January - 21 March 2025.<sup>75</sup>

In addition, other military operations and confrontations against Al-Shabaab,<sup>76</sup> indiscriminate and widespread forms of targeting across the country,<sup>77</sup> rising levels of clan conflicts,<sup>78</sup> and other layers of conflict, which will be discussed in more detail in the remainder of this chapter, have contributed to ongoing sources of insecurity in the country. For further details see section on [1.4 Recent overall security trends](#).

<sup>68</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>69</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 24 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>70</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>71</sup> ACLED, Somalia: The Government and Al-Shabaab Vie for the Support of Clan Militias, 15 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>72</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>73</sup> Soufan Center (The), Between Islamic State and Al-Shabaab: An Embattled Mogadishu?, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>74</sup> ADF, Puntland Forces Believe They Have ISSOM on the Run, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>75</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>76</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 12-19; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 11-14; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 10-12; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/426, 3 June 2024, [url](#), para. 13-16; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 11-16

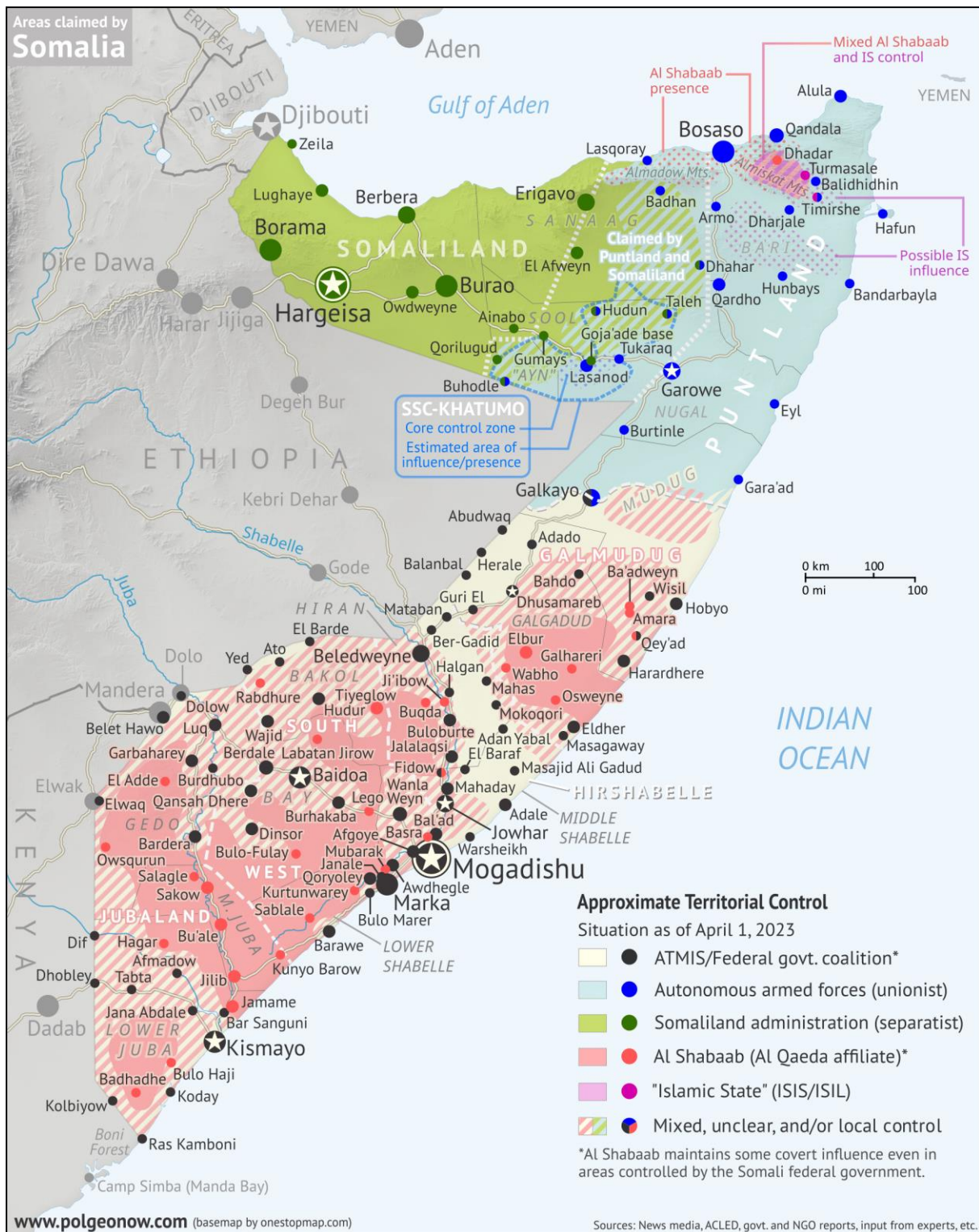
<sup>77</sup> UNSC, Somalia – April 2025 Monthly Forecast, 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>78</sup> ACAPS, Somalia – Impact of clan conflicts, 19 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2



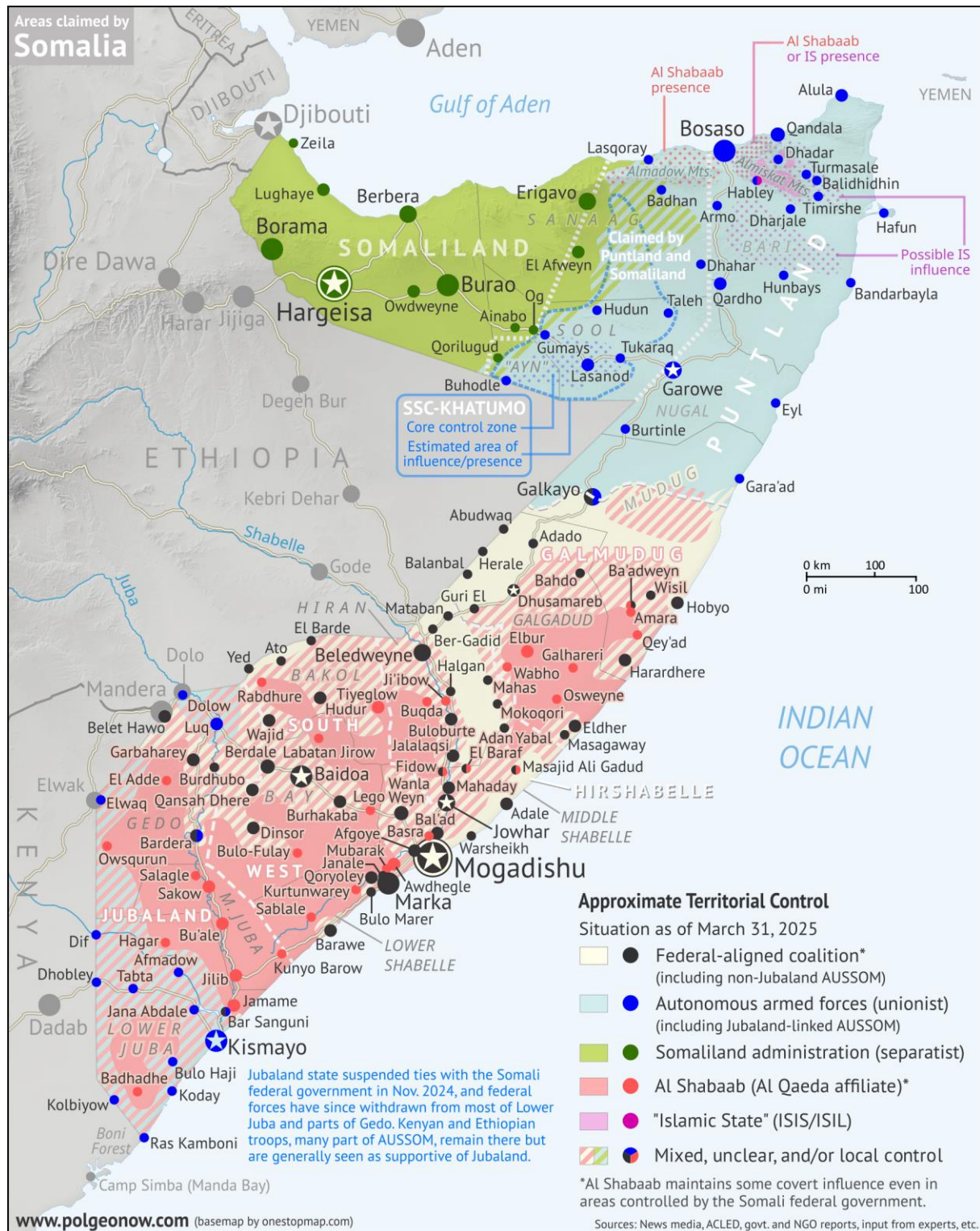
## 1.2. Armed actors and relevant developments

### 1.2.1. Territorial control maps



Map 2. Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, 1 April 2023, [Political Geography Now](https://www.polgeonow.com).<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, 1 April 2023, n.a.. Please see also [note](#) below under Map. 3



Map 3. Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, 31 March 2025, [Political Geography Now](#).<sup>80</sup>

**Please note:** The depictions on Map 2 and 3 do not imply any opinion whatsoever on the part of EUAA concerning legal status or effective control over any country, territory, city, or area. Every effort is made to ensure this map is free of errors, but there is no guarantee that the map or its features are either spatially or temporally accurate or fit for a particular use. This map is provided without any warranty of any kind whatsoever, either expressed or implied.

<sup>80</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, 31 March 2025, n.a.





### 1.2.2. Al-Shabaab control areas, presence, and influence

Al-Shabaab is Somalia's 'armed Islamist extremist and self-declared al-Qaeda affiliate organisation'.<sup>81</sup> As indicated by the UN Panel of Experts on Somalia, in its October 2024 report, 'Al-Shabaab remains the most significant threat to peace and security in Somalia'.<sup>82</sup> The group is characterised by enduring resilience and capacity to absorb attacks.<sup>83</sup> During the reporting period, the group has managed to repel repeated Government-backed military offensives, to recapture previously liberated areas, and to carry out complex attacks against the Government, ATMIS, and international targets, as well as civilians and the business community.<sup>84</sup> According to the Center for Preventing Action's backgrounder, the group's overall goal remains 'to destroy the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), rid their country of foreign forces, and establish a "Greater Somalia," joining all ethnic Somalis across East Africa under strict Islamic rule'.<sup>85</sup>

**Armed attacks.** In the reference period Al-Shabaab has continued to stage high profile attacks in Mogadishu, as well as elsewhere in Somalia, resorting to improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rockets and mortar attacks, while also engaging in military operations in various regions across the country.<sup>86</sup> In Mogadishu alone, in the reference period, Al-Shabaab carried out more than 160 attacks against civilians.<sup>87</sup> The deadliest of these were: Pearl Beach Hotel attack, on 9 June 2023 (16 casualties);<sup>88</sup> SYL Hotel attack, on 15 March 2024 (34 casualties);<sup>89</sup> Top Coffee attack,<sup>90</sup> on 14 July 2024 (31 casualties);<sup>91</sup> Beach View Hotel restaurant attack,<sup>92</sup> on 2 August 2024 (287 casualties);<sup>93</sup> Tea shops bombing, on 17 August 2024 (28 casualties);<sup>94</sup> Gel Doh bar and restaurant attack, on 28 September 2024 (16 casualties);<sup>95</sup> café bombing outside a police training school, on 17 October 2024 (13 casualties);<sup>96</sup> President convoy attack,

<sup>81</sup> International Crisis Group, Somalia: Al-Shabaab – It Will Be a Long War, 26 June 2014, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>82</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 6

<sup>83</sup> UNSC, Thirty-third report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, S/2024/92\*, 29 January 2024, [url](#), para. 16; UNSC, Thirty-fourth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, S/2024/556, 22 July 2024, [url](#), para. 37; UNSC, Thirty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, S/2025/71/Rev.1, 6 February 2025, [url](#), para. 39

<sup>84</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 6

<sup>85</sup> CFR, Conflict with Al-Shabaab in Somalia, 15 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>86</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 12-15; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 11-14; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 10-12; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/426, 3 June 2024, [url](#), para. 13-16; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 13-16

<sup>87</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), filter 'Al-Shabaab' as Actor 1, 'Civilians' as Actor 2, location 'Mogadishu'

<sup>88</sup> Al Jazeera, Several killed in hotel siege in Somalia's Mogadishu, 9 June 2023, [url](#); see also UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 14

<sup>89</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/426, 3 June 2024, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>90</sup> BBC, Car bomb kills Somalis watching Euro football final, 15 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>91</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 14

<sup>92</sup> Al Jazeera, At least 32 killed in al-Shabab beach attack in Somalia's capital Mogadishu, 3 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>93</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 16

<sup>94</sup> Horn Observer, More Than 20 Killed in Deadly Bombings in Mogadishu, Afgooye, 17 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>95</sup> VOA, 6 killed by bomb blasts in Somalia after leader addresses UN, 28 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>96</sup> Al Jazeera, Seven killed in suicide bombing at cafe in Somalia's Mogadishu, 18 October 2024, [url](#)



on 18 March 2025 (at least 10 fatalities);<sup>97</sup> Aden Adde International airport and Halane compound mortar attack, on 19 March 2025.<sup>98</sup> Another major attack, this time in Beletweyne, in Hiraan region, took place on 11 March 2025 at the Hotel Cairo (unknown casualties, 6-11 fatalities).<sup>99</sup>

Moreover, Al-Shabaab in the last part of the reference period reversed most of the gains of the Government-led offensive of 2022 and beginning of 2023.<sup>100</sup> In particular, after having deliberately reduced its military operations in the course of 2024,<sup>101</sup> in the period February - March 2025, Al-Shabaab engaged in a major offensive against Government controlled areas, locations, and towns, starting from Hiraan and Middle Shabelle regions.<sup>102</sup> Within this context the group made incursions into Ceel Saleebaan, located at about 20 km from Adan Yabal,<sup>103</sup> Biya Cadde, located approximately 40 km east of Jowhar,<sup>104</sup> Jowhar,<sup>105</sup> and Balcad, located 30 kilometres from Mogadishu.<sup>106</sup> On 17-18 March 2025, as a reaction to the offensive, the FGS authorities deployed police and the Somali Custodial Corps to the front-lines in Middle Shabelle.<sup>107</sup> A few days later, 145 police officers disappeared from the local Police Academy in Mogadishu, and had reportedly abandoned their post with some of them suspected to have defected to Al-Shabaab.<sup>108</sup>

Simultaneously, the group launched its offensive in Lower Shabelle,<sup>109</sup> including in Awdheegle,<sup>110</sup> and Afgoye.<sup>111</sup> In mid-March 2025 Al-Shabaab started to encircle Mogadishu,<sup>112</sup> with incursions in Ceelasha Biyaha, a strategic town 15 km from Mogadishu, Xaawo-Cabdi,

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<sup>97</sup> Horn Observer, Somalia's President Narrowly Escapes Al-Shabaab Bomb Attack; Media Station Briefly Shutdown, Dozen Journalists Arrested, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>98</sup> Horn Observer, Somalia: Multiple mortar rounds hit parts of the Mogadishu airport and Halane, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>99</sup> AP, Somali forces end a 24-hour siege by al-Shabab militants on a hotel, leaving all fighters dead, 12 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>100</sup> RFI, Fears mount over resurgence of Al-Shabaab jihadists in Somalia, 27 March 2025, [url](#); Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 13-23; Weiss, C., Shabaab mounts coordinated assault north of Mogadishu, 3 March 2025, [url](#); Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab Captures Balcad, 30km from Somali Capital, During Ethiopian PM's Visit, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>101</sup> Sahan, Somali Wire, Al-Shabaab Advances and Villa Somalia's Dhusamareb Strategy, Issue no. 798, 12 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>102</sup> Weiss, C., Shabaab mounts coordinated assault north of Mogadishu, 3 March 2025, [url](#); Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab Captures Balcad, 30km from Somali Capital, During Ethiopian PM's Visit, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>103</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>104</sup> Weiss, C., Shabaab mounts coordinated assault north of Mogadishu, 3 March 2025, [url](#); Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 1 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>105</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>106</sup> Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab Captures Balcad, 30km from Somali Capital, During Ethiopian PM's Visit, 28 February 2025, [url](#); Weiss, C., Shabaab mounts coordinated assault north of Mogadishu, 3 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>107</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali police deployed to frontlines in Middle Shabelle region to combat Al-Shabaab, 18 March 2025, [url](#); see also Hiiraan Online, Somali Custodial Corps deployed to Middle Shabelle region in fight against Al-Shabaab, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>108</sup> Horn Observer, INTERPOL-Trained Somali Police Officers Among 145 Missing in Mass Defection, Some Suspected of Joining Terrorists, 3 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>109</sup> Sahan, Somali Wire, Al-Shabaab's Offensive Steps Up Further, No. 801, 19 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>110</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>111</sup> Abdalle Ahmed Mumin, [X], posted on: 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>112</sup> Bacon T., [X], posted on: 19 March 2025, [url](#); Rashid Abdi, [X], posted on: 20 March 2025, [url](#)



Lafoole,<sup>113</sup> and others along the Mogadishu-Afgooye road,<sup>114</sup> while establishing checkpoints there,<sup>115</sup> as well as on Mogadishu-Balcad road.<sup>116</sup>

On 4 March 2025, the US embassy in Mogadishu warned of imminent Al-Shabaab attacks in multiple locations in Mogadishu, including the Aden Adde International Airport.<sup>117</sup> On 18 March 2025, Al-Shabaab attempted to assassinate the President, with a major IED attack on his convoy while transiting through Mogadishu.<sup>118</sup>

**Control areas.** Apart from large swathes of territory in South-Central Somalia, which are firmly controlled by the group – notably in Hiraan, Galgaduud, and Southern Somalia – Al-Shabaab contest and exert its influence over larger portions of the country,<sup>119</sup> and controls key routes across South-Central Somalia.<sup>120</sup> Moreover, the group also maintains its strongholds in the north of the country, in the western Al-Madow mountains, between the Bari and the Sanaag regions.<sup>121</sup> For more information on territorial control across Somalia, see the control maps on the situation [at the beginning](#) (1 April 2023, [Map 2](#)) and [at the end](#) (31 March 2025, [Map 3](#)) of the reference period of this report. For more information on checkpoints and routes controlled by the group see section [1.7 Checkpoints and road security in Somalia](#).

During the reference period the group has maintained, gained, or regained control, in full or in part – at times temporarily – of the following locations in South-Central Somalia:

- Bacaadweyne, Caad, Camaara, Xiinlabi, in Mudug;<sup>122</sup>
- Budbud, Galcad, Cowsweyne, Ceel Buur, in Galgaduud;<sup>123</sup>
- Booco, Nuur Fanax, Beero Yabal, Cell Qooxle, Garasyaani, Aborey, in Hiraan;<sup>124</sup>
- Ciidciidka,<sup>125</sup> and Cali Fooldehere, Ceel Baraf, Ruun Nirgood, Ceel Cali Axmed, Caadley, Miir Tuugo, Al-Kowthar, Daaruu Nicma, Xalfooley, Nuur Dugle,<sup>126</sup> Shabeellow, Mansuur, Caadleey, Huriwaa, Oobaale, Qurac Madoobe, Miirtaqwo, Biya Cadde,<sup>127</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Halqabsi News, Security forces respond to Al-Shabab advance near Mogadishu, 16 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>114</sup> Abdalle Ahmed Mumin, [X], posted on: 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>115</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>116</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 23 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>117</sup> East African (The), US warns of imminent Shabaab attack in Mogadishu, 5 March 2025, [url](#); US Embassy in Somalia, Security alert for US citizens, 4 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>118</sup> Reuters, Somali militants target presidential convoy in bomb attack, president safe, 19 March 2025, [url](#); AA, Somali president survives Al-Shabaab assassination attempt, officials say, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>119</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, 31 March 2025, n.a; see also Williams, P. D., The Somali National Army Versus Al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, April 2024, [url](#), p. 38

<sup>120</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 14-15

<sup>121</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 42

<sup>122</sup> Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab seizes control of towns and villages abandoned by Somali army, militia, 18 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>123</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 16-18

<sup>124</sup> Abdalle Ahmed Mumin, [X], posted on: 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>125</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 21

<sup>126</sup> Abdalle Ahmed Mumin, [X], posted on: 10 March 2025, [url](#); see also Sahan, Somali Wire, Mogadishu Agrees on Ethiopian Troops Remaining, Issue no. 791, 24 February 2025, n.a.

<sup>127</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 1 March 2025, [url](#); see also Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 13 March 2025, [url](#); Horn Observer, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Carries Out Attacks in Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle, Civilians Flee, 26 February 2025, [url](#)



Bursha Sheekh, Ceel Xarar, Xaruur, and Laba Garas,<sup>128</sup> Guulane and Xagarey,<sup>129</sup> Masjid Cali Gaduud,<sup>130</sup> in Middle Shabelle;

- Afgooye-Mogadishu road,<sup>131</sup> Awdheegle town,<sup>132</sup> strategic bridges in the area - Awdheegle, Bariire, and Sabiib and Caanole<sup>133</sup> - Bariire town,<sup>134</sup> in Lower Shabelle.

Unlike previous offensives where the group typically seized new territory and then withdrew, Al-Shabab appears to be consolidating its positions and gains.<sup>135</sup> Moreover, the situation in Hiraan and Middle Shabelle remains particularly uncertain at the end of the reference period, in light of Shabaab's ability 'to mount such a large fighting force over a large area'.<sup>136</sup> The group may count on a significant fighting force in the region, 'possibly numbering in the hundreds of fighters'.<sup>137</sup>

During the reference period, the only exception to this overall trend is represented by the success of government-led operations in Jubbaland:

- in summer 2024, where federal and regional forces repelled Al-Shabaab attacks and reportedly cleared about 100 km on the route linking Kismayo to Afmadow;<sup>138</sup>
- at the end of March 2025, when following massive bombing and air striking of Jilib - Al-Shabaab stronghold in Middle Juba - many militants fled the town, whose key facilities were also severely impacted.<sup>139</sup>

**Al-Shabaab forces.** Relatively recent estimates indicate that Al-Shabaab had between 7 000 and 12 000 fighters at the end of 2023.<sup>140</sup> However, Al-Shabaab's 'true strength remains unknown'. The militants recursively replenish their losses through forcible recruitment and by cutting deals with clans.<sup>141</sup> During the reference period, Al-Shabaab has launched massive recruitment campaigns, including: on occasion of the signing of the MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland, on 1 January 2024, when the militant group called for the Somalis 'to join in defending their land from Ethiopia and other foreigners';<sup>142</sup> during the first half of 2024, when the group was reported to make renewed efforts to recruit fighters to counter the offensives by the FGS, and to look for 'individuals with engineering expertise to assist with drone

<sup>128</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 13 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>129</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>130</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 27 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>131</sup> Abdalle Ahmed Mumin, [X], posted on: 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>132</sup> SMN, Tensions Between Somali Forces and Al-Shabaab Erupt in Sabiid Area, 1 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>133</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>134</sup> Baidoa On-Line, [X], posted on: 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>135</sup> Addis Standard, Op-ed: From Insurgency to Power Grab: Al-Shabaab's deadly advance on Mogadishu signals Somalia's descent into disaster, 21 March 2025, [url](#); Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 13 March 2025, [url](#); Cirka News, [X], posted on: 2 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>136</sup> Weiss, C., Shabaab mounts coordinated assault north of Mogadishu, 3 March 2025, [url](#); Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 1 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>137</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Escalates Attacks In and Around Mogadishu, 27 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>138</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 24

<sup>139</sup> Hiiraan Online, Al-Shabaab leaders flee Jilib following intensified airstrikes by Somali forces, 23 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>140</sup> UNSC, Thirty-third report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, S/2024/92\*, 29 January 2024, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>141</sup> Williams, P. D., The Somali National Army Versus Al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, April 2024, [url](#), p. 40

<sup>142</sup> ACLED, Somalia at a Glance: 9 December 2023-19 January 2024, 15 January 2024, [url](#)



modifications, as well as clerics for propaganda dissemination'.<sup>143</sup> At the beginning of March 2025, in the course of Al-Shabaab offensive in Hiraan and Middle Shabelle, the group released a 'video purportedly showing hundreds of newly trained militants'.<sup>144</sup> This happened again at the end of March 2025.<sup>145</sup>

Within this context, the UN Secretary General, in the latest report on Children and Armed Conflict, indicated that more than 900 children were recruited and 663 were abducted by Al-Shabaab in the course of 2022,<sup>146</sup> mostly in Bay, Bakool, Hiraan, Middle Juba, and Lower Shabelle.<sup>147</sup> According to the UN Panel of Experts on Somalia, there are no indications that patterns in the recruitment and abduction of children at the hands of Al-Shabaab have changed ever since and in the period September 2023 – August 2024.<sup>148</sup>

For further information on Al-Shabaab as a military and political organisation, including insights into the group's outreach, see the [EASO COI report Somalia: Actors \(July 2021\)](#).<sup>149</sup> For additional details about conflict layers and dynamics at federal and regional level see section 1.3 as well as the regional chapters of this report. For information on Al-Shabaab financial capacity and source of revenue see section on 1.10 Individuals who have to pay taxes to Al-Shabaab in the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Country Focus](#) (May 2025).<sup>150</sup>

### 1.2.3. Updated list of main actors

Somalia is characterised by the presence of numerous state and non-state armed actors. As Somali security expert Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown<sup>151</sup> put it '[m]ore than 60 warring parties are present in the country, ranging from clan and warlord militias to various other militant groups', including the Islamic State in Somalia (ISIS-Somalia).<sup>152</sup>

Most of these military and security forces have been addressed in detail in [EASO COI report Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021),<sup>153</sup> and integrated in the following [EASO COI report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021),<sup>154</sup> and [EUAA COI report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).<sup>155</sup> Each armed actor's general strength, territorial control/presence, and overall dynamics are discussed in the referenced pages in those reports. For the main

<sup>143</sup> UNSC, Thirty-fourth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, S/2024/556, 22 July 2024, [url](#), para. 39

<sup>144</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>145</sup> Baidoa On-line, [X], posted on: 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>146</sup> UNSG, Children and armed conflict, A/77/895-S/2023/363, 5 June 2023, [url](#), para. 151, 157

<sup>147</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 194

<sup>148</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 193, and Annex no. 44

<sup>149</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 58-67

<sup>150</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Country Focus, May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>151</sup> Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute where she focuses on international and internal conflict, non-traditional security threats, and insurgency, among others. She has conducted fieldwork on a range of countries, including Somalia. Brookings, Vanda Felbab-Brown, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>152</sup> Felbab-Brown, V., The Problem with Militias in Somalia, 2020, [url](#), p. 118

<sup>153</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#)

<sup>154</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 24-26

<sup>155</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#), pp. 31-34



changes that have occurred during the reference period (April 2023 - March 2025), or for additional information, see further details in the remainder of this section.

**The FGS Security Forces** include the Somali National Army (SNA), the Somali Air Force, the Navy, the Special Forces, the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA), Police Forces, Prison Forces;<sup>156</sup> regarding some relevant updates on these forces:

- SNA: while on paper it counts 32 000 personnel, the *de facto* deployable force is closer to 19 000, with an additional 24 000 that the FGS claimed would have been trained and integrated in the army by the end of 2024.<sup>157</sup> Overall cohesion is undermined by ‘a very fragmented’ composition, heavy clan-based recruitment, disparities in training and equipment. Other issues are ‘desertion, defections, soldiers working multiple jobs, and infiltration by Al-Shabaab, although these problems have become less acute’.<sup>158</sup> While the the Air force is not functional, the Navy is slightly more advanced but still unable to meet the challenges it is confronted with;<sup>159</sup>
- Danab Infantry Brigade: as of August 2023, 342 new recruits completed their training and joined the 1 700 SNA-Danab forces operationally active in the country;<sup>160</sup> as of November 2022, the US had trained almost 2 000 fighters,<sup>161</sup> since 2017;<sup>162</sup> In January 2025, the new Trump administration in the US suspended all US foreign aid programmes, including military security assistance, for 90 days. Implications for Danab forces are still unclear;<sup>163</sup>
- Gorgor Brigade: as of March 2024, Gorgor’s strength was of about 4 000 soldiers, approximately 1 900 soldiers from the 17<sup>th</sup> Brigade and 2 100 from the 18<sup>th</sup> Brigade;<sup>164</sup> since 2017, according to the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), Türkiye had trained more than 6 000 Gorgor soldiers,<sup>165</sup> but in the meantime over 2 000 have either deserted or lost their lives in operations;<sup>166</sup>
- SNA soldiers trained elsewhere: as of October 2023, a second batch of 3 000 Somali soldiers were being trained in Eritrea,<sup>167</sup> while the first batch of 5 000 had started to return to Mogadishu by December 2022;<sup>168</sup> another set of approximately 3 000 soldiers were reported to be receiving military training from Uganda and other countries as from October 2022.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>156</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 37-45

<sup>157</sup> Williams, P. D., The Somali National Army Versus Al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, April 2024, [url](#), p. 36; HIPS, Security sector reform in Somalia, January 2023, [url](#), pp. 7-8

<sup>158</sup> Williams, P. D., The Somali National Army Versus Al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, April 2024, [url](#), p. 39

<sup>159</sup> HIPS, Security sector reform in Somalia, January 2023, [url](#), pp. 7-8

<sup>160</sup> US Embassy in Somalia, Somalia and United States Graduate 342 Somali National Army Danab Soldiers, 8 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>161</sup> VOA, Somalia Military Rebuilding Shows Signs of Improvement, 30 November 2022, [url](#)

<sup>162</sup> US Embassy in Somalia, United States Increases Security Assistance through Construction of SNA Bases, 16 February 2024, [url](#)

<sup>163</sup> SMN, Trump halts U.S. Foreign Aid to Countries Including Somalia, 22 January 2025, [url](#); see also Sahan, Somali Wire, Al-Shabaab Tightens Noose Around Mogadishu, Issue no. 800, 17 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>164</sup> Somali Digest (The), Gorgor Forces in Crisis: Desertions and Leadership Failures, 28 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>165</sup> TRT, 6,000 Somali military personnel trained by Türkiye since 2017, 12 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>166</sup> Somali Digest (The), Gorgor Forces in Crisis: Desertions and Leadership Failures, 28 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>167</sup> Garowe Online, Hassan Sheikh visits Somali soldiers training in Eritrea, 10 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>168</sup> VOA, First Batch of Somali Troops Trained in Eritrea Arrives Home, 21 December 2022, [url](#); Africanews, First batch of Somali soldiers returns from Eritrea, 21 December 2022, [url](#)

<sup>169</sup> HIPS, Security sector reform in Somalia, January 2023, [url](#), p. 10





**The FMS armed forces**, Darwish (state level paramilitary/militia) and police forces, under each FMS administration, namely: Jubbaland, South West State, Benadir Regional Administration [BRA]-Mogadishu, Hirshabelle, Galmudug, Puntland, and Somaliland.<sup>170</sup>

- According to an operational readiness assessment of regional security forces conducted in 2019 there were an estimated 19 700 registered individuals in the following FMS: Jubbaland, Galmudug, South-West State, and Puntland;<sup>171</sup>
- In the course of the reference period a new administrative entity was set up in the contested regions between Puntland and Somaliland - in the Sool, Sanaag and Cayn regions, with Cayn basically corresponding to the Buhodle district of the Togdheer region.<sup>172</sup> This autonomous regional SSC-Khatumo administration,<sup>173</sup> later recognised by the FGS,<sup>174</sup> also relies on its own security forces. According to Somalia expert Markus Hoehne, they are about 8 000 in total, the vast majority of which are drawn from the Dhulbahante clan.<sup>175</sup>

**The Clan militias.** In the reference period, there were in Somalia more than 100 clan or sub-clan militias.<sup>176</sup> For additional information on clan militias and clan conflict dynamics at the regional level, during the reference period, see the remainder of this report as well as the section on 'Individuals involved in blood feuds/clan disputes and other clan issues' in the [EUAA COI report Somalia: Country focus](#) (May 2025).<sup>177</sup> For general background information see the [EASO COI report Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021),<sup>178</sup> among other EUAA sources.<sup>179</sup>

**Macawisley** (also in the variants *Macawiisleey*, *Ma'awisley*, among others) was originally an Hawadle-led clan militia,<sup>180</sup> operating in the Lower Shabelle region and consisting of around 200 fighters.<sup>181</sup> Similar forms of clan based, self-organised and self-styled protection forces against Al-Shabaab were also set-up in Gedo,<sup>182</sup> in Hirshabelle,<sup>183</sup> in Middle Shabelle,<sup>184</sup> and in

<sup>170</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 77-116

<sup>171</sup> HIPS, Security sector reform in Somalia, January 2023, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>172</sup> Somali development scholar based in Puntland, Telephone interview with EUAA, 3 April 2025. The Somali development scholar based in Puntland is a seasoned researcher, university professor, and observer of Somali issues

<sup>173</sup> SSC-Khatumo, Needs assessment report, December 2023, [url](#), pp. 12-14

<sup>174</sup> Somali Digest, Somali government makes a strategic move by recognizing SSC-Khaatumo, 19 October 2023, [url](#); Horseed Media, Somali Federal Government Recognizes New SSC-Khatumo Administration, 19 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>175</sup> Hoehne, M. V., Interview and email exchange with EUAA, 25 March 2025. Markus Hoehne is a lecturer in social anthropology at the University of Göttingen (Germany), specialized on Somalia, fluent in Somali language, and with many years of experience in conflict-research

<sup>176</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>177</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>178</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 52-54; 77-116

<sup>179</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), Chapter 5 Individuals involved in blood feuds/clan disputes and other clan issues; EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security situation, September 2021, [url](#), sections on conflict dynamics

<sup>180</sup> Keating M. and Waldman M., eds., War and Peace in Somalia – National Grievances, Local Conflict and Al-Shabaab, Hurst and Company London, 2018, p. 101

<sup>181</sup> Felbab-Brown, V., The Problem with Militias in Somalia, 2020, [url](#), p. 129

<sup>182</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 80

<sup>183</sup> Strategic Intelligence, Several Al Shabaab Killed, Dozen Injured After Macawisley Militia Attacks Militant Camp In Beledweyne, 23 October 2019, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, May 2021, [url](#)

<sup>184</sup> Harun Maruf, 'Ma'awisley' Militias in Central Somalia Mobilizing Against al-Shabab, 4 October 2022, [url](#); Harun Maruf, [X], posted on: 25 February 2021, [url](#)



Galmudug,<sup>185</sup> at different times in recent years. More recently, on the backdrop of the joint offensive against Al-Shabaab launched in mid-2022, their number was estimated at between 8 000 and 10 000 members across Hirshabelle and Galmudug.<sup>186</sup> In October 2023, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud appointed Ali Jeyte, the former governor of the Hiraan region, as the presidential coordinator for these forces, also referred to as ‘community defence forces’,<sup>187</sup> despite the fact that they are not mentioned in the Somali National Security Architecture.<sup>188</sup> However, reliance on Macawisley forces and their arming is controversial among FMS, with Puntland, Jubaland and Southwest state administrations opposing it.<sup>189</sup>

**AUSSOM, ATMIS.** With United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution no. 2628, from 31 March 2022, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) replaced the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) with a similar mandate.<sup>190</sup> Its progressive phase out ended on 31 December 2024, when it was replaced by the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM). With UNSC resolution no. 2767, in the period 1 January 2025 - 30 June 2025 (phase 1 of the mission) the members states of the African Union were authorised to continue to deploy 12 626 uniformed personnel, including 1 040 police forces, and to complete the re-alignment of troops from ATMIS to AUSSOM.<sup>191</sup> During the first 6 months of phase 2 of the mission (1 July 2025 – 31 December 2027), the number of uniformed personnel will instead be 11 826, including 680 police.<sup>192</sup> On 25 February 2025, the African Union and the FGS agreed on the contributing countries and the number of their troops as follows: 4 500 Uganda, 2 500 Ethiopia, 1 520 Djibouti, 1 410 Kenya, and 1 091 Egypt.<sup>193</sup> The mission’s funding and financial sustainability was uncertain from the start.<sup>194</sup>

**United States Africa Command (AFRICOM).** In May 2022 the Biden administration, reversing President Trump’s 2020 decision, decided to send US troops back to Somalia, with sources indicating between around 450,<sup>195</sup> and 500 redeployed soldiers.<sup>196</sup> US AFRICOM in Somalia provides assistance to Somali and African Union forces,<sup>197</sup> conducts air, drone, and ground operations,<sup>198</sup> and trains Danab’s special forces.<sup>199</sup> Regarding airstrikes, based on ACLED data, US Military Forces in Somalia were responsible for 62 air/drone strikes in the period April

<sup>185</sup> HIPS, Galmudug – Governance, state formation, conflict dynamics, and reconciliation, March 2024, [url](#), pp. 12, 26, and footnote n. 37

<sup>186</sup> Somali Dialogue Platform, Ma’awisley, September 2023, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>187</sup> Goobjoog, Jeyte picked to head Ma’awisley militia affairs amid build-up for second military operations, 29 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>188</sup> Somali Dialogue Platform, The shaping of the Somali National Security Architecture, March 2024, [url](#), p. 21; see also Somali Dialogue Platform, Ma’awisley, September 2023, [url](#), pp. 2, 4

<sup>189</sup> Somali Dialogue Platform, The shaping of the Somali National Security Architecture, March 2024, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>190</sup> UNSC, Resolution no. 2628, S/RES/2628 (2022), 31 March 2022, [url](#), para. 22

<sup>191</sup> UNSC, Resolution no. 2767, S/RES/2767 (2024), 27 December 2024, [url](#), para. 20

<sup>192</sup> UNSC, Resolution no. 2767, S/RES/2767 (2024), 27 December 2024, [url](#), para. 21

<sup>193</sup> VOA, AU, Somalia agree on troop numbers for new mission, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>194</sup> ISS, Funding for Somalia’s new AU peace mission hangs in the balance, 19 February 2025, [url](#); Balqiis, Special Issue – AUSSOM - Off to an unclear start, 1 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9

<sup>195</sup> New York Times (The), Biden Approves Plan to Redeploy Several Hundred Ground Forces Into Somalia, 16 May 2022, [url](#)

<sup>196</sup> Harper, M., US troops back in Somalia to fight al-Shabab, BBC News, [url](#); NCB News, Biden sends hundreds of U.S. troops back to Somalia to fight al-Shabab extremists, 16 May 2022, [url](#)

<sup>197</sup> US AFRICOM, Somalia, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>198</sup> New America, The War in Somalia, March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>199</sup> Stars and Stripes, US military presence in Somalia likely to be scrutinized by incoming Trump administration, 30 December 2024, [url](#)



2023 – 21 March 2025, causing at least 381 fatalities, including civilians. At the same time, ‘unidentified military forces’ were responsible for another 155 instances resulting in 1 206 reported fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.<sup>200</sup> Conversely, Airwars reported that the number of ‘alleged’ airstrikes at the hands of the US military forces in the reference period were 36.<sup>201</sup> With an even lower estimate, the Long War Journal Tracker reported that the number of airstrikes was 18 in 2023 and 6 in 2024.<sup>202</sup> Other international partner engaged in air/drone strikes are Kenya, Ethiopia, the UAE, and ATMIS/AUSSOM.<sup>203</sup>

**Al-Shabaab.** See section [1.2.2 Al-Shabaab control areas, presence, and influence](#) above.

**Islamic State in Somalia** (ISIS-Somalia or ISS). With its al-Karrar office, the Islamic State in Somalia has recently regained prominence as a key administrative and financial hub for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) at the global level.<sup>204</sup> Some national administrations claim as well that the ISIL’s global leader, al-Qurashi, is actually Abdul Qadir Mumin - the head of ISIS,<sup>205</sup> or that he has relocated to Puntland.<sup>206</sup> Within this context, the UN Panel of Experts on Somalia, in its latest report, noted ‘a significant shift in the strength and disposition of the [ISIL] faction in Somalia’, whose capabilities vis a vis Al-Shabaab had been recently enhanced by a strong injection of foreign fighters.<sup>207</sup> Recent estimates indicate that the group’s size ranges between 600 and 700 fighters,<sup>208</sup> or even between 700 and 1 500-1600 fighters.<sup>209</sup> Half of them are estimated to be foreign and coming from Ethiopia<sup>210</sup> – notably Somali-Ethiopians, but also Oromo and Amhara – Tanzania, North Africa countries, and other Arab countries such as Yemen and Sudan.<sup>211</sup> The leadership, however, remains in the hand of

<sup>200</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), filter ‘air/drone strikes’ and ‘us military forces in Somalia’

<sup>201</sup> Airwars, US Forces in Somalia – US Strikes and Civilian Casualties, 2025, [url](#), filters US Forces, Somalia, 1 April 2023 – 21 March 2025

<sup>202</sup> Long War Journal, US strikes in Somalia, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>203</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>204</sup> Weiss, C., and Webber, L., Islamic State-Somalia: A Growing Global Terror Concern, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 12-14; International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Somalia: Responding to an Evolving Threat, 12 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 4-5; Weiss C., et al., Fatal Transaction: The Funding Behind the Islamic State's Central Africa Province, June 2023, [url](#), pp. 6, 19-20; UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 5

<sup>205</sup> UNSG, Twentieth Report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh), S/2025/72, 31 January 2025, [url](#), para. 5; Weiss, C., and Webber, L., Islamic State-Somalia: A Growing Global Terror Concern, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 12-13

<sup>206</sup> Weiss, C., and Webber, L., Islamic State-Somalia: A Growing Global Terror Concern, September 2024, [url](#), pp. 12-13

<sup>207</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 30

<sup>208</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 44

<sup>209</sup> International humanitarian expert based in Somaliland, Telephone interview with EUAA, 25 March 2025. The international humanitarian expert based in Somaliland has decades-long experience in Somalia and in the humanitarian sector in general; ADF, Puntland Forces Believe They Have ISSOM on the Run, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>210</sup> International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Somalia: Responding to an Evolving Threat, 12 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>211</sup> Weiss, C., and Webber, L., Islamic State-Somalia: A Growing Global Terror Concern, September 2024, [url](#), pp.15-17; International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Somalia: Responding to an Evolving Threat, 12 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3; see also UNSG, Twentieth Report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh), S/2025/72, 31 January 2025, [url](#), para. 10



Puntland clans, notably from the Bari region, and dominated by the Ali Salebaan, a small sub-clan of the Majerteen/ Darood.<sup>212</sup>

Between late 2023 and mid-2024, ISIS had made significant gains against Al-Shabaab in the Bari region of Puntland, substantially pushing them out of the Al-Miskaad mountain range and claiming full control of the area by April 2024. By then ISIS had established bases in four districts: Balidhidin, Hunbays, Iskushuban, and Qandala.<sup>213</sup> However, in January 2025, the Puntland authorities launched a 'relatively successful' offensive against the group with air support from the US and the UAE.<sup>214</sup> By the end of March, the offensive, also labelled Hilac offensive,<sup>215</sup> had cleared the Al-Miskaad mountain range from the major ISIS military bases, but the militant group was not defeated. Several hundred fighters,<sup>216</sup> believed to be hiding out and regrouping in the remotest areas of the mountain range, were still facing the third phase of the offensive at the time of writing.<sup>217</sup>

Based on ACLED data, overall, in the reference period ISIS-Somalia was responsible for 34 security incidents,<sup>218</sup> mostly IED attacks, but also drone strikes and armed clashes, with following distribution from north to south: 32 in Bari - 22 Qandala, notably in the Al-Miskaad area, 8 in Bosasso, 2 in Iskushuban - and 2 in Mogadishu.<sup>219</sup> For further background information see chapter 6 Islamic State in Somalia in the [EASO COI report Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>220</sup>

**Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'ah (ASWJ).** The multi-clan (Ayr, Dir and Marehan clans)<sup>221</sup> armed Sufi group, operating mostly in Galmudug and in part of Hiraan, had by 2017 an estimated force of about 5 000 soldiers.<sup>222</sup> While it was considered to be defeated both militarily and politically,<sup>223</sup> its leadership reappeared in Galmudug in mid-2021.<sup>224</sup> Throughout 2021 and 2022, the group clashed sporadically with the SNA and the Galmudug State's forces.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Somalia: Responding to an Evolving Threat, 12 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 3, 6

<sup>213</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 39-42

<sup>214</sup> Conversation (The), Islamic State in Somalia: the terrorist group's origins, rise and recent battlefield defeats, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>215</sup> Somali Digest (The), Puntland Unleashes 'Hilac' Offensive, Targeting IS-Somalia and Al-Shabab, 26 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>216</sup> Conversation (The), Islamic State in Somalia: the terrorist group's origins, rise and recent battlefield defeats, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>217</sup> Somali Digest (The), President Deni Declares Final Offensive in War Against ISIS in Puntland, 28 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>218</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), coded as Actor 1

<sup>219</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>220</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 74-77

<sup>221</sup> Saferworld, Clans, contention and consensus - Federalism and inclusion in Galmudug, June 2020, [url](#), p. 19

<sup>222</sup> Felbab-Brown, V., The Problem with Militias in Somalia, 2020, [url](#), pp. 129-130

<sup>223</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 111

<sup>224</sup> Sahan, Somali Wire (The), Issue no. 316, 27 January 2022, source requiring registration, p. 1

<sup>225</sup> UN Women, Mapping report on existing women peacemakers, leaders, networks, and forums in Somalia, September 2023, [url](#), p. 39; UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, S/2022/754, 10 October 2022, [url](#), para. 34; ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, 30 November 2022, [url](#)



**Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF), Kenya Defence Force (KDF), others.** Both Ethiopia and Kenya provide extrabudgetary security assistance to Somalia.<sup>226</sup> In addition to the AUSSOM contingent of 2 500 troops from Ethiopia and 1 410 from Kenya,<sup>227</sup> both countries reportedly have thousands of additional troops in Somalia bilaterally.<sup>228</sup> While Ethiopia's AUSSOM troops will be deployed to the same Somali regions as before - Gedo, Bay, Bakool and Hiran regions - additional ENDF troops will be stationed in Somalia based on the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) signed bilaterally with the FGS in February 2025.<sup>229</sup> KDF forces are bilaterally deployed in Lower Juba in the context of Operation Amani Boni.<sup>230</sup> Under a bilateral agreement Egypt may also send additional special forces,<sup>231</sup> while Türkiye reportedly plans to deploy 3 000 soldiers from Sadat, the private military company linked to President Erdogan, as early as the beginning of April 2025 to counter Al-Shabaab offensive in the Shabelle regions.<sup>232</sup>

For further information about the nature and character of the security forces and the armed groups touched upon above, including their fluid membership, please refer to the [EUAA COI report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023), section 1.3 Armed actors,<sup>233</sup> as well as [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021), section 1.2 Armed actors.<sup>234</sup>

### 1.3. Conflict layers and main developments

For analytical purposes, the main conflict dynamics in Somalia can be presented in different layers, which can be described as follows:

**The Al-Shabaab/anti-Al-Shabaab conflict.** According to the Rule of Law in Armed Conflicts (RULAC) project,<sup>235</sup> the Somali government is a party to a non-international armed conflict with Al-Shabaab.<sup>236</sup> Al-Shabaab is designated as a terrorist group by the UK<sup>237</sup> and the US.<sup>238</sup> The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), the Federal Member States (FMS), clan militias, as well as other international actors, such as Ethiopia, Kenya, the US, and ATMIS/AUSSOM, are all

<sup>226</sup> LSE, Somalia's Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 24

<sup>227</sup> VOA, AU, Somalia agree on troop numbers for new mission, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>228</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), p. 69; see also Sahan, Somali Wire, Effects of Ethiopia-Somalia Diplomatic Row on South West State, Issue no. 631, 5 January 2024, n.a.; Sahan, Somali Wire, A Showdown in Lower Juba, Issue no. 767, 13 December 2024, n.a.; Kenya Ministry of Defence, Commander Kenya army visits Forward Operating Bases, 4 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>229</sup> VOA, AU, Somalia agree on troop numbers for new mission, 25 February 2025, [url](#); Sahan, Somali Wire, Mogadishu Agrees on Ethiopian Troops Remaining, Issue no. 791, 24 February 2025, n.a.

<sup>230</sup> Sahan, Somali Wire, A Showdown in Lower Juba, Issue no. 767, 13 December 2024, n.a.

<sup>231</sup> Sahan, Somali Wire, Al-Shabaab Tightens Noose Around Mogadishu, Issue no. 800, 17 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>232</sup> Agenzia Nova, La Turchia sarebbe pronta a inviare fino a 3 mila militari della compagnia privata Sadat in Somalia, 3 April 2025, [url](#); see also Soufan Center (The), Between Islamic State and Al-Shabaab: An Embattled Mogadishu?, 2 April 2025, [url](#)

<sup>233</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#), pp. 31-34

<sup>234</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 24-26

<sup>235</sup> RULAC is a project of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights that identifies and classifies situations of armed conflict, providing an independent and impartial analysis of conflicts and applicable international law. RULAC, About RULAC, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>236</sup> RULAC, Non-international armed conflict in Somalia, 10 November 2022, [url](#)

<sup>237</sup> UK, Home Office, Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations, [Updated] 23 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>238</sup> USDOS, Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, n.d., [url](#)





engaged, although in various degrees and forms, in the conflict against the militant al-Qaeda affiliated organisation.<sup>239</sup> During the reference period this was the main conflict driver in the country, with most of the security incidents either perpetrated by Al-Shabaab, or involving various security actors and forces against Al-Shabaab. Overall, more than 75 % of these security events, and more than 80 % of the estimated fatalities that were recorded by ACLED during the reference period of the report, are to be attributed to the (anti-)Al-Shabaab conflict.<sup>240</sup> For main developments during the reference period about Al-Shabaab's control areas and influence see section above [1.2.2 Al-Shabaab control areas, presence, and influence](#). For details about all other actors, and their armed forces, see main developments during the reference period in the chapter [1.2.3 Updated list of main actors](#) as well as the previous [EUAA COI report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023),<sup>241</sup> [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021),<sup>242</sup> and the [EASO COI report Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>243</sup> For (anti) Al-Shabaab conflict dynamics and their reverberations at regional level, please see the remainder of this report, [2 Regional security situation and trends](#).

