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# Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Somalia – January to June 2023

30 June 2023

## 02 January 2023

### **Somaliland: well-known journalist released from prison**

The journalist Abdimaalik Muse Coldoon was released from prison in Hargeysa, Somaliland, on 22.12.22. He was imprisoned in August 2021 and acquitted by the Woqooyi Galbeed Regional Court in February 2022. However, the prosecutor appealed the decision. His arrest came after he accused the Hargeisa Cultural Centre of advocating the spread of Christianity and same-sex marriage. Persons close to the investigation said he was being investigated for links to al-Shabaab.

### **Somaliland: protests in Las Anod**

At least 20 people have reportedly been killed and dozens injured in several days of clashes that erupted between security forces and protesters in Las Anod (bordering Puntland) since 27.12.22. The protesters are accusing the Somaliland government of failing to provide security for civilians and are demanding an administrative takeover by neighbouring Puntland. The protests were triggered by the assassination of a local politician by unknown individuals on 26.12.22.

### **Freedom of the press**

In its latest media directive, the Somali government reportedly stipulated that local news outlets would have to submit content for approval before broadcasting. Several media companies, including Risala Media Corporation, have reportedly been verbally instructed to do so. In October 2022, a crackdown on media outlets publishing al-Shabaab-related propaganda coverage was announced as part of the military offensive against al-Shabaab (cf. BN of 10.10.22). Media professionals view the new measures as further restrictions on their independence.

On 22.12.22, Mustaf Ali Adow, the editor-in-chief, and three other journalists at Radio Hiiraanweyn in Hirshabelle State were arrested and the station was taken off the air after they reported that al-Shabaab was attacking rural areas after local militias fighting them reportedly withdrew due to pay-related issues.

On 25.12.22 and 28.12.22, a total of five journalists were arrested in Adado (Galmudug) and in Mogadishu, including employees of Risala Media Corporation, and were released a few hours later. The reason for the arrests was allegedly critical reporting, including an interview with clan elders who had spoken out in favour of al-Shabaab.

### **US missile attack**

On 23.12.22, at least six al-Shabaab fighters were killed in a U.S. military airstrike in Adale (Middle Shabelle region), according to a statement issued by U.S. Africa Command (U.S. AFRICOM). The attack was described as an act of "self-defence" and was reportedly carried out at the request of the Somali government. The attack is the third drone strike to be carried out within ten days. As recently as 22.12.22, the Somali government had announced that the region had been completely liberated from al-Shabaab.

### **Violent clashes in Baidoa**

Violent clashes broke out in Baidoa (Bay region) on 23.12.22 between the South West Administration Forces and the South West Security Forces, which support the opposition. Militias reportedly joined ranks with the security forces. Tensions between opposition candidates and incumbent South West State (SWS) President Abdiiaziz Laftagareen had risen in recent weeks after opposition candidates refused to recognise the extension of the SWS parliament until December 2023. The Somali federal government is pushing for mediation between the two sides. At least ten people are reported to have been killed in the clashes.

### **09 January 2023**

#### **Several persons killed in bomb blasts**

At least 35 persons were killed and at least 40 others were wounded in two car bombings carried out in the city of Mahas (Hiiraan region) on 04.01.2013. Most of the victims were civilians. The homes of Mumin Mohamed Halane, the mayor of Mahas, and Mohamed Abukar Jacfar, a member of the federal parliament, were reportedly targeted in the attack. Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Al-Shabaab is also believed to be responsible for an attack carried out on an army base near the town of Runirgod (Middle Shabelle region) on 06.01.2013 in which at least seven soldiers and several assailants were reportedly killed. According to army sources, the town was the militant group's last stronghold in the region.

#### **Civilians kidnapped**

According to reports, the number of civilians kidnapped in the Hiiraan region is once again on the rise. Nine civilians were reportedly abducted, for instance, near Dheenweyne on 02.01.23 and 20 farmers belonging to the Hawadle clan were abducted near Beledweyne on 04.01.23.

### **16 January 2023**

#### **At least 15 killed in al-Shabaab bombings**

At least 15 persons were killed and more than 50 were injured in three bomb attacks that were carried out in central Hirshabelle state on 14.01.23, according to official sources. In the town of Bulobarde, a suicide bomber killed at least 11 people when he detonated a car bomb near a police station and the African Union peacekeepers' base. In the town of Jalalaqsi, two bombings occurred almost simultaneously. One car bomb exploded near a Somali military checkpoint, another near a school. At least four people are reported to have been killed.

