

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

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Land:	Somalia
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Titel:	COI Query. Security situation in Gedo Region (January – 15 November 2019)
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**COI QUERY**

Country of Origin/Topic	Somalia
Question(s)	1. Security situation in Gedo Region (January – 15 November 2019): 1.1 Short description of the region 1.2 Actors, control of territory and presence/activities of non-state armed groups 1.3 Recent security trends, impact on the civilian population and overview of documented incidents with civilians casualties
Date of completion	4 December 2019
Query Code	Q36
Contributing EU+ COI units (if applicable)	

Disclaimer

This response to a COI query has been elaborated according to the [Common EU Guidelines for Processing COI](#) and [EASO COI Report Methodology](#).

The information provided in this response has been researched, evaluated and processed with utmost care within a limited time frame. All sources used are referenced. A quality review has been performed in line with the above mentioned methodology. This document does not claim to be exhaustive neither conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. If a certain 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. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

The information in the response does not necessarily reflect the opinion of EASO and makes no political statement whatsoever.

The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision making authorities. The answer was finalised on the 4 December 2019. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.

COI QUERY RESPONSE

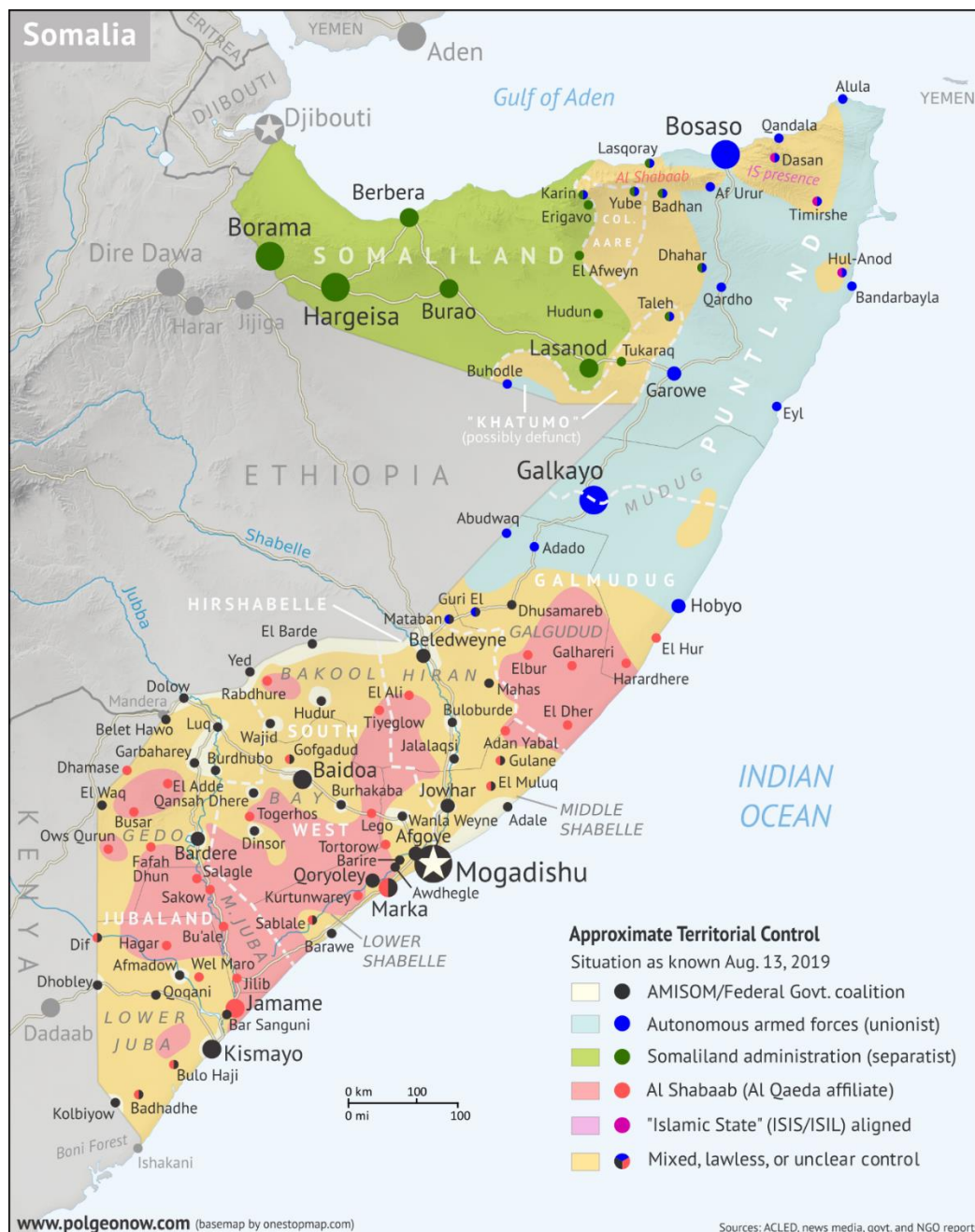
1. Security situation in Gedo Region (January – 15 November 2019)