**The inter- and intra-clan rivalries.** Another major source of conflict that pervades Somali society is constituted by clan rivalries and competitions over political power and scarce resources.<sup>244</sup> Various experts agree that the level of clan conflicts, rivalries, and animosity has substantially increased across the country during the past two years.<sup>245</sup> According to ACLED data, inter- and intra-clan conflicts in the country caused more than 472 security incidents during the reporting period, resulting in 1 214 estimated fatalities and an unspecified number of casualties.<sup>246</sup> The number of estimated fatalities has more than doubled compared to the two preceding years (April 2021 – March 2023), when there were 280 reported incidents resulting in 487 estimated fatalities.<sup>247</sup> After the Al-Shabaab conflict, this is the second main conflict driver and source of insecurity in the country.<sup>248</sup>

For a mapping of the main clan conflicts across Federal Member States in Somalia see the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Country Focus](#) (May 2025).<sup>249</sup> For background information on the

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<sup>239</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>240</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>241</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>242</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>243</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#)

<sup>244</sup> Abdurahman Abdullahi Baadiyow, Somali Elite Political Culture: Conceptions, Structures, and Historical Evolution, 28 January 2021, [url](#), pp. 59-70

<sup>245</sup> Mohamed Abdullahi, Telephone interview with EUAA, 18 March 2025. Mohamed Abdullahi is the Director of programmes at Horncenter Dialogue for Peace, Governance, and Development (The Horncenter), an independent, not-for-profit Think-Do-Tank organization based in Dushamared, Galmudug State of Somalia. He is an expert in reconciliation, peace-building, and governance; Farhia Mohamud, Telephone interview with EUAA, 19 March 2025. Farhia Mohamud is a researcher and Hirshabelle political and security analyst at Somali Public Agenda, a leading research organisation based in Mogadishu; Independent political and security analyst/researcher based in Jubbaland, Telephone interview with EUAA, 18 March 2025. The independent political and security analyst based in Jubbaland works as a consultant and has long-standing experience with conflict analysis; see also ACAPS, Somalia – Impact of clan conflicts, 19 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>246</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with clan militias as Actor 1 vs clan militias as Actor 2

<sup>247</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, April 2021 – March 2023, [url](#)

<sup>248</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>249</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Country Focus, May 2025, [url](#), sections 1.5. Individuals involved in blood feuds/clan disputes and other clan issues





clan system in Somalia see the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Country Focus](#) (May 2025),<sup>250</sup> the [EASO COI report Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021),<sup>251</sup> and the [EASO COI report Somalia: Targeted profiles](#) (August 2021),<sup>252</sup> as well as relevant information in the [EUAA COI report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023),<sup>253</sup> and the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021).<sup>254</sup> For clan conflict dynamics and their reverberations at regional level during the reference period (April 2023 – March 2025), please see the remainder of this report [2 Regional security situation and trends](#).

**The ISIS/anti-ISIS Conflict.** Somali security forces - notably Puntland Maritime Police Forces and Puntland Darwish – as well as US military forces, are engaged in armed confrontation with the Islamic State in Somalia. During the reference period, most confrontations and security incidents have taken place in the Bari region, in the Qandala (Al Miskaad), Bossaso, and Iskushuban districts. On various occasions ISIS has also clashed with Al-Shabaab, notably in the Bossaso and Qandala districts. Based on ACLED data, in the reference period ISIS-Somalia was involved in 126 reported security incidents,<sup>255</sup> with a spike in the period January-March 2025 - almost 85 % of all events - which resulted in 769 estimated fatalities.<sup>256</sup> For an overview about ISIS-Somalia see section [1.2.3 Updated list of main actors](#). For (anti) ISIS-Somalia conflict dynamics and their reverberation at regional level please see the remainder this report [2 Regional security situation and trends](#).

**SSC-Khatumo versus Somaliland.** Among other territorial disputes across Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland contend over control of the Sool and Sanaag regions, which border the two state administrations, as well as the area of Cayn, which basically correspond to the Buhodle district of the Togdheer region.<sup>257</sup> Within this broader context, a major conflict erupted in February 2023 between the Somaliland National Army and the SSC-Khatumo forces – Sool, Sanaag and Cayn – mainly constituted by Dhulbahante clan militias,<sup>258</sup> which belong to the same Harti/Darood clan family for which Puntland constitutes the core and institutional ‘home’.<sup>259</sup> During the first few months, the conflict caused around 5 000 casualties from both sides, including armed forces and civilian fatalities,<sup>260</sup> and more 200 000 displaced people.<sup>261</sup> With the establishment of an autonomous regional SSC-Khatumo administration,<sup>262</sup> later

<sup>250</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Country Focus, May 2025, [url](#), sections 1.4. Minorities

<sup>251</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 45-57

<sup>252</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 76-85

<sup>253</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>254</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>255</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), with ISIS either as Actor 1 or as Actor 2

<sup>256</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>257</sup> SSC-Khatumo, Needs assessment report, December 2023, [url](#), p. 10; Mahmood O. S., Overlapping claims by Somaliland and Puntland, November 2019, [url](#), pp. 3-7; ISS, The various layers to the Somaliland-Puntland discord, 9 December 2019, [url](#)

<sup>258</sup> Barnett, J., Inside the Newest Conflict in Somalia's Long Civil War, 7 August 2023, [url](#); Horn Observer, Somaliland deploys more forces to Oog, announces military action against SSC-Khaatumo, 6 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>259</sup> ISS, Overlapping claims by Somaliland and Puntland – The case of Sool and Sanaag, November 2019, East Africa Report No. 27, [url](#), pp. 3-5; Hoehne, M. V., Between Somaliland and Puntland, 2015, [url](#), pp. 19-21, 36

<sup>260</sup> Hoehne, M. V., The conflict over Las Anod: Long-term and immediate factors, and prospects for settlements, June 2023, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>261</sup> SSC-Khatumo, Needs assessment report, December 2023, [url](#), p. 10; Hoehne, M. V., The conflict over Las Anod: Long-term and immediate factors, and prospects for settlements, June 2023, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>262</sup> SSC-Khatumo, Needs assessment report, December 2023, [url](#), pp. 12-14



recognised by the FGS,<sup>263</sup> the conflict has continued intermittently throughout the entire reference period in various locations in the disputed areas.<sup>264</sup> For regional details about this conflict see the remainder of this report, notably sections [2.7 Sool, Sanaag and SSC-Khatumo](#). For background information and additional details see the [EUAA COI report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023),<sup>265</sup> and the [EASO COI report Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>266</sup>

**Crime.** According to the Africa Organised Crime Index, Somalia ranked 13<sup>th</sup> out of 54 African countries in terms of criminality - a combination of criminal market and criminal actor indicators - at the end of 2023,<sup>267</sup> up from 18<sup>th</sup> in 2021.<sup>268</sup> In particular, Somalia has the highest score in Africa and the world (9.50) for extortion and protection racketeering at the hands of non-state armed groups and militias.<sup>269</sup> With arms trafficking (9.0) and trafficking in human beings (8.0) also prominent among criminal markets,<sup>270</sup> as well as dysfunctional institutions characterised by the highest levels of corruption in the world (1.0),<sup>271</sup> confidence in law enforcement institutions is lowest in Somalia (1.5).<sup>272</sup> In terms of resilience, defined 'as the ability to withstand and disrupt organised criminal activity',<sup>273</sup> the country's performance remained unvaried during the reference period, exhibiting the lowest score across Africa after Libya,<sup>274</sup> similarly to 2021.<sup>275</sup> Within this context, Al-Shabaab is not the sole actor responsible for criminal and illicit activities, attacks, targeted killings and executions in Somalia. Such crimes can also be politically and economically motivated or related to other type of conflicts and activities.<sup>276</sup> According to the organised crime index, next to mafia-style groups – such as Al-Shabaab – 'criminal networks' and 'state embedded actors' are particularly relevant in Somalia.<sup>277</sup> Against this backdrop, youth gangs engaged in violent criminality, notably in

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<sup>263</sup> Somali Digest, Somali government makes a strategic move by recognizing SSC-Khaatumo, 19 October 2023, [url](#); Horseed Media, Somali Federal Government Recognizes New SSC-Khatumo Administration, 19 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>264</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somaliland and SSC Khaatumo forces clash in Buqdharkayn as territorial dispute escalates, 7 March 2025, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, SSC Khaatumo forces claim victory over Somaliland in Shangeed clashes, 31 January 2025, [url](#); SMN, Fighting in Ceerigaabo as SSC-Khaatumo, Somaliland Troops Clash; Both Claim Victory, 15 December 2024, [url](#); Somali Digest, Somaliland: Secessionist Rhetoric Amidst Territorial and Diplomatic Setbacks, 18 May 2024, [url](#); Somali Digest, Tensions flare: Clashes erupted in Ayn region and Erigavo, 8 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>265</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>266</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 101-116

<sup>267</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023, Increasing criminality, growing vulnerabilities, 2024, [url](#), pp. 106-110, 115

<sup>268</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2021, Evolution of crime in a Covid world, 2021, [url](#), p. 141

<sup>269</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023, Increasing criminality, growing vulnerabilities, 2024, [url](#), p. 30

<sup>270</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023, Increasing criminality, growing vulnerabilities, 2024, [url](#), pp. 35-36

<sup>271</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023, Increasing criminality, growing vulnerabilities, 2024, [url](#), p. 85

<sup>272</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023, Increasing criminality, growing vulnerabilities, 2024, [url](#), p. 86

<sup>273</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023, Increasing criminality, growing vulnerabilities, 2024, [url](#), p. 110

<sup>274</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023, Increasing criminality, growing vulnerabilities, 2024, [url](#), pp. 83-84, 123-124

<sup>275</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2021, Evolution of crime in a Covid world, 2021, [url](#), pp. 150-151

<sup>276</sup> Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA, SOMALIË Veiligheidssituatie in Mogadishu [Somalia Security Situation in Mogadishu], 29 June 2021, [url](#), p. 19

<sup>277</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023, Increasing criminality, growing vulnerabilities, 2024, [url](#), pp. 35-38, 120

Mogadishu, where they are locally known as *ciyaal weero*,<sup>278</sup> are a persistent and long-standing issue.<sup>279</sup> For further information on Criminality see section [1.5 Criminality](#).

**Other layers.** Other confrontations which are more of a political nature and do not necessarily escalate into armed confrontations include: (1) Tensions between the FGS and the Federal Member States over the establishment of an effective federal system.<sup>280</sup> These included, more recently, disputes over electoral issues,<sup>281</sup> and related controversial constitutional amendments.<sup>282</sup> Within this context, in March 2024, Puntland revoked its recognition of the federal government,<sup>283</sup> while Jubbaland officially severed its ties with it in November 2024,<sup>284</sup> in a move that escalated into open military confrontation.<sup>285</sup> (2) The intra-regional tensions and governance dynamics at FMS level.<sup>286</sup> (3) The FGS versus Somaliland tensions, over its political status and international recognition,<sup>287</sup> and in the course of 2024, in relation to the signing of the MoU between Somaliland and Ethiopia.<sup>288</sup> (4) External disputes and tensions, which often play out at regional level in Somalia, and which revolve around various external actors, such as Ethiopia and Kenya - historically engaged in Somalia - UAE, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, home to Somali elites patrons, but also Türkiye and Egypt, with which Somalia has signed security pacts in the course of 2024.<sup>289</sup> For a more detailed overview about these other layers and their implications at regional level see part [2 Regional security situation and trends](#), as well as previous EUAA COI reports.

<sup>278</sup> Afyare A. Elmi, Mogadishu City Report, August 2024, [url](#), pp. 29-30; Chonka P., et al., Safety and security in Mogadishu, 2023, [url](#), pp. 10-11, 15-17; see also SPA, Governance Brief 19, The Rise of Youth Gangs (Ciyaal Weero) in Mogadishu, October 2022, [url](#)

<sup>279</sup> Shafie Sharif Mohamed, Why Youth Join Gangs and Somalis' Approach to Gang Prevention and Intervention, July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>280</sup> Guled Salah Barre, Weaknesses of Federalism in Somalia and Required Reforms, 28 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 5-7; Somali Dialogue Platform, Options for allocating powers in Somalia's federal system, 9 September 2022, [url](#), pp. 1-3; Abdinor Dahir, and Ali Yassin Sheikh Ali, Federalism in post-conflict Somalia: A critical review of its reception and governance challenges, 8 November 2021, [url](#), pp. 1, 6-7, 10; Daily Sabah, Is there an antidote for Somalia's Federalism?, 23 August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>281</sup> HIPS, Unpacking the NCC decision: Political ramifications for Somalia's future, November 2024, [url](#), pp. 3-4; Somali Dialogue Platform and SPA, Addressing contentious issues on elections in the constitutional review process, March 2024, [url](#), pp. 7-11

<sup>282</sup> Somali Dialogue Platform and SPA, Addressing contentious issues on elections in the constitutional review process, March 2024, [url](#), pp. 4, 18; VOA, Somalia's Parliament Approves Historic Constitutional Amendments, 30 March 2024, [url](#); Africa Report (The), Somalia: Constitutional amendments meet controversy, 10 April 2024, [url](#); SPA, Governance Brief No. 28, February 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>283</sup> DW, Somalia: Puntland pulls recognition of federal government, 31 March 2024, [url](#); The Guardian, Somalia accused of 'threatening national unity' with new constitution, 5 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>284</sup> Addis Standard, News: Jubaland suspends ties with Somalia's federal government, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>285</sup> Horn Observer, Battle for Jubbaland: Deadly Conflict Push Region to the Brink of Chaos, 24 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>286</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#), regional chapters; EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), regional chapters; EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), Chapter 7 Federal members States and Somaliland; EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), Chapter 5 Individuals involved in blood feuds/clan disputes and other clan issues

<sup>287</sup> CFR, Somaliland: The Horn of Africa's Breakaway State, 21 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>288</sup> International Crisis Group, The Stakes in the Ethiopia-Somaliland Deal, 6 March 2024, [url](#); DW, Somaliland unfazed by Somalia-Ethiopia compromise, 16 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>289</sup> African Arguments, Somalia in the Red Sea Arena: Tensions and Domestic Implications, 23 October 2024, [url](#)

## 1.4. Recent overall security trends

### 1.4.1. Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

In the period April 2023 – 21 March 2025, ACLED recorded 5 944 security incidents, resulting in 14 883 estimated fatalities, both security forces and civilians, and an unspecified number of casualties, with following the breakdown: 3 759 battles, 1 479 explosions or other forms of remote violence, and 706 violence against civilians.<sup>290</sup> All type of events had or potentially had impacts on the civilian population.<sup>291</sup> [Figure 1](#) below shows the monthly distribution of these types of events during the reference period. [Figure 2](#) below shows their overall distribution and resulting fatalities during the same period.

Comparably, in the various UNSG reports, covering the period 8 February 2023 - 20 September 2024,<sup>292</sup> the number of reported security incidents were respectively 935 (8 February – 7 June 2023),<sup>293</sup> 605 (8 June – 5 October 2023),<sup>294</sup> 755 (6 October 2023 – 24 January 2024),<sup>295</sup> an unspecified number (25 January 2024 – 23 May 2024),<sup>296</sup> and 850 (24 May – 20 September 2024).<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>291</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#); ACLED, Codebook, 3 October 2024, [url](#), pp. 12, 16, 38. Based on ACLED methodology, all events coded as ‘violence against civilians’ are also considered as ‘civilian targeting’, while ‘explosions’ may be or may not, depending on whether civilians were the main or only target; ‘battles’ instead are never co-coded as ‘civilian targeting’ based on ACLED methodology, but de facto they often are in the Somali context.

<sup>292</sup> Please note that the UNSG report covering the period 21 September 2024 – February 2025 was not yet published at the time this report was drafted.

<sup>293</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 12

<sup>294</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 12

<sup>295</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 10

<sup>296</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/426, 3 June 2024, [url](#), para. 13

<sup>297</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 12

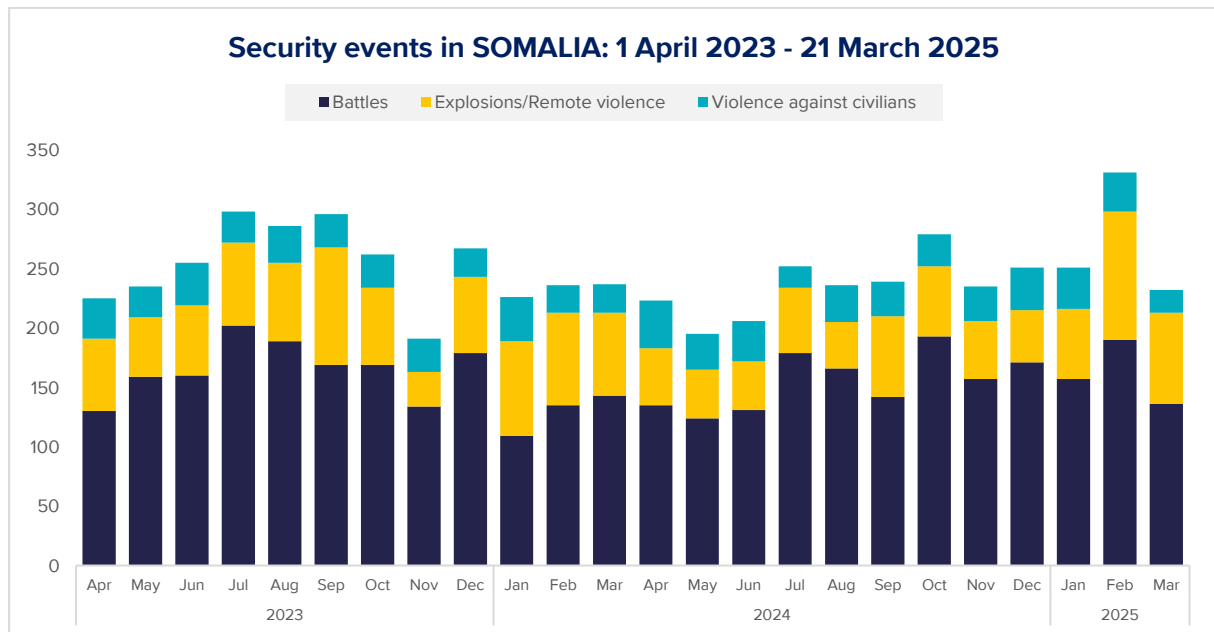


Figure 1. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in the period 1 April 2023 - 21 March 2025.<sup>298</sup>

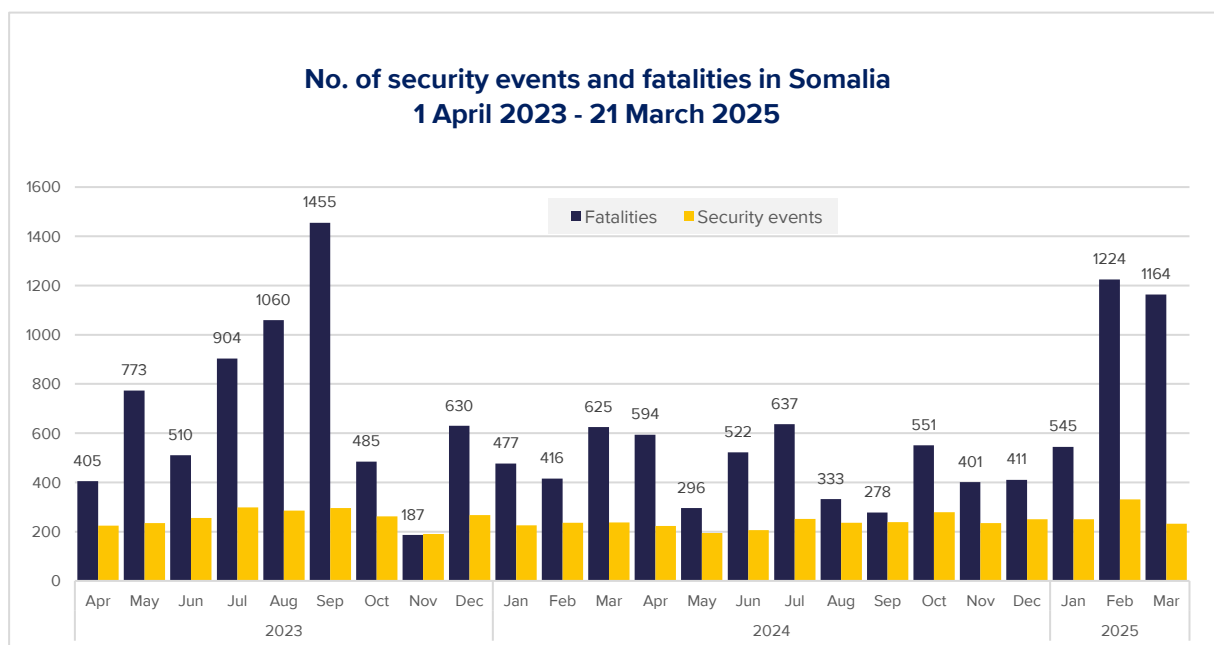


Figure 2. Number of fatalities in the period April 2023 – 21 March 2025 based on ACLED data.<sup>299</sup>

Based on INSO CHDC data – the Conflict and Humanitarian Data Centre of the International NGO Safety Organisation, which adopts a different methodology compared to ACLED and has a stronger focus on NGO security,<sup>300</sup> in the period April 2023 – March 2025 there were 6 861 security incidents in Somalia - Attack, Confine, Theft or Threat – resulting in 6 170 directly impacted civilians either killed, injured, abducted, or arrested.<sup>301</sup> [Figure 3](#) below shows their

<sup>298</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>299</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>300</sup> INSO, CHDC data, 4 April 2022, [url](#)

<sup>301</sup> EUAA analysis based on INSO data, Conflict Data Dashboard, Somalia, as of 31 March 2025, [url](#)

evolution during the reference period. For further details about INSO CHDC data see section on [Datasets](#) in the [Methodology](#) chapter.

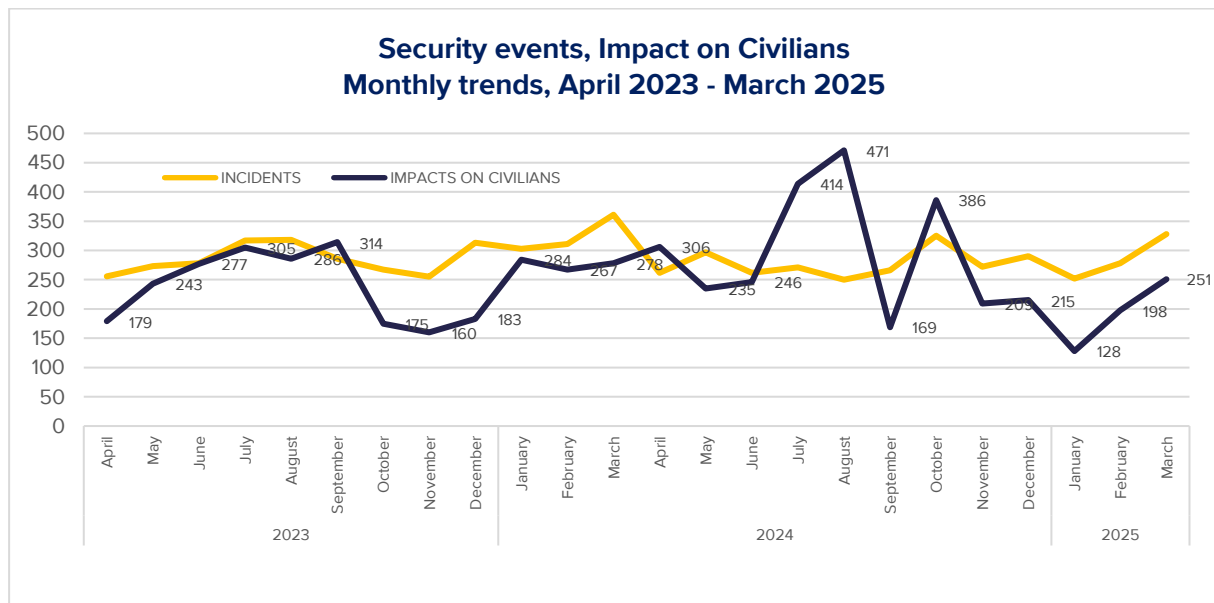


Figure 3. Evolution of security incidents in the period April 2023 - March 2025, based on INSO data.<sup>302</sup>

During the reference period, several sources reported on the volatility of the situation in Somalia and the impact of armed violence on the civilian populations,<sup>303</sup> ‘which continued to ‘bear the brunt’ of the conflict<sup>304</sup> and be subject to indiscriminate attacks,<sup>305</sup> notably across central and southern Somalia.<sup>306</sup>

Based on ACLED data, [Figure 4](#) shows the regional breakdown of security events and resulting fatalities, while [Figure 5](#) shows the breakdown of security events and resulting fatalities per main Actor or group of Actors coded as Actor 1, during the reference period of this report.

<sup>302</sup> EUAA analysis based on INSO data, Conflict Data Dashboard, Somalia, as of 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>303</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Somalia: Report of the Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Somalia, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 20; AI, Amnesty International Report – The State of the World’s Human Rights, Somalia, April 2024, [url](#), p. 336; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024 – Somalia, 2024, [url](#); Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report – Somalia, 2024, [url](#), p. 18; UNHCR and Protection Cluster Somalia, Somalia - Protection Analysis Update September 2022, 30 September 2022, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>304</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Somalia: Report of the Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Somalia, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 20; AI, Amnesty International Report – The State of the World’s Human Rights, Somalia, April 2024, [url](#), p. 336; Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report – Somalia, 2024, [url](#), pp. 14, 18

<sup>305</sup> AI, Amnesty International Report – The State of the World’s Human Rights, Somalia, April 2024, [url](#), p. 336; Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2024 Country Report – Somalia, 2024, [url](#), pp. 14, 18-19; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024 – Somalia, 2024, [url](#)

<sup>306</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in Somalia: Report of the Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Somalia, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 20



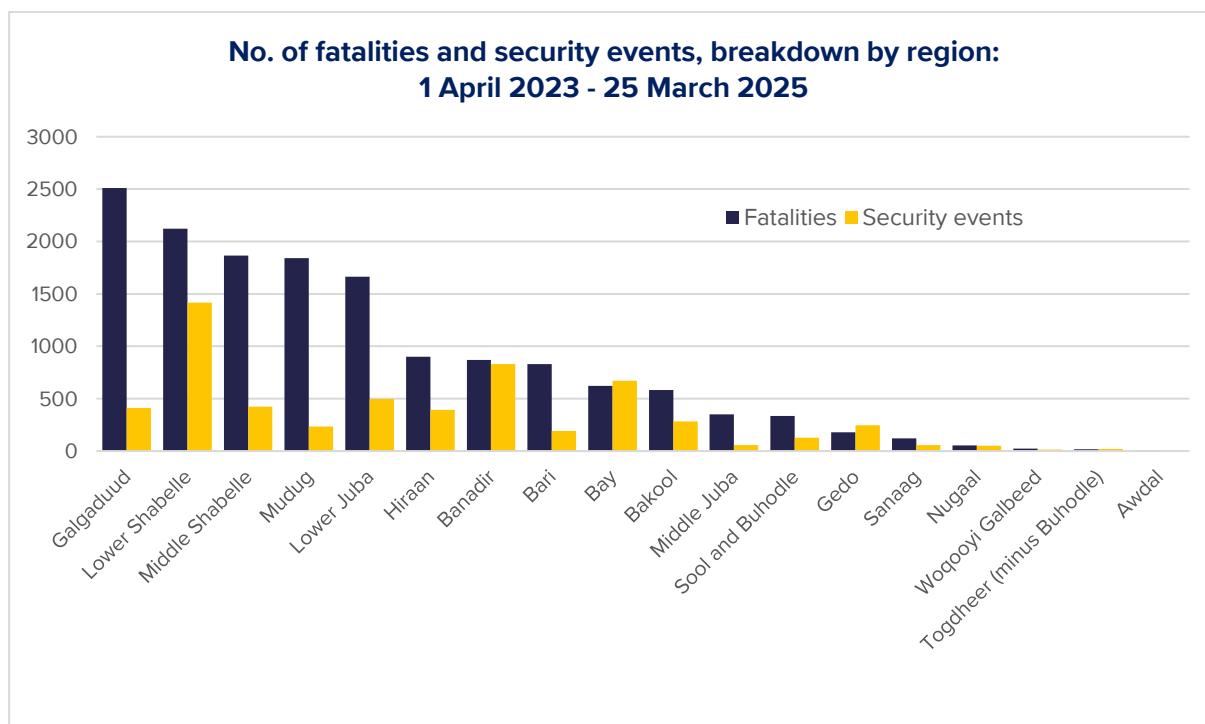


Figure 4. Regional distribution of security incidents and estimated fatalities in the period April 2023 - March 2025, based on ACLED data.<sup>307</sup>

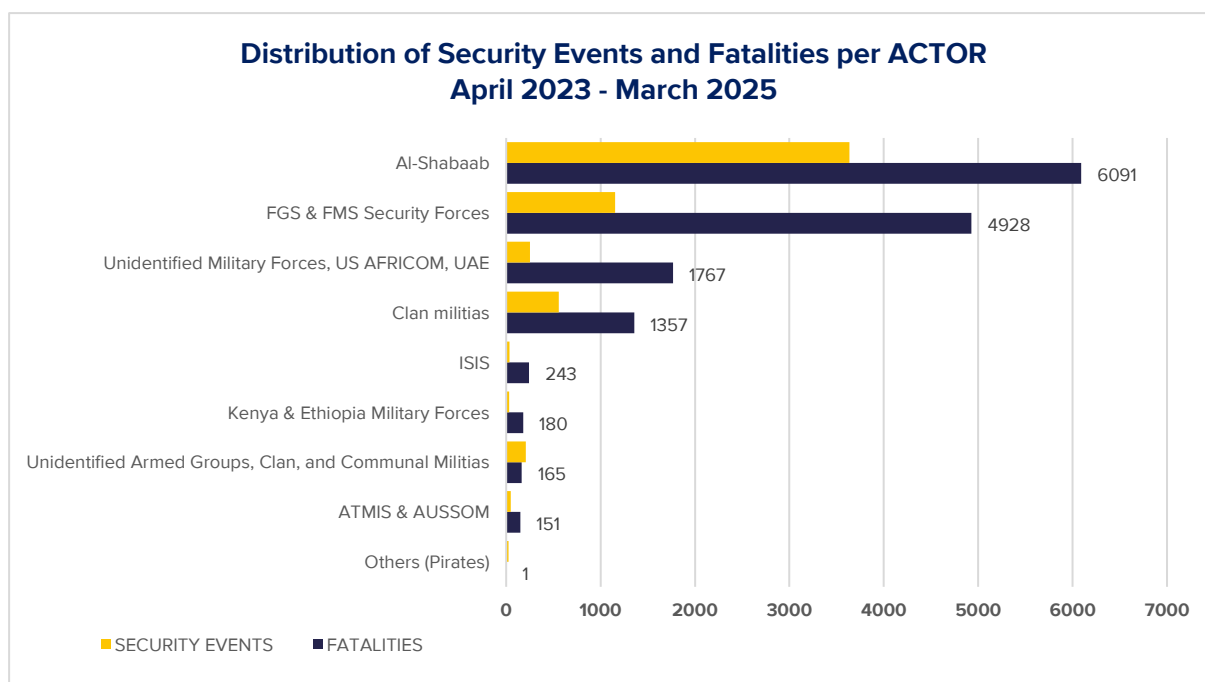


Figure 5. Distribution of security incidents and related fatalities grouped per major ACTOR, coded as 'Actor 1', in the period April 2023 - March 2025, based on ACLED data.<sup>308</sup>

For more detailed information on the regional level, please see section [2 Regional security situation and trends](#).

<sup>307</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>308</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

## 1.4.2. Conflict-related displacement

**Newly displaced.** During the reference period of this report, April 2023 – March 2025, the UNHCR Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN)<sup>309</sup> reported that conflict and insecurity were the drivers for the displacement of about 600 000 people - out of about 2 788 000 newly displaced - notably from the following regions: Gedo, Benadir, Lower Juba, Nugaal, Togdheer.<sup>310</sup> [Figure 6](#) below offers an overview of the number of conflict/insecurity displaced people versus other drivers per administrative regions. For more detailed information on the regional level, please see section [2 Regional security situation and trends](#).

In the course of 2024 Somalia exhibited 553 000 new displacements, while they were 2 970 000 in 2023 overall, all causes considered. Conflict and insecurity were responsible for the displacement of 290 000 people in the course of 2024, and 653 000 in the course of 2023.<sup>311</sup> In particular, conflict mostly related to escalating inter-clan fighting was the main driver of new internal displacements in 2024, with most people who were forced to flee their homes remaining within the same region.<sup>312</sup> The districts most affected by conflict-related internal displacement were Luuq (Gedo), Diinsoor (Bay), Xarardheere (Muduq), Jamaame (Lower Juba), and Buhodle (Togdheer).<sup>313</sup> For an overview of main clan conflicts/disputes across Somalia see section on Individuals involved in clan feuds/disputes in the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Country Focus](#) (May 2025).

**Overall IDP population.** Based on UN OCHA data, at the end of 2024, there were in Somalia 3 812 registered IDP sites across the country, hosting an overall population of more than 4 million people. Of these, Mogadishu hosted 2 057 sites (1 091 in Daynile, and 966 in Kahda) with an overall population of more than 1 160 million people, and Baidoa district hosted another 649 sites with an overall population of more than 740 000 people.<sup>314</sup> [Figure 7](#) shows the regional distribution of IDPs and the most affected urban centres within the region.

According to the UNHCR CCCM cluster, the majority of IDP people in Somalia settle in informal sub-standard IDP sites in urban and peri-urban areas across the country.<sup>315</sup> As of January 2022, 85 % of the IDPs sites were informal settlements on private land and about 74 % of them were in urban areas.<sup>316</sup> Coordination and management of these informal settlements is largely informal,<sup>317</sup> while living conditions are precarious and basic needs are not met, due to inconsistent service provision, barriers to or exclusion from accessing humanitarian assistance.<sup>318</sup> In particular, in the urban areas, IDPs move into private IDP sites

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<sup>309</sup> For further information on this data and their handling, please see the section on [Methodology](#) in the introductory chapter of this report.

<sup>310</sup> UNHCR, PRMN – Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>311</sup> UNHCR, Operational Data Portal – Somalia, 2024, [url](#)

<sup>312</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – Somalia 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>313</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – Somalia 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>314</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNOCHA, Humanitarian Data, Somalia CCCM IDP Site Master List, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>315</sup> UNHCR, CCCM Cluster – Somalia Overview, Operational Data Portal, January 2022, [url](#)

<sup>316</sup> UNOCHA, 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Somalia, October 2021, [url](#), pp. 27-28

<sup>317</sup> UNHCR, CCCM Cluster – Somalia Overview, Operational Data Portal, January 2022, [url](#)

<sup>318</sup> UNHCR, CCCM Cluster – Somalia, 2025, [url](#)

where they are exposed to tenure insecurity.<sup>319</sup> Within this context local integration and IDP returns are limited.<sup>320</sup>

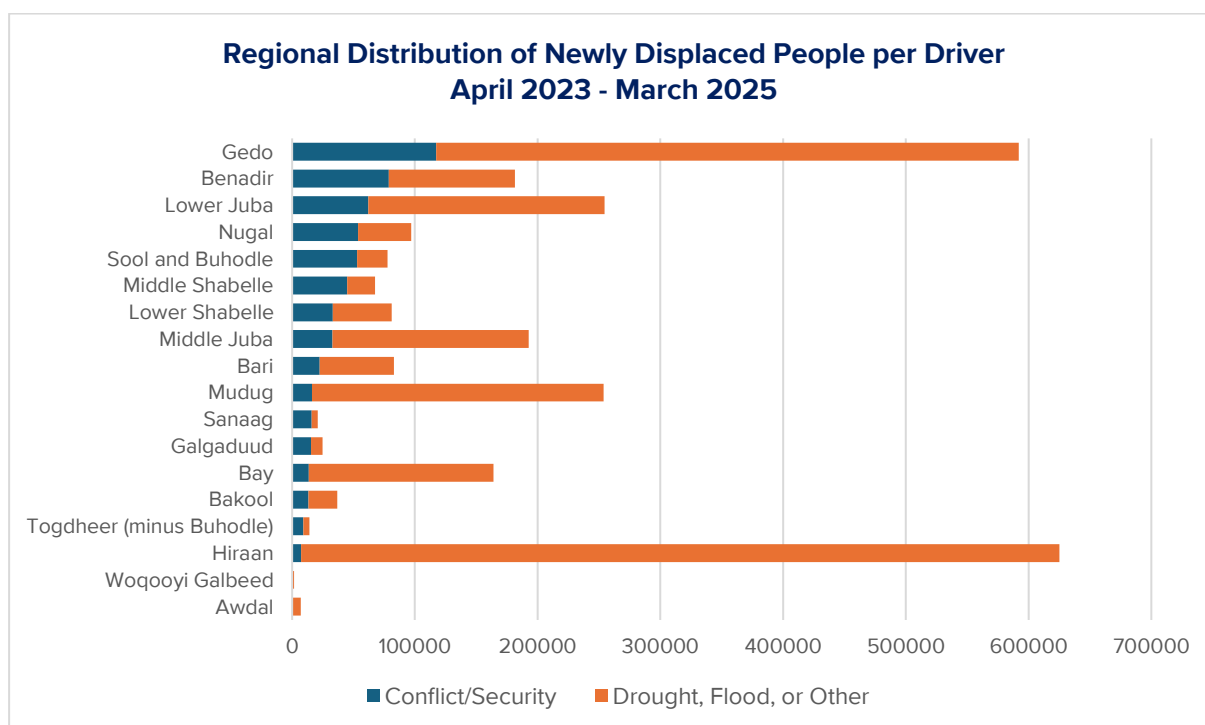


Figure 6. Regional distribution of newly displaced individuals due to conflict/insecurity vs other drivers (drought, flood, others) – current location - in the period between April 2023 and March 2025, based on UNHCR PRMN data.<sup>321</sup>

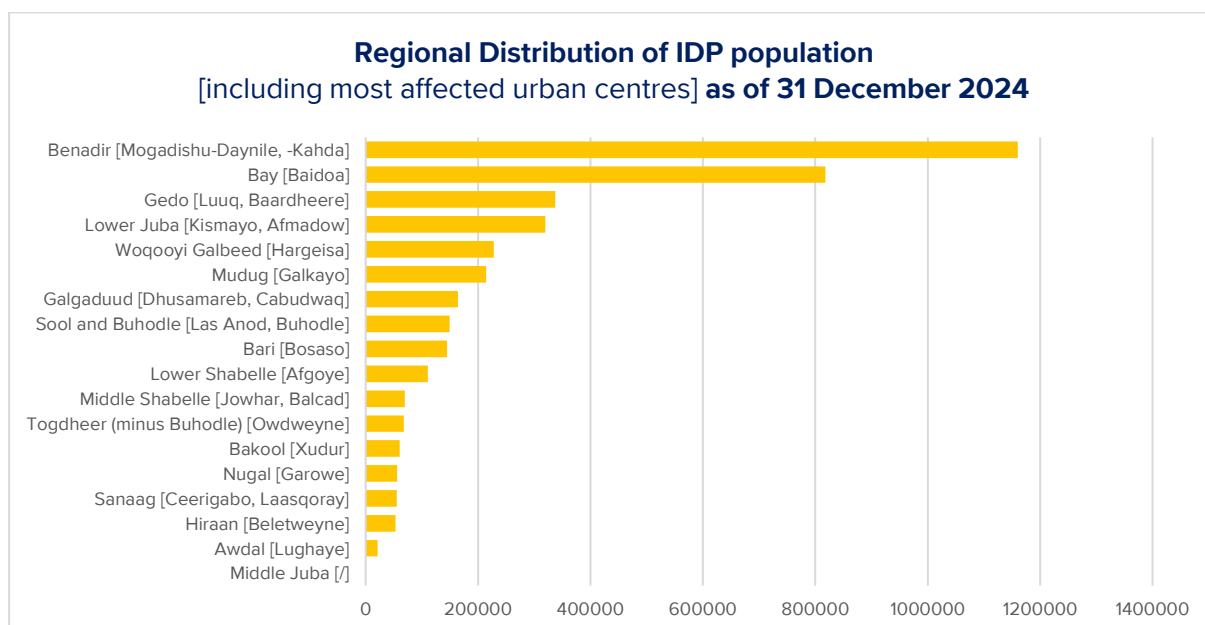


Figure 7. Regional distribution of IDP population, including urban areas mostly affected within the region, as of 31 December 2024, based on UNOCHA CCCM data as analysed by the EUAA.<sup>322</sup>

<sup>319</sup> UNHCR, CCCM Cluster – Somalia, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>320</sup> UNHCR, CCCM Cluster – Somalia, 2025, [url](#)

<sup>321</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>322</sup> EUAA analysis based on UNOCHA, Humanitarian Data, Somalia CCCM IDP Site Master List, 11 February 2025, [url](#)

### 1.4.3. Other impacts on civilian life

#### (a) Humanitarian situation

According to the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for 2025, 9.1 million people, or 47 % of the overall population in Somalia, are affected by multiple shocks caused by conflict, floods, drought, disease outbreaks, and displacement.<sup>323</sup>

Within this context, there are almost 6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in the country in 2025, down from 6.9 million in 2024,<sup>324</sup> and 8.25 million in 2023.<sup>325</sup> This is due to stricter scope setting in the analysis process, but also improvements in drought conditions, decreases in internal displacement, and lower floods, factors that have all contributed to positive developments in the humanitarian situation.<sup>326</sup> However, Somalia is still confronted with a protracted and complex humanitarian crisis, where conflict and insecurity drivers interplay with climate shocks and recurring disease outbreaks, notably of Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD) /cholera in IDP sites.<sup>327</sup>

At the beginning of 2025, the food security situation remained precarious, with more than 440 000 people in an ‘emergency’ situation (Phase 4), almost 3 million in ‘crisis’ (Phase 3), and another 6.5 million ‘stressed’ (Phase 2). With projected trends worsening for the remainder of 2025, the affected population was distributed across all regions, notably in correspondence of IDP sites, while it exhibited higher levels of concentration in the whole of Mudug and Galgaduud, as well as portion of Bari, Middle Shabelle, Lower Shabelle, Bay and Bakool. The most affected households were to be found in agricultural and pastoralist contexts, as well as in IDP sites. In terms of acute malnutrition, more than 1.7 million children, aged between 6 and 59 months were in need of treatment, either for severe or moderate acute malnutrition, notably in south-central Somalia.<sup>328</sup>

Among others, access to safe drinking water, suitable living conditions, and healthcare are particularly challenging in Somalia. Half of Somalia’s population is water insecure, while widespread households’ issues include lack of access to kitchen utensils, hygiene items, privacy, and source of power. In terms of healthcare, primary barriers include lack of accessible health facilities, unaffordable costs, and unavailability of medicines and services. Across all these domains, IDPs experience the same issues as the host communities at a higher rate.<sup>329</sup>

Within this overall context, the most vulnerable groups are the minority and marginalised communities in Somalia, whose access to humanitarian assistance is also hindered; children in general, who represent the 44 % of all people in need in the country; women, who together with children represent 80 % of the entire IDP population, older persons, and persons with

<sup>323</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – Somalia 2025, January 2025, [url](#), pp. 8-9

<sup>324</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – Somalia 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>325</sup> SIDA, Humanitarian Crisis Analysis 2024 - Somalia, 20 September 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>326</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – Somalia 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>327</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – Somalia 2025, January 2025, [url](#), pp. 5, 8

<sup>328</sup> IPC, Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis, Somalia, January – June 2025, 24 February 2025, [url](#), pp. 1-3

<sup>329</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – Somalia 2025, January 2025, [url](#), pp. 12-13



disabilities, whose access to humanitarian assistance is particularly obstructed.<sup>330</sup> For more information on the humanitarian situation at regional level, conflict induced displacement, and other impacts on civilians please see section [2 Regional security situation and trends](#).

### (a) Infrastructure Damage

Civilian infrastructure was reported to be frequently caught in the crossfire of the fight against Al-Shabaab, or other conflict dynamics. During the reference period, the UN task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children (alone) verified the following attacks on schools and hospitals across the country:

- schools experienced 12 attacks in the period 8 February - 7 June 2023,<sup>331</sup> 12 attacks in the period 8 June – 5 October 2023,<sup>332</sup> 2 attacks in the period 6 October 2023 – 24 January 2024,<sup>333</sup> 13 attacks in the period 25 January – 23 May 2024,<sup>334</sup> 11 attacks (including on hospitals) in the period 24 May – 20 September 2024;<sup>335</sup>
- hospitals experienced 10 attacks in the period 8 February - 7 June 2023,<sup>336</sup> 2 attacks in the period 8 June – 5 October 2023,<sup>337</sup> 2 attacks in the period 25 January – 23 May 2024,<sup>338</sup> 11 attacks (including on hospitals) in the period 24 May – 20 September 2024;<sup>339</sup>

In the context of the conflict in Las Anod, civilian infrastructure, health facilities, and schools were severely affected.<sup>340</sup> Increasing levels of clan conflict during the reporting period have also resulted in damage to critical infrastructure and caused service disruptions. For instance, in the context of the clan conflict in Luuq (Gedo), armed violence resulted in attacks on health facilities, leaving thousands without access to medical care, as well as on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases. Similarly, the destruction of schools and the displacement of teachers has left children without access to education.<sup>341</sup>

### (b) Evictions

For background information on evictions in Somalia, please see the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).<sup>342</sup> In the course of 2024, the NRC registered the eviction of more than 192 000 individuals across Somalia, while there were more than 207 000 in the course of 2023.<sup>343</sup> Banadir (Daynille, Kahda), Bay (Baidoa), and Wogooyi Galbeed (Hargeisa) accounted for more than 90 % of all forced evictions. Urban IDPs, especially in

<sup>330</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – Somalia 2025, January 2025, [url](#), pp. 13-14

<sup>331</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 74

<sup>332</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 59

<sup>333</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 59

<sup>334</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/426, 3 June 2024, [url](#), para. 62

<sup>335</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 60

<sup>336</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 74

<sup>337</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 59

<sup>338</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/426, 3 June 2024, [url](#), para. 62

<sup>339</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 60

<sup>340</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 9, 91; see also UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 37

<sup>341</sup> ACAPS, Somalia – Impact of clan conflicts, 19 March 2025, [url](#), pp. 2, 9

<sup>342</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#), pp. 50-51

<sup>343</sup> NRC, Evictions Information Data Portal, 2025, [url](#)



spaces with high population density, tend to live on private land and without formal tenure agreements, which increases the risk of forced evictions.<sup>344</sup> For more detailed information at regional level, please see section [2 Regional security situation and trends](#).