### **23 January 2023**

#### **SNA recapture strategic towns**

On 16.01.23, the government announced that the Somali National Army (SNA) had retaken the port town of Harardheere (Mudug region) with the support of local militias. Harardheere is considered to be the most strategically important town in Galmudug and had been controlled by al-Shabaab since 2010. This was a "historic victory", the government said.

According to official reports, the town of Galcad (Galguduud region) was also recaptured. After several days of control over Galcad, heavy fighting reportedly broke out between the SNA and al-Shabaab after a car bomb detonated at a military base in Galcad on 20.01.2013. Several SNA members, including the deputy commander of the Danab forces, Hassan Tuurre, were reportedly killed in the attack. The SNA was then supported by US Africa Command with an airstrike, in which, according to US reports, around 30 al-Shabaab fighters were killed. Afterwards, the area was reportedly brought back under military control. According to official figures, at least 100 al-Shabaab fighters were killed in the fighting. Al-Shabaab, by contrast, claims to have killed dozens of soldiers. It is not possible to independently verify the number of casualties.

#### **Attack on military base in Hawadley**

On 17.01.23, al-Shabaab fighters carried out an attack on the military base in Hawadley, about 60 km north of Mogadishu. At least seven soldiers were reportedly killed when a vehicle loaded with explosives was blown up

before the camp was attacked by gunmen. The military base had been recaptured by government forces and al-Shabaab clan militias in October 2022.

#### **At least eight killed in attack on government office in Mogadishu**

On 22.01.23, at least six civilians and two members of the security forces were killed and more than 16 were injured when al-Shabaab fighters stormed the headquarters of the Benadir Regional Administration where the office of the Mayor of Mogadishu is also located. At least six insurgents were reportedly killed. The attack began with a suicide bombing after which gunmen penetrated the gates and engaged in gunfire exchange with security forces.

### **30 January 2023**

#### **Regional Minister assassinated**

On 28.01.23, the Galmudug State Government announced that the Regional Minister for Transport and Aviation, Farhiya Abdi Mohamed, had been shot dead in Mogadishu by armed al-Shabaab fighters who had been trailing her.

#### **Freedom of the press**

On 25.01.23, Somaliland police arrested two SomNews journalists in Hargeysa, the capital of Somaliland. The police previously searched the news channel's offices. According to media representatives, television reporter Mohamed Mohamud Koronto and cameraman Mahdi Siyad remain in police custody without charge. Representatives of SomNews suspect that the arrests are about their coverage of the protests in Las Anod (cf. BN of 02.01.23).

#### **High-ranking ISIS leader killed by U.S. military**

The U.S. government announced on 26.01.23 that during a military operation carried out the previous day in a mountainous cave complex in northern Somalia, U.S. special forces had killed 11 ISIS fighters, including the senior leader Bilal al-Sudani, who had been targeted in the mission. The objective had actually been to capture al-Sudani, but this had not been possible due to the resistance put up by ISIS fighters. No further details are known about the nature of the mission. Al-Sudani is reported to have played a key role in financing ISIS operations in Africa and also to have been active in Afghanistan. Before joining ISIS in the mid-2010s, al-Sudani was reportedly active with al-Shabaab.

### **06 February 2023**

#### **Execution of four officials for killing colleagues**

On 02.02.23, the military court in Mogadishu executed four officials, including members of the military, police and National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA), by firing squad, according to official sources. The court found them guilty of killing fellow soldiers.

#### **Wife of an ISS leader convicted**

On 30.01.23, the military court in Mogadishu sentenced Fartun Abdirashid Hassan, wife of Abdiqadir Mumin, a senior local member of the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS), to eight years in prison. She is alleged to be a member of the ISS and to have passed on information and organised financial transactions. She had been under custody in Mogadishu since her arrest in March 2022.

#### **Regional security summit; mortar shell attack**

On 01.02.23, the Heads of State and Government of Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia met in Mogadishu for a regional security summit focused on the fight against al-Shabaab. The three neighbouring countries are contributing troops to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). After the summit concluded, it was stated that planning for a joint operational strategy against al-Shabaab had been agreed.

Prior to the meeting, at least four mortar shells landed near the presidential palace in Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack, in which no casualties were reported.

