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Introduction

This Country of Origin Information (COI) Report was drawn up on the basis of the points for attention mentioned in the Terms of Reference (ToR) compiled by the Ministry of Justice and Security (now Asylum and Migration). The ToR for this COI Report were adopted on 28 May 2024. The ToR, together with the report, are available at the Dutch Government's website.

This COI Report describes the situation in Somalia insofar as this affects the assessment of asylum applications from persons originating from Somalia, and for decision-making regarding the return of Somali asylum seekers who have been rejected. The reporting period covers the period from 1 July 2023 up to and including February 2025. The COI Report is a factual, neutral and objective representation of the findings that were made during the period under consideration. It is not a policy document, nor does it reflect the government's vision or policy in relation to any given country or region, or reach any conclusions on immigration policy.

This COI Report has been compiled on the basis of public and confidential sources, using carefully selected, analysed and verified information. In the compilation of this report, use was made of information from various sources, including European and other COI organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), specialist literature, media reporting and relevant government agencies. The content in this COI Report is based on multiple sources, except where the facts are generally undisputed or when stated otherwise. The public sources that were consulted are listed in the appendices of this COI Report.

Some of the information used was obtained during a fact-finding mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi, which took place in November 2024. This COI Report draws on information from interviews held on-site during this mission with relevant expert sources. In addition, some of the information used was obtained through channels including the diplomatic mission of the Netherlands for Somalia, along with information originating from conversations and correspondence outside the context of the fact-finding mission. Such information was used primarily to support and complement passages based on publicly available information. The sources are listed as 'confidential source' in the footnotes, and are accompanied by a date.

Chapter 1 addresses political developments in Somalia during the reporting period. Chapter 2 sets out developments in the security situation. Chapter 3 explores Somali documentation and legislation on nationality. Chapter 4 describes compliance with and violations of human rights. Chapter 5 describes the position of refugees and displaced persons. Chapter 6 addresses the situation concerning the (forced) return of Somali nationals.

1 Political developments

The reporting period was marked by a partial review of Somalia's federal constitution and electoral reforms that led to tensions between the federal government and some federal member states. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Somaliland and Ethiopia affected relations between Somalia and Ethiopia, as well as internal relations within Somalia. During the reporting period, the peacekeeping mission known as the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) was transformed into the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission (AUSSOM). This transition was also complicated by tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia.

1.1 Federal member states

Somalia is a federal state composed of separate federal member states – each encompassing several regions – and the administrative region of Benadir, which encompasses the area of the capital Mogadishu. Each federal member state has its own parliament, constitution and armed forces. The southern and central parts of Somalia include the Benadir region and the federal member states of Galmudug, Hirshabelle, South-West State and Jubbaland. The federal member state of Puntland in the north enjoys a high degree of autonomy within the federal state of Somalia. Located in north-western Somalia, Somaliland proclaimed independence in 1991, but is not internationally recognised as such.¹ In 2023, a new federal member state was declared in the area on the border between Puntland and Somaliland: SSC-Khatumo (see also 2.2.7).

Informal consultations took place regularly between the leaders of the federal government and the federal member states, including the region of Benadir (Mogadishu), in the National Consultative Council (NCC).

1.2 Constitutional review

In March 2024, Somalia's federal constitution was partially reviewed. Since 2012, Somalia had a provisional constitution in which some sections were not yet finalised. Topics covered in these sections included the relationship and distribution of resources between the federal government and the federal member states, and the state structure.² Since then, however, the various governments had failed to reach a consensus. In May 2023, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud decided to revive the process.³ From February to March 2024, the parliament debated amendments concerning the first four chapters of the constitution concerning the state structure, fundamental civil rights and duties, land and property, representation of the people and elections.⁴ One of the elements that was revised was that the prime minister could now be dismissed by the president rather than by parliament, as had previously been the case. In addition, it was decided to introduce universal suffrage

¹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, 21 December 2021, p. 10; Council for Foreign Relations, *Somaliland: The Horn of Africa's Breakaway State*, 21 January 2025.

² ConstitutionNet, [Constitutional History of Somalia | ConstitutionNet](#), consulted on 3 December 2024; The East African, *Somalia constitution review generates heated debate among leaders*, 21 March 2024.

³ ACLED, *Somalia: Dispute Over Constitutional Amendment and Increased al-Shabaab Attacks*, 26 April 2024.

⁴ UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 1; VOA, *Somalia's Parliament Approves Historic Constitutional Amendments*, 30 March 2024.

(one man, one vote).⁵ The amendments were adopted by a majority of parliament on 30 March 2024.⁶

The proposed amendments drew a considerable amount of criticism, as they would purportedly affect Somalia's informal power-sharing system.⁷ Under that system, seats in electoral colleges and the parliament were distributed according to a distribution key known as the '4.5 system': the four largest clan families (Hawiye, Darood, Dir⁸ and Rahanweyn⁹) each received an equal share of seats, with the minority clans together receiving the remaining half share.¹⁰

In February 2020, then-President Farmaajo had already signed a law to change the electoral system to universal suffrage.¹¹ The 2021 presidential election was nevertheless held largely according to an indirect stepwise election model.¹²

1.3 Tensions between the federal government and federal member states

The reporting period was marked by tensions between the federal government and some federal member states. The constitutional review put a strain on relations between the federal government, opposition politicians and some federal member states.¹³

1.3.1 Puntland

The Puntland government had previously indicated that it would no longer negotiate jointly with the other federal member states on the division of power between the federal government and the federal member states.¹⁴ Following the constitutional review, Puntland withdrew confidence in the federal government and federal institutions on 31 March 2024.¹⁵ Puntland accused President Mohamud of wanting to concentrate power in his own hands.¹⁶ During the reporting period, Puntland no longer participated in the NCC's informal consultations.¹⁷

1.3.2 Jubbaland

In October 2024, tensions also escalated between the federal government and the federal member state of Jubbaland. At a meeting of the NCC in early October 2024, President Ahmed Mohamed Islam (also known as 'Madobe') of Jubbaland left early;

⁵ ACLED, *Somalia: Dispute Over Constitutional Amendment and Increased al-Shabaab Attacks*, 26 April 2024; VOA, *Somalia's Parliament Approves Historic Constitutional Amendments*, 30 March 2024.

⁶ UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 1; VOA, *Somalia's Parliament Approves Historic Constitutional Amendments*, 30 March 2024.

⁷ ACLED, *Somalia: Dispute Over Constitutional Amendment and Increased al-Shabaab Attacks*, 26 April 2024; VOA, *Somalia's Parliament Approves Historic Constitutional Amendments*, 30 March 2024.

⁸ In the system, the Dir also include the Isaaq.

⁹ The Rahanweyn are also referred to according to their subclans, the Digil-Mirifle.

¹⁰ United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), *Fact sheet on Somalia's 2016 electoral process*, 23 October 2016; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, p. 36, 21 December 2021; Freedom House, *Freedom in the world 2022 – Somalia*, 24 February 2022; BBC News, *Somalia's elections – where the people don't vote*, 14 April 2022; Deutsche Welle (DW), *Somalia finally holds long-delayed elections*, 13 May 2022; Reuters, *Factbox: Old faces compete for presidency of turbulent Somalia*, 15 May 2022; International Crisis Group (ICG), *A welcome chance for a reset in Somalia*, 31 May 2022.

¹¹ This should be understood as direct elections with universal suffrage.

¹² Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, pp. 7–9, 21 December 2021.

¹³ UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 2; The East African, *Somalia constitution review generates heated debate among leaders*, 21 March 2024; ACLED, *Somalia: Dispute Over Constitutional Amendment and Increased al-Shabaab Attacks*, 26 April 2024.

¹⁴ UNSC, *S/2023/109 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 16 February 2023, p. 2.

¹⁵ UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 2; The East African, *Somalia constitution review generates heated debate among leaders*, 21 March 2024.

¹⁶ The Guardian, *Somalia accused of 'threatening national unity' with new constitution*, 5 April 2024.

¹⁷ UNSC, *S/2023/758 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 1; UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 2; UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 1.

he disagreed with the proposal to implement universal suffrage for all elections (federal member state and federal) simultaneously. To this end, expiring terms of sitting federal member state presidents were to be extended for one year.¹⁸

A few days after his departure from the NCC, on 10 October 2024, President Madobe announced that Jubbaland would hold elections in November 2024.¹⁹ The federal government declared the elections illegitimate, as a maximum of two terms had been agreed with Madobe in the past.²⁰ In addition to the fact that Madobe's term expired in 2023, Jubbaland's parliament had amended the federal member state's constitution in 2024 to allow a new term for the president.²¹ In response to the federal government's position, Jubbaland announced that it would sever relations with Mogadishu.²² A few days later, Gedo (Jubbaland) regional authorities arrested six federal army officers.²³

On 25 November 2024, Madobe was re-elected president, with 55 of the total 75 votes in Jubbaland's parliament (which is not directly elected).²⁴ In response, the federal government issued an international arrest warrant for President Madobe of Jubbaland.²⁵ According to reports, Mogadishu also sent federal troops to the federal member state ahead of the elections.²⁶

Reactions from neighbouring Kenya and Ethiopia

Kenya, the neighbouring country with which the Jubbaland government has traditionally had the best relations and which supplied troops to ATMIS²⁷ (see also 1.7 and 2.1.4), generally took a neutral position in the conflict between Jubbaland and the federal government.²⁸ Nevertheless, President Madobe was not hindered in meeting the international community in Nairobi in January 2025.²⁹ Ethiopia, which had its own conflict with the federal government over an MoU between Somaliland and Ethiopia (see also 1.4), supported Jubbaland. In November 2024, Ethiopian troops in Jubbaland refused to allow a plane carrying federal government officials to land at Garbaharey airport.³⁰ In December 2024, fierce fighting broke out in the Gedo region between troops of the national army and Jubbaland's paramilitary

¹⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Mogadishu talks collapse as Somali politicians squabble over elections*, 7 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali PM says leaders' meeting underway amid disagreement on voting*, 8 October 2024.

¹⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somalia's Jubbaland to hold regional elections in November*, 11 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Jubbaland to 'hold regional presidential election'*, 9 October 2024 (Radio Shabelle).

²⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Somali president criticises Jubbaland leader, urges popular vote*, 11 December (Somali National TV, Mogadishu); Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

²¹ BBC Monitoring, *Constitutional changes allow Somali regional leader to seek a third term*, 2 July 2024 (Jubbaland TV, Kismaayo); BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somalia's Jubbaland to hold regional elections in November*, 11 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali government questions Jubbaland leader's legitimacy amid row*, 10 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somalia poll row worsens as PM condemns Jubbaland leader*, 18 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali PM warns regional leader over re-election bid amid dispute*, 19 November 2024 (Hiiraan Online).

²² BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Jubbaland state suspends relations with federal government*, 10 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somalia's Jubbaland cut ties with federal government amid tension*, 28 November 2024.

²³ BBC Monitoring, *Somali government suspends flight to Jubbaland town amid row*, 21 November 2024.

²⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: President of Somalia's Jubbaland re-elected in controversial poll*, 25 November 2024.

²⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali court issues arrest warrant for Jubbaland leader amid tensions*, 27 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's cabinet orders legal action against leader of Jubbaland state*, 26 November 2024; Robert Lansing Institute, *Tension Rises Between Somalia And Jubbaland*, 29 November 2024.

²⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia deploys troops to town in Jubbaland amid tensions*, 15 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Jubbaland warns of violence over troop deployment in town*, 25 November 2024.

²⁷ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Horn Examiner, *KENYA'S FAILED PROJECT IN JUBALAND: Buffer Zone Strategy Stumbles Under Madobe Leadership*, 1 July 2023; International Crisis Group, *Ending the Dangerous Standoff in Southern Somalia*, 14 July 2020.

²⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Explainer: Somalia's Jubbaland poll heightens fears of military fallout*, 27 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Kenyan forces 'vacate' key bases in Somalia's Jubaland amid tensions*, 4 December 2024 (Radio Shabelle, Mogadishu).

²⁹ Garowe Online, *Jubbaland leader's trip to Nairobi stirs divisions in Villa Somalia*, 21 January 2025; Confidential source, 13 February 2025.

³⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopian army blocks officials from landing in Somali town*, 23 November 2024.

forces. According to Somali authorities, at least ten, and according to the International Crisis Group (ICG), at least 75 federal soldiers were killed.³¹

1.4 Tensions with Ethiopia

On 1 January 2024, Ethiopia and Somaliland signed an MoU that would give Ethiopia access to a port and a military base.³² In return, Ethiopia would recognise Somaliland's independence. Although Somaliland unilaterally seceded from Somalia in the 1990s, neither Somalia nor the international community recognised Somaliland as independent.³³ In reactions to the MoU, Somalia indicated that it saw this as an act of aggression,³⁴ and the president of Somalia declared the agreement null and void.³⁵

The MoU between Somaliland and Ethiopia led to the expulsion of the Ethiopian ambassador,³⁶ rapprochement between Somalia and countries with which Ethiopia was at odds (such as Egypt and Eritrea),³⁷ and threats from Somalia to expel Ethiopian troops from the country.³⁸ The latter raised concerns both within and outside Somalia about the future of the African Union peacekeeping mission and the fight against al-Shabab (see also Chapter 2).³⁹ In addition to more than three thousand troops in ATMIS, Ethiopia bilaterally had many thousands more troops in Somalia (estimates were between three and ten thousand).⁴⁰ If these troops had to withdraw, there would be a significant shortage of troops for which it would be difficult to find alternatives. Moreover, some ATMIS bases were logistically served from the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.⁴¹

Finally, on 12 December 2024 – a few days before the end of the ATMIS mandate – an agreement was reached between Somalia and Ethiopia, following mediation by

³¹ BBC Monitoring, *Jubbaland says Somali army 'used drones' against its troops*, 11 December 2024 (Jubbaland TV); BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces 'lose' Jubbaland town after 12 hours of fighting*, 11 December 2024 (Caasimada Online, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali government, regional forces clash in southern region*, 11 December 2024; Reuters, *Fighting breaks out between Somalia's Jubbaland region and federal government*, 11 December 2024; VOA Officials, *Fighting breaks out between Somalia's Jubbaland region and federal government*, 11 December 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Ten killed as Somali troops clash with Ethiopian-backed regional forces*, 24 December 2024 (Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu); The Horn Observer, *Jubbaland Forces Regain Control of Dolow After Deadly Battle With Somalia Government Forces*, 23 December 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somalia says 23 December fighting won't affect recent deal with Ethiopia*, 24 December 2024; International Crisis Group, *December 2024 trends and January 2025 alerts*, January 2025.

³² BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia and Somaliland sign MoU on port access*, 1 January 2024; BBC Monitoring, *PM says Somaliland MoU to heal 'Ethiopia's heartbreak'*, 2 January 2024.

³³ BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia and Somaliland sign MoU on port access*, 1 January 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia alludes to Somaliland recognition for first time*, 3 January 2023; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's president 'nullifies' Ethiopia-Somaliland pact*, 7 January 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopian official says formal recognition part of Somaliland deal*, 20 January 2024.

³⁴ BBC News, *Somalia calls Ethiopia-Somaliland agreement act of aggression*, 2 January 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somalia accuses Ethiopia of provocation over port deal with Somaliland*, 2 January 2024.

³⁵ UNSC, *Report of the Secretary General on the situation in Somalia*, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, p. 2; BBC Monitoring, *Somali leader dismisses lease of territory to Ethiopia amid row*, 5 January 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's president 'nullifies' Ethiopia-Somaliland pact*, 7 January 2024; International Crisis Group, *The Stakes in the Ethiopia-Somaliland Deal*, 6 March 2024.

³⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia's army chief issues warning to Somalia amid diplomatic tensions*, 6 October 2024; The Africa Report, *Renewed tension as Somalia expels Ethiopian ambassador over 'sovereignty'*, 5 April 2024; Confidential source, 17 December 2024.

³⁷ Confidential source, 17 December 2024.

³⁸ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia asks Ethiopian forces to leave country amid tension*, 1 June 2024; Reuters, *Somalia to expel Ethiopian troops unless Somaliland port deal scrapped, official says*, 3 June 2024; The Africa Report, *Somalia's threat to expel Ethiopian troops spurs escalating tension*, 4 June 2024; BBC Monitoring, *African Union to deploy new stabilisation mission to Somalia*, 7 August 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).

³⁹ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 8 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁴⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Explainer: Could tensions in the Horn of Africa lead to conflict?*, 18 September 2024; ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁴¹ Confidential source, 8 November 2024.

Türkiye.⁴² The deal was made possible in part by the 13 November 2024 elections in Somaliland. The election there of a new president, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi (also known as 'Irro'), made it possible to call the Somaliland-Ethiopia MoU into question.⁴³ The MoU between Somalia and Ethiopia paved the way for a new AU mission to succeed ATMIS (see also 1.7). On 22 February 2025, Somali and Ethiopian authorities concluded an agreement on the deployment of Ethiopian troops in Somalia, both under AUSSOM and bilaterally.⁴⁴ On 27 February 2025, the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy paid a visit to Mogadishu.⁴⁵

The threat of the expulsion of the Ethiopian troops had nevertheless already opened the door to talks on supplying Egyptian troops to Somalia.⁴⁶ Due to a long-running conflict between Egypt and Ethiopia concerning a dam on the Nile, Egyptian participation in AUSSOM was unacceptable to Ethiopia.⁴⁷

The regional tensions between Somalia, Ethiopia and Egypt were also fuelling existing tensions between the federal government and the federal member states of Jubbaland and South-West State (see also 1.3.2 and 2.2.3). These federal member states did not want the Ethiopian troops to withdraw.⁴⁸ Despite the transition of the ATMIS mandate to AUSSOM in January 2025, up to the end of the reporting period it remained unclear whether Egyptian troops would become part of AUSSOM and how this would affect relations with Ethiopia.

1.5 Electoral reforms

Despite the withdrawal of Puntland and Jubbaland from the NCC (see also 1.3) and the concerns that South-West State had with the reforms (see also 2.2.3), President Mohamud pressed ahead with preparations for elections by universal suffrage. In November 2024, an electoral commission was established, universal suffrage was made legal and legislation on the formation of political parties was passed.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, at the end of the reporting period, much was still unclear, and it was uncertain whether it would be possible to complete all the necessary reforms in time for the next elections.⁵⁰

1.6 Elections

Elections in Puntland

⁴² BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Leaders agree to end Somalia-Ethiopia row after talks in Turkey*, 12 December 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia and Somalia reach deal in Turkey to end Somaliland port feud*, 12 December 2024; Confidential source, 17 December 2024.

⁴³ BBC Monitoring, *BBCM Watchlist 6 Jan 25, Somaliland says to review maritime agreement with Ethiopia*, 6 January 2025; BBC, *Somaliland opposition leader wins presidential election*, 19 November 2024; VOA News, *Somalia, Ethiopia agree to end dispute*, 12 December 2024; Confidential source, 8 November 2024; Confidential source, 12 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

⁴⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopia and Somalia reach agreement on troop deployment*, 24 February 2025.

⁴⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopian prime minister welcomed in Somali capital*, 27 February 2025.

⁴⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Egypt joins AU peacekeeping force in Somalia*, 24 December 2024.

⁴⁷ Confidential source, 28 January 2025.

⁴⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Somali regional state opposes withdrawal of Ethiopian troops*, 2 June 2024; Confidential source, 8 November 2024.

⁴⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Somali parliament passes controversial electoral regulations*, 11 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali MPs greenlight formation of new poll committee*, 16 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali lawmakers pass bill on formation of political parties*, 20 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali MPs pass electoral law allowing universal suffrage*, 24 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali cabinet approves new national poll body amid opposition*, 27 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali parliament approves new electoral agency officials*, 28 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia poll commission elects chairperson amid opposition*, 2 December 2024.

⁵⁰ Confidential source, 13 February 2025.

On 8 January 2024, Said Abdullahi Deni was once again elected president of the federal member state of Puntland.⁵¹ Although Deni had committed to universal suffrage (one man, one vote) in the run-up to the elections, this generated so much political opposition that he eventually agreed to indirect elections.⁵² This decision was supported by Federal President Mohamud.⁵³

Elections in Somaliland

Presidential elections were held in Somaliland on 13 November 2024 by universal suffrage. Outgoing President Muse Bihi of the Kulmiye party lost to Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi (Irro) of the Waddani party. A peaceful transfer of power took place.⁵⁴ President Irro was inaugurated on 12 December 2024.⁵⁵ Although his election helped to ease relations between Somalia and Ethiopia (see also 1.4), after his election, he stated his intention to intensify efforts for international recognition of Somaliland's independence.⁵⁶

Additional information on elections in Jubbaland and the postponement of elections in other federal member states is provided in 1.3.2.

1.7 Transition from ATMIS to AUSSOM

During the previous reporting period, the African Union's peacekeeping mission in Somalia – the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)⁵⁷ – was replaced by ATMIS. The ATMIS mandate entailed countering the threat of al-Shabab, promoting security in urban centres and along major trade routes within the country, promoting capacity development for the federal government's security and judicial structures, and developing the capacity of the federal security forces, with a view to transferring security responsibilities to them in December 2024.⁵⁸ In early April 2022, ATMIS consisted of around twenty thousand troops.⁵⁹

The ATMIS drawdown began on 1 July 2023, at the beginning of this reporting period.⁶⁰ By the end of 2024, 27 of the fifty bases ATMIS had started with had been either shut down or transferred to the Somali army.⁶¹

During the drawdown, it became clear that the Somali army (see also 2.1.3) was not yet capable of fully taking over the role of ATMIS.⁶² For this reason, in August 2024, the African Union once again decided on a temporary successor for ATMIS beginning 1 January 2025: AUSSOM. This new mission had the mandate to

⁵¹ BBC monitoring, *President of Somalia's Puntland state wins second term*, 8 January 2024.

⁵² BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland leader backs down on direct elections push*, 6 December 2023.

⁵³ BBC Monitoring, *Somali leader commends Puntland's plan to hold poll in January*, 7 December 2023.