## 1.5. Criminality

As mentioned in the section [1.3 Conflict layers and main developments](#), criminality in Somalia represents another source of insecurity in the country. Based on INSO CHDC data, in the period 2023 – March 2025, crime as ‘initiating actor’ accounted for 26 % of all security incidents registered in the country.<sup>345</sup> Based on the Africa Organized Crime Index, the following main areas of criminality were identified in Somalia as of the end of 2023:

- **Smuggling and trafficking in human beings.** Somalia is a primary source country for smuggling across East Africa. Trafficking in human beings, including forced labour and sex trafficking, usually starts as smuggling, possibly with vulnerabilities, and then becomes trafficking later along migratory routes, in countries such as Sudan, Libya, or Yemen. Most victims come from south-central Somalia on their way to destinations such as Europe, the Gulf states, and Southern Africa. Smuggling is an ingrained feature in the country, with large segments of society not perceiving migration facilitation as a crime. Smuggling networks are typically run by Somalis and are considered a ‘viable source of income’.<sup>346</sup>
- **Child labour.** Children are ‘forced into labour in agriculture, domestic work, livestock herding, and selling khat internally and abroad’. Particularly vulnerable are IDPs children, children belonging to marginalised ethnic minorities, or those living in Al-Shabaab’s territory.<sup>347</sup>
- **Extortion and protection racketeering.** Extortion and protection money are a major source of income for terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia. Citizens, companies, NGOs, and humanitarian organisations regularly pay ‘extortion’ fees to these groups to protect their personnel and physical assets.<sup>348</sup> For further information see section 1.10 Individuals who have to pay ‘taxes’ to Al-Shabaab or other groups and militias in the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Country Focus](#) (May 2025).
- **Arms trafficking.** Somalia hosts one of the most pervasive arms trafficking markets in the whole Africa.<sup>349</sup> Clan militias, transnational criminal networks based in the north, particularly Puntland and eastern Somaliland, and militant groups linked to Al-Shabaab and ISIS substantially engage with arms trafficking in Somalia.<sup>350</sup> The trade, eased by sophisticated transnational maritime trafficking networks, operate to smuggle small arms and light weapons from Iran, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman.<sup>351</sup> After more

<sup>344</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – Somalia 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>345</sup> EUAA analysis based on INSO data, Conflict Data Dashboard, Somalia, as of 31 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>346</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023 – Somalia, [url](#)

<sup>347</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023 – Somalia, [url](#)

<sup>348</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023 – Somalia, [url](#)

<sup>349</sup> GITOC, Countering the arms race in Somalia, 24 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>350</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023 – Somalia, [url](#); see also GITOC, Countering the arms race in Somalia, 24 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>351</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023 – Somalia, [url](#)





than 30 years the arms embargo on the Somali government was lifted by the UNSC in December 2023.<sup>352</sup>

- **Counterfeit pharmaceutical products.** Pharmaceutical products are the most commonly circulated counterfeit items in Somalia, but no violence is associated with this trade.<sup>353</sup> Among other measures, the Medicine Regulation Bill, proposed at the beginning of March 2025, seeks to address the widespread circulation of counterfeit, expired, or substandard medicines in the country.<sup>354</sup>
- **Charcoal, frankincense, and gold trade.** With 98 % of households in Somalia's towns and cities relying on charcoal for cooking and heating, charcoal trade remains prevalent in the country.<sup>355</sup> The ban on charcoal exports, in place since 2012,<sup>356</sup> has substantially prevented external trade,<sup>357</sup> as also reported by the UN at the end of 2024.<sup>358</sup> However, the domestic market is expanding due to rising gas prices,<sup>359</sup> while Al-Shabaab enforces crackdowns on the cutting and transporting of wood from leafy trees.<sup>360</sup> Both Al-Shabaab and state representatives profit from the internal trade.<sup>361</sup> Clan militias are also involved in the exploitation and 'overharvesting' of the Boswellia trees, which is used to produce frankincense,<sup>362</sup> with most of world's production coming from the Horn of Africa.<sup>363</sup> Disputes over the trafficking of frankincense often become violent.<sup>364</sup> The artisanal and informal gold mining sector centred around Milxo, in the Golis mountains (Sanaag), is subject to Al-Shabaab and ISIS revenue collection.<sup>365</sup>
- **Criminal networks.** Entrepreneurs, who often control ethnic and clan-based groups, lead criminal networks, many of which operate in conjunction with Al-Shabaab, and engage with smuggling commodities out of the country. State officials are also involved in organised criminal activities, including the misappropriation of international aid and tax flows, as well as the gatekeeping of 'illegal activities for bribes'.<sup>366</sup>

<sup>352</sup> Security Council Report, Votes to Renew the Sanctions Regime on Al-Shabaab and to Lift the Arms Embargo on the Somali Government\*, 1 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>353</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023 – Somalia, [url](#)

<sup>354</sup> Somali magazine, Somalia Moves to Regulate Pharmaceuticals and Combat Counterfeit Drugs, 5 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>355</sup> Horn Observer, Somalia's profitable charcoal trade benefits government and Al-Shabaab, 16 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>356</sup> UNSC, Resolution 2036, S /RES/2036 (2012), 22 February 2012, [url](#)

<sup>357</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023 – Somalia, [url](#)

<sup>358</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 136

<sup>359</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023 – Somalia, [url](#); see also The Guardian, Inside Somalia's vicious cycle of deforestation for charcoal, 8 August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>360</sup> The Guardian, Inside Somalia's vicious cycle of deforestation for charcoal, 8 August 2022, [url](#)

<sup>361</sup> Horn Observer, Somalia's profitable charcoal trade benefits government and Al-Shabaab, 16 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>362</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023 – Somalia, [url](#)

<sup>363</sup> BBC, The Somali gold rush endangering frankincense and myrrh, 5 January 2023, [url](#)

<sup>364</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023 – Somalia, [url](#)

<sup>365</sup> Horn Observer, Getting a grip on Somalia's Gold rush, 11 November 2022, [url](#)

<sup>366</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index 2023 – Somalia, [url](#)



## 1.6. Death penalty, arbitrary arrests and detentions, corporal punishments, prison conditions

The death penalty as a punishment is included in the Somalia Penal Code, under Article 90(1).<sup>367</sup> Crimes punishable by death penalty include ‘intentional homicide, bearing arms against the State, war crimes and the misuse of State secrets.’<sup>368</sup>

The death penalty continues being used in Somalia, and can be imposed for offences that, according to the UN Human Rights Committee, ‘do not meet the threshold of “the most serious crimes” within the meaning of article 6 (2) of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights], understood to be crimes involving intentional killing’. The death penalty can reportedly be imposed by military courts on persons under 18 years old and on civilians.<sup>369</sup>

The UN noted allegations that in some cases executions were being carried out without legal representation for the accused or the possibility to appeal,<sup>370</sup> while USDOS reported that on occasion authorities executed those sentenced to death very closely to the verdict, especially in cases where defendants confessed to being members of Al-Shabaab in court or in televised videos.<sup>371</sup> Children recruited and used by Al-Shabaab continued being held in both official and unofficial detention locations and in some cases were subjected to the death penalty for offences committed while associated with Al-Shabaab.<sup>372</sup>

In 2024, military courts were reported to continue sentencing people to death in Somalia.<sup>373</sup> In August 2024, the state of Puntland sentenced and executed 10 Al-Shabaab fighters by firing squad, after they were tried by a military court,<sup>374</sup> four of whom were reportedly underage at the time the alleged crime was committed.<sup>375</sup> According to UNICEF, the Puntland Age Verification Committee met with the young people and determined that they were minors at the time of arrest and that they should not be subjected to the death penalty.<sup>376</sup> Between October 2023 to January 2024, 14 executions were performed by the Somali authorities, which included nine former members of the security forces and five civilians, while three individuals, two former soldiers and one civilian, were sentenced to death. On 10 November 2023, authorities executed a soldier on the same day that he was convicted and sentenced to

<sup>367</sup> Somalia, Penal Code, Legislative Decree No. 5 of 16 December 1962, 1962, available at: [url](#), p. 151

<sup>368</sup> UN, The United Nations Office in Geneva, In Dialogue with Somalia, Experts of the Human Rights Committee Welcome the State’s Anti-Corruption Measures, Raise Issues Concerning the Death Penalty and Sexual Violence by Armed Forces and Militias, 8 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>369</sup> UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia\*, 6 May 2024, CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1, [url](#), para. 21

<sup>370</sup> UN, The United Nations Office in Geneva, In Dialogue with Somalia, Experts of the Human Rights Committee Welcome the State’s Anti-Corruption Measures, Raise Issues Concerning the Death Penalty and Sexual Violence by Armed Forces and Militias, 8 March 2024, [url](#); UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan\*, 23 August 2024, A/HRC/57/80, [url](#), para. 35

<sup>371</sup> USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2023 – Somalia, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>372</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>373</sup> HRW, Somalia Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>374</sup> East African (The), Somalia executes 10 Al Shabaab insurgents, police say, 17 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>375</sup> International Commission Against Death Penalty, Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty: Four children executed in Somalia, 25 September 2024, [url](#); HRW, Somalia Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, [url](#); UNICEF, UNICEF statement on execution of four youths in Puntland state, Somalia, 22 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>376</sup> UNICEF, UNICEF statement on execution of four youths in Puntland state, Somalia, 22 August 2024, [url](#)



death by the First Instance of the Military Court in Baidoa, without the opportunity to appeal the verdict and sentence.<sup>377</sup> In 2023, according to Amnesty International (AI), Somalia was the only country in sub-Saharan Africa that carried out death penalties.<sup>378</sup> Sources reported between more than 38 and at least 55 executions having taken place in 2023.<sup>379</sup> According to AI, more than 31 death sentences were recorded in 2023, with recorded death sentences increasing and the number of executions more than tripling from the previous year.<sup>380</sup> According to a report on the death penalty in Somalia, 23 out of the at least 55 executions that took place in 2023 were carried out by military authorities in Puntland and in Mogadishu. Out of the individuals executed, at least 16 were civilians who were considered to be members of Al-Shabaab and Islamic State, and at least seven soldiers convicted of killing civilians.<sup>381</sup>

In areas under Al-Shabaab control, the de facto authorities carry out executions for crimes such as adultery and consensual same-sex sexual relations<sup>382</sup>. Allegedly, some ‘Islamic “courts”’, under Al-Shabaab control have imposed the death penalty for consensual same-sex sexual relations based on sharia law.<sup>383</sup> For more information on corporal punishment as well as forms of sanctioning of Al-Shabaab opponents or perceived opponents, see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Country Focus](#) (May 2025), Section 1.3. Individuals contravening Sharia (and customary) laws/tenets and Section 1.6. Individual supporting or perceived as supporting the FGS/the International Community, and/or as opposing Al-Shabaab.

**Corporal punishment.** There is no mention in either Somalia’s Provisional Constitution or in the Penal Code on corporal punishment.<sup>384</sup> The Prison Commander of Mogadishu Central Prison stated that no corporal punishment is imposed to any prisoner either for a minor or aggravated offence.<sup>385</sup> However, according to the Child’s Rights International Network, there is no legal prohibition of corporal punishment as a judicial sentence for children who have committed offences. The possibility of children being sentenced to corporal punishment under Islamic law has been reported.<sup>386</sup> Experts of the Committee Against Torture had noted that corporal punishment was broadly accepted in Somalia and not prohibited either at home, in the school and care settings, or as a sentence for a crime in penal institutions.<sup>387</sup> For more information on corporal punishment, see [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Country Focus](#) (May 2025), Section 1.3. Individuals contravening Sharia (and customary) laws/tenets.

<sup>377</sup> UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 55

<sup>378</sup> AI, Death Penalty 2023: Executions more than tripled in sub-Saharan Africa, as global executions soar to highest number in almost a decade, 24 May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>379</sup> AI, Death sentences and executions 2023, 29 May 2024, [url](#), pp. 4-5, 35-36; Advocates for Human Rights et al, Somalia’s Compliance with The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: The Death Penalty, 5 February 2024, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>380</sup> AI, Death sentences and executions 2023, 29 May 2024, [url](#), pp. 4-5, 35-36

<sup>381</sup> Advocates for Human Rights et al., Somalia’s Compliance with The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: The Death Penalty, 5 February 2024, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>382</sup> UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia\*, 6 May 2024, CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1, [url](#), para. 21

<sup>383</sup> UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia\*, 6 May 2024, CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1, [url](#), para. 13

<sup>384</sup> Somalia, Penal Code, Legislative Decree No. 5 of 16 December 1962, 1962, available at: [url](#); Somalia, The Federal Republic of Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 1 August 2012, [url](#)

<sup>385</sup> CSHRDs et al., Somalia: Patterns of unlawful killings, torture and other ill-treatment, November 2022, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>386</sup> CRIN, Inhuman sentencing of children in Somalia, June 2015, [url](#), pp. 1, 3

<sup>387</sup> UN OHCHR, Experts of the Committee against Torture Commend Somalia on Progress in Rebuilding State and Government Institutions, Raise Questions on the Definition of Torture and the Death Penalty, 9 November 2022, [url](#)



**Arbitrary arrests and detentions.** In the period from February to June 2023, a 76 % increase in arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists was reported.<sup>388</sup> Arrests and arbitrary detentions of journalists and media workers were reported in the period from July 2023 to June 2024.<sup>389</sup> Arbitrary arrests and killings allegedly also took place perpetrated by both state actors and Al-Shabaab forces against human rights defenders, media workers and journalists, including a high number of attacks against female journalists,<sup>390</sup> while in the period from May to September 2024, reports of incidents of arbitrary arrests and detentions of journalists by law enforcement and intelligence officials continued.<sup>391</sup> For more information on the arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists, see section 1.7. Journalists from the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Country Focus](#), (May 2025).

**Prison conditions.** As of July 2024, there were fourteen operational prisons in Somalia, with the conditions described as ‘substandard’<sup>392</sup> and ‘below internationally recognized standards’.<sup>393</sup> Issues include inadequate infrastructure, lack of steady food and water supplies, limited medical facilities, inadequate separation of prisoners by gender and age, and insufficient rehabilitation and reintegration programs.<sup>394</sup> Medical facilities within prisons were described as rare, and prisoners have restricted access to external medical care.<sup>395</sup>

## 1.7. Checkpoints and road security in Somalia

This section is to be read in conjunction with the same section on checkpoint and road-security in the previous [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) from February 2023,<sup>396</sup> and September 2021,<sup>397</sup> as well as the section on ‘1.10 Individuals who have to pay ‘taxes’ to Al-Shabaab or other groups and militias in the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Country Focus](#) (May 2025).<sup>398</sup>

Checkpoints - *isbaaro* in Somali – are widespread in Somalia and constitute an intricate web of sites along routes where ‘trade meets imposition, and where mobile economies must negotiate competing claims to revenue and authority.’<sup>399</sup> A recent research project on checkpoints, led by Dutch scholar Peer Schouten, identified between October 2022 and March 2023, a total of 204 major checkpoints in Somalia, 44 of which, roughly 23 %, were operated by Al-Shabaab. The remaining 77 % were controlled either by government actors, or

<sup>388</sup> UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 96

<sup>389</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan\*, 23 August 2024, A/HRC/57/80, [url](#), p. 1 and para. 31

<sup>390</sup> UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia\*, 6 May 2024, CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1, [url](#), para. 37

<sup>391</sup> UNSC, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 88

<sup>392</sup> UNSOM, Prison Conditions in Somalia - A Holistic Assessment, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 3, 7

<sup>393</sup> UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia\*, 6 May 2024, CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1, [url](#), para. 29

<sup>394</sup> UNSOM, Prison Conditions in Somalia - A Holistic Assessment, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 3, 7; UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia\*, 6 May 2024, CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1, [url](#), para. 29

<sup>395</sup> UNSOM, Prison Conditions in Somalia - A Holistic Assessment, July 2024, [url](#), pp. 3, 7-8

<sup>396</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#), pp. 51-53

<sup>397</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 42-44

<sup>398</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Country Focus, May 2025, [url](#)

<sup>399</sup> Schouten P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 7, 10



by allied and 'loosely' affiliated clan militia.<sup>400</sup> The study, however, focused more on South-Central Somalia, and remained 'fragmentary' for other parts – namely Somaliland and Puntland – while it mapped checkpoints along major transport routes only.<sup>401</sup> In other words, according to the author of the research, interviewed in March 2025, it is likely that there are many more checkpoints in Somalia. At the time of writing there might be dozens more in Somaliland and in Puntland, also in consideration of the impact of the intervened Las Anod conflict; and there might be many more across Somalia, also in consideration of the resurgence of clan conflicts and quarrels over revenue sharing.<sup>402</sup> Next to the more permanent forms of checkpoints, there are others more temporary in nature – the so called 'pop-up checkpoints' - '*isbaaro soo booda*' in Somali. These are roadblocks that can be operated either 'by *mooryaan* or bandits, a label used for armed men (they may be clan militia, soldiers or freelance operators)' or by clan militias in the context of clan conflicts and blood compensation disputes.<sup>403</sup>

Federal actors, representatives of federal member states, regional and local government authorities, Al-Shabaab and clan groups or militias, they all seek to maximise control over checkpoints, and they all have competing, often overlapping, if not clashing claims over them.<sup>404</sup> In practice, checkpoints are operated either by clan militias wearing federal or member state government uniforms and perceived as representatives of the government authority on the ground,<sup>405</sup> or by a combination of government soldiers and other actors, including clans.<sup>406</sup> Irrespective of the operating actor, clans' claims and agendas are crucially at play in the management of checkpoints, in their setting-up, and in the sharing of the extracted revenues,<sup>407</sup> with these sites being also historically linked to the 'politics of passage' through clan territories typical of Somalia.<sup>408</sup>

Checkpoints are found across the entire country, but certain areas show a higher level of concentration, such as South-Central Somalia compared to Puntland and Somaliland, or within South-Central Somalia, with more checkpoints in Jubbaland than in South-West State and Hirshabelle. Moreover, the coastal regions – notably Middle Shabelle, Lower Shabelle, and Lower Juba - have a higher density of checkpoints compared to more in-land areas. However, the highest concentration is found in Benadir – Mogadishu – where on top of the 22 checkpoints identified by Schouten, dozens, if not hundreds more are to be found.<sup>409</sup> In Galmudug, the relative scarcity of checkpoints, compared to other areas of the country, can be

<sup>400</sup> Schouten P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 7, 24, 28; see also Abdirahman Ali, The political economy of checkpoints along the Baidoa corridor, 2023, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>401</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 11, 13, 25

<sup>402</sup> Schouten, P., Telephone interview, 13 March 2025. Peer Schouten is senior researcher at the Danish Institute for international Studies (DIIS) and the International Peace Information Service (IPIS), with focus on mapping the political economy of checkpoints in conflict.

<sup>403</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 14-15

<sup>404</sup> Abdirahman Ali, The political economy of checkpoints along the Baidoa corridor, 2023, [url](#), pp. 13-14; see also Jamal Mohammed, Navigating trade controls - The political economy of checkpoints along Somalia's Garissa corridor, 2023, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>405</sup> Abdirahman Ali, The political economy of checkpoints along the Baidoa corridor, 2023, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>406</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), p. 28

<sup>407</sup> Abdirahman Ali, Brokering trade routes - The political economy of checkpoints along the Baidoa corridor, 2023, [url](#), pp. 16-17; Jamal Mohammed, Navigating trade controls - The political economy of checkpoints along Somalia's Garissa corridor, 2023, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>408</sup> Edle A., et al., *Isbaaro: checkpoints and worldmaking beyond the state*, 2024, [url](#), pp. 3-5

<sup>409</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 25-26



explained, in part, with the success of the revenue sharing mechanism that was agreed among the main clans and constituencies of the state,<sup>410</sup> and in part with under-reporting issues along the Bossaso-Galkayo-Beledweyne route.<sup>411</sup> Checkpoints distribution can also be explained by looking at the main trade routes across the country, with following list representing the key ones: Bullo Mareer–Mogadishu; Jamaame–Kismayo; Mogadishu–Adale; Mogadishu–Beledweyne; Kismayo–Jilib–Bardera; Mogadishu–Bula Hawa; Kismayo–Afmadow–Dhobley; Berbera–Wajale; Bossaso–Galkayo–Beledweyne. Along these routes there is a checkpoint roughly every 15–20 km, or about 5 checkpoints every 100 km travelled, which can be taken ‘as a good average for Somali roads’.<sup>412</sup>

Checkpoints are described as ‘flashpoints’ for conflict and violence,<sup>413</sup> for various reasons. From a military point of view, they are consistently targeted for tactical reasons, notably by Al-Shabaab with IED and suicide attacks, but also with drone-strikes by coalition forces when operated by Al-Shabaab. From a financial point of view, they are strategically targeted to disrupt or reverse revenue generation mechanisms among opponents. From a gender perspective, being staffed predominantly by men, they can be hotspots of harassment and gender-based violence for women, especially those without clan connections. Finally, in general, they represent a risk for civilian passers-by.<sup>414</sup> According to data from the International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO), as quoted in the study referenced here, between 2000 and 2023, there were in Somalia 1 237 violent checkpoint-related incidents, or between one and two every day.<sup>415</sup> Based on ACLED data, checkpoints across Somalia were the site of 707 reported incidents in the reference period, resulting in 678 estimated fatalities and a non-specified number of casualties, including civilians.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> Schouten, P., Telephone interview with EUAA, 13 March 2025

<sup>411</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), p. 27

<sup>412</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), p. 27

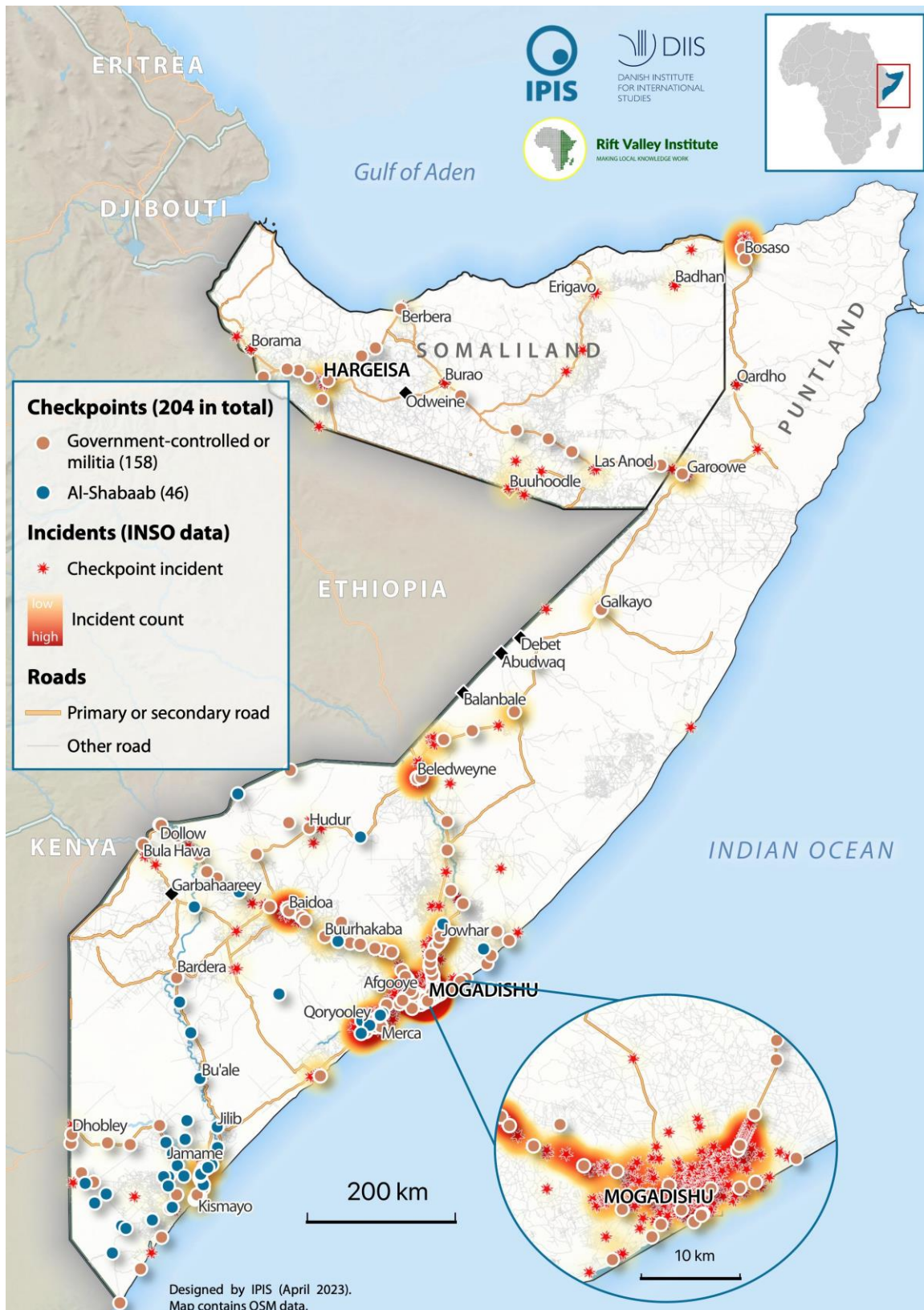
<sup>413</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), p. 35

<sup>414</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 35-38

<sup>415</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), pp. 35-38

<sup>416</sup> EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 21 March 2025, [url](#), filter ‘checkpoint’





Map 4. IPIS, Distribution of violent checkpoint-related incidents (2020-2023), April 2023, [url](#).<sup>417</sup>

<sup>417</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia (DIIS/RVI), 2023, [url](#), p. 36

## 2. Regional security situation and trends

### 2.1. Jubbaland

#### 2.1.1. Gedo

##### (a) Background

Gedo, Somalia's second-largest region,<sup>418</sup> is located in the southern part of the country. It shares international borders with Kenya to the west and Ethiopia to the north-west and internal borders with Bakool to the north-east, Bay to the east and Middle Juba and Lower Juba to the south. The region is divided into six districts: Garbahaarey (or Garbaharey), Luuq, Doolow, Belet Xaawo (or Bulo Hawa), Ceel Waaq (or El Waq/El Wak) and Bardhere (or Baardheere).<sup>419</sup> The region's capital is Garbahaarey.<sup>420</sup> Due to its porous borders with Kenya and Ethiopia, Gedo has significant strategic value.<sup>421</sup> Long-standing disputes between the Jubbaland administration and the federal government over Gedo have kept the region in a state of semi-autonomy.<sup>422</sup>

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Gedo region at 975 586 (IPC),<sup>423</sup> and 713 299 (IOM).<sup>424</sup> Gedo's clan composition is diverse. The Marehan (Darood) is the most powerful clan in political and military terms, dominating virtually all of the territory west of the Juba river. On the eastern bank, the Rahanweyn clan predominates in rural areas.<sup>425</sup> For more detailed information on Gedo region's clan composition, see section 2.1.1.1. of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021).

##### (b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

A variety of armed actors were present in Gedo region.<sup>426</sup> According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025 and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Al-Shabaab controlled most of Gedo's territory, including the towns and surroundings of El Adde (central Gedo) and Cows Qurun (western Gedo) as well as large rural territories extending across most of Ceel Waag and Belet Xaawo districts and

<sup>418</sup> UN-Habitat and IOM, Dolow – Urban Profile, November 2018, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>419</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>420</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#); Somali Digest (The), Political Appointments Ignite Unrest in Gedo, 21 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>421</sup> SMN, Jubbaland Accuses Somali President of Security Disruption in Gedo, 17 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>422</sup> Mogadishu24, Jubbaland Registers Gedo Forces as Tensions with Federal Government Rise, 7 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>423</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>424</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>425</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 46

<sup>426</sup> SMN, Jubbaland Accuses Somali President of Security Disruption in Gedo, 17 December 2024, [url](#)



parts of Garbahaarey district and southward into Middle Juba region. Control over the rural surroundings of Garbahaarey, Belet Xaawo, Burdhubo and Bardhere towns continued to be mixed between Al-Shabaab and the FGS-aligned coalition.<sup>427</sup> In the remaining rural areas, including around Doolow, Luuq and Ceel Waaq towns, control has been mixed between Al-Shabaab and Jubbaland regional forces since FGS forces withdrew from parts of Gedo following a suspension of ties between the Jubbaland State and the FGS in November 2024.<sup>428</sup>

[Map 3](#) shows that as of 31 March 2025, the previously FGS-controlled<sup>429</sup> towns of Doolow, Luuq and Ceel Waaq were under the control of the Jubbaland regional forces. Meanwhile, Garbahaarey, Belet Xaawo and Burdhubo remained in the hands of the FGS coalition, while control of Bardhere was mixed between the FGS coalition and Jubbaland forces.<sup>430</sup> Other sources similarly noted that, as of December 2024, the FGS controlled Garbahaarey<sup>431</sup> and had a military presence in Belet Xaawo,<sup>432</sup> while the Jubbaland forces controlled Doolow.<sup>433</sup>

Gedo region continued to be a strategic target for Al-Shabaab's activities due its proximity to Kenya.<sup>434</sup> The group continued to sustain a significant presence in the region,<sup>435</sup> where its operations aimed at weakening local governance and disrupting cooperation with Kenya in security matters.<sup>436</sup> However, in August 2024, the SNA and the Jubbaland Dervish Force<sup>437</sup> recaptured ten villages along the strategic Luuq–Doolow road that had previously served as military strongholds for Al-Shabaab to exert control, including by demanding bribes and instilling fear among residents.<sup>438</sup>

Attempts by both the FGS and the Jubbaland administration to gain control over Jubbaland resulted in military buildups in the Ceel Waaq area in November 2024.<sup>439</sup> Amid escalating tensions with Jubbaland forces,<sup>440</sup> the FGS mobilised forces the following month,<sup>441</sup> airlifting

<sup>427</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.; PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>428</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>429</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>430</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>431</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme summary of Somalia's Radio Shabelle news 05:00 GMT 27 Dec 24, 31 December 2024

<sup>432</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali military blocks Ethiopian troops from entering Beled Hawo district in Gedo region, 6 December 2024, [url](#); Horn Observer, Jubbaland Forces Regain Control of Dolow After Deadly Battle With Somalia Government Forces, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>433</sup> Horn Observer, Jubbaland Forces Regain Control of Dolow After Deadly Battle With Somalia Government Forces, 23 December 2024, [url](#); BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Risala news 16:00 GMT 23 Dec 24, 5 January 2025

<sup>434</sup> SMN, Jubbaland Dervish Commander Survives Al-Shabaab Mine Attack in Somali Border Area, 25 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>435</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: Deputy Security Chief of Beled-Hawo Killed in Gedo after targeted landmine explosion, 26 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>436</sup> SMN, Jubbaland Dervish Commander Survives Al-Shabaab Mine Attack in Somali Border Area, 25 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>437</sup> Dervish forces are composite militia forces of the federal member states carrying out both police and military functions. UNU, Hybrid Conflict, Hybrid Peace, 2020, [url](#), p. 127

<sup>438</sup> Radio Dalsan, Somali army liberate ten Villages in Gedo Operation, 19 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>439</sup> Garowe Online, Jubaland conflict: What we know so far, 26 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>440</sup> Garowe Online, Somalia's Govt mobilising troops in Gedo after Raskamboni defeat, 17 December 2024, [url](#); SG, Somalia's army suffers defeat in Raskamboni battle as Jubaland forces claim victory, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>441</sup> Garowe Online, Somalia's Govt mobilising troops in Gedo after Raskamboni defeat, 17 December 2024, [url](#)



troops into the regional capital Garbahaarey.<sup>442</sup> In late 2024, Gedo further saw a buildup of Ethiopian forces<sup>443</sup> who had reportedly seized key strategic airports in September 2024<sup>444</sup> (including those in Garbahaarey, Bardhere, Luuq and Doolow)<sup>445</sup> and taken control of several villages in the region's north.<sup>446</sup>

### Conflict dynamics

As of late December 2024, the situation in Gedo has been described as being 'volatile'<sup>447</sup> and affected by crisis as tensions between Jubbaland authorities and the FGS were escalating into violent clashes.<sup>448</sup>

In the early months of the reference period, Al-Shabaab carried out a number of attacks on military bases that were being operated by ATMIS troops (on the outskirts of Doolow town<sup>449</sup> and near Bardhere airport, both in June 2023)<sup>450</sup> or had been handed over from ATMIS to local forces<sup>451</sup> (at Giriley in July 2023).<sup>452</sup> Attacks on such military sites involved twin bombings using explosive-laden cars<sup>453</sup> or were carried out with firearms.<sup>454</sup> Giriley base, a military site whose control had been transferred to the Jubbaland Dervish Force, notably first came under Al-Shabaab attack on 4 July 2023<sup>455</sup> and was then briefly<sup>456</sup> captured on 13 July 2023,<sup>457</sup> the second attack leaving at least one civilian dead.<sup>458</sup> The temporary capture of the base highlighted vulnerabilities of the state forces, raising fears that Al-Shabaab could exploit a vacuum left by the departure of ATMIS forces.<sup>459</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> Somali Digest (The), FGS Advances Jubaland Destabilization, Igniting Conflict in Gedo, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>443</sup> Garowe Online, Somalia forces take control of military bases ahead of AU peacekeepers' exit, 7 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>444</sup> Garowe Online, Ethiopian troops take control of airports in Somalia, 10 September 2024, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, Ethiopian troops reportedly seize airports in Somalia's Gedo region as tensions rise, 10 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>445</sup> Garowe Online, Ethiopian troops take control of airports in Somalia, 10 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>446</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary Radio Risala News 16:00 GMT 26 Sept 24, 29 September 2024

<sup>447</sup> Garowe Online, Somalia's Govt mobilising troops in Gedo after Raskamboni defeat, 17 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>448</sup> Horn Observer, Jubbaland Forces Regain Control of Dolow After Deadly Battle With Somalia Government Forces, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>449</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Political Turmoil Threatens the Fight Against Al-Shabaab, 30 June 2023, [url](#); AA, Al-Shabaab terror group attack Ethiopian military base in Somalia, 7 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>450</sup> Somali Digest (The), Twin Bombings Strike at the Heart of Security Operations near Bardhere Airport, 21 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>451</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>452</sup> VOA, Al-Shabab Attacks Somali Base Handed Over by AU Forces, 13 July 2023, [url](#); Somali Digest (The), Concerns mount over ATMIS withdrawal as al-Shabaab attacks Giriley base, 5 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>453</sup> VOA, Seven Killed in Attack on Somali Military Training Camp, 21 June 2023, [url](#); AA, Al-Shabaab terror group attack Ethiopian military base in Somalia, 7 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>454</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali army recaptures Geriley military base amid ATMIS troop drawdown, 14 July 2023, [url](#); Somali Digest (The), Concerns mount over ATMIS withdrawal as al-Shabaab attacks Giriley base, 5 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>455</sup> VOA, Al-Shabab Attacks Somali Base Handed Over by AU Forces, 13 July 2023, [url](#); Somali Digest (The), Concerns mount over ATMIS withdrawal as al-Shabaab attacks Giriley base, 5 July 2023, [url](#); SMN, Al-Shabaab attacks Geriley base after AU troops pullout, 5 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>456</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali army recaptures Geriley military base amid ATMIS troop drawdown, 14 July 2023, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>457</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali army recaptures Geriley military base amid ATMIS troop drawdown, 14 July 2023, [url](#); VOA, Al-Shabab Attacks Somali Base Handed Over by AU Forces, 13 July 2023, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>458</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali army recaptures Geriley military base amid ATMIS troop drawdown, 14 July 2023, [url](#); Somali Digest (The), UPDATED: Al-Shabaab captures Giriley military base in Gedo region, 13 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>459</sup> HIPS, State of Somalia 2023 Report, May 2024, [url](#), p. 19





In early August 2023, the FGS launched a new counter-insurgency campaign named Operation Black Lion.<sup>460</sup> Forces of the SNA and Jubbaland Dervishes retook strategic sites from Al-Shabaab along the Luuq–Doolow road (August 2023),<sup>461</sup> with further operations by Jubbaland and Ethiopian forces reported the following month.<sup>462</sup> At least one suspected Kenyan airstrike in Al-Shabaab-held El Adde town caused civilian deaths (September 2023).<sup>463</sup>

The launch of Operation Black Lion in the summer of 2023 was followed by a rise in Al-Shabaab attacks on local officials supporting counter-insurgency.<sup>464</sup> The reference period also saw Al-Shabaab publicly executing five men it accused of spying for the FGS, the Jubbaland State or the USA (June 2023).<sup>465</sup> The group further carried out deadly bombings against SNA forces travelling between Luuq and Doolow,<sup>466</sup> as well as in Belet Xaawo.<sup>467</sup> Moreover, unclaimed IED attacks killed civilians on the Belet Xaawo–Doolow road (May 2024)<sup>468</sup> and a senior official in Belet Xaawo (January 2025).<sup>469</sup>

Amid escalating tensions between FGS and Jubbaland authorities, their forces recently clashed in Doolow in December 2024<sup>470</sup> (leaving at least four people dead),<sup>471</sup> Ceel Waaq in January 2025 (leaving two dead)<sup>472</sup> and Bardhere in February 2025<sup>473</sup> (leaving six dead).<sup>474</sup>

Gedo is one of the country's regions in which clan violence has been reported to be particularly widespread.<sup>475</sup> Indeed, 2024 saw a notable increase in clan violence.<sup>476</sup> In early July 2024, fighting between two rival clan-based militia groups in Luuq district involving both light and heavy weaponry<sup>477</sup> resulted in a death toll ranging between four and 30 or more fatalities.<sup>478</sup> It was believed that these clashes had been sparked by land disputes.<sup>479</sup> Further clashes between tribal/clan militias were reported in the same district in October 2024

<sup>460</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Strikes Back at Local Administrators, 20 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>461</sup> SMN, Somali Forces Reclaim Key Areas from Al-Shabaab in Gedo Region, 19 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>462</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary Somalia's Radio Risala News 16:00 GMT 18 Sep 24, 19 September 2024

<sup>463</sup> Somali Digest (The), At least 2 children killed in suspected KDF airstrike on El Adde, 14 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>464</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Strikes Back at Local Administrators, 20 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>465</sup> Mogadishu24, Al-Shabaab militants execute five men accused of spying, 26 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>466</sup> VOA, 11 Somali Soldiers Killed as AU Forces Start Second Round of Troop Drawdown, 19 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>467</sup> Somali Digest (The), Deadly blast targeted government forces in Beled Hawo, Gedo, 9 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>468</sup> Hiiraan Online, Landmine explosion kills two civilians in Gedo region, 16 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>469</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: Deputy Security Chief of Beled-Hawo Killed in Gedo after targeted landmine explosion, 26 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>470</sup> Somali Digest (The), FGS Advances Jubaland Destabilization, Igniting Conflict in Gedo, 23 December 2024, [url](#); Horn Observer, Jubbaland Forces Regain Control of Dolow After Deadly Battle With Somalia Government Forces, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>471</sup> Horn Observer, Jubbaland Forces Regain Control of Dolow After Deadly Battle With Somalia Government Forces, 23 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>472</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>473</sup> Garowe Online, Deadly Clashes in Somalia's Bardhere Claim Lives of Key Officials, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>474</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>475</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 39

<sup>476</sup> ACAPS, Somalia: Impact of clan conflicts [Map], 19 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>477</sup> Radio Dalsan, Jubbaland Authorities Warn of Crackdown As Deadly Clan Clashes Erupt in Gedo Region, 8 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>478</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Monthly Humanitarian Update (July 2024), 12 August 2024, [url](#), p. 1; Radio Dalsan, Jubbaland Authorities Warn of Crackdown As Deadly Clan Clashes Erupt in Gedo Region, 8 July 2024, [url](#)

International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>479</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Monthly Humanitarian Update (July 2024), 12 August 2024, [url](#), p. 1



(resulting in between six and 20 or more deaths)<sup>480</sup> and February 2025 (causing an unconfirmed number of deaths).<sup>481</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 248 security incidents in Gedo region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 180 fatalities. [Figure 8](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>482</sup> At district level, Bardhere district recorded the most security incidents (60 incidents), followed by Belet Xaawo (48 incidents) and Garbahaarey and Luuq districts (47 incidents each).<sup>483</sup>

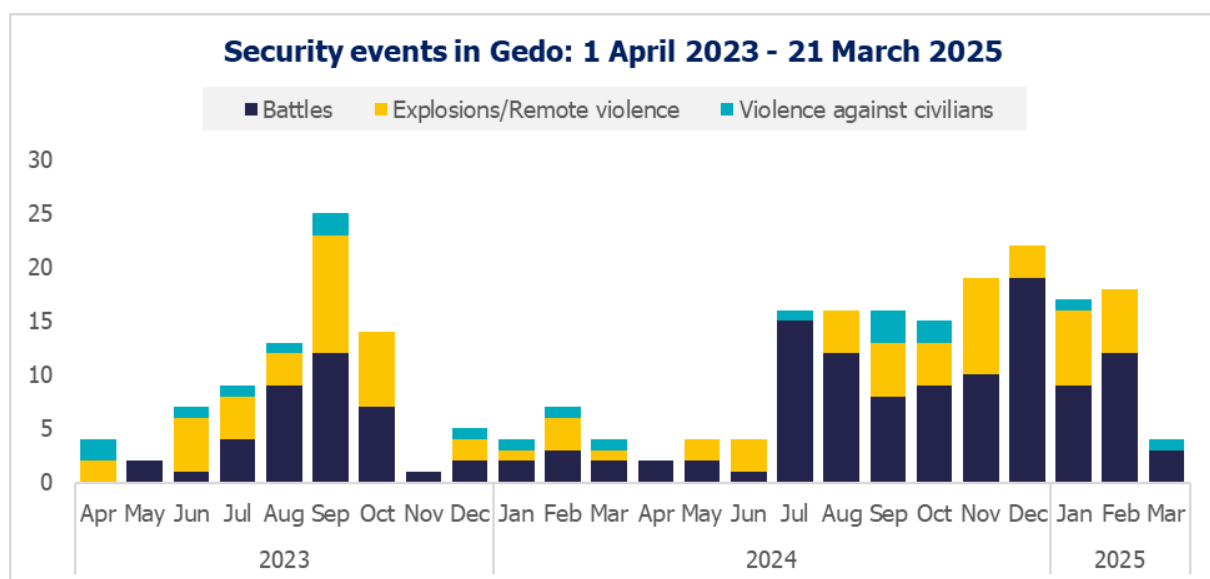


Figure 8. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Gedo.<sup>484</sup>

ACLED recorded 191 incidents involving Al-Shabaab (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2'). Of these incidents, 135 involved both Al-Shabaab and the Military or Police Forces of Somalia, including 16 incidents involving Al-Shabaab and Jubbaland security forces. A further six incidents involved both the Rahanweyn-Moalim Weyne

<sup>480</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Conflict in Luuq District, Jubaland State Flash Update No.1 (As of 23 October 2024), 23 October 2024, [url](#); BBC Monitoring, Programme summary of Somalia's Radio Shabelle news 05:00 GMT 21 Oct 24, 28 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 17:00 GMT 21 Oct 24, 25 October 2024

<sup>481</sup> Hiiraan Online, Intense clan fighting erupts in Luuq, Somalia, as rival militias clash, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>482</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>483</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>484</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.





and Rahanweyn-Gawaweene subclan militia, while another seven incidents involved Rahanweyn-Moalim Weyne subclan militia and Marehan clan militia.<sup>485</sup>

For incidents involving civilian fatalities, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- on 13 July 2023, Al-Shabaab captured the strategic Giriley military base from Jubbaland forces following a firefight. At least one civilian was killed in the attack, along with two soldiers.<sup>486</sup> The Jubbaland Dervish Forces recaptured the base the next day.<sup>487</sup>
- on 16 May 2024, at least two civilians were killed and five others injured when an unclaimed landmine struck their vehicle on the Belet Xaawo–Doolow road.<sup>488</sup>
- on 5 February 2025, FGS forces attacked the Bardhere district headquarters.<sup>489</sup> Six people were killed in ensuing clashes with Jubbaland forces;<sup>490</sup>
- on 20 October 2024, clashes between rival clans in Luuq district left between six and 20 or more people dead.<sup>491</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 94 452 individuals were newly displaced from Gedo due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. Of this group, the vast majority (90 641 individuals) were displaced within the same administrative region, while 3 811 individuals were displaced to other regions, including Middle Juba, Lower Juba, Bakool, Bari, and Nugal. During the same period, 26 778 individuals arrived from other regions (Middle Juba and Lower Juba, Bakool, Bay, Hiraan, Middle and Lower Shabelle, and Galgaduud). At district level, Luuq, by a wide margin, was both the district most affected by IDPs departures to other regions (3 540, including 3 510 who were displaced in July 2024) and by intra-regional IDP departures to other locations within Gedo region (84 611 including around 45 000 in July 2024 and another 36 000 in October 2024).<sup>492</sup>

According to UNOCHA data, some 42 000 people were displaced due to violence between clans in the Luuq area between 5 and 7 July 2024, including 12 000 who fled to hard-to-access areas outside Luuq town such as Ceel Boon, Yurkud, and Bashiir. Some of the IDPs fled towards Wajid town in South West State.<sup>493</sup> Further clashes in October 2024 displaced another 30 000 people, including individuals who had previously been affected by

<sup>485</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>486</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali army recaptures Geriley military base amid ATMIS troop drawdown, 14 July 2023, [url](#); Somali Digest (The), UPDATED: Al-Shabaab captures Giriley military base in Gedo region, 13 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>487</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali army recaptures Geriley military base amid ATMIS troop drawdown, 14 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>488</sup> Hiiraan Online, Landmine explosion kills two civilians in Gedo region, 16 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>489</sup> SMN, Somali Officials, Civilians Killed in Heavy Clashes in Gedo's Baardheere, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>490</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>491</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Conflict in Luuq District, Jubaland State Flash Update No.1 (As of 23 October 2024), 23 October 2024, [url](#); BBC Monitoring, Programme summary of Somalia's Radio Shabelle news 05:00 GMT 21 Oct 24, 28 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 17:00 GMT 21 Oct 24, 25 October 2024

<sup>492</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>493</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Monthly Humanitarian Update (July 2024), 12 August 2024, [url](#), p. 1



displacement or had recently returned.<sup>494</sup> Additional large-scale displacement resulted from escalating violence between FGS and Jubbaland forces in Bardhere in early February 2025.<sup>495</sup>

For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, see section 2.1.1. of the [EUAA COI Report on Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

#### Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded 28 humanitarian access incidents in Gedo region between April and December 2023<sup>496</sup> and another 29 over the year 2024,<sup>497</sup> including security forces opening fire on a vehicle of humanitarian workers at an IDP camp and hitting one aid worker (first quarter of 2024),<sup>498</sup> the killing of two humanitarian workers amid the clan conflict in Luuq (July 2024), the hijacking of a lorry transporting humanitarian supplies in Doolow (third quarter of 2024),<sup>499</sup> an attack by clan militias on an NGO office in Burdhubo, and the detention of humanitarian staff (fourth quarter of 2024).<sup>500</sup> Earlier, the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition recorded the hijacking of a lorry carrying medical supplies (third quarter of 2023).<sup>501</sup> Moreover, the inter-clan clashes that erupted in Luuq town in early July 2024 led to the burning of a main market with hundreds of shops.<sup>502</sup>

## 2.1.2. Middle Juba

### (a) Background

Middle Juba region is located in the southern part of Somalia and shares internal borders with Gedo to the north and north-west, Bay to the north-east, Lower Shabelle to the east and Lower Juba to the south. To the south-east, it borders the Indian Ocean. The region is divided into three districts: Bu'aale, Jilib and Saakow. The region's capital is Bu'aale.<sup>503</sup>

As of September 2024, an IPC document estimated the population of Middle Juba region at 430 129.<sup>504</sup> The region's demographic composition is very diverse. The Somali Bantu are the most populous ethnic group in the region. The two strongest clans both in political and military terms are the Aulihan (Darood) and the Mohamed Zubier/Ogaden (Darood) clans.<sup>505</sup> For more

<sup>494</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>495</sup> SMN, Somali Officials, Civilians Killed in Heavy Clashes in Gedo's Baardheere, 5 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>496</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1;

UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>497</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>498</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 January to 31 March 2024, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>499</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 July to 30 September 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#), pp. 1-2

<sup>500</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 1 October to 31 December 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>501</sup> SHCC and Insecurity Insight, Critical Condition. Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2023, May 2024, [url](#), p. 94

<sup>502</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Flash Update No.1 Displacement due to inter-clan conflict in Luuq town, Jubaland State of Somalia, 14 July 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>503</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>504</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3. Please note that round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024) of the DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment was not conducted in Middle Juba

<sup>505</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 53



general background information on Middle Juba region, see section 2.1.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023). For more detailed information on Middle Juba region's clan composition, see section 2.1.2.1 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021).

### **(b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics**

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

Middle Juba region is an Al-Shabaab stronghold<sup>506</sup> and has been described as the group's 'center of gravity' in Somalia.<sup>507</sup> Maps published by PolGeoNow show that Al-Shabaab has been in control of virtually the entire region, including the towns of Bu'aale, Jilib, Saakow, and Salagle ([Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025<sup>508</sup> and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023<sup>509</sup>). The town of Jilib serves as the group's main centre of command<sup>510</sup> and de facto headquarters.<sup>511</sup>

#### Conflict dynamics

The SNA and international forces carried out a number of operations against Al-Shabaab in various parts of Middle Juba, including Jilib, Bu'aale, and Saakow (October 2023)<sup>512</sup> and the border area between Middle Juba and Lower Juba (December 2023).<sup>513</sup> In mid-2024, Jubbaland and SNA forces (Danab special forces) launched a ground operation in Jubbaland that also targeted Al-Shabaab strongholds in Jilib district.<sup>514</sup>

Airstrikes attributed by some sources to US forces reportedly killed or injured senior Al-Shabaab commanders in the Jilib area (in May 2023,<sup>515</sup> December 2023<sup>516</sup> and notably in a series of strikes in March 2025<sup>517</sup>) and dozens of fighters of the group in Jilib,<sup>518</sup> the Arabow area<sup>519</sup> and the border zones between Middle Juba and Lower Juba<sup>520</sup> and Lower Shabelle.<sup>521</sup> Somali officials claimed that, following the March 2025 airstrikes, several high-ranking Al-Shabaab commanders and their families were abandoning Jilib town and relocating to new

<sup>506</sup> ACLED, Controversy over electoral reform sparks debate in Somalia amid al-Shabaab operation, 28 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>507</sup> ISW and CTP, Africa File, January 9, 2025: Islamic State Suicide Attack in Somalia; AUSSOM Dysfunction; M23 Captures District Capital in Eastern DRC, 9 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>508</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>509</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>510</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories Amid Run-up to State Elections, 28 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>511</sup> Radio Dalsan, Al Shabaab executes seven alleged spies in Middle Juba region, 16 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>512</sup> SONNA, Operations against Al-Shabaab terrorists carried out in the Middle Jubba region, 10 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>513</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: Ten AS fighters Killed, their bases destroyed in a joint Operation in Middle Jubba, Gov't says, 21 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>514</sup> ACLED, The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia, 31 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>515</sup> Airwars, USSOM385, 20 May 2023, [url](#); SONNA, Senior Al-Shabaab leader injured in a joint operation, 23 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>516</sup> Airwars, USSOM410, 17 December 2023, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>517</sup> Hiiraan Online, Al-Shabaab leaders flee Jilib following intensified airstrikes by Somali forces, 23 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>518</sup> SONNA, Over 120 Al-Shabaab Militants Killed in Major Airstrikes in the Middle Juba Region, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>519</sup> SD, Airstrike in Somalia targets foreign fighters, 25 February 2024, [url](#)

<sup>520</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: Ten AS fighters Killed, their bases destroyed in a joint Operation in Middle Jubba, Gov't says, 21 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>521</sup> Airwars, USSOM424, 7 March 2024, [url](#)



places to hide.<sup>522</sup> In 2023, Kenyan forces also carried out a series of airstrikes against Al-Shabaab positions,<sup>523</sup> including in Saakow, Salagle<sup>524</sup> and allegedly Jilib<sup>525</sup> and Bu'aale,<sup>526</sup> although the impact of these strikes on the group's activities remained unclear.<sup>527</sup>

Several aerial strikes attributed to international forces, including those of the USA<sup>528</sup> and Kenya,<sup>529</sup> were alleged to have caused civilian deaths or injuries in Saakow (June 2023),<sup>530</sup> Salagle (also June 2023)<sup>531</sup> and Jilib (August 2023,<sup>532</sup> December 2023,<sup>533</sup> and February 2024<sup>534</sup>).

