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World Report 2025 - Somalia

Somalia government military operations against the armed group Al-Shabab, which was responsible for numerous unlawful attacks, as well as inter-clan conflict, left hundreds of civilians dead and forced tens of thousands to flee. Al-Shabab, security forces, and clan militia committed sexual violence against women and girls, and widespread abuses against children. Despite some improvements in the humanitarian context, an estimated [4.4 million](#) people were anticipated to need urgent food aid by year's end. Extreme weather patterns [destroyed livelihoods](#) and forced thousands to seek residence elsewhere.

Somalia's constitutional review process, underway for nearly a decade, resulted in [tensions](#) with the federal states, notably regarding additional powers granted to the president. The chapters of the constitution under review included provisions violating children's rights.

Tensions with Ethiopia [escalated](#) following the announcement of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ethiopia and Somaliland. The MoU reportedly grants landlocked Ethiopia access to parts of the Somaliland coast in exchange for possible recognition of Somaliland's sovereignty. Somalia [reportedly](#) requested the exclusion of Ethiopian troops in the new African Union mission. Egypt, at odds with Ethiopia over control of the river Nile, [announced](#) it would send troops into Somalia.

Troop-contributing countries to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), set to end in December, continued to withdraw troops as discussions on the financing of its replacement mission continued. The European Union [approved](#) ongoing support to ATMIS and renewed support to the Somali national army.

In May, the Somali government called on the United Nations Security Council to terminate the UN political mission in Somalia (UNSOM), later walking back on the timeframe. The handover of UNSOM's human rights roles and functions remain under discussion, including human rights advocacy, technical compliance with international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law, and monitoring of UN-supported forces. The mandate of the Independent Expert on Somalia was [renewed](#) by the United Nations Human Rights Council.

The government did not review the country's outdated penal code or establish a national human rights commission.

Attacks on Civilians

Al-Shabab's attacks, using [improvised explosive devices \(IEDs\)](#), suicide bombings, and shelling, as well as targeted assassinations, resulted in hundreds of civilian deaths and injuries in 2024. On August 2, the armed group [attacked](#) a beach restaurant in Mogadishu, the capital, that [killed](#) 37 civilians and injured over 200.

The government's offensive against Al-Shabab [led to](#) civilian deaths, injuries, and displacement. Amnesty International [found](#) that on March 18, two strikes, supported by Turkish-made drones, killed 23 civilians, including 14 children, near Bagdad village, Lower Shabelle region, the site of heavy fighting throughout the year. The US [acknowledged](#) conducting airstrikes in support of the Somali army's operations against Al-Shabab.

Inter-clan conflict in central Somalia, notably in [Galmudug state](#), over increasingly scarce resources [escalated](#) mid-year killing and injuring civilians and forcing [thousands to flee](#).

Military courts continued to sentence people to death. On August 17, Puntland [executed](#) 10 people accused of Al-Shabab affiliation and killings, four of whom were children at time of the alleged offense. In March, [two men were executed](#) by firing squad, one after a court in Galgudug found him [guilty](#) of killing state-media journalist Abdikarim Ahmed Bulhan earlier in the year.

Al-Shabab fighters continued to execute individuals accused of working for the government and foreign forces.

Displacement and Access to Humanitarian Assistance

The humanitarian situation remained dire despite some improvements due to better rainfall and humanitarian assistance.

[Around half of the 350,000](#) people internally displaced between January and October fled conflict and insecurity, according to the UN. [Tens of thousands](#) of people were forcibly evicted, mostly by property owners, notably in Mogadishu.

Humanitarian agencies face serious challenges delivering aid due to conflict, targeted attacks on aid workers, restrictions imposed by warring parties, including arbitrary taxation and bureaucratic hurdles, and [physical constraints](#).

Sexual Violence

The UN continued to [document](#) incidents of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence affecting mostly internally displaced women and girls.

Somalia has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) or the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).

Abuses against Children

The UN [documented](#) hundreds of incidents of grave violations against children, including killings, sexual violence and attacks on schools, primarily by Al-Shabab, but also by government forces.

Authorities detained children and sentenced them in military courts on allegations of Al-Shabab affiliation. UN experts [condemned](#) the August 17 execution of four young men who were children at the time of the alleged offenses. International law prohibits the imposition of the death penalty on child offenders.

On March 30, both houses of parliament decided to [shelve](#), pending further consultations, proposed constitutional amendments that would lower the age of majority to 15 and possibly permit certain forms of female genital mutilation (FGM). Following significant international pressure, the parliament maintained an existing provision that banned "all forms" of female genital cutting. The provision does not define female circumcision, which may or may not be interpreted to mean the same thing as FGM.

The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) [reported](#) that Somalia has one of the highest rates of FGM in the world with 99 percent of girls and women ages 15 to 49 having undergone genital cutting.

Freedom of Expression

Regional and federal authorities harassed, intimidated, and arbitrarily detained and charged [journalists](#) and media workers.

On March 14, Abdikarin Ahmed Bulhan, a journalist with two state-run media houses, was [shot dead](#) in Abudwak, Galgaduud region.

In Mogadishu, the government [froze the accounts](#) of the Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS), a media-rights organization, and announced criminal charges against the organization and its leadership whose staff members had previously been repeatedly detained.

Somali media organizations [condemned](#) the appointments of nine commissioners to the new media council, which they said failed to comply with the procedure under the media law to ensure independence and consultations.

Somaliland

The authorities in Somaliland again restricted discussions on controversial issues, arresting journalists, politicians, and other perceived [government critics](#).

In early January, the government detained three media workers, including Mohamed Abdi Sheikh, chairman of privately owned MM Somali TV, as they hosted an X space around the controversial MoU with Ethiopia and also [detained](#) social media activist Abdimalik Muse Oldon. Mohamed Abdi and Abdimalik Muse were released in February.

In September, opposition Member of Parliament Mohamed Abib Yusuf Jama was [detained](#) despite parliament rejecting a request by the attorney general's office to remove his [parliamentary immunity](#). The Somaliland Supreme Court ordered his release on September 30.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Somalia criminalizes consensual same-sex conduct with up to three years in prison.