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Information on the security situation

Agence France Presse in October 2023 points out that:

“Al-Qaeda-affiliated al-Shabaab has been waging an insurgency against the internationally backed Somali government since 2007 to establish Islamic law in the Horn of Africa country. Driven out of major cities in 2011-2012, they remain in large rural areas in the country's centre and north, from where they regularly carry out attacks against security, political and civilian targets...Government forces and clan militias, backed by African Union forces and US airstrikes, have been conducting a military offensive in central Somalia for more than a year, reclaiming territory. Despite setbacks, al-Shabaab has continued to carry out deadly attacks” (*Agence France Presse* (21 October 2023) *Six killed in Somalia suicide bombing*).

A publication issued in October 2023 by the *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project* notes that:

“From 9 September to 13 October 2023, ACLED records 279 political violence events and 1,752 reported fatalities in Somalia. Political violence has increased by over 80% in Hirshabelle and Galmudug states over the past 10 weeks – since the government officially launched Operation Black Lion against al-Shabaab on 6 August – compared to the 10 weeks prior” (*Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project* (20 October 2023) *Somalia: Al-Shabaab Strikes Back at Local Administrators*, p.1).

In October 2023 the *United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia* points out that:

“Conflicts in Somalia continue to take a heavy toll on civilians. Last year, we saw the largest increase in civilian casualties since 2017. Sadly, early data indicate a similar trend in 2023, with 1,289 civilian casualties recorded so far. This is partly attributable to Al-Shabaab attacks but also the conflict in Laascaanood” (*United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia* (19 October 2023) *Statement by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Catriona Laing to the Security Council on the situation in Somalia*, p.3).

A report issued in October 2023 by the *United Nations Security Council* comments on the:

“...security front...[and] the continuing threat posed by Al-Shabaab...that despite the initial success of the Somali National Army's offensive in taking significant territory, they have since faced setbacks and operational challenges. As Government forces focus on regrouping, reinforcing, and reorganizing, Al-Shabaab has increased the use of 107-millimetre rockets in Mogadishu and conducted targeted attacks on high-profile Somali politicians. The conflicts have extracted a mounting civilian toll, with 1,289 civilian casualties recorded in 2023 so far, she added” (*United Nations* (19 October 2023) *As African Union Mission in Somalia Draws Down, Al-Shabaab Remains Threat to Country, Region, Special Representative Tells Security Council*, p.1).

In October 2023 *United Nations Security Council* states that:

“Activities by Somali authorities to counter Al-Shabaab continued in central and southern Somalia throughout the reporting period. In August, Somali security forces launched an offensive to retake areas long held by Al-Shabaab in Galmudug...During the reporting period, 605 security incidents were recorded, including 173 incidents of terrorism” (United Nations Security Council (13 October 2023) *Situation in Somalia*, p.3).

In October 2023 *Amnesty International* states that:

“The escalation of armed conflict between Al-Shabaab and the Somali authorities, with the support of allied regional and international forces, continues to have a devastating impact on civilians” (Amnesty International (9 October 2023) *Somalia: Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Somalia*).

In October 2023 the *United Nations Security Council* states that:

“Al-Shabaab remains the most immediate threat to the peace, security and stability of Somalia. Despite ongoing efforts by Somali and international forces to curb Al-Shabaab's operational capacity, the group's ability to carry out complex, asymmetric attacks in Somalia remains undiminished. Nevertheless...the offensive has dented Al-Shabaab's ability to govern and exert influence over newly liberated territory” (United Nations Security Council (2 October 2023) *Final report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia (October 2023)*, p.2).

In September 2023 the *Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project* notes that:

“From 22 July to 8 September 2023, ACLED records nearly 375 political violence events and over 1,500 fatalities in Somalia. Political violence has increased by over 70% in Hirshabelle and Galmudug states over the past month compared to the month prior, after the government officially launched the second phase of the counterinsurgency operation against al-Shabaab on 6 August. Security forces have managed to inflict heavy casualties on al-Shabaab militant” (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (15 September 2023) *Somalia: The Government and al-Shabaab Vie for the Support of Clan Militias*, p.1

A report published in August 2023 by *United Nations Human Rights Council* states that:

“During the reporting period, the security situation remained a serious concern, with sustained attacks by Al-Shabaab, despite the presence of Somali security forces and regional forces. During the period 8 February–7 June 2023, 935 security-related incidents were recorded in the country, including 355 incidents of terrorism...” (United Nations Human Rights Council (21 August 2023) *Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, p.5).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. All

COI Query Responses are compiled in line with the Common EU Guidelines (2008) and the EUAA Report Methodology (2023). This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. Please refer to all documents cited.

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