⁵⁴ International Crisis Group, *Somaliland's Peaceful Handover Withstands Neighbourhood Strains*, 11 December 2024.

⁵⁵ AP News, *Somaliland's new president is sworn in after elections that boosted region's drive for recognition* | AP News, 12 December 2024.

⁵⁶ AP News, *Somaliland's new president is sworn in after elections that boosted region's drive for recognition*, 12 December 2024.

⁵⁷ AMISOM was established in 2007.

⁵⁸ African Union Peace and Security Council, *Communiqué (PSC/PR/COMM.1068)*, 8 March 2022.

⁵⁹ Institute for the Study of War, Africa File: 'AUSSOM' New AU Mission in Somalia; *Burkina Faso Reaches Boiling Point*, 22 August 2024.

⁶⁰ The Horn Observer, *AU Launches New Somalia Mission Amid Rising Rivalry and Funding Challenges*, 8 August 2024; Xinhua Net, *ATMIS completes third phase of troops' drawdown in Somalia*, 15 November 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

⁶¹ UNSC, *S/2024/698 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, pp. 12-13; UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, pp. 11-12; UNSC, *S/2023/758 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 11; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁶² The Horn Observer, *AU Launches New Somalia Mission Amid Rising Rivalry and Funding Challenges*, 8 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

gradually continue the transfer of security-related tasks to the Somali authorities.⁶³ The number of troops for AUSSOM was limited to a maximum of twelve thousand, and the mission was to be drawn down completely by the end of 2028.⁶⁴

The MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland led to a deterioration in relations between Somalia and Ethiopia during the reporting period. As a result, it was long said that Somalia would refuse to allow Ethiopia to supply troops to AUSSOM (see also 1.4). The agreement between Somalia and Ethiopia, which was concluded in Türkiye in late 2024, once again opened the way for Ethiopia to supply troops.⁶⁵

⁶³ The Horn Observer, *AU Launches New Somalia Mission Amid Rising Rivalry and Funding Challenges*, 8 August 2024; Xinhua Net, *ATMIS completes third phase of troops' drawdown in Somalia*, 15 November 2024; Confidential source, 3 October 2024.

⁶⁴ Institute for the Study of War, *Africa File: 'AUSSOM' New AU Mission in Somalia; Burkina Faso Reaches Boiling Point*, 22 August 2024; Security Council Report, *What's in blue: Somalia: Vote on the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)*, 9 August 2024; Confidential source, 3 October 2024.

⁶⁵ Confidential source, 28 January 2025.

2 The security situation

During the reporting period, the fight against al-Shabab reached its limits: the offensives decreased in intensity, and the group regained strength. At the end of the reporting period, al-Shabab had started an offensive in the areas surrounding the capital, Mogadishu. At first, IS-Somalia benefited from the fight against al-Shabab, and it initially increased in strength as well. At the end of the reporting period, an offensive in Puntland resulted in strategic victories over IS-S. Furthermore, clan violence increased, especially in areas where al-Shabab had less control.

This chapter provides an overview of the actors, control areas and major incidents. It also discusses 'tax collection'⁶⁶ by the various actors. Other topics that are addressed include freedom of movement, living conditions and possibilities for protection.

2.1 General security situation

2.1.1 Fight against al-Shabab

Following a relatively successful military campaign during the previous reporting period, the fight against al-Shabab reached its limits. At the end of the reporting period, al-Shabab launched an offensive around Mogadishu, in Middle and Lower Shabelle (see below).

The impasse in the fight against al-Shabab was due in part to the tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia, as well as between the federal government and Jubbaland. Several areas that had been seized by the national army and its allies during the previous reporting period fell back into the hands of al-Shabab during this reporting period (see also 2.1.5.2).⁶⁷ Confidence in the offensive launched by President Mohamud declined, and al-Shabab was able to regain its strength due to corruption and the lack of cooperation between the federal government, the federal member states and clans. This lack of cooperation was due to political infighting and clan clashes.⁶⁸ Al-Shabab deliberately targeted attacks on local authorities in order to undermine support for the federal government.⁶⁹

The fighting against al-Shabab continued, with major losses of troops, but they did not lead to the sustainable seizure of any areas, either for al-Shabab or for the authorities.⁷⁰ The elite forces of the Somali army were sometimes able to drive out al-Shabab and eliminate important al-Shabab actors, but they did not have

⁶⁶ In accordance with the Terms of Reference, the term 'tax' will be used here. Given that collection is accompanied by threats and force, it could also be referred to as extortion.

⁶⁷ BBC Monitoring, *Analysis: Regional row, internal tensions undermine war on Somali militants*, 29 November 2024; Afyare A Elmi, *Engaging Al-Shabaab in Somalia: Military Failures and the Merits of Dialogue*, 31 October 2024; ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali leader establishes four new army commands as war on al-Shabab falters*, 14 June 2024 (X); BBC Monitoring, *Explainer: Somalia constitutional amendments trigger discord among leaders*, 18 April 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 8 November 2024; Confidential source, 8 November 2024.

⁶⁸ Daisy Muibu, *Somalia's Stalled Offensive Against al-Shabaab: Taking Stock of Obstacles*, CTC Sentinel, Volume 17, Issue 2, February 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Explainer: Somalia constitutional amendments trigger discord among leaders*, 18 April 2024; ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; ACLED, *Somalia: Renewed counter-insurgency operations expected as al-Shabaab regroup*, 31 May 2024; Confidential source, 21 June 2024.

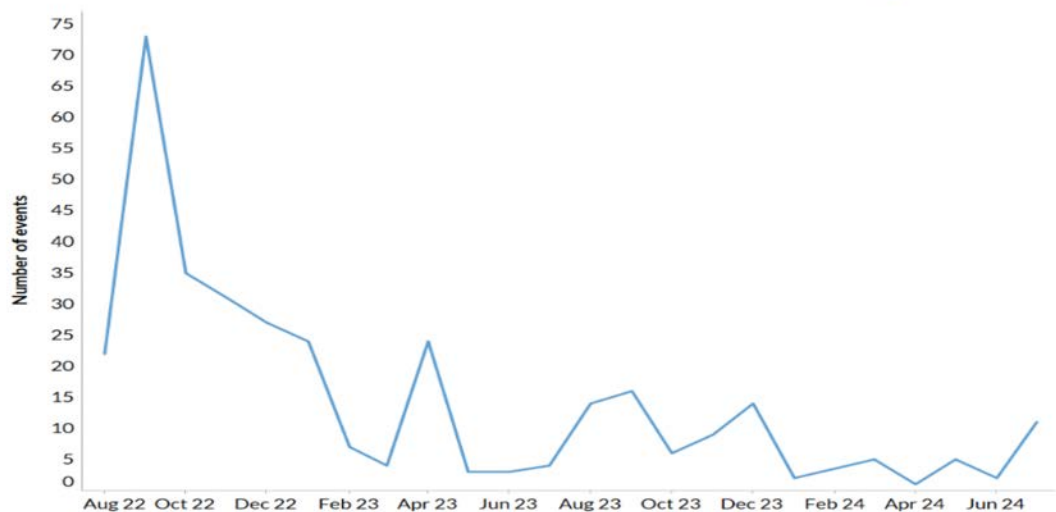
⁶⁹ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024.

⁷⁰ Confidential source, 8 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 June 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

sufficient capacity to subsequently maintain control over areas.⁷¹ According to several confidential sources, it was a strategic choice on the part of al-Shabab not to always seize areas, as long as they could operate in them.⁷² According to the Armed Conflict Location and Events Data Project (ACLED),⁷³ when the army became more active in the federal member states of Galmudug and Hirshabelle in 2024, al-Shabab moved towards South-West State and Jubbaland in the south and Puntland in the north.⁷⁴

On 10 November 2024, the commander of the armed forces of the national army was replaced following criticism of the setbacks that the army had suffered. He was replaced by his predecessor, who had been the army chief during the offensive that took place in the previous reporting period.⁷⁵

Territorial gains by Somali government forces
1 August 2022 - 30 August 2024



Graph 1: Trend in the number of incidents in which the Somali security forces seized areas that had previously been controlled by al-Shabab between August 2022 (start of the offensive against al-Shabab) and August 2024.⁷⁶

Additional information on the (increasing) capacity of al-Shabab is presented in 2.1.5.1.

Following his election in 2022, President Mohamud launched a military offensive against al-Shabab, in addition to an offensive to counter taxation by al-Shabab. One way he did this was by replacing staff in the port and at army checkpoints.⁷⁷ According to the authorities, in 2024, taxation by al-Shabab at the port of Mogadishu had been successfully countered.⁷⁸ According to another source,

⁷¹ Daisy Muibu, *Somalia's Stalled Offensive Against al-Shabaab: Taking Stock of Obstacles*, CTC Sentinel, Volume 17, Issue 2, February 2024; ACLED, *Al-Shabaab targets civilians in Somalia in retaliation for installing CCTV cameras*, 29 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces capture leader of al-Shabab 'extortion' unit in operation*, 6 August 2024; Confidential source, 21 June 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

⁷² Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁷³ ACLED is an NGO engaged in collecting, analysing and charting conflict data. Additional information about ACLED is available at the following website: <https://acleddata.com>.

⁷⁴ ACLED, *Somalia: Renewed counter-insurgency operations expected as al-Shabaab regroup*, 31 May 2024.

⁷⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Somali president reappoints Odowa Yusuf Rageh as army chief*, 11 November 2024.

⁷⁶ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024.

⁷⁷ Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

⁷⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia says militants 'no longer collect taxes' from port*, 3 September 2024.

however, al-Shabab had already resumed imposing taxes in the port of Mogadishu in 2023.⁷⁹ The general image emerging from sources was that al-Shabab continued to operate in Mogadishu because the government did not have sufficient capacity to fully guarantee security in Mogadishu.⁸⁰

In late February 2025, at the end of the reporting period, al-Shabab launched an offensive in the regions of Middle and Lower Shabelle.⁸¹ By mid-March, al-Shabab had approached Mogadishu to distances of ten to several dozen kilometres.⁸² According to the internet newspaper *Somali Guardian*, there were reports that al-Shabab had set up checkpoints on the main roads of Mogadishu in this area.⁸³ On 18 March 2025, President Mohamud survived an attack on his convoy in the vicinity of the presidential palace in Mogadishu, but at least eight people – most of whom were civilians and two of whom were journalists – were killed.⁸⁴

2.1.2

Clan violence

Conflicts between clans and subclans have traditionally occurred on a regular basis in Somalia, particularly in parts of the country where the influence of Al-Shabab and the authorities is weak. Most of these conflicts were based on political or territorial disputes, as well as on struggles over access to natural resources (like water and land).⁸⁵

According to various sources, clan violence often increased in areas where al-Shabab's control had decreased in the previous reporting period.⁸⁶ This was partly due to the fact that al-Shabab did not resolve clan clashes, but rather suppressed them.⁸⁷ Clan conflicts became more violent as a result of the fact that the government had armed the clan militias as part of the fight against al-Shabab.⁸⁸

⁷⁹ Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 13 February 2025.

⁸⁰ UNSC, S/2024/748, *Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab*, 28 October 2024, p. 15; Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

⁸¹ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Al-Shabab intensifies attacks in regions near Somali capital*, 16 March 2025; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'seizes' southern town near Somali capital*, 27 February 2025; BBC Monitoring, *US warns of imminent 'terrorist' attacks in Somali capital*, 5 March 2025.

⁸² BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Al-Shabab intensifies attacks in regions near Somali capital*, 16 March 2025.

⁸³ *Somali Guardian*, *Ethiopia 'has no plans to deploy its infantry' in Somalia's Middle Shabelle region amid militant advance*, 17 March 2025.

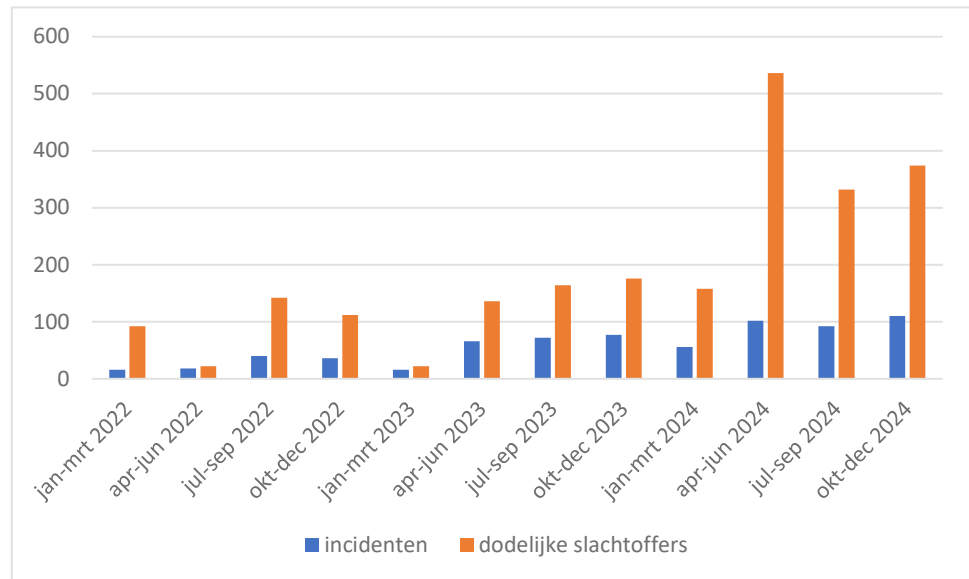
⁸⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Blast targeting Somali presidential convoy kills eight*, 18 March 2025; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somalia acknowledges attack on president as militant fight intensifies*, 19 March 2025; *The Somali Wire*, Issue No. 801, 19 March 2025; *Somali Guardian*, *Somalia's president narrowly escapes assassination attempt, travels to frontlines*, 18 March 2025.

⁸⁵ UNSOM, OHCHR, *Protection of civilians report; Building the foundation for peace, security and human rights in Somalia*, pp. 16-17, 3 November 2019; The Hill, *The violence in Somalia needs to be addressed*, 7 July 2021; UN Security Council, S/2021/849, p. 13, 6 October 2021; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, pp. 88-89, September 2022.

⁸⁶ Confidential source, 21 June 2024; Confidential source, 11 June 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

⁸⁷ Confidential source, 11 June 2024.

⁸⁸ ADF, *'Natural Warriors': Somalia's Local Militias Take the Fight to al-Shabaab*, 26 September 2023; *The Arab Wall*, *The Benefits and Hazards of Arming Tribal Militias in Somalia*, 29 September 2022; Confidential source, 21 June 2024.



Graph 2: Clan violence between January 2022 and December 2024.⁸⁹

Clan violence increased sharply in 2024, particularly in southern and central Somalia.⁹⁰ Al-Shabab was accused of contributing to clan conflict.⁹¹ According to the local press, al-Shabab instigated clan conflicts with the objective of undermining the fight against al-Shabab.⁹²

2.1.3 Somali armed forces

2.1.3.1 National army

The Somali national army was still being constructed during the reporting period.⁹³ According to various sources, it was unclear how many operational forces the army had or exactly where these forces were located.⁹⁴ In addition, the number of fatalities resulting from fighting was high.⁹⁵ According to figures from ACLED, at least 2,450 soldiers were killed in approximately 450 incidents between July 2023 and December 2024.⁹⁶ International partners provided capacity-building training, but according to one confidential source, investments in the army were used mainly for maintaining the number of troops.⁹⁷

⁸⁹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 17 February 2025. Filters: Country = Somalia; Region = all; Period = January 2022–December 2024; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Riots; Interaction = identity militia – identity militia.

⁹⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Central Somalia clan clashes kill at least five people*, 25 May 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

⁹¹ Daisy Muibu, *Somalia's Stalled Offensive Against al-Shabaab: Taking Stock of Obstacles*, CTC Sentinel, Volume 17, Issue 2, February 2024; ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Reuters, *Fighting between central Somalia clans kills at least 55, residents say*, 10 June 2024; Hiiraan Online, *President Mohamud accuses al-Shabab of instigating clan conflicts to disrupt military operations*, 7 July 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali local official accuses al-Shabab of fuelling clan clashes*, 21 April 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

⁹² BBC Monitoring, *Three killed in Somali clan clashes in southern town*, 18 April 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

⁹³ Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 8 November 2024;

⁹⁴ Confidential source, 8 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁹⁵ Confidential source, 8 November 2024; ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 11 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = All; Period = July 2023 – January 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence; Actors = Military Forces of Somalia + Military Forces of Somalia, Special Forces.

⁹⁶ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 11 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = All; Period = July 2023 – January 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence; Actors = Military Forces of Somalia + Military Forces of Somalia, Special Forces.

⁹⁷ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 13 February 2025.

A few elite units existed within the Somali army, including the Danab (trained by the United States of America) and the Gorgor (trained by Türkiye).⁹⁸ These troops were well-trained, but a confidential source stated that they were not representative of what the rest of the army was capable of.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, these troops also incurred heavy losses (including through desertion).¹⁰⁰ One analysis reported that Türkiye had trained six thousand troops since 2017, but that only about four thousand of them remained in 2024.¹⁰¹

The federal army was susceptible to political influence due to clan dynamics. In addition, the army had been trained by many different countries, which did not benefit cohesion within the army. There were also reports of widespread corruption and theft of equipment, weapons, ammunition and food.¹⁰² In April 2024, the United States halted food supplies to the Danab troops due to corruption.¹⁰³ According to one confidential source, soldiers at the front often did not receive their salaries. The army was also extremely weak in terms of logistics: supplies to troops were limited, especially in places that were farther away from the centre. As a result, some soldiers defected to al-Shabab.¹⁰⁴

The functioning of the national army was also impacted by the tense relations between the federal government and the federal member states. There was still insufficient agreement concerning the division of responsibilities across the national army. This raised concerns amongst the federal member states that the army would be used against them.¹⁰⁵

Puntland did not allow the recruitment of troops for the national army in that federal member state. The authorities in Puntland also refused to allow the national army to operate in the federal member state.¹⁰⁶ According to one confidential source, the distrust of several federal member states in the federal army grew after the arms embargo was completely lifted in December 2023, as this made it easier for the federal army to obtain weapons.¹⁰⁷ This embargo against supplying weapons to Somalia's federal government had been imposed by the UN Security Council in 1992. In 2007, arms imports to the Somali security sector were once again allowed, but only subject to the approval of the UN Sanctions Committee. This restriction was lifted in December 2023. The prohibition against arms imports to the benefit of non-state actors remained in force.¹⁰⁸

2.1.3.2 Police and paramilitary forces at the level of the federal member states

⁹⁸ ACLED, *Somalia: Renewed counter-insurgency operations expected as al-Shabaab regroup*, 31 May 2024; Garowe Online, *Hassan Sheikh: Gorgor soldiers, important in Al-Shabaab war*, 15 September 2023.

⁹⁹ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

¹⁰⁰ The Somali Digest, *Gorgor Forces in Crisis: Desertions and Leadership Failures*, 28 March 2024; The Somali Digest, *SNA deserters sentenced*, 29 January 2024.

¹⁰¹ The Somali Digest, *Gorgor Forces in Crisis: Desertions and Leadership Failures*, 28 March 2024.

¹⁰² The Horn Observer, *AU Launches New Somalia Mission Amid Rising Rivalry and Funding Challenges*, 8 August 2024; ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; VOA News, *Al-Shabab reverses Somali force gains, now working with Houthis in Somalia*, 17 June 2024; The Somali Digest, *U.S. Stops Rations to Danab Amid Corruption Scandal [Exclusive]*, 25 April 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 11 June 2024.

¹⁰³ The Somali Digest, *U.S. Stops Rations to Danab Amid Corruption Scandal [Exclusive]*, 25 April 2024; NBC News, *Somalia detains US-trained commandos over theft of rations*, 26 April 2024.

¹⁰⁴ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

¹⁰⁵ Confidential source, 8 November 2024; Confidential source, 8 November 2024.

¹⁰⁶ Hiraan Online, *Minister Adala accuses Puntland of blocking national army deployment in Galgala mountains*, 9 October 2024.

¹⁰⁷ Confidential source, 8 November 2024; Confidential source, 13 February 2025.

¹⁰⁸ UNSC, *Press release: Security Council Lifts Arms Embargo on Federal Government of Somalia, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2714 (2023)*, 1 December 2023; Reuters, *UN Security Council lifts arms embargo on Somalia government*, 1 December 2023; SIPRI website, [UN arms embargo on Somalia | SIPRI](#), consulted on 24 December 2024.

Somalia did not (yet) have a federal police force.¹⁰⁹ The federal member states had paramilitary forces (also referred to as *darwish*, or special police forces).¹¹⁰ The capacity of these forces differed by federal member state.¹¹¹ According to 2021 information from the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), Jubbaland and South-West State each had several thousand troops.¹¹² The paramilitary forces in South-West State and Jubbaland played a role in the fight against al-Shabab,¹¹³ but they were also vulnerable. For example, in April 2024, a part of the South-West State *darwish* disintegrated along the lines of clans (or subclans), after which the two groups joined different sides of a clan conflict.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, during the reporting period, the Jubbaland forces clashed with the federal army (see also 1.3.2). In Puntland, a contingent of the regional forces deserted during the reporting period, and subsequently joined the political opposition.¹¹⁵

2.1.4 ATMIS/AUSSOM

ATMIS and its successor, AUSSOM, did not play an offensive role in the fight against al-Shabab. The AU forces were located in Forward Operation Bases (FOB), from which they occasionally carried out patrols. One important role of the ATMIS forces entailed the provision of a certain level of services from the FOBs, such as access to water and minimal medical care. As a result, displaced persons and NGOs often settled in the vicinity of these bases. Upon leaving these bases, however, the ATMIS forces would take their equipment with them, and the federal army was not always capable of taking over the provision of these services.¹¹⁶

According to multiple sources, various contingents did not receive their allowances (or at least not on time).¹¹⁷ ATMIS troops were not paid directly by the African Union. The AU paid the governments of the countries sending the troops. Many ATMIS troops were often paid poorly by their own governments, or they were not paid until they returned home after their deployment in Somalia. According to one confidential source, the Ethiopian authorities used the African Union's payments to fund the bilateral deployment of soldiers in Somalia.¹¹⁸ During the reporting period, there were reports that Ethiopian forces were imposing taxes on the population in the Gedo region.¹¹⁹

2.1.5 Al-Shabab

¹⁰⁹ Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

¹¹⁰ Vanda Felbab-Brown, *The problem with militias in Somalia: Almost everyone wants them despite their dangers*, 14 April 2020; ATMIS News, *ATMIS ENDF troops commended for securing Southwest State during Ramadan*, 12 April 2024; Daisy Muibu, *Somalia's Stalled Offensive Against al-Shabaab: Taking Stock of Obstacles*, CTC Sentinel, Volume 17, Issue 2, February 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

¹¹¹ Daisy Muibu, *Somalia's Stalled Offensive Against al-Shabaab: Taking Stock of Obstacles*, CTC Sentinel, Volume 17, Issue 2, February 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Explainer: Somalia's Jubbaland poll heightens fears of military fallout*, 27 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

¹¹² EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, pp. 69-70.