Over the reference period, Al-Shabaab carried out several public executions, including of two Somali soldiers in Saakow<sup>535</sup> and at least 12 individuals on charges of spying for Kenyan, US, FGS and Jubbaland intelligence agencies in Jilib.<sup>536</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

#### Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 57 security incidents in Middle Juba region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 350 fatalities. [Figure 9](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>537</sup> At district level, Jilib recorded the most security incidents (35 incidents), followed by Saakow (12 incidents) and Bu'aale (10 incidents).<sup>538</sup>

<sup>522</sup> Hiiraan Online, Al-Shabaab leaders flee Jilib following intensified airstrikes by Somali forces, 23 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>523</sup> ACLED, Assessing Al-Shabaab's Threat to the Region as Somalia Joins the East Africa Community, 8 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>524</sup> SG, Kenyan, UAE warplanes carry out airstrikes in south and central Somalia, 17 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>525</sup> Airwars, KS004, 15 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>526</sup> SMN, Suspected KDF airstrike reported in Al-Shabaab HQs in southern Somalia, 3 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>527</sup> ACLED, Assessing Al-Shabaab's Threat to the Region as Somalia Joins the East Africa Community, 8 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>528</sup> Airwars, USSOM418, 15 February 2024, [url](#)

<sup>529</sup> Airwars, KS004, 15 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>530</sup> Airwars, USSOM390 KS001, 16 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>531</sup> Airwars, USSOM391 KS002, 16 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>532</sup> Airwars, KS004, 15 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>533</sup> Hiiraan Online, Jilib drone strike targets Al-Shabaab amidst leadership feud, 5 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>534</sup> Airwars, USSOM418, 15 February 2024, [url](#)

<sup>535</sup> BBC Monitoring, Al-Shabab publicly kills two soldiers in southern Somalia, 5 September 2024

<sup>536</sup> Radio Dalsan, Al Shabaab executes seven alleged spies in Middle Juba region, 16 January 2024, [url](#); Garowe Online, Al-Shabaab executes suspected spies in Somalia, 16 January 2024, [url](#); BBC Monitoring, Al-Shabab kills five in Somalia over espionage claims, 5 May 2023

<sup>537</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>538</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

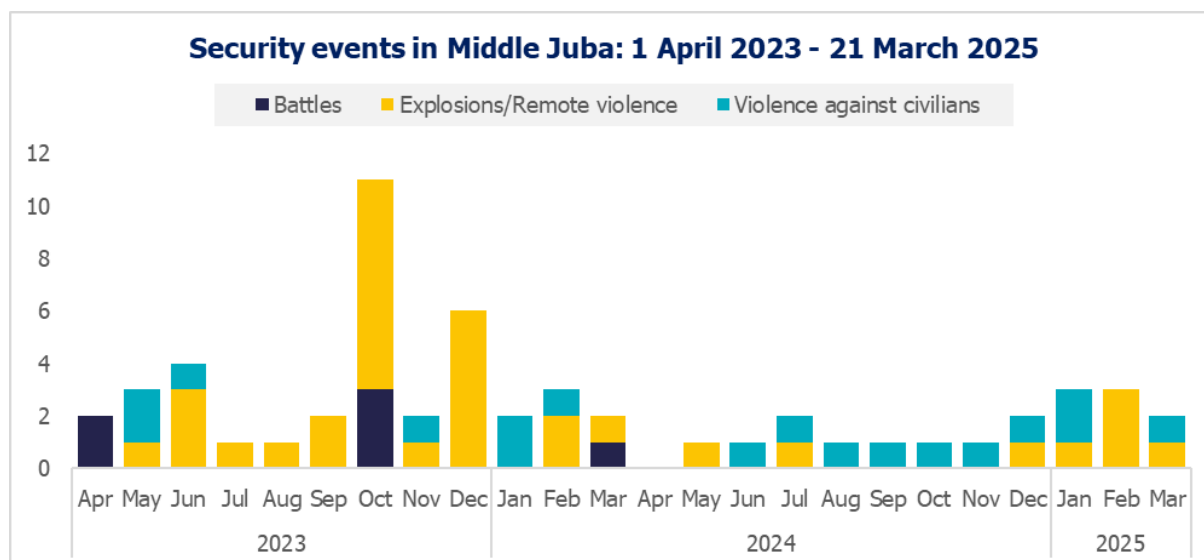


Figure 9. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Middle Juba.<sup>539</sup>

ACLED recorded 51 incidents involving Al-Shabaab (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2'). Of these incidents, 14 involved both Al-Shabaab and the Military or Police Forces of Somalia.<sup>540</sup>

For incidents involving civilian fatalities, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- on 15 August 2023, four civilians were killed in alleged Kenyan airstrikes on a civilian area in the centre of Jilib town. Four other civilians were injured.<sup>541</sup>
- on 15 January 2024, Al-Shabaab publicly executed seven men in Jilib, accusing them of spying for the FGS and the US and Kenyan governments.<sup>542</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 52 217 individuals were newly displaced from Middle Juba due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. Of this group, the majority (32 605 individuals) were displaced within the same administrative region, while 19 612 individuals were displaced to other regions, including Gedo, Lower Juba, and Benadir. During the same period, only 245 individuals arrived from other regions (Gedo, Lower Juba, and Bay). At district level, Saakow was the district most affected by individuals leaving for other regions (9 267) and Jilib was the district most affected by intra-regional IDP departures to other locations within Middle Juba region (12 687).<sup>543</sup> For information on conflict-related

<sup>539</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

<sup>540</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>541</sup> Airwars, KS004, 15 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>542</sup> Radio Dalsan, Al Shabaab executes seven alleged spies in Middle Juba region, 16 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>543</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)



displacement prior to April 2023, see section 2.1.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

#### Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded no humanitarian access incidents in Middle Juba region between April and December 2023<sup>544</sup> and over the year 2024.<sup>545</sup> A suspected Kenyan airstrike on Saakow town in June 2023 was reported to have destroyed key telecommunications installations.<sup>546</sup> According to an October 2024 report by the UN Panel of Experts, Middle Juba was one of the regions where abductions of children by Al-Shabaab for recruitment and use was most common.<sup>547</sup> No further information could be found within the time constraints of this report.

### 2.1.3. Lower Juba

#### (a) Background

Lower Juba region is the southernmost region of Somalia. It shares an international border with Kenya to the west and south-west and has internal borders with Gedo region to the north and Middle Juba region to the north-east. To the south-east, it borders the Indian Ocean. The region has four districts: Kismayo, Jamaame, Badhaadhe (all three located on the coast), and Afmadow. Kismayo, Lower Juba's regional capital,<sup>548</sup> has also been the de facto capital of Jubbaland.<sup>549</sup>

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Lower Juba region at 1 158 256 (IPC),<sup>550</sup> and 858 827 (IOM).<sup>551</sup> Lower Juba is inhabited by members of the Somali Bantu (also known as Jareer), the Biyomaal (Dir) clan, the Tunni (Digil-Mirifle), the Mohamed Zubier/Ogaden (Darood) and other Darood clans (including Harti), the Gaaljaal (proto-Hawiye) the Somali Bajuni and small pockets of other clans. Kismayo town has been dominated by the Ogaden clan, particularly the large Mohamed Zubeir/Ogaden subclan.<sup>552</sup> For further general background information on Lower Juba region, see section 2.1.3. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023). For more detailed information on Lower Juba region's clan composition, see section 2.1.3.1 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021).

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<sup>544</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>545</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024 [Map], 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>546</sup> Garowe Online, Suspected KDF airstrike in Somalia destroys Telecom infrastructure, 17 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>547</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 194

<sup>548</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>549</sup> GI-TOC, Terror and Taxes. Inside al-Shabaab's revenue-collection machine, 8 December 2022, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>550</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>551</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>552</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 59



## (b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025 and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Al-Shabaab was in control of Jamaame, Hagar, and Badhaadhe as well as swaths of rural territory in the region's north-east encompassing Jamaame district and most of Afmadow district north of the Juba River and extending into Middle Juba. The group also controlled another rural area stretching northward from Badhaadhe through Kismayo district into southern Afmadow. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab lost control of Bulo Haji (Afmadow district),<sup>553</sup> recaptured by the SNA and allied local clan militias in June 2024<sup>554</sup> and now under the control of the Jubbaland regional forces.<sup>555</sup> Following the recapture of Bulo Haji, a number of strategic villages linking Kismayo and Afmadow were seized from Al-Shabaab control.<sup>556</sup> Concurrently, the militant group mobilised fighters from Middle Juba to areas in Kismayo and Jamaame districts in August, September, and October 2024.<sup>557</sup> According to [Map 3](#), as of 31 March 2025, the rural areas outside Al-Shabaab's full dominance were under mixed control of Al-Shabaab and Jubbaland forces.<sup>558</sup>

Both the FGS and the Jubbaland administration have invested in efforts to gain control over Jubbaland,<sup>559</sup> deploying their respective forces to occupy military sites vacated by ATMIS and secure areas formerly controlled by the international troops.<sup>560</sup> In late 2024, military buildups were seen in Raskamboni town,<sup>561</sup> where the SNA deployed hundreds of troops. However, following the town's capture by Jubbaland forces in December 2024,<sup>562</sup> FGS forces withdrew from most areas of Lower Juba.<sup>563</sup> According to [Map 3](#), as of 31 March 2025, the previously FGS/ATMIS-controlled<sup>564</sup> towns of Kismayo, Afmadow, Dif, Dhobley, Tabta, Jana Abdale, Koday, Kolbiyow and Raskamboni were under the control of the Jubbaland forces, while Bar Sanguni was mapped as being under mixed control of FGS coalition and Jubbaland forces.<sup>565</sup>

<sup>553</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.; PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>554</sup> Hiiraan Online, Prime Minister Barre praises Somali forces for retaking Bulo Haji area from al-Shabab, 10 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>555</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>556</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali government and Jubbaland forces seize key areas from Al-Shabaab in Lower Juba, 11 July 2024, [url](#); Goobjoog, Somali National Army Seize Two Key Villages in Lower Juba, 10 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>557</sup> ACLED, Controversy over electoral reform sparks debate in Somalia amid al-Shabaab operation, 28 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>558</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>559</sup> Garowe Online, Jubaland conflict: What we know so far, 26 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>560</sup> Hiiraan Online, Jubbaland forces take over bases vacated by AU troops in Lower Juba, 4 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>561</sup> Garowe Online, Jubaland conflict: What we know so far, 26 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>562</sup> Reuters, Somalia pulls troops out of Lower Juba after clashes with Jubbaland forces, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>563</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>564</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>565</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.



## Conflict dynamics

Lower Juba is a region of key strategic importance to Al-Shabaab's operations<sup>566</sup> and the group conducted a number of attacks on military bases, including in Bar Sanguni (March and April 2024, reportedly killing dozens of soldiers)<sup>567</sup> and Jannay Abdalla (October 2024).<sup>568</sup>

In the early months of the reference period, Lower Juba region saw some small-scale counter-insurgency operations against Al-Shabaab,<sup>569</sup> including airstrikes and ground operations in June 2023 (Jamaame, killing two Al-Shabaab commanders)<sup>570</sup> and July 2023 (near Afmadow town, killing dozens of fighters).<sup>571</sup> Further SNA operations, backed by US forces, were reported in late 2023 (involving heavy clashes with Al-Shabaab)<sup>572</sup> and early 2024, but these efforts generally remained sporadic and limited in scope.<sup>573</sup> However, in March 2024, SNA and Jubbaland forces launched heavy-handed joint operations in Musa Haji, Bahar Saaf, Malaylay, Turdho and other areas serving as hideouts for Al-Shabaab, reportedly killing dozens of militants.<sup>574</sup>

After recapturing the Bulo Haji area in June 2024<sup>575</sup> without facing any resistance from Al-Shabaab and the subsequent surrender of Al-Shabaab district-level leaders,<sup>576</sup> SNA and Jubbaland forces seized further localities between Kismayo and Afmadow in early July,<sup>577</sup> including Lagta Qubbi, Golhadamo, Biibi, Harboole, Miido,<sup>578</sup> and Welmaro.<sup>579</sup>

However, on 22 July 2024, Al-Shabaab launched coordinated, multi-pronged and near-simultaneous attacks on military bases in Bulo-Haji and the towns of Harbole, Miido, and Bar Sanguni. These attacks involved at least one suicide car bomb, as well as rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) and small arms.<sup>580</sup> Clashes between the Jubbaland forces/SNA and Al-

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<sup>566</sup> Garowe Online, Somali and Jubaland Forces Make Strategic Gains Against Al-Shabaab in Lower Jubba Region, 13 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>567</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>568</sup> Halqabsi News, Jubaland Security Forces Repel Al-Shabaab Attack in Lower Juba, 27 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>569</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>570</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia submitted in accordance with resolution 2662 (2022), S/2023/724, 2 October 2023, [url](#), para. 8

<sup>571</sup> VOA, New US Airstrikes Kill Al-Shabab Militants, 9 July 2023, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, KDF troops in Somalia, SNA kill 40 al Shabaab terrorists, 9 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>572</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab and Danab Clash in Lower Juba, 22 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>573</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>574</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: Gov't, Jubaland Regional forces kill AS ring Leaders Comprising of Somalis and Foreigners in Lower Jubba Region as tough operations continue, 4 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>575</sup> Hiiraan Online, Prime Minister Barre praises Somali forces for retaking Bulo Haji area from al-Shabab, 10 June 2024, [url](#); ACLED, Fighting deepens around El Fasher in Sudan, al-Shabaab loses territory in Somalia, and police crack down on tax-related protests in Kenya, 28 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>576</sup> ACLED, Fighting deepens around El Fasher in Sudan, al-Shabaab loses territory in Somalia, and police crack down on tax-related protests in Kenya, 28 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>577</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali government and Jubbaland forces seize key areas from Al-Shabaab in Lower Juba, 11 July 2024, [url](#); Goobjoog, Somali National Army Seize Two Key Villages in Lower Juba, 10 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>578</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali government and Jubbaland forces seize key areas from Al-Shabaab in Lower Juba, 11 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>579</sup> Goobjoog, Somali National Army Seize Two Key Villages in Lower Juba, 10 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>580</sup> FDD's Long War Journal, Analysis: Shabaab mounts large-scale offensive, Somali Armed Forces claim victory, 23 July 2024, [url](#)



Shabaab were reported in a number of localities in the area,<sup>581</sup> with the FGS claiming that the attackers were repelled and dozens of militants killed.<sup>582</sup>

The following weeks and months saw military operations reportedly killing over 200 Al-Shabaab militants,<sup>583</sup> targeted operations against the group's hideouts,<sup>584</sup> the recapture of further Al-Shabaab-controlled territory,<sup>585</sup> and the killing of senior Al-Shabaab figures in Badhaadhe and Kismayo.<sup>586</sup> At the same time, the intensity of fighting decreased from mid-August 2024 as security forces cleared villages in Kismayo district from Al-Shabaab fighters.<sup>587</sup> Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab publicly executed several men it had accused of spying.<sup>588</sup>

Amid political tensions in the run-up to the 25 November 2024 Jubbaland presidential election, a deadly clash erupted in Kismayo.<sup>589</sup> The following month, deteriorating relations between the FGS and the Jubbaland administration escalated into an attack by Jubbaland forces on FGS troops in Raskamboni in December 2024.<sup>590</sup> Following these hostilities, the FGS announced the withdrawal of its forces from Lower Juba,<sup>591</sup> although SNA operations in the region continued into early 2025.<sup>592</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

#### Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 497 security incidents in Lower Juba region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 1 663 fatalities. [Figure 10](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>593</sup> At district level, Kismayo district recorded the most security incidents (176 incidents), followed by Afmadow (151 incidents) and Jamaame districts (105 incidents).<sup>594</sup>

<sup>581</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 172

<sup>582</sup> FDD's Long War Journal, Analysis: Shabaab mounts large-scale offensive, Somali Armed Forces claim victory, 23 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>583</sup> Halqabsi News, Al-Shabaab Casualties from Lower Juba Operations Rise to over 200, Says Defence Spokesperson, 24 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>584</sup> SMN, Jubbaland Forces Strike Al-Shabaab Hideout in Lower Jubba Region, 29 July 2024, [url](#);

SMN, Jubaland Forces Launch Operation in Lower Juba, Targeting Al-Shabaab, 15 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>585</sup> Garowe Online, Somali and Jubaland Forces Make Strategic Gains Against Al-Shabaab in Lower Jubba Region, 13 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>586</sup> ACLED, Al-Shabaab targets civilians in Somalia in retaliation for installing CCTV cameras, 29 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>587</sup> ACLED, Controversy over electoral reform sparks debate in Somalia amid al-Shabaab operation, 28 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>588</sup> Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab Executes 5 Men for Allegedly Spying for U.S., Somalia and Kenya, 15 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>589</sup> SG, Heavy fighting erupts in Somalia's Kismayo town ahead of controversial vote, 23 November 2025, [url](#)

<sup>590</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>591</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>592</sup> SONNA, 10 Al-Shabaab militants killed in joint operation in Lower Jubba, 5 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>593</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>594</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)



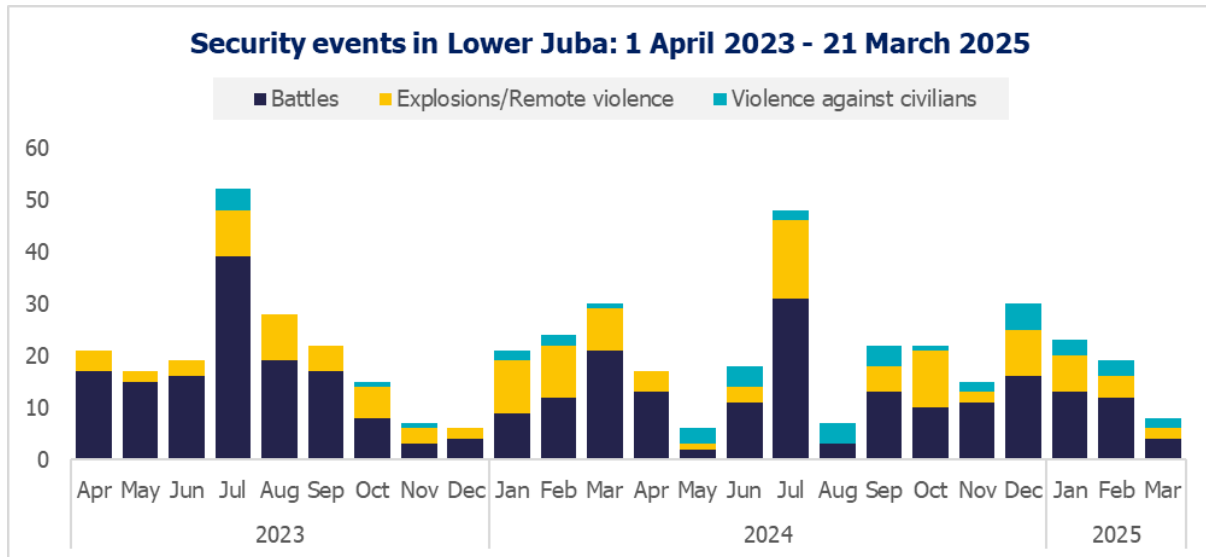


Figure 10. Evolution of ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Lower Juba.<sup>595</sup>

ACLED recorded 460 incidents involving Al-Shabaab (coded as either ‘Actor 1’, ‘Associated Actor 1’, ‘Actor 2’, or ‘Associated Actor 2’). Of these incidents, 334 involved both Al-Shabaab and the Military or Police Forces of Somalia, including 252 incidents involving Al-Shabaab and Jubbaland security forces. Meanwhile, 50 incidents involved both Al-Shabaab and Somali civilians.<sup>596</sup>

For incidents involving fatalities, including civilian deaths, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- in March and April 2024, Al-Shabaab carried out two attacks on Bar Sanguni military base, reportedly killing dozens of soldiers;<sup>597</sup>
- on 13 July 2024, Al-Shabaab publicly executed five men in its stronghold of Jamaame, accusing them of spying for the Somali, US and Kenyan governments;<sup>598</sup>
- on 22 July 2024, Al-Shabaab launched coordinated attacks on bases<sup>599</sup> of the SNA and Jubbaland forces<sup>600</sup> in Buulo-Haji and the towns of Harbole, Miido, and Bar Sanguuni. The FGS claimed that the SNA, its allies in the Jubbaland forces and Kenyan forces had repelled the attackers;<sup>601</sup>

<sup>595</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

<sup>596</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>597</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – February 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>598</sup> Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab Executes 5 Men for Allegedly Spying for U.S., Somalia and Kenya, 15 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>599</sup> FDD’s Long War Journal, Analysis: Shabaab mounts large-scale offensive, Somali Armed Forces claim victory, 23 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>600</sup> SD, Al Shabab defeated in Lower Juba, 23 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>601</sup> FDD’s Long War Journal, Analysis: Shabaab mounts large-scale offensive, Somali Armed Forces claim victory, 23 July 2024, [url](#)





- on 11 December 2024, heavy clashes erupted between Jubbaland forces and the SNA in Raskamboni town,<sup>602</sup> resulting in the killing of 75 people and the surrender and fleeing of SNA troops;<sup>603</sup>
- in the run-up to the 25 November 2024, Jubbaland presidential election, Jubbaland security forces clashed with fighters affiliated with the opposition candidate Ilyas Beddel Gabose on 23 November 2024. The violence left one of his bodyguards dead<sup>604</sup> and two other individuals injured.<sup>605</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 50 650 individuals were newly displaced from Lower Juba due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. Of this group, the vast majority (49 076 individuals) were displaced within the same administrative region, while 1 574 individuals were displaced to other regions, including Gedo, Middle Juba, Benadir, Bari, and Nugal. During the same period, 12 997 individuals arrived from other regions (Gedo, Middle Juba, Bay, Lower Shabelle, Benadir, and Hiraan). At district level, Jamaame was the most affected by individuals leaving for other regions (743). Afmadow was the district most affected by intra-regional IDP departures to other locations within Lower Juba region (18 335), followed by Jamaame (14 228).<sup>606</sup> According to UNOCHA, Jamaame was one of the districts most affected by conflict-related internal displacement in 2024.<sup>607</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, see section 2.1.3. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded 11 humanitarian access incidents in Lower Juba region in 2023<sup>608</sup> and another 22 in 2024,<sup>609</sup> including the destruction of a school and water and sanitary infrastructure during hostilities in Wirkooy (Afmadow district), the Jubbaland forces requiring clearances at checkpoints to access northern Kismayo (first quarter of 2024),<sup>610</sup> the eviction of 2 652 IDPs in Dhobley and Badhaadhe (second quarter of 2024),<sup>611</sup> and a mortar projectile reportedly fired by Al-Shabaab hitting the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) compound in Kismayo.<sup>612</sup>

<sup>602</sup> Reuters, Somalia pulls troops out of Lower Juba after clashes with Jubbaland forces, 12 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>603</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>604</sup> SG, Heavy fighting erupts in Somalia's Kismayo town ahead of controversial vote, 23 November 2025, [url](#)

<sup>605</sup> Raxanreeb, Deadly Clash Erupts in Kismayo Amid Jubaland Election Tensions, 23 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>606</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>607</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>608</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1;

UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>609</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>610</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 January to 31 March 2024, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>611</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 April to 30 June 2024, 8 August 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>612</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 July to 30 September 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3



### 2.1.4. Jubbaland - Checkpoints and road security

A report published by the Rift Valley Institute (RVI) and other organisations noted that, as of October 2023, 34 % of all of Somalia's checkpoints were located in Jubbaland State, the vast majority (80 %) in Lower Juba region.<sup>613</sup> The International Peace Information Service (IPIS), a Belgium-based humanitarian research institute<sup>614</sup> that had contributed to the above-mentioned report, identified multiple checkpoints located on the Kismayo–Afmadow–Dhobley road (with those between Kismayo and Afmadow under Al-Shabaab control), on the Kismayo–Badhaadhe road (where Al-Shabaab controlled most checkpoints, including in Badhaadhe town), and on the Kismayo–Jamaame–Jilib–Bardhere road (where Al-Shabaab was likewise in control of most checkpoints).<sup>615</sup> For an overview on checkpoints at country level see section 1.7 and [Map 4](#).

ACLED reported that Al-Shabaab mobilisation in Jubbaland increased in September 2024 as the group set up two new checkpoints and bases along the roads between Kismayo and Afmadow and Jamaame. Moreover, Al-Shabaab imposed a transport blockade on Bardhere town (Gedo) which allowed the group to extort funds from traders and travellers.<sup>616</sup>

Jubbaland witnessed a number of roadside bombings during the reference period, including an attack near Bulo Haji (targeting a Jubbaland official),<sup>617</sup> the road between Luuq and Doolow (targeting SNA troops),<sup>618</sup> the Belet Xaawo–Doolow road (targeting government forces<sup>619</sup> and civilians<sup>620</sup>). Al-Shabaab planted IEDs on roads leading into Kismayo city<sup>621</sup> and in Gedo region to ambush the armed forces.<sup>622</sup>

## 2.2. South West

### 2.2.1. Bakool

#### (a) Background

Bakool, a rural region<sup>623</sup> predominantly inhabited by agro-pastoralists,<sup>624</sup> shares an international border with Ethiopia to the north and internal borders with the regions of Gedo to the west, Bay to the south, Hiraan to the east, and Lower Shabelle to the south-east. The

<sup>613</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the Price: The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, RVI et al., October 2023, [url](#), pp. 25-26

<sup>614</sup> IPIS, About IPIS, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>615</sup> IPIS, Mapping the political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 20 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>616</sup> ACLED, Controversy over electoral reform sparks debate in Somalia amid al-Shabaab operation, 28 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>617</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Jubaland State Minister Injured in Roadside Explosion En Route to Bulo Haji, 22 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>618</sup> VOA, 11 Somali Soldiers Killed as AU Forces Start Second Round of Troop Drawdown, 19 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>619</sup> Somali Digest (The), Deadly blast targeted government forces in Beled Hawo, Gedo, 9 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>620</sup> Hiiraan Online, Landmine explosion kills two civilians in Gedo region, 16 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>621</sup> SMN, Jubaland Forces Intensify Security Operations in Kismayo and Surrounding Areas, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>622</sup> Hiiraan Online, Landmine explosion kills two civilians in Gedo region, 16 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>623</sup> CSHRD, Somalia: 01/07/2024: – Human Rights Second Quarter Report 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>624</sup> Edle, A., Bay and Bakool: How Somalia's Breadbasket turned into an Epicenter of Humanitarian Crisis, RVI, 2023, [url](#)



region is divided into five districts: Xudur, Tayeeglow, Ceel Barde, Rab Dhuure, and Waajid. Its capital is Xudur.<sup>625</sup>

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Bakool region at 543 371 (IPC),<sup>626</sup> and 392 347 (IOM).<sup>627</sup> Bakool is mainly inhabited by various Rahanweyn groups, while the Jajele (Hawiye) are present in a small section in the north<sup>628</sup> and the Aulihan (Ogaden/Darood) clan resides along both sides of the border with Ethiopia.<sup>629</sup> For more detailed background information on Bakool region, see section 2.2.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### **(b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics**

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

Al-Shabaab remained in control of large swaths of the region's territory.<sup>630</sup> Bakool has been described as one of the country's regions where Al-Shabaab's grip was most strongly felt, including through blockades of humanitarian aid,<sup>631</sup> heavy tax burdens<sup>632</sup> and a high frequency of child abductions for recruitment purposes.<sup>633</sup>

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025 and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Al-Shabaab was in control of the towns of Rab Dhuure and Tayeeglow and of rural territories in eastern and south-eastern Bakool, including the surroundings of Tayeeglow and the region's southeastern corner. During the reference period, Al-Shabaab added large rural swaths south-east of Rab Dhuure town to its realm of control. Meanwhile, the FGS coalition remained in control of a narrow stretch of rural territory in the region's north delimited by the towns of Ceel Barde, Ato, and Yeed. Control over the remaining rural areas of Bakool region was mixed between Al-Shabaab and the FGS. The towns of Xudur, Waajid, Ceel Barde, Yeed, and Ato remained under the control of the FGS coalition.<sup>634</sup> However, Al-Shabaab continued to hold sway over the territories surrounding Xudur<sup>635</sup> and Waajid,<sup>636</sup> keeping these towns in a state of siege.<sup>637</sup>

<sup>625</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>626</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>627</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>628</sup> EASO, COI report - South and Central Somalia Country overview [clan maps based on Lewis 1955, Abikar 1999], August 2014, [url](#), pp. 52-53

<sup>629</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 67; EASO, COI report - South and Central Somalia Country overview [clan map based on Lewis 1955], August 2014, [url](#), pp. 52

<sup>630</sup> Halqabsi News, Somali Army Claims Success in Hudur City Operation, 6 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>631</sup> CSHRD, Somalia: 01/07/2024: – Human Rights Second Quarter Report 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>632</sup> Edle, A., Bay and Bakool: How Somalia's Breadbasket turned into an Epicenter of Humanitarian Crisis, RVI, 2023, [url](#)

<sup>633</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 59

<sup>634</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.; PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>635</sup> UNDP Somalia, How the Town of Hudur is Pioneering Resilience in Somalia, 30 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>636</sup> SG, Ethiopian military convoy ambushed in south Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>637</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Situation Report (Last updated: 13 Aug 2024), 13 August 2024, [url](#), p. 3; Halqabsi News, Somali Army Claims Success in Hudur City Operation, 6 July 2024, [url](#); SG, Ethiopian military convoy ambushed in south Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#)



Meanwhile, the SNA units operating in the region included the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 60<sup>th</sup> division,<sup>638</sup> stationed in the towns of Xudur<sup>639</sup> and Waajid,<sup>640</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 60<sup>th</sup> Division.<sup>641</sup> Xudur and Waajid also hosted bases of Ethiopian troops.<sup>642</sup> During the reference period, the SNA regained control of several locations previously controlled by Al-Shabaab,<sup>643</sup> including in the vicinity of Xudur town,<sup>644</sup> and ended a blockade of the Xudur–Qurajome road.<sup>645</sup>

### Conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab continued to pose a significant threat in Bakool and other parts of southern Somalia.<sup>646</sup> Notably, the region's capital Xudur has been a 'focal point' in the persisting conflict between the SNA and Al-Shabaab.<sup>647</sup>

During the reference period, Al-Shabaab carried out multiple attacks against ATMIS troops in Waajid district (including in April/May 2023<sup>648</sup> and January<sup>649</sup> and October 2024<sup>650</sup>), Xudur district, and at the Somali-Ethiopian border in Rab Dhuure district (June 2023),<sup>651</sup> while also launching attacks on the SNA (in Waajid in January<sup>652</sup> and Ceel Barde in June 2024<sup>653</sup>) and South West State forces (in Waajid in March 2025).<sup>654</sup>

Notably, on 17 September 2023, the group ambushed convoys of Ethiopian ATMIS troops<sup>655</sup> travelling from Yeed to Waajid and from Ceel Barde to Xudur.<sup>656</sup> Various sides claimed that around 50 militants<sup>657</sup> and 167 Ethiopian soldiers had been killed in the attacks and ensuing

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<sup>638</sup> Goobjoog, Somali National Army Crushes Al-Shabaab Militants in Bakool Region Operation, 15 March 2025, [url](#); SMN, Somali Forces Strike Al-Shabaab in Major Operation Near Hudur, 21 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>639</sup> Halqabsi News, Somali Army Claims Success in Hudur City Operation, 6 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>640</sup> SONNA, Somali National Army Foils Khawarij Attacks and Landmine Plot in Wajid District, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>641</sup> BBC Monitoring Africa, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Risalanews 16:00 GMT 7 Nov 24, 8 November 2024

<sup>642</sup> VOA, Al-Shabab Attacks Ethiopian Military Convoys in Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>643</sup> Halqabsi News, Somali Army Claims Success in Hudur City Operation, 6 July 2024, [url](#); SONNA, Somali National Army defeats Khawarij in Bay and Bakool regions, 30 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>644</sup> Halqabsi News, Somali Army Claims Success in Hudur City Operation, 6 July 2024, [url](#); Radio Dalsan, Somali military captures several key towns in Hiraan and Bakool regions as operations against the militants continue to intensify, 10 December 2023, [url](#); SONNA, Somali Forces Launch Sweeping Operation Against Al-Shabaab in Bakool Region, 29 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>645</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali forces reclaim key road from Al-Shabaab in Bakool, 17 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>646</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>647</sup> Radio Dalsan, Security Forces Foil Alshabaab Attack in Hudur, Preventing Potential Mass Casualty Event, 17 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>648</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories as Tax Dispute Halts Counter-Insurgency Operation [Map], 2 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>649</sup> Radio Dalsan, Somali army kills Al-Shabaab fighters in fierce battle near Wajid in Bakool region, 14 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>650</sup> Garowe Online, Al-Shabaab Militants launch Attack on Ethiopian Military Base in Somalia, 12 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>651</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Political Turmoil Threatens the Fight Against Al-Shabaab [Map], 30 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>652</sup> Radio Dalsan, Somali army kills Al-Shabaab fighters in fierce battle near Wajid in Bakool region, 14 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>653</sup> Mogadishu24, Somali Army neutralizes 7 Al-Shabaab militants, 4 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>654</sup> SMN, Al-Shabaab Attacks Security Base in Waajid, Somali Forces Capture Key Operative, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>655</sup> AA, Heavy casualties in clashes between al-Shabaab terrorists, Ethiopian peacekeepers in Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>656</sup> VOA, Al-Shabab Attacks Ethiopian Military Convoys in Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>657</sup> VOA, Al-Shabab Attacks Ethiopian Military Convoys in Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#); AA, Heavy casualties in clashes between al-Shabaab terrorists, Ethiopian peacekeepers in Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#)



clashes, although these accounts could not be verified independently.<sup>658</sup> The group further executed five individuals in Tayeeglow, accusing them of spying for the US and Ethiopian governments.<sup>659</sup>

Meanwhile, new operations against Al-Shabaab were announced in the South West State by the South West administration in July 2023<sup>660</sup> and by the FGS in October 2023.<sup>661</sup> These operations intensified in several instances, including in November-December 2023<sup>662</sup> and over the spring<sup>663</sup> and summer months of 2024.<sup>664</sup> Multiple SNA operations focused on targeting Al-Shabaab hideouts in Waajid district (including in July 2023,<sup>665</sup> March<sup>666</sup> and December 2024,<sup>667</sup> and March 2025<sup>668</sup>) and Xudur district (throughout the period from late 2023 to late 2024<sup>669</sup>), but were also reported along the Bakool–Bay border (December 2023).<sup>670</sup> There were ensuing reports of clashes,<sup>671</sup> dismantling of Al-Shabaab hideouts,<sup>672</sup> and surrendering of defecting Al-Shabaab fighters.<sup>673</sup> Following SNA operations in September 2024, tensions remained at heightened levels in the Xudur area as military and insurgent activities continued.<sup>674</sup>

The region further witnessed some airstrikes targeting Al-Shabaab positions,<sup>675</sup> including a strike by FGS forces in Wajid district that, according to Al-Shabaab, killed eight civilians.<sup>676</sup>

<sup>658</sup> VOA, Al-Shabab Attacks Ethiopian Military Convoys in Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>659</sup> Frontier Online, Al-Shabaab executes five men for espionage in Bakool region, 12 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>660</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali Army kills 25 al-Shabab militants, including five foreign fighters in Bakool region, 26 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>661</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 12

<sup>662</sup> Radio Dalsan, Somali military captures several key towns in Hiraan and Bakool regions as operations against the militants continue to intensify, 10 December 2023, [url](#); SONNA, Somali Forces Launch Sweeping Operation Against Al-Shabaab in Bakool Region, 29 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>663</sup> Halqabsi News, SNA Intensifies Operations Against Al-Shabaab in Bakool, 29 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>664</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somali Armed Forces Clash with Al-Shabaab in Bakool Region, Capture Suspects, 21 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>665</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali Army kills 25 al-Shabab militants, including five foreign fighters in Bakool region, 26 July 2023, [url](#); SONNA, Somali National Army kills 25 Al-Shabaab militants near Wajid district, 25 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>666</sup> Mogadishu24, Government forces kill over 80 Al-Shabaab militants, 28 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>667</sup> SMN, SNA Dismantles Al-Shabaab Trenches in Bakool Region Operation – defense ministry, 19 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>668</sup> Goobjoog, Somali National Army Crushes Al-Shabaab Militants in Bakool Region Operation, 15 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>669</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Risala news 16:00 GMT 7 Nov 24, 8 November 2024; Mustaqbal Media, Somali Armed Forces Clash with Al-Shabaab in Bakool Region, Capture Suspects, 21 September 2024, [url](#); SMN, Somali National Army Strikes Blow Against Al-Shabaab in Bakool Operation, 24 July 2024, [url](#); Halqabsi News, SNA Intensifies Operations Against Al-Shabaab in Bakool, 29 April 2024, [url](#); Radio Dalsan, Somali military captures several key towns in Hiraan and Bakool regions as operations against the militants continue to intensify, 10 December 2023, [url](#); SONNA, Somali Forces Launch Sweeping Operation Against Al-Shabaab in Bakool Region, 29 November 2023, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>670</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>671</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somali Armed Forces Clash with Al-Shabaab in Bakool Region, Capture Suspects, 21 September 2024, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>672</sup> SMN, SNA Dismantles Al-Shabaab Trenches in Bakool Region Operation – defense ministry, 19 December 2024, [url](#); Radio Dalsan, Somali military captures several key towns in Hiraan and Bakool regions as operations against the militants continue to intensify, 10 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>673</sup> SMN, Al-Shabaab fighters surrender to Somali government, 2 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>674</sup> SMN, Somali Forces Strike Al-Shabaab in Major Operation Near Hudur, 21 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>675</sup> SMN, Fresh Airstrikes Target Al-Shabaab in Bakool Region, 22 June 2024, [url](#); Airwars, USSOM405, 22 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>676</sup> Airwars, USSOM405, 22 September 2023, [url](#)





Moreover, clashes along clan lines between SNA and Dervish forces left at least 10 people dead in Ceel Barde,<sup>677</sup> with further clan feuds were observed around Xudur.<sup>678</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 284 security incidents in Bakool region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 583 fatalities. [Figure 11](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>679</sup> At district level, Xudur recorded the most security incidents (149 incidents), followed by Waajid (87 incidents) and Ceel Barde (26 incidents).<sup>680</sup>

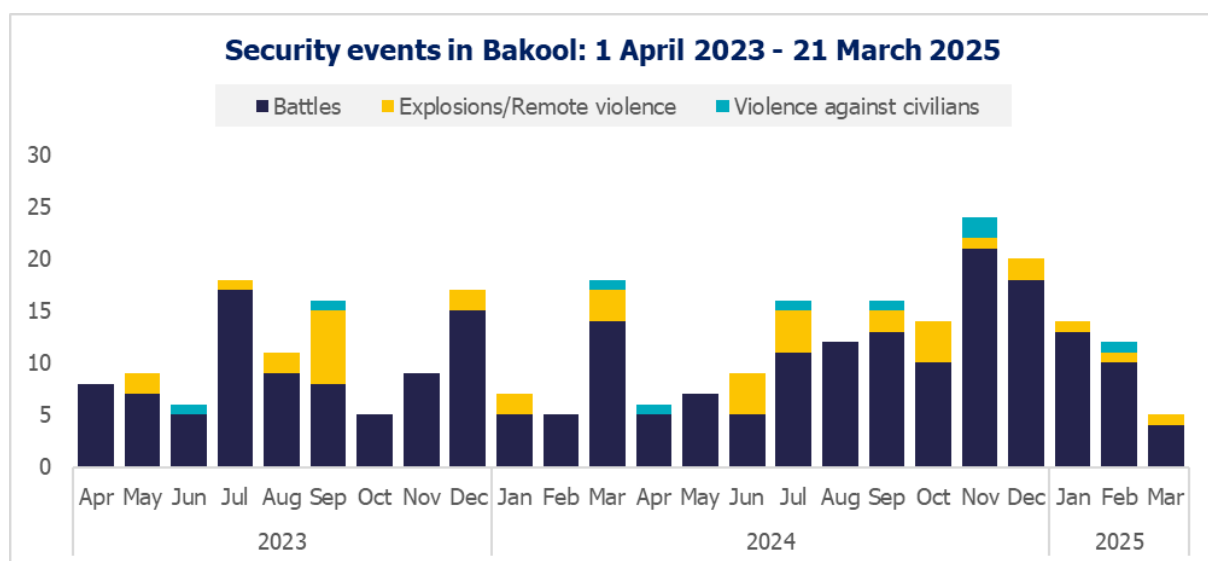


Figure 11. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Bakool.<sup>681</sup>

ACLED recorded 277 incidents involving Al-Shabaab (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2'). Of these incidents, 205 involved both Al-Shabaab and the Military or Police Forces of Somalia, including eight incidents involving Al-Shabaab and Southwest Special Police Forces.<sup>682</sup>

For incidents involving fatalities, including alleged civilian deaths, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

<sup>677</sup> Horn Observer, At least 10 killed as rival armed groups clash in Elbarde town of Somalia, 14 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>678</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Risala news 16:00 GMT 19 Nov 24, 25 November 2024

<sup>679</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>680</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>681</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

<sup>682</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)



- on 17 September 2023, Al-Shabaab group ambushed convoys of Ethiopian ATMIS troops<sup>683</sup> travelling from Yeed to Waajid and from Ceel Barde to Xudur.<sup>684</sup> Various sides claimed that around 50 militants and 167 Ethiopian soldiers had been killed.<sup>685</sup> These accounts could not be verified independently;<sup>686</sup>
- on 22 September 2023, an airstrike carried out by FGS forces in Wajid district killed a prominent Al-Shabaab leader and his seven bodyguards (as claimed by Somali Ministry of Defence)<sup>687</sup> or eight civilians (as claimed by Al-Shabaab).<sup>688</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 20 284 individuals were newly displaced from Bakool due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. Of this group, 9 657 individuals were displaced within the same administrative region, while 10 627 individuals were displaced to other regions, including Bay, Benadir, Bari, Gedo, Galgaduud, Hiraan, and Nugal. At district level, Rab Dhuure was the most affected by individuals leaving for other regions (3 467), while Waajid was the only affected by displacement from other regions (3 510, all displaced from Gedo's Luuq district in July 2024). Ceel Barde, by a wide margin, was the district most affected by intra-regional IDP departures to other locations within Bakool region (7 736, including 5 400 who were displaced in June 2023).<sup>689</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, see section 2.2.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded eight humanitarian access incidents in Bakool region between April and December 2023<sup>690</sup> and one further incident over the year 2024.<sup>691</sup> In August 2024, UNOCHA reported that Al-Shabaab blocked and controlled the main supply routes to Xudur town,<sup>692</sup> restricting the flow of food and other commodities into the town to airlifted aid and items smuggled into the town by donkey carts.<sup>693</sup>

<sup>683</sup> AA, Heavy casualties in clashes between al-Shabaab terrorists, Ethiopian peacekeepers in Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>684</sup> VOA, Al-Shabab Attacks Ethiopian Military Convoys in Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>685</sup> VOA, Al-Shabab Attacks Ethiopian Military Convoys in Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#); AA, Heavy casualties in clashes between al-Shabaab terrorists, Ethiopian peacekeepers in Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>686</sup> VOA, Al-Shabab Attacks Ethiopian Military Convoys in Somalia, 17 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>687</sup> Halqabsi News, Targeted Airstrike Kills High-Ranking Al-Shabaab Leader in Bakool Region, 22 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>688</sup> Airwars, USSOM405, 22 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>689</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>690</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>691</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024 [Map], 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>692</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Situation Report (Last updated: 13 Aug 2024), 13 August 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>693</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Situation Report (Last updated: 13 Aug 2024), 13 August 2024, [url](#), p. 3; UNDP Somalia, How the Town of Hudur is Pioneering Resilience in Somalia, 30 April 2024, [url](#)



## 2.2.2. Bay

### (a) Background

Bay, a rural region<sup>694</sup> predominantly inhabited by agro-pastoralists,<sup>695</sup> shares internal borders with Bakool, Lower Shabelle, Middle Jubba, and Gedo. It is divided into four districts: Baidoa, Buur Hakaba, Qansax Dheere, and Diinsoor. The region's capital is Baidoa city,<sup>696</sup> locally known as Baydhabo.<sup>697</sup> While the official capital of the South West State is Baraawe in Lower Shabelle region,<sup>698</sup> the strategically important city of Baidoa<sup>699</sup> serves as the de facto capital of the South West State.<sup>700</sup>

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Bay region at 1 247 975 (IPC),<sup>701</sup> and 1 801 464 (IOM).<sup>702</sup> Baidoa district hosted the highest number of IDPs among the country's districts assessed by IOM (731 492 individuals as of September 2024).<sup>703</sup> Bay region is mainly inhabited by Rahanweyn clans, with Mirifle groups mainly populating the northern half and the Digil predominating in the south. The region is also home to small communities of Hawiye groups.<sup>704</sup> Baidoa city is mainly populated by the Mirifle and Digil clans, with the Mirifle the more powerful clan.<sup>705</sup> For more detailed background information on Bay region, see section 2.2.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

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<sup>694</sup> CSHRD, Somalia: 01/07/2024: – Human Rights Second Quarter Report 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>695</sup> Edle, A., Bay and Bakool: How Somalia's Breadbasket turned into an Epicenter of Humanitarian Crisis, RVI, 2023, [url](#)

<sup>696</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>697</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, Somalia, last updated 23 March 2025, [url](#); Somalia, South West State Ministry of Public Works, Reconstruction and Housing, Baidoa Urban Profile, UN-Habitat, June 2020, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>698</sup> Halqabsi News, South West Security Minister arrives in Barawe, 2 August 2023, [url](#); EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 73

<sup>699</sup> Somalia, South West State Ministry of Public Works, Reconstruction and Housing, Baidoa Urban Profile, UN-Habitat, June 2020, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>700</sup> UN-Habitat, Baidoa City Strategy, March 2023, [url](#), p. 86; EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 73

<sup>701</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>702</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>703</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>704</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 74

<sup>705</sup> NRC, 'I want my land. You have to go.' Understanding the eviction phenomenon in Baidoa, 16 September 2021, [url](#), p. 34



## (b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

Al-Shabaab maintained a strong presence in Bay region<sup>706</sup> and exerted influence through blockades of humanitarian assistance,<sup>707</sup> heavy tax burdens<sup>708</sup> and a high incidence of abductions of children for recruitment purposes.<sup>709</sup>

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025 and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Al-Shabaab controlled the towns of Lego, Labatan Jirow, and Bulo-Fulay. It also controlled large swaths of territory encompassing more than half of Bay's rural terrain, extending from the surroundings of Labatan Jirow in the north and Lego in the east into central and southern Bay, with the exception of the environs of Diinsoor. Control over the remaining rural areas of Bay region was mapped as being mixed between Al-Shabaab and the FGS coalition. The towns of Baidoa, Buur Hakaba and Berdale (all located on the Mogadishu–Doolow road), as well as Qansah Dhere, Diinsoor remained under the control of the FGS coalition.<sup>710</sup> During the reference period, the SNA regained control of several previously Al-Shabaab-controlled villages,<sup>711</sup> including north of Baidoa (April 2023) and along the Bay–Bakool border (December 2023).<sup>712</sup>

In spring 2024, SNA and South West State forces started to reposition their troops in some areas of Bay as part of their efforts to liberate the region from Al-Shabaab elements.<sup>713</sup> Meanwhile, amid rising tensions between the FSG and the South West State administration, both sides deployed forces in parts of the state.<sup>714</sup> Units of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the SNA's 60<sup>th</sup> Division were operating in the region.<sup>715</sup> Both SNA forces<sup>716</sup> and Ethiopian troops were stationed in Diinsoor town.<sup>717</sup>

### Conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab continued to pose a significant threat across southern Somalia.<sup>718</sup> During the early months of the reference period, Al-Shabaab carried out several attacks on ATMIS troops in

<sup>706</sup> SONNA, Somali National Army defeats Khawarij in Bay and Bakool regions, 30 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>707</sup> CSHRD, Somalia: 01/07/2024: – Human Rights Second Quarter Report 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>708</sup> Edle, A., Bay and Bakool: How Somalia's Breadbasket turned into an Epicenter of Humanitarian Crisis, RVI, 2023, [url](#)

<sup>709</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 59

<sup>710</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.; PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>711</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); SONNA, Somali National Army defeats Khawarij in Bay and Bakool regions, 30 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>712</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>713</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Mustaqbal News 1730 gmt 22 Mar 24, 2 April 2024

<sup>714</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>715</sup> SMN, Explosion Claims Lives of Somali Army Commander and Soldiers in Southwest state, 15 June 2024, [url](#);

SONNA, Somali National Army defeats Khawarij in Bay and Bakool regions, 30 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>716</sup> SMN, Ethiopian troops in Diinsoor town fire mortars at Al-Shabaab bases, 30 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>717</sup> Mogadishu24, Somalia Dispatches Urgent Aid to Isolated Diinsoor Town Amid Drought Crisis, 30 October 2024, [url](#); Radio Dalsan, ATMIS Ethiopian contingent in Diinsoor, Bay region escort high profile peace delegation to address clan hostilities in the district, 19 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>718</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)



Diinsoor (April/May 2023)<sup>719</sup> and imposed a near-two-week siege on the city of Baidoa (July 2023).<sup>720</sup> Another spike in Al-Shabaab operations was observed from December 2023 and continued into 2024<sup>721</sup> as the group pursued ground raids against armed forces stationed in the region.<sup>722</sup> Over the summer of 2024, Baidoa city witnessed four artillery attacks by Al-Shabaab that targeted Baidoa airport, Baidoa Regional Hospital, and UN and ATMIS facilities (with no reported casualties),<sup>723</sup> while an IED attack attributed to the group targeted security forces near Aawdiinle village<sup>724</sup> of Baidoa district.<sup>725</sup> Another focal area of Al-Shabaab's attacks and ambushes was the important Mogadishu–Baidoa road.<sup>726</sup> For more detailed information on road incidents, see section [2.2.4 South West - Checkpoints and road security](#) of this report.

