

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1064
Land:	Somalia
Kilde:	ACLED
Titel:	Situation Update, March 2024. Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories Amid Run-up to State Elections
Udgivet:	28. marts 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	29. maj 2024

Situation Update | March 2024

Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories Amid Run-up to State Elections

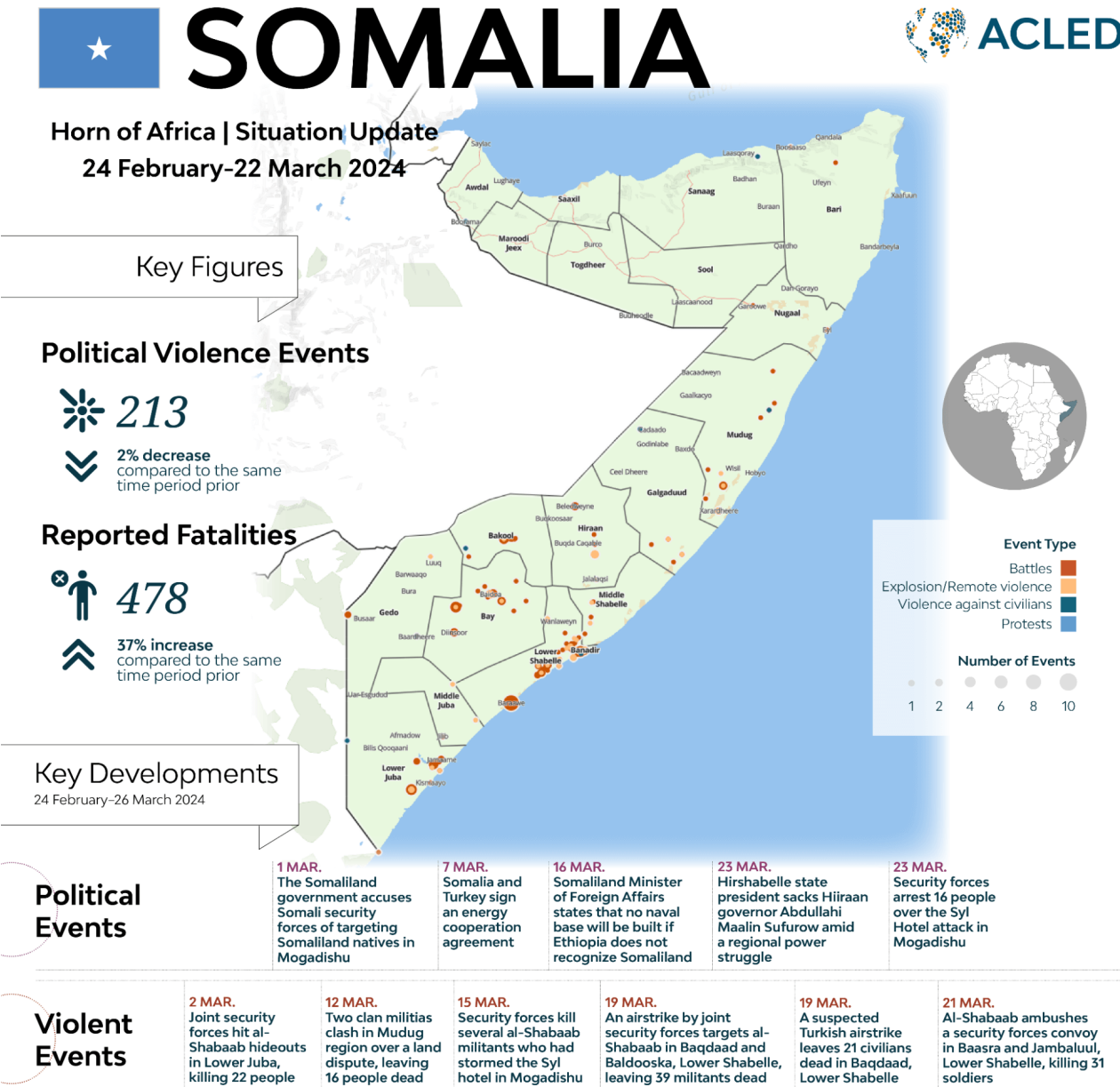
28 March 2024

[< Back to Somalia Hub](#)