Map 1: Somalia Administrative Regions¹

¹ UN, Somalia, Map No. 3690 Rev. 10, December 2011 [url](#).

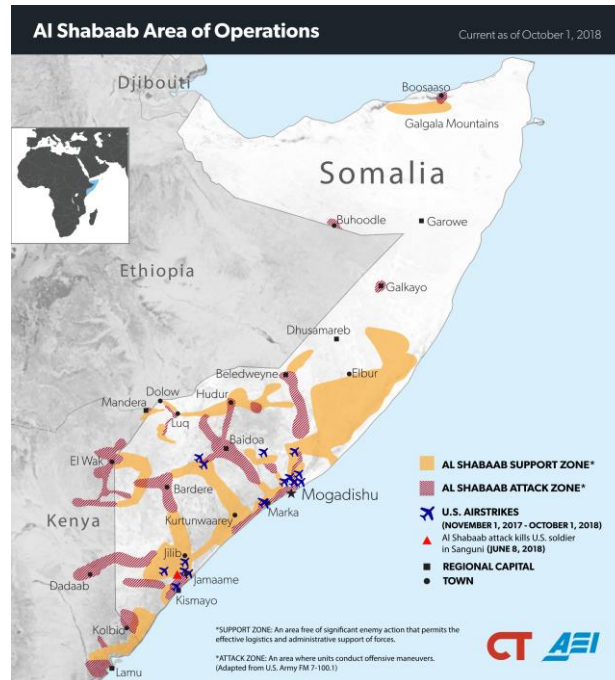
Map 2: For a map showing Al-Shabaab-administered areas, areas of significant Al-Shabaab military presence, and Al-Shabaab's taxation catchment, as of September 2019, it is possible to consult the latest UNSP Panel of Expert on Somalia report at the following link: [url](#).²



Map 3: Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 13 August 2019.³

² The aforementioned map will be referred to as 'Map n. 2' throughout this query response. UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#) p. 49 (Annex 1.1).

³ Political Geography Now, Last Update 13 August 2019, [url](#).



Map 4: Al-Shabaab Areas of Operations as of October 2018.⁴



Map 5: Al-Shabaab Area of Operations as of 2017.⁵

⁴ The American Enterprise Institute, Critical Threats Project, Al-Shabaab Area of Operations, 1 October 2018, [url](#)

⁵ The American Enterprise Institute, Critical Threats Project, Al-Shabaab Area of Operations, 2017, [url](#)

1.1. Short description of Gedo Region

Gedo is the second largest administrative region (gobol) of Somalia. Together with Middle Juba (Juba Dhexe) and Lower Juba (Juba Hoose) it forms the Federal Member State of Jubaland. The regional capital is Garbaharey.⁶ Gedo lies on the Somalia borders with Ethiopia and Kenya, and comprises seven administrative districts: El Wak, Burdhubo, and Bardera in the south, Dolow, Luuq, Beled Hawo, and Garbaharey in the north. The economy relies on livestock and farming, but also has strong inter-regional and international cross-border trade with Kenya and Ethiopia.⁷

1.2. Actors, control of territory and presence/activities of non-state armed groups

For an overview of the security situation in Somalia and in Jubaland in the period antecedent the reference period of this query, please consult, among others, the security reports mentioned in the footnote.⁸ For a general overview of actors' presence and their controlled areas, please see the aforementioned [Map n. 5](#) and [Map n. 2](#)⁹, the latter showing Al-Shabaab-administered areas, areas of significant Al-Shabaab military presence, and Al-Shabaab's taxation catchment as of September 2019.¹⁰