The reference period also witnessed unclaimed IED attacks striking SNA troops in the Bay–Bakool border zone (June 2024)<sup>727</sup> and in the Baidoa airport area (July 2024),<sup>728</sup> with the June attack notably killing the commander of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 60<sup>th</sup> SNA Division and several soldiers, thus highlighting the challenges faced by the SNA in securing the area.<sup>729</sup>

Meanwhile, new anti-Al-Shabaab operations in the South West State were announced by the South West State administration in July 2023.<sup>730</sup> Military and security campaigns against Al-Shabaab were reported near Baidoa city (including in April 2023<sup>731</sup> and May 2024<sup>732</sup>), around Berdale town (July 2023),<sup>733</sup> at the Bay–Bakool border,<sup>734</sup> and in Diinsoor district (December 2023),<sup>735</sup> resulting in deaths<sup>736</sup> and arrests of Al-Shabaab members.<sup>737</sup> Furthermore, Al-Shabaab-controlled areas on the Diinsoor outskirts were shelled by Ethiopian forces,<sup>738</sup> while several civilians were killed in suspected US airstrikes in Buur Hakaba district (July 2023).<sup>739</sup>

<sup>719</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories as Tax Dispute Halts Counter-Insurgency Operation [Map], 2 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>720</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>721</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 10

<sup>722</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab's Infiltration of a Military Base in Mogadishu and Somaliland's Conflict, 1 March 2024, [url](#); SMN, Al-Shabaab members killed in clashes near Baidoa, southern Somalia, 30 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>723</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 13

<sup>724</sup> ACLED, What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?, 4 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>725</sup> Strategic Intelligence Service, Al-Shabaab Militants Killed, Several Captured in Awdiinle, Bay Region of Somalia, 8 July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>726</sup> Williams, P.D., The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, CTC Sentinel, April 2024, [url](#), p. 39

<sup>727</sup> SMN, Explosion Claims Lives of Somali Army Commander and Soldiers in Southwest state, 15 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>728</sup> Mogadishu24, Landmine blast injures two army members in Baidoa town, 4 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>729</sup> SMN, Explosion Claims Lives of Somali Army Commander and Soldiers in Southwest state, 15 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>730</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali Army kills 25 al-Shabab militants, including five foreign fighters in Bakool region, 26 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>731</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>732</sup> SMN, Southwest State Forces Capture militants: A Significant Victory in Fight Against Al-Shabaab, 9 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>733</sup> SONNA, Over 60 Al-Shabaab Militants Killed in Joint Operation in Bay Region, 26 July 2023, [url](#); UNOCHA, Somalia – Bay region, Somalia Atlas, 17 October 2011, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>734</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>735</sup> SONNA, Somali National Army kills al-Shabaab militants in Bay region, 14 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>736</sup> SMN, Southwest State Forces Capture militants: A Significant Victory in Fight Against Al-Shabaab, 9 May 2024, [url](#); SONNA, Somali National Army kills al-Shabaab militants in Bay region, 14 December 2023, [url](#); SONNA, Over 60 Al-Shabaab Militants Killed in Joint Operation in Bay Region, 26 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>737</sup> SMN, Southwest State Forces Capture militants: A Significant Victory in Fight Against Al-Shabaab, 9 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>738</sup> SMN, Ethiopian troops in Diinsoor town fire mortars at Al-Shabaab bases, 30 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>739</sup> Airwars, USSOM396, 24 July 2023, [url](#)



2024 saw a notable increase in clan violence.<sup>740</sup> In March and April 2024, clashes between clan groups were reported in Diinsoor district (including Diinsoor town)<sup>741</sup> and Buur Hakaba town,<sup>742</sup> resulting in several deaths.<sup>743</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 670 security incidents in Bay region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 621 fatalities. [Figure 12](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>744</sup> At district level, Baidoa recorded the most security incidents (431 incidents), followed by Diinsoor (148 incidents) and Qansax Dheere (55 incidents).<sup>745</sup>

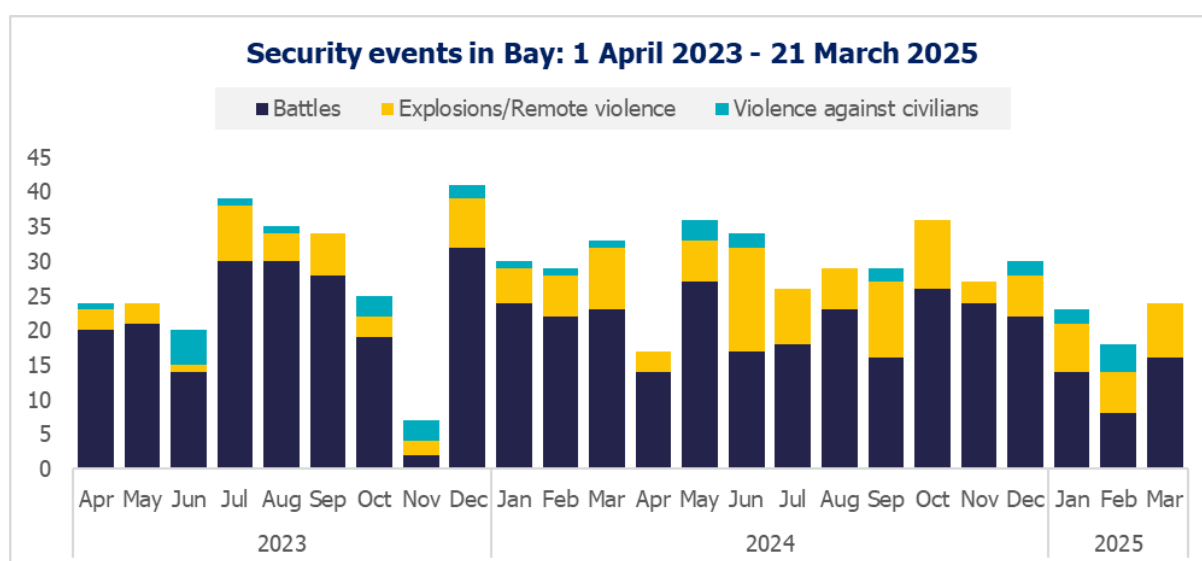


Figure 12. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Bay.<sup>746</sup>

ACLED recorded 630 incidents involving Al-Shabaab (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2'). Of these incidents, 486 involved both Al-Shabaab and the Military or Police Forces of Somalia, including 154 incidents involving Al-Shabaab and Southwest Special Police Forces. Five incidents involved both Leysaan Clan Militia and

<sup>740</sup> ACAPS, Somalia: Impact of clan conflicts [Map], 19 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>741</sup> UNHCR, Somalia, Protection and Return Monitoring Flash Alert #04, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>742</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Inter-clan Conflict Claims One Life in Burhakaba, Bay Region of Somalia, 13 April 2024, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, Inter-clan fighting kills two people in Burhakaba district, 13 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>743</sup> Hiiraan Online, Inter-clan fighting kills two people in Burhakaba district, 13 April 2024, [url](#); UNHCR, Somalia, Protection and Return Monitoring Flash Alert #04, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>744</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>745</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>746</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.



Southwest Special Police Forces, while another three incidents occurred between members of Rahanweyn-Elay Sub-Clan Militia.<sup>747</sup>

For incidents involving fatalities, including civilian deaths, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- in mid-June 2024, an unclaimed IED attack in the Bay–Bakool border zone killed the commander of the 8<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 60<sup>th</sup> SNA Division and several soldiers;<sup>748</sup>
- on 24 July 2023, suspected US airstrikes struck civilian areas in Buur Hakaba district, killing five civilians and injuring 10 others;<sup>749</sup>
- between 25 and 29 March 2024, clashes between clan groups broke out in Biilile village of Diinsoor district and spread to Diinsoor town, leaving at least five men dead and escalating into a significant conflict between the two clans dominating the town;<sup>750</sup>
- on 13 April 2024, inter-clan hostilities re-erupted in Buur Hakaba town, leaving at least one person dead.<sup>751</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 23 722 individuals were newly displaced from Bay due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. Of this group, the majority (13 373 individuals) were displaced within the same administrative region, while 10 349 individuals were displaced to other regions, including Lower Shabelle, Benadir, Gedo, Middle and Lower Juba, Nugal, and Bari. During the same period, only 102 individuals arrived in Bay from another region (Bakool, all arriving in Baidoa district). At district level, Diinsoor was both the district most affected by individuals leaving for other regions (3 955) and by intra-regional IDP departures to other locations within Bay region (11 644).<sup>752</sup> UNOCHA similarly noted that Diinsoor was one of Somalia's districts most severely affected by conflict-related internal displacement in 2024.<sup>753</sup>

Hostilities between clans in Diinsoor in late March 2024 resulted in the displacement of 1 371 households, as recorded by UNHCR,<sup>754</sup> while an unspecified number of people were displaced by months-long inter-clan skirmishes in Buur Hakaba that were reported to have come to an end in April 2024.<sup>755</sup>

For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, see section 2.2.2. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

<sup>747</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>748</sup> SMN, Explosion Claims Lives of Somali Army Commander and Soldiers in Southwest state, 15 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>749</sup> Airwars, USSOM396, 24 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>750</sup> UNHCR, Somalia, Protection and Return Monitoring Flash Alert #04, 31 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>751</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Inter-clan Conflict Claims One Life in Burhakaba, Bay Region of Somalia, 13 April 2024, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, Inter-clan fighting kills two people in Burhakaba district, 13 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>752</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>753</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>754</sup> UNHCR, Somalia, Protection and Return Monitoring Flash Alert #04, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>755</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: Months-long inter-clan skirmishes in Burhakaba put to rest after joint efforts, 18 April 2024, [url](#)





## Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded 20 humanitarian access incidents in Bay region between April and December 2023<sup>756</sup> and another 17 over the year 2024,<sup>757</sup> including the temporary abduction of two humanitarian workers (first quarter of 2024),<sup>758</sup> mortar projectiles allegedly fired by Al-Shabaab hitting the UN facilities in Baidoa (third<sup>759</sup> and fourth quarter of 2024), the seizure of a lorry with food supplies by Al-Shabaab in the Daynuunay area, the detention of humanitarian staff in Diinsoor, and an IED detonation damaging a humanitarian-rented building in Baidoa (fourth quarter of 2024).<sup>760</sup> A temporary siege imposed by Al-Shabaab on Baidoa city in July 2023 prompted shortages in food and fuel.<sup>761</sup>

### 2.2.3. Lower Shabelle

#### (a) Background

Lower Shabelle region is situated along the coast of south Somalia and shares internal borders with Middle Jubba, Bay, Bakool, Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, and Benadir regions. Lower Shabelle is divided into seven districts: Marka, Wanla Weyn, Afgooye, Qoryooley, Baraawe, Kurtunwaarey, and Sablaale. The region's capital is Marka,<sup>762</sup> while the city of Baraawe is the official capital of the South West State.<sup>763</sup> Lower Shabelle is known for yielding the country's largest agricultural output<sup>764</sup> and is of key strategic importance due to its location along two main roads connecting Mogadishu with Baidoa and Kismayo and the presence of the port towns of Marka and Baraawe.<sup>765</sup>

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Lower Shabelle region at 1 593 117 (IPC),<sup>766</sup> and 835 126 (IOM).<sup>767</sup> The structure of Lower Shabelle's population has been described as highly diverse and complex, encompassing large numbers of Digil-Mirifle subclans, the Biyomaal (Dir) clan around Marka, and numerous Hawiye clans in the east.<sup>768</sup> For more detailed background information on Lower Shabelle region, see section 2.2.3. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

<sup>756</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>757</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>758</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 January to 31 March 2024, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>759</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 July to 30 September 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>760</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 1 October to 31 December 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>761</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>762</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>763</sup> Halqabsi News, South West Security Minister arrives in Barawe, 2 August 2023, [url](#); EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 73

<sup>764</sup> Horn Observer, Lower Shabelle Farmers Struggle Between Al-Shabaab Threats and Government Neglect, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>765</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 79

<sup>766</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>767</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>768</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 79



## **(b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics**

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025 and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Al-Shabaab controlled nearly all of the region's central, southern and south-western areas, including the towns of Mubarak, Kurtunwaarey and Sablaale, as well as Basra north of Mogadishu. During the reference period, the group added the previously FGS-controlled town of Awdhegle to its realm of control. Meanwhile, the towns of Marka, Baraawe, Qoryooley, Bullo Mareer, Afgooye and Wanla Weyn remained under the control of the FGS coalition, while control of their rural hinterlands was mostly mapped as being mixed between Al-Shabaab and the FGS coalition. The same could be observed in the rural areas surrounding Benadir/Mogadishu.<sup>769</sup>

Lower Shabelle has been described as one of Somalia's regions where Al-Shabaab's control was most strongly felt, including through isolation from humanitarian assistance,<sup>770</sup> use of force against residents to extort harvested crops as a form of taxation,<sup>771</sup> and a high incidence of abductions of children for recruitment into the group's ranks.<sup>772</sup>

SNA brigades operating in the region during the reference period included the 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 60<sup>th</sup> Division,<sup>773</sup> the 83<sup>rd</sup> Brigade,<sup>774</sup> and the 143<sup>rd</sup> Brigade.<sup>775</sup> SNA and South West regional forces started to reposition in some areas of Lower Shabelle in spring 2024 as part of their efforts to liberate the region from Al-Shabaab.<sup>776</sup>

### Conflict dynamics

Lower Shabelle has been affected by insecurity resulting from Al-Shabaab activity and hostilities between clan militia groups.<sup>777</sup> Al-Shabaab 'continued to pose a major threat' in Lower Shabelle and other parts of southern Somalia.<sup>778</sup> Al-Shabaab has been using the region as a strategic zone to control food supplies<sup>779</sup> and stage attacks across southern Somalia.<sup>780</sup> The group's tactics included hit-and-run attacks, IED attacks and ambushing small groups of

<sup>769</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.; PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>770</sup> CSHRD, Somalia: 01/07/2024: – Human Rights Second Quarter Report 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>771</sup> Horn Observer, Lower Shabelle Farmers Struggle Between Al-Shabaab Threats and Government Neglect, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>772</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 59

<sup>773</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali forces strike al-Shabaab strongholds in Lower Shabelle, 31 December 2024, [url](#); Radio Dalsan, Somali Army Kills Over 50 Al-Shabaab Militants in Operations, 7 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>774</sup> SD, SNA forces liberate districts in Janale in Lower Shabelle, 17 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>775</sup> SONNA, SNA conducts clearing operations in Afgooye area in the Lower Shabelle region, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>776</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Mustaqbal News 1730 gmt 22 Mar 24, 2 April 2024

<sup>777</sup> Horn Observer, Lower Shabelle Farmers Struggle Between Al-Shabaab Threats and Government Neglect, 29 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>778</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>779</sup> SMN, Two Soldiers Killed in Al-Shabaab Ambush in Somalia's Lower Shabelle Region, 12 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>780</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali forces strike al-Shabaab strongholds in Lower Shabelle, 31 December 2024, [url](#)



soldiers.<sup>781</sup> A focal area of Al-Shabaab's attacks and ambushes has been the key Mogadishu–Baidoa road<sup>782</sup> running through Wanla Weyn.<sup>783</sup>

As of spring 2023, Lower Shabelle recorded one of the highest incidences of IED attacks among all regions.<sup>784</sup> During the early months of the reference period, Al-Shabaab carried out a series of attacks on ATMIS troops, including in Bulo Mareer<sup>785</sup> (where Al-Shabab targeted an ATMIS base using vehicle-borne IEDs and claimed to have killed more than 137 soldiers), Janale, Marka, Qoryooley, Baraawe, and the Mogadishu outskirts of Bariirre and Awbocow (April/May 2023)<sup>786</sup> and Arbacow (July 2023).<sup>787</sup> Moreover, the group launched attacks against the SNA<sup>788</sup> and local government and security infrastructure. The group's activities saw another increase in December 2023 and continued at heightened levels into early 2024.<sup>789</sup> The second half of 2024 witnessed Al-Shabaab attacking multiple ATMIS positions in Daanow, Bur Colow<sup>790</sup> and Bulo Mareer,<sup>791</sup> targeting Baraawe airport,<sup>792</sup> and ambushing South West regional forces.<sup>793</sup> The group launched a further series of attacks in December 2024<sup>794</sup> and re-escalated its operations against military sites in late February 2025.<sup>795</sup>

Dozens of civilians were killed in drone strikes by the FGS,<sup>796</sup> by patrolling ATMIS forces,<sup>797</sup> and in artillery crossfire.<sup>798</sup> Moreover, there were reports of unattributed explosions resulting in dozens more civilian casualties,<sup>799</sup> including a detonation of an unexploded shell in Qoryooley (June 2023),<sup>800</sup> and an attack on a bus on the Marka–Qoryooley road (August 2023).<sup>801</sup> An increase in child casualties due to mortar fire, unexploded ordnance and remnants of war documented over the summer of 2023<sup>802</sup> continued through late 2023 and early 2024<sup>803</sup> with

<sup>781</sup> SMN, Two Soldiers Killed in Al-Shabaab Ambush in Somalia's Lower Shabelle Region, 12 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>782</sup> Williams, P.D., The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, CTC Sentinel, April 2024, [url](#), p. 39

<sup>783</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>784</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 13

<sup>785</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories as Tax Dispute Halts Counter-Insurgency Operation, 2 June 2023, [url](#); UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 19

<sup>786</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories as Tax Dispute Halts Counter-Insurgency Operation [Map], 2 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>787</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>788</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); VOA, Suicide Car Bomb Kills Somali Security Personnel, 21 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>789</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 10-11

<sup>790</sup> Somali Digest (The), ATMIS Bases in Lower Shabelle Attacked by Al-Shabab, 24 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>791</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Launches Attacks on Security Targets in Mogadishu and Lower Shabelle, 28 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>792</sup> Mogadishu24, Al-Shabaab Claims Responsibility for Mortar Attacks on Mogadishu's International Airport, 5 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>793</sup> SMN, Two Soldiers Killed in Al-Shabaab Ambush in Somalia's Lower Shabelle Region, 12 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>794</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>795</sup> Hiiraan Online, Al-Shabaab attacks military bases near Afgoye in Lower Shabelle region, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>796</sup> Amnesty International, Somalia: Death of 23 civilians in military strikes with Turkish drones may amount to war crimes – new investigation, 7 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>797</sup> Radio Dalsan, ATMIS Troops Kill and Slaughter Civilians in Somalia's Lower Shabelle Region, 17 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>798</sup> Radio Dalsan, Deadly Mortar Attack Kills 10 Civilians in Lower Shabelle Village, 10 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>799</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 59; Raxanreeb, Three Civilians Killed in Landmine Explosion in Somalia's Lower Shabelle Region, 18 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>800</sup> New Arab (The), Mortar shell explosion kills 27 people in Somalia, mainly children, 10 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>801</sup> Al Jazeera, At least six killed, 12 wounded in targeted Somali bus explosion, 9 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>802</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 59

<sup>803</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 59





Al-Shabaab reported as the main perpetrator across regions.<sup>804</sup> The group also carried out several public executions of individuals it accused of spying.<sup>805</sup>

While anti-Al-Shabaab operations were announced in the South West State in July 2023,<sup>806</sup> as of early 2024, efforts to combat Al-Shabaab were limited to sporadic aerial operations.<sup>807</sup> Later months, however, saw several security operations targeting Al-Shabaab strongholds,<sup>808</sup> hideouts<sup>809</sup> and checkpoints,<sup>810</sup> while aerial strikes reportedly killed a high-ranking Al-Shabaab commander<sup>811</sup> and dozens of Al-Shabaab fighters.<sup>812</sup>

2024 saw a notable increase in clan violence.<sup>813</sup> High levels of tension between clan groups were reported in the Baraawe, Qoryooley<sup>814</sup> and Wanla Weyn areas,<sup>815</sup> escalating into armed violence in June–July 2024,<sup>816</sup> including a clash in Qoryooley between the Jiido and Garre clans<sup>817</sup> (both part of Digil)<sup>818</sup> that reportedly left at least two people dead.<sup>819</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

#### Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 1 416 security incidents in Lower Shabelle region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 2 122 fatalities. [Figure 13](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>820</sup> At district level, Afgooye recorded the most security incidents (639 incidents), followed by Marka (424 incidents) and Qoryooley (169 incidents).<sup>821</sup>

<sup>804</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 59; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 59

<sup>805</sup> Garowe Online, Somalia: Al-Shabaab publicly executes suspected ‘spies’, 16 November 2024, [url](#); SMN, Al-Shabaab executes 5 men on espionage charges, 16 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>806</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali Army kills 25 al-Shabab militants, including five foreign fighters in Bakool region, 26 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>807</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>808</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali forces strike al-Shabaab strongholds in Lower Shabelle, 31 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>809</sup> SONNA, SNA conducts clearing operations in Afgooye area in the Lower Shabelle region, 3 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>810</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali forces raid Al-Shabaab checkpoints, free civilians in Lower Shabelle, 14 February 2025, [url](#); ACLED, State officials in Somalia crack down on clan militia checkpoints, 30 September 2024, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>811</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>812</sup> AA, Somali forces kill 82 al-Shabaab terrorists in airstrikes, 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>813</sup> ACAPS, Somalia: Impact of clan conflicts [Map], 19 March 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>814</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: South West administration brokers peace deal between two warring clans in Diinsoor, 20 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>815</sup> Horn Observer, Somalia Lower Shabelle: Clashes Spark Fear of Full-Fledged Clan Conflict, 22 August 2024, [url](#); Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: South West administration brokers peace deal between two warring clans in Diinsoor, 20 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>816</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); Muibu, D., Somalia’s Stalled Offensive Against al-Shabaab: Taking Stock of Obstacles, CTC Sentinel, February 2024, [url](#), p. 24

<sup>817</sup> UNHCR Somalia, Protection and Return Monitoring Flash Alert #13, 11 July 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>818</sup> Somali Digest (The), Qoryooley Clashes Reveal Clan Mobilization Consequences, 19 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>819</sup> UNHCR Somalia, Protection and Return Monitoring Flash Alert #13, 11 July 2024, [url](#), p. 1; Somali Digest (The), Qoryooley Clashes Reveal Clan Mobilization Consequences, 19 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>820</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>821</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

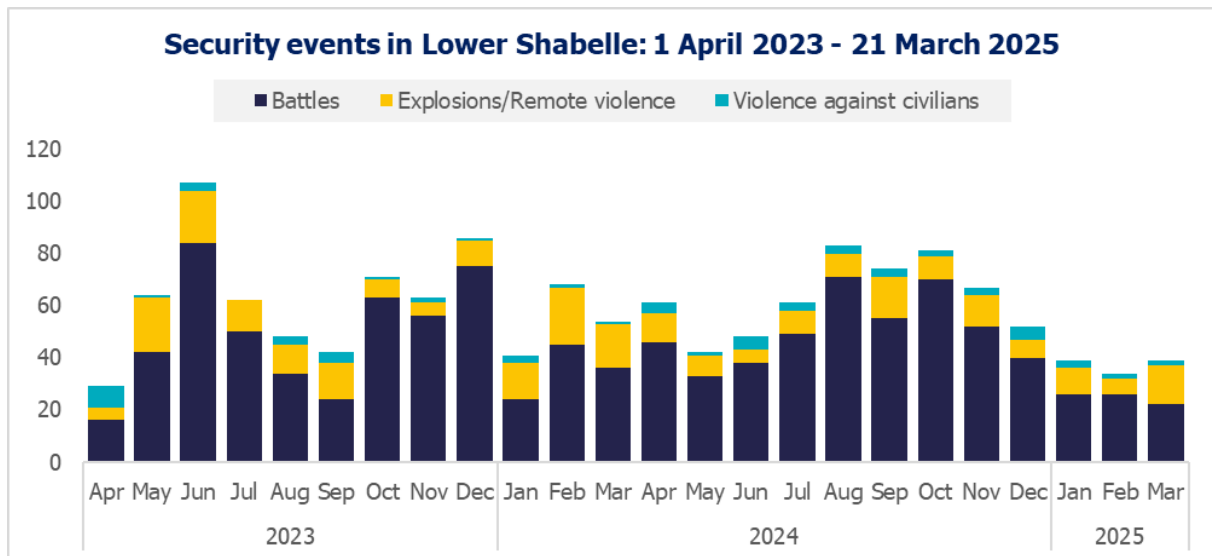


Figure 13. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Lower Shabelle.<sup>822</sup>

ACLED recorded 1 302 incidents involving Al-Shabaab (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2'). Of these incidents, 832 involved both Al-Shabaab and the Military or Police Forces of Somalia, including five incidents involving Al-Shabaab and Southwest Special Police Forces. A further four incidents involved both Gaaljecel clan militia and Shanta Caleemo clan militia, while another three incidents involved both Gaaljecel clan militia and Rahanweyn-Hubeer subclan militia.<sup>823</sup>

For incidents resulting in fatalities, including civilian deaths, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- on 26 May 2023, large numbers of Al-Shabaab fighters carried out a complex attack on Ugandan forces at the ATMIS forward operating base in Bulo Mareer district,<sup>824</sup> with the militants claiming that 137 troops had been killed in the attack;<sup>825</sup>
- on 9 June 2023, a detonation of an unexploded mortar shell in Qoryooley town killed around 27 people, mainly children, and left another 53 injured;<sup>826</sup>
- on 9 August 2023, an attack by an unidentified armed group on a passenger bus travelling on the Marka–Qoryooley road left at least six people dead and another 12 injured;<sup>827</sup>
- on 18 March 2024, drone strikes launched during military operations killed 23 civilians of the marginalised Gorgaarte clan near Bagdad village;<sup>828</sup>

<sup>822</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

<sup>823</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>824</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 19

<sup>825</sup> Horn Observer, Uganda initiates inquiry after deadly al-Shabaab raid on Somalia's Buulo Mareer army base, 28 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>826</sup> New Arab (The), Mortar shell explosion kills 27 people in Somalia, mainly children, 10 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>827</sup> Al Jazeera, At least six killed, 12 wounded in targeted Somali bus explosion, 9 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>828</sup> Amnesty International, Somalia: Death of 23 civilians in military strikes with Turkish drones may amount to war crimes – new investigation, 7 May 2024, [url](#)

- between 8 and 9 July 2024, a clash between the two clans in Qoryooley district over administrative power in the district<sup>829</sup> reportedly left at least two civilians dead.<sup>830</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 78 367 individuals were newly displaced from areas of Lower Shabelle due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. Of this group, 32 836 individuals were displaced within the same administrative region, while 45 531 individuals were displaced to other regions, including Benadir, Gedo, Hiraa, Lower Juba, Nugal, and Bari. During the same period, only 167 individuals arrived from other regions (Galgaduud and Bay, all arriving in Afgooye district). At district level, Kurtunwaarey (16 824) and Qoryooley (12 344) were the most affected by individuals leaving for other regions. Kurtunwaarey, by a wide margin, was also the district most affected by intra-regional IDP departures to other locations within Lower Shabelle region (24 063).<sup>831</sup> The clashes between the Jiido and Garre clans in Qoryooley district in early July 2024 resulted in the displacement of around 2 100 individuals to Bullo-Mareer and Marka, while others fled to nearby areas within the same district.<sup>832</sup>

For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, see section 2.2.3. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded 19 humanitarian access incidents in Lower Shabelle region between April and December 2023<sup>833</sup> and another nine over the year 2024,<sup>834</sup> including disruptions of humanitarian activities due to clashes between two clans in Qoryooley and between military actors in the Baraawe area (second quarter of 2024).<sup>835</sup> In 2023, the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) and Insecurity Insight recorded one case of violence against health care staff by Al-Shabaab in Lower Shabelle, who shot and injured the director of an NGO-run hospital.<sup>836</sup>

## 2.2.4. South West - Checkpoints and road security

A report published by the RVI and other organisations noted that, as of October 2023, 26 % of all of Somalia's checkpoints were located in South West State, the majority (66 %) in Lower Shabelle region.<sup>837</sup> IPIS mapped multiple checkpoints on routes located between Mogadishu

<sup>829</sup> UNHCR Somalia, Protection and Return Monitoring Flash Alert #13, 11 July 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>830</sup> UNHCR Somalia, Protection and Return Monitoring Flash Alert #13, 11 July 2024, [url](#), p. 1; Somali Digest (The), Qoryooley Clashes Reveal Clan Mobilization Consequences, 19 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>831</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>832</sup> UNHCR Somalia, Protection and Return Monitoring Flash Alert #13, 11 July 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>833</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1;

UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>834</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>835</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 April to 30 June 2024, 8 August 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>836</sup> SHCC and Insecurity Insight, Critical Condition. Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2023, May 2024, [url](#), p. 94

<sup>837</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the Price: The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, RVI et al., October 2023, [url](#), pp. 25-26



and Baraawe (where Al-Shabaab controlled several checkpoints in Qoryooley town and around Janale), on the Mogadishu–Afgooye–Baidoa–Doolow road (mostly under non-Al-Shabaab control), and along routes in Bakool (where Al-Shabaab held checkpoints in Yeed and Tayeeglow).<sup>838</sup> Major checkpoints in the state included Daynuunaay near Baidoa (held by Al-Shabaab as of October 2023), Jamecada in Buur Hakaba, and Bar Ismail, an entry point to Afgooye.<sup>839</sup> For an overview on checkpoints at country level see section [1.7](#) and [Map 4](#).

Al-Shabaab controlled a number of key supply routes across the state, including the road between Aawdiinle and Bardale (Bay region),<sup>840</sup> and aimed to gain control over the main routes connecting Lower Shabelle, Bay, and Banadir regions.<sup>841</sup> The group carried out multiple attacks on key supply routes heading into Mogadishu, including the Mogadishu–Afgooye road.<sup>842</sup> The numerous Al-Shabaab-imposed sieges of cities in South West State made travel on roads ‘difficult and dangerous’.<sup>843</sup>

Particularly the key supply and transit route from Mogadishu to Baidoa,<sup>844</sup> running through Wanla Weyn (Lower Shabelle) and Buur Hakaba (Bay),<sup>845</sup> has been a focal area of Al-Shabaab attacks that mostly took the form of small-scale raids and ambushes,<sup>846</sup> while the group has also ambushed the main supply route around Janale.<sup>847</sup> In Bakool, the SNA reclaimed control of the strategic Xudur–Qurajome road from Al-Shabaab in August 2024.<sup>848</sup>

## 2.3. Benadir and Mogadishu

### 2.3.1. Security Situation

#### (a) Background

Benadir (or Banadir/Benaadir) region is located on the south-eastern coast of Somalia and shares internal borders with Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle regions.<sup>849</sup> It covers the same area as the municipality of Mogadishu and effectively constitutes a territory under direct FGS administration.<sup>850</sup> Mogadishu city is divided into 20 municipal districts: Warta Nabada

<sup>838</sup> IPIS, Mapping the political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 20 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>839</sup> PeaceRep, Checkpoints/Isbaaro – Brokers and Clusters, 5 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>840</sup> Somali Digest (The), Major Mohamed Noor, Brigade Commander in Bay, Killed by IED, 15 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>841</sup> ACLED, What’s next for the fight against al-Shabaab?, 4 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>842</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Tightens Grip Around Mogadishu’s Suburbs, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>843</sup> Horn Observer, At Least 12 Killed in Roadside Bombing Near Baidoa, Al-Shabaab Claims Responsibility, 17 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>844</sup> Williams, P.D., The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, CTC Sentinel, April 2024, [url](#), p. 39

<sup>845</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>846</sup> Williams, P.D., The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, CTC Sentinel, April 2024, [url](#), p. 39

<sup>847</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories as Tax Dispute Halts Counter-Insurgency Operation, 2 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>848</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali forces reclaim key road from Al-Shabaab in Bakool, 17 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>849</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>850</sup> World Bank, Somalia Urbanization Review: Fostering Cities as Anchors of Development, January 2021, [url](#), p. 91





(formerly known as Wardhigley)<sup>851</sup> Abdiaziz, Bondhere, Daynile, Hamar-Jajab, Hamar-Weyne, Hodan, Howl-Wadag, Huriwa (Heliwaa), Kaxda, Karan, Shangani, Shibis, Waberi, Wadajir, Yaqshid, Dharkenley, Darusalam, Garasbaley and Gubadley.<sup>852</sup> The three last-mentioned districts were included into the city of Mogadishu in May 2024.<sup>853</sup>

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Benadir region at 3 171 391 (IPC),<sup>854</sup> and 2 181 609 (IOM).<sup>855</sup> While Mogadishu is inhabited by individuals from all Somali clans<sup>856</sup> as well as minorities,<sup>857</sup> it is dominated by the Hawiye clan,<sup>858</sup> with the mayor, the deputy mayors and the majority of district commissioners appointed from among the Hawiye sub-clans.<sup>859</sup> For more detailed background information on Benadir region and Mogadishu, including its demographic composition, see section 2.3.1. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### **(b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics**

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors.

Forces present in the city include federal security forces, the Presidential Guard, police forces, security forces answering to the Benadir regional authorities, numerous private security firms and clan protection forces.<sup>860</sup> Responsibility for ensuring general security of the Presidential Palace (Villa Somalia) was transferred from ATMIS to the SNA in late 2023.<sup>861</sup> African Union (AU) peacekeeping forces were housed at Halane Base camp<sup>862</sup> at Aden Adde International Airport<sup>863</sup> and operated a forward operating base (FOB) at Mogadishu's seaport.<sup>864</sup> Since 2017 Turkish forces also operated a military base, Camp Turksom, in the capital.<sup>865</sup>

Meanwhile, Mogadishu's security landscape has been described as 'porous'.<sup>866</sup> While Al-Shabaab lacks permanent sites in Mogadishu, it has been operating in the city,<sup>867</sup> relying on

<sup>851</sup> Somalia, Benadir Regional Administration, Somalia Urban Resilience Project Phase II, September 2022, [url](#), p. 3; Atlantic Council, Somalia's continuing crisis worsens with UAE dispute [Blog], 23 April 2018, [url](#)

<sup>852</sup> Somalia, Benadir Regional Administration and Mogadishu Municipality, About, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>853</sup> SMN, Mogadishu Expands as President Recognizes Three New Districts, 20 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>854</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>855</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>856</sup> Finland, Finnish Immigration Service's Country Information Service, Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, Security situation and humanitarian conditions in Mogadishu [source: oral interview with UNHCR 3.3.2020], 7 August 2020, [url](#), p. 39

<sup>857</sup> ACCORD, Clans in Somalia, December 2009, [url](#), p. 17

<sup>858</sup> HIPS, Mogadishu: City Report, 28 August 2024, [url](#), p. 11; Menkhaus, K. and Adawe, I., Looma Dhama: Political Inclusivity in the Somali Urban Context, 2018, p. 38

<sup>859</sup> HIPS, Mogadishu: City Report, 28 August 2024, [url](#), p. 11

<sup>860</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 89

<sup>861</sup> Somali Digest (The), Villa Somalia: Somali National Army Assumes Security, 17 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>862</sup> Horn Observer, Mortar Attack on Mogadishu's Halane Base Camp Leaves Multiple Dead, Including UN Staff, 4 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>863</sup> Xinhua, AU mission condemns al-Shabab mortar attacks on airport, 20 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>864</sup> East African (The), Why Turkey, Atmis jostle for control of Mogadishu Port, 28 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>865</sup> Atlantic Council, Turkey signed two major deals with Somalia. Will it be able to implement them?, 18 June 2024, [url](#); Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Bombings in Mogadishu, Following Stalled Operations, 3 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>866</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Establishes Bases North of Mogadishu, Temporarily Cleared by Government Forces, 28 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>867</sup> HIPS, Mogadishu: City Report, 28 August 2024, [url](#), p. 10





the presence of agents of its Amniyat intelligence service in government-held areas, whose operations state security services have struggled to disrupt.<sup>868</sup> In September 2024, the Somali Digest news website reported that the group had set up a network of bases at strategic locations in the northern Mogadishu outskirts, collecting taxes and administering justice.<sup>869</sup> More recently, in March 2025, it was reported that several other suburbs had witnessed a notable rise in Al-Shabaab operations, including Daynile district<sup>870</sup> in the northwestern outskirts,<sup>871</sup> long viewed as a relatively stable area with a strong security presence.<sup>872</sup> Local residents in these areas were quoted as saying that militants were moving without hindrance and erecting checkpoints, conducting patrols and launching attacks.<sup>873</sup>

### Conflict dynamics

Despite years of counter-terrorism efforts by the FGS and international forces<sup>874</sup> that continued and intensified at certain points during the reference period<sup>875</sup> (including in Daynile and Kaxda in August 2024<sup>876</sup> and Hamarweyne in October 2024<sup>877</sup>) Al-Shabaab has shown resilience and adaptability.<sup>878</sup> The group continued to find new ways to infiltrate Mogadishu<sup>879</sup> and posed an ongoing threat to its security,<sup>880</sup> mainly in the outskirts<sup>881</sup> but also in well-protected and sensitive zones.<sup>882</sup> Further threats to security stemmed from armed clans groups opposing the FGS.<sup>883</sup>

During the reference period, Al-Shabaab infiltrated and attacked at least two Somali military sites, including the Jaalle Siyaad Military Academy (July 2023)<sup>884</sup> and the General Gordon

<sup>868</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 6

<sup>869</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Establishes Bases North of Mogadishu, Temporarily Cleared by Government Forces, 28 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>870</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Resurgence Around Mogadishu Exposes Government Failures, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>871</sup> UNSOM, A round-up of activities of the UN system in Somalia in March 2024, 1 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>872</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Bombs More Mogadishu Businesses Over CCTV Installation, 4 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>873</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Resurgence Around Mogadishu Exposes Government Failures, 17 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>874</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Establishes Bases North of Mogadishu, Temporarily Cleared by Government Forces, 28 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>875</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories as Tax Dispute Halts Counter-Insurgency Operation, 2 June 2023, [url](#); UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 July to 30 September 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>876</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 July to 30 September 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>877</sup> SMN, Somalia: Mogadishu Security Sweep Targets Potential Threats, 22 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>878</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Establishes Bases North of Mogadishu, Temporarily Cleared by Government Forces, 28 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>879</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 10; Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Establishes Bases North of Mogadishu, Temporarily Cleared by Government Forces, 28 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>880</sup> AFP, Fears mount over resurgence of Al-Shabaab jihadists in Somalia, 27 March 2025; HIPS, Mogadishu: City Report, 28 August 2024, [url](#), p. 30

<sup>881</sup> HIPS, Mogadishu: City Report, 28 August 2024, [url](#), p. 30

<sup>882</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 10

<sup>883</sup> Gabobe, M., Al-Shabab in Somalia: Bullets and bombs can't bury ideologies, Al Jazeera, 6 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>884</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia submitted in accordance with resolution 2662 (2022), S/2023/724, 2 October 2023, [url](#), para. 19





military base (February 2024),<sup>885</sup> as well as carrying out bomb attacks against checkpoints and members of the security forces.<sup>886</sup> At least two bombings during the reference period targeted the General Kaahiye Police Academy in Hamar-Jajab district<sup>887</sup> and its immediate vicinity.<sup>888</sup>

In a trend continuing from the previous reference period, Villa Somalia and UN facilities at Aden Adde International Airport areas remained frequent targets of mortar attacks by Al-Shabaab.<sup>889</sup> The group also targeted AU peacekeeping troops at the airport<sup>890</sup> and the Turkish military base.<sup>891</sup> The group's repeated mortars attacks on the Villa Somalia area struck the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (April 2023),<sup>892</sup> the Presidential Palace (July 2023),<sup>893</sup> and residential areas where they caused civilian casualties.<sup>894</sup> Most recently, a bomb attack targeted the motorcade of Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who survived unharmed (March 2025).<sup>895</sup>

Moreover, the group carried out deadly complex/suicide attacks targeting, among others reported events, the Pearl Beach Hotel on Lido Beach (June 2023),<sup>896</sup> a tea shop (September 2023)<sup>897</sup> and a hotel near Villa Somalia (March 2024), a coffee shop in Bondhere district (July 2024) and, notably, a restaurant on Lido Beach (August 2024)<sup>898</sup> in what was reported as the most lethal attack in Mogadishu since October 2022.<sup>899</sup> Unclaimed bombings further killed six telecom workers in Garasbaley district (April 2024),<sup>900</sup> and five further individuals near the National Theatre in the vicinity of Villa Somalia (September 2024).<sup>901</sup>

Furthermore, Al-Shabaab carried out attacks against businesses that had complied with orders from the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) to install CCTV cameras,<sup>902</sup> with

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<sup>885</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 11

<sup>886</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 11; ACLED, What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?, 4 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>887</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories as Tax Dispute Halts Counter-Insurgency Operation, 2 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>888</sup> AP, 7 killed in suicide bomber attack at a cafe in Somalia's capital, 18 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>889</sup> See, for example, UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 11; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 13; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/443, 15 June 2023, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>890</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>891</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Bombings in Mogadishu, Following Stalled Operations, 3 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>892</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia submitted in accordance with resolution 2662 (2022), S/2023/724, 2 October 2023, [url](#), para. 27

<sup>893</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 13

<sup>894</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 11; SMN, Somali capital hit by deadly mortar attack amidst tight security, 4 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>895</sup> Reuters, Somali militants target presidential convoy in bomb attack, president safe, 18 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>896</sup> Garowe Online, Al-Shabaab raids Mogadishu hotel, several held hostage, 9 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>897</sup> Al Jazeera, Suicide attack on tea shop in Somalia capital kills at least seven, 29 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>898</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 11

<sup>899</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>900</sup> Reuters, Roadside blast kills six telecoms workers on outskirts of Somali capital, 29 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>901</sup> Horn Observer, At Least Six Killed by Bomb Blasts in Somalia, 29 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>902</sup> Halqabsi News, Mogadishu Businesses Face Terrorism Threats Over CCTV Camera Installation, 5 December 2023, [url](#)



reports of bombings in the city's commercial districts of Laba Dhagax and Bakaro market.<sup>903</sup> Several suburbs including Daynile also saw bombings,<sup>904</sup> as well as killings of businessmen.<sup>905</sup>

Several individuals were reported to have been killed or injured by security forces in the context of protests led by members of the Hawiye/Abgaal clan in central Mogadishu (March 2024).<sup>906</sup> Moreover, forces aligned with the President of Somalia clashed with gunmen allegedly linked to the opposition in the city's outskirts (February 2025).<sup>907</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

#### Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED recorded 830 security incidents in Benadir region/Mogadishu (battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians), causing 869 fatalities. [Figure 14](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>908</sup> At municipal district level,<sup>909</sup> Daynile district recorded the most security incidents between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 (190 incidents), followed by Hodan district (115 incidents) and Dharkenley district (84 incidents).<sup>910</sup>

<sup>903</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Bombings in Mogadishu, Following Stalled Operations, 3 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>904</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Bombs More Mogadishu Businesses Over CCTV Installation, 4 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>905</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Kills Four Mogadishu Businessmen Over CCTV Installations, 13 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>906</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 30

<sup>907</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>908</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>909</sup> The ACLED dataset used for this report does not feature a district with the name Gubadley, however, the dataset includes incidents in Gubadley neighborhood of Karan district. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>910</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)



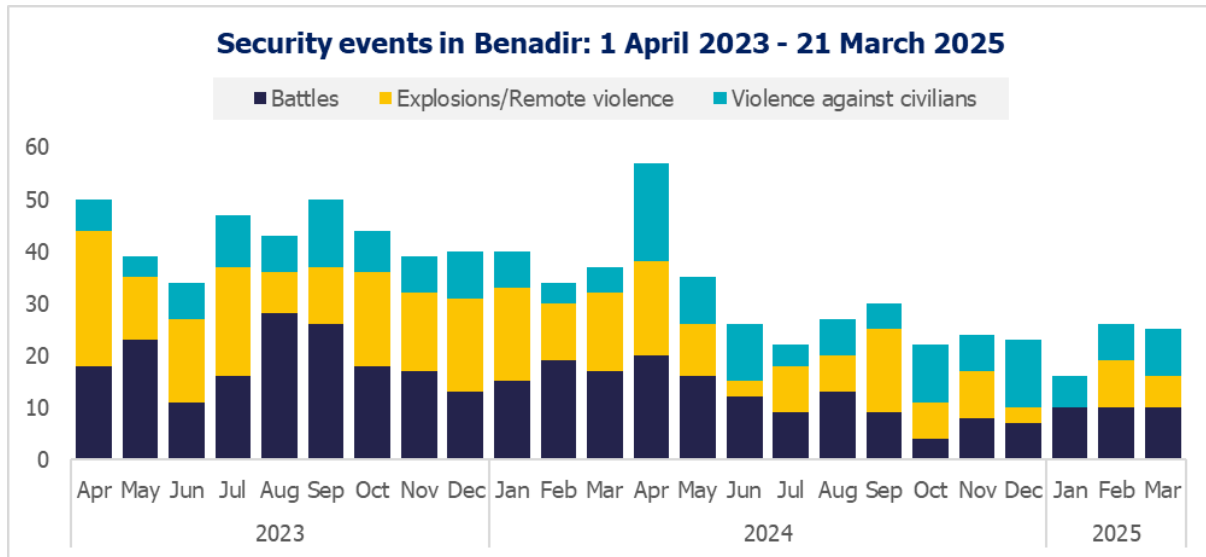


Figure 14. Evolution of ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Benadir.<sup>911</sup>

ACLED recorded 624 incidents involving Al-Shabaab (coded as either ‘Actor 1’, ‘Associated Actor 1’, ‘Actor 2’, or ‘Associated Actor 2’). Of these, 462 incidents involved both Al-Shabaab and the Military or Police Forces of Somalia, while 190 incidents involved both Al-Shabaab and Somali civilians.<sup>912</sup>

For incidents involving civilian fatalities, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- on 9 June 2023, Al-Shabaab carried out a complex attack on the busy Pearl Beach Hotel on Lido Beach. The attackers used suicide bombings to gain access to the facility and carried out ‘random shootings’ while taking hostages,<sup>913</sup> leaving nine people dead,<sup>914</sup> and another 10 injured;<sup>915</sup>
- on 14 and 15 March 2024, Al-Shabaab carried out a complex attack<sup>916</sup> against the Syl Hotel, often frequented by government officials. The attack left three soldiers dead and 27 other people injured;<sup>917</sup>
- on 2 August 2024, Al-Shabaab carried out another complex attack on Lido Beach, targeting civilians at a restaurant.<sup>918</sup> The attack involved suicide bombings and

<sup>911</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

<sup>912</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>913</sup> Garowe Online, Al-Shabaab raids Mogadishu hotel, several held hostage, 9 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>914</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 14

<sup>915</sup> Al Jazeera, Several killed in hotel siege in Somalia’s Mogadishu, 9 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>916</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 11

<sup>917</sup> BBC News, Somalia’s Syl hotel attacked by al-Shabab fighters in Mogadishu, 15 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>918</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 11

indiscriminate firing into crowds.<sup>919</sup> UN estimates on fatalities ranged from at least 37 to nearly 100, with injuries estimated at between around 184 and 250;<sup>920</sup>

- in early October 2024, Al-Shabaab killed four businessmen in the suburbs of Daynile and Suqa Holaha for complying with the authorities' order to install CCTV cameras.<sup>921</sup>

For additional information on illustrative incidents in Mogadishu see paragraph on Armed attacks in the section [1.2.2 Al-Shabaab control areas, presence, and influence](#).

### Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 1 952 individuals were newly displaced from areas of Benadir due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. Of this group, 492 individuals were displaced within the same administrative region, while 1 460 individuals were displaced to other regions, including Lower Juba, Nugal, and Bari. During the same period, 78 177 individuals arrived from other regions (Lower Juba, Middle Juba, Bakool, Bay, Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Hiraan, Galgaduud, and Mudug).<sup>922</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, see section 2.2.3. of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded 55 humanitarian access incidents in Benadir region between April and December 2023<sup>923</sup> and another 43 over the year 2024,<sup>924</sup> the highest prevalence among all regions.<sup>925</sup> These incidents, which complicated access to aid and services, included evictions of thousands of IDP households,<sup>926</sup> the demolishing of a nutrition facility (Hodan district),<sup>927</sup> mortar attacks on Aden Adde International Airport housing UN personnel, and intensifying security operations in Kahda and Daynile hampering access to IDP camps.<sup>928</sup> According to data recorded by the NRC, 49 122 individuals were evicted in Benadir during 2024. Most evictions occurred in Kaxda (21 635), Daynile (13 147) and Garasbaley districts (12 264).<sup>929</sup>

<sup>919</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 16

<sup>920</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 11; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 16

<sup>921</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Kills Four Mogadishu Businessmen Over CCTV Installations, 13 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>922</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>923</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>924</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>925</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: 2023 Annual Humanitarian Access Overview, 28 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>926</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 April to 30 June 2024, 8 August 2024, [url](#), p. 2;

UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 January to 31 March 2024, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>927</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 April to 30 June 2024, 8 August 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>928</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 July to 30 September 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>929</sup> NRC, Eviction Information Portal: Evictions Graphs, n.d., [url](#). Set filters to 2024 and Banaadir.

In August 2024, Al-Shabaab attacked the Safa and Marwa markets on the city's outskirts with explosives and fire, inflicting significant damage to goods and property, estimated at 4 million USD.<sup>930</sup>

### 2.3.2. Benadir and Mogadishu - Checkpoints and road security

As of October 2023, Benadir region had the country's highest density of checkpoints. A report published by the RVI and other organisations identified 22 checkpoints located along key access roads, while citing other sources that pointed to the existence of dozens or even hundreds of more checkpoints in the region.<sup>931</sup> IPIS mapped multiple checkpoints located around Aden Adde International Airport, in the city centre, and along roads connecting the city with Afgooye, Merka (Lower Shabelle), Balcad, and Warsheikh (Middle Shabelle).<sup>932</sup> For an overview on checkpoints at country level see section 1.7 and [Map 4](#).