Somalia at a Glance: 24 February-22 March 2024

VITAL TRENDS

- ACLED records more than 210 political violence events and at least 478 reported fatalities from 24 February to 22 March 2024. Most political violence centered in Lower Shabelle.
- Lower Shabelle region had the highest number of reported fatalities, with at least 158 recorded during the reporting period. Lower Juba region followed, with 153 reported fatalities. This is due to armed clashes between al-Shabaab and the Jubaland security forces, and the Somali National Army (SNA).
- The most common event type was battles, with over 140 events, followed by explosions/remote violence, with 167 events. This was due to al-Shabaab attacks against security forces and the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) bases, as well as security force operations against al-Shabaab militants.



In February, the Galmudug Safety Forum — a group of state presidential candidates and intellectuals from Galmudug — urged the state administration to announce the schedule of the forthcoming Galmudug state presidential election. However, after the administration responded with silence, members of the forum began to accuse State President Ahmed Abdi Karie (QoorQoor) of fueling inter-clan conflict following increased fighting over access to grazing land and local feuds broke out in Mudug and Galgaduud regions.²

In neighboring Hirshabelle, which is also set to hold a presidential election, the state government ordered a new cabinet reshuffle ahead of the vote.³ The administration appointed five ministers in Jowhar town, sacked the longest-serving district commissioner of the Middle Shabelle region, and removed the mayor of Belet Weyne town in the Hiiraan region.⁴ These appointments came amid simmering tensions over power-sharing arrangements between the Hawadle and Abgal clans. After the Hirshabelle state president [sacked](#) Hiiraan Governor Ali Jeyte Osman on 16 June, the outgoing governor refused to relinquish his position and announced the secession of Hiiraan from Hirshabelle. On 24 June 2023, Ali Jeyte created a state-sanctioned militia with the backing of several federal members of parliament from the Hawadle clan who are at odds with the Hirshabelle administration.

Local elites from Hiiraan rejected the recent appointments and accused the Hirshabelle deputy president of bias against their region.⁵ They also blamed Hirshabelle President Ali Abdullahi Hussein — also known as Ali Gudlawe — for stoking divisions within the Hawadle clan, pitting sub-clans against each other. Ahead of the upcoming state elections, these political struggles risk sparking renewed tensions between the Hawadle clan in Hiiraan and Abgal clan in Middle Shabelle, and could lead to a new secessionist push of Hiiraan region from Hirshabelle state over [claims to power sharing, tax, and access to grazing land](#). In particular, the dispute over power-sharing is linked to a previous agreement that the state presidents come from Hawadle clan, while the deputy comes from the Abgal clan, and that the state capital is relocated to Jowhar in Middle Shabelle, home to the Abgal clan. This agreement was violated when the incumbent Hirshabelle President Ali Gudlawe, from the Abgal clan, was elected on 12 November 2020.⁶