During the reporting period (January – 15 November 2019), there has been a deterioration in relations between the Federal Government of Somalia and various federal member states, including Jubaland, to which Gedo belongs.¹¹ The July - August 2019 electoral process in Jubaland, which led to the de-facto re-election of President Ahmed Mohamed Islam 'Madobe', was characterized by heightened political tensions revolving around the role of Mogadishu (read the Federal Government) in regional electoral processes and the right interpretation of the provisional constitution.¹² Against this backdrop, two regional powers and military actors in the field, engaged in the war against Al-Shabaab, namely Ethiopia and Kenya, proved to have different if not contrasting agenda in the region and to adopt uncoordinated political-military strategies.¹³ Ethiopia is perceived to back the Federal Government of Somalia, while Kenya is supportive of the incumbent president 'Madobe'.¹⁴ This endangers coordination at military level, in the fight against Al-Shabaab, and strains the relations between the different (military) actors engaged in the Gedo region (among other regions), including the Jubaland State Forces.¹⁵

⁶ OCHA, Gedo Region Situation Analysis, October 2012, [url](#), p. 1

⁷ OCHA, Gedo Region Situation Analysis, October 2012, [url](#), p. 1

⁸ Sweden: Lifos, S kerhetssituationen i Somalia – [The Security Situation in Somalia] version 1.0, 3 July 2019, [url](#); EASO, Country of Origin Information Report, Somalia Security Situation, December 2017, [url](#)

⁹ Please note that all borders showed in both maps are approximate.

¹⁰ UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), p. 49 (Annex 1.1)

¹¹ UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), p. 4

¹² UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), p. 23

¹³ Garowe on-line, Somalia: How Ethiopian troops' raid in Jubaland could collapse AMISOM forces, 18 November 2019, [url](#); TRT World, Is Kenya waging war on Somalia's economic lifeline? 18 September 2019, [url](#); UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), pp. 23-24

¹⁴ Garowe on-line, Somalia: How Ethiopian troops' raid in Jubaland could collapse AMISOM forces, 18 November 2019, [url](#); UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), pp. 23-24

¹⁵ Somali Dispatch, Jubaland files complaint against Ethiopian troops in Somalia to the UN, 15 November 2019, [url](#); Garowe on-line, Somalia: Jubaland accuses Ethiopian soldiers of secret plot to overthrow Madobe, 16 November 2019, [url](#); IPI Global Observatory, State-Level Military Forces Can Potentially Turn Tide in War Against al-Shabaab, 7 November 2019, [url](#);

The following military forces/actors have been engaged in the Gedo region during the period January – 15 November 2019:

- **Al-Shabaab:** based on the latest Report of the Panel of Security Experts on Somalia (September 2019), Al-Shabaab is waging an ‘active insurgency’ in parts of the Gedo region, and around the town of El Adde.¹⁶ According to the latest LIFOS security situation report on Somalia, quoting a UN source, ‘Gedo [is] considered to be more or less entirely under the control of the organisation’.¹⁷ Due to continuously shifting attack/control areas and clash sites, information on districts/towns falling under the direct control of Al-Shabaab is difficult to corroborate and keep up-to-date. However, for a general overview please see the aforementioned [Map n. 5](#) and [Map n. 2](#) of the present query as well as the below list of incidents occurred in the region in the period January – 18 November 2019 (Section 1.3).
- **Somali National Army (SNA):** the Somali National Army, also abbreviated as SNAF (Somali National Armed Forces), is engaged in the Gedo region.¹⁸ No information could be found on the number of troops deployed, their control areas, and their military bases.
- **AMISOM:** the military component of the African Union Mission in Somalia comprises of troops drawn from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia. They are deployed in six sectors covering south and central Somalia.¹⁹
 - *Ethiopian Troops:* Ethiopian troops command Sector 3, comprising Gedo, Bay, and Bakool regions.²⁰
 - *Kenyan Troops:* Kenyan forces are responsible for Sector 2, comprising Lower and Middle Juba regions.²¹ They are military present in the Gedo region as well, from where they started to withdraw in the past months, from both military bases as well as other Forward Operating Bases.²² Among others, they pulled out of Busar military base, which for years served as the KDF command centre in the northern sector of Jubaland.²³
- **Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF)** – Reportedly, Ethiopian National Defense Forces have entered the Somali Gedo region at least once in the course of the reference period (January – 15