Al-Shabaab, aiming to gain control over the main routes connecting Lower Shabelle, Bay, and Benadir regions,<sup>933</sup> carried out multiple attacks on key supply routes heading into Mogadishu, especially the Mogadishu–Afgooye road and the Mogadishu–Balcad road.<sup>934</sup>

The group's attacks targeted security checkpoints in Daynile (September 2023),<sup>935</sup> Garasbaley (August 2024)<sup>936</sup> and Kaxda districts (September 2024),<sup>937</sup> causing a number of casualties<sup>938</sup> and briefly enabling the group to gain control of Kaxda's Burta Ali Janaale checkpoint, a strategic entry gate into the city.<sup>939</sup> Roadside bombings reportedly also resulted in several casualties in Daynile<sup>940</sup> and Huriwa,<sup>941</sup> as well as in the March 2025 attack targeting the convoy of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud near Villa Somalia.<sup>942</sup> Moreover, Al-Shabaab reportedly set up checkpoints of its own in the Mogadishu suburbs.<sup>943</sup> On the night of 21 October 2024, federal forces launched a security campaign in the Hamar-Weyne district. They executed house-to-house searches and installed checkpoints to control traffic of vehicles and pedestrians, mainly targeting young males, some of whom were arrested.<sup>944</sup>

<sup>930</sup> Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab attack on Mogadishu markets inflicts \$4 million in losses amid Government's failure to protect businesses, 28 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>931</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the Price: The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, RVI et al., October 2023, [url](#), p. 26

<sup>932</sup> IPIS, Mapping the political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 20 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>933</sup> ACLED, What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?, 4 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>934</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Tightens Grip Around Mogadishu's Suburbs, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>935</sup> AA, 8 injured as car bomb targets army checkpoint in Somali capital, 13 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>936</sup> Mogadishu24, Al-Shabaab claims deadly attacks on security checkpoints, 21 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>937</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Launches Attacks on Security Targets in Mogadishu and Lower Shabelle, 28 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>938</sup> Mogadishu24, Al-Shabaab claims deadly attacks on security checkpoints, 21 August 2024, [url](#); AA, 8 injured as car bomb targets army checkpoint in Somali capital, 13 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>939</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Launches Attacks on Security Targets in Mogadishu and Lower Shabelle, 28 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>940</sup> AA, Roadside bomb blast kills 3 in Somali capital, 13 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>941</sup> SONNA, Police statement: Terrorist explosion attack kills 5 civilians, 20 February 2024, [url](#)

<sup>942</sup> AP, A roadside bomb in Mogadishu targeted the president's convoy, Somali government says, 19 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>943</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Tightens Grip Around Mogadishu's Suburbs, 24 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>944</sup> SMN, Somalia: Mogadishu Security Sweep Targets Potential Threats, 22 October 2024, [url](#)



## 2.4. Hirshabelle

### 2.4.1. Hiraan

#### (a) Background

Hiraan region shares an international border with Ethiopia to the north and internal borders with Galgaduud region to the north-east, Middle Shabelle region to the south, Lower Shabelle region to the south-west, and Bakool region to the west. It is divided into three districts, Jalalaqsi, Bulo Burto and Belet Weyne, with Belet Weyne city as the region's capital city.<sup>945</sup>

Sources estimated the population of Hiraan at 504 816 (IPC),<sup>946</sup> and 597 823 (IOM),<sup>947</sup> respectively, in 2024. The main clan in Hiraan region is the Hawadle clan,<sup>948</sup> a Hawiye sub-clan dominating the territory north-east of the Shabelle River, while other Hawiye sub-clans, such as Gaaljecel (or Gaalje'el) and Badicadde (or Badi Adde) dominate the territory south-west of the river.<sup>949</sup> Smaller clans living in the region's northeast include Udeeejen, Faqi Omar and Faqi Muhmed (both Dir), Rer Aw Hassan and Makanne.<sup>950</sup> For additional details on clans in Hiraan region, please see section 2.4.1.1 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021) and section 2.4.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

#### (b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

The Somali news portal Horn Observer noted in June 2024 that Hiraan region had been the 'epicenter' of the Ma'awisley clan militias' fight against Al-Shabaab over the previous two years. Many clan militia members, however, had left their positions, allowing Al-Shabaab to regain control over many rural villages and towns.<sup>951</sup>

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025 and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Al-Shabaab fully controlled the western part of Bulo Burto district, including the area between the South-West state border and close to the Shabelle River valley and up to the north as far as Buqda town. Other parts of Hiraan region were reported to be under mixed, unclear, and/or local control, except for the north-eastern part of the region. This region, as well as urban centres such as Belet Weyne city, Bulo Burto, and Jalalaqsi were reported to be under control of ATMIS/federal

<sup>945</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>946</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>947</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>948</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories as Tax Dispute Halts Counter-Insurgency Operation, 2 June 2023, [url](#); HIPS, State of Somalia 2023 Report, May 2024, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>949</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin Information Somalia: Security Information, February 2023, [url](#), p. 120

<sup>950</sup> Abdirahman, K. et al., Checkpoints, Ma'awisley and the Political Entrepreneur, PeaceRep, January 2025, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>951</sup> Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab begins massive extortion campaign amid attempts to mend ties with clans, 3 June 2024, [url](#)





government coalition forces.<sup>952</sup> Another map, developed by the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) and based on zone assessments of April 2024, showed Al-Shabaab having control and support zones along the west bank of the Shabelle River between Jalalaqsi and Belet Weyne towns, except for an area around Bulo Burto town.<sup>953</sup>

The CTP explained that an initially successful counteroffensive launched by Somali forces in 2022 stalled in 2023 and left large Al-Shabaab support zones intact on the west bank of the Shabelle River, which the group used for new offensives aimed at re-establishing positions on the east bank.<sup>954</sup> In February 2025, local media reported on heavy fighting between Al-Shabaab and government forces (supported by Ma'awisley clan militias) in the Jicibow area along the Shabelle River,<sup>955</sup> in the Jinka Wabiga areas in eastern Hiraan,<sup>956</sup> and in areas between Bulo Burto and Jalalaqsi.<sup>957</sup>

Djibouti ATMIS troops reportedly withdrew from two key military bases in Belet Weyne town in March 2024 over security concerns.<sup>958</sup> Djibouti forces are also part of AUSSOM's - ATMIS' successor's - operations in Hiraan region.<sup>959</sup> Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) briefly crossed into Hiraan region in summer 2024.<sup>960</sup> According to the news site Mareeg, Ethiopia has 10 000 soldiers stationed in four of Somalia's regions, including in Hiraan region.<sup>961</sup>

### Conflict dynamics

A counter-offensive against Al-Shabaab by Somali government forces together with local clan militias in April 2023 targeting Belet Weyne was reportedly initially 'promising', but later slowed down due to lack of forces, inter-clan feuds and logistical difficulties.<sup>962</sup> Moreover, the political conflict between Hiraan governor Ali Jeyte Osman and the Hirshabelle administration led to a withdrawal of militia members, which slowed down the counter-offensive and allowed Al-Shabaab to regain territory.<sup>963</sup> In September 2023, after long negotiations, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud secured the support of the Hawadle community in Mahaas, Hiraan district, in the fight against Al-Shabaab. He appointed Ali Jeyte as the local Ma'awisley militia's

<sup>952</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.; PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>953</sup> ISW and CTP, Africa File: M23 Unilateral Ceasefire; SAF Closes in on Khartoum; US Airstrikes in Northern Somalia; al Shabaab Reinfilters Central Somalia; IS Sahel Kidnapping Campaign; US-Algeria Relationship Grows, 6 February 2024, [url](#), Figure 8

<sup>954</sup> ISW and CTP, Africa File: M23 Unilateral Ceasefire; SAF Closes in on Khartoum; US Airstrikes in Northern Somalia; al Shabaab Reinfilters Central Somalia; IS Sahel Kidnapping Campaign; US-Algeria Relationship Grows, 6 February 2024, [url](#)

<sup>955</sup> Hiiraan Online: Several al-Shabaab militants killed in fighting in Hiiraan region, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>956</sup> Radio Dalsan, Somali National Army, NISA, and Local Forces Conduct Successful Operation in Eastern Hiiraan Region, 8 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>957</sup> Mustaqal Media, Somali Government Deploys NISA Forces to Frontlines in Hiiraan Region, 16 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>958</sup> Mogadishu24, Djibouti troops under ATMIS withdraw from key bases in Beledweyne town in Hiiraan, 12 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>959</sup> Kaab TV, Djibouti forces join operations against 'AS' in Hiran, 1 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>960</sup> Reuters, Somalia accuses Ethiopian troops of 'illegal' incursion, 24 June 2024, [url](#); APA News, Somalia accuses Ethiopian troops of infiltrating its territory, 26 June 2024, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, Ethiopian troops enter Somalia for second time in a month, sparking anxiety among residents, 23 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>961</sup> Mareeg, Ethiopia Negotiates Participation in New AU Mission with Somalia, 2 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>962</sup> HIPS, State of Somalia 2023 Report, May 2024, [url](#), p. 17

<sup>963</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Renewed counter-insurgency operations expected as al-Shabaab regroups, 31 May 2024, [url](#)

commander.<sup>964</sup> The International Crisis Group recorded Al-Shabaab attacks in Hiraan district in August, and September 2023, as well as government operations against Al-Shabaab in December 2023, January and February 2024 (airstrikes), July 2024, September 2024, and January 2025.<sup>965</sup> Al-Shabaab carried out a number of attacks involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs), such as in July and August 2023,<sup>966</sup> and in July 2024,<sup>967</sup> causing civilian casualties. Since late 2024, Hiraan region has reportedly become a ‘focal point’ in the federal government’s fight against A-Shabaab, with the support of local militias and international partners.<sup>968</sup>

The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS) pointed to ongoing tensions between the Hawadle clan dominant in Hiraan and the Hirshabelle State administration over power-sharing arrangements. Tensions intensified in June 2023 when Hiraan’s governor Ali Jeyte Osman was removed from his position by Hirshabelle State president Ali Gudlawe. Previously, Osman had announced Hiraan’s secession from Hirshabelle State following a dispute over the collection of taxes.<sup>969</sup> For further information on the roots of the conflict, please see section 2.4.1 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021). An agreement was reportedly negotiated in February 2025.<sup>970</sup>

SMN reported on inter-clan clashes between Hawadle and Abgal clan members along the border between Hiraan and Middle Shabelle in April 2024 and noted that the area had been a ‘hotspot’ for recent clan clashes, especially the Jalalaqsi and Moqokori districts.<sup>971</sup> Similar fights, rooted in disputes over land ownership and resource control, were recorded in Iji area in January 2024, in Halfooley village in July 2023,<sup>972</sup> December 2024,<sup>973</sup> and February 2025,<sup>974</sup> and in Jalalaqsi in November 2024.<sup>975</sup> Inter-clan fights between Hawadle and Habar Gidir clans were reported in Mataban district in April 2023.<sup>976</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 394 security incidents in Hiraan region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 899 fatalities. [Figure 15](#) below shows their evolution per type across the

<sup>964</sup> Somali Digest (The), Ma’awisley to take lead in the fight against al-Shabaab, 13 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>965</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>966</sup> Somali Digest (The), IED explosion claims lives of 8 family members: Al-Shabaab suspected, 11 July 2023, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, Death toll rises to eight in suicide bombing in Hiiraan region, 11 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>967</sup> Hiiraan Online, Shabaab hits Djibouti military base with suicide bombing in central Somalia, 3 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>968</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali forces, Ma’awisley militia push al-Shabaab back in Hiiraan offensive, 31 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>969</sup> HIPS, State of Somalia 2023 Report, May 2024, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>970</sup> Onkod Radio, Senator Hassan Kobac hails recent peace settlement in the Hiiraan region as a transformative victory for Hirshabelle State, 18 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>971</sup> SMN, Deadly Inter-Clan Clashes Erupt in Somalia, 18 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>972</sup> Somali Digest (The), Eji Unrest: Somalia’s Battle for Land and Tribal Harmony, 28 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>973</sup> Horn Observer, Over 20 Killed in Clan Clashes as Influx of Weapons Fuels Violence in Somalia, 4 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>974</sup> Hiiraan Online, 102-year-old elder killed in Hiiraan region as clan dispute escalates, 4 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>975</sup> Hiiraan Online, Traditional elders demand end to deadly inter-clan clashes in Hiiraan-Middle Shabelle regions, 23 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>976</sup> Hiiraan Online, Five killed as rival clans clash in Hiiraan region, 28 April 2023, [url](#)

reference period.<sup>977</sup> At district level, Bulo Burto recorded the most security incidents (185), followed by Belet Weyne (176 incidents) and Jalalaqsi (33 incidents).<sup>978</sup>

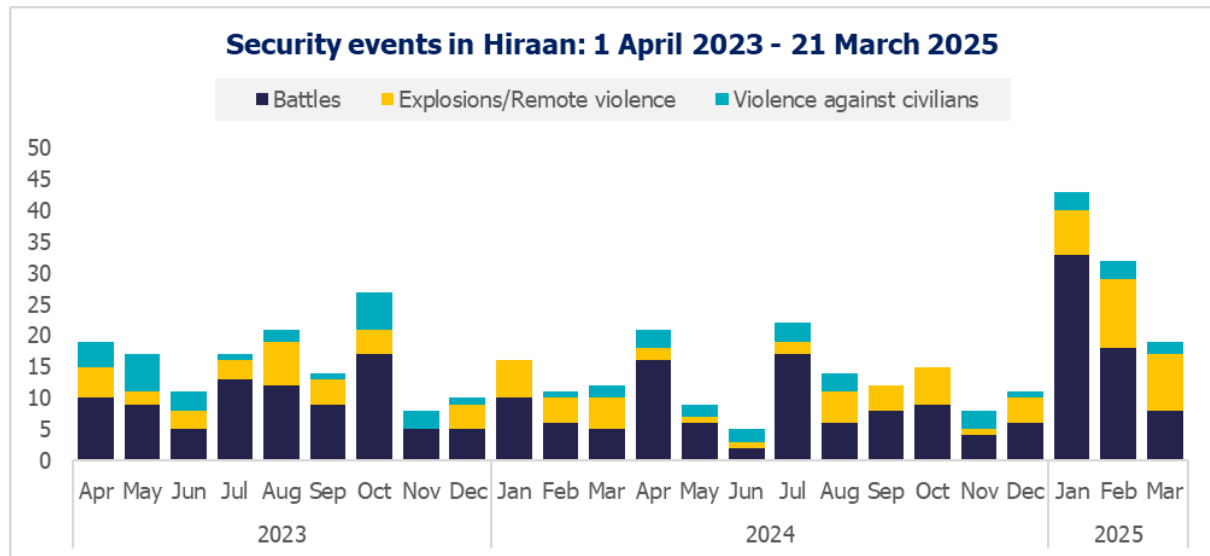


Figure 15. Evolution of ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Hiraan.<sup>979</sup>

ACLED recorded 280 incidents involving Al-Shabaab (coded as either ‘Actor 1’, ‘Associated Actor 1’, ‘Actor 2’, or ‘Associated Actor 2’). Of these, 191 incidents involved both Al-Shabaab and the Military and Police Forces of Somalia. 11 incidents involved both Abgal and Hawadle Clan militias.

For incidents resulting in fatalities, including civilian deaths, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- eight family members were killed in a suspected Al-Shabaab landmine explosion in the village of Jicibow (Bulo Burto district) in July 2023;<sup>980</sup>
- eight people were killed in a suicide attack on a tea shop in Jalalaqsi district in August 2023, while more than 10 were injured. The attack reportedly targeted the district commissioner, whose bodyguard was among the victims;<sup>981</sup>
- at least 36 people, including civilians and security forces were reportedly killed and more than 40 injured when a lorry filled with explosive devices exploded at a government checkpoint in Belet Weyne town on 23 September 2023;<sup>982</sup>

<sup>977</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>978</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>979</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

<sup>980</sup> Somali Digest (The), IED explosion claims lives of 8 family members: Al-Shabaab suspected, 11 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>981</sup> Hiiraan Online, Death toll rises to eight in suicide bombing in Hiiraan region, 11 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>982</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali President condemns deadly al Shabab attack in Beledweyne town, 24 September 2023, [url](#)



- at least six people, including children and security forces, were killed and more than 10 injured when a car bomb exploded near a market in Bulo Burto town on 28 September 2023;<sup>983</sup>
- at least four people, including three civilians and a soldier, were killed in a suicide car bombing targeting a military base in Belet Weyne town on 2 July 2024. Al-Shabaab later reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack;<sup>984</sup>
- a landmine attack on a restaurant in Belet Weyne town in July 2024 claimed two victims, a civilian and a soldier;<sup>985</sup>
- at least 20 people, including women and children, were killed in armed clashes between two clan militias in Halfooley in village in December 2024.<sup>986</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 10 542 individuals were newly displaced from Hiraan region due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNCHR PRMN. Of this group, 6 701 individuals were displaced within the administrative region, while 3 841 individuals were displaced to other regions, including Banadir, Bari, Gedo, Lower Juba, Middle Shabelle, and Nugal regions. In the same period, 544 individuals arrived in Hiraan region from other regions, including Bakool, Bari, Galgaduud, Middle Shabelle, and Lower Shabelle.

Belet Weyne was the district most affected by arrivals from other regions (303 individuals) in the period from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025, as well as by arrivals from within the region (including within the district), namely 3 717 individuals. Jalalaqsi was the district most affected by individuals leaving for other regions (2 215) and for other locations within the region (3 280), respectively.<sup>987</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, please see section 2.4.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### Other impacts on civilian life

According to a report by the UN Secretary-General of October 2024, Al-Shabaab continued to abduct children for recruitment and use in several regions, including in Hiraan.<sup>988</sup>

In May 2023, the governor of Hiraan region blocked food and fuel transports into areas recaptured by Al-Shabaab,<sup>989</sup> along the Shabelle River between Belet Weyne and Bulo Burto.<sup>990</sup> The International Crisis Group (ICG) noted that, in the period from 2020 to 2023, Al-

<sup>983</sup> VOA, Suicide Car Bomb Kills 6 as Somali Forces Foil 2 Others in Central Somalia, 28 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>984</sup> Hiiraan Online, Shabaab hits Djibouti military base with suicide bombing in central Somalia, 3 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>985</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: Landmine explosion kills two, a government soldier and a civilian in Beledweyne, 17 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>986</sup> Horn Observer, Over 20 Killed in Clan Clashes as Influx of Weapons Fuels Violence in Somalia, 4 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>987</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>988</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 194

<sup>989</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories as Tax Dispute Halts Counter-Insurgency Operation, 2 June 2023, [url](#); Halbeeg, Hiiraan governor imposes siege on Al-Shabaab controlled areas, 8 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>990</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories as Tax Dispute Halts Counter-Insurgency Operation, 2 June 2023, [url](#)



Shabaab increased attacks on food and water resources in Hiraan region as a ‘punitive measure’ for clans cooperating with government forces in the fight against Al-Shabaab.<sup>991</sup>

In 2024, UNOCHA recorded the eviction of displaced persons from displaced sites in Belet Weyne, including 50 households in the period from 1 January to 31 March 2024 and 130 households (780 IDPs) in the period 1 April to 30 June 2024.<sup>992</sup> No evictions were recorded for the second half of 2024.

UNOCHA recorded 25 humanitarian access incidents in Hiraan region in 2024,<sup>993</sup> such as, for example, the temporary detention of aid workers,<sup>994</sup> or an assault by police officers on aid workers after a dispute at a checkpoint, leaving several aid workers injured in Belet Weyne.<sup>995</sup> In 2023, the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition recorded four cases of violence against or obstruction of healthcare by Al-Shabaab in the period from June to September, including the abduction of five NGO health workers and a civilian man in Hiraan region, who were released following the payment of a ransom.<sup>996</sup>

## 2.4.2. Middle Shabelle

### (a) Background

Middle Shabelle region shares internal borders with Hiraan region to the north, Galgaduud region to the north-east, and Lower Shabelle and Banadir regions to the south-west. To the south, it borders the Indian Ocean. The region is divided into four districts: Adan Yabaal, Cadale, Balcad (also Bal’ad) and Jowhar, with Jowhar city serving as the capital of both Middle Shabelle region and Hirshabelle State.<sup>997</sup>

As of September 2024, sources varyingly estimated the population of Middle Shabelle at 1 013 352 (IPC),<sup>998</sup> and 1 257 049 (IOM).<sup>999</sup> The dominant clan in Middle Shabelle is the Abgal clan.<sup>1000</sup> Minority groups include the Somali Bantu in Jowhar district and others.<sup>1001</sup> For more detailed information on clans in Middle Shabelle region, please see section 2.4.2.1 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021) and section 2.4.2 (a) of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

<sup>991</sup> International Crisis Group, Fighting Climate Change in Somalia’s Conflict Zones, 10 December 2024, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>992</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 April to 30 June 2024, 8 August 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>993</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>994</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 April to 30 June 2024, 8 August 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>995</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 January to 31 March 2024, 31 March 2024, [url](#), pp. 1-2

<sup>996</sup> SHCC and Insecurity Insight, Critical Condition. Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2023, May 2024, [url](#), p. 94

<sup>997</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>998</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>999</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1000</sup> Abdirahman, K. et al., Checkpoints, Ma’awisley and the Political Entrepreneur, PeaceRep, January 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1001</sup> Global Protection Cluster, Somalia Protection Analysis Update - Jowhar District September 2024, 31 August 2024, [url](#), pp. 2, 4



## (b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025, most of Middle Shabelle was under 'mixed, unclear, and/or local control' involving Al-Shabaab and 'federal-aligned coalition' forces, except for the area along the coastline, which was fully controlled by federal and aligned forces. Al-Shabaab fully controlled a strip of land in the region's north-west, stretching between the town of Fidow and the border to Southwest State, as well as the area east of Adan Yabaal town. The town itself and other urban centres, such as Jowhar and Mahaday and Adale, were under control of federal-aligned coalition forces, while Fidow, El Baraf and Masajid Ali Gadud were under mixed or unclear control, involving Al-Shabaab and federal-aligned forces.<sup>1002</sup> According to [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, most of Middle Shabelle was controlled by ATMIS/federal government coalition forces. Areas along the internal borders to Galmudug and South West states were under mixed or unclear control, involving Al-Shabaab and ATMIS/federal government coalition forces.<sup>1003</sup>

CTP assessed, in a map of May 2024, that the northeastern and northwestern parts of Middle Shabelle region were Al-Shabaab-contested support zones. A small part of territory north of Jowhar along the border with Hiraaan was assessed an Al-Shabaab support zone, while the areas around the towns of Adale, Jowhar and Balcad, as well as the area east of Jowhar were targeted by Al-Shabaab attacks.<sup>1004</sup>

SMN reported in November 2024 that Al-Shabaab controlled the road connecting Balcad to Jowhar, thus 'severely' restricting movement.<sup>1005</sup> As of February 2025, military operations against Al-Shabaab continued along the Shabelle River<sup>1006</sup> and in the Adan Yabaal district.<sup>1007</sup>

AUSSOM police forces will reportedly be based in Jowhar,<sup>1008</sup> the operational base for Sector Five AUSSOM troops.<sup>1009</sup>

### Conflict dynamics

In April 2024, Al-Shabaab regained control over key strategic locations in Middle Shabelle, only a few months after having been driven out by the SNA. Corruption and low morale among government forces as well as inter-clan disputes between Hawadle and Abgal – stoked and

<sup>1002</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>1003</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>1004</sup> ISW and CTP, Africa File: Iran Pursues Economic and Military Influence, 2 May 2024, [url](#), Figure 6

<sup>1005</sup> SMN, Airstrikes Hit Al-Shabaab in Somalia's Middle Shabelle Region After Militant Attack on Army Base, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1006</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somali Army Advances in Middle Shabelle, Clears Al-Shabaab Hideouts, 18 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1007</sup> Halqabsi News, SNA Forces Repel Al-Shabab Attack in Middle Shabelle Region, 20 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1008</sup> VOA, AU, Somalia agree on troop numbers for new mission, 25 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1009</sup> AUSSOM, Military Component, n.d., [url](#)





exploited by Al-Shabaab – reportedly undermined the collaboration between government forces and clan militia in their fight against Al-Shabaab, allowing for the group's return.<sup>1010</sup>

Local media reported on fighting between Al-Shabaab and government forces in Balcad district, including Al-Shabaab attacks on military checkpoints in April,<sup>1011</sup> and on military bases of FGS forces in August<sup>1012</sup> and November 2024, as well as airstrikes on the group's strongholds in November,<sup>1013</sup> and December 2024.<sup>1014</sup> Run-Nirgod in Adan Yabaal district was reportedly recaptured by government forces in June 2024,<sup>1015</sup> although Al-Shabaab's presence in the area persisted.<sup>1016</sup> International Crisis Group recorded military operations against Al-Shabaab in Yaagle in November and December 2024 and in Hawadley town (Balcad District) in December 2024.<sup>1017</sup> In February 2025, Al-Shabaab attacked and recaptured several areas in Middle Shabelle, among them El Baraf, and others.<sup>1018</sup>

Violent conflicts were reported between the Abgal sub-clans Abdalle Arone and Mohamed Muse in July 2023,<sup>1019</sup> but were reportedly resolved through a peace agreement in August 2024.<sup>1020</sup> The killing of at least six Hawadle soldiers in El Baraf district in Middle Shabelle by militia fighters in December 2024 was presumably linked to ongoing clan conflicts,<sup>1021</sup> and led to the withdrawal of over 200 Hawadle soldiers from their positions.<sup>1022</sup> Local media reported on violent inter-clan conflicts between Hawadle and Abgal over grazing land along the border of Hiraan and Middle Shabelle regions in November 2024<sup>1023</sup> and early 2025.<sup>1024</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

#### Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED recorded 424 security incidents in Middle Shabelle region (battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence, and violence against civilians), causing 1 867 fatalities. [Figure 16](#) below shows their evolution per type across the

<sup>1010</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Regains Strategic Locations in Middle Shabelle Amid Clan Rivalries, 27 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1011</sup> Somali Digest (The), Balcad: Al-Shabab Attack Exposes Government Fragility, 6 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1012</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: Al-Shabab launch dawn attack on government forces base in Ilbaq village, Bal'ad district., 13 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1013</sup> SMN, Airstrikes Hit Al-Shabaab in Somalia's Middle Shabelle Region After Militant Attack on Army Base, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1014</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: Heavy Airstrikes Hit Al-Shabaab Bases Near Balcad, Casualties reported, 2 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1015</sup> ACLED, Fighting deepens around El Fasher in Sudan, al-Shabaab loses territory in Somalia, and police crack down on tax-related protests in Kenya, 28 June 2024, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, Somali government forces recapture key strongholds from Al-Shabaab, 18 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1016</sup> SMN, Airstrikes in Somalia Target Al-Shabaab Strongholds, 4 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1017</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1018</sup> Horn Observer, Somalia: Al-Shabaab Carries Out Attacks in Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle, Civilians Flee, 26 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1019</sup> Somali Digest (The), Land disputes turn deadly: Abgal subclans clash in Middle Shabelle, 23 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1020</sup> Horn Observer, Milestone for Somalia Peace: Clans End Deadly Conflict in Middle Shabelle, 22 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1021</sup> Hiiraan Online, Clan militia kills seven soldiers in Middle Shabelle region, two escape, 27 December 2024, [url](#); SMN, At least Six Somali Soldiers Killed in Clan Militia Ambush in El-Baraf, 27 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1022</sup> Horn Observer, Somali Forces Arrive in Jalalaqsi After Vacating Positions in Protest, 30 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1023</sup> Hiiraan Online, Traditional elders demand end to deadly inter-clan clashes in Hiiraan-Middle Shabelle regions, 23 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1024</sup> Hiiraan Online, Inter-clan conflict erupts on Hiiraan-Middle Shabelle border, 18 January 2025, [url](#)

reference period.<sup>1025</sup> At district level, Balcad district recorded the highest number of security incidents between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 (147 incidents), followed by Jowhar district (125 incidents), Adan Yabaal district (108 incidents), and Cadale district (44 incidents).<sup>1026</sup>

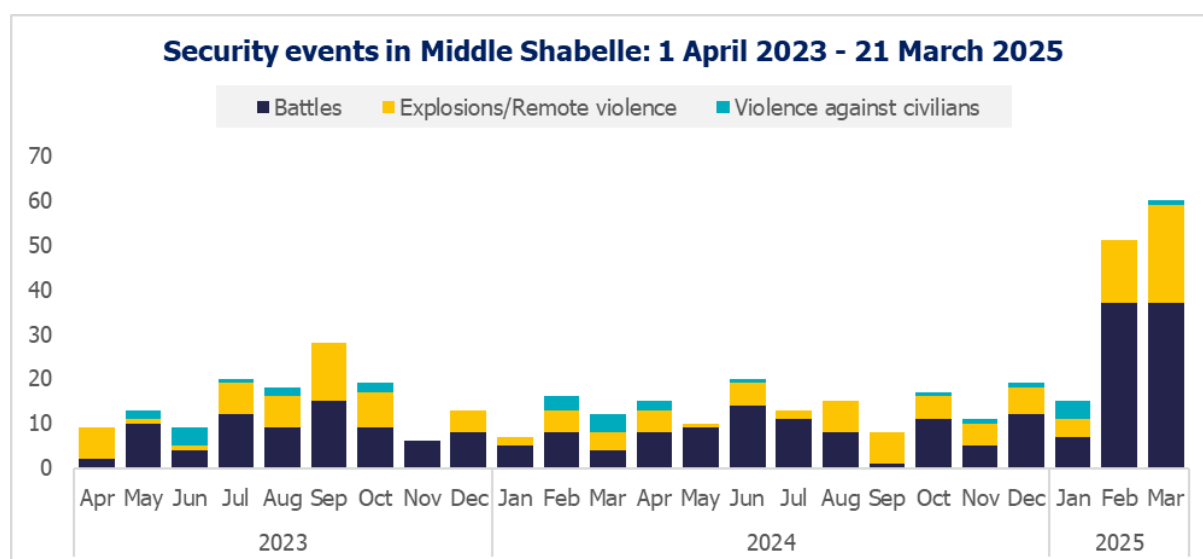


Figure 16. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Middle Shabelle.<sup>1027</sup>

ACLED recorded 251 security incidents involving Al-Shabaab (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2') and the Military and Police Forces of Somalia. 23 incidents involved both, Abgal and Hawadle clan militias, including Abgal and Hawadle Sub-Clan militias.<sup>1028</sup>

For incidents involving civilian fatalities or civilians being injured, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- several civilians were injured when a suicide car bomb exploded in Balcad town on 6 April 2024. The main market and the District Hospital were severely damaged.<sup>1029</sup>
- five civilians were killed and eight injured in a roadside explosion in Balcad on 25 June 2024. The improvised explosive device (IED) was reportedly targeting ATMIS troops travelling behind the vehicle hit by the explosion;<sup>1030</sup>

<sup>1025</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1026</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1027</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

<sup>1028</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1029</sup> UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 22

<sup>1030</sup> FTL, 5 People Killed in Roadside Explosion in Middle Shabelle, 25 June 2024, [url](#)

- seven civilians travelling on a minibus were killed and several others injured when a roadside bomb exploded on the Jowhar-Mogadishu road north of Balcad in August 2024.<sup>1031</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 66 238 individuals were newly displaced from Middle Shabelle region due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. Of this group, 43 889 individuals were displaced within the region, while 22 349 individuals left for other regions, including Banadir, Bari, Gedo, Hiraan, and Nugal. In the same period, 1 068 individuals arrived in Middle Shabelle from other regions in a single case of displacement: all arrivals were recorded in March 2024, coming from Jalalaqsi, Hiraan region, and arriving in Jowhar district. At district level, Jowhar was also the district most affected by individuals leaving for other regions (10 496). Cadale was the district most affected by individuals arriving (38 087) and by individuals leaving (34 789) for other locations within Middle Shabelle (including movements within the district).<sup>1032</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, please see section 2.4.2 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### Other impacts on civilian life

The Somali Digest reported on mutual abductions between Al-Shabaab and Ma'awisley clan militias in Run-Nirgod district in June 2023, including of civilians suspected of having links with the respective other side. Moreover, Al-Shabaab reportedly briefly took control over a village in the district, setting houses on fire, destroying a water well and damaging the local mosque.<sup>1033</sup>

Al-Shabaab's control over the Balcad-Jowhar road reportedly disrupted the delivery of aid as well as of daily supplies for the residents.<sup>1034</sup>

UNOCHA recorded 14 humanitarian access incidents in Middle Shabelle region in 2024,<sup>1035</sup> including, for example, inter-clan violence preventing aid deliveries and the explosion of a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) near a hospital in Balcad damaging the infrastructure in the period from 1 April to 30 June 2024.<sup>1036</sup>

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<sup>1031</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Jowhar: Roadside Bomb Explosion Kills Seven in Somalia, 3 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1032</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1033</sup> Somali Digest (The), Daarul Nim'a: A Symbol of Al-Shabaab's Power and Government's Struggling Control, 30 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1034</sup> SMN, Airstrikes Hit Al-Shabaab in Somalia's Middle Shabelle Region After Militant Attack on Army Base, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1035</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1036</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 April to 30 June 2024, 8 August 2024, [url](#), p. 2



### 2.4.3. Hirshabelle - Checkpoints and road security

In April 2023, local media reported on illegal checkpoints across Hirshabelle State,<sup>1037</sup> which were often set up by FGS troops and clan militias in areas re-captured from Al-Shabaab. Established along important transportation routes, these checkpoints had reportedly become ‘hubs of extortion’ for travellers.<sup>1038</sup> According to a report published by the RVI, 18 % of all of Somalia’s checkpoints were located in Hirshabelle State as of October 2023, predominantly in the Middle Shabelle region (76 %).<sup>1039</sup> For an overview on checkpoints at country level see section 1.7 and Map 4.

According to a report by the University of Edinburgh’s Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (PeaceRep) of January 2025, checkpoints in and near the towns of Belet Weyne and Jowhar – both located along important trade routes connecting their respective regions with the south – generated tens of thousands of dollars per week in taxation revenues, while distribution was unclear and control was in the hand of ‘key individuals’.<sup>1040</sup> The income from checkpoints in Hiraan was, according to the authors, ‘effectively a clan resource’ for the Hawadle or any other clan entity that had control over the respective checkpoint.<sup>1041</sup>

In April 2024, ACLED pointed to Al-Shabaab fighters patrolling along the Balcad-Mogadishu road and using hidden checkpoints to collect taxes from commercial and private transport, and to watch over the presence and activities of security forces in certain areas.<sup>1042</sup> Local media reported on improvised explosive devices (IEDs) along the Balcad-Jowhar road, resulting in civilian casualties in September 2024.<sup>1043</sup> As of November 2024, Al-Shabaab reportedly continued to control the road connecting Balcad to Jowhar. Sporadic shooting and the threat of new attacks made the road ‘practically a no-go zone’, according to a resident of the area.<sup>1044</sup> The Horn Observer noted that, as of February 2025, Al Shabaab had flooded the main road between the cities of Jowhar and Mogadishu, forcing vehicles to take Al-Shabaab-controlled detours where ‘heavy extortion’ was imposed.<sup>1045</sup>

Two strategic towns along the Main Supply Routes from Mahadaay to Adan Yabaal were reportedly re-captured by Al-Shabaab in April 2024.<sup>1046</sup>

<sup>1037</sup> Hiiraan Online, Hirshabelle President accuses Somali military of establishing illegal checkpoints, 5 April 2023, [url](#); Garowe Online, Somalia: Hirshabelle President Debunks Somali President’s Checkpoint Accusations, 5 April 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1038</sup> Horn Examiner, Proliferation Of Illegal Checkpoints in Somalia Raise Concerns of Al-Shabab Resurgence, 12 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1039</sup> Schouten, P., Paying the Price: The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, RVI et al., October 2023, [url](#), pp. 25-26

<sup>1040</sup> Abdirahman, K. et al., Checkpoints, Ma’awisley and the Political Entrepreneur, PeaceRep, January 2025, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1041</sup> Abdirahman, K. et al., Checkpoints, Ma’awisley and the Political Entrepreneur, PeaceRep, January 2025, [url](#), p. 10

<sup>1042</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Dispute Over Constitutional Amendment and Increased al-Shabaab Attacks, 26 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1043</sup> Halqabsi News, HirShabelle President arrives in Bal’ad to bolster anti-Al-Shabaab campaign, 15 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1044</sup> SMN, Airstrikes Hit Al-Shabaab in Somalia’s Middle Shabelle Region After Militant Attack on Army Base, 28 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1045</sup> Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab Launches Terror Attacks, Seizes Military Trucks in Middle Shabelle, 21 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1046</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Regains Strategic Locations in Middle Shabelle Amid Clan Rivalries, 27 April 2024, [url](#)



## 2.5. Galmudug

### 2.5.1. Galgaduud

#### (a) Background

Galgaduud (also Galgudud) shares an international border with Ethiopia to the north-west and borders the Indian Ocean to the south. The region shares internal borders with Hirshabelle State to the west and Mudug district to the north and east. Galgaduud is divided into five districts: Cabudwaaq, Cadaado, Dhuusamarreeb (which is also the name of the region's capital city), Ceel Buur (also El Buur, Celbur) and Ceel Dheer (also El-Dheer).<sup>1047</sup>

Sources varyingly estimated Galgaduud's population at 812 638 (IPC),<sup>1048</sup> and 622 632 (IOM),<sup>1049</sup> as of September 2024. Main clans in Galgaduud are Habar Gidir (Hawiye) sub-clans, Suleiman (or Suliman, Saleban), Ayr, Duduble, as well as the Murasade (Hawiye) clan, and the Marehan (Darod) sub-clan.<sup>1050</sup> For additional details on clans in Galgaduud region, please see section 2.5.1.1 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021) and section 2.5.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

#### (b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025 and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Al-Shabaab controlled the southern-central part of Galgaduud region from the coastline up to the area north and north-east of Ceel Buur town. The remaining part of the region was marked as being under mixed, unclear and/or local control, except for the area along the border with Ethiopia. This area, including the region's capital city Dhuusamarreeb, was under the control of 'federal-aligned coalition' forces.<sup>1051</sup>

According to a map by the ISW and CTP showing Al-Shabaab's presence in the region as of June 2024, the southern and central parts of Galgaduud were assessed as being either Al-Shabaab control or support zones, except for small areas along the border with Hirshabelle State, which were assessed as Al-Shabaab-contested support zones, while the area around Ceel Dheer town in southern Galgaduud was marked as an Al-Shabaab attack zone.<sup>1052</sup>

<sup>1047</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1048</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1049</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1050</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin Information Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#), p. 138

<sup>1051</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.; PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>1052</sup> ISW and CTP, Africa File: Houthi-Shabaab Weapons Deal; SFG Boost in Central Somalia, 13 June 2024, [url](#), Figure 2



Radio Dalsan described Galgaduud region in October 2024, as a longstanding battleground for control between government forces and Al Shabaab.<sup>1053</sup> Government forces and allied militias briefly captured Ceel Garas in September 2023 but withdrew a few days later. The town, situated along the Dhuusamarreeb-Ceel Buur road, has reportedly been controlled by Al-Shabaab for decades.<sup>1054</sup> In February 2025, Ma'awisley attacked Al-Shabaab positions in Ceel Buur district, one of the group's 'key operational hubs'<sup>1055</sup> and an area that had been 'under different levels of Al-Shabaab's influence' throughout the previous 15 years. The SNA had regained control over Ceel Buur briefly in August 2023 but had to withdraw after a few days.<sup>1056</sup>

### Conflict dynamics

The International Crisis Group recorded fights between government and allied forces and Al-Shabaab during the reference period.<sup>1057</sup> The frontline, however, remained 'oscillating' and – referring to the two strategically important towns of Budbud and Osweyne – the fight for control a 'perpetual game of territorial tug-of-war', according to the Somali Digest. The SNA briefly gained and lost control over Budbud in April 2023. In August 2023, the SNA regained control over Budbud and Osweyne but again had to withdraw a few days later.<sup>1058</sup> Fighting over Budbud continued to be reported in October 2024<sup>1059</sup> and January 2025.<sup>1060</sup> Similarly, in August 2023, government troops withdrew from Ceel Dheer and Masagaway – areas they had recaptured only a few months earlier.<sup>1061</sup> However, fighting in Ceel Dheer district continued throughout 2023<sup>1062</sup> and 2024,<sup>1063</sup> with Abgaal clan militias supporting the security forces.<sup>1064</sup> In Masagaway, intense fights re-erupted between government forces and Al-Shabaab in January 2025<sup>1065</sup> after over a year of 'stagnant' military operations against the armed group in the area.<sup>1066</sup> As of February 2025, fights also continued in the Jowle area, a strategic location linking Galgaduud and Mudug regions, according to SMN.<sup>1067</sup>

<sup>1053</sup> Radio Dalsan, Somali Forces and Local Militias Crush Al-Shabaab Strongholds in Galgaduud Offensive, 19 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1054</sup> Horn Observer, Somali forces and allied militia withdraw from Ceel Garas after brief capture from Al-Shabaab, 11 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1055</sup> Hiiraan Online, Ma'awisley militia strikes al-Shabaab stronghold in El Buur, 18 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1056</sup> Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabaab recaptured El Buur, 30 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1057</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1058</sup> Somali Digest (The), ANALYSIS: The oscillating frontlines in Somalia, 28 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1059</sup> Halqabsi News, National Army Eliminates 10 Al-Shabaab Fighters in Galgaduud, 22 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1060</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: AS ring Leaders Eliminated in Targeted Operations in Galgaduud, 12 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1061</sup> VOA, Somalia Military Offensive Suffers Setback as Troops Retreat, 29 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1062</sup> Somaliland, Somalia army retakes control of El-Dheer, Galgaduud region from Al-Shabaab, 21 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1063</sup> Halqabsi News, Government Forces Destroy Al-Shabaab Vehicles in Galgaduud Offensive, 6 November 2024, [url](#); Halqabsi News, Government Forces Ambush Al-Shabaab Militants in Galgaduud Region, 19 October 2024, [url](#); Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab Assault on Somali Forces Leaves Over 60 Dead, Vehicles Destroyed, 9 June 2024, [url](#); Mustaqbal Media, Federal Government Forces Thwart Al-Shabaab Attack in Galgaduud Region, 19 February 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1064</sup> ACLED, Controversy over electoral reform sparks debate in Somalia amid al-Shabaab operation, 28 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1065</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somali Federal Forces and Al-Shabaab Clash in Galgaduud Region, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1066</sup> SG, Al-Shabaab militants attack army base in central Somalia's Masagawa town, 25 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1067</sup> SMN, Somali Army and Local Forces Conduct Operation, 11 Al-Shabaab Members Killed, 13 February 2025, [url](#)





Local media reported on deadly clashes between Marehan [Darod] and Dir clan militias in the Landhere area in April<sup>1068</sup> and in June 2024, presumably in the context of disputes over land.<sup>1069</sup> More than 10 people were killed in clashes between the Habar Gidir/Saleban clan and the Marehan/Wagar Dhac militia in September 2024.<sup>1070</sup> Several media reported on the killing of civilians, including children, presumably in the context of clan conflicts.<sup>1071</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

#### Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

In the period from 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, ACLED recorded 411 security incidents in Galgaduud region, including battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence, and violence against civilians, causing 2 509 fatalities. [Figure 17](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>1072</sup> At district level, Ceel Dheer recorded the highest number of security incidents (187), followed by Dhuusamarreeb (78), Cabudwaaq (66), Ceel Buur (56) and Cadaado (24 incidents).<sup>1073</sup>

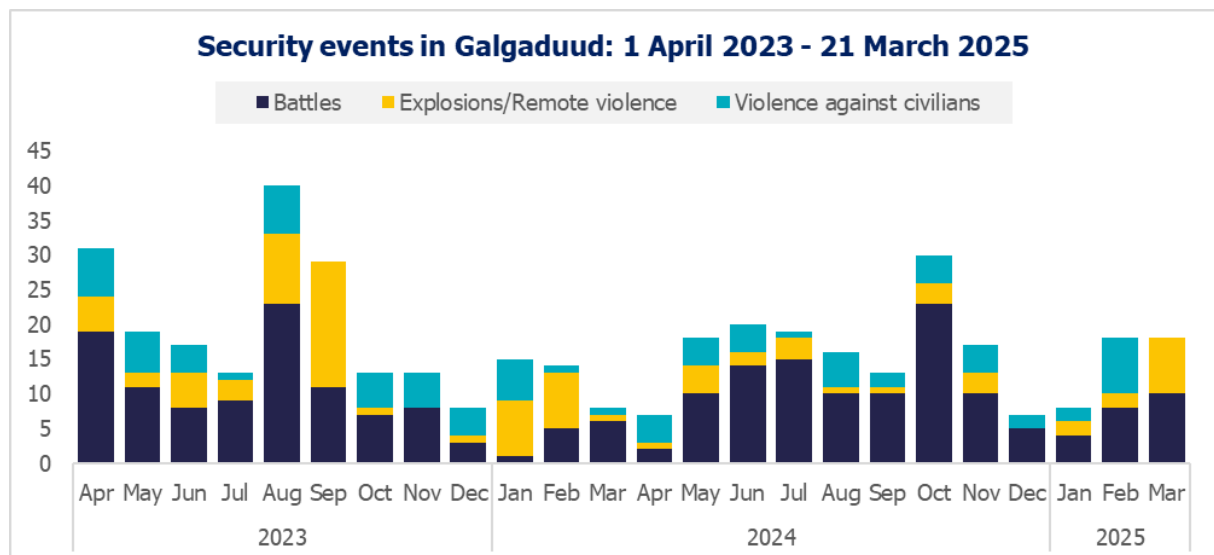


Figure 17. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Galgaduud.<sup>1074</sup>

<sup>1068</sup> Halqabsi News, Over 10 Killed in Clan Clashes in Galmudug, 28 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1069</sup> Hiiraan Online, Heightened security measures imposed following deadly clan clashes in Somalia's Galgaduud, 10 June 2024, [url](#); Horn Observer, Death Toll of Central Somalia Clan Fight Rises to 50, Authorities Call for Ceasefire, 9 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1070</sup> Horn Observer, Renewed Clashes in Central Somalia Leave Over 10 Dead, Dozens Injured, 10 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1071</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Gunmen Kill Father and Young Son in Dhusamareb Amid Ongoing Clan Conflict, 16 October 2024, [url](#); Mustaqbal Media, Shocking Story of 12-Year-Old Boy Killed in Revenge Attack by Tribal Militia in Galgaduud Region, 18 May 2024, [url](#); Somali Digest (The), Clan feuds unleashed: 5 children murdered along Somalia-Ethiopia border, 8 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1072</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1073</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1074</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.



In the period from 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, Al-Shabaab was involved in 203 security incidents against Forces of Somalia (Military Forces and Police Forces, including the Galmudug Police Force) (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2'). Moreover, Al-Shabaab was involved in 84 security incidents against clan militias (including Ma'awisley as well as Habar Gidir, Marehan and other clan and sub-clan militias and unidentified clan militias).<sup>1075</sup>

In terms of clan conflicts, ACLED recorded 49 security incidents involving both Marehan and Dir clan and sub-clan militias in the period from 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025. Marehan clan and sub-clan militias were also involved in 32 security incidents with Habar Gidir clan and sub-clan militias.