#### **Elders arrested for links to al-Shabaab**

Somali authorities claim they arrested six traditional elders on 31.01.23 who are accused of signing an agreement with al-Shabaab and thus violating the new guidelines (cf. BN of 10.10.22). According to military sources, the elders

have reportedly reached an agreement with al-Shabaab to withdraw their clan militias from the ongoing military offensive against al-Shabaab (cf. BN of 10.10.22 and 23.01.23).

### **Transparency International: highest level of corruption in the world**

According to the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2022 released on 31.01.23, Somalia is the most corrupt country in the world. Last year, it ranked penultimate in terms of the perception of corruption in the public sector.

## **13 February 2023**

### **Ceasefire after fighting in Somaliland**

After five days of clashes in Las Anod (Sool region) between Somaliland security forces and clan militias allied with the Somali government, a ceasefire was agreed on 11.02.23. However, according to residents of Las Anod, this is unlikely to be respected. The Somaliland government stated that the clan militias had links to al-Shabaab, which the militias and al-Shabaab deny. At least 57 people were killed and over 400 injured in the fighting. The fighting broke out after local traditional elders declared that they wanted to rejoin the Federal Government of Somalia. The town of Las Anod, which has for years been part of a disputed area between Somaliland and the Somali Federal Member State of Puntland, is under the control of Somaliland, which seceded from the Federal Government of Somalia in 1991 but was never recognised as an independent state. According to UN figures, the fighting has displaced more than 80,000 people and water and electricity supplies were cut off during the shelling. The UN has called for an independent investigation into the clashes.

### **U.S. airstrike against al-Shabaab**

According to U.S. reports, 12 al-Shabaab fighters were killed in a United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) airstrike on 10.02.23, which was carried out at the request of the Somali Federal Government. AFRICOM did not specify the location; Somali government media reported that the attack took place in Donlaye near the town of Amara (Galmudug State). The Somali government said 117 fighters were killed in the operation.

### **An attack by al-Shabaab thwarted**

The authorities have reported that at least six members of Jubaland's elite Darwish forces were critically wounded on 11.02.23 and 12.02.23 when they thwarted a heavy attack by al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab allegedly tried to attack a military base in Afmadow district (Lower Juba region). The military reportedly detonated two trucks loaded with explosives as they approached the base. A bomb exploded in a deserted area outside the military camp, and a second was hit by a rocket outside the district. Several al-Shabaab fighters were reportedly killed in subsequent gun battles.

### **Jubaland MP assassinated**

On 07.02.23, Isak Mohamed Hassan, known as Sandheere, was shot dead as he left a mosque in Mogadishu. Sandheere was a member of the Jubaland Regional Parliament and previously Jubaland's Deputy Security Minister. To date, no one has claimed responsibility for the crime.

## **20 February 2023**

### **Forces kill more than 200 al-Shabaab fighters**

According to government sources, over 200 al-Shabaab militia have been killed in fighting in Iji in the Hiran region. The casualties reportedly included Yusuf Ali Sheikh, the commander in charge of the region, as well as Salad Mohamud Siyad and his deputy Hussein Dhere, al-Shabaab leaders in the Middle Shabelle region. It was reportedly a coordinated attack involving foreign forces and clan militias in which dozens of militants were also captured. In another operation, at least 12 more al-Shabaab fighters were killed when the Somali army repelled an attack in Sunguni village, 50 km north of Kismayo (Jubaland region).

### **Release of journalist Abdalle Ahmed Mumin**

On 13.02.23, the journalist and Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS) Secretary General Abdalle Ahmed Mumin was released by a court in Mogadishu a few hours after being sentenced to two months in prison on security-related charges. He explained that prison officials released him on the grounds he had already served his sentence despite the verdict with previous arrests and court appearances. Mumin was arrested in October 2022 during an intensified

government crackdown on media outlets accused of publishing what it deems propaganda for the Islamist militant group al-Shabab (cf. BN of 24.10.22 and 31.10.22).

## **27 February 2023**

### **Drought**

In a statement issued on 22.02.23, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) said the current drought in the Horn of Africa could potentially be more severe than the one in 2011 that claimed the lives of at least 250,000 people. Rainfall is expected to be below average in the coming rainy season over the next three months. This could be the sixth consecutive failed rainy season. As a result of the drought, which has lasted for almost three years, tens of thousands of people are reported to have already died. According to UN figures, more than one million people have been displaced in Somalia alone. According to the UN, almost 23 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya are considered to be highly food insecure. Eleven million livestock have reportedly perished already.