Shabelle Media Network, Xiisad xoogan oo ka taagan qaybo kamida Gedo [Heavy fighting in parts of Gedo], (unofficial translation by EASO), 2 August 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶ UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), p. 10

¹⁷ Sweden: Lifos, Säkerhetssituationen i Somalia – [The Security Situation in Somalia] version 1.0, 3 July 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸ Xinhua, Somali army kills 8 al-Shabab militants in southern regions, 11 September 2019, [url](#); Shabelle Media Network, Xiisad xoogan oo ka taagan qaybo kamida Gedo [Heavy fighting in parts of Gedo], 2 August 2019, [url](#); Shabelle Media Network, Qarax khasaaro geystay oo ka dhacay gobolka Gedo [Gedo blast kills 3, injures dozens], (unofficial translation by EASO), 9 July 2019, [url](#); Shabelle Media Network, Al Shabaab oo guulo ka sheegtay Dagaalkii Gedo [Al-Shabaab claims victory in Gedo], (unofficial translation by EASO), 17 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁹ AMISOM, AMISOM Military Component, n.a, [url](#)

²⁰ AMISOM, AMISOM Military Component, n.a, [url](#)

²¹ AMISOM, AMISOM Military Component, n.a, [url](#)

²² Dalsan Radio, Somalia: KDF Quietly Pulls Out of Bases in Gedo Over Stand-Off With AMISOM, 1 April 2019, [url](#); The East African, Somalia: Troop drawdown risks reversal of AMISOM gains, 24 March 2019, [url](#); Daily Nation, Somali leaders jittery over KDF's military base pullout, 20 March 2019, [url](#)

²³ Dalsan Radio, Somalia: KDF Quietly Pulls Out of Bases in Gedo Over Stand-Off With AMISOM, 1 April 2019, [url](#); The East African, Somalia: Troop drawdown risks reversal of AMISOM gains, 24 March 2019, [url](#); Daily Nation, Somali leaders jittery over KDF's military base pullout, 20 March 2019, [url](#)

November 2019).²⁴ This is a practice that ENDF have recursively adopted also in previous years in particular emergency cases.²⁵

- **Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF)** – Non-AMISOM KDF have been engaged in Gedo during the reference period, especially by carrying out attacks and air-strikes on telecom towers, with collateral damage on the civilian population.²⁶ KDF forces claim that these attacks are a way to break lifeline communication channels used by Al-Shabaab, but the Somali Federal Government and other sources question these claims.²⁷
- **Jubaland State Forces:** Jubaland Federal State level paramilitary forces, also known as Daraawiish, are engaged in the Gedo region.²⁸
- **AFRICOM:** From 1 January to 17 September 2019, the United States Africa Command conducted 50 publicly acknowledged airstrikes in all Somalia (including Jubaland), targeting Al-Shabaab fighters, compared with 47 in 2018 and 35 in 2017. The presence of American special operations forces in Somalia, especially in Jubaland, is also aimed at conducting advise-and-assist missions.²⁹

1.3. Recent security trends and overview of documented incidents with civilians casualties

Based on ACLED Data, in the period January – 15 November 2019 there have been a total of 67 security incidents in the Gedo region, including battles, violence against civilians, and explosions and/or remote violence, resulting in 80 fatalities.³⁰ Within this context, in the period November 2018 - August 2019 the Panel of Security Experts on Somalia recorded 12 attacks against humanitarian workers, 'the majority of which were abductions for ransom carried out by Al-Shabaab in Gedo region', apparently a new trend observed in the area.³¹ Additionally, on 2 July 2019, Al-Shabaab killed an aid worker from the non-governmental organization (NGO) Lifeline in Buulo Cadey, Gedo.³²

Moreover, 'during the months of May, June and July 2019, multiple incidents of sexual- and gender-based violence were committed against girls and elderly women by regional armed actors' in various Somali regions, including Jubaland.³³ In 2018 only, the Jubaland armed forces were held responsible for 26 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, out of 281 registered cases in Somalia. Of these, 83 cases were attributed to unknown armed actors, 34 to Al-Shabaab and 33 to clan Militias. The Somali

²⁴ Shabelle Media Network, Ethiopian troops detain Somali officials in Gedo province, 6 November 2019, [url](#)