Al-Shabaab's Territorial Regains Amid Withdrawal of Security Forces in Galmudug

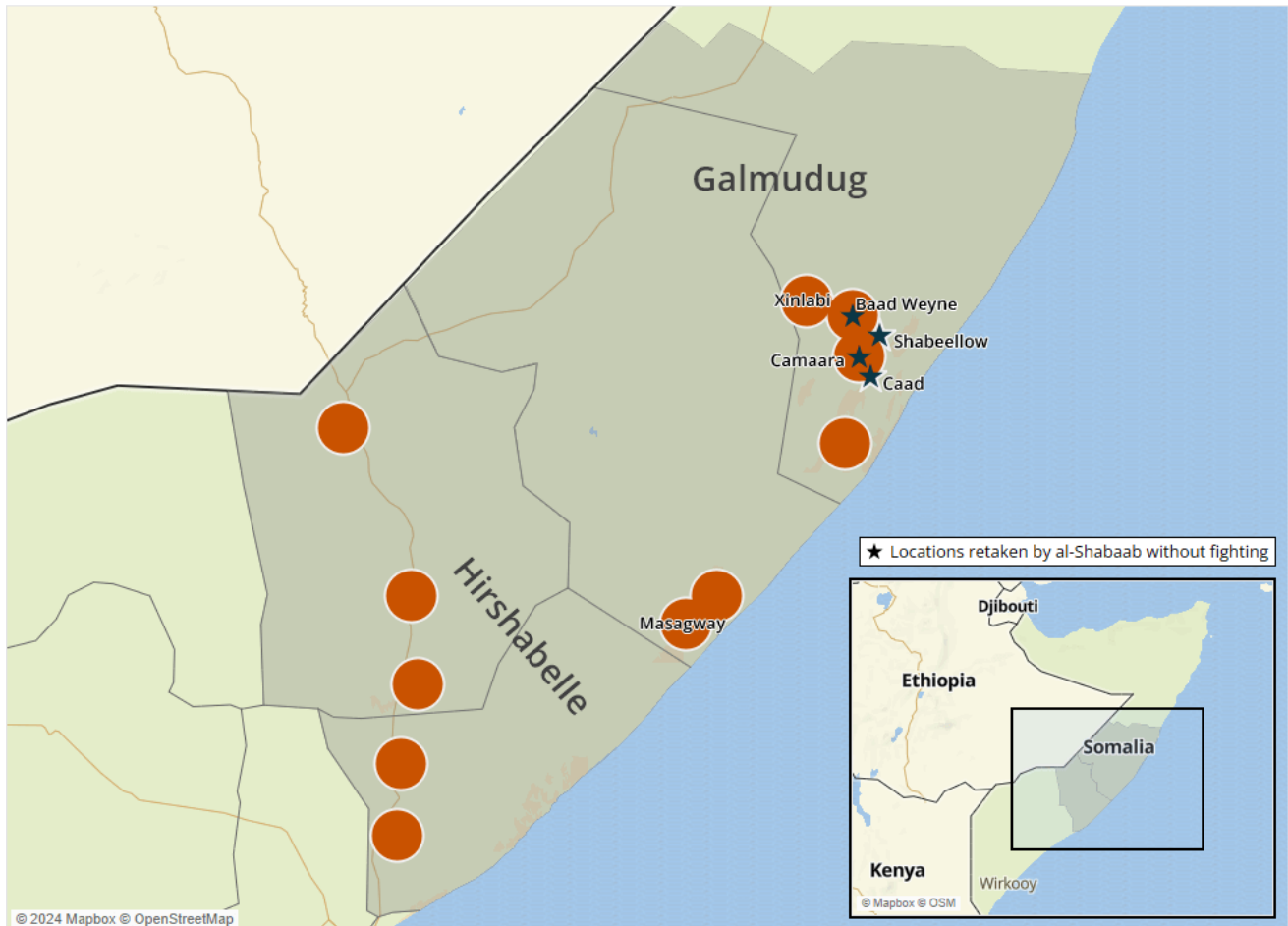
In Galmudug and Hirshabelle states, the SNA also suffered significant setbacks, which led al-Shabaab militants to regain control of several areas.⁷ Security forces withdrew from several bases, reflecting internal tensions over logistics failures, corruption, and power struggles. In fact, the SNA leadership is rife with factionalism. In September 2023, Minister of Defense Abdulkadir Mohamed Noor (Jamac) and SNA chief General Ibrahim Sheikh Muhuddin disagreed on the planning and logistics of the counter-insurgency operation. The federal government has failed to resolve the dispute, creating a leadership crisis that has sparked frustration among the troops and caused operational delays. Among them is the postponement of the planned liberation of Galhareeri, an al-Shabaab stronghold in Galgaduud region.⁸

Al-Shabaab's outreach activities also contributed to the army's setbacks. The group continued its efforts to [engage with clan elders and clan militias](#) that share bases with the security forces in Mudug and Galgaduud regions, aiming to persuade them to withdraw their support for the counter-insurgency operation and defect to al-Shabaab.⁹ These efforts yielded results on 11 March, when several members of local clan militias announced leaving the Xarardheere base and backing al-Shabaab in Jowlo, Mudug region.¹⁰