¹¹³ BBC Monitoring, *Army captures al-Shabab operative in southwest Somalia raid*, 11 May 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces kill militants and seize village in south-west region*, 21 July 2024 (Somali National TV, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Somali army kills 12 militants in south-west region*, 18 September 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Jubbaland forces 'seize villages' from al-Shabab*, 13 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Explainer: Somalia's Jubbaland poll heightens fears of military fallout*, 27 November 2024.

¹¹⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Somali state to court-martial soldiers over inter-clan clashes – report*, 22 April 2024; UNHCR, *Somalia: Protection and Return Monitoring (PRMN) FLASH ALERT #4*, 31 March 2024.

¹¹⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland soldiers join pro-opposition force amid poll row*, 20 November 2023.

¹¹⁶ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

¹¹⁷ Garowe Online, *Financial crisis hits ATMIS as Ugandan soldiers go without pay in Somalia*, 6 February 2023; Confidential source, 8 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

¹¹⁸ Confidential source, 8 November 2024.

¹¹⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopian troops 'tax' southwestern Somali residents*, 29 May 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

2.1.5.1 Capacity of al-Shabab

After substantial losses during the Mohamud administration's offensive against al-Shabab during the previous reporting period, various sources reported that al-Shabab regained strength during the current reporting period.¹²⁰ In the meantime, al-Shabab's capacity increased – not only in terms of the number of fighters, but also in terms of the capacity for innovation (for example, the use of drones and building their own weapons)¹²¹ – as did the precision of their attacks.¹²² During the reporting period, there were several reports that al-Shabab was collaborating with the Houthis from Yemen.¹²³

The estimated numbers of al-Shabab fighters were between six and fifteen thousand.¹²⁴ According to various sources, recruitment was not difficult for al-Shabab. First, al-Shabab controlled access to information in the areas under its control. Men in particular, but also women, grew up knowing that they could be asked to join al-Shabab.¹²⁵ Many al-Shabab recruits came from Jubbaland and South-West State, where al-Shabab maintained a large presence. In many cases, they joined out of dissatisfaction with the foreign presence in Somalia, particularly that of Ethiopia. The MoU between Somaliland and Ethiopia (see also 1.4) had purportedly contributed to al-Shabab's recruitment capacity.¹²⁶ By presenting itself as an organisation that stood for the dismantling of clan relationships, al-Shabab also appealed to minority clans.¹²⁷

A detailed description of recruitment (including forced recruitment) by al-Shabab is presented in the previous COI Report.¹²⁸ There was no reason to assume that any major changes in this regard occurred during the current reporting period.¹²⁹

2.1.5.2 Areas under the control of al-Shabab

The map below indicates the areas that were under the control of the various actors at the end of the reporting period. For the purpose of comparison with the previous reporting period, the map from the previous COI Report is included in the appendix.

Comparison of the maps shows that the federal government had slightly extended its control in Hirshabelle during the reporting period, whereas al-Shabab had increased its control area in Jubbaland, South-West State and Galmudug. In Puntland, IS-S had gained a greater foothold, and Somaliland had lost control around SSC-Khatumo. The map below draws a distinction between areas controlled by the federal government and those controlled by autonomous forces (for example, those of Puntland and Jubbaland). In Jubbaland, this included elements of the AUSSOM forces.

¹²⁰ VOA News, *Al-Shabab reverses Somali force gains, now working with Houthis in Somalia*, 17 June 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

¹²¹ Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

¹²² Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

¹²³ VOA News, *Al-Shabab reverses Somali force gains, now working with Houthis in Somalia*, 17 June 2024; Confidential source, 4 October 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

¹²⁴ VOA News, *Al-Shabab reverses Somali force gains, now working with Houthis in Somalia*, 17 June 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

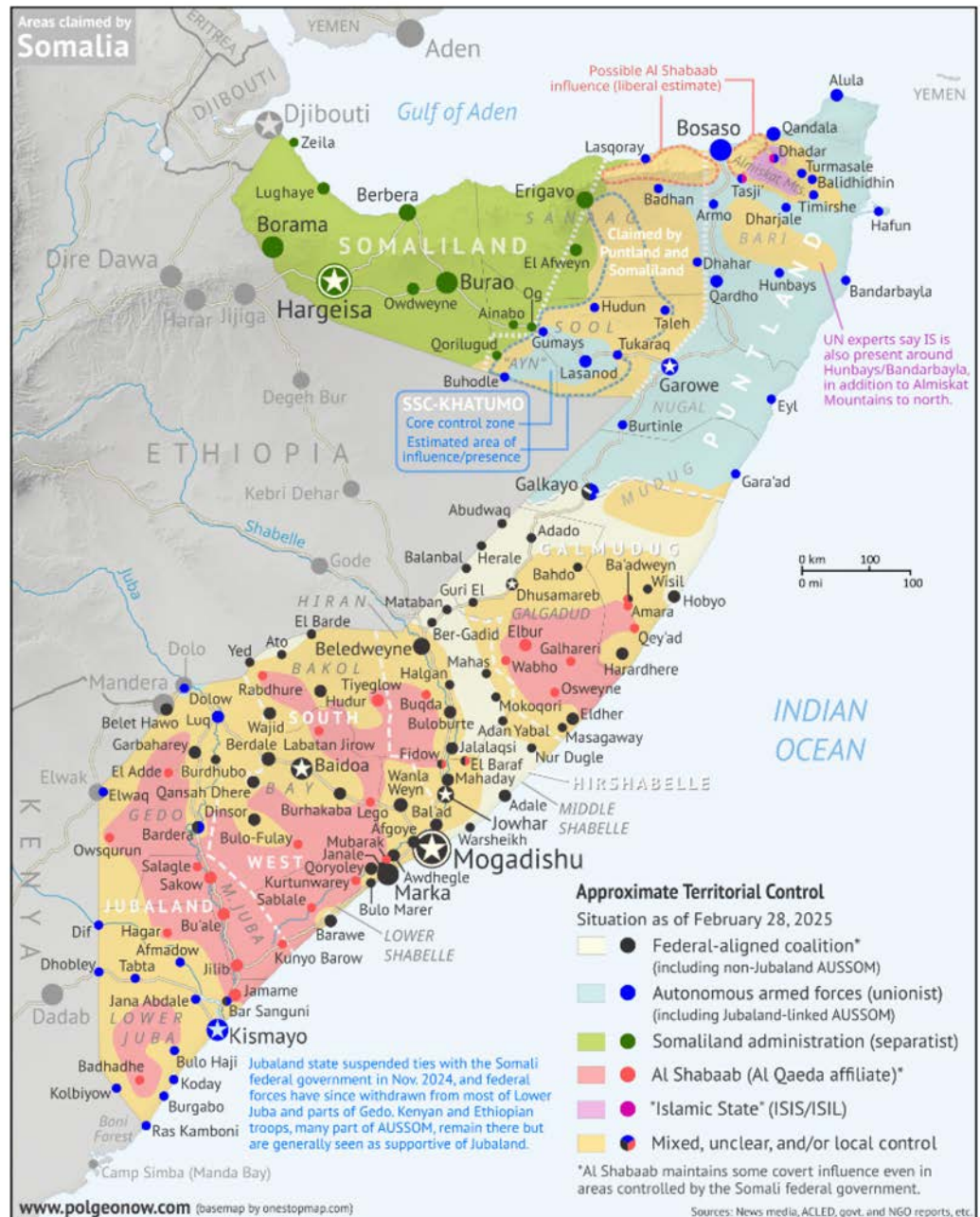
¹²⁵ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

¹²⁶ VOA News, *Al-Shabab reverses Somali force gains, now working with Houthis in Somalia*, 17 June 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

¹²⁷ Daisy Muibu, *Somalia's Stalled Offensive Against al-Shabaab: Taking Stock of Obstacles*, CTC Sentinel, Volume 17, Issue 2, February 2024; Confidential source, 6 November 2024.

¹²⁸ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, pp. 36-40.

¹²⁹ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p.16; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 13 November 2024.

Map 1: Areas of control in Somalia.¹³⁰

The authorities were insufficiently or not at all capable of gaining sustainable control over and stabilising the reclaimed areas.¹³¹ Even in areas controlled by the federal government, Al-Shabab still held some form of control (see also the legend to Map 1). Al-Shabab therefore had more control than it would appear at face value. According to various sources, this was due to the fact that al-Shabab was more interested in imposing taxes than it was in controlling areas. They often settled for

¹³⁰ Evan Centanni / Political Geography Now (<https://www.polgeonow.com/>), 28 February 2025.

¹³¹ Combating Terrorism Center, *The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment*, Volume 17, Issue 4, April 2024.

raiding and setting up checkpoints.¹³² According to various sources, al-Shabab chose not to take over urban areas and the ATMIS bases located there. The group preferred to carry out occasional attacks in order to obtain arms and equipment, and to subsequently withdraw back to the rural areas. In general, the urban areas held by the government were under siege by al-Shabab in the surrounding areas.¹³³

Al-Shabab was capable of moving freely and infiltrating urban areas as well, including Mogadishu¹³⁴ and, according to one confidential source, sometimes even in the secure zone around the airport (see also 2.2.1.2).¹³⁵ The city of Baidoa was particularly vulnerable because of its inland location, which made it difficult to reach.¹³⁶ Although the number of attacks by al-Shabab appeared to be decreasing in early 2024, it spiked again in September 2024.¹³⁷ At the end of the reporting period, al-Shabab had advanced to within a few dozen kilometres of Mogadishu (see also 2.1.1).

According to one confidential source, attacks by Al-Shabab were aimed especially at the elite forces of the Somali army, with the objective of undermining morale within the army.¹³⁸

2.1.5.3 Life in the areas controlled by al-Shabab

In areas that were completely controlled by al-Shabab, the organisation applied a strict version of the sharia. Although this resulted in a certain level of access to justice for the population, it also restricted the civil liberties of civilians. For example, there was no freedom of expression or assembly.¹³⁹ Al-Shabab also restricted access to information. People were not allowed to watch television, and smartphones were prohibited; even some religious books were not permitted. Al-Shabab had informants everywhere, as well as many checkpoints in the areas controlled by the organisation. If it saw cause to do so, al-Shabab conducted home searches. Finally, many parents in al-Shabab territory feared that their sons would be conscripted by al-Shabab and sent to the front.¹⁴⁰

Some restrictions that were imposed on the population by al-Shabab did not deviate from the social norm to any large extent. The difference was that al-Shabab formalised such norms and strictly enforced them. One example was that women were always required to be accompanied by their husbands or by a male relative. Although many women already adhered to this norm, al-Shabab purportedly enforced it.¹⁴¹

¹³² Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

¹³³ UNSC, S/2024/748, *Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab*, 28 October 2024; ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

¹³⁴ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

¹³⁵ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

¹³⁶ Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

¹³⁷ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

¹³⁸ Confidential source, 11 June 2024.

¹³⁹ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 12; Africa Center for Strategy & Policy, *Justice and terror: Al-Shabaab's informal justice mechanism*, 5 January 2019; The Hiraal Institute, ODI and Centre on Armed Groups, *Playing the long game Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control*, August 2023, p. 12; USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, pp. 19, 24; Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

¹⁴⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Somali militants ban sale of smartphones, beauty products*, 7 September 2024 (Radio Andalus); Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

¹⁴¹ Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

According to various sources, life in areas under the sustainable control of al-Shabab could be relatively stable, due to the lack of open conflict, particularly if the population was accustomed to the restrictions imposed by al-Shabab.¹⁴² The administration in government territory was perceived to have become less secure and less predictable due to such factors as corruption, nepotism and the influence of clan dynamics.¹⁴³

2.1.5.4 Life in areas where control was less clear

In areas where control in recent years shifted back and forth between al-Shabab and the government, life was relatively insecure for civilians. This was particularly the case if the community was internally divided, given that civilians could be accused by either side of collaborating with the other side.¹⁴⁴ In some cases, communities that formed a tight entity succeeded in negotiating a certain level of autonomy with al-Shabab.¹⁴⁵ As a result, however, these communities had to pay taxes to both sides.¹⁴⁶

In areas where al-Shabab had less control and where incidents of violence were more frequent, they were more restrictive and less trusting of the civilian population. There was less room for negotiation and less freedom of movement.¹⁴⁷ In these areas, al-Shabab could devote more time to preaching and indoctrination, and it sometimes separated al-Shabab youth from older generations in order to be able to exercise a greater influence on the young people.¹⁴⁸

2.1.6 Tax collection by al-Shabab outside the control areas

The previous COI Report contains a description of how al-Shabab imposes taxes. This description continued to apply during the current reporting period.¹⁴⁹ During the reporting period, al-Shabab continued to retain the capacity to impose taxes in areas that were not completely under its control.¹⁵⁰ Estimates of al-Shabab's annual revenues from taxation varied between USD 100 and 150 million. By way of comparison, the federal government's annual revenues amounted to around USD 250 million.¹⁵¹

Al-Shabab collected information about imports and property through its network of informants. Based on this information, the owner of the commodities or property was notified of the amount of taxes to be paid.¹⁵² According to one confidential source, it was difficult to negotiate the amount, as the information to which al-Shabab had access was usually very precise.¹⁵³ According to several confidential

¹⁴² The Hiraal Institute, ODI and Centre on Armed Groups, *Playing the long game Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control*, August 2023, pp. 12, 28; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024.

¹⁴³ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

¹⁴⁴ Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

¹⁴⁵ Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

¹⁴⁶ Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

¹⁴⁷ Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

¹⁴⁸ Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

¹⁴⁹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, 2.5.3.

¹⁵⁰ Jay Bahadur, *TERROR AND TAXES. Inside al-Shabaab's revenue-collection machine*, December 2022, p. 1; BBC Monitoring, *TV says businesses in Somali capital closing over al-Shabab fears*, 28 November 2023 (Radio Shabelle, Mogadishu); Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

¹⁵¹ UNSC, *SI/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab*, 28 October 2024, p. 15; US Department of Treasury, *Treasury Designates Transnational al-Shabab Money Laundering Network*, 11 March 2024; Africa Center for Strategic Studies, *Reclaiming Al-Shabaab's Revenue*, 27 March 2023.

¹⁵² Jay Bahadur, *TERROR AND TAXES. Inside al-Shabaab's revenue-collection machine*, December 2022, p. 1; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

¹⁵³ Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

sources, those who did not pay promptly did not always face immediate reprisals. In some cases, several warnings were issued before al-Shabab proceeded to violence. Some negotiation concerning the timing of payment was possible in some cases (for example, through the mediation of a clan elder). There was nevertheless no possibility of cancellation.¹⁵⁴ Whether al-Shabab would trace an individual depended on the type of problems that the individual had with al-Shabab (see also 2.1.9.2), as well as on al-Shabab's willingness to invest time and resources in finding the individual. Such consideration was dependent on the context and the al-Shabab official involved.¹⁵⁵ Within the Somali context, it was virtually impossible to escape reprisals by al-Shabab.¹⁵⁶ The government did not have the capacity to protect civilians from al-Shabab.¹⁵⁷

Companies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had no choice other than to pay taxes, given that al-Shabab had the capacity to enforce cooperation. This capacity consisted of punitive measures such as executions, but also, for example, by making it impossible to transport the commodities inland.¹⁵⁸ That al-Shabab was capable of doing this was also evidenced by the executions of shop owners who had installed cameras on their business premises on order of the government (see also 2.2.1.3).¹⁵⁹ In December 2024, the Somali prime minister called upon business owners to arm themselves against taxation by al-Shabab.¹⁶⁰

Taxes were also imposed at checkpoints. According to one confidential source, al-Shabab earned the most money with checkpoints in the areas where it held full control,¹⁶¹ but it was also capable of forcing taxation in areas that were not under the administration of al-Shabab (see also 2.1.5.2). Particularly at checkpoints, the leeway for negotiation depended on financial need and the mood and circumstances of the al-Shabab fighter involved.¹⁶²

2.1.7 IS-Somalia

Islamic State-Somalia (IS-S) was founded in 2015 by fighters who had left al-Shabab.¹⁶³ According to experts, little had remained of the organisation by 2022.¹⁶⁴ In contrast to al-Shabab, IS-S historically carried out far fewer large-scale attacks on Somali forces.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁴ Ripamonti, D., Dowd, C., Patel, R., Gleason, K., & Polzin, S. S. (2024), Non-state armed groups as food system actors in Somalia and Haiti. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 24(4), 348; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

¹⁵⁵ Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

¹⁵⁶ Ripamonti, D., Dowd, C., Patel, R., Gleason, K., & Polzin, S. S. (2024), Non-state armed groups as food system actors in Somalia and Haiti. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 24(4), 348; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

¹⁵⁷ Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

¹⁵⁸ Jay Bahadur, *TERROR AND TAXES. Inside al-Shabaab's revenue-collection machine*, December 2022, p. 1; BBC Monitoring, *TV says businesses in Somali capital closing over al-Shabab fears*, 28 November 2023 (Radio Shabelle, Mogadishu); Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

¹⁵⁹ Mareeg Media, *Mogadishu Shop Owners Under Attack for CCTV Installations*, 28 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Suspected al-Shabab militants kill businessman in Somali capital*, 5 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Suspected militants kill businessmen in Somali capital*, 10 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Businesses in Somali capital bombed after installing CCTV cameras*, 2 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Suspected al-Shabab blasts destroy mall outside Somali capital*, 31 August 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia arrests two for facilitating treatment for militants*, 16 November 2023 (Somali News Agency Website, Mogadishu); Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

¹⁶⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali PM calls on traders to arm against al-Shabab's 'taxation'*, 15 December 2024.

¹⁶¹ Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

¹⁶² Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

¹⁶³ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland state to launch new offensive against militants*, 22 November 2024.

¹⁶⁴ Africa Defense Forum, *Somalia Faces Critical Threat as Islamic State Group Expands in Puntland*, 18 June 2024.

¹⁶⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland state to launch new offensive against militants*, 22 November 2024; ACLED, *The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia*, 31 July 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Explainer: Was the recent military campaign a major setback for IS in Somalia?*, 10 February 2025.

At the end of the reporting period, a military campaign was waged against IS-S in Bari, whereupon the Puntland authorities achieved strategic gains with assistance from the United States and the United Arab Emirates (see also 2.2.6).

During the reporting period, IS-S had initially gained strength.¹⁶⁶ According to the Africa Defense Forum, the rise of IS-S was related to the Somali federal government's offensive against al-Shabab. Because of this, al-Shabab had fewer resources for the fight against IS-S.¹⁶⁷ In 2023, IS-S launched an offensive against al-Shabab¹⁶⁸ and, in 2024, it drove al-Shabab out of the strategic¹⁶⁹ Al-Miskaad mountains in the Bari region.¹⁷⁰ This expansion of the influence of IS-S also increased the organisation's appeal to potential recruits.¹⁷¹ IS-S was positioned primarily in the Bari region in Puntland (see also 2.2.6).¹⁷²

Following American air strikes on IS-S positions in May 2024 aimed at eliminating the leader Abdulqadi Mumin, IS-S became even more active.¹⁷³ In 2024, IS-S carried out several attacks against the security forces and companies in Puntland, and it increased taxation.¹⁷⁴ Anyone not paying taxes could become a victim of attacks (see also 2.1.8).¹⁷⁵ According to experts, IS-S was the financial hub of ISIS. This was made possible in part by taxation, particularly in the port city of Bosaso, where revenues at the local level exceeded that of al-Shabab. On a national scale, IS-S mobilised much less revenue than al-Shabab did, but more than enough to sustain itself.¹⁷⁶ With the increase in revenues, the organisation could recruit even more new fighters.¹⁷⁷

According to the UN Panel of Experts, the number of IS-S fighters doubled during the reporting period.¹⁷⁸ About half of all new recruits were reported to be foreign

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- ¹⁶⁶ UNSC, S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab, 28 October 2024, pp. 11-12.
- ¹⁶⁷ Africa Defense Forum, *Somalia Faces Critical Threat as Islamic State Group Expands in Puntland*, 18 June 2024.
- ¹⁶⁸ Africa File, *Africa Crucial to IS Global Network*, 20 June 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali minister accuses Puntland of blocking national army deployment*, 10 October 2024; UNSC, S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab, 28 October 2024, p. 12.
- ¹⁶⁹ Al Miskaad was strategically important because it provided water and protection, and because of its location in the area belonging to the clan of the IS-S leader Abdulqadir Mumin.
- ¹⁷⁰ Africa File, *Africa Crucial to IS Global Network*, 20 June 2024; The Somali Digest, *Islamic State in Somalia Strategically Takes over Al Miskaad*, 21 April 2024; BBC Monitoring, *IS reportedly increasing presence in north-eastern Somalia*, 29 May 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); ACLED, *The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia*, 31 July 2024; Africa Defense Forum, *Somalia Faces Critical Threat as Islamic State Group Expands in Puntland*, 18 June 2024; UNSC, S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab, 28 October 2024, p. 12.
- ¹⁷¹ Africa Defense Forum, *Somalia Faces Critical Threat as Islamic State Group Expands in Puntland*, 18 June 2024.
- ¹⁷² UNSC, S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab, 28 October 2024, pp. 11-12.
- ¹⁷³ VOA, *Islamic State in Somalia poses growing threat*, US officials say, 18 June 2024; ACLED, *The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia*, 31 July 2024; ACLED, *The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia*, 31 July 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali minister accuses Puntland of blocking national army deployment*, 10 October 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.
- ¹⁷⁴ ACLED, *The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia*, 31 July 2024; Africa Defense Forum, *Somalia Faces Critical Threat as Islamic State Group Expands in Puntland*, 18 June 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali minister accuses Puntland of blocking national army deployment*, 10 October 2024.
- ¹⁷⁵ ACLED, *The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia*, 31 July 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali minister accuses Puntland of blocking national army deployment*, 10 October 2024.
- ¹⁷⁶ UNSC, S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab, 28 October 2024, pp. 12-13; Africa File, *Africa Crucial to IS Global Network*, 20 June 2024; VOA, *Islamic State in Somalia poses growing threat*, US officials say, 18 June 2024; US Treasury, *Fact Sheet: Countering ISIS Financing*, 27 February 2024, p. 1; ACLED, *The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia*, 31 July 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.
- ¹⁷⁷ ACLED, *The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia*, 31 July 2024.
- ¹⁷⁸ UNSC, S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab, 28 October 2024, p. 13.

fighters from countries including Yemen and Ethiopia, as well as from Sudan, Morocco and Tanzania.¹⁷⁹ According to reports, IS-S had hundreds of fighters during the reporting period.¹⁸⁰

According to the Africa Defence Forum, the rise of IS-S also led to an increase in piracy, as pirates were offered protection in exchange for a share of the proceeds.¹⁸¹ After six years of relatively few cases of piracy, the number increased again during the reporting period.¹⁸² The UN Panel of Experts registered 25 cases between November 2023 and October 2024.¹⁸³

2.1.8 Taxation by IS-S

In contrast to some cases with al-Shabab, IS-S generally allowed absolutely no room for negotiation. This was due to the fact that IS-S had much less capacity to enforce directives in the long term¹⁸⁴ and, from an ideological perspective, it was also unwilling to negotiate with clan leaders.¹⁸⁵ During the reporting period, various companies and hospitals in Bosaso, Puntland, closed their doors as a result of threats from IS-S.¹⁸⁶

2.1.9 Violence against civilians

2.1.9.1 Civilian casualties in general

According to various sources, civilians were often the target of violence.¹⁸⁷ Between 1 July 2023 and late February 2025, ACLED registered 806 incidents aimed at civilians, in which there were 852 fatalities.¹⁸⁸ The political mission of the United Nations in Somalia, UNSOM, registered 1,429 civilian casualties between June 2023 and September 2024,¹⁸⁹ with 562 of them being fatalities.¹⁹⁰ No figures were found for civilian casualties by region.