²⁵ VOA, Ethiopian Troops Enter Somalia for Attack on al-Shabab, 8 July 2015, [url](#); VOA, Ethiopian Troops Enter Somalia, Back Offensive Against Al-Shabab, 1 November 2017, [url](#)

²⁶ Shabelle Media Network, Maamulka G/ Gedo oo baaq u diray dowladda Kenya [Gedo administration calls on Kenyan government to act], (unofficial translation by EASO), 28 September 2019, [url](#); Shabelle Media Network, Duqeyn diyaaradeed oo ka dhacday gobolka Gedo [Somalia: Fighting in Gedo], (unofficial translation by EASO), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

²⁷ TRT World, Is Kenya waging war on Somalia's economic lifeline? 18 September 2019, [url](#)

²⁸ IPI Global Observatory, State-Level Military Forces Can Potentially Turn Tide in War Against al-Shabaab, 7 November 2019, [url](#);

²⁹ Military Times, Lightning brigade: Training advanced infantry — not airstrikes — is AFRICOM's primary effort in Somalia, 27 March 2019, [url](#)

³⁰ Acled Dashboard, November 2019, [url](#)

³¹ UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), pp. 5, 35

³² UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), p. 35

³³ UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), p. 42, footnote no. 140

National Army was responsible for 65 cases of rape or gang rape and the Somali Police Force for another 17 cases.³⁴

In the period January – 15 November 2019, the following incidents/major changes to territorial control in the Gedo region have been reported by local media:

- November 18, 2019 - Another incursion of non-AMISOM Ethiopian forces in Jubaland is reported to jeopardize AMISOM (African Union's) mission in Somalia.³⁵
- November 12, 2019 - The Ethiopian forces that are part of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) are reported to have restored the governors of Beled Hawo, Luuq and Dolow districts.³⁶
- November 6, 2019 - Ethiopian troops have arrested officials and military officials of Jubaland state – namely, the governors of Beled Hawo, Luuq and Dolow districts - for refusing to cooperate with the Somali government. These arrests further exacerbates the current political tensions between the leaders of the Somali federal government and Jubaland administration.³⁷
- September 28, 2019 - Gedo administration calls on Kenyan government to stop bombardments in civilian areas to minimize casualties and to stop extremism against civilians.³⁸
- September 2, 2019 - Heavy bombardment of the Gedo region. The shelling targeted educational and medical facilities in Fauxunun (Fafah Dhuun?) area of the region, which is under the control of Al-Shabaab.³⁹
- August 6, 2019 - Military operations in the Bardera district in Gedo region to oust Al-Shabaab from the area.⁴⁰
- August 2, 2019 - Tensions and heavy fighting between armed forces, notably KDF and the SNA, due to lack of cooperation between the two sides.⁴¹
- July 9, 2019 - Gedo blasts kills 3, injures dozens: a landmine – supposedly addressed to General Abas Ibrahim Gurey, commander of the army in the area – hits civilians in Kurtun area.⁴² Additionally, a car bomb exploded in the town of El-Wak.⁴³
- July 2, 2019 - Somalia: Life Line aid worker killed in Gedo region.⁴⁴
- July 1, 2019 - Government troops carry out operations in the Bardera district in the Gedo region.⁴⁵

³⁴ UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), p. 42, footnote no. 139

³⁵ Muqdisho Online, How Ethiopian Troops' Raid could collapse AMISOM forces, 18 November 2019, [url](#)

³⁶ Shabelle Media Network, Itoobiya oo soo celisay mas'uuliyiin ay ka wadatay Gedo [Ethiopia Returns Officials in Gedo], (unofficial translation by EASO), 12 November 2019, [url](#)

³⁷ Shabelle Media Network, Ethiopian troops detain Somali officials in Gedo province, 6 November 2019, [url](#)

³⁸ Shabelle Media Network, Maamulka G/ Gedo oo baaq u diray dowladda Kenya [Gedo administration calls on Kenyan government to act], (unofficial translation by EASO), 28 September 2019, [url](#)

³⁹ Shabelle Media Network, Duqeyn xoogan oo ka dhacday gobolka Gedo [Heavy bombardment of the region], (unofficial translation by EASO), 2 September 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁰ Shabelle Media Network, Dhaq dhaqaaqyo ciidan oo laga dareemayo gobolka Gedo [Military operations reported in Gedo region], (unofficial translation by EASO), 6 August 2019, [url](#)