### **Fighting in Somaliland**

Despite the ceasefire agreed on 10.02.23 between Somaliland security forces and clan militias allied with the Somali government (cf. BN of 13.02.23), clashes continue in the embattled town of Las Anod (Sool region). On 23.02.23, several artillery and mortar shell attacks were reportedly carried out in Las Anod. The main hospital in Las Anod is said to have also been shelled. The electricity supply, the oxygen system, the blood bank and parts of the hospital are reported to have been destroyed. According to several sources, the Somaliland military withdrew from Tukaraq (Sool region), a strategic base, on 25./26.02.23. Health workers say at least 112 people, including civilians, have been killed and 500 wounded so far in the clashes, which have been ongoing since 06.02.23. According to UN reports, more than 185,000 people, 89% of them women and children, have been displaced by the violence. More than 60,000 of them are reported to have fled to the Ethiopian regional state of Somali.

### **Attack in Mogadishu**

On 21.02.23, at least 10 people, including civilians, were killed and seven others injured in an attack in the Abdiiaziz district of Mogadishu. Armed al-Shabaab members reportedly attacked and for seven hours laid siege to a care home for members of the armed forces, which accommodates government employees, a high-ranking military commander and injured soldiers, among others.

### **US airstrike**

Seven al-Shabaab fighters were reportedly killed in a US airstrike in Galmudug State on 21.02.23, the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) said in a statement, adding that it had been a "collective self-defence strike". It was the sixth US airstrike to be carried out since the beginning of the year.

## **06 March 2023**

### **USA and neighbouring states increase military support**

The USA is increasing its military assistance against al-Shabaab. It said that 61 tonnes of weapons and ammunition had arrived on 28.02.23 in support of the Somalia-led military offensive (cf. BN of 10.10.22). In a joint statement issued with Qatar, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom, it stated that it would support Somalia in managing weapons and ammunition so that the UN Security Council could lift its arms embargo against the country. The UN arms embargo was imposed in 1992 and somewhat relaxed in 2013, allowing the government to buy light weapons.

Similarly, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya said they would send soldiers in addition to the soldiers they already have serving as part of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) troops to support Somali forces against al-Shabaab.

### **Doctors without Borders partially suspends work in Las Anod (Somaliland)**

The aid organisation Doctors without Borders said in a statement issued on 01.03.23 that it had to suspend almost all activities except for emergency care in Las Anod (Somaliland) due to the fighting that has been ongoing since

early February 2023. The hospital in Las Anod supported by the organisation had been shelled several times, causing severe damage to the building (cf. BN of 27.02.23).

#### **Civilian deaths after shooting in café in Mogadishu**

On 04.03.23, at least five civilians were killed, and three others were wounded when unknown attackers randomly opened fire at a busy café in Daruslam Villa in Mogadishu. Some reports indicate that a grenade was initially thrown at the building. So far, no group has claimed responsibility for the crime.

### **13 March 2023**

#### **Execution of 19 convicts in Puntland**

On 08.03.23, a Puntland Military Court firing squad executed 19 convicts, including 13 members of al-Shabaab and the Islamic State in Somalia, in Galkayo, Garowe and Bossaso. Those executed reportedly included six soldiers who had been found guilty of murdering civilians.

#### **New anti-terrorism law passed**

On 08.03.23, the lower house of parliament passed a new anti-terrorism law which aims to create a legal framework that gives security agencies more rights to fight terrorism in the country. Critics express concern about the overly broad definition of terrorism and warn that ratification of the law could give security agencies excessive and unchecked power. Terror suspects could, for instance, be arrested without a court order under the new law.

#### **Attack on military base in Lower Juba**

An attack by al-Shabaab on a military base in Janay Abdalle district (Lower Juba region) claimed the lives of at least 32 members of the armed forces and 40 al-Shabaab fighters on 07.03.23, according to official sources. Al-Shabaab claimed it had killed 89 members of the armed forces.

### **20 March 2023**

#### **Three persons executed**

A firing squad from the military court in Mogadishu executed three men convicted of collaborating with al-Shabaab on 15.03.2013. They were allegedly responsible for explosions that killed many people and for targeted killings of civilians and government employees. Two of them were former officials of the security agencies.

#### **Suicide bombing in Bardhere (Gedo Region)**

On 14.03.23, at least five people were killed and 11 others were injured in a suicide bombing in Bardhere, Jubaland. Regional Governor Ahmed Bulle Gared survived but was injured in the attack. A vehicle loaded with explosives drove unchecked into a guest house where government employees were staying. Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the attack.

### **27 March 2023**

#### **UN study: 43,000 excess drought deaths in 2022**

A report published on 20.03.23 by Somalia's Federal Ministry of Health and Human Services, WHO and UNICEF indicates that an estimated 43,000 excess deaths might have occurred in 2022 in Somalia resulting from a deepening drought when compared with the 2017 and 2018 drought crisis. Half of the deaths relate to children under the age of five. This is the first official count of drought deaths. The risk of famine remains.

#### **Flash floods**

In mid-March 2023, flash floods occurred in the Gedo and Bay regions, among others, following moderate rainfall. At least 14 people were killed and thousands displaced. Loss of crops and livestock was reported, and infrastructure was destroyed.

## **17 April 2023**

### **Attack on African Union Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)**

On 03.04.23, an ATMIS convoy was hit by an explosion near the headquarters in Mogadishu where a landmine was placed on the side of the road. At least three civilians were reportedly killed. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

### **Floods**

In early April 2023, flash floods killed at least 21 people and displaced around 100,000 more, OCHA has stated. Livestock was killed and farmland destroyed. Bardhere district in Jubaland is the worst affected district.

### **UN: more than 1,200 victims of Al-Shabaab attacks last year**

A report published by the UN on 05.04.23 says that in 2022, more than 1,200 people were killed or injured by Al-Shabaab attacks, mainly by landmines and improvised explosive devices.

### **Recapture of a strategically important village in Galmudug**

According to military reports, the Danab Special Forces have recaptured one of the most strategic villages in Galmudug, the village of Ali Afrah, from al-Shabaab. The village is located near the recently liberated town of Galcad (Galgadud region). Apparently, Al-Shabaab fighters escaped before the government forces arrived, leaving them to face no resistance.

### **UN Secretary-General appeals for support**

During his multi-day visit to Somalia, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appealed to the international community, asking for more donations to provide the country with the resources it needs to fight Al-Shabaab, stabilise the liberated areas and provide much-needed humanitarian aid. The UN estimates that 2.6 billion USD will be required to support Somalia through 2023. The current funding level is around 15 percent.

## **24 April 2023**

### **Attack on military base thwarted**

On 19.04.23, the Somali National Army (SNA) reportedly repelled an attack by al-Shabaab on a military base in Budbud village (Galguduud region), which was recently captured by government forces (cf. BN of 17.04.23). Al-Shabaab fighters were reportedly killed in the process. Al-Shabaab, in turn, has claimed to have killed more than 50 SNA members and seized vehicles. No independent sources are available.

### **Amnesty International (AI) calls for independent investigation in Las Anod (Somaliland)**

AI has researched that more than 100 people have been killed and over 600 injured, among them dozens of civilians, in the ongoing fighting in Las Anod (see BN of 13.02.23, 27.02.23 and 06.03.23). Between 154,000 and 203,000 people have apparently been displaced, including more than 60,000 to Ethiopia, according to the UN. The rules of international humanitarian law have apparently not been respected and hospitals, schools and mosques have been shelled indiscriminately. AI is therefore calling for an independent investigation into all human and international rights violations and for a cessation of hostilities. On 17.04.23, a group of 15 international partners, including the EU, also expressed serious concern about the ongoing violence and called for an immediate ceasefire in a joint conference call with Somaliland's President Muse Bihi Abdi.

### **Extension of the mandate of the African Union Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)**

The Somali government intends to extend the ATMIS mandate, which will expire in December 2024, as the mission's presence has been instrumental in promoting peace and stability in the country. Apparently, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has held talks with the international community on a possible extension of the mandate. The UN Peace and Security Council will discuss the future of ATMIS at a forthcoming meeting.



## **08 May 2023**

### **Al-Shabaab attacks**

On 04.05.23, Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre said in a speech to the cabinet that the number of al-Shabaab attacks have reportedly decreased by 70 percent in the past six months due to robust security measures. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said on 03.05.23 that the government planned to launch the second phase of the offensive against al-Shabaab with the expected support from Kenyan, Ethiopian and Djiboutian troops. Security experts believe that although al-Shabaab has been pushed out of some areas (cf. BN of 23.01.23 and 17.04.23), it still poses a major threat to the security of Somalia and the whole region.

### **Five people executed by al-Shabaab**

On 05.05.23, al-Shabaab executed five men in a public square in Jilib (Middle Juba region), claiming that they were spying on al-Shabaab for the governments of Somalia and the U.S.

## **15 May 2023**

### **ATMIS: Troop withdrawal**

According to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), the withdrawal of 2,000 ATMIS troops out of a total of around 20,000 ATMIS is to be accelerated by the end of June 2023. In some bases, the number of ATMIS troops will be reduced and the Somali National Army (SNA) will increase the number of its forces accordingly. This is the first phase of the Somali Transition Plan (STP). The UN is pushing for compliance with the STP and for a strategic withdrawal, followed by a handover of security responsibilities to the SNA. According to ATMIS, the troop withdrawal should not affect security measures against al-Shabaab.

### **Flooding**

On 14.05.23, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that according to initial estimates, at least 460,470 people have been affected by flash floods following heavy rains, particularly in Beledweyne (Hiiraan region) and Baardheere (Gedo region). Nearly 219,000 people, including many IDPs, have been displaced from their homes. At least 22 people are reported dead. Homes and farmland were flooded, and schools and health facilities were temporarily closed. Localised flooding has also been reported in other regions, including Somaliland, Puntland, Galmudug and Jubaland.

## **22 May 2023**

### **Two EU staff expelled**

According to a statement by the Somali Foreign Ministry, Somalia expelled two staff members of the European Union Capability Building Mission in Somalia (EUCAP Somalia) in mid-May 2023. They are accused of secretly photographing detainees during a visit to the Somali maritime police detention centre at Mogadishu airport. They are also accused of interfering in the internal affairs of the country.

Apparently, the expulsions are linked to the arrest of 36 fishermen, mostly from Iran, who are accused of illegal fishing in Somali waters.

### **Executions**

The prosecution has informed that on 18.05.23, a firing squad in Southwest State executed two men in a public square in Baidoa, the capital of the Bay Region. They had been sentenced to death for murder by the competent regional court in early April 2023.

### **Election dispute in Puntland: Fighting and arrests of politicians**

On 16.05.23, nine days before the local elections in Puntland, clashes were reported between two factions of the security forces in the outskirts of the capital Garowe. According to Puntland's public prosecutor, four politicians were responsible for attacks on vehicles transporting ballot boxes to different districts. Arrest warrants have been issued for them. At least three soldiers were reportedly killed and others injured in the clashes. Criticism of an illegal

extension of Puntland President Said Abdullahi Deni's term, which expires in January 2024, is currently causing tension in Puntland.

## **05 June 2023**

### **More than 50 Ugandan soldiers killed**

The Ugandan government has informed that 54 members of the armed forces were killed on 26.05.23 in an attack with explosives followed by an exchange of fire at a military base of Ugandan peacekeepers of the African Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) in Bulmarer (Lower Shabelle region). Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the attack. This has been one of the worst recent attacks on ATMIS units since the launch of the offensive against al-Shabaab in August 2022.

### **US drone strike**

According to official reports, the US military on 01.06.23 carried out an airstrike against al-Shabaab near Wayanta (Lower Juba region), reportedly killing three al-Shabaab members. The attack was carried out at the request of the Somali National Army. On 24.05.23, the US killed three al-Shabaab commanders in the Wayanta area who were organising attacks on nearby bases.

### **Direct suffrage**

On 28.05.23, the Somali government announced in a statement that the country would return to direct elections from 2024. This will abolish the indirect electoral system, in which members of parliament elect the president and clan chiefs and elders elect the federal and regional governments. At the same time, the office of prime minister is to be abolished and replaced by a presidential system. A return to direct elections had already been planned for the 2020 elections but was postponed due to political disputes and the security situation.

## **12 June 2023**

### **Attack on Ethiopian military base**

The Ethiopian military has reported that on 07.06.23, it foiled an attack on one of its bases in the Ethiopian-Somali border town of Dolow (Gedo region). Four soldiers were reportedly injured in two suicide attacks. Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility and said the attack was successful.

### **Terrorist attack on hotel**

According to the Somali government, several people were killed in an attack by Al-Shabaab on a hotel in Mogadishu on 09.06.23. Apparently, the dead include six civilians and three security personnel, as well as all seven attackers. Two suicide bombers blew themselves up at the entrance to the hotel before other militia members stormed the building. By the next morning, security forces had ended the siege and rescued over 120 hotel guests and staff.

### **Children killed in detonation of unexploded ordnance**

On 09.06.23, at least 27 people, most of them children, were killed and more than 50 others injured when a grenade exploded on a football field near the town of Qoryoley in southern Lower Shabelle region. The iron object was an unexploded ordnance from earlier fighting, which, according to local sources, became visible after rainfall.

### **Attack on former police commander**

On 05.06.23, a bomb attack targeted the house of Abdifitah Qoslaye, the former commander of the Hodan district police station in Mogadishu. Officials say he escaped the attack unhurt, but four of his bodyguards were killed and several others injured. Qoslaye was recently dismissed after one of his bodyguards killed a businessman. A person believed to be responsible for the attack has reportedly been arrested.

### **Violent clash between rival clans in Lower Shabelle**

Local sources say that on 07.06.23, militias from two rival clans, Shan Alemod and Galjeel, clashed over disputes over resources and territorial control in Yaaqbiri Weyne (Lower Shabelle region). At least 15 people were reportedly killed and many civilians injured. The two militias reportedly obtained weapons and ammunition from military depots in Mogadishu intended for the offensive operations against al-Shabaab.

## **19 June 2023**

### **Civilians killed in air strikes**

On 16.06.23 at least three civilians, including a mother and her child, were killed in air strikes targeting the densely populated towns of Saakow, Salagle, Jilib and Jamaame in the Middle Juba region. The towns are controlled by al-Shabaab. Hormuud, the country's largest telecommunications provider, reported that its Saakow site was damaged in the airstrike, resulting in the disruption of telecommunications services. It is not known who is responsible for the airstrikes. Local media have attributed the attacks to the Kenyan army, among others.

### **Five men executed**

Local media report that on 15.06.23, an al-Shabaab firing squad publicly executed five men aged between 28 and 52 in Kunyo-Barrow (Lower Shabelle region). An al-Shabaab court had convicted the men of spying for the Somali government and foreign intelligence services.

## **26 June 2023**

### **ATMIS troop withdrawal begins**

The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) has begun to withdraw troops in accordance with the Somali Transition Plan (STP) calling for the withdrawal of 2,000 troops by the end of June 2023. The first military base in Haji Ali (Middle Shabelle region), which was used by Burundian forces, will be handed over to the Somali national army.

### **Attack on military training camp**

According to officials, seven recruits were killed and at least 18 injured when two explosives-laden cars detonated outside a military training camp on 21.06.23 in the town of Bardhere (Gedo region). Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the attack.

### **Violent clashes outside Puntland parliament**

Violent clashes broke out between regional forces and opposition militias outside the Puntland parliament in Garoowe on 20.06.23, during and after the parliament debated constitutional amendments, including the introduction of a system of 'one man, one vote' system. Opposition groups accuse President Said Abdullahi Deni of trying to extend his term or help ensure that the January 2024 elections go in his favour. At least 26 people, among them civilians, were killed and more than 30 injured in the fighting. On 21.06.23, both armed factions agreed to a ceasefire. As a result, they reportedly left the streets, and shops reopened. In response to the clashes, Said Abdullahi Deni reshuffled his cabinet.

### **More than 30 people abducted by al-Shabaab**

On 17.06.23, al-Shabaab reportedly abducted more than 30 people, mainly clan elders and children, in Daru Nicma village (Middle Shabelle) which was recently liberated by the Somali national army. There is no further information on the whereabouts of the abductees.

### **Ongoing conflict in Las Anod**

According to the latest UN figures, at least 36 civilians have been killed and more than 272 injured in the violent conflict in Las Anod (Somaliland), which has been ongoing since January 2023 (cf. BN of 13.02.23, 27.02.23, 06.03.23 and 24.04.23). In addition, between 154,000 and 203,000 civilians are reported to have been displaced. Somaliland forces reportedly attacked Dhulbahante militia positions near Las Anod between 19.06 and 25.06.23 but were repulsed. Casualties were reported on both sides.