¹⁷⁹ UNSC, S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab, 28 October 2024, p. 13; VOA, *Islamic State in Somalia poses growing threat, US officials say*, 18 June 2024; The Somali Digest, *Islamic State in Somalia Strategically Takes over Al Miskaad*, 21 April 2024; Hiraan, *Minister Adala accuses Puntland of blocking national army deployment in Galgala mountains*, 9 October 2024.

¹⁸⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland state to launch new offensive against militants*, 22 November 2024; Africa File, *Africa Crucial to IS Global Network*, 20 June 2024; ACLED, *The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia*, 31 July 2024.

¹⁸¹ Africa Defense Forum, *Somalia Faces Critical Threat as Islamic State Group Expands in Puntland*, 18 June 2024.

¹⁸² UNSC, S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab, 28 October 2024, p. 3; Africa Defense Forum, *Somalia Faces Critical Threat as Islamic State Group Expands in Puntland*, 18 June 2024.

¹⁸³ UNSC, S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab, 28 October 2024, p. 3.

¹⁸⁴ Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

¹⁸⁵ Confidential source, 13 February 2025.

¹⁸⁶ Garowe Online, *ISIS extortion threats force business closures in Bosaso, Somalia*, 18 June 2023; Halqabsi News, *Bosaso Hospitals Shut Down Amidst ISIS Extortion Demands*, 24 June 2024; Abdikhalig Awil on X, 27 June 2024, [Abdikhalig Awil on X: 'Within a month, #IS-Somalia has forced more than five major business companies to shut down due to #extortion demands. Today, Towfiig General Trading has also been closed by IS orders. Meanwhile, the #Puntland government remains silent and inactive'. / X, consulted on 15 December 2024.](#)

¹⁸⁷ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

¹⁸⁸ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 20 March 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = All; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

¹⁸⁹ The most recent report on Somalia by the UN Secretary-General, which was compiled by UNSOM during the reporting period, dated from September 2024. UNSOM ceased to exist in November 2024. The successor to UNSOM, UNTMIS, will issue a report once every six months.

¹⁹⁰ UNSC, S/2023/758 Report of the Secretary-General, *Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 9; UNSC, S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, *Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, pp. 9-10; UNSC, S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, *Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 10; UNSC, S/2024/698 Report of the Secretary-General, *Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10; Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

The Somali security forces regularly committed human rights violations, both within and outside conflict zones.¹⁹¹ According to the UN, al-Shabab was responsible for the greatest share of civilian casualties. Other groups of perpetrators of civilian casualties included clan militias, security forces at the level of both the federal state and the federal member states, and unidentified perpetrators.¹⁹² According to the UN, around 150 of the 1,429 registered civilian casualties between June 2023 and September 2024¹⁹³ were caused by security forces.¹⁹⁴ According to al-Shabab, air strikes by foreign forces (such as the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia and Türkiye) had also resulted in civilian casualties.¹⁹⁵ According to one confidential source, it was not always clear who was behind drone strikes.¹⁹⁶

2.1.9.2

Targeted violence against civilians by al-Shabab

Repression by al-Shabab was often extreme.¹⁹⁷ Targeted violence against civilians by al-Shabab was often due to the fact that someone had not adhered to the restrictions or directives of al-Shabab (for example, concerning the payment of taxes).¹⁹⁸ According to one confidential source, the attacks on the Bakaara market in Mogadishu on 6 February 2024 and the attack on employees of Hormuud Telecom on 28 April 2024 were the result of extortion by al-Shabab.¹⁹⁹ Examples of targeted violence against civilians also included the executions of business owners who had installed cameras on their business premises (see also 2.2.1.3).

Al-Shabab targeted individuals and groups who posed a risk to the group's ideological and economic interests.²⁰⁰ Groups that were in danger under al-Shabab included government officials and individuals suspected of collaborating with the government (such as militia members and clan elders).²⁰¹ As indicated in the previous COI Report,²⁰² high-ranking government officials in particular were in danger of being targeted by al-Shabab. During the current reporting period, examples of executions by al-Shabab also included a police officer and a tax collector at the local level.²⁰³ Individuals suspected of espionage were also at risk,

¹⁹¹ Confidential source, 30 August 2024; UNSC, *S/2023/758 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 9; UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, pp. 9-10; UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 10; UNSC, *S/2024/698 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10.

¹⁹² UNSC, *S/2023/758 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 9; UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, pp. 9-10; UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 10; UNSC, *S/2024/698 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10.

¹⁹³ The most recent report on Somalia by the UN Secretary-General, which was compiled by UNSOM during the reporting period, dated from September 2024. UNSOM ceased to exist in November 2024. The successor to UNSOM, UNTMIS, will issue a report once every six months.

¹⁹⁴ UNSC, *S/2023/758 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 9; UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, pp. 9-10; UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 10; UNSC, *S/2024/698 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10; Confidential source, 6 November 2024; Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

¹⁹⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab vows revenge over alleged civilian deaths in US raid*, 7 September 2023 (Calamada website); BBC Monitoring, *UAE airstrike 'kills nine civilians' in Somalia's Puntland*, 11 March 2025; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab accuses Ethiopia of killing Somali civilians in air strikes*, 17 March 2025; BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopian warplanes reportedly kill minor in Somalia raid*, 19 March 2025; Confidential source, 30 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

¹⁹⁶ Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

¹⁹⁷ Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

¹⁹⁸ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

¹⁹⁹ Al Jazeera, *Ten dead, 20 others injured in multiple blasts in market in Somali capital*, 6 February 2024; DatacenterDynamics, *Hormuud Telecom employees killed in bomb attack in Mogadishu, Somalia*, 3 May 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

²⁰⁰ Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

²⁰¹ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

²⁰² Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 20.

²⁰³ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'beheads three civilians' in southern Somalia*, 17 December 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).

as such suspicions could lead to immediate execution.²⁰⁴ The suspicion could be due to the fact that a person had spent time abroad, had a large amount of telephone contact outside the region,²⁰⁵ spoke poor Somali or did not dress in the typical Somali manner, or it could even be due to the way in which people gesticulated while speaking.²⁰⁶ Men without beards were suspect, and people were expected to be able to recite the Quran.²⁰⁷ According to one source, men were at greater risk than women in this regard, as men were more likely to be suspected of espionage.²⁰⁸ Additional information on specific groups that could encounter problems with al-Shabab is presented in 2.3.3 and 4.3.

Penalties that al-Shabab imposed on communities included restrictions – for example, by determining where nomadic communities could or could not graze their livestock or by denying access to water. In other cases, al-Shabab prevented communities from leaving certain areas.²⁰⁹

2.1.9.3 Random violence against civilians by al-Shabab

In addition to targeted violence against civilians, al-Shabab also committed random violence against civilians.²¹⁰ During the reporting period, al-Shabab carried out several attacks in Mogadishu, resulting in large numbers of civilian casualties (see also 2.2.1.3). Civilian casualties also regularly occurred in attacks on road traffic (for example, using landmines; see also 2.3.2).

According to one confidential source, although civilians were generally not the primary target of al-Shabab, the organisation also made no attempt to spare civilians during attacks. According to the same source, some attacks by al-Shabab were aimed at eliminating particular individuals. In other cases, al-Shabab used them to show that the organisation was still active and to deter the population from supporting the fight against al-Shabab.²¹¹ According to another source, al-Shabab's main goal was to instil fear in order to achieve its objectives.²¹² Attacks by al-Shabab resulting in civilian casualties occurred primarily in areas where al-Shabab was not in full control.²¹³

2.1.10 Forced recruitment

During the reporting period, there were reports of the recruitment of underage men for the army, police (darwish) and militias.²¹⁴ Clan elders were often ordered to supply young men (see also 2.1.5.1).²¹⁵ They often cooperated in this regard, as

²⁰⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab publicly kills three security officers in southern Somalia*, 21 August 2024 (Radio Andalus); Halqabsi News, *Al-Shabaab Executes Seven in Jilib Over Espionage Allegations*, 15 January 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

²⁰⁵ Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024

²⁰⁶ Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

²⁰⁷ Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

²⁰⁸ Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

²⁰⁹ VOA, *Al-Shabab 'bans' tree-cutting — but not to save the environment*, 16 August 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

²¹⁰ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

²¹¹ Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

²¹² Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

²¹³ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

²¹⁴ Children in Armed Conflict, *Recommendations to the Security Council*, May 2024; USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 15; EUAA, *Country Guidance: Somalia*, August 2023, p. 103; Confidential source, 6 November 2024; Confidential source, 13 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

²¹⁵ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 103; Confidential source, 13 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

failure to supply them could have consequences. Minors could also be supplied, given that, in Somali society, it is considered normal for minors to join the army.²¹⁶

2.1.11 Extortion and bribes

At checkpoints, security forces and militias collected types of taxes. In some cases, this was done with the permission of or on orders by the authorities, whereas in other cases, it was not.²¹⁷ Such 'tax collection' could be accompanied by violence.²¹⁸ Additional information on checkpoints is provided in 2.3.3.

During the reporting period, there were reports that Ethiopian troops were imposing taxes in the Gedo region.²¹⁹

According to one confidential source, people sometimes had to pay bribes or ransom in case of arrests, detentions or abductions involving political or government-allied militias/government departments. The source noted that this had occurred in all regions.²²⁰ Another confidential source reported having no information on such incidents, but being certain that it happened.²²¹

2.1.12 Possibilities for evading threats within South-Central Somalia

Information on protection by the authorities is provided in 4.3. Individuals having problems with al-Shabab could move to urban areas like Mogadishu, Kismayo or Baidoa – cities that were under government control. This did not always allow them to evade violence, as al-Shabab also had the capacity to move beyond areas that were under their control (see also 2.1.5). Whether al-Shabab would trace an individual depended on the type of problems that the individual had with al-Shabab, as well as on al-Shabab's willingness to invest time and resources in finding the individual. Such consideration was dependent on the context and the al-Shabab official involved.²²² The government did not have the capacity to protect civilians from al-Shabab.²²³

In general, individuals fleeing al-Shabab areas had two options: either they sought protection in urban areas and shelter within their own clans, or they went to a camp for displaced persons. Support provided by the clan could be in the form of shelter, employment, food or financial support.²²⁴ Although providing support to a fellow clan member was self-evident in Somali society, the form that such support took was a personal consideration. This also depended on the subclan to which an individual belonged, since powerful clans also included marginalised subclans.²²⁵ In wealthy clans (or subclans), support could be provided for a very long time. Those unable to mobilise sufficient support within the clan went to a camp for displaced

²¹⁶ Confidential source, 6 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 13 November 2024.

²¹⁷ Confidential source, 4 February 2025.

²¹⁸ PeaceRep, *Checkpoints in Hiraan – 'Everything is Upside Down'*, 7 January 2025.

²¹⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Ethiopian troops 'tax' southwestern Somali residents*, 29 May 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

²²⁰ Confidential source, 4 February 2025.

²²¹ Confidential source, 4 February 2025.

²²² Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

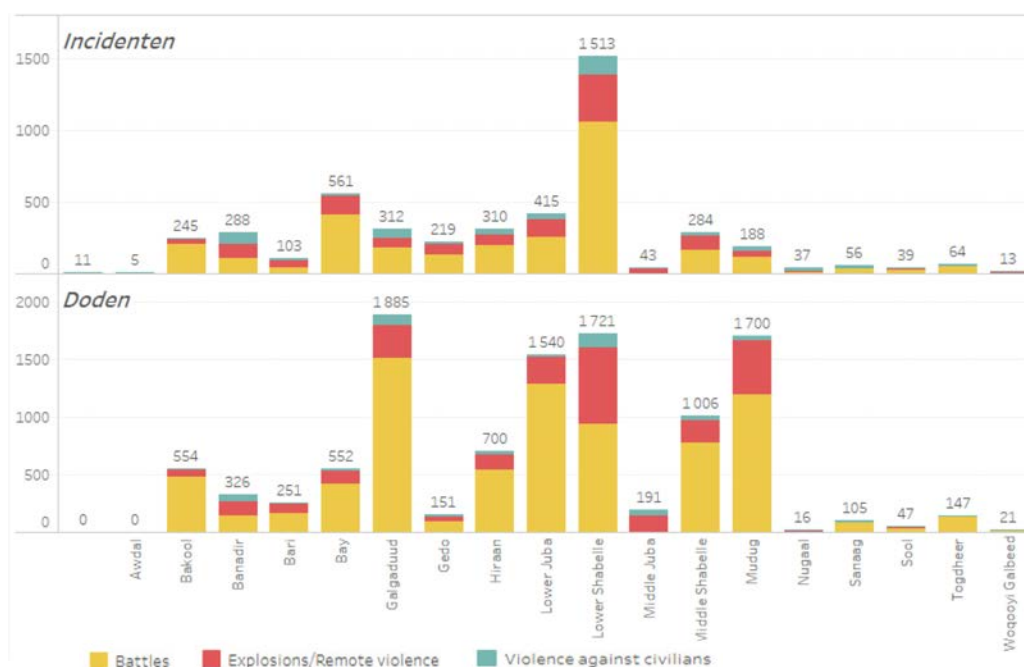
²²³ Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

²²⁴ Humanitarian Policy Group, *The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia*, April 2024, pp. 12, 15; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

²²⁵ Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

persons (see also 5.1.1). For this reason, these camps were generally inhabited by members of the more marginalised and less wealthy clans.²²⁶

2.2 Security situation by region



Graphs 3 and 3a: Numbers of incidents of violence and fatalities by region during the reporting period.²²⁷

During the reporting period, Lower Shabelle was the region in which by far the most incidents of violence were registered. The most fatalities – both civilians and armed forces – were registered in Galgaduud, Mudug, Lower Shabelle, Lower Juba and Middle Shabelle. The vast majority of the incidents of violence were categorised as battles.

A description of the security situation in each region is provided below. This information should be viewed in light of the information presented above concerning the general security situation. This section describes the geography and population of each region, including the number of displaced persons and the cause of displacement during the reporting period. This is followed by a description of the actors who were active in the region. Data from ACLED are then used to demonstrate how many incidents of violence occurred during the previous and current reporting periods, as well as where these incidents took place. The section concludes with a brief, non-exhaustive description of the main incidents from the reporting period.

Please note:

²²⁶ The New Humanitarian, 'There's no future in this IDP camp': Why Somalia's crisis needs a rethink, 17 August 2023; Humanitarian Policy Group, *The lives and livelihoods of forcibly displaced people in Mogadishu, Somalia*, April 2024, p. 18; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

²²⁷ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = All; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = All.

The population figures are estimates. The only census for which the results have been published dates from 1974. The results of a 1986 census were not released.²²⁸ The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) is a global initiative of organisations and authorities aimed at improving food security and countering malnutrition.²²⁹ To this end, the network collaborates with the authorities of a country to make estimates of population numbers. When using these figures, it is important to bear in mind that figures on population numbers are politically sensitive and, without corroboration by a recent and accepted census, they can be subject to the influence of financial and political interests.²³⁰

The ACLED conflict data do not provide a complete overview of the numbers of incidents of violence and fatalities. In its own explanation of the methodologies used, ACLED states that data on fatalities are often the least accurate component of conflict reports. The organisation states that it relies on the most conservative estimates and bases its figures primarily on public, secondary reporting. If the death toll in a reported incident of violence is unknown, ACLED records no fatalities. Reports referring to 'dozens' or 'hundreds' of deaths are translated into records of ten and one hundred deaths, respectively. The ACLED data on fatalities thus involve the lowest estimate, and they might therefore be under-reported.²³¹ In addition, ACLED records only fatalities due to violence. Although information on injuries, victims of plundering, abduction and sexual violence may be described in the database, it does not appear in the reports and infographics published by ACLED.

Finally, ACLED does not distinguish between civilian casualties and other victims. For several types of incidents (such as remote violence and explosions), it is noted whether civilians were a target of the violence, but this is not the case for battles. It is therefore not possible to show which battles resulted in civilian casualties. It is also not possible to show how many civilians became unintended victims of violence. The ACLED data can be used to illustrate trends, and they are not a reflection of reality.²³²

2.2.1 Benadir/Mogadishu

2.2.1.1 Geography and population

The Benadir region comprises about the same area as the city of Mogadishu, the capital of both the region and the republic of Somalia. Benadir is situated on Somalia's south-eastern coast on the Indian Ocean, and it borders on the regions of Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle. Benadir/Mogadishu is composed of 17 districts/neighbourhoods: Abdiaziz, Bondhere, Daynile, Hamar-Jajab, Hamar-Weyne, Hodan, Howl-Wadag, Huriwa (Heliwa), Kaxda, Karan, Shangani, Shibis, Yaqshid, Waberi, Wadajir (Medina), Warta Nabada (previously Whardiigleey) and Dharkenley. In addition to being the administrative capital, Mogadishu is Somalia's main economic crossroads.²³³

Mogadishu is inhabited by people of all clans and minority groups that are present in Somalia, but the dominant clan family is that of the Hawiye. Most districts are

²²⁸ Somali National Bureau of Statistics, [SOMALI POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS -](#), consulted on 1 April 2025.

²²⁹ IPC, *Overview and classification system*, [IPC Overview and Classification System | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#), consulted on 31 March 2025.

²³⁰ Confidential source, 1 April 2025.

²³¹ ACLED website, [Fatalities - ACLED](#), consulted on 25 March 2025.

²³² ACLED, *Fatalities, Uses and limitations of ACLED data*, published on 27 February 2023, last updated on 7 May 2024; ACLED, *Codebook*, published on 2 June 2023.

²³³ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 109; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

connected to a specific Hawiye clan. The Abgaal and the Habar Gidir are the most powerful of the specific Hawiye clans. Although all clans are free to settle and trade in Mogadishu, the dominant clans benefit the most from access to tax revenues, contracts and jobs. According to the EUAA, the following districts/neighbourhoods are known for their more heterogeneous composition, which also includes minorities: Wadajir (Medina), Hamar Weyne, Hamar Jajab, Shibis, Shingan and Bondhere. The Reer Hamar minority group (Benadiri) live primarily in Hamar Weyne and Shangani, whereas Bondhere is inhabited primarily by the Bantu minority group. The Yibr (Sab clan) live along Mogadishu's coastline. In the more heterogeneous neighbourhoods as well, minority and less-powerful groups are dependent on the dominant clan for their safety.²³⁴

The population of Mogadishu is growing steadily. According to the IPC, Benadir had an estimated 3,171,391 inhabitants in January 2024.²³⁵ According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the region was the smallest, with a surface area of more than 327 km².²³⁶

According to the International Office for Migration (IOM), there were 1,058,177 displaced persons in Benadir in September 2024.²³⁷ In 2024, around four thousand people became displaced in Benadir, around one thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict.²³⁸

2.2.1.2 Actors and control areas in Benadir

Mogadishu was nominally under the control of the federal government. The federal government was not capable of fully guaranteeing security in Mogadishu. Although al-Shabab did not have control of any areas in Mogadishu, it had infiltrated the government and had a large network of informants (see also 2.1.5.3 and 2.1.6). Al-Shabab could collect taxes and enforce policy in Benadir, as evidenced by the attacks on companies and individuals who had installed cameras on the instructions of the authorities (see also 2.2.1.3).