⁴¹ Shabelle Media Network, Xiisad xoogan oo ka taagan qaybo kamida Gedo [Heavy fighting in parts of Gedo], (unofficial translation by EASO), 2 August 2019, [url](#)

⁴² Shabelle Media Network, Qarax khasaaro geystay oo ka dhacay gobolka Gedo [Gedo blast kills 3, injures dozens], (unofficial translation by EASO), 9 July 2019, [url](#)

⁴³ Shabelle Media Network, Qarax khasaaro geystay oo ka dhacay gobolka Gedo [Gedo blast kills 3, injures dozens], (unofficial translation by EASO), 9 July 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Shabelle Media Network, Madaxdii hay'adda Life Line oo lagu dilay gobolka Gedo [Somalia: Life Line leader killed in Gedo region], (unofficial translation by EASO), 2 July 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁵ Shabelle Media Network, Ciidamada dowladda oo howlgallo ka sameeyay G/Gedo [Government troops carry out operations in Gedo] (unofficial translation by EASO), 1 July 2019, [url](#)

- June 12, 2019 - Al-Shabaab militants surrender to KDF in Gedo.⁴⁶
- June 10, 2019 - SNA forces take over control of Bardera area in Gedo region.⁴⁷
- May 17, 2019 - Fights opposing Somali government forces, Jubaland and Ethiopia, on one side, and Al-Shabaab occurred in the area near Garbaharey.⁴⁸
- May 1, 2019 - Blasts in the outskirts of the Gedo region, in Libaaxlow, Shabeelow, and Kurtuun Dhooble villages.⁴⁹
- April 23, 2019 - A senior Al-Shabaab official known as Aden Obe surrendered near Bardera in Gedo region.
- April 20, 2019 - Somali army repels Al-Shabaab attack in Gedo region.⁵⁰
- March 21, 2019 - Explosions on the outskirts of Gedo region, Busar, targeting Kenyan and Jubbaland troops.⁵¹
- March 19, 2019 – Al-Shabaab took over Busar village in Gedo region after Kenyan forces withdrew.⁵²
- March 13, 2019 - Fightings in Gedo: airstrikes allegedly carried out by Kenya's fighter jets, in the area of El Wak.⁵³
- March 5, 2019 - Government troops clash with Al-Shabaab in Busar, Gedo region.⁵⁴
- March 2, 2019 – Al-Shabaab took over Fafah Dhun village in southwestern Somalia's Gedo region after AMISOM troops withdrew.⁵⁵
- January 1, 2019 - Somali troops executed six militants in Gedo region on 31 December 2018.⁵⁶

⁴⁶ Shabelle Media Network, Al-Shabaab militants surrender to KDF in Gedo, 12 June 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁷ Shabelle Media Network, Ciidamada DFS oo la wareegay deegaano ka tirsan G/Gedo [TFG forces take over control of Gedo region], (unofficial translation by EASO), 10 June 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁸ Shabelle Media Network, Al Shabaab oo guulo ka sheegtay Dagaalkii Gedo [Al-Shabaab claims victory in Gedo], (unofficial translation by EASO), 17 May 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁹ Shabelle Media Network, Duqeymo xoogan oo ka dhacay gobolka Gedo [Blasts in the Gedo region], (unofficial translation by EASO), 1 May 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁰ Shabelle Media Network, Somali army repels Al-Shabaab attack in Gedo region, 20 April 2019, [url](#)

⁵¹ Shabelle Media Network, Qaraxyo Ka Dhacay Deegaan Hoos Taga Gobolka Gedo, (unofficial translation by EASO), 21 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵² Goobjoog News, Kenyan forces pull out, Al-Shabaab take charge in Gedo, 19 March 2019, [url](#); Shabelle Media Network, Al-Shabaab recaptures town in Gedo Kenyan military retreat, 19 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵³ Shabelle Media Network, Duqeyn diyaaradeed oo ka dhacday gobolka Gedo [Somalia: Fighting in Gedo], (unofficial translation by EASO), 13 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁴ Shabelle Media Network, Faah faahinno ka soo baxaya dagaal ka dhacay G/Gedo [Somalia: Govt troops clash with Al-Shabaab in Gedo region], (unofficial translation by EASO), 5 March 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁵ Garowe Online, Al-Shabab regains town in Somalia as Kenya pulls troops, 2 March 2019, [url](#)

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