For incidents resulting in fatalities, including civilian deaths, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- five boys were reportedly killed by members of the Saleban sub-clan in a village near the border with Ethiopia in August 2023, possibly in the context of a clan conflict between Saleban and Marehan subclans;<sup>1076</sup>
- a doctor and his brother, a religious teacher, were killed by armed clan militias in Ilix in December 2023.<sup>1077</sup> The perpetrators escaped but were later arrested and executed in June 2024.<sup>1078</sup>
- a 12-year old boy from Mudug region was abducted and killed by members of a tribal militia from Galgaduud region in May 2024, allegedly as a revenge killing in the context of conflicts between communities from both regions;<sup>1079</sup>
- at least 60 soldiers and militia fighters were killed in an Al-Shabaab attack on four military bases in Ceel Dheer in June 2024;<sup>1080</sup>
- in Heraale area, three children died when a landmine exploded in the area where they were playing in July 2024;<sup>1081</sup>
- two brothers were killed by armed militias in Oodan area in August 2024. The incident is believed to be part of a conflict between Marehan and Dir clans.<sup>1082</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

According to the UNHCR PRMN, 11 203 individuals were newly displaced from Galgaduud region due to conflict or insecurity in the period from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025. Among

<sup>1075</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1076</sup> Somali Digest (The), Clan feuds unleashed: 5 children murdered along Somalia-Ethiopia border, 8 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1077</sup> Horn Observer, Prominent civil society icons assassinated in central Somalia thanks to influx of weapons, 12 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1078</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Somalia: A Court in Galgaduud executes three men by firing squad for killing two brothers, a Quran school teacher and a doctor, 6 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1079</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Shocking Story of 12-Year-Old Boy Killed in Revenge Attack by Tribal Militia in Galgaduud Region, 18 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1080</sup> Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab Assault on Somali Forces Leaves Over 60 Dead, Vehicles Destroyed, 9 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1081</sup> SMN, Tragic Landmine Incident Claims Lives of Children in Somalia, 11 July 2024, [url](#); Mustaqbal Media, Tragic Landmine Explosion Claims Lives of Siblings in Galgaduud Region, Somalia, 11 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1082</sup> Hiiraan Online, Armed clan militia kill two brothers, injure family in Galgaduud region, 7 August 2024, [url](#)



them, 3 175 IDPs were displaced within Galgaduud region, while 8 028 IDPs were displaced to other regions, including Banadir, Bari, Gedo, Hiraaan, Lower Shabelle, and Nugal. In the same period, 12 320 individuals arrived from other regions, including Mudug and Bakool region. The district most affected by these arrivals from other regions was Cadaado, with 9 710 individuals arriving. On the other hand, Ceel Buur was the district most affected by individuals leaving for other regions (4 361 individuals). This district was also the most affected by displacement within Galgaduud region, with 2 022 individuals arriving from other locations and 1 707 individuals leaving for other locations (including movements within the district).<sup>1083</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement in Galgaduud region prior to April 2023, please see section 2.5.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

#### Other impacts on civilian life

A water well and a water delivery tanker were destroyed by Al-Shabaab in Ceel Garas town in September 2023. The group had reportedly put land mines and explosive devices at major facilities around the town, which previously had been recaptured by government forces.<sup>1084</sup> Another source pointed to contradicting claims, with Al-Shabaab declining responsibility, saying that the well was destroyed in a U.S. airstrike.<sup>1085</sup> Local infrastructure (homes and water holes) was damaged during violent clashes between clan militias in Landhere region in June 2024, according to Garowe Online.<sup>1086</sup>

In February 2024, Al-Shabaab reportedly captured a UN helicopter that had made an emergency landing in territory controlled by the group, abducting and killing passengers.<sup>1087</sup>

In June 2024, the Horn Observer reported on deadly clashes between Marehan and Dir clan militias in Heraale area and on claims by one of the groups to have closed the local airport.<sup>1088</sup> In October 2024, Hiiraan Online reported on the temporary closure of Galgaduud's Abudwak airport following threats from a militia group to target incoming planes. However, the source also quoted officials claiming that the closure was motivated by business and political interests.<sup>1089</sup>

Humanitarian activities were restricted due to violent incidents in Dhuusamarreeb district in September 2023<sup>1090</sup> and increased insecurity in Cadaado district in the period from July to September 2024.<sup>1091</sup> In total, UNOCHA recorded eight humanitarian access incidents in

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<sup>1083</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1084</sup> Halbeeg, Al-Shabaab destroys key water well in recently liberated town, 13 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1085</sup> Somali Digest (The), Mystery surrounds destruction of vital water source in El Garas, 14 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1086</sup> Garowe Online, Deadly clan clashes claim over 50 lives in Central Somalia, 9 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1087</sup> Guardian (The), Al-Shabaab militants seize UN helicopter killing one and abducting five, 10 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1088</sup> Horn Observer, Central Somalia: Over 15 Dead, Militia Threatens Domestic Flights, 9 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1089</sup> Hiiraan Online, Abudwak airport reopens after 2-week closure due to militia threats and political dispute, 10 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1090</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1091</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 1 July to 30 September 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#), p. 2

2023<sup>1092</sup> and five in 2024.<sup>1093</sup> Two members of an international NGO were killed in Galgaduud region in ambushes and inter-clan violence in the period from October to December 2024.<sup>1094</sup>

## 2.5.2. Mudug

### (a) Background

Mudug region is divided between Galmudug (Southern Mudug) and Puntland (Northern Mudug). The region borders Ethiopia to the northwest and the Indian Ocean to the east. It shares internal borders with Galgaduud region (Galmudug State) to the south and west, and with Nugal region (Puntland State) state to the north. Mudug is divided into five districts: Xarardheere (also Harardhere), Hobyo, Gaalkacyo (also Galkayo), Galdogob and Jariiban. The region's capital is Gaalkacyo city,<sup>1095</sup> which is divided into two administrative areas controlled by Galmudug and Puntland, respectively.<sup>1096</sup>

Sources varyingly estimated Mudug's population at 1 470 309 (IPC),<sup>1097</sup> and 613 906 (IOM),<sup>1098</sup> as of September 2024. Dominant clans are the Darod (Majerteen-Omar Mahmoud sub-clan) in the North, and the Hawiye (Habar Gidir Sa'ad sub-clan) in the South. Other clans include the Lelkase (Darod), Sheikhal, Dir and Marehan.<sup>1099</sup> For additional details on clans in Mudug region, please see section 2.5.2.1 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021) and section 2.5.2 of the [EUAA COI report on Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### (b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025, the northern and southern parts of Southern Mudug were under mixed, unclear and/or local control involving Al-Shabaab and 'federal-aligned coalition' forces. Mudug's central part was fully controlled by 'federal-aligned coalition' forces while Al-Shabaab fully controlled an area stretching from the border with Galgaduud region to the towns of Ba'adweyne, Amara and Qey'a. The latter two towns were shown as being controlled by Al-Shabaab. Ba'adweyne town was under mixed or unclear control, involving Al-Shabaab and 'federal-aligned coalition forces'. Northern Mudug was under control of 'autonomous armed forces (unionist)'. These forces and 'federal-aligned coalition' forces had mixed control over Gaalkacyo city.<sup>1100</sup>

<sup>1092</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1;

UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1093</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1094</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 1 October to 31 December 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1095</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1096</sup> Somali Digest (The), Debunking the myth of salary delays and road closures in Puntland, 17 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1097</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1098</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1099</sup> Abdirahman, K. and Majid, N., Building on the Galkayo Agreement. Mitigating Revenge Killings, PeaceRep, 25 March 2024, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>1100</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

According to [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Ba’adweyne and Amara were under control of Al-Shabaab at the beginning of the reference period, while Qey’ad was under mixed or unclear control, involving Al-Shabaab and ‘federal-aligned coalition’ forces.<sup>1101</sup>

Garowe Online noted, in May 2024, that Mudug region was ‘usually a hotbed’ for Al-Shabaab fighters, who kept regaining control of Xarardheere town, an area previously liberated by government forces.<sup>1102</sup> Operations against Al-Shabaab in the area continued as of September 2024.<sup>1103</sup> As of February 2025, government forces and aligned forces reportedly regained control over ‘key areas’ in southern Mudug that had been controlled by Al-Shabaab ‘for an extended period’.<sup>1104</sup>

### Conflict dynamics

Several sources reported on operations by government and allied forces against Al-Shabaab in the second half of 2023<sup>1105</sup> and early 2024.<sup>1106</sup> In the period 9-14 March 2024, however, following the withdrawal of government and allied forces, Al-Shabaab reportedly managed to regain control over several areas in Mudug, including Ba’adweyne, Caad, Camaara, and Xiinlabi.<sup>1107</sup> According to local sources, the government forces’ initial successes slowed down due to logistical challenges, difficulties in holding recaptured territories, the armed group’s persistence,<sup>1108</sup> but also low morale, unpaid salaries, corruption and internal political discord among other reasons.<sup>1109</sup> Operations against Al-Shabaab continued to be reported in September<sup>1110</sup> and October 2024.<sup>1111</sup> In early 2025, government forces launched operations together with local forces targeting Al-Shabaab positions in Camaara in January<sup>1112</sup> and in Ba’adweyne in February 2025.<sup>1113</sup>

Halqabsi News reported in January 2024 on a suspected revenge killing in western Mudug in the context of longstanding clan disputes involving clans in Mudug and Galgaduud.<sup>1114</sup> Violent clashes between Sa’ad and Lelkase sub-clans over grazing land were recorded in Galdogob

<sup>1101</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>1102</sup> Garowe Online, Ranking Al-Shabaab leader surrenders in Somalia, 11 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1103</sup> Halbeeg, Somali forces destroy Al-Shabaab bases in southern Mudug region, 18 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1104</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali forces conduct anti-Al-Shabaab operation in southern Mudug, 19 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1105</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); Somali Digest (The), Government forces backed by Ma’awisley make gains in Mudug, 17 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1106</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); Mustaqbal Media, Intense Clashes Erupt in South Mudug as Government Forces Repel Al-Shabaab Attack, 3 February 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1107</sup> Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab seizes control of towns and villages abandoned by Somali army, militia, 18 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1108</sup> Hiiraan Online, Al-Shabaab recaptures Mudug region towns as Somali government forces withdraw, 11 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1109</sup> Horn Observer, Al-Shabaab seizes control of towns and villages abandoned by Somali army, militia, 18 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1110</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1111</sup> SMN, Somali Forces Strike Al-Shabaab Bases, Kill 10 Militants in Southern Mudug, 16 October 2024, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, Somali forces eliminate 10 al-Shabaab fighters in southern Mudug operation, 16 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1112</sup> SMN, Somali forces kill four Al-Shabaab militants in Mudug raid, 12 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1113</sup> Halqabsi News, Joint Forces Make Gains Against Al-Shabab in Mudug Region, 19 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1114</sup> Halqabsi News, Clan Revenge Attack in Mudug Leaves Five Dead, Six Injured, 28 January 2024, [url](#)

district in October 2023,<sup>1115</sup> and June<sup>1116</sup> and December 2024.<sup>1117</sup> Deadly clan conflicts over resources were also reported between Sheikh al and Dir in Jariiban district<sup>1118</sup> and between clan militias from Adado and Gaalkacyo in October 2024.<sup>1119</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

In the period from 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, ACLED recorded 233 security incidents in Mudug region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 1 841 fatalities. [Figure 18](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>1120</sup> At district level, the highest number of incidents was recorded in Xarardheere (103 incidents), followed by Gaalkacyo (62), Hobyo (40), Galdogob (19) and Jariiban (9 incidents) in the period between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025.<sup>1121</sup>

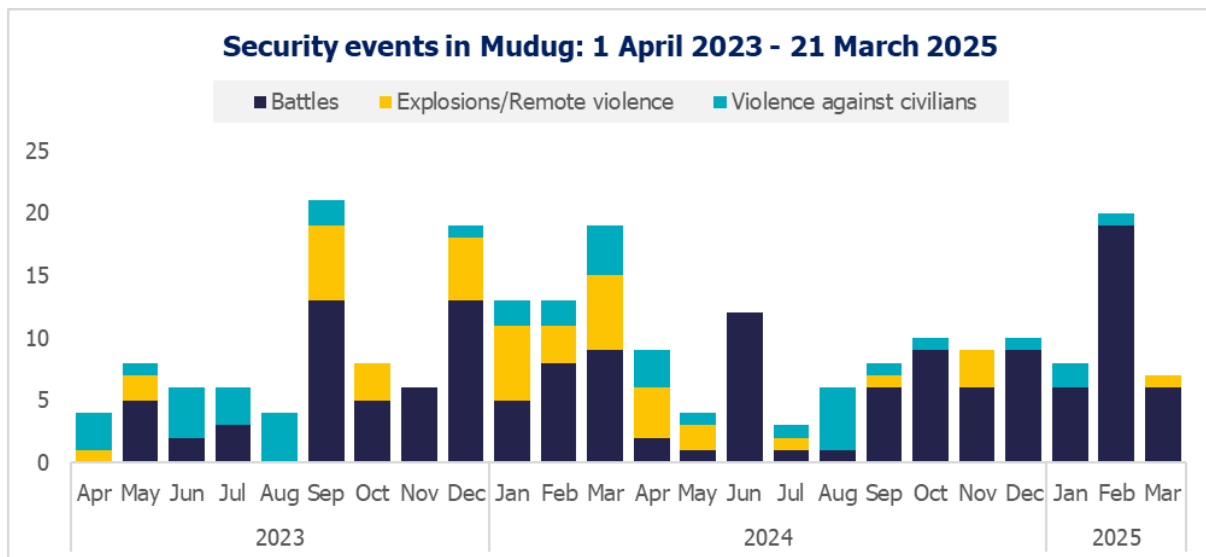


Figure 18. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Mudug.<sup>1122</sup>

Al-Shabaab was involved in 110 security incidents against Forces of Somalia (Military and Police Forces, including the Puntland Police Force and Puntland Prison Guards) (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2'). Moreover, Al-Shabaab

<sup>1115</sup> Somali Digest (The), At least 20 killed in clashes between clan militias in Mudug, 2 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1116</sup> UNHCR, Somalia: Intense Clan Conflict in West Mudug Displaces Over 5,820 individuals, Flash Alert #10, June 2024, 8 July 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1117</sup> UNHCR, Somalia: Recent Clan Clashes in Jiicboor Village, Galdogob District, Mudug Region, Displaces Thousands, Flash Alert #21, December 2024, 31 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1118</sup> UNHCR, Somalia: Inter-Clan Conflict Displaces Over 2,910 Individuals in Jariiban District, Mudug Region, Flash Alert #11, July 2024, 8 July 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1119</sup> Hiiraan Online, Deadly clan conflict in Mudug leaves four dead, 11 injured, 15 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1120</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1121</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1122</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.



was involved in 53 security incidents against clan militias. With regard to inter-clan conflicts, ACLED recorded 37 security incidents involving Habar Gidir clan and sub-clan militias and Lelkase clan militia and 11 incidents involving Sheikhal and Dir clan militias.<sup>1123</sup>

For incidents involving civilians, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- a drone strike targeting Al-Shabaab fighters reportedly killed five civilians in El Lahelay village in September 2023;<sup>1124</sup>
- five members of a family were killed and six others injured in a suspected revenge attack in western Mudug in January 2024;<sup>1125</sup>
- 20 civilians, including women and children, were kidnapped by armed militias in Hiiglo-Ceelle village in February 2024;<sup>1126</sup>
- six civilians, including three children, were killed in deadly clan clashes in western Mudug in June 2024.<sup>1127</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

According to a report by the UN Secretary-General of September 2024, covering the period from 24 May to 20 September 2024, displacement caused by clan violence remained widespread, notably in Mudug and Galgaduud regions, among others.<sup>1128</sup> UNHCR noted that a renewed outbreak of clan violence in Galdogob district led to the displacement of 8 010 individuals in December 2024.<sup>1129</sup>

According to the UNHCR PRMN, 30 787 individuals were newly displaced from Mudug region due to conflict or insecurity in the period from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025. Among them, 16 285 individuals were displaced within Mudug region, while 14 502 individuals left for other regions, including Banadir, Bari, Galgaduud, and Nugal. No individuals arrived from other regions during the reporting period. The district most affected by individuals leaving for other regions was Xarardheere (14 070 individuals). In terms of displacement within Mudug region (including movements within the district), Gaalkacyo was the district most affected by arrivals, with 11 725 individuals arriving from other locations, as well as by departures, with the same number (11 725) of individuals leaving to other locations (including one incident involving the departure of 11 400 individuals, recorded in December 2024).<sup>1130</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement in Mudug region prior to April 2023, please see section 2.5.2 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

<sup>1123</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1124</sup> Reuters, Suspected drone strike kills five in central Somalia, local leaders say, 8 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1125</sup> Halqabsi News, Clan Revenge Attack in Mudug Leaves Five Dead, Six Injured, 28 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1126</sup> Halqabsi News, Armed Militias Abduct 20 Civilians, Including New Mother, in Mudug Region, 9 February 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1127</sup> UNHCR, Somalia: Intense Clan Conflict in West Mudug Displaces Over 5,820 individuals, Flash Alert #10, June 2024, 8 July 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1128</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 39

<sup>1129</sup> UNHCR, Somalia: Recent Clan Clashes in Jiicboor Village, Galdogob District, Mudug Region, Displaces Thousands, Flash Alert #21, December 2024, 31 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1130</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)



## Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded 15 incidents of humanitarian access restraints in Mudug region in the period from 1 April to 31 December 2023,<sup>1131</sup> and 17 incidents of humanitarian access restraints in 2024. Incidents included, among others, the temporary suspension or revocation of licenses,<sup>1132</sup> the carjacking of a humanitarian organisation's car and clan hostilities that disrupted humanitarian operations.<sup>1133</sup> A doctor was reportedly shot dead in his health centre in an alleged revenge killing in Gaalkacyo town in September 2023.<sup>1134</sup>

A 'vital' water well was reportedly destroyed during violent clashes between two clans of the Majerteen sub-clan in Xarfo town in Mudug region in December 2024. Due to the violence, many of the local population fled and schools remained closed.<sup>1135</sup>

UNHCR noted that inter-clan fighting in Galdogob district in June 2024 led to the displacement of thousands of people, disrupting children's education and restricting the local population's freedom of movement.<sup>1136</sup> Radio Ergo reported on displaced families in southeastern Mudug lacking the money to buy food or water while host communities were overburdened.<sup>1137</sup>

### 2.5.3. Galmudug - Checkpoints and road security

In Galmudug, the relative scarcity of checkpoints can be attributed in part to the success of the local actors revenue sharing mechanism<sup>1138</sup> and in part to under-reporting issues.<sup>1139</sup> For an overview on checkpoints at country level see section [1.7](#) and [Map 4](#).

UNOCHA reported on humanitarian partners in Xarardheere who experienced 'extended' delays at checkpoints, demands for bribes and other protection concerns.<sup>1140</sup> In another case, a humanitarian team was reportedly stopped at a checkpoint by clan militia and denied passage while the militia was looking for members of another clan.<sup>1141</sup> In February 2025, government forces and allied militias attacked an Al-Shabaab-controlled checkpoint in Xarardheere district that was allegedly used to extort money from civilians and travellers.<sup>1142</sup>

<sup>1131</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1132</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1133</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 1 October to 31 December 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>1134</sup> Hiiraan Online, A young doctor killed in suspected clan revenge in Mudug region, 10 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1135</sup> Horn Observer, Under The Shade of A Tree, Peace Talks Bring Hope to Rural Town in Puntland, 25 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1136</sup> UNHCR, Somalia: Intense Clan Conflict in West Mudug Displaces Over 5,820 individuals, Flash Alert #10, June 2024, 8 July 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1137</sup> Radio Ergo, War in southeastern Mudug displaces hundreds of families, 8 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1138</sup> Schouten P., Telephone interview, 13 March 2025

<sup>1139</sup> Schouten P., Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, 2023, [url](#), p. 27

<sup>1140</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 1 October to 31 December 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1141</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 1 April to 30 June 2024, 8 August 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1142</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali forces kill six Al-Shabaab militants in a military operation in Harardhere district, 21 February 2025, [url](#)



In September 2023, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for two car bomb attacks in Dhuusamarreeb, targeting the road to the town's main airport and a checkpoint within the town. The attack happened while President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was residing in the town to continue the mobilisation against Al-Shabaab.<sup>1143</sup> In July 2024, Al-Shabaab stole arms and ammunition in an attack on a government-escorted convoy in Abudwak district near the Ethiopian border. The weapons had been smuggled into the country and had been seized by the government forces.<sup>1144</sup> In July 2024, the SNA reportedly cleared the road between Mesagaway and Barak-Sheikh Amir in Galgaduud region from landmines planted by Al-Shabaab.<sup>1145</sup> Mine clearing operations by government forces were also taking place in Ceel Dheere district in December 2023,<sup>1146</sup> and on the roads along the Hirshabelle-Galgaduud border regions in May 2024.<sup>1147</sup> Several local media reported on landmine explosions killing or injuring civilians, including near Galcad in July 2023,<sup>1148</sup> near Ceel Dheer district,<sup>1149</sup> and in the Heraale area in July 2024.<sup>1150</sup>

## 2.6. Puntland

### 2.6.1. Nugal

#### (a) Background

Nugal shares internal borders with Mudug, Bari and Sool regions and an international border with Ethiopia. To the east, it borders the Indian Ocean. The region is divided into three districts: Burtinle, Eyl and Garowe. Garowe is also the name of the region's capital city.<sup>1151</sup>

IPC estimated Nugal region's population at 631 810 as of September 2024.<sup>1152</sup> IOM, on the other hand, has a much lower estimate at 310 658 as of September 2024.<sup>1153</sup> Puntland's dominant clans are three sub-clans of the Majeerteen/Mohamoud Saleban, including the Isse Mohamud who live mostly in Nugal region.<sup>1154</sup> For additional information on clans in the Nugal region, please see section 2.6.1.1 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021) and section 2.6.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

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<sup>1143</sup> Garowe Online, Twin Al-Shabaab morning car bomb attack targets Somalia, 28 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1144</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/698, 27 September 2024, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>1145</sup> SMN, Somali National Army Clears Mines, Enhances Connectivity in Galgaduud Region, 14 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1146</sup> Somaliland, Somalia army retakes control of El-Dheer, Galgaduud region from Al-Shabaab, 21 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1147</sup> SD, Somalia: Danab Sources clear land mines in Galmudug and Hirshabelle, 29 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1148</sup> Daljir, Land mine blast in Somalia leaves three dead, 17 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1149</sup> Halqabsi News, Landmine Explosion in Galgaduud Kills One, Injures Another, 31 July 2024, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, A landmine explosion kills one civilian, injures another one in Galgadud region, 31 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1150</sup> SMN, Tragic Landmine Incident Claims Lives of Children in Somalia, 11 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1151</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1152</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1153</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1154</sup> International Crisis Group, Lessons from the Missed Opportunity in Puntland's Polls, 12 March 2024, [url](#)



## (b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

[Map 3](#) displaying the approximate territorial control in Somalia as of 31 March 2025, showed no presence of Al-Shabaab in Nugal region. The map indicated the presence of 'autonomous armed forces' across the region. A small area along the Galmudug-Puntland border running through Mudug region was marked as being under mixed/unclear, and/or local control.<sup>1155</sup> The map showed no changes compared to the situation as of April 2023 ([Map 2](#)).<sup>1156</sup> However, in August 2024, local media reported on increased security measures following the reported infiltration of suspected Al-Shabaab militants in Garowe.<sup>1157</sup> For further information on relevant actors in Nugal region, please see section 2.6.1.2 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021) and section 2.6.1 (b) of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### Conflict dynamics

2023 was dominated by political conflicts between Puntland's government and president and his opponents over electoral and constitutional changes.<sup>1158</sup> A planned change to the electoral system from a clan-based electoral model to universal suffrage was met with resistance from opponents who saw it as an attempt by Puntland's president Said Abdullahi Deni to prolong his stay in power beyond the presidential elections scheduled for January 2024. According to the clan-based model, presidency traditionally rotated between the state's three main sub-clans and President Deni, an Osman Mohamud, was expected to be followed by a member of the Isse Mohamud clan. Consequently, resistance was particularly strong in Nugal region, according to the International Crisis Group.<sup>1159</sup> Election-related disruptions and violent incidents were reported in May,<sup>1160</sup> and June 2023,<sup>1161</sup> with security forces splitting along party/clan affiliation. Danab troops (a special unit of the armed forces<sup>1162</sup>), reportedly split from the government forces over the dispute, siding with Issa Mohamud-linked opposition.<sup>1163</sup> Existing tensions increased in November 2023, with security forces from other regions reportedly arriving in Garowe.<sup>1164</sup> President Deni was eventually re-elected in the January 2024 polls, held under the clan-based indirect model.<sup>1165</sup>

<sup>1155</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>1156</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>1157</sup> Hiiraan Online, Puntland increases security in Garowe following fears of Al-Shabaab infiltration, 26 August 2024, [url](#); Garowe Online, Somalia: Puntland Bolsters Security in Garowe Post Al-Shabaab Executions, 26 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1158</sup> HIPS, State of Somalia 2023 Report, May 2024, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>1159</sup> International Crisis Group, Lessons from the Missed Opportunity in Puntland's Polls, 12 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1160</sup> Horn Observer, Somalia: Puntland takes historic step with first direct election in 54 Years, 25 May 2023, [url](#); Somaliland Sun, Clan Militias Battle Puntland Presidential Guards in Garowe, 17 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1161</sup> Al Jazeera, Dozens killed in Somalia's Puntland after parliament debate, 20 June 2023, [url](#); Reuters, 36 dead in violence in Somalia's Puntland and Lower Shabelle regions, 20 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1162</sup> Garowe Online, U.S. Cuts Funds for Somalia's Elite Danab Forces, 6 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1163</sup> International Crisis Group, Lessons from the Missed Opportunity in Puntland's Polls, 12 March 2024, [url](#); Horn Observer, Profile: General Jim'ale Jama Takar – A key figure in Puntland's political conflict, 21 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1164</sup> Garowe Online, Somalia: Tension rises in Puntland as president mobilizes troops, 20 November 2023, [url](#)

Halqabsi News, Tensions Rise in Garowe Amidst Military Build-Up and Electoral Disputes, 19 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1165</sup> International Crisis Group, Lessons from the Missed Opportunity in Puntland's Polls, 12 March 2024, [url](#)



Political conflicts between the Puntland administration and the federal government, including over the latter's alleged support for the opposition in Puntland,<sup>1166</sup> escalated at the end of March 2024, when Puntland's government withdrew its recognition of the federal government following changes to the country's constitution.<sup>1167</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

#### Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

In the reference period 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, ACLED recorded 51 security incidents in Nugal region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 54 fatalities. [Figure 19](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period. At district level, the (by far) highest number of incidents was recorded in Garowe (41 incidents), followed by Eyl (7) and Burtinle (3).<sup>1168</sup>

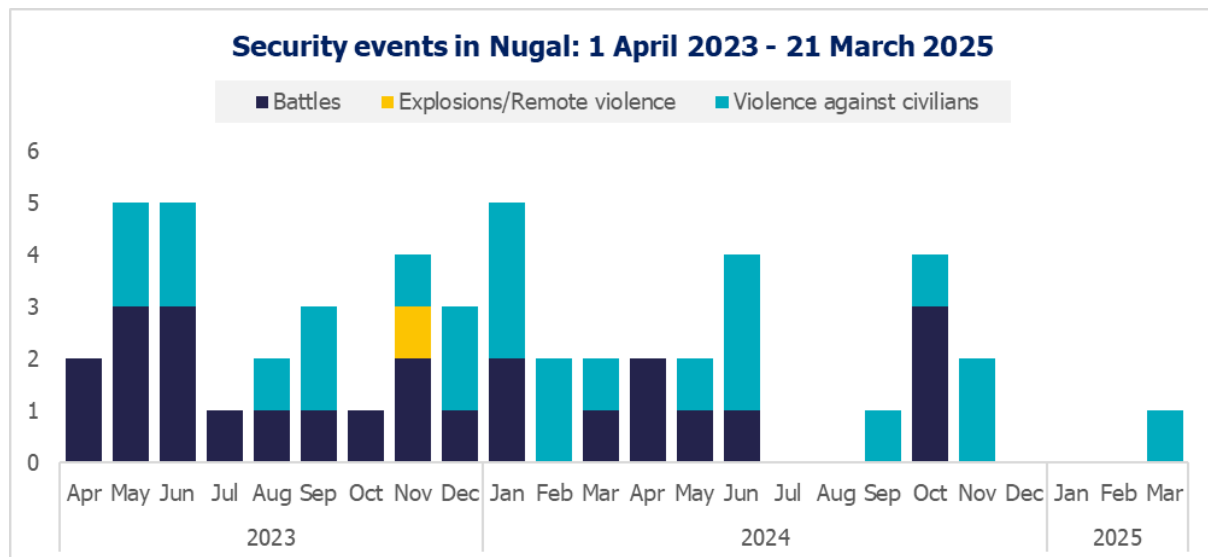


Figure 19. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Nugal.<sup>1169</sup>

In terms of incidents involving the different factions of security forces, the Puntland Security Force (Military Force) was involved in three incidents with the Puntland Police Force (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2'), in one incident with the Puntland Maritime Police Force and in one incident with unidentified militia. The Puntland

<sup>1166</sup> HIPS, State of Somalia 2023 Report, May 2024, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>1167</sup> Hiiraan Online, Puntland withdraws recognition of Somali federal government following historic constitutional amendment, 30 March 2024, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1168</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1169</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.



Police Force was involved in seven incidents with unidentified militia. Various clan militias were involved in 18 incidents.<sup>1170</sup>

For incidents involving civilian fatalities, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- at least 26 people, including an unspecified number of civilians, were killed in clashes between government forces and clan militias linked to political opposition in Garowe in June 2023;<sup>1171</sup>
- one civilian was killed during clashes between government and opposition forces in Garowe in November 2023;<sup>1172</sup>
- one civilian was killed and two others injured during a security operation in Garowe in June 2024.<sup>1173</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

According to UNHCR PRMN data, 48 200 individuals were newly displaced from Nugal region due to conflict or insecurity in the period from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025. Of this number, 46 235 individuals were displaced within Nugal region, while 1 965 individuals left for other regions, including Bari, Sanaag and Sool. All individuals leaving Nugal for other regions were from Nugal's Garowe district. In the same period, 7 357 individuals were recorded to have arrived in Nugal region from other regions. The district most affected by arrivals from other regions was Garowe, with 6 099 individuals arriving. Garowe was also the district most affected in terms of displacement within Nugal region: 37 500 individuals were recorded to have arrived from other locations (including movements within the district).<sup>1174</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement in Nugal region prior to April 2023, please see section 2.6.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded nine humanitarian access incidents in Nugal region in 2024,<sup>1175</sup> and 20 incidents in the period from April to December 2023.<sup>1176</sup> Incidents include, for example, the hijacking of a truck transporting humanitarian supplies,<sup>1177</sup> or delays in the processing of imported aid supplies.<sup>1178</sup>

Schools in Garowe were closed in November 2023 in the context of increasing political tensions and the mobilisation of forces,<sup>1179</sup> while local businesses and transport services faced

<sup>1170</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1171</sup> Al Jazeera, Dozens killed in Somalia's Puntland after parliament debate, 20 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1172</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1173</sup> Garowe Online, Puntland seizes weapons and drugs in Garowe, 10 June 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1174</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1175</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1176</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1;

UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1177</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 1 July to 30 September 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1178</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 1 April to 30 June 2024, 8 August 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1179</sup> UNSOM, International Partners call for Calm and Restraint in Garowe, 21 November 2023, [url](#)





disruptions.<sup>1180</sup> The Horn Observer noted that schools in Garowe remained inaccessible for IDP children as they could not afford the fees,<sup>1181</sup> while Radio Ergo reported on IDPs being evicted from Jillab IDP camp for failure to pay monthly rent.<sup>1182</sup>

## 2.6.2. Bari

### (a) Background

Bari borders the Indian ocean to the east and the Gulf of Aden to the north. It shares internal borders with Nugal region to the south and Sool and Sanaag to the east. The region is divided into six districts: Qardho, Bandarbeyla, Iskushuban, Calula, Qandala, and Bossaso. The region's capital is the coastal city of Bossaso (also Boosaaso, Bosaso), situated on the Gulf of Aden.<sup>1183</sup>

IPC estimated Bari's population at 1 232 231 as of September 2024.<sup>1184</sup> In contrast, IOM estimated the region's population much lower at 723 755.<sup>1185</sup> The region's main clan is the Osman Mahmud sub-clan of the Majerteen clan; the Ali Suleman clan also is very relevant politically in the region.<sup>1186</sup> For more information on clans in the Bari region, please see section 2.6.2.1 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021) and section 2.6.2 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### (b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

[Map 3](#) indicated Al-Shabaab's presence in the Al Madow mountains to the west, and the presence of Al-Shabaab or the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) in the Al Miskaad mountains to the east of Bossaso city. Possible ISS influence was also indicated in central and northeastern Bari. 'Autonomous armed forces (unionist)' were present across Bari region including its main urban centres, except for Habley, which was shown as under mixed, unclear and/or local control.<sup>1187</sup> In contrast, as of April 2023 ([Map 2](#)), the Al Miskaad mountains were assessed to be under mixed control of Al-Shabaab and the ISS. The remainder of the region was controlled by 'autonomous armed forces (unionist)', as were most of the main urban centres, with the exception of Timirshe (partially controlled by the ISS), Turmasale (ISS) and Dhadar (Al-Shabaab).<sup>1188</sup>

<sup>1180</sup> Halqabsi News, Tensions Rise in Garowe Amidst Military Build-Up and Electoral Disputes, 19 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1181</sup> Horn Observer, Forgotten Futures: Hundreds of Children Out of School in Garowe's Shabelle Camp, 23 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1182</sup> Radio Ergo, New houses and amenities for 1,000 IDP families in Garowe, 16 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1183</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1184</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1185</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1186</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 126

<sup>1187</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>1188</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.



## Conflict dynamics

The Somali Digest reported in April 2024 that the ISS had taken control over the Al Miskaad (also Calmiskaad) Mountains from Al-Shabaab after several years of fighting. However, the regional government continued to control access roads and the nearby population centres.<sup>1189</sup> According to an October 2024 UN Security Council report, Al-Shabaab remained present in the western Al Madow mountains while the ISS did not control any population centres but had established bases in four of Bari's districts: Balidhidin, Hunbays, Iskushuban, and Qandala,<sup>1190</sup> the home district of the Ali Saleban clan, of which also ISS leader Abdulqadir Mumin was a member.<sup>1191</sup> Both groups were running extortion schemes in Bossaso city.<sup>1192</sup>

The International Crisis Group noted that the ISS had become a 'key component' of the global IS network, financing other branches with funds gathered through extortion,<sup>1193</sup> tax collection,<sup>1194</sup> and gold mining,<sup>1195</sup> while ISS leader Mumin reportedly rose to the ranks of IS' global leader. Claims that he was killed in an U.S. airstrike in May 2024 were not confirmed.<sup>1196</sup> The UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team on ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaida highlighted in a report of February 2025 that, following the attack, ISS' operational capabilities had 'evolved' and that the group was using/testing unmanned aerial vehicles for reconnaissance and the deployment of explosives.<sup>1197</sup> Following an ISS car bomb attack on Puntland security forces in Dharjaale in December 2024, where at least 18 soldiers were killed and 30 injured, Puntland authorities launched a counteroffensive against the ISS,<sup>1198</sup> the so-called operation 'Hilaac' (lightning).<sup>1199</sup> Moreover, airstrikes on ISS positions were reported in January,<sup>1200</sup> February,<sup>1201</sup> and March 2025.<sup>1202</sup> On 10 February 2024, ISS launched a major suicide attack in the vicinity of Hararyo area. 27 soldiers and about 70 fighters were killed in the attack.<sup>1203</sup> Puntland president Deni claimed in March 2025 that ISS and Al-Shabaab had been expelled from Bari region, and that both groups had ceased to hold 'operational control' in Bossaso,<sup>1204</sup> while Hiiraan Online cited regional authorities saying that ISS had regrouped in Togga Miraale valley near Bossaso city.<sup>1205</sup>

<sup>1189</sup> Somali Digest (The), Islamic State in Somalia Strategically Takes over Al Miskaad, 21 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1190</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 41-42

<sup>1191</sup> ACLED, The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia, 31 July 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1192</sup> International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Somalia: Responding to an Evolving Threat, 12 September 2024, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>1193</sup> International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Somalia: Responding to an Evolving Threat, 12 September 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1194</sup> Somali Digest (The), Islamic State in Somalia Strategically Takes over Al Miskaad, 21 April 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1195</sup> Horn Observer, ISIS Believed to Engage in Gold Mining in Puntland to Fund Its Activities, 5 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1196</sup> BBC News, Why Trump is on the warpath in Somalia, 7 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1197</sup> UNSC, Thirty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, S/2025/71/Rev.1, 6 February 2025, [url](#), para. 38

<sup>1198</sup> SMN, Death toll from deadly ISIS attack in Puntland rises to 18, injuries climb to 30, 1 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1199</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); Somali Digest (The), Puntland Unleashes 'Hilac' Offensive, Targeting IS-Somalia and Al-Shabab, 26 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1200</sup> Garowe Online, Puntland Forces, With International Support, Target ISIS in Bari Region, 9 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1201</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1202</sup> Hiiraan Online, U.S. airstrikes target ISIS militant group in Somalia's Puntland State, 29 March 2025, [url](#); SMN, U.S.-Somali Forces Target ISIS in Puntland's Bari Mountains, 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1203</sup> International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1204</sup> Hiiraan Online, Puntland President Deni vows zero tolerance for Al-Shabaab, ISIS resurgence, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1205</sup> Hiiraan Online, U.S. airstrikes target ISIS militant group in Somalia's Puntland State, 29 March 2025, [url](#)



The October 2024 UN Security Council report pointed to the smuggling of weapons between Puntland and Yemen and in this context to the seizure of arms in Bossaso in May and August 2024, as well as to a re-emergence of piracy off the coast of Puntland.<sup>1206</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

In the reference period from 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, ACLED recorded 191 security incidents in Bari region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, resulting in 830 fatalities. [Figure 20](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period. At district level, the highest number of incidents was recorded in Qandala (102), followed by Bossaso (64), Iskushuban (14), Qardho (8), Calula (2) and Bandarbeyla (1 incident).<sup>1207</sup>

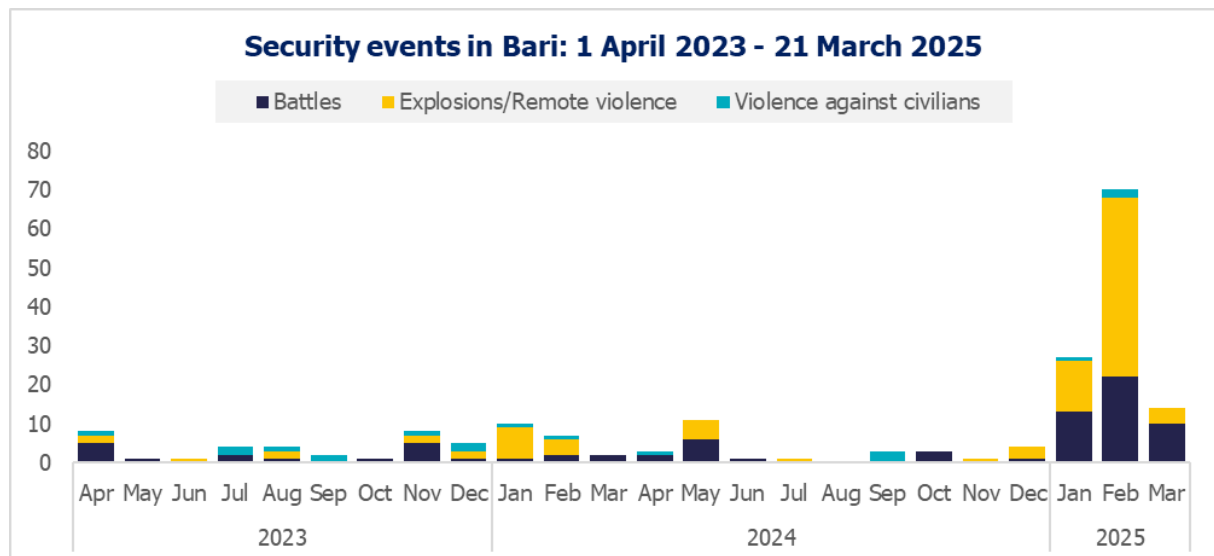


Figure 20. Evolution of ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Bari.<sup>1208</sup>

The Military Forces of Somalia (including Puntland Dervish Force, Puntland Intelligence Agency and Puntland Security Force) were involved in 105 incidents with the ISS (coded as either ‘Actor 1’, ‘Associated Actor 1’, ‘Actor 2’, or ‘Associated Actor 2’), and in five incidents with Al-Shabaab. Moreover, they were involved in seven incidents with unidentified groups (including unidentified armed groups, unidentified clan militia, and unidentified military forces).

<sup>1206</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 142, 144-145, 149 and Figure III Map of attacks by Somali Pirates March 2023 to August 2024, p. 34

<sup>1207</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1208</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.



The Puntland Maritime Police Force was involved in 97 incidents with the ISS, causing 676 fatalities.<sup>1209</sup>

For incidents involving civilian fatalities, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- several civilians, including women and children, were killed in an ISS attack on a military base in Dharjaale on 31 December 2024. While military facilities were targeted, several civilians were killed too in the suicide bombing;<sup>1210</sup>
- at least four civilians were accidentally killed by the strike of an unidentified military drone in Qandala district in January 2025. The drone had been targeting ISS positions in the area.<sup>1211</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

UNHCR PRMN data indicated that 15 778 individuals were newly displaced from Bari region due to conflict or insecurity in the period from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025. Almost all of them, 15 749 individuals, were displaced within Bari region, while a small number, 29 individuals (all of them from Bossaso), left for other regions, including Nugal and Hiraan. In the same period, 6 637 individuals were recorded to have arrived in Bari region from other regions. The district most affected by arrivals from other regions was Bossaso (4 842), while the district most affected by arrivals from other locations within Bari region was Qandala district (5 881 individuals), followed by Iskushuban (4 567 individuals), including movements within the district.<sup>1212</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement in Bari region prior to April 2023, please see section 2.6.2 of the [EUAA COI report on Somalia – Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### Other impacts on civilian life

Several hospitals in Bossaso city shut down over extortion demands by the ISS.<sup>1213</sup> Similarly, local businesses reportedly faced extortion demands and threats against their business.<sup>1214</sup> Horseed Media quoted regional police saying that most businesses, NGOs and charities in the region were extorted by ‘terrorist groups’, and those who refused were often killed or met with violence,<sup>1215</sup> including IED and grenade attacks on their businesses.<sup>1216</sup>

<sup>1209</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1210</sup> Hiiraan Online, Deadly clashes as Puntland forces foil ISIS attack in Bari region, 1 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1211</sup> Hiiraan Online, Unidentified drone strike kills four civilians near ISIS stronghold in Bari region, 28 January 2025, [url](#); Garowe Online, Somalia: An airstrike kills four civilians from the same family in Puntland, 28 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1212</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1213</sup> Halqabsi News, Bosaso Hospitals Shut Down Amidst ISIS Extortion Demands, 24 June 2024, [url](#); Garowe Online, ISIS Extortion Threats Force Business Closures in Bosaso, Somalia, 18 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1214</sup> Garowe Online, ISIS Extortion Threats Force Business Closures in Bosaso, Somalia, 18 June 2023, [url](#); Garowe Online, Somalia: Puntland's Business Center Faces Terrorist Threats as Businesses Close Down, 12 April 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1215</sup> Horseed Media, A powerful explosion rocked the Timirshe area in at Iskushuban district of Bari region of Somalia today, 16 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1216</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 48



Hiiraan Online reported in March 2025 that due to the ongoing conflict between Puntland security forces and the ISS, local farmers cultivating frankincense trees were unable to reach their trees as they feared getting caught in the crossfire or bombings. Without the possibility to earn an income with the trees' harvest, many lacked the funds to pay for food, water or their children's school.<sup>1217</sup>

UNOCHA recorded three humanitarian access incidents (such as, for example, attacks on humanitarian personnel) in Bari region in 2024,<sup>1218</sup> and an equal number of such incidents in the period from April to December 2023.<sup>1219</sup> The driver of a car belonging to a local humanitarian organisation, the Horn of Africa Integrated Development Activities (HIDA), was injured when a landmine exploded in the Timirshe area in Iskushuban district in March 2024. The attack was reportedly targeting HIDA's director, who had been threatened in the past, but who remained unharmed.<sup>1220</sup>

### 2.6.3. Puntland - Checkpoints and road security

Checkpoints in Puntland are likely to be many more than those shown on [Map 4](#), according to an interview with P. Schouten in March 2025.<sup>1221</sup> For an overview on checkpoints at country level see section [1.7](#).

Puntland security forces intercepted an illegal arms and ammunition transport on the way to Bossaso city in May 2024;<sup>1222</sup> they also confiscated five 'suicide' drones during a raid on a convoy on the road between Garowe and Gaalkacyo in August 2024, detaining seven individuals suspected of having links to Al-Shabaab or the ISS.<sup>1223</sup> Police forces and suspected militiamen clashed at a checkpoint in Garowe in March 2025;<sup>1224</sup> a bomb attack on a police checkpoint in Bossaso city a month earlier had reportedly failed.<sup>1225</sup>

In March 2025, an ambulance and another car transporting Puntland soldiers were targeted by an ISS roadside bomb, 'causing casualties'.<sup>1226</sup> In the context of the counteroffensive against the ISS in early 2025, Hiiraan Online cited regional authorities saying that ISS fighters from Al Miskaad mountains had regrouped in Togga Miraale valley near Bossaso city and mined access routes to the valley.<sup>1227</sup>

<sup>1217</sup> Hiiraan Online, Puntland war against Daesh displaces frankincense farmers in Bari region, 11 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1218</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1219</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1220</sup> Horseed Media, A powerful explosion rocked the Timirshe area in at Iskushuban district of Bari region of Somalia today, 16 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1221</sup> Schouten P., Telephone interview, 13 March 2025

<sup>1222</sup> Eastleigh Voice (The), Puntland forces seize cache of weapons in major security operation, 19 May 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1223</sup> Hiiraan Online, Puntland seizes 'suicide' drones, arrests 7 linked to Al-Shabaab or ISIS-S, 27 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1224</sup> Garowe Online, Somalia: Puntland Police Seize Stolen Bus, Arrest Militiamen After Gunfight, 22 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1225</sup> Hiiraan Online, ISIS forcing migrants into militancy in Puntland, Somali officials say, 12 February 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1226</sup> Hiiraan Online, ISIS attack in Puntland kills one soldier, injures nine, 25 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1227</sup> Hiiraan Online, U.S. airstrikes target ISIS militant group in Somalia's Puntland State, 29 March 2025, [url](#)



In the context of the dispute between Puntland president Deni and the political opposition, opposition forces reportedly blocked roads, stopped the transport of electoral material,<sup>1228</sup> and seized a checkpoint in Garowe city ahead of his inauguration in January 2024.<sup>1229</sup>

## 2.7. Sool, Sanaag and SSC-Khatumo

### 2.7.1. Sool

#### (a) Background

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025,<sup>1230</sup> and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023,<sup>1231</sup> Sool region is part of the areas disputed between Somaliland and Puntland. Sool shares an international border with Ethiopia to the south and internal borders with Sanaag region to the north, Togdheer region to the west, and Nugal and Bari regions to the east. It is divided into four districts, Taleex (also Taleh), Xudun (also Hudun), Caynabo (also Aynabo or Ainado) and Laas Caanood (also Laas Anood). The capital of Sool is Laas Caanood. According to the reference map, Togdheer region's Buhodle (or Buuhoodle) district and parts of Burco district are part of the disputed areas.<sup>1232</sup>

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Sool region at 548 975 (IPC),<sup>1233</sup> and 84 024 (IOM).<sup>1234</sup> Most of Sool's population belongs to the Dhulbahante clan,<sup>1235</sup> which is part of the Darod family. The Dhulbahante are not affiliated with Somaliland's dominant Isaaq clan.<sup>1236</sup> A map produced by the Max Planck Institute and published by Somalia expert Markus Hoehne in a February 2023 article on crisis in Sool region shows Dhulbahante territories in eastern Sool and also in Togdheer's Buhodle district.<sup>1237</sup> Members of the Dhulbahante clan refer to Togdheer region as Cayn.<sup>1238</sup> The map also shows a smaller Warsangeli (Darod) territory in the northeastern area bordering Puntland's Bari region and Sanaag region.<sup>1239</sup>

<sup>1228</sup> ACLED, Somalia: Political Crisis Deepens Amid Transition to Direct Elections, 28 July 2023, [url](#); Somaliland Sun, Clan Militias Battle Puntland Presidential Guards in Garowe, 17 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1229</sup> SG, Pro-opposition forces seize key security checkpoint in Somalia's Garowe town, 14 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1230</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>1231</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>1232</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1233</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1234</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#). IOM notes that 'Regarding the regions in Somaliland state, DTM teams reached a low coverage of the settlements to be assessed. Therefore, the population figures displayed in this report are underestimated and should be interpreted with caution'

<sup>1235</sup> International Crisis Group, Somaliland's Peaceful Handover Withstands Neighbourhood Strains, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1236</sup> International Crisis Group, The Stakes in the Ethiopia-Somaliland Deal, 6 March 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1237</sup> Hoehne, M.V., Towards a proper understanding of the conflict in Somaliland [Map], ROAPE, 31 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1238</sup> Hoehne, M.V., Towards a proper understanding of the conflict in Somaliland, ROAPE, 31 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1239</sup> Hoehne, M.V., Crisis in Lasanod: Border Disputes, Escalating Insecurity and the Future of Somaliland [Map], African Arguments, 6 February 2023, [url](#)





On 6 February 2023,<sup>1240</sup> elders and leaders established the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn-Khatumo (SSC-Khaatumo, SSC-K) administration,<sup>1241</sup> representing the Dhulbahante clan along with the Fiqishine and Madiban clans.<sup>1242</sup> SSC-K led efforts to remove Somaliland forces in August 2023 and has since declared its allegiance to Somalia rather than Somaliland.<sup>1243</sup> In October 2023, the Federal Government of Somalia formally recognised the SSC-K administration.<sup>1244</sup> The leader of SSC-K is Abdikhkadir Ahmed Aw Ali Firdhiye.<sup>1245</sup>

Events and incidents taking place in Buhodle district are covered in this section and not in in the section [2.8.3 Togdheer](#) (Somaliland).

For additional details on clans in Sool region, please see section 2.6.3.1 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021) and section 2.7.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### **(b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics**

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors, notably SSC-Khatumo

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025, Al-Shabaab did not control any territory in the Sool region,<sup>1246</sup> which is consistent with the situation reported in [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023.<sup>1247</sup> As of 31 March 2025, the area between Gumays, Buhodle, and Tukaraq, including Laas Caanood, was reported as the 'core control zone' of SSC-K (marked as being controlled by 'Autonomous armed forces (unionist)'). These towns were also directly controlled by these 'autonomous armed forces'. The 'estimated area of political influence' of SSC-K further included Taleh and Hudun. Meanwhile, Qorilugud and Oog were reportedly under the control of the Somaliland administration, and the border areas west of Xudun, Gumays, and Buhodle were under mixed control between the 'Autonomous armed forces (unionist)' and the 'Somaliland administration (separatist)'.<sup>1248</sup>

In contrast, as of 1 April 2023, Gumays and the Goja'ade base near Laas Caanood were reported to be under the control of the Somaliland administration. The towns of Buhodle,

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<sup>1240</sup> Horseed Media, Somali Federal Government Recognizes New SSC-Khatumo Administration, 19 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1241</sup> SD, Breaking News: SSC Clan Leaders' Summit release a 13 point declaration, 6 February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1242</sup> International Crisis Group, Somaliland's Peaceful Handover Withstands Neighbourhood Strains, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1243</sup> International Crisis Group, Somaliland's Peaceful Handover Withstands Neighbourhood Strains, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1244</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somali government expands influence in Las Anod with new immigration office, 13 August 2024, [url](#); Hiiraan Online, Federal government recognizes SCC-Khatumo administration, pledges cooperation, 19 October 2023, [url](#); Horseed Media, Somali Federal Government Recognizes New SSC-Khatumo Administration, 19 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1245</sup> Hiiraan Online, SSC Khaatumo leader vows to reclaim Erigavo from Somaliland control, 13 January 2025, [url](#); Garowe Online, Somalia: There will be no new administration in SSC, Bihi says, 15 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1246</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>1247</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>1248</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.



Xudun, and Taleex, as well as the area stretching from the western border to Laas Caanood, Tuqaraq, and Taleex, were under mixed control.<sup>1249</sup>

### Conflict dynamics

Please also see the paragraph on ‘SSC-Khatumo versus Somaliland’ in section [1.3 Conflict layers and main developments](#) of this report for an overview of the conflict dynamics in Sool. For background information and additional details see the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023),<sup>1250</sup> and the [EASO COI report Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>1251</sup>

Between February and August 2023, there was intense fighting between Somaliland forces and Dhulbahante clan militias, supported by allied clans.<sup>1252</sup> According to a June 2023 article by Markus Hoehne, from March 2023 onward, the conflict around Laas Caanood involved fighters from Dhulbahante, Warsangeli, Majeerteen and other clans (the Harti clan coalition) on one side and clans like Ise and Gadabursi besides Isaaq clans on the Somaliland army side. The majority of the Harti clan coalition, however, belonged to the Dhulbahante clan.<sup>1253</sup> In May 2023, for example, fighting took place around the villages of Dhabansaar and Samakab.<sup>1254</sup> Multiple clashes and mortar exchanges were reported from 24 to 27 June 2023 in and around Laas Caanood.<sup>1255</sup> In August 2023, SSC-K launched a counteroffensive against Somaliland forces, driving them out of Laas Caanood.<sup>1256</sup> A new frontline emerged between Oog and Guumays in western Sool, aligning roughly with the boundary between the Isaaq and Dhulbahante clans.<sup>1257</sup> Troops remained deployed along the frontlines and both sides sent reinforcements to the area in September 2023.<sup>1258</sup> In December 2023, Somaliland forces and Dhulbahante clan militias continued to strengthen their positions near the frontline in Sool region, raising concerns about renewed fighting.<sup>1259</sup> Reportedly, in the first half of 2024, the situation in Sool remained calm, despite troop movements of Somaliland forces and Dhulbahante clan militias along the frontline.<sup>1260</sup>

In January 2025, fighting between Somaliland and SSC-Khaatumo forces resumed in Sool, with clashes erupting in Guumays, in Oog area. The clashes resulted in casualties, though exact numbers were unclear.<sup>1261</sup> Ongoing military movements had heightened tensions,

<sup>1249</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>1250</sup> EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>1251</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 101-116

<sup>1252</sup> International Crisis Group, Somaliland’s Peaceful Handover Withstands Neighbourhood Strains, 11 December 2024, [url](#); UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 9

<sup>1253</sup> Hoehne, M., The Dynamics of Conflict over Lasanod: Ongoing Fighting, Administration Building, Failed Mediation and Forecast, African Arguments, 12 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1254</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); Mustaqbal Media, Somaliland, SSC forces clash in Samakaab, 16 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1255</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); Horn Observer, Renewed clashes and shelling erupt in Laascaanood, 26 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1256</sup> HIPS, State of Somalia 2023 Report, May 2024, [url](#), p. 27; Halqabsi, SSC-Khaatumo Forces Capture Somaliland’s Biggest and Last Military Base in Sool, 25 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1257</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1258</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); Horn Observer, Somaliland deploys more forces to Oog, announces military action against SSC-Khaatumo, 6 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1259</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1260</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1261</sup> Kaab TV, Somaliland Forces Clash SSC-Khaatumo in Guumeys, 20 January 2025, [url](#); Sahan, The Somali Wire, Issue no. 776, 20 January 2025, source requiring registration, [url](#), accessed 28 March 2025



sparking fears of the conflict spreading further.<sup>1262</sup> Early March 2025, members of Habar Je'lo (sub-clan of the Isaaq) and Dhulbahante clans clashed in the disputed village of Buq Dharkayn. The confrontation involved both government forces and troops from SSC-Khatumo. The violence led to numerous casualties, with dozens reported killed or injured.<sup>1263</sup>

Other incidents involving violence between clan militias were also reported in Sool region. In November 2023, violence between militias of Habar Je'lo and Dhulbahante clans was reported<sup>1264</sup> near Oog in the areas of Buq Dharkayn and Maygaale.<sup>1265</sup> Further clashes in the region between Habar Je'lo and Dhulbahante clan members were reported in early November 2024, this time in Qorilugud and Gadgad, in Togdheer's Buhodle district.<sup>1266</sup>

### **(c) Recent security trends**

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 126 security incidents in Sool region (including Buhodle district), including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 334 fatalities. [Figure 21](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period. At district level, Laas Caanood recorded the most security incidents (59), followed by Buhodle district (53 incidents) and Caynabo district (14 incidents) between April 2023 and 21 March 2025.<sup>1267</sup>

<sup>1262</sup> Sahan, The Somali Wire, Issue no. 776, 20 January 2025, source requiring registration, [url](#)

<sup>1263</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1264</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, [url](#), para. 7

<sup>1265</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1266</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); Hiiraan Online, Heavy casualties as Somaliland, SSC-Khatumo forces clash in Ain area, 1 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1267</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

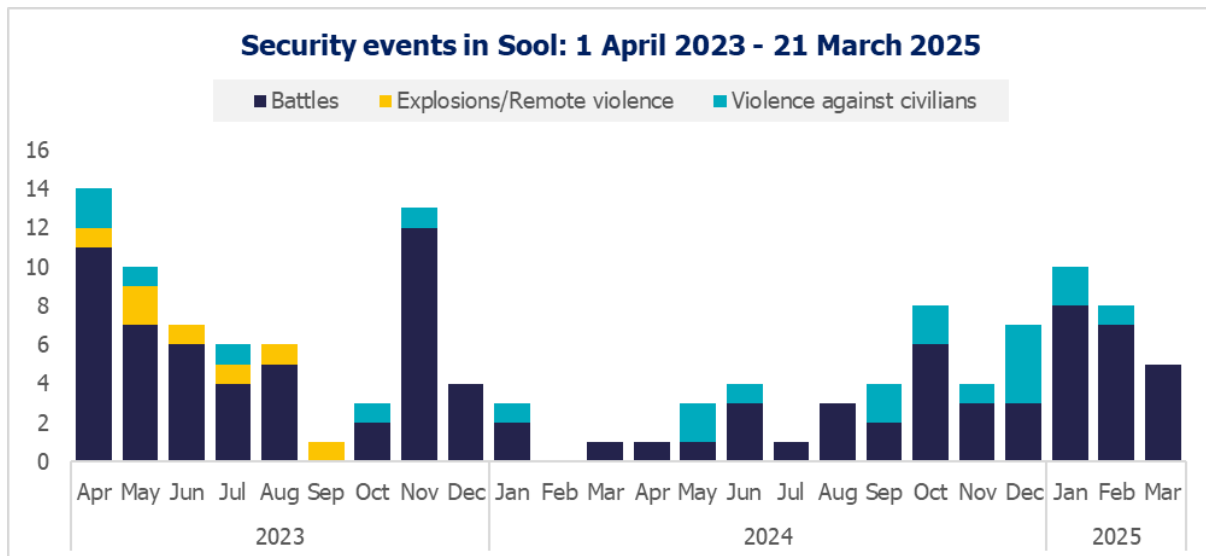


Figure 21. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Sool.<sup>1268</sup>

Military forces of Somaliland and Sool, Sanaag and Cayn Militia (SSC) were involved in 56 incidents resulting in 255 fatalities.