According to one confidential source, IS-S attempted to gain a foothold in Mogadishu, but its presence was largely incidental. Civilians often called for assistance from al-Shabab when IS-S sought to impose taxes on them.²³⁹

The EUAA stated that, in the past, there were regular confrontations between the various federal and regional security forces present in Mogadishu. In general, the loyalty of these troops was more to their clans than to the official authorities. In addition, data from the EUAA indicate that a number of clan and personal militias were present in Mogadishu, and private military and security companies were active there.²⁴⁰ In late 2024, the federal government called on citizens to arm themselves against al-Shabab.²⁴¹

²³⁴ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 109; Confidential source, 1 April 2025.

²³⁵ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](#), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

²³⁶ OCHA, *Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange*, updated on 15 January 2025.

²³⁷ IOM, *Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024* [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Benadir.

²³⁸ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network* [PRMN Dashboard](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Benadir; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

²³⁹ EUAA, *Somalia: Country Guidance*, August 2023, p. 171; confidential source, 21 August 2024.

²⁴⁰ EUAA, *Somalia: Country Guidance*, August 2023, pp. 170-171.

²⁴¹ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali PM calls on traders to arm against al-Shabab's 'taxation'*, 15 December 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali PM calls on traders to arm against al-Shabab's 'taxation'*, 15 December 2024.

Entities located within the high-security zone surrounding Mogadishu's Aden Adde international airport included UN offices, the ATMIS headquarters and foreign diplomatic posts. Access to the gated airport zone was possible only through three entry points with heavy security checks. The airport is surrounded by the 'green zone',²⁴² where other international organisations and hotels are established, and where many government officials live. This green zone also has a large number of checkpoints, and it is guarded by Somali security forces.²⁴³ Due to the presence of Somali government officials, security personnel and foreigners, the area surrounding the airport has for years been a prominent target of al-Shabab. Attacks were carried out in this area during the reporting period as well (see also 2.2.1.3).

2.2.1.3 Main incidents in Benadir

Attacks by al-Shabab in response to cameras

In 2023, the Somali security agency (NISA) requested business owners in Mogadishu to install cameras.²⁴⁴ On 28 November 2023, al-Shabab announced that it would take measures against individuals who had installed cameras.²⁴⁵ At the same time, the Somali authorities closed businesses that had not installed cameras.²⁴⁶ In 2024, al-Shabab intensified its reaction to the cameras. At first, businesses were attacked after working hours, as was the case with two attacks on a shopping centre in August 2024.²⁴⁷ Thereafter, the attacks also occurred during working hours and, in October and November 2024, there was an increase in the number of incidents in which business owners in Mogadishu were executed by al-Shabab.²⁴⁸ In a December 2024 attack on private residences that had installed cameras, children were injured as well.²⁴⁹ Many businesses closed or relocated (for example, to Nairobi).²⁵⁰

According to one confidential source, the increase in attacks by al-Shabab were related to the appointment of a new head of the security services in April 2024. The new head had purportedly deployed the secret police, which had been established by his predecessor in Mogadishu, outside the capital city, thereby decreasing the day-to-day control on the streets of Mogadishu.²⁵¹

In October 2024, NISA detained several suspects of the attacks.²⁵²

²⁴² Landinfo, *Somalia: The security situation in Mogadishu and al-Shabab's influence in the city*, 8 September 2022, pp. 13-14.

²⁴³ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, 21 December 2021, p. 22.

²⁴⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Shops in Somali capital 'remove cameras' after al-Shabab attacks*, 15 October 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

²⁴⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Al-Shabab warns Somali capital businesses against CCTV camera use*, 29 November 2023; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

²⁴⁶ BBC Monitoring, *TV says businesses in Somali capital closing over al-Shabab fears*, 28 November 2023 (Radio Shabelle, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Suspected militants kill businessmen in Somali capital*, 10 October 2025; BBC Monitoring, *Shops in Somali capital 'remove cameras' after al-Shabab attacks*, 15 October 2024.

²⁴⁷ BBC Monitoring, *Suspected al-Shabab blasts destroy mall outside Somali capital*, 31 August 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Businesses in Somali capital bombed after installing CCTV cameras*, 2 October 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

²⁴⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Suspected al-Shabab militants kill businessman in Somali capital*, 5 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Suspected militants kill businessmen in Somali capital*, 10 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Businesses in Somali capital bombed after installing CCTV cameras*, 2 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Suspected al-Shabab blasts destroy mall outside Somali capital*, 31 August 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia arrests two for facilitating treatment for militants*, 16 November 2023 (Somali News Agency Website, Mogadishu); Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

²⁴⁹ BBC, Monitoring, *Al Shabab bombs civilian homes in Somali capital*, 16 December 2024.

²⁵⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Businesses shut in Somali capital over al-Shabab CCTVs threat*, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

²⁵¹ VOA, *Somalia Names New Intelligence and Security Chief*, 4 April 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

²⁵² BBC Monitoring, *Somali security forces capture five militants in Mogadishu*, 1 October 2024 (Somali National TV, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Businesses shut in Somali capital over al-Shabab CCTVs threat*, 7 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia arrests two for facilitating treatment for militants*, 16 November 2023 (Somali News

Other attacks on civilians

Several attacks in which civilians were killed took place in Mogadishu during the reporting period. The following is a non-exhaustive overview. On 14 July 2024, at least five individuals were killed and twenty individuals were wounded in a suicide attack on a café where people were watching a match in the European football championships. This café was located in the vicinity of the presidential palace – an area that is usually heavily secured.²⁵³

In August 2024, a suicide attack took place on a beach in Mogadishu. This attack resulted in the deaths of at least forty and possibly ninety people, most of whom were young people.²⁵⁴ According to Somali national television, several security officers were detained on suspicion of facilitating the attack.²⁵⁵

Two weeks later, on 17 August 2024, an attack on a tea shop in Mogadishu resulted in at least ten civilian casualties (both fatalities and injuries).²⁵⁶

On 17 October 2024, a suicide attack took place on a restaurant in the vicinity of the high-security police academy in Mogadishu. According to al-Shabab, fifteen soldiers were killed in this attack, whereas the Somali authorities reported seven fatalities, including both security personnel and civilians.²⁵⁷

Attacks in the green zone

Several attacks were also carried out in the high-security zone at the international airport, where the UN, the African Union and diplomatic missions are based. On 5 September 2024, al-Shabab fired mortars on Mogadishu. Several of them struck the international airport and the surrounding security zone.²⁵⁸ At least two civilians were wounded. One of the mortars landed in a nearby neighbourhood, resulting in injuries.²⁵⁹ On 3 November, al-Shabab again fired mortars on the security zone. A few UN guards were killed in the attack, and several others were wounded.²⁶⁰

Agency Website, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Somali spy agency captures 'militants' linked to killing of traders*, 13 November 2024.

²⁵³ BBC Monitoring, *Suicide bombing in Somali capital kills five watching Euro final*, 15 July 2024 (Somali National TV).

²⁵⁴ Al Jazeera, *At least 32 killed in al-Shabab beach attack in Somalia's capital Mogadishu*, 3 August 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Death toll rises to 37 in Somalia beach attack by al-Shabab*, 3 August 2024 (Somali National TV); BBC Monitoring, *Somalia donates \$500,000 to victims of Mogadishu attack*, 7 August 2024 (Somali National News Agency, Mogadishu); Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

²⁵⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia arrests security officers over deadly beach attack*, 4 August 2024 (Somali National TV, Mogadishu).

²⁵⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Blast at tea shop in Somali capital kills, wounds 10*, 17 August 2024.

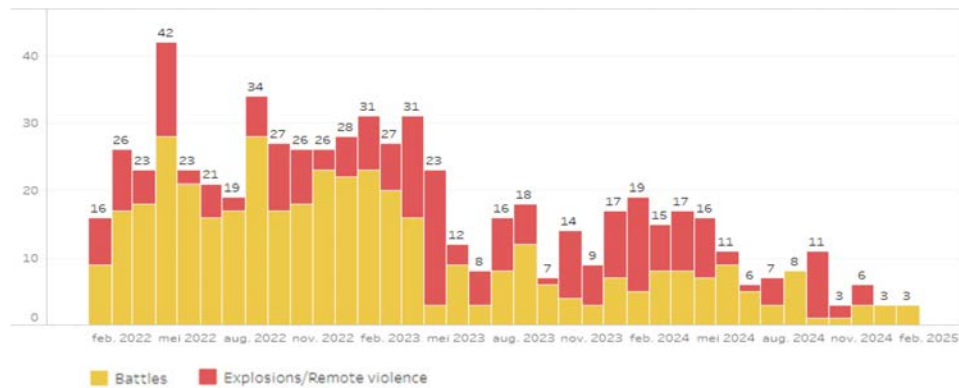
²⁵⁷ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somalia launches probe into deadly suicide bombing*, 18 October 2024.

²⁵⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Mortar shelling targets airport, key compound in Somali capital*, 5 September 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab mortar attack on UN compound wounds civilians*, 5 September 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab claims mortar attack on Somalia's Halane complex*, 5 September 2024.

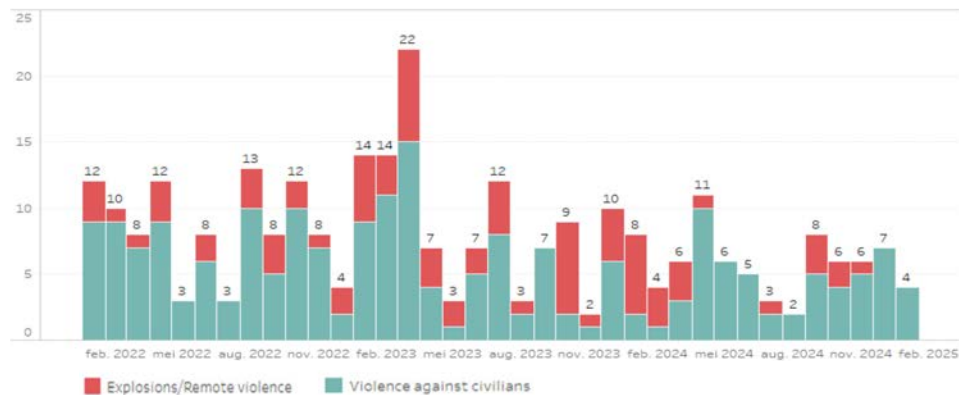
²⁵⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab mortar attack on UN compound wounds civilians*, 5 September 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).

²⁶⁰ Garda World, *Somalia security report*, 4 November 2024, p. 3; Horn Observer, *Mortar Attack on Mogadishu's Halane Base Camp leaves Multiple Dead, Including UN Staff*, 4 November 2024; ATMIS, *ATMIS condemns mortar attacks on Halane Base Camp in Mogadishu*, 3 November 2024; Horseed Media, *Deadly Mortar Attack Strikes Halane Base camp in Mogadishu, Somalia*, 3 November 2024.

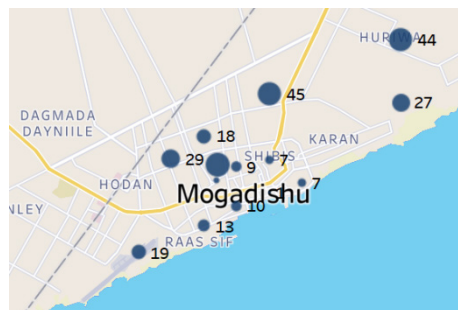
2.2.1.4 Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence in Benadir



Graph 4: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Benadir during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.²⁶¹



Graph 5: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Benadir during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.²⁶²



Map 2: Distribution of incidents of violence in Benadir during the reporting period, with number of incidents in each location.²⁶³

2.2.2 Jubbaland

²⁶¹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Benadir; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

²⁶² ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Benadir; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

²⁶³ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Benadir; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

The federal member state of Jubbaland was established in 2013. In that year, Ahmed Mohamed Islam (Madobe) was elected president of the federal member state.²⁶⁴ It is Somalia's southernmost federal member state. Although Bu'aale is the official capital of Jubbaland, the regional and state governments were located in Kismayo.²⁶⁵ A sector headquarters of ATMIS/AUSSOM was also located in Kismayo.²⁶⁶

The dominant clan family in Jubbaland was the Darood. There were nevertheless major differences between the dominant clans: Gedo was dominated by the Marehan, whereas Lower Juba was dominated by the Ogadeni.²⁶⁷ In the past, there had been a large extent of political competition between the federal government and Jubbaland, with Jubbaland receiving support from Kenya. The Ogadeni, to which Madobe belonged, had close ties to Kenya. In contrast, the Marehan had historically had good relations with Ethiopia.²⁶⁸ In the past, Ethiopia had therefore supported the federal government.²⁶⁹ The Marehan did not recognise the presidency of Madobe.²⁷⁰

Because of the vast presence of al-Shabab in Jubbaland and the fact that the federal member state borders on both Kenya and Ethiopia, these two countries maintained military activity in Jubbaland, both bilaterally and through ATMIS.²⁷¹

The relations changed during the reporting period, after Ethiopia entered into an MoU with Somaliland on 1 January 2024 (see also 1.4). Although the content of the agreement was not disclosed, it was assumed and not denied that Ethiopia would be willing to recognise Somaliland in exchange for access to a port. Somalia responded by demanding that Ethiopian troops leave Somalia. In addition, tensions escalated between the federal government and President Madobe due to a difference of opinion concerning the electoral system and the distribution of power between the federal government and the federal member states (see also 1.3 and 2.2.3). Shared security interests drew Ethiopia and Jubbaland closer to each other during the reporting period, with the result that Ethiopia supported Jubbaland's troops when they became involved in fighting with the federal army in December 2024.²⁷² Incidentally, the Somali authorities argued that such fighting would not have any influence on the implementation of the agreement with Ethiopia (brokered by Türkiye) earlier that month (see also 1.4).²⁷³

Jubbaland is composed of the regions of Lower Juba, Middle Juba and Gedo, which are discussed below.

²⁶⁴ Heritage Foundation, *State of Somalia Report*, 2021, p. 22; Confidential source, 1 August 2024.

²⁶⁵ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 73.

²⁶⁶ Confidential source, December 2024.

²⁶⁷ Confidential source, 1 August 2024.

²⁶⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Explainer: Somalia's Jubbaland poll heightens fears of military fallout*, 27 November 2024; ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Horn Examiner, *KENYA'S FAILED PROJECT IN JUBALAND: Buffer Zone Strategy Stumbles Under Madobe Leadership*, 1 July 2023; International Crisis Group, *Ending the Dangerous Standoff in Southern Somalia*, 14 July 2020; Confidential source, 1 August 2024.

²⁶⁹ International Crisis Group, *Ending the Dangerous Standoff in Southern Somalia*, 14 July 2020; EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 61.

²⁷⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Constitutional changes allow Somali regional leader to seek a third term*, 2 July 2024 (Jubbaland TV, Kismaayo).

²⁷¹ Safer World, *Inside Kenya's war on terror: breaking the cycle of violence in Garissa*, 2017; ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab in Kenya and Somalia*, 4 September 2024; VOA, *Somalia insists Ethiopia not be part of new AU mission*, 10 November 2024; Al Jazeera, *Somalia: Kenya's foreign policy failure*, 29 January 2020; ATMIS website, *Troop Contributing Countries Home - African Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)*, consulted on 2 February 2025; Confidential source, 4 February 2025.

²⁷² BBC Monitoring, *Ten killed as Somali troops clash with Ethiopian-backed regional forces*, 24 December 2024 (Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu); The Horn Observer, *Jubbaland Forces Regain Control of Dolow After Deadly Battle With Somalia Government Forces*, 23 December 2024.

²⁷³ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somalia says 23 December fighting won't affect recent deal with Ethiopia*, 24 December 2024.

2.2.2.1 Lower Juba

Geography and population

Lower Juba (Juba Hoose) is Somalia's southernmost region, bordering on the south with the neighbouring country of Kenya. It also borders on the regions of Gedo and Middle Juba. The region has four districts: Kismayo, Jamaame, Afmadow and Badhaadhe.²⁷⁴

Lower Juba was the most densely populated region in Jubbaland.²⁷⁵ The main communities in Lower Juba are Somali Bantu (also known as Jareer), Biyomaal (Dir) clan, Tunni (Rahanweyn), Mohamed Zubier/Ogaden (Darood) clan, other Darood clans, the Gaaljaal, the Harti (Darood), the Somali Bajuni and small groups of other clans. The population of the city of Kismayo is heterogeneous and undergoing major changes. Since 2012, Kismayo has been dominated politically, economically and militarily by the Ogaden clan, and particularly by the Mohamed Zubier subclan.²⁷⁶

According to figures from the IPC, Lower Juba had a population of 648,937 in January 2024.²⁷⁷ According to OCHA, the surface area of Lower Juba was 47,883 km².²⁷⁸

According to IOM, there were 205,648 displaced persons in Lower Juba in September 2024.²⁷⁹ In 2024, around 53 thousand people became displaced in Lower Juba, 26 thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict or insecurity.²⁸⁰

Actors and incidents

The greatest share of the incidents occurring in Lower Juba during the reporting period involved fighting by al-Shabab against the Jubbaland darwish and the Somali army. In a smaller share of the incidents, al-Shabab used explosives, including against an ATMIS convoy.²⁸¹ The number of incidents of violence in the region decreased relative to the previous reporting period (see Graph 6), but the number of incidents targeting civilians increased (see Graph 7).

In November 2024, in the run-up to the elections, a shooting incident took place in Jubbaland between the darwish and the security guards of a presidential candidate. One person was killed in this incident.²⁸²

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence

²⁷⁴ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 73; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

²⁷⁵ Reuters, *Somalia pulls troops out of Lower Juba after clashes with Jubbaland forces*, 12 December 2024.

²⁷⁶ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 73.

²⁷⁷ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](#), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

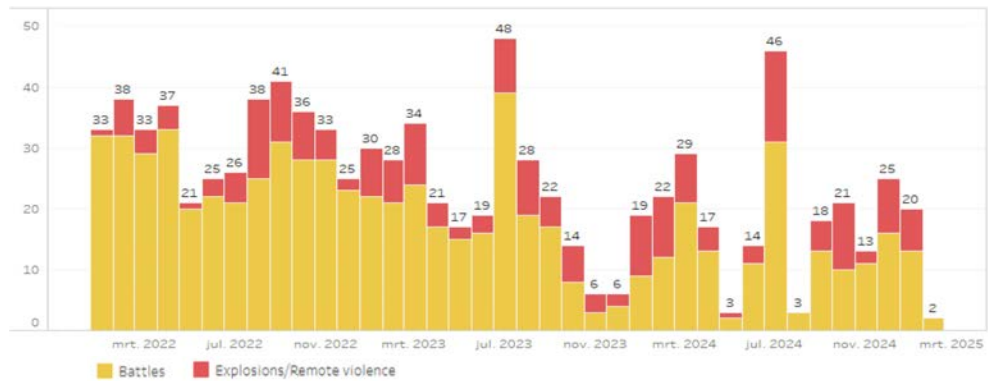
²⁷⁸ OCHA, [Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange](#), updated on 15 January 2025.

²⁷⁹ IOM, *Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024* [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Lower Juba.

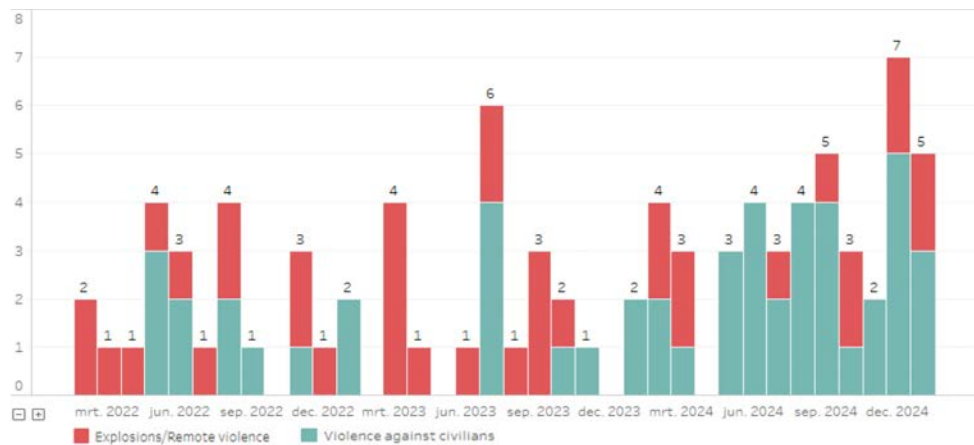
²⁸⁰ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network* [PRMN Dashboard](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Lower Juba; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

²⁸¹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Lower Juba; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

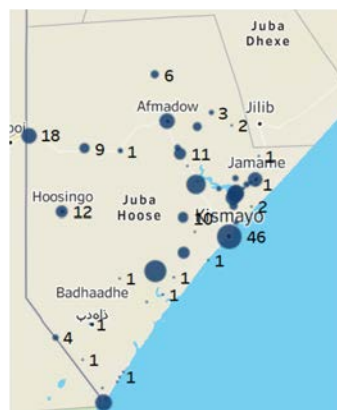
²⁸² BBC Monitoring, *One killed as tensions rise over election in Somalia's Jubbaland*, 23 November 2024.



Graph 6: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Lower Juba during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.²⁸³



Graph 7: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Lower Juba during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.²⁸⁴



Map 3: Distribution of incidents of violence in Lower Juba during the reporting period.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Lower Juba; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

²⁸⁴ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Lower Juba; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

²⁸⁵ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Lower Juba; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

2.2.2.2 Middle Juba

Geography and population

Middle Juba (Juba Dhexe) is surrounded by the regions of Lower Juba, Gedo (Jubbaland), Bay and Lower Shabelle (South-West State). In the east, it borders on the Indian Ocean. It comprises three districts: Bu'aale (also known as Bualle), Jilib and Saakow. Jilib is the largest city in the region, and it is the region's most important and most strategic urban area in terms of trade.²⁸⁶ Middle Juba has barely any infrastructure. According to sources from the EUAA, only one dilapidated road runs from Mogadishu through Jilib to Kismayo.²⁸⁷ The capital of Middle Juba, Jilib, functions as one of the administrative centres of the al-Shabab territory.²⁸⁸

The region's population composition is diverse. The Somali Bantu are the most common ethnic group in the region. The regional clans with the greatest political and military strength in the region are the Aulihan (Darood) and Mohamed Zubier/Ogaden (Darood) clans.²⁸⁹

According to figures from the IPC, Middle Juba had a population of 286,539 in January 2024.²⁹⁰ According to OCHA, the surface area of Middle Juba was 18,791 km².²⁹¹

In September 2024, IOM did not have any figures on the number of displaced persons in Middle Juba.²⁹² According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), in 2024, around 23 thousand people became displaced in Middle Juba, nineteen thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict or insecurity.²⁹³

Actors and incidents

Again during the reporting period, Middle Juba was almost completely under the control of al-Shabab.²⁹⁴ Most incidents in the region involved airstrikes.²⁹⁵ In December 2023, one of the leaders of al-Shabab was killed in an American airstrike in the vicinity of Jilib.²⁹⁶

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence

²⁸⁶ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, pp. 67-68; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

²⁸⁷ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 69.