Against this backdrop, al-Shabaab has recaptured key strategic towns in Mudug and Galgaduud regions without fighting. Among the locations successfully retaken by the group are Caad, Shabeelow, Camaara, Masagaway, Xinlabi, and Badaweyne (*see map below*). Additionally, security forces were divided on the decision to withdraw from frontline bases, in some places leading to armed clashes between the security forces. On 7 March, at least one soldier died amid clashes that erupted between security forces near Camaara village in Mudug. The security forces clashed after a section of the troops planned to withdraw from a base near the village.¹¹

Al-Shabaab Political Violence in Hirshabelle and Galmudug States

24 February - 22 March 2024



The political struggle in Hirshabelle state also reverberated on the frontline. On 12 March, the Djibouti National Defense Forces — a member of the ATMIS — withdrew from the Lamagalay administration center in Belet Weyne town amid tension between Hiiraan state militia and Hirshabelle over the control of the center and other administration areas in the town.¹² On 14 March, clashes between Hiiraan state militia and the SNA and Hirshabelle police broke out at the front gate of the Lamagalay administration building in Belet Weyne town. The militia took control of the regional administration building. At least six people were reportedly killed, and several others were injured. These disputes created instability and weakened the government's ability to effectively combat al-Shabaab, allowing the militants to operate with relative impunity.

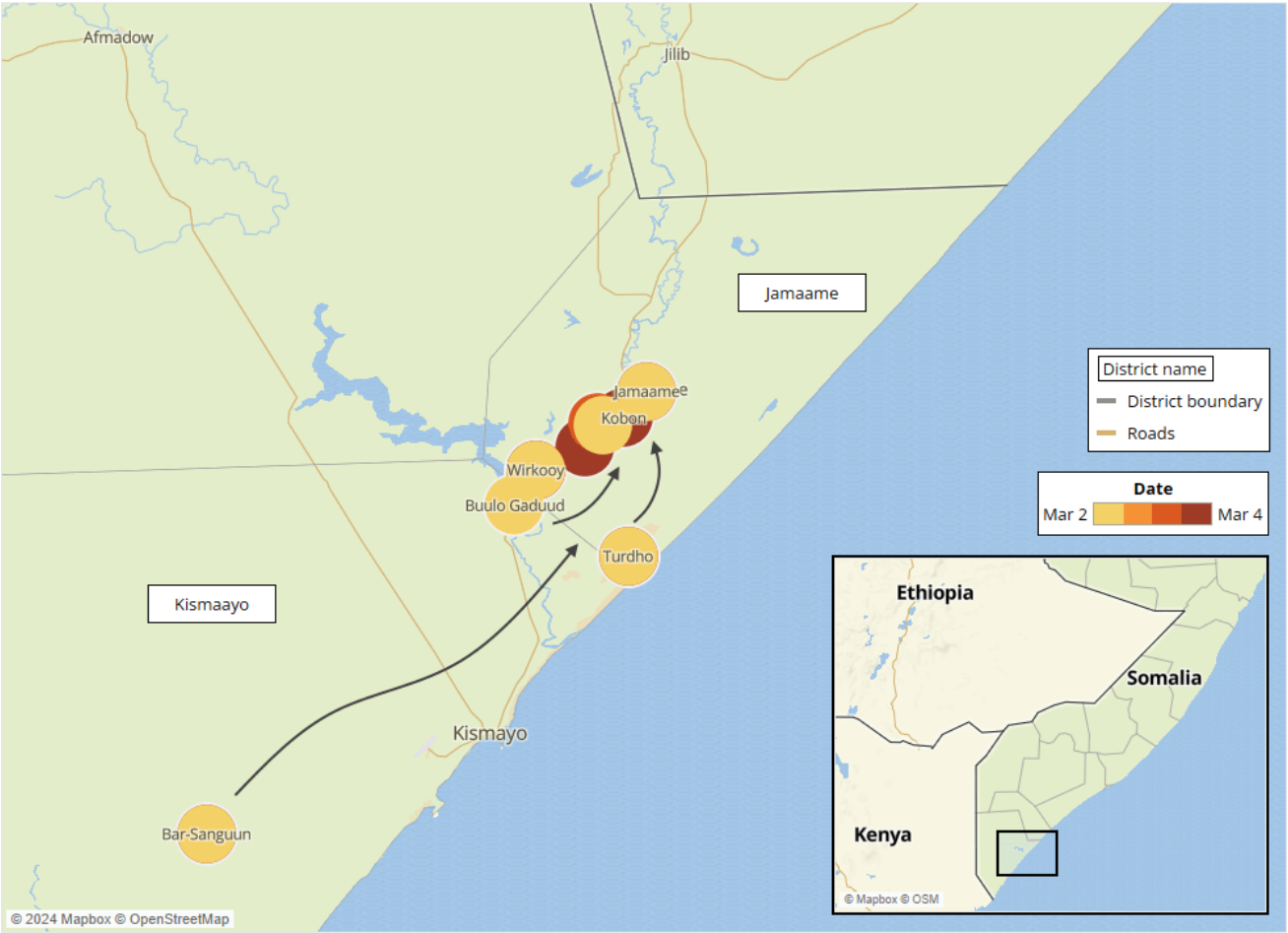
Growing mistrust within the Somali civilian and military institutions, and frustration among allied clans, raise concerns over possible delays in the military campaign against al-Shabaab in central Somalia.¹³ For its part, the militant group is taking advantage of election-related disputes and infighting within the army to reverse the advances made by the SNA in recent months. The militants are especially focusing on the Ceel Buur and Ceel Dheer districts, situated along the border between Middle Shabelle and Galgaduud, and plan to defend the strongholds in Galhareeri and Ceel Buur. The government's fight against al-Shabaab was more prolonged than planned at the start of the counter-insurgency operation, with security forces divided along factional and clan lines now struggling to contain al-Shabaab.