For incidents resulting in fatalities, including civilian deaths, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- on 11 July 2023, a health facility in Laas Canood was attacked, resulting in the killing and wounding of dozens of people, including health care workers and patients;<sup>1269</sup>
- in August 2023, Jama Kadiye Elmi, an 81-year-old poet, was killed in Laas Caanood when artillery hit the car in which he was travelling;<sup>1270</sup>
- in early November 2024, members of the Habar Je'lo and the Dhulbahante clans clashed near Shangeed and Qorilugud villages in Buhodle district.<sup>1271</sup> There were concerns that the violence had 'claimed multiple lives';<sup>1272</sup>
- on 7 March 2025, clashes involving Somaliland forces and SSC Khaatumo fighters broke out in Buq Dharkayn, resulting in an unspecified number of casualties.<sup>1273</sup>

#### Conflict-related displacement

According to the UNHCR PRMN, 54 077 individuals were newly displaced from Sool region (including Buhoodle district) due to conflict or insecurity in the period from April 2023 to 16 March 2025. Among them, 48 294 IDPs were displaced within Sool region (including

<sup>1268</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

<sup>1269</sup> WHO, WHO condemns attack on health care facility in Las Canood, Somaliland, 13 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1270</sup> Puntland Post, The Murder of a Somali Poet by Somaliland Forces, 20 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1271</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); UNHCR, UNHCR, Somalia Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network (PSMN) Flash Alert #18 | November 2024, 5 November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1272</sup> Hiiraan Online, Heavy casualties as Somaliland, SSC-Khatumo forces clash in Ain area, 1 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1273</sup> Hiiraan Online, Somaliland and SSC Khaatumo forces clash in Buqdharkayn as territorial dispute escalates, 7 March 2025, [url](#)

Buhoodle), while 5 783 IDPs were displaced to other regions, including Bari, Nugal, Togdheer, and Woqooyi Galbeed. 36 118 were displaced within the region to Buhoodle district. In the same period, 4 633 individuals arrived from other regions, including Nugal, and Sanaag regions. Xudun was the district most affected by arrivals from other regions (2 392 individuals, all arriving from Ceerigaabo) during the reference period, while Laas Caanood was the district most affected by individuals leaving for other regions (3 072), including Bari, Nugal, Togdheer, and Woqooyi Galbeed.<sup>1274</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, please see section 2.4.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

According to UNHCR's Somalia Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network (PSMN) fighting in Buhoodle district in November 2024 resulted in the displacement of 26 550 individuals. The conflict caused widespread displacement, especially in areas such as 'Qorilugud, Shangeed, Gocondhaale, Maygaagle, Galgal, Harufadhi, Sooljoogto, Xadhadhan, and Shimbiraale'.<sup>1275</sup>

#### Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded 6 humanitarian access incidents in Sool region (excluding Buhoodle district) in the period from April to December 2023,<sup>1276</sup> and another 15 in 2024,<sup>1277</sup> including, for example, movement restrictions impeding humanitarian activities.<sup>1278</sup>

In 2023, the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) recorded 10 incidents of violence against or obstructing healthcare in Laas Caanood in the period between February and July 2023. Additionally, eight incidents were recorded in which explosive weapons damaged hospitals and injured health workers.<sup>1279</sup> Laas Caanood General Hospital was struck by mortars and artillery, resulting in damages and disruptions.<sup>1280</sup> Between 8 June and 5 October 2023, UNSOM recorded at least eight civilian casualties in Laas Caanood, including four killed and four injured. Six of the victims were medical staff.<sup>1281</sup>

In April 2023, AOA reported that hospitals, schools, and residential areas in Laas Caanood had repeatedly been shelled since the outbreak of heavy fighting in February 2023.<sup>1282</sup> Also in April 2023, Amnesty International shared 'findings that Somaliland security forces indiscriminately shelled the town [of Laas Caanood], damaging hospitals, schools and mosques, killing and injuring civilians, and displacing tens of thousands of people'.<sup>1283</sup>

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<sup>1274</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1275</sup> UNHCR, UNHCR Somalia Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network (PSMN) Flash Alert #18 | November 2024, 5 November 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1276</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1277</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1278</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 1 July to 30 September 2024, 30 September 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1279</sup> SHCC and Insecurity Insight, Critical Condition. Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2023, May 2024, [url](#), pp. 95-96

<sup>1280</sup> SHCC and Insecurity Insight, Critical Condition. Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2023, May 2024, [url](#), p. 96

<sup>1281</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2023/758, 13 October 2023, [url](#), para. 9

<sup>1282</sup> AOA, Somaliland: fighting between Somaliland forces and tribal leadership claims civilian lives and puts hospitals out of action, 19 April 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1283</sup> Amnesty International, Somaliland: Urgent investigation needed as fighting takes heavy toll on civilians in Las Anod, 20 April 2023, [url](#)



In November 2024, the World Food Program (WFP) suspended its humanitarian operations in Somalia's SSC-Khaatumo region due to insecurity and the looting of food aid.<sup>1284</sup>

## 2.7.2. Sanaag

### (a) Background

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025,<sup>1285</sup> and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023,<sup>1286</sup> Sanaag region is part of the areas disputed between Somaliland and Puntland. Sanaag shares internal borders with Sool region to the south, Togdheer and Woqoyi Galbeed regions to the west, and Bari region to the east. In the north it borders the Gulf of Aden. It is divided into three districts, Lasqoray, Ceerigaabo (also known as Erigabo or Erigavo) and Ceel Afweyn (also known as El Afweyne). Ceerigaabo is the capital of Sanaag.<sup>1287</sup>

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Sanaag region at 428 699 (IPC),<sup>1288</sup> and 132 140 (IOM).<sup>1289</sup>

Eastern Sanaag is primarily inhabited by the Warsangeli, a sub-clan of the Harti-Darod, while the Dhulbahante clan resides in some southern areas.<sup>1290</sup> The western part, including Ceerigaabo, is predominantly home to the Habar Yunis (also known as Habar Yoonis) sub-clan of the Isaaq.<sup>1291</sup> Ceerigaabo is also home to members of Isaaq subclan Habar Je'lo (also known as Habar Jeclo), as well as the Harti subclans of Dhulbahante and Warsangeli.<sup>1292</sup>

### (b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

According to both the Report of the UN Panel of Experts and [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025, Al-Shabaab maintained a presence in the Cal Madow (Almadow) mountain range,<sup>1293</sup> which is consistent with the situation depicted in [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023.<sup>1294</sup>

<sup>1284</sup> Hiiraan Online, WFP halts aid in SSC-Khaatumo after looting disrupts relief efforts, 30 November 2024, [url](#); Goobjoog, WFP Suspends Operations in SSC-Khatumo Over Looting of Aid, 30 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1285</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>1286</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>1287</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1288</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1289</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#). IOM notes that 'Regarding the regions in Somaliland state, DTM teams reached a low coverage of the settlements to be assessed. Therefore, the population figures displayed in this report are underestimated and should be interpreted with caution'

<sup>1290</sup> Hoehne, M.V., Crisis in Lasanod: Border Disputes, Escalating Insecurity and the Future of Somaliland [Map], African Arguments, 6 February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1291</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 137

<sup>1292</sup> Somali Digest (The), Analysis: The risks of Colonel Arre's return to Somaliland, 23 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1293</sup> UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 42; PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>1294</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.





As of 31 March 2025, the western part of Sanaag region (including the towns of Ceerigaabo and El Afweyn) were controlled by the Somaliland administration, while the central part was under ‘mixed, unclear, and/or local control’, but also marked as ‘[e]stimated area of influence/presence’ of SSC-K. Lasqoray, Badhan and Dhahar towns were controlled by ‘Autonomous armed forces (unionist)’, as were parts of the eastern and southern areas.<sup>1295</sup>

In contrast, as of 1 April 2023, the SSC-K’s influence was confined to a smaller area in the south. The central and eastern parts of Sanaag, including Dhahar, were largely marked as under mixed control, with no broader SSC-K presence indicated. Lasqoray and Badhan were already under the control of ‘autonomous armed forces’.<sup>1296</sup>

### Conflict dynamics

The conflict dynamics in Sanaag involve multiple actors and may be grouped as follows:

**Dhulbahante vs Isaaq and Somaliland military forces.** Dhulbahante in parts of Sanaag region do not support Somaliland’s independence.<sup>1297</sup> In August 2024, the long-standing conflict between the Dhulbahante and Isaaq sub-clans flared up again in Ceerigaabo and nearby Goof village,<sup>1298</sup> resulting in five deaths.<sup>1299</sup> Habar Yunis militias reportedly also ambushed vehicles carrying Dhulbahante civilians in Ceerigaabo.<sup>1300</sup> In December 2024, Somaliland security forces clashed with Dhulbahante clan members in Ceerigaabo, following a retaliatory killing in late November 2024. Fighting continued as Somaliland forces, backing the Habar Yunis clan, clashed with SSC-K militias. Tensions later shifted outside Ceerigaabo, with Dhulbahante fighters regrouping 20 to 30 km southwest of the city. In January 2025, Somaliland security forces had maintained control of Ceerigaabo, however Dhulbahante clan militias mobilised outside the city.<sup>1301</sup>

**Warsangeli vs Isaaq.** Besides land disputes within the Warsangeli clans, ‘there has been conflict between the Isaaq and Warsangeli over mining rights’.<sup>1302</sup> In January 2025, Horn Observer reported that the Ceerigaabo conflict involved militias from the Warsangeli and Habar Je’lo clans, but had also involved SSC-K and Somaliland forces. That same month, tensions intensified after a declaration by the Warsangeli clan, which condemned the clashes in Ceerigaabo that had resulted in dozens of deaths and significant displacement since November 2024.<sup>1303</sup> By January 2025, Warsangeli clan militias had also mobilised outside the city.<sup>1304</sup>

<sup>1295</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.

<sup>1296</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>1297</sup> Hoehne, M.V., Crisis in Lasanod: Border Disputes, Escalating Insecurity and the Future of Somaliland, African Arguments, 6 February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1298</sup> ACLED, State officials in Somalia crack down on clan militia checkpoints, 30 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1299</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#); Radio Dalsan, Five Killed in SSC-Khaatumo-Somaliland Conflict, 28 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1300</sup> ACLED, State officials in Somalia crack down on clan militia checkpoints, 30 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1301</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1302</sup> Somali Digest (The), Analysis: The risks of Colonel Arre’s return to Somaliland, 23 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1303</sup> Horn Observer, Tensions Escalate in Sanaag Amid Erigabo Conflict, 4 January 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1304</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

**Intra-Isaaq conflicts.** Since 2015, an intra-Isaaq conflict in El Afweyn has periodically flared into violence between Habar Yunis and Habar Je'lo pastoralists over access to pasture and water.<sup>1305</sup> In August 2024, Somaliland security forces clashed with Habar Yunis sub-clan militias following the above mentioned earlier attacks by Habar Yunis on Dhulbahante civilians in Ceerigabo.<sup>1306</sup>

Also, between late September and early October 2023 unspecified clan tensions were reported in Ceerigaabo, leading to minor skirmishes,<sup>1307</sup> while other clashes between rival clan militias were also reported in Ceerigaabo district in March 2025.<sup>1308</sup> According to an October 2023 article by the Somali Digest, unresolved land disputes dating back to the aftermath of the first civil war (from 1981 to 1991) remain a major source of conflict in Ceerigaabo.<sup>1309</sup>

### (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 58 security incidents in Sanaag region, including battles and violence against civilians, causing 121 fatalities. [Figure 22](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period. At district level, Ceerigaabo recorded the most security incidents (45 incidents), followed by Ceel Afweyn district (11 incidents) and Lasqoray district (2 incidents) between April 2023 and 21 March 2025.<sup>1310</sup>

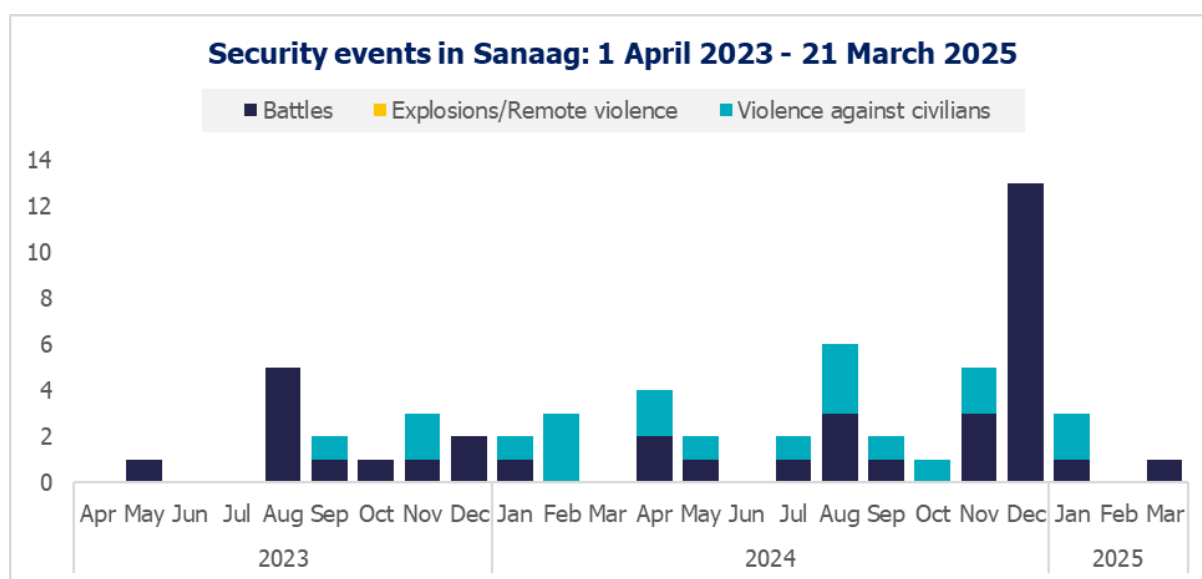


Figure 22. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Sanaag.<sup>1311</sup>

<sup>1305</sup> Somali Digest (The), Analysis: The risks of Colonel Arre's return to Somaliland, 23 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1306</sup> ACLED, State officials in Somalia crack down on clan militia checkpoints, 30 September 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1307</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1308</sup> Mustaqbal Media, Deadly Clan Conflict Erupts in Sanaag, Casualties Reported, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1309</sup> Somali Digest (The), Analysis: The risks of Colonel Arre's return to Somaliland, 23 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1310</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1311</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

ACLED recorded 14 incidents involving both Habar Je'lo Clan (and Sub-Clan Militias) and Habar Yunis Clan (and Sub-Clan Militias) militias (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2'). ACLED also recorded 11 incidents involving both Dhulbahante Clan (and Sub-Clan Militias) and Habar Yunis Clan (and Sub-clan militias). Both Sool, Sanaag and Cayn Militia (SSC) and Somaliland Forces were involved in 6 incidents.

For incidents involving civilian fatalities, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- violent clan disputes broke out in the Ceel Afweyn district<sup>1312</sup> between 25 August 2023 and 30 August 2023, resulting in 19 fatalities, including a six-year-old child, and 26 injuries;<sup>1313</sup>
- on 26 August 2024, a Dhulbahante clan militia member exchanged fire with Somaliland police while resisting arrest in Ceerigaabo, injuring two officers before being killed. The following day, clashes broke out in Goof village between a Dhulbahante sub-clan and the Habar Yunis sub-clan, to which the police officers belonged. This resulted in at least nine deaths, including a civilian businessman;<sup>1314</sup>
- on 10 March 2025, clan fighting in Dooxada Dureere area of Ceerigaabo district resulted in the killing of at least 12 people and the wounding of several others. The fighting affected 'both fighters and civilians nearby'.<sup>1315</sup>

#### Conflict-related displacement

According to the UNHCR PRMN, 22 608 individuals were newly displaced from Sanaag region due to conflict or insecurity in the period from April 2023 to 16 March 2025. Among them, 15 161 IDPs were displaced within Sanaag region, while 7 447 IDPs were displaced to other regions, including Bari, Nugal, Sool, Togdheer, Woqooyi Galbeed. In the same period, 662 individuals arrived from other regions, including Nugal and Togdheer region. Badhan was the district most affected by arrivals from outside the region (460 individuals) during the reference period, while Ceerigaabo was the district most affected by individuals leaving for other regions (6 938). In terms of displacement within Sanaag region, Ceel Afweyn, by a wide margin, was the district most affected by intra-regional IDP departures to other locations within Sanaag region, with 11 700 individuals arriving from other locations within Sanaag (all of whom were displaced within Ceel Afweyn district in August 2023).<sup>1316</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, please see section 2.4.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

In December 2024, UN OCHA reported that violent clashes erupted in Ceerigaabo on 14 December 2024 and continued the next day. The fighting displaced around 43 000 people, many of whom sought refuge in safer areas within Ceerigaabo district. Others fled to different

<sup>1312</sup> Hiiraan Online, Five killed, ten wounded as rival clan militias clash in Sanaag region, 26 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1313</sup> Somalia Protection Cluster, Monthly Update, July/August 2023, 21 September 2023, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1314</sup> ACLED, State officials in Somalia crack down on clan militia checkpoints, 30 September 2024, [url](#); Radio Dalsan, Five Killed in SSC-Khaatumo-Somaliland Conflict, 28 August 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1315</sup> Caasimada, Clan clashes kill 12 in Somalia's Sanaag region, 10 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1316</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

parts of Sanaag, including Ceel Afweyn and Lasqoray, while some reportedly fled to Bossaso, Laas Caanood, Xuddun, and Burco districts.<sup>1317</sup>

#### Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded 6 humanitarian access incidents in Sanaag region in the period from April to December 2023,<sup>1318</sup> and another 6 in 2024.<sup>1319</sup> In the period from January to March 2024, for example, ‘two individuals assaulted a local chief and police officer during a beneficiary registration over disagreements of inclusion/exclusion.’<sup>1320</sup>

UNOCHA reported that the above-mentioned clashes in December 2024 left those displaced in urgent need of food, shelter, water, sanitation, and basic healthcare services. The fighting had completely disrupted humanitarian operations, business activities, and schooling.<sup>1321</sup>

### 2.7.3. Sool, Sanaag and SSC-Khatumo - Checkpoints and road security

In April 2023, the Dhulbahante committee in Laas Caanood announced that traffic between the Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn regions and Somaliland would be suspended, isolating Laas Caanood from the major port of Berbera and hindering traffic between Somaliland and Somalia.<sup>1322</sup>

[Map 4](#) by IPIS shows non-al-Shabaab-controlled checkpoints in Caynabo, Guumeys, Tuulo Samakaab, Faleeryale, and Buuro Wadar in Sool region.<sup>1323</sup> However, checkpoints in the contested regions, notably as a consequence of the conflict in Las Anod, are likely to be many more than those shown on the map.<sup>1324</sup> For an overview on checkpoints at country level see section [1.7 Checkpoints and road security in Somalia](#).

## 2.8. Somaliland

### 2.8.1. Awdal

#### (a) Background

According to a UNOCHA Administrative Reference Map, Awdal region shares international borders with Djibouti and Ethiopia. It borders the Gulf of Aden to the north and the region of

<sup>1317</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Armed Violence in Ceerigaabo town, Sanaag region Flash Update No.1 (as of 18 December 2024), 18 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1318</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1319</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1320</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 01 January to 31 March 2024, 31 March 2024, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1321</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Armed Violence in Ceerigaabo town, Sanaag region Flash Update No.1 (as of 18 December 2024), 18 December 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1322</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1323</sup> IPIS, Checkpoints in Somalia [Map], n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1324</sup> Schouten P., Telephone interview, 13 March 2025

Wogoyi Galbeed to the east. It is divided into four districts: Zeylac, Lughaye, Baki and Borama. The region's capital is Borama.<sup>1325</sup>

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Awdal region at 636 108 (IPC),<sup>1326</sup> and 303 218 (IOM).<sup>1327</sup> Awdal region is inhabited by members of the Gadabursi (Isaaq-Dir)<sup>1328</sup> and Issa clans.<sup>1329</sup> In the port town of Zeylac and throughout the Awdal region, the majority of the population is Gadabursi.<sup>1330</sup>

For additional details on clans in Awdal region, please see section 2.7.1.1 of the [EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (September 2021) and section 2.8.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### **(b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics**

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025 and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Al-Shabaab did not control any territory in Awdal region. The entire region including the cities of Zeylac (Zeila), Lughaye, and Borama was reported to be under the control of the 'Somaliland administration (separatist)'.<sup>1331</sup>

#### Conflict dynamics

In May 2023, clashes between protesters and security forces were reported in different locations in Somaliland, including Borama city,<sup>1332</sup> 'where local clan members have long complained about marginalisation'.<sup>1333</sup>

At a conference in Ottawa, Canada, in September 2023, Gadabursi clan chiefs stated their desire for the Awdal region to secede from Somaliland.<sup>1334</sup> In a declaration all Awdal officers and troops who were currently serving in the Somaliland army were urged to leave to the front and return to Awdal 'in order to liberate it as soon as possible'.<sup>1335</sup> In October 2023, election-related tensions remained simmering, as Gadabursi clan leaders were trying to organise both

<sup>1325</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1326</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1327</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#); IOM notes that 'Regarding the regions in Somaliland state, DTM teams reached a low coverage of the settlements to be assessed. Therefore, the population figures displayed in this report are underestimated and should be interpreted with caution'

<sup>1328</sup> Somali Digest (The), Analysis: The prospect of conflict in the Awdal region, 28 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1329</sup> Daljir, Awdal, the sacrificial lamb, and the Devil's bargain between IOG of Djibouti and Habar Awal clansmen of Somaliland, 23 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1330</sup> Reporter (The), Ethiopia's pursuit of a naval base: Navigating Somalia's clan politics, 4 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1331</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.; PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>1332</sup> Hiiraan Online, Protests turn violent in Borama: demonstrators seek justice for fallen coast guard officer, 8 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1333</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1334</sup> Somali Digest (The), Breaking: Awdal announced it is breaking away from Somaliland, 4 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1335</sup> Somali Digest (The), Breaking: Awdal announced it is breaking away from Somaliland, 4 September 2023, [url](#)

inside and outside of Somaliland.<sup>1336</sup> However, as of April 2025, no further information on this subject could be found. Please see section [2.8.3 Togdheer](#) on information regarding the Somaliland presidential elections in November 2024.

### (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported six security incidents in Awdal region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing one fatality. [Figure 23](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>1337</sup> At district level, Borama recorded three security incidents, followed by Baki district (two incidents) and Zeylac district (one incident).<sup>1338</sup>

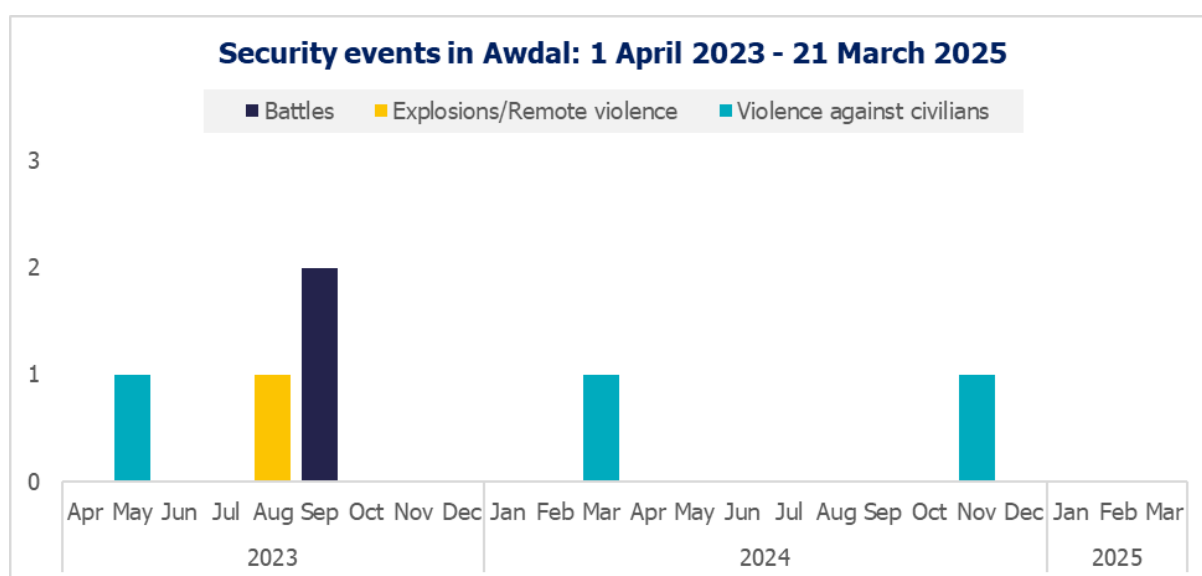


Figure 23. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Awdal.<sup>1339</sup>

Gadabursi (sub-) clan militias were involved in three incidents, while Police Forces of Somaliland were involved in two incidents. The one fatality was recorded in Zeylac district and involved the killing of an off-duty Somaliland police officer, the deputy commander of the Awdal coastal naval forces,<sup>1340</sup> by Somaliland police forces in Lawyacaddo village.<sup>1341</sup>

<sup>1336</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1337</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1338</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1339</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

<sup>1340</sup> VOA Somali, Taliye ku-xigeenkii ciidamada badda xeebta Awdal oo la dilay [The deputy commander of the Awdal coastal naval forces has been killed], 5 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1341</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)



## Conflict-related displacement

According to the UNHCR PRMN, eight individuals were newly displaced from Awdal region due to conflict or insecurity in the period from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025. All were displaced from Borama district to Garowe district, Nugal region in August 2023. In the same period, no individuals arrived from other regions or were displaced within the region.<sup>1342</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, please see section 2.8.1 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

## Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded no humanitarian access incidents<sup>1343</sup> in Awdal region in the period from April to December 2023.<sup>1344</sup> In 2024, two humanitarian access incidents were recorded.<sup>1345</sup>

## 2.8.2. Wogoyi Galbeed

### (a) Background

According to a UNOCHA Administrative Reference Map, Wogoyi Galbeed region shares an international border with Ethiopia, and it borders the Gulf of Aden. It shares internal borders with the regions of Awdal, Sanaag and Togdheer. It consists of three districts: Gebiley, Hargeysa and Berbera. The region's capital is Hargeysa.<sup>1346</sup> Hargeysa is also the capital of Somaliland.<sup>1347</sup> According to the new Somaliland Regions & Districts Self Management (Amendments and Additions) Law (Law No. 23/2019), taking effect on 4 January 2020,<sup>1348</sup> the Southern part of Wogoyi Galbeed region is named Maroodijeex (Marodijeh),<sup>1349</sup> while the Northern part is named Saaxil (Sahil) region.<sup>1350</sup> Law No. 23/2019 also lists Berbera as the capital of Saaxil region.<sup>1351</sup>

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Wogoyi Galbeed region at 1 447 484 (IPC),<sup>1352</sup> and 1 022 984 (IOM).<sup>1353</sup> The Habar Awal, Habar Yunis, and Idagalle

<sup>1342</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1343</sup> The term is used by UNOCHA to describe events or actions that impede humanitarian operations, such as, for example, violence against humanitarian staff, the carjacking of humanitarian vehicles or restrictions on the movement of humanitarian staff or humanitarian supplies. UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1344</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1345</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1346</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1347</sup> Al Jazeera, Breakaway Somaliland holds vote as quest for recognition gathers pace, 13 November 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1348</sup> Somaliland Law, Somaliland Local Government Laws, updated March 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1349</sup> Somaliland Government, Maps & Regions [Map], n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1350</sup> Somaliland Government, Maps & Regions [Map], n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1351</sup> Somaliland, Xeerka Ismaamulka Gobolladda iyo Degmooyinka, Lr. 23/2019 [(Somaliland) Regions and Districts Self-management Law, No. 23/2019], 4 January 2020, [url](#), p. 11; Somaliland Law, Somaliland Local Government Laws, updated March 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1352</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1353</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#). IOM notes that 'Regarding the regions in Somaliland state, DTM teams reached a low coverage of the



clans make up the majority of the population of Wogoyi Galbeed. There are various clans and sub-clans in Hargeysa, including minority groups as well as the Habar Awal, Habar Yunis, Habar Je'lo (Habar Jeclo), and Idagalle.<sup>1354</sup>

### **(b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics**

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025 and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Al-Shabaab did not control any territory in Wogoyi Galbeed region. The entire region, including the cities of Hargeysa and Berbera, was reported to be under the control of the 'Somaliland administration (separatist)'.<sup>1355</sup>

#### Conflict dynamics

In August 2023, clashes between Somaliland forces and Gacaaan Libaah militia were reported.<sup>1356</sup> In August 2024, one person was reportedly killed in election-related clashes between a clan militia 'allegedly upset with electoral proceedings' and security forces in Baligubadle town.<sup>1357</sup>

Please see section [2.8.3\(b\) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics](#) on further information regarding the Gacaaan Libaah militia.

### **(c) Recent security trends**

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 14 security incidents in Wogoyi Galbeed region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 22 fatalities. [Figure 24](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>1358</sup> At district level, Hargeysa recorded the most security incidents (12 incidents), followed by Gebiley and Berbera districts (1 incident each).<sup>1359</sup>

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settlements to be assessed. Therefore, the population figures displayed in this report are underestimated and should be interpreted with caution'

<sup>1354</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 146

<sup>1355</sup> PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.; PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

<sup>1356</sup> Somali Digest (The), 9 Somaliland soldiers killed in clashes with Garhajis militia, 12 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1357</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1358</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1359</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)



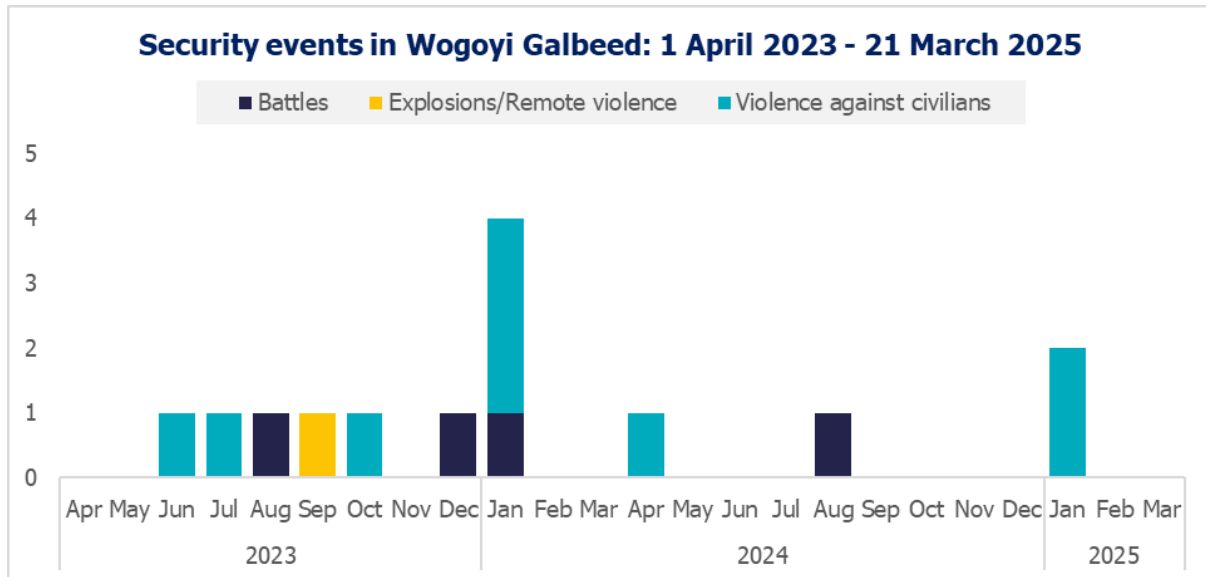


Figure 24. Evolution of ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Wogoyi Galbeed.<sup>1360</sup>

For incidents resulting in fatalities, including civilian deaths, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- on 11 August 2023, 9 Somaliland soldiers were reportedly killed and 17 others injured in clashes between Somaliland forces and Gacaan Libaah militia in Saaxil region;<sup>1361</sup>
- in January 2024, a police officer and a civilian were killed by Ethiopian forces in Qoolbuulalle near the Somaliland-Ethiopia border.<sup>1362</sup>

#### Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, seven individuals were newly displaced from Wogoyi Galbeed due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. All were displaced within Hargeysa district in September 2023. In the same period, 507 individuals arrived from other regions, including Sanaag, Sool and Togdheer regions. All 507 individuals arrived in Hargeysa district (among them, 210 from Laas Caanood and 158 from Burco).<sup>1363</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, please see section 2.8.2 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

<sup>1360</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

<sup>1361</sup> Somali Digest (The), 9 Somaliland soldiers killed in clashes with Garhajis militia, 12 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1362</sup> Caasimada, Caro xooggan oo ka dhalatay dil ay ciidanka Itoobiya ka geysteen xuduuda Somaliland [Strong anger over killings by Ethiopian troops on Somaliland border], 12 January 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1363</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#)



## Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded 12 humanitarian access incidents<sup>1364</sup> in Wogoyi Galbeed region in the period from April to December 2023,<sup>1365</sup> and another 19 in 2024.<sup>1366</sup>

### 2.8.3. Togdheer

#### (a) Background

According to a UNOCHA Administrative Reference Map, Togdheer region shares an international border with Ethiopia. Internally, it borders the regions of Wogoyi Galbeed, Sool, and Sanaag. It consists of four districts: Sheikh, Owdweyne, Burco (or Burao) and Buhodle (or Buuhoodle). The region's capital is Burco (or Burao).<sup>1367</sup> Information related to Buhodle district is covered in section [2.7.1 Sool](#).

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Togdheer region at 860 684 (IPC),<sup>1368</sup> and 363 403 (IOM).<sup>1369</sup> Togdheer region is mainly inhabited by Habar Yunis and Habar Je'lo (also known as Habar Jeclo) clans. Along with other minority sub-clans considered to be a part of the Habar Yunis clan, members of the Idagalle are living in the region west of Burco.<sup>1370</sup> All three<sup>1371</sup> political parties in Somaliland, Kulmiye, Waddani and Kaah, 'are headed by leaders from the Habar Jeclo' clan.<sup>1372</sup> In the November 2024 Somaliland presidential elections, elders of the Habar Je'lo clan 'declared their endorsement of Waddani party's opposition candidate, Abdirahman Abdillahi Cirro',<sup>1373</sup> claiming that former president Muse Bihi Abdi supported his Habar Awal clan while in power. Prominent Habar Je'lo clan members also said they had been the ones most affected by the fighting in Sool (see section [2.7.1 Sool](#)) that broke out under Bihi's presidency.<sup>1374</sup> Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi ('Cirro')

<sup>1364</sup> The term is used by UNOCHA to describe events or actions that impede humanitarian operations, such as, for example, violence against humanitarian staff, the carjacking of humanitarian vehicles or restrictions on the movement of humanitarian staff or humanitarian supplies. UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1365</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1366</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>1367</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1368</sup> IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1369</sup> IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, [url](#). IOM notes that 'Regarding the regions in Somaliland state, DTM teams reached a low coverage of the settlements to be assessed. Therefore, the population figures displayed in this report are underestimated and should be interpreted with caution'

<sup>1370</sup> EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, [url](#), p. 150

<sup>1371</sup> Somaliland National Electoral Commission, 5. Political Party Elections, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1372</sup> International Crisis Group, Somaliland's Peaceful Handover Withstands Neighbourhood Strains, 11 December 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1373</sup> Kaab TV, Habar Jeclo Clan Elders Endorse Waddani Candidate Ahead of Somaliland Election, 10 October 2024, [url](#)

<sup>1374</sup> International Crisis Group, Somaliland's Peaceful Handover Withstands Neighbourhood Strains, 11 December 2024, [url](#)



is a member of the Habar Yunis clan<sup>1375</sup> and won the 13 November 2024 elections with 63.92 % of the vote.<sup>1376</sup>

## **(b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics**

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025 and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Al-Shabaab did not control any territory in Togdheer region. The entire region, including the cities of Owdweyne and Burco, was reported to be under the control of the 'Somaliland administration (separatist)'.<sup>1377</sup> For information regarding control areas in Buhodle district please see section [2.7.1 Sool](#).

The Gacaan Libaah militia is associated with the Habar Yunis clan (Garhajis, Isaaq),<sup>1378</sup> and 'launched its insurgency' in July 2023. The group was based in based in the Ga'an Libaah mountain range.<sup>1379</sup> Another group, the 'so-called Jeegaan alliance' (also known as 'Baha lidoor' clan alliance or Jeegaanta Somaliland)<sup>1380</sup> is a coalition of Habar Je'lo and Habar Awal<sup>1381</sup> (including members of the Isse Muse sub-clan of the Habar Awal) clans.<sup>1382</sup> As of early September 2023, 'Go'da-Weyn, Libi Sagaalo, Haji Salah (Xaaji Saalax), Duruqsi, Hahi (Xaaxi), Biyo Fadhiisinka, Raydab Khaatumo, Go'da Yar, Warabeye (Waraabeeye), Dabagorayaale, Salahley (Sallaxley), Qalo'ato (Qaloocato), and other small settlements' were reportedly controlled by the Gacaan Libaah.<sup>1383</sup> In September 2023, Somaliland President Muse Bihi agreed to a settlement in a long-running election-related dispute and offered to pardon the Gacaan Libaah militia in exchange for disbanding. The group accepted the offer and demobilised.<sup>1384</sup> However, in June 2024, Bihi declared that members of the Gacaan Libaah movement who rebelled against the government in August 2023 would be placed on trial, contradicting the agreement.<sup>1385</sup>

### **Conflict dynamics**

In May 2023, the Somaliland Army responded to inter-clan clashes that erupted in villages near Burco, involving two Isaaq sub-clans,<sup>1386</sup> resulting in two deaths.<sup>1387</sup>

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<sup>1378</sup> Somali Digest (The), Ethnic clashes in Somaliland escalate, threaten civil war, 19 September 2023, [url](#)

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<sup>1381</sup> Former Somaliland President Muse Bihi is a member of the Habar Awal clan. Somali Digest (The), Ethnic clashes in Somaliland escalate, threaten civil war, 19 September 2023, [url](#)

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<sup>1384</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

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<sup>1386</sup> Halqabsi, Samakaab Clashes Between Somaliland and SSC Result in High Casualties, 16 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1387</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)



In July 2023, Somaliland forces clashed with the newly created Gacaan Libaah militia<sup>1388</sup> in Togdheer's Gacaan Libaah mountains.<sup>1389</sup>

In August 2023, Somaliland security forces were ambushed in Godayar district, Togdheer region, by a 'newly-formed militia composed of members of Haber Yonis clan', resulting in the killing of nine Somaliland security force members<sup>1390</sup> and the wounding of seventeen others.<sup>1391</sup> Please also see section [2.8.2 Wogoyi Galbeed](#) as this incident may have been mistakenly attributed to Togdheer region.

Between late September and early October 2023 clan tensions in Togdheer's capital, Burco, and Sanaag's capital, Erigabo, were reported, leading to minor skirmishes.<sup>1392</sup> For example, on 19 September 2023, Habar Yunis clan members clashed with members of the Isse Muse clan, a sub-clan of Habar Awal, the clan former Somaliland President Muse Bihi belongs to.<sup>1393</sup>

No more recent information on conflict dynamics in Togdheer could be found.

### (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 21 security incidents in Togdheer region (without Buhodle district), including battles and violence against civilians, causing 17 fatalities. [Figure 25](#) below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.<sup>1394</sup> At district level, Burco recorded the most security incidents (13 incidents), followed by Owdweyne district (8 incidents).<sup>1395</sup>

<sup>1388</sup> Somali Digest (The), New insurgency inside Somaliland? Unidentified militia clashed with Somaliland forces in Golis Mountains, 30 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1389</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1390</sup> Radio Dalsan, 9 killed in deadly attack by Gaal-Libah rebels in Somaliland's Sahil Region, 12 August 2023, [url](#); SMN, Nine Somaliland police officers killed in rebel ambush attack, 12 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1391</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1392</sup> International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1393</sup> Somali Digest (The), Ethnic clashes in Somaliland escalate, threaten civil war, 19 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>1394</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

<sup>1395</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)





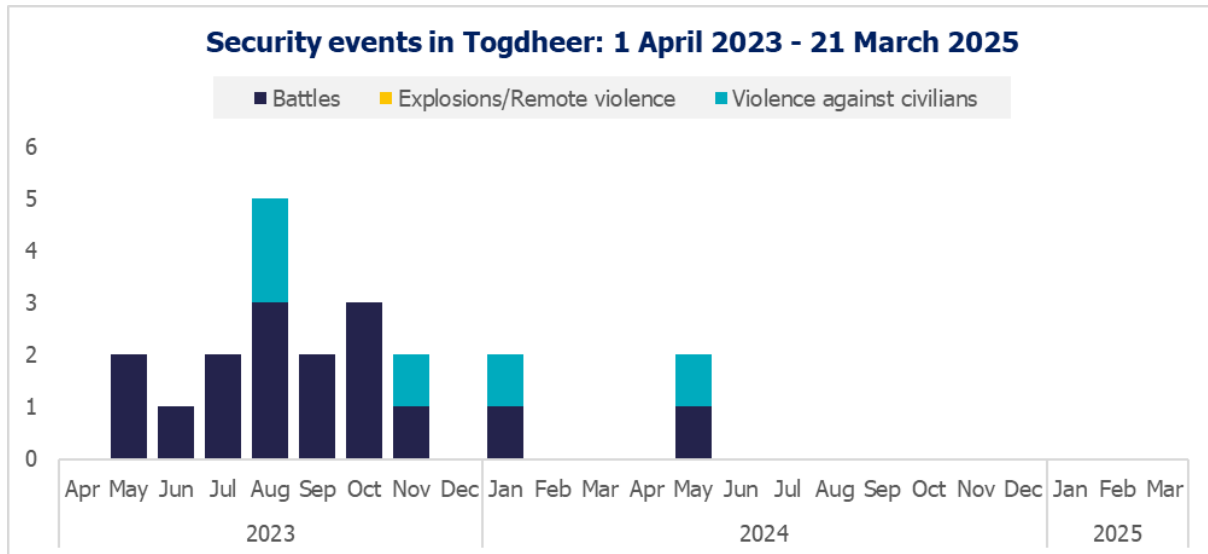


Figure 25. Evolution of ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Togdheer.<sup>1396</sup>

### Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 7 712 individuals were newly displaced from Togdheer (without Buhodle district) due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. Of this group, 7 518 individuals were displaced within the same administrative region (without Buhodle), and of these 7 008 individuals were displaced within Burco. 194 individuals were displaced to other regions, including Sanaag and Wogoyi Galbeed. At district level, Burco recorded the highest number of individuals leaving for other regions (180). All 2 160 individuals arriving from other regions (including Buhodle) arrived in Burco district. 919 arrived from Caynabo district, with 840 of these arriving in September 2023.<sup>1397</sup> For information on conflict-related displacement in Togdheer region prior to April 2023, please see section 2.8.3 of the [EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation](#) (February 2023).

### Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded six humanitarian access incidents in Togdheer region (including Buhodle district) in the period from April to December 2023,<sup>1398</sup> and another six in 2024.<sup>1399</sup> In the period between October and December 2024, for example, the region ‘experienced significant food aid looting, leading to the suspension of a UN-led operation in SSC-Khaatumo administered areas.’<sup>1400</sup>

<sup>1396</sup> EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

<sup>1397</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, [url](#).

<sup>1398</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, [url](#), p. 1.

<sup>1399</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2.

<sup>1400</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: 1 October to 31 December 2024, 2 January 2025, [url](#), p. 2.



#### 2.8.4. Somaliland - Checkpoints and road security

According to [Map 4](#) by IPIS displaying the distribution of violent checkpoint-related incidents in the period 2020-2023, there was one non-al-Shabaab-controlled checkpoint in Beerta village, Toghdheer region, about 25 kilometres southeast of Burco, and others in Hargeisa, Jibaaqe, Abarso, Arabsiyo, Gebilay, Wajale, Dacar Budhuq and Abdaal, in Wogoyi Galbeed region.<sup>1401</sup> However, according to Peer Schouten checkpoints in Somaliland are likely to be many more than those shown on the map.<sup>1402</sup> For an overview on checkpoints at country level see section [1.7](#).

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<sup>1401</sup> IPIS, Checkpoints in Somalia, [map], n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1402</sup> Schouten P., Telephone interview, 13 March 2025



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## Maps

Map. 2. Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, 1 April 2023, [Political Geography Now](#)

Map 3. Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, 31 March 2025, [Political Geography Now](#)

Map 5. IPIS, Distribution of violent checkpoint-related incidents (2020-2023), April 2023, [url](#)

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## Annex 2: Terms of Reference

### Security Situation

Reference period 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2025. The security situation will be addressed building upon, integrating and updating the 2023 EUAA report and query on the security situation in Somalia.

#### 1. General description of the security situation in Somalia

- 1.1. Recent political and security developments (3 pp)
- 1.2. Armed actors (3 pp)
  - 1.2.1. Territorial control map
  - 1.2.2. Al-Shabaab control areas, presence, and influence
  - 1.2.3. Updated list of main actors building upon previous reports (2021, 2023)
  - 1.2.4. Other armed actors
- 1.3. Layers of conflict (2 pp)
- 1.4. Recent overall security trends (5 pp)
  - 1.4.1. Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties
  - 1.4.2. Conflict-related displacement
  - 1.4.3. Other impacts on civilian life (e.g. infrastructure damage, evictions, access to health, access to food)
- 1.5. Criminality (2 pp)
- 1.6. Death penalty, arbitrary arrests and detentions, corporal punishments, prison conditions (2 pp)
- 1.7. Checkpoints and road security in Somalia (2 pp)

#### 2. Regional security situation and trends

- 2.1. Jubbaland
  - 2.1.1. Gedo (3 pp)
    - 2.1.1.1. Background
    - 2.1.1.2. Actors' presence and conflict dynamics
      - 2.1.1.2.1. Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors
      - 2.1.1.2.2. Conflict dynamics
    - 2.1.1.3. Recent security trends
      - 2.1.1.3.1. Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties
      - 2.1.1.3.2. Illustrative security incidents
      - 2.1.1.3.3. Conflict-related displacement
      - 2.1.1.3.4. Other impacts on civilian life (e.g. infrastructure damage, evictions, access to health, access to food)
  - 2.1.2. Middle Juba [same structure as for Gedo] (3 pp)
  - 2.1.3. Lower Juba [same...] (3 pp)
  - 2.1.4. Jubbaland - Checkpoints and road security (1 pp)

#### 2.2. South-West State



- 2.3. Benadir and Mogadishu
- 2.4. Hirshabelle
- 2.5. Galmudug
- 2.6. Puntland
- 2.7. Sool, Sanaag and SSC-Khatumo
- 2.8. Somaliland

The same structure will apply to all (18) administrative regions of Somalia and to all federal member states, including Somaliland. The contested regions between Somaliland and Puntland - Sool and Sanaag, including SSC-Khatumo (newly established autonomous administration) - will be addressed in a separate section.





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