²⁸⁸ ODI, *Playing the long game: Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control*, August 2023, p. 7.

²⁸⁹ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 68.

²⁹⁰ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipinfo.org\)](#), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

²⁹¹ OCHA, [Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange](#), updated on 15 January 2025.

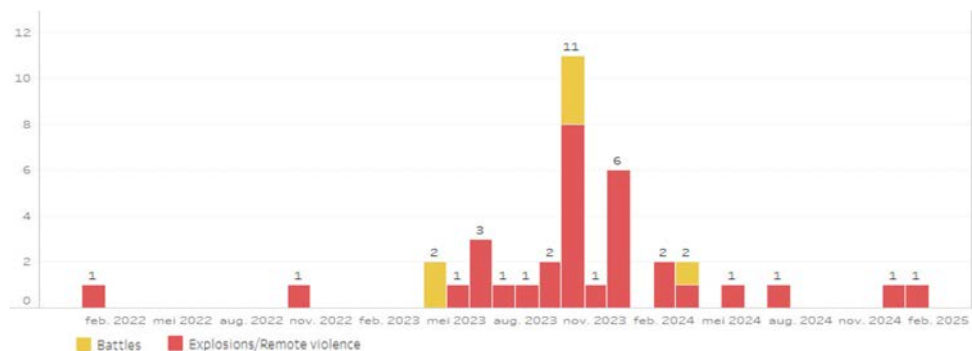
²⁹² IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Middle Juba.

²⁹³ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Middle Juba; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

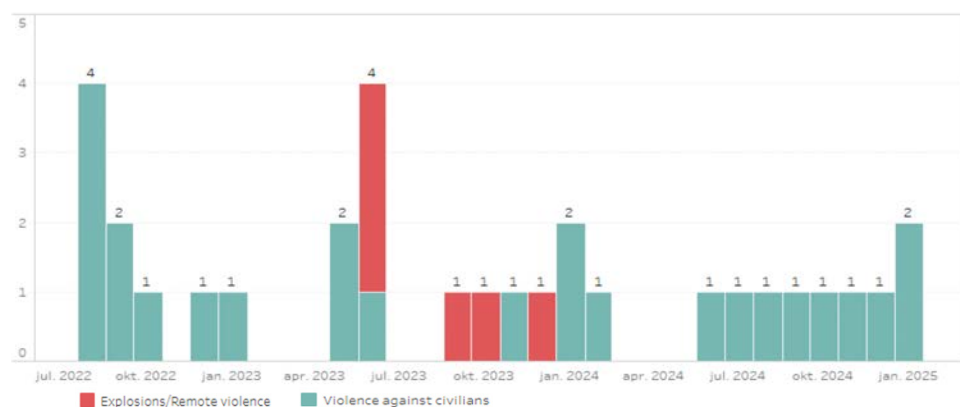
²⁹⁴ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 68; BBC Monitoring, *Somali president criticises Jubbaland leader, urges popular vote*, 11 December (Somali National TV, Mogadishu).

²⁹⁵ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Middle Juba; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

²⁹⁶ VOA, *US-Somali Operation Kills a Top Al-Shabab Commander*, 21 December 2023.



Graph 8: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Middle Juba during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.²⁹⁷



Graph 9: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Middle Juba during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.²⁹⁸



Map 4: Distribution of violence in Middle Juba during the reporting period.²⁹⁹

2.2.2.3 Gedo

Geography and population

Gedo is Somalia's second-largest region, and it borders on Ethiopia and Kenya. The region consists of six districts: Garbahaarey, Luuq, Doolow, Belet Xaawo (or Bulo

²⁹⁷ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Middle Juba; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

²⁹⁸ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Middle Juba; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

²⁹⁹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Middle Juba; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

Hawa), Ceel Waaq (of El Waq) and Bardhere (or Baardheere). The capital of the region is Garbahaarey, and the largest cities are Bardhere and Belet Xaawo.³⁰⁰

The population composition of Gedo is diverse. The largest and most politically and militarily powerful clan is the Marehan (Darood), which is dominant in nearly the entire region west of the Jubba River.³⁰¹

According to figures from the IPC, Gedo had a population of 430,941 in January 2024.³⁰² According to OCHA, the surface area of Gedo was 45,057 km².³⁰³

According to IOM, there were 237,138 displaced persons in Gedo in September 2024.³⁰⁴ In 2024, around 110 thousand people became displaced in Gedo, 86 thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict.³⁰⁵

In 2023, the region experienced large amounts of rainfall, which caused the Jubba Rivier to overflow, resulting in loss of life, damage to local agriculture, the collapse of bridges and the displacement of many people.³⁰⁶

Actors and incidents

Clans played a major role in the general politics of Gedo, and this was sometimes accompanied by violence, as was the case during the reporting period. The Marehan were by far the most powerful clan in Gedo, as well as in the national political system. Of the other clans, the Garre in Gedo fought the most fiercely for access to land, trade and political rights.³⁰⁷ The Marehan were divided in their support of al-Shabab, which recruited people extensively from within the clan.³⁰⁸

In the past, relations between the government of Jubbaland and the regional authorities of Gedo had been tense. In these tensions, Kenya was on the side of Jubbaland, whereas Ethiopia had good relations with Gedo.³⁰⁹ During the reporting period, relations between the government of Jubbaland and Gedo improved.³¹⁰ From the time that Ethiopia recognised the independence of Somaliland on 1 January 2024, relations between Somalia and Ethiopia deteriorated. This led Somalia to ask Ethiopia to withdraw its troops from Somalia. Egypt showed interest in supplying troops to fill the gap (see also 1.4). Gedo was fiercely opposed to the possibility of stationing Egyptian troops in Gedo under AUSSOM, the future AU mission against al-Shabab, given the poor diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Egypt.³¹¹

³⁰⁰ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 59; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

³⁰¹ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 59.

³⁰² IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](#), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

³⁰³ OCHA, *Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange*, updated on 15 January 2025.

³⁰⁴ IOM, *Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Gedo.

³⁰⁵ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Middle Juba; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

³⁰⁶ Hiraan, *Floods displace hundreds in Gedo region as Jubba River overflows*, 3 November 2023; Somali Humanitarian News and Information, *Mothers and children sleep outside as floods wash away homes in Gedo region - Radio Ergo*, 2 December 2023.

³⁰⁷ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 60.

³⁰⁸ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 87.

³⁰⁹ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab in Kenya and Somalia - August 2024*, 4 September 2024.

³¹⁰ United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), *Report of the Secretary General on the situation in Somalia*, S/2024/129, 2 February 2024, p. 2.

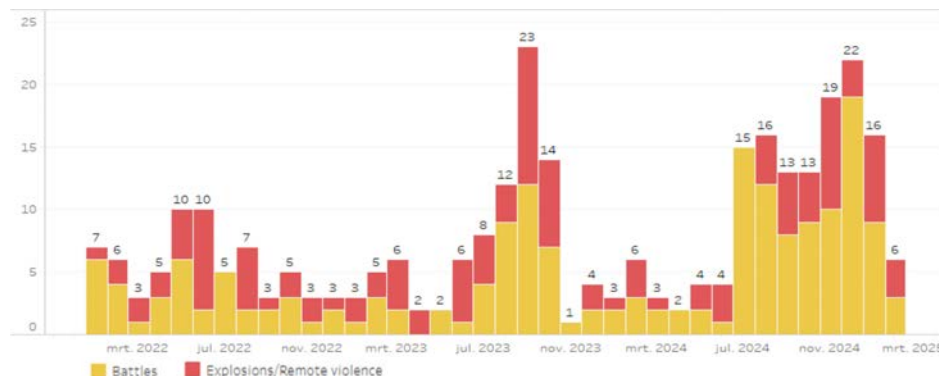
³¹¹ Horn Observer, *Somalia's Gedo Regional Authorities Vow to Fight Egyptian Forces If They Deploy in Their Region*, 18 August 2024.

Due to the improved relations between Gedo and the government of Jubbaland, the latter gained control of all urban areas in the Gedo region, with the exception of Garbahaarey, where community grievances persisted against the Jubbaland authorities.³¹²

During the reporting period, al-Shabab was by far the main source of violence in Gedo.³¹³ In July 2023, al-Shabab captured a military base near the town of Geriley on the border with Kenya after Kenyan armed forces from ATMIS had handed it over to the security forces of the federal member state of Jubbaland in June 2023.³¹⁴ According to ACLED, al-Shabab also carried out attacks against officials of local authorities after they had attempted to mobilise clans and have them fight against al-Shabab.³¹⁵

In the district of Luuq, there had been a history of clan violence due to disputes over land rights. Both the government of the federal member state of Jubbaland and the Somali government tried to mediate between the clans, which led to a peace agreement in August 2024. The conflict escalated again in October 2024, following the murder of a clan leader, thus apparently nullifying the peace agreement.³¹⁶ According to OCHA, the violence resulted in the displacement of 30,000 people.³¹⁷

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence



Graph 10: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Gedo during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.³¹⁸

³¹² UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary General on the situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 2.

³¹³ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 31 January 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Gedo; Period = July 2023 – January 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

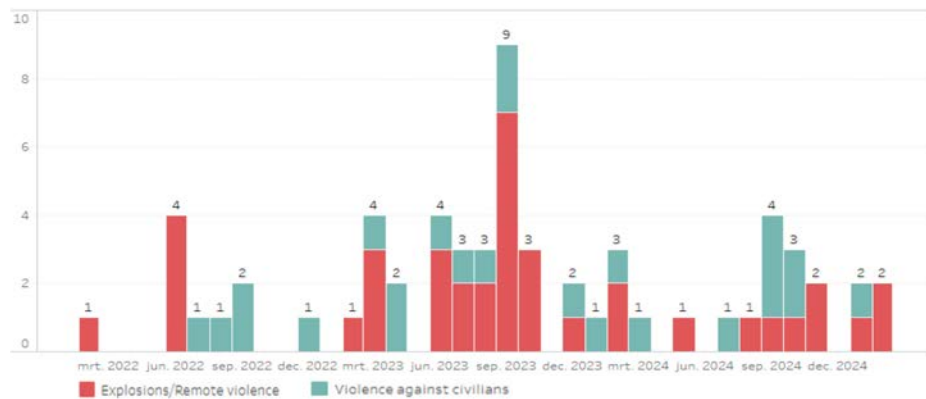
³¹⁴ Voice of America, *Al-Shabab Attacks Somali Base Handed Over by AU Forces*, 13 July 2023; Hiiraan Online, *Al-Shabab Claims Seizure of key Military Base amid ATMIS troop drawdown*, 13 July 2023; Somali Guardian, *Al-Shabab captures base recently handed over by ATMIS peacekeepers*, 13 July 2023.

³¹⁵ ACLED, [Somalia Situation Update: October 2023 | Al-Shabab Strikes Back at Local Administrators](#) ([acleddata.com](#)), 20 October 2023.

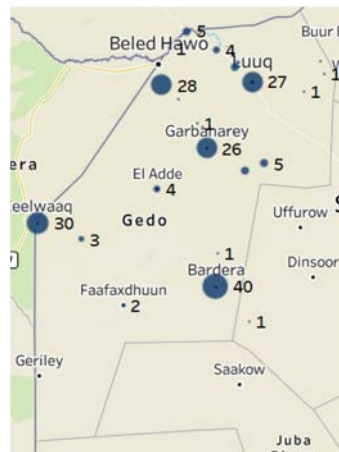
³¹⁶ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, August 2023, p. 60; Shabelle Media Network, *Somalia: Luuq District of Gedo Region Engulfed in clan Conflict After Land Dispute*, 6 July 2024; Hiraan Online, *Somali clans reach peace agreement to end deadly conflict in Gedo region*, 5 August 2024; Hiraan Online, *Clan militias clash in Luuq after peace agreement collapse*, 14 October 2024.

³¹⁷ OCHA, *Somalia: Conflict in Luuq District, Jubaland State Flash Update No.1*, 23 October 2024.

³¹⁸ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Gedo; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.



Graph 11: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Gedo during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.³¹⁹



Map 5: Distribution of violence in Gedo during the reporting period.³²⁰

2.2.3

South-West State

South-West State was established in 2014/2015 and, in 2018, Abdulaziz Hassan Mohamed (also known as 'Laftagareen') was elected president of the federal member state. In 2020, the South-West State parliament extended Laftagareen's term to 2024 – without having a legal basis for doing so, according to the opposition.³²¹

Both the Rahanweyn clan family (dominant in South-West State) and President Laftagareen personally had previously received a great deal of support from Ethiopia, and ties with that country were therefore close. The federal member state was vulnerable because hardly any revenue was generated there. This was because the state was largely occupied by al-Shabab and because it had no port. As a result, President Laftagareen's position was dependent on both the federal authorities and the foreign (Ethiopian) forces. Laftagareen was not in favour of electoral reforms on the part of the federal government (see also 1.2). Owing to his relatively weak

³¹⁹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Gedo; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

³²⁰ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Gedo; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

³²¹ Confidential source, 1 August 2024.

position, however, he was not able to speak out against them as the president of Jubbaland had.³²² The Somali federal government's June 2024 announcement that Ethiopian troops would be asked to withdraw from Somalia and the indications that Egypt would be supplying troops raised major concerns in South-West State. Ethiopia and Egypt had a long-standing mutual conflict over the GERD dam in the Nile.³²³

The disagreement between the federal government and the federal member state increased tensions between the Hawiye (who supported the federal government) and the Rahanweyn clan families.³²⁴ This also led to conflicts over the checkpoints that the various clans had set up in the federal member state. In September 2024, Hawiye clan elders threatened violence against the Rahanweyn, but later withdrew the threat.³²⁵ A subclan of the Rahanweyn – the Dabarre – was known for supporting al-Shabab.³²⁶

South-West State had its own security forces (darwish), which received support from Ethiopia.³²⁷

The capital of the federal member state is officially Baraawe in Lower Shabelle. In practice, however, Baidoa (in the Bay region) served as the capital.³²⁸ South-West State consists of three regions: Bakool, Bay and Lower Shabelle. These regions are discussed separately below.

2.2.3.1 Bakool

Geography and population

Bakool is located along the Ethiopian border and is surrounded by the regions of Gedo (Jubbaland), Hiraaan (Hirshabelle), Bay and Lower Shabelle (South-West State). The region consists of five districts: Xudur, Tayeeglow, Ceel Barde, Rab Dhuure and Waajid. The capital of Bakool is Xudur.³²⁹

The region is inhabited primarily by various subclans of the Rahanweyn (Mirifle and Digil). A subclan of the Hawiye is located in a small area in the north, and a subclan of the Ogaden/Darood in the border region with Ethiopia (primarily on the Ethiopian side).³³⁰

According to figures from the IPC, Bakool had a population of 284,354 in January 2024.³³¹ According to OCHA, Bakool had a surface area of 25,798 km².³³²

³²² Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

³²³ Sudan War Monitor, *New security pact inflames regional tensions*, 2 September 2024; ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024. Garowe Online, *Southwest opposes withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Somalia*, 4 June 2024; The Somali Digest, *Southwest State Unmoved by PM's Visit, Stands Firm on Ethiopian Troops*, 13 September 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 8 November 2024.

³²⁴ The Somali Digest, *President Laftagaren Defends Southwest MPs and Ethiopian Military Presence*, 9 September 2024; ACLED, *State officials in Somalia crack down on clan militia checkpoints*, 30 September 2024.

³²⁵ ACLED, *State officials in Somalia crack down on clan militia checkpoints*, 30 September 2024.

³²⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Somali clan hands over '380 armed fighters' to al-Shabab*, 6 June 2024 (Radio Andalus).

³²⁷ Confidential source, 1 August 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

³²⁸ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 90.

³²⁹ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 82; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805 ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

³³⁰ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 82.

³³¹ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](https://ipcinfo.org/), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

³³² OCHA, *Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange*, updated on 15 January 2025.

According to IOM, there were 81,132 displaced persons in Bakool in September 2024.³³³ In 2024, around nineteen thousand people became displaced in Bakool, ten thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict.³³⁴

Actors and incidents

During the reporting period, al-Shabab was by far the greatest instigator of incidents of violence in Bakool, followed by the federal army.³³⁵ The number of confrontations between al-Shabab and the pro-government forces (including Rahanweyn militias) in Bakool increased slightly during the reporting period, relative to the previous reporting period. Both al-Shabab and South-West State's darwish and clan militias claimed successes.³³⁶

The countryside was controlled by al-Shabab, whereas the federal army and troops from the federal member states (darwish) were present in urban areas.³³⁷ According to one source, al-Shabab regularly blocked access to the urban areas.³³⁸ Ethiopian forces were present in the border regions with Ethiopia, both under the flag of ATMIS and on a bilateral basis.³³⁹ In June 2024, the governor of Bakool complained that too little logistical support was coming from Mogadishu and that Bakool was therefore at risk of falling into the hands of al-Shabab.³⁴⁰

In August 2024, the population and local officials organised a demonstration against the withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops and the possible deployment of Egyptian troops.³⁴¹

In January 2025, at least forty al-Shabab fighters were killed in violent clashes between various factions of the organisation. The clashes concerned the proceeds from local taxation.³⁴²

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence

■ Battles ■ Explosions/Remote violence

³³³ IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Bakool.

³³⁴ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Bakool; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

³³⁵ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Bakool; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

³³⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab claims series of attacks in southern Somalia*, 13 October 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Somali army kills 12 militants in south-west region*, 18 September 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Army kills nine militants in southwestern Somalia operation*, 24 July 2024 (Somali National TV, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces kill militants and seize village in south-west region*, 21 July 2024 (Somali National TV, Mogadishu); AllAfrica.com, *Somalia: Armed Forces Dismantles Al-Shabaab Trenches in Bakool Region Operation - Defense Ministry*, 19 December 2024.

³³⁷ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 83; BBC Monitoring, *Somali military police killed in Mogadishu attack, says al-Shabab radio*, 19 November 2024 (Radio Andalus); Confidential source, 1 August 2024.

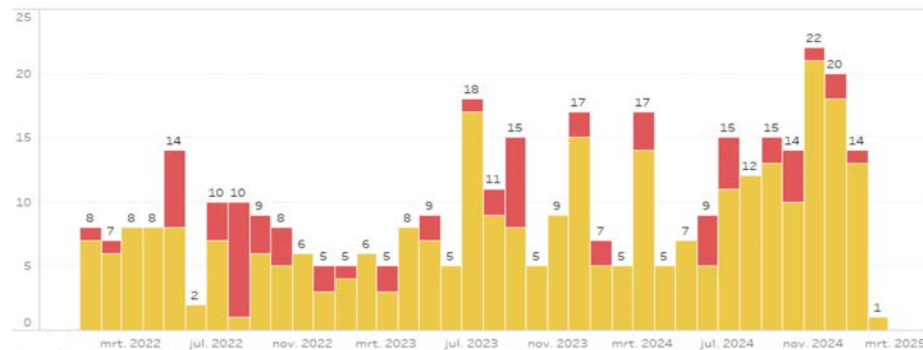
³³⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Somali military police killed in Mogadishu attack, says al-Shabab radio*, 19 November 2024 (Radio Andalus).

³³⁹ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 83; BBC Monitoring, *Explainer: Could tensions in the Horn of Africa lead to conflict?*, 18 September 2024; ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

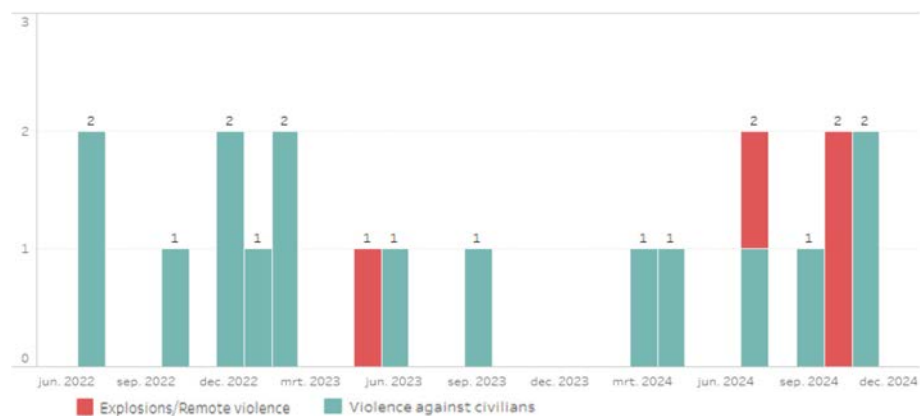
³⁴⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Bakool governor warns al-Shabab could seize region*, 4 July 2024 (Garowe Online).

³⁴¹ BBC Monitoring, *Residents of south-west Somalia express support for Ethiopia amid row*, 30 August 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Somali MPs accuse federal member state leader of 'treason' after pro-Ethiopia rally*, 31 August 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

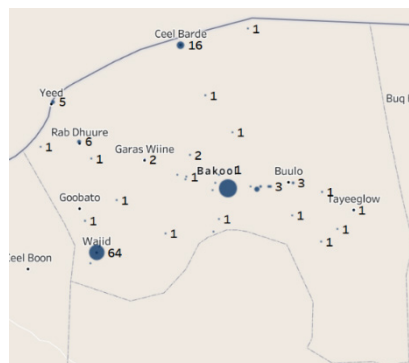
³⁴² BBC Monitoring, *Forty 'killed' in south-west Somalia al-Shabab infighting*, 15 January 2025 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).



Graph 12: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Bakool during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.³⁴³



Graph 13: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Bakool during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.³⁴⁴



Map 6: Distribution of violence in Bakool during the reporting period.³⁴⁵

2.2.3.2 Bay

Geography and population

³⁴³ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Bakool; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

³⁴⁴ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Bakool; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

³⁴⁵ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Bakool; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

Bay is completely surrounded by the regions of Middle Juba and Gedo (Jubbaland) and of Bakool and Middle Shabelle (South-West State). The region consists of four districts: Baydhaba, Buur Hakaba, Qansax Dheere, and Dinsoor. The capital is Baidoa (also known as Baydhabo).³⁴⁶ Although Baraawe in Lower Shabelle is officially the capital of South-West State, Baidoa functions as the *de facto* capital. Baidoa is the region's most densely populated city. The region is of strategic and economic importance due to an important road from Mogadishu that runs through Baidoa in the direction of Gedo and the Kenyan border.³⁴⁷ A sector headquarters of ATMIS/AUSSOM was located in Baidoa, with a large contingent of AU troops.³⁴⁸

The residents of Bay belong primarily to the Rahanweyn clans. In the north of the region, including in the capital of Baidoa, the Mirifle clans are in the majority, with the Digil dominant in the south. Most of the residents are sedentary^{349, 350}

According to figures from the IPC, Bay had a population of 1,247,975 in January 2024.³⁵¹ According to OCHA, Bay had a surface area of 43,932 km².³⁵²

According to IOM, there were 774,374 displaced persons in Bay in September 2024.³⁵³ In 2024, around 56 thousand people became displaced in Bay, 21 thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict.³⁵⁴ Approximately one fourth of all displaced persons in Somalia were located in and around Baidoa. They included Rahanweyn who had returned from Kenya, but many also belonged to clans not originally from Baidoa, thereby changing the demographic composition of the city.³⁵⁵

Actors and incidents

The main cause of violence in Bay was the conflict between al-Shabab and pro-government forces. During the reporting period, the number of confrontations between al-Shabab and the pro-government forces in Bay increased slightly, relative to the previous reporting period. Both the South-West State darwish and al-Shabab claimed attacks. During the reporting period, al-Shabab was responsible for – among others – a bombing attack on a minister of the federal member state, as well as an attack on Ethiopian soldiers.³⁵⁶ According to a confidential source, al-Shabab regularly carried out attacks in Baidoa.³⁵⁷

The federal army cooperated with the state darwish, although the tensions between the South-West State government and the federal government escalated during the

³⁴⁶ OCHA, *Somalia administrative map*, consulted on 24 January 2025

³⁴⁷ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 164; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

³⁴⁸ Confidential source, December 2024.

³⁴⁹ Sedentary means that they do not move around from place to place like nomads, as is the case for approximately half of the Somali population.

³⁵⁰ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 164.

³⁵¹ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](#), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

³⁵² OCHA, [Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange](#), updated on 15 January 2025.

³⁵³ IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Bay.

³⁵⁴ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Bay; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

³⁵⁵ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 165.

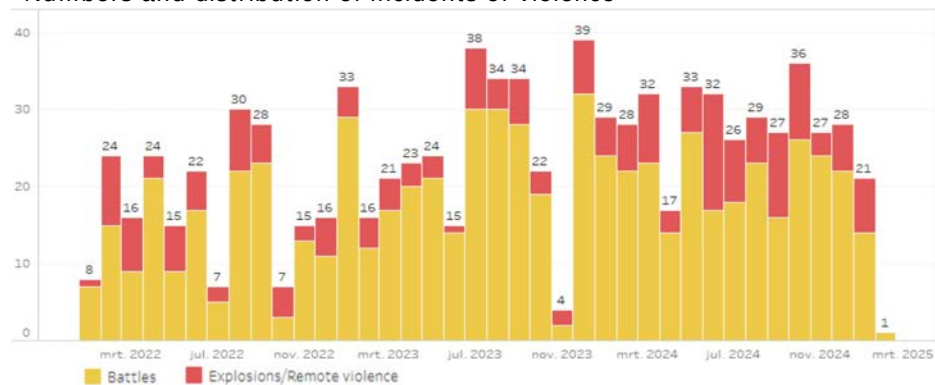
³⁵⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces 'capture al-Shabab finance official' in south-west*, 4 December 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab claims attack on Somali regional minister's home*, 9 March 2024 (Calamada website); BBC monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'kills six Ethiopian soldiers' in south-west Somalia town*, 14 June 2024 (Radio Al-Furqaan website).

³⁵⁷ Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

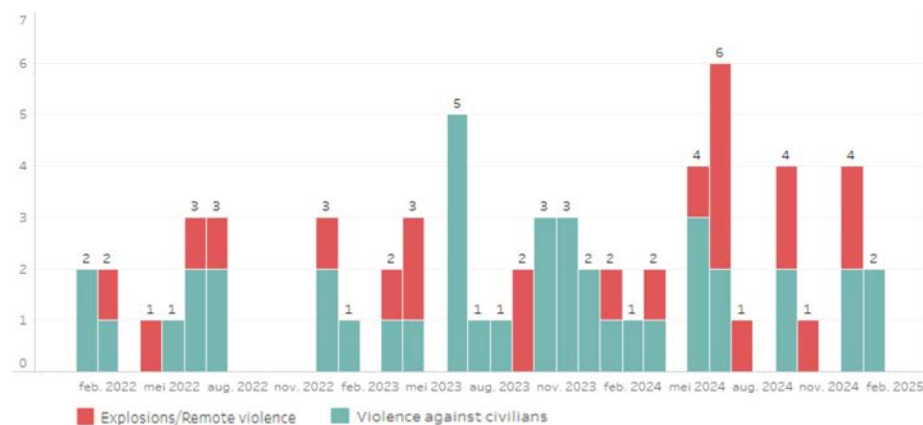
reporting period.³⁵⁸ Al-Shabab was present in large parts of Bay, in addition to having access to the urban areas.³⁵⁹ Of all large cities in south-central Somalia, Baidoa was the most vulnerable, given the city's inland location, which made it more difficult to defend.³⁶⁰

In some cases, conflicts over natural resources led to violence between clans.³⁶¹ In April 2024, deadly clashes took place between clans in Bay over access to grazing land.³⁶² In these clashes, the local unit of the South-West State darwish broke up into two factions, each of which joined the militias of their own subclan.³⁶³

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence



Graph 14: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Bay during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.³⁶⁴



Graph 15: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Bay during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.³⁶⁵

³⁵⁸ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 165; ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Bay; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians. BBC Monitoring, *Somali federal member state opposes withdrawal of Ethiopian troops*, 2 June 2024; Confidential source, 8 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

³⁵⁹ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 165; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

³⁶⁰ Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

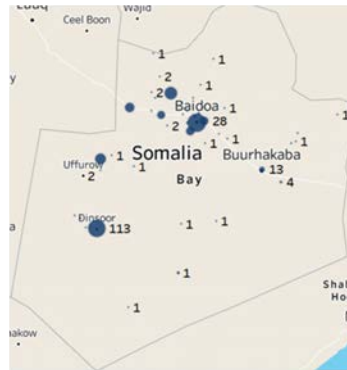
³⁶¹ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 165.

³⁶² BBC Monitoring, *Somali federal member state reconciles clans after deadly violence*, 26 April 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Clan fighting kills 10 people in south-western Somali town*, 13 April 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Somali local official accuses al-Shabab of fuelling clan clashes*, 21 April 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

³⁶³ BBC Monitoring, *Somali state to court-martial soldiers over inter-clan clashes – report*, 22 April 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

³⁶⁴ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Bay; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

³⁶⁵ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Bay; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.



Map 7: Distribution of violence in Bay during the reporting period.³⁶⁶

2.2.3.3 Lower Shabelle

Geography and population

Lower Shabelle has a long coast on the Indian Ocean, and it is further surrounded by Middle Juba (Jubbaland), Bay and Bakool (South-West State), Hiraaan and Middle Shabelle (Hirshabelle). The region consists of seven districts: Wanla Weyn, Afgooye, Qoryooley, Marka, Kurtunwaarey, Sablaale and Baraawe. The capital is Marka. The region is one of the main food-producing areas in Somalia. Two main roads cross through the region: one from Mogadishu to Kismayo, and another from Mogadishu to Baidoa. In addition, the region has two port cities: Marka and Baraawe.³⁶⁷

The population composition of Lower Shabelle is diverse. The region was originally inhabited by Rahanweyn, Dir (Biyomaal) around the city of Marka, and many Hawiye clans in the east of the region. Groups of Bantu are also located in the rural areas. In the 1990s, armed militias and their families settled there, primarily from the Habir Gedir (Hawiye) clan.³⁶⁸

According to figures from the IPC, Lower Shabelle had a population of 1,593,117 in January 2024.³⁶⁹ According to OCHA, Lower Shabelle had a surface area of 25,612 km².³⁷⁰

According to IOM, there were 79,260 displaced persons in Gedo in September 2024.³⁷¹ In 2024, around 28 thousand people became displaced in Lower Shabelle, 18 thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict.³⁷² Many displaced persons settled in the Afgooye corridor, the area between Mogadishu and Afgooye.³⁷³

³⁶⁶ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Bay; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

³⁶⁷ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, pp. 98-99; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805 ochasom administrative map somalia a0 1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

³⁶⁸ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, pp. 99-100.

³⁶⁹ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#) ([ipcinfo.org](#)), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

³⁷⁰ OCHA, *Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange*, updated on 15 January 2025.

³⁷¹ IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Lower Shabelle.

³⁷² UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Lower Shabelle; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

³⁷³ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, pp. 98-99.

Actors and incidents

For a long time, the Lower Shabelle region was one of al-Shabab's centres of power.³⁷⁴ During the reporting period, it was the region in which by far the most incidents of violence were registered (see also Graph 3). According to data from ACLED, al-Shabab was the main actor in terms of incidents of violence.³⁷⁵ The federal army carried out several attacks on al-Shabab, including with air support from the United States and Türkiye.³⁷⁶ Operations were conducted to drive al-Shabab out of the supply roads between Mogadishu and Lower Shabelle. These roads were of strategic importance to al-Shabab, due to the checkpoints that the organisation had there and the revenue that these posts yielded.³⁷⁷

In Lower Shabelle, al-Shabab carried out regular attacks on ATMIS contingents, resulting in fatalities. In April 2024, at least two Burundian soldiers were killed³⁷⁸ and more than twelve Ugandan soldiers were killed between April and October 2024.³⁷⁹ In January 2025, within a few days, al-Shabab killed at least sixteen Ugandan soldiers from ATMIS in several attacks. These attacks also resulted in injuries.³⁸⁰

Al-Shabab also used violence against civilians. In December 2024, three civilians were executed, including a tax collector from the local government and a police officer.³⁸¹ In October 2024, a journalist who was known for reporting on recruitment by al-Shabab was killed by unidentified armed men.³⁸² In April 2024, a former deputy mayor of a neighbourhood in Mogadishu survived an attack, but two of his security guards were killed.³⁸³

In some cases, conflicts over natural resources led to violence between clans, resulting in fatalities (see also 2.1.2).³⁸⁴ In April 2024, at least nine people were killed and many were wounded during fighting between clans in Qoryoley. According to the local press, al-Shabab instigated clan clashes in the region with the objective of undermining the fight against al-Shabab.³⁸⁵

In August and October 2024, fighting broke out between clan militias and the South-West State darwish in response to the attempts by the South-West State

³⁷⁴ ACLED, *Somalia: Dispute Over Constitutional Amendment and Increased al-Shabab Attacks*, 26 April 2024.

³⁷⁵ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Lower Shabelle; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

³⁷⁶ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 167; ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Lower Shabelle; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; BBC Monitoring, *Army 'raids al-Shabab's logistics networks' in southern Somalia*, 31 December 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Air strikes hit al-Shabab camps in southwestern Somalia*, 22 June 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

³⁷⁷ ACLED, *Somalia: Dispute Over Constitutional Amendment and Increased al-Shabab Attacks*, 26 April 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Army 'raids al-Shabab's logistics networks' in southern Somalia*, 31 December 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).

³⁷⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Burundian peacekeepers in Somalia 'killed in roadside bombing'*, 7 April 2024 (Calamada website).

³⁷⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab claims killing Ugandan soldiers in Somalia attack*, 2 October 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab claims killing two African Union soldiers in Somalia*, 24 September 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab claims 'inflicting casualties' on AU soldiers in Somalia*, 21 September 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab claims killing six soldiers in southern Somalia*, 18 September 2024 (Calamada website); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'kills three Ugandan soldiers' in southern Somalia*, 8 July 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab kills Ugandan soldiers in southern Somalia blast*, 13 June 2024 (Radio Andalus).

³⁸⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'kills Ugandan soldiers' in southern Somalia blasts*, 9 January 2025 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'kills five' African Union soldiers in Somalia attacks*, 11 January 2025 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'kills seven Ugandan soldiers' in southern Somalia*, 12 January 2025 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'kills five Ugandan soldiers' in south Somalia blast*, 15 January 2025 (Radio Andalus).

³⁸¹ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'beheads three civilians' in southern Somalia*, 17 December 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).

³⁸² BBC Monitoring, *Gunmen kill former journalist in southern Somalia*, 22 October 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).

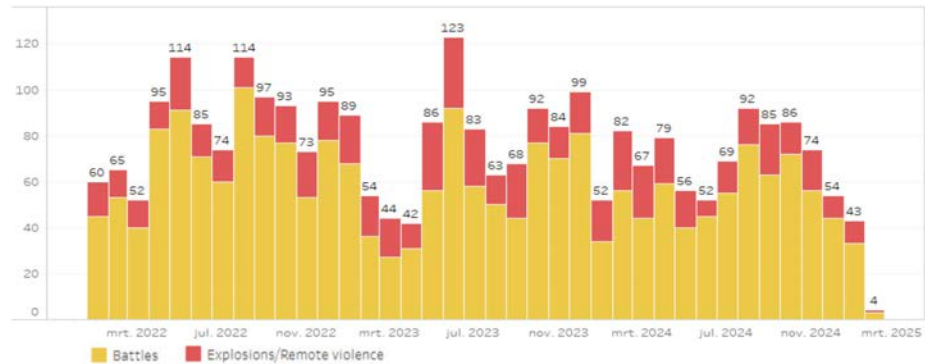
³⁸³ BBC Monitoring, *Ex-Somali official survives suspected al-Shabab bomb attack*, 22 April 2024 (Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu).

³⁸⁴ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 168.

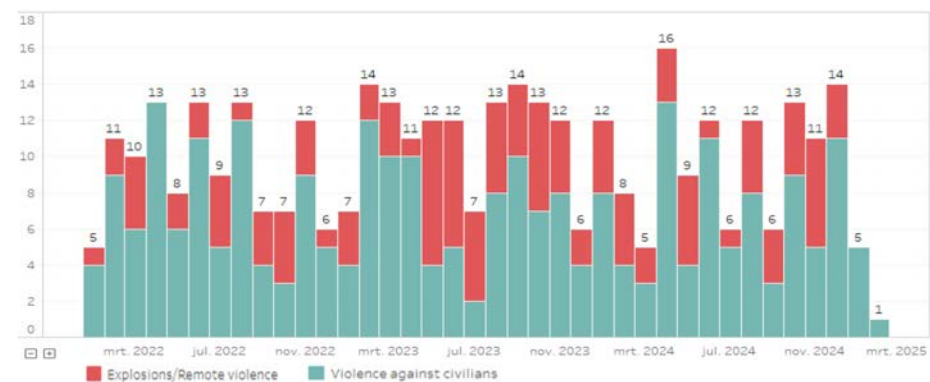
³⁸⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Three killed in Somali clan clashes in southern town*, 18 April 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

authorities to address the many illegal checkpoints that had been set up by militias. At least 25 people were killed in the process.³⁸⁶

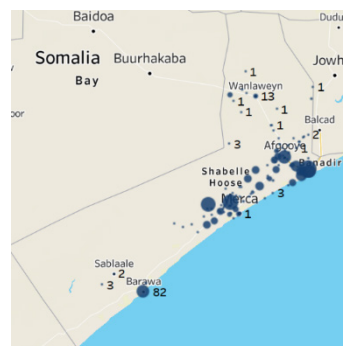
Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence



Graph 16: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Lower Shabelle during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.³⁸⁷



Graph 17: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Lower Shabelle during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.³⁸⁸



Map 8: Distribution of violence in Lower Shabelle during the reporting period.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Fifteen killed in clashes between Somali forces, clan militias*, 26 October 2024 (Caasimada Online, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Scores killed in army, militia clashes in south Somali town*, 22 August 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

³⁸⁷ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Lower Shabelle; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

³⁸⁸ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Lower Shabelle; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

³⁸⁹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Lower Shabelle; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

2.2.4 Hirshabelle

The federal member state of Hirshabelle was established in 2016, based on a covenant between the Hawiye clans of Hiraan and Middle Shabelle. In 2020, Ali Abullahi Hussein (also known as Ali Gudlawe) was elected president of this federal member state. His election was seen as a break with the informal distribution of power within the federal member state, thereby leading to tensions between the Hiraan region and the federal member state.³⁹⁰

Hirshabelle was the federal member state in which the government offensive against al-Shabab in 2022 was launched. With assistance from the pro-government militias (*ma'awiisley*), al-Shabab was almost completely driven out east of the Shabelle River. In early 2023, the government offensive was expanded to Galmudug, thereby decreasing the military capacity of the pro-government forces in Hirshabelle and causing them again to lose ground to al-Shabab.³⁹¹

Hirshabelle is composed of the regions of Middle Shabelle and Hiraan.

2.2.4.1 Middle Shabelle

Geography and population

Middle Shabelle (Shabelle Dhexe) consists of four districts: Adan Yabaal, Cadale (Adale), Balcad and Jowhar. Jowhar is the capital of both the region of Middle Shabelle and the state of Hirshabelle. The city is located along an important road that connects Mogadishu with the central regions.³⁹² A sector headquarters of ATMIS/AUSSOM was located in Jowhar.³⁹³

Middle Shabelle is inhabited primarily by Hawiye clans. The Shiidle – a Bantu population group – live to the east of the Shabelle Rivers around the city of Jowhar.³⁹⁴

According to figures from the IPC, Middle Shabelle had a population of 1,013,352 in January 2024.³⁹⁵ According to OCHA, Middle Shabelle had a surface area of 18,661 km².³⁹⁶

According to IOM, there were 56,088 displaced persons in Middle Shabelle in September 2024.³⁹⁷ In 2024, around fourteen thousand people became displaced in Middle Shabelle, six thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict.³⁹⁸

Actors and incidents

³⁹⁰ Confidential source, 1 August 2024.

³⁹¹ ACLED, *Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories Amid Run-up to State Elections*, 28 March 2024; Confidential source, 1 August 2024.

³⁹² EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 128; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805 ochasom administrative map somalia a0 1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

³⁹³ Confidential source, December 2024.

³⁹⁴ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, pp. 128-129.

³⁹⁵ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](#), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

³⁹⁶ OCHA, [Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange](#), updated on 15 January 2025.

³⁹⁷ IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Middle Shabelle.

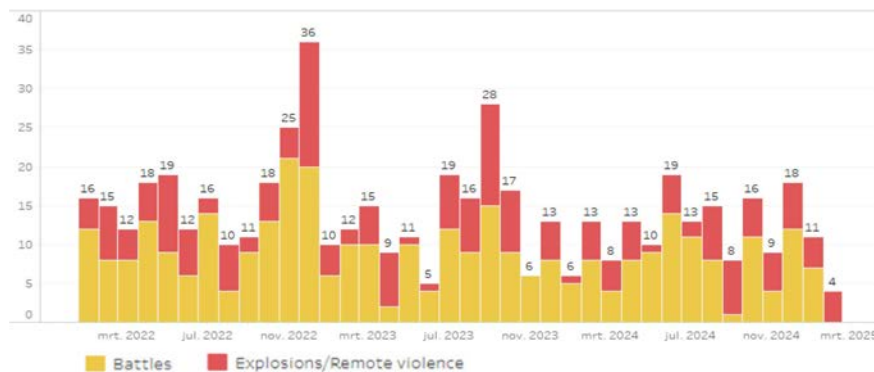
³⁹⁸ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Bakool; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

Fighting between al-Shabab and the national army was the main cause of violence in Middle Shabelle.³⁹⁹ In September 2024, the president of Hirshabelle called on the federal army to mobilise more militias in the fight against al-Shabab, particularly to improve security along the road between Mogadishu and Jowhar in Middle Shabelle.⁴⁰⁰ In February 2024, pro-government militias killed three traders because they had purportedly spied for al-Shabab.⁴⁰¹ During the reporting period, al-Shabab was responsible for the largest number of incidents of violence in the region.⁴⁰²

ATMIS was present in the region with Burundian troops, who often came under fire from al-Shabab.⁴⁰³ In October 2024, within a few days, multiple Burundian soldiers were killed in fighting. In January 2025, at least two additional Burundian soldiers were killed in a series of attacks involving explosives.⁴⁰⁴

During the reporting period, fighting broke out several times between clans on the border between Hiraan and Middle Shabelle. Many dozens of people were killed in the process.⁴⁰⁵

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence



Graph 18: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Middle Shabelle during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁴⁰⁶

³⁹⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Al-Shabab intensifies attacks in regions near Somali capital*, 16 March 2025; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'seizes' southern town near Somali capital*, 27 February 2025; BBC Monitoring, *US warns of imminent 'terrorist' attacks in Somali capital*, 5 March 2025; EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 177.

⁴⁰⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Somali regional leaders call for mobilisation of clan militias*, 17 September 2024 (Somali National News Agency).

⁴⁰¹ BBC Monitoring, *Somali militia accused of killing traders over espionage claims*, 18 February 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

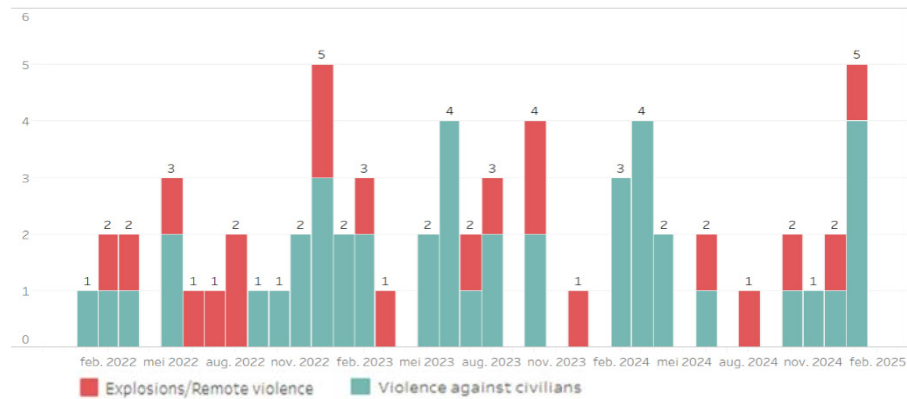
⁴⁰² ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Middle Shabelle; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

⁴⁰³ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 177; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'kills AU, Somali soldiers' in southern region clashes*, 20 October 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'kills nine' Somali and Burundian soldiers in clashes*, 21 October 2024 (Calamada website); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab blast kills departing Burundian soldiers*, 2 January 2025 (Radio Al-Furqaan, Mogadishu).

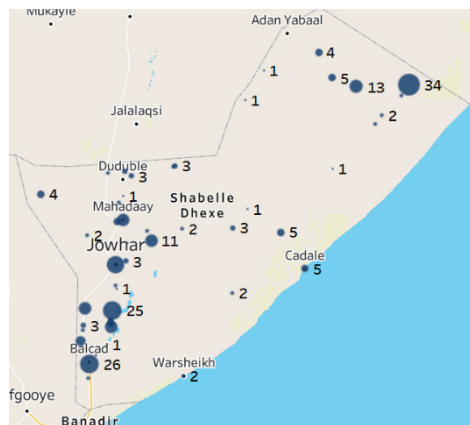
⁴⁰⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab blast kills departing Burundian soldiers*, 2 January 2025, Radio Al-Furqaan (Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'kills nine' Somali and Burundian soldiers in clashes*, 21 October 2024 (Calamada website); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'kills AU, Somali soldiers' in southern region clashes*, 20 October 2024 (Radio Andalus).

⁴⁰⁵ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 168; BBC Monitoring, *Thirty people killed in southern Somalia inter-clan fighting*, 13 May 2024 (Caasimada Online, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Clan clashes reportedly kill 10 people in south-central Somalia*, 30 November 2024 (Radio Kulmiye); BBC Monitoring, *Twenty people killed in southern Somalia clan fighting*, 7 December 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Farmers wounded in south-central Somalia attack amid tensions*, 8 January 2025 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Somalia sends delegation to central town to address clan tensions*, 31 December 2024 (Caasimada Online, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Clan fighting leaves four dead in central Somalia*, 20 September 2024 (Hiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Seven killed in fresh clashes in south-central Somali regions*, 19 July 2024 (Radio Shabelle, Mogadishu).

⁴⁰⁶ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Middle Shabelle; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.



Graph 19: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Middle Shabelle during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁴⁰⁷



Map 9: Distribution of violence in Middle Shabelle during the reporting period.⁴⁰⁸

2.2.4.2 Hiraan

Geography and population

Hiraan is located in the centre of Somalia, and it shares a border with Ethiopia. The region is surrounded by Bakool and Lower Shabelle (South-West State), Middle Shabelle (Hirshabelle) and Galgaduud (Galmudug). The region consists of three districts: Beletweyne (on the border with Ethiopia), Bulo Burto and Jalalaqsi. The capital of the region is Beletweyne.⁴⁰⁹

Hiraan is inhabited primarily by Hawiye clans. The Makane – a Bantu/Jareer group – live along the northern part of the Shabelle River.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁷ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Middle Shabelle; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

⁴⁰⁸ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Middle Shabelle; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

⁴⁰⁹ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, August 2023, p. 120; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

⁴¹⁰ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, August 2023, p. 120.

According to figures from the IPC, Hiraan had a population of 504,816 in January 2024.⁴¹¹ According to OCHA, Hiraan had a surface area of 33,854 km².⁴¹²

According to IOM, there were 108,517 displaced persons in Hiraan in September 2024.⁴¹³ In 2024, around 57 thousand people became displaced in Hiraan, five thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict, with a spike in March 2024.⁴¹⁴ In May 2024, 51 thousand people in Hiraan became displaced due to flooding.⁴¹⁵

Actors and incidents

Fighting between al-Shabab and the national army was the main cause of violence in Hiraan. Pro-government militias (ma'awiisley) supported the federal army in the fight against Al-Shabab.⁴¹⁶ The majority of incidents of violence took place along and near the road that runs from Mogadishu through Jowhar towards Beledweyne (see also Map 10). In January 2025, al-Shabab fired several mortars on the federal army's base in Bula Burte, when the national commander of the armed forces and the director of the national security service were visiting the base.⁴¹⁷

In Hiraan, there were many conflicts between clans. During the reporting period, fighting broke out several times between clans on the border between Hiraan and Middle Shabelle. Many dozens of people were killed in the process.⁴¹⁸

Clan dynamics also generated tension and violence at the political level. During the previous reporting period, the president of Hirshabelle dismissed the governor of Hiraan, who responded by declaring Hiraan an autonomous federal member state.⁴¹⁹ The arrival of a new governor in March 2024 led to fighting between the state-level darwish and a militia that supported the dismissed governor.⁴²⁰ In July 2024, militias prevented the president of Hirshabelle from visiting Hiraan.⁴²¹ ATMIS was present in the region with troops from Djibouti.⁴²² Because of this conflict, the

⁴¹¹ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinform.org\)](https://ipcinform.org/), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

⁴¹² OCHA, [Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange](https://ocha-dhnapex.org/humanitarian-data-exchange/), updated on 15 January 2025.

⁴¹³ IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](https://data.iom.int/dtm/somalia), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Hiraan.

⁴¹⁴ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Hiraan; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

⁴¹⁵ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Hiraan; (Reasons = Flood).

⁴¹⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces 'kill unknown number of militants' in central region*, 2 January 2025 (Radio Al-Furqaan, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Pro-government militia kills seven militants in central Somalia*, 14 October 2024 (Somali National Army Radio, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces kill 15 al-Shabab militants in central region*, 19 July 2024 (Somali National News Agency website); BBC Monitoring, *Pro-government clan militias kill four militants in central Somalia*, 16 January 2025 (Caasimada Online, Mogadishu).

⁴¹⁷ BBC monitoring, *Al-Shabab claims attack on army base in central Somalia*, 14 January 2025 (Radio Andalus).

⁴¹⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Thirty people killed in southern Somalia inter-clan fighting*, 13 May 2024 (Caasimada Online, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Clan clashes reportedly kill 10 people in south-central Somalia*, 30 November 2024 (Radio Kulmiye); BBC Monitoring, *Twenty people killed in southern Somalia clan fighting*, 7 December 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Farmers wounded in south-central Somalia attack amid tensions*, 8 January 2025 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Somalia sends delegation to central town to address clan tensions*, 31 December 2024 (Caasimada Online, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Clan fighting leaves four dead in central Somalia*, 20 September 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Seven killed in fresh clashes in south-central Somali regions*, 19 July 2024 (Radio Shabelle, Mogadishu); EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 174.

⁴¹⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Fears of fresh violence as central Somalia tensions escalate*, 28 March 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Clashes between Somali regional troops, militia group kill six*, 14 March 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Militia blocks Somali state leader from visiting central town*, 27 July 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

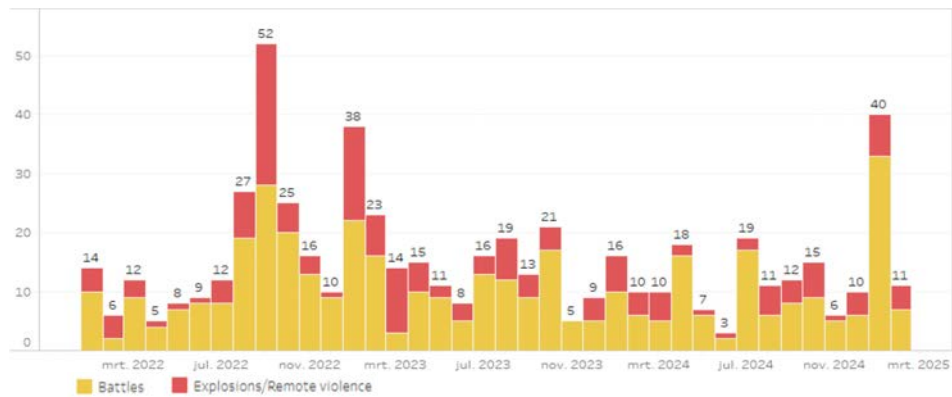
⁴²⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Clashes between Somali regional troops, militia group kill six*, 14 March 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).

⁴²¹ BBC Monitoring, *Militia blocks Somali state leader from visiting central town*, 27 July 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

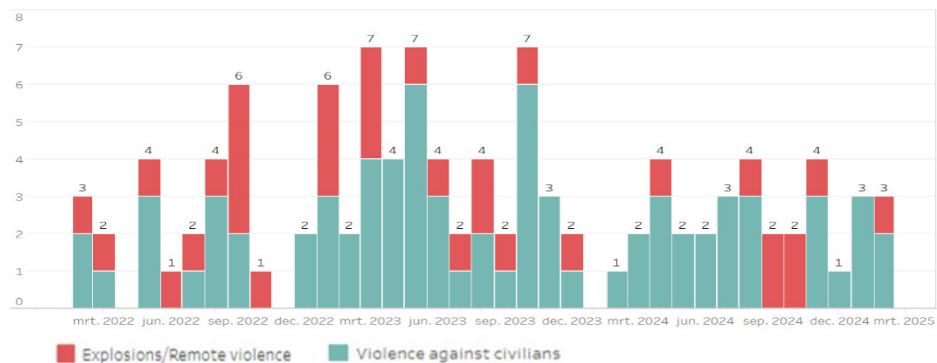
⁴²² Mogadishu24, *Djibouti troops under ATMIS withdraw from key bases in Beledweyne town in Hiiraan*, 12 March 2024; ATMIS, *ATMIS, Djibouti peacekeepers mark 47th Independence Day Anniversary*, 29 June 2024.

ATMIS forces withdrew from Beletweyne, where troops from Djibouti had been stationed for ten years.⁴²³

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence



Graph 20: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Hiraan during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁴²⁴

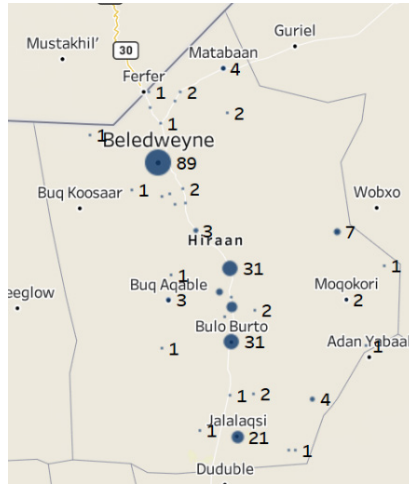


Graph 21: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Hiraan during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ BBC Monitoring, *Djibouti troops leave central Somali base over 'local feuds'*, 12 March 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).

⁴²⁴ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Hiraan; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

⁴²⁵ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Hiraan; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.



Map 10: Distribution of violence in Hiraan during the reporting period.⁴²⁶

2.2.5 Galmudug

The federal member state of Galmudug was established in 2015. Since 2020, Ahmed Abdi Kariye (also known as 'Qoorqoor') has been the president elected by the parliament of the federal member state. His term will end in 2025.⁴²⁷ Uncertainty about the timing of the new elections led to an increase in clan violence during the reporting period.⁴²⁸

During the previous reporting period, the pro-government forces reclaimed some areas from al-Shabab,⁴²⁹ but some of the territorial gains were reversed during the current reporting period.⁴³⁰ Although several military campaigns were carried out against al-Shabab in the federal member state during the reporting period, they did not result in any real territorial gains.⁴³¹ The government (and pro-government) forces controlled the cities in Galmudug.⁴³²

Galmudug is subdivided into the following regions: Galgaduud and part of Mudug.

2.2.5.1 Galgaduud

Geography and population

Galgaduud (or Galguduud) is located in the centre of Somalia, bordered on one side by Ethiopia and on the other side by the ocean. It is bordered on the south by Hiraan and Middle Shabelle (Hirshabelle) and on the north by Mudug (Galmudug). The region consists of five districts: Cabudwaaq, Cadaado, Dhusamareb, Ceel Buur and Ceel Dheer. The capital of the region is Dhusamareb.⁴³³

⁴²⁶ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Hiraan; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

⁴²⁷ Confidential source, 1 August 2024.

⁴²⁸ ACLED, *Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories Amid Run-up to State Elections*, 28 March 2024.

⁴²⁹ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 70; Confidential source, 1 August 2024.

⁴³⁰ ACLED, *Somalia: Al-Shabaab Regains Lost Territories Amid Run-up to State Elections*, 28 March 2024.

⁴³¹ ACLED, *Controversy over electoral reform sparks debate in Somalia amid al-Shabaab operation*, 28 October 2024.

⁴³² EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 70; Confidential source, 1 August 2024.

⁴³³ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 181; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

The region is inhabited primarily by Hawiye: the Habar Gidir and the Murasade clans. The Darood are present in the border region with Ethiopia.⁴³⁴

According to figures from the IPC, Galgaduud had a population of 427,809 in January 2024.⁴³⁵ According to OCHA, the surface area of Galgaduud was 49,280 km².⁴³⁶

According to IOM, there were 98,786 displaced persons in Galgaduud in September 2024.⁴³⁷ In 2024, around four thousand people became displaced in Galgaduud, three thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict.⁴³⁸ This was a sharp decrease relative to the previous reporting period, when at least one hundred thousand people became displaced each year due to conflict alone.⁴³⁹

Actors and incidents

Fighting between al-Shabab and the national army was the main cause of violence in Hiraaan. Pro-government militias (ma'awiisley) supported the federal army and played an important role in the fight against al-Shabab.⁴⁴⁰ During the reporting period, several offensives against al-Shabab took place in the district of Ceel Dheer. The densely forested area is of strategic military importance because al-Shabab can easily hide there and carry out attacks in various regions in Galmudug and Hirshabelle. The offensives nevertheless failed to drive al-Shabab out of the area.⁴⁴¹

Conflicts over natural resources regularly led to clan violence with fatalities.⁴⁴² During the reporting period, several confrontations between clans left at least nineteen dead and others wounded.⁴⁴³ According to an article in the press, one of the clans had accused al-Shabab of fighting on the side of the other clan.⁴⁴⁴

Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) was a Sufi militia (see also 4.2.2) that had previously fought against al-Shabab to protect its own religious practices and shrines.⁴⁴⁵ The militia had merged with the federal army in 2019. In 2021 and 2022, however, there were confrontations between the army and ASWJ over control in the west of Galgaduud.⁴⁴⁶ In August 2024, a large share of the former members of ASWJ left their barracks in protest against pay reductions.⁴⁴⁷ It was not clear where they went or whether they later returned to the barracks.

⁴³⁴ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 181.

⁴³⁵ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#) ([ipcinform.org](#)), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

⁴³⁶ OCHA, [Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange](#), updated on 15 January 2025.

⁴³⁷ IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Galgaduud.

⁴³⁸ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Galgaduud; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

⁴³⁹ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Departure Regions = Galgaduud; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

⁴⁴⁰ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 181; BBC Monitoring, *Vigilantes 'dislodge' militants from central Somali village*, 17 July 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Vigilantes kill eight militants in central Somalia raid*, 29 August 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

⁴⁴¹ ACLED, *Controversy over electoral reform sparks debate in Somalia amid al-Shabaab operation*, 28 October 2024.

⁴⁴² EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 182; BBC Monitoring, *Central Somalia clan clashes kill at least five people*, 25 May 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Central Somalia clan clashes kill four people*, 14 October 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Ten killed in fierce clan clashes in central Somalia*, 12 September 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

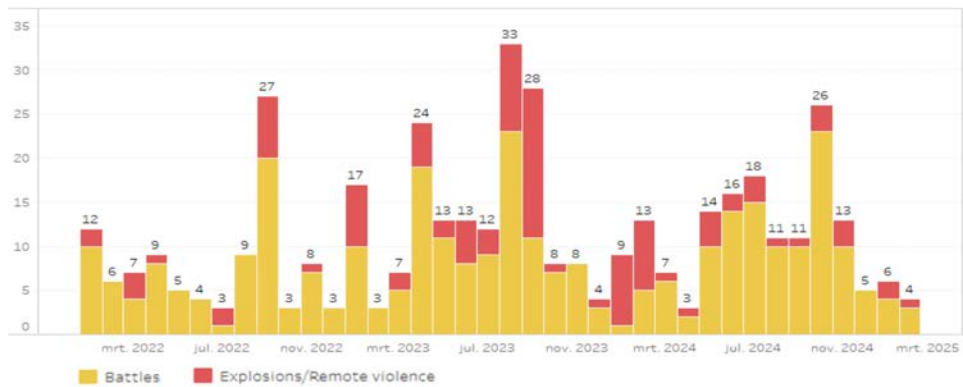
⁴⁴³ BBC Monitoring, *Central Somalia clan clashes kill at least five people*, 25 May 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Central Somalia clan clashes kill four people*, 14 October 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Ten killed in fierce clan clashes in central Somalia*, 12 September 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

⁴⁴⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Central Somalia clan clashes kill at least five people*, 25 May 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).
⁴⁴⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'abducts' 20 Sufi clerics in southern Somalia*, 8 June (Caasimada Online).

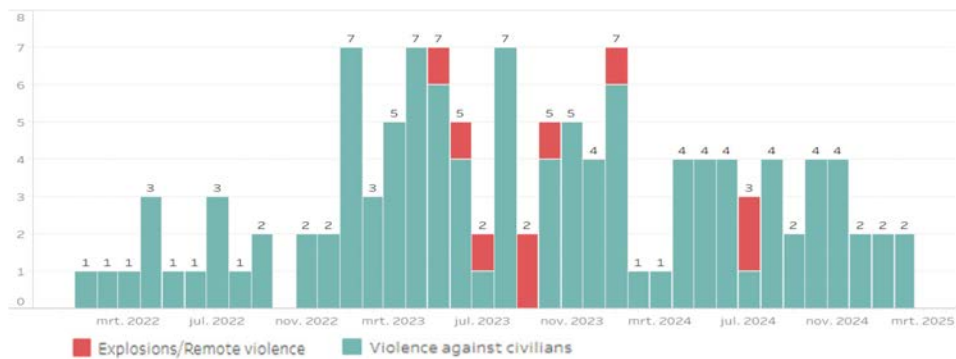
⁴⁴⁶ BBC Monitoring, *BBCM Africa Watchlist for 6 August*, 6 August 2024 (Caasimada Online); EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 70; Confidential source, 1 August 2024.

⁴⁴⁷ BBC Monitoring, *BBCM Africa Watchlist for 6 August*, 6 August 2024 (Caasimada Online).

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence



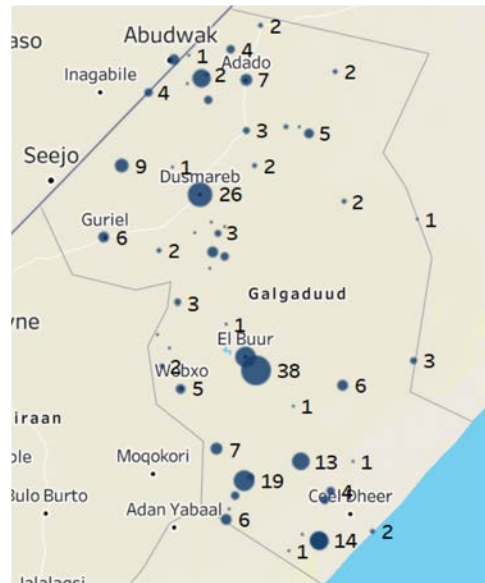
Graph 22: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Galgaduud during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁴⁴⁸



Graph 23: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Galgaduud during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁸ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Galgaduud; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

⁴⁴⁹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Galgaduud; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.



Map 11: Distribution of violence in Galgaduud during the reporting period.⁴⁵⁰

2.2.5.2 Mudug (divided between Galmudug and Puntland)

Geography and population

In practice, the northern half of the Mudug region falls under Puntland, with the southern half falling under Galmudug. Mudug has five districts: Xarardheere and a small part of Hobyo fall under Galmudug, with the rest of Hobyo, Galkayo, Galdogob and Jariiban falling under Puntland. The capital of Mudug, Galkayo (in the west of the region) is also divided between Puntland and Galmudug.⁴⁵¹

In the south, Mudug is inhabited by the Habir Gedir (Hawiye). In this part of the region there is also a small enclave of a Dir clan (Qubeys). The north of the region is inhabited primarily by a subclan of the Darood family. In addition, there are several minority groups in the region.⁴⁵²

According to figures from the IPC, Mudug had a population of 1,470,309 in January 2024.⁴⁵³ According to OCHA figures, Mudug had a surface area of 58,716 km².⁴⁵⁴

According to IOM, there were 133,198 displaced persons in Mudug in September 2024.⁴⁵⁵ In 2024, around 23 thousand people became displaced in Mudug, sixteen thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict. Of these sixteen thousand, thirteen thousand were from the district of Xarardheere.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁰ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Galgaduud; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

⁴⁵¹ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 146; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805 ochasom administrative map somalia a0 1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

⁴⁵² EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, August 2023, p. 146.

⁴⁵³ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](#), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

⁴⁵⁴ OCHA, [Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange](#), updated on 15 January 2025.

⁴⁵⁵ IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Mudug.

⁴⁵⁶ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Mudug; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

Actors and control areas

South-Mudug (under the administration of Galmudug)