Counter-insurgency Operations in Lower Juba Region

Despite the troubles in central Somalia, in early March, Somali security forces launched a new round of the counter-insurgency operation in Lower Juba. A joint military operation consisting of army troops and Danab special forces¹⁴ targeted al-Shabaab positions in the villages along the River Juba, while al-Shabaab militants advanced toward villages that were affected by the El Niño rains in November and December, where several locals were displaced. The four-day military operation, supported by the United States military command, started in Kismaayo district and advanced in a northeast direction toward Jamaame (*see map below*). On 2 March, US forces conducted an airstrike against al-Shabaab's position near Buulo Gaduud village, reportedly killing two militants. After the airstrike, the troops crossed the Juba River to destroy al-Shabaab bases and captured several militants. On 4 March, joint security forces conducted an operation targeting al-Shabaab positions in Baxar Saafka and Musa Haji village, Turdho, and Malayle

Country-insurgency Operations in Lower Juba

1 - 4 March 2024



Categories: Analysis , Horn of Africa 28 March 2024

Regions: Africa

Tags: Somalia

Share

Related

Sudan Situation

Update: May 2024 |

The RSF sets its eyes

on North Darfur

17 May 2024

Sun Belt showdown:

Exploring swing state

dynamics in Arizona,

Nevada, and Georgia

16 May 2024

Beyond Mexico's

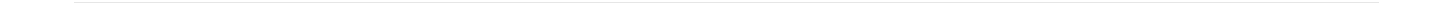
criminal gangs:

Hybrid violence in

Puebla, Mexico, and

Veracruz states

15 May 2024



The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) is a disaggregated data collection, analysis, and crisis mapping project. ACLED is the highest quality and most widely used real-time data and analysis source on political violence and protest around the world. Practitioners, researchers, journalists, and governments depend on ACLED for the latest reliable information on current conflict and disorder patterns.

ACLED is a registered non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status in the United States.

Please contact admin@acleddata.com with comments or queries regarding the ACLED dataset.

Register

Data Export Tool

Codebook

Contact

Careers

Cookie Policy

Privacy Statement

Opt-out preferences

Ethiopia Peace Observatory

Cabo Ligado (Mozambique)

© 2024 ACLED. All Rights Reserved.