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Al-Shabaab Seizes Strategic Area Amid Fierce Clashes in Central Somalia



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GAROWE ONLINE

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MOGADISHU, Somalia - Al-Shabaab fighters have released images purportedly of El Hareeri, a strategic village in central regions, further reaffirming that they are still in total control, with no indication of government soldiers within the vicinity.

On Wednesday, the militants released images showing their fighters maintaining control of the town of El Hareri in central Somalia's Hiran region for a second week, despite sustained fighting and repeated attempts by government forces and allied clan militias to retake it.



The militants seized the town last week, and there are reports that they are attempting to push deeper into the eastern Hiran region, prompting government troops and allied clan militias to launch repeated counterattacks. However, none of the offensives have succeeded in retaking lost ground.

According to multiple sources within Hiiraan, the militants are sending more reinforcements every day, with local security teams noting that the militants are aiming to capture Moqokori and Mahas towns, which are also considered key in the battle for the control of the country.

Ali Jayte, a senior militia coordinator, warned the frontlines could collapse unless President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud intervenes. According to him, the Al-Shabaab fighters are gaining ground due to a lack of cooperation by Hirshabelle state officials.

The insurgents have stepped up operations in central Somalia, despite airstrikes and resistance from government troops and allied militias. Hiiraan and Galgaduud regions have seen increased attacks, with the government troops relying on international partners for counteroffensives.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has been accused of directing his focus on political issues in the country at the expense of supporting the Somali National Army in the fight against Al-Shabaab. Currently, the government is preoccupied with the changing of the constitution, the targeting model of elections and the structure of the executive.

Hassan Sheikh is glaring at the political fallout in the country, with Al-Shabaab fighters also making gains on several frontlines. The government of Somalia has been criticised for failing to support efforts to defeat both the ISIS and Al-Shabaab militants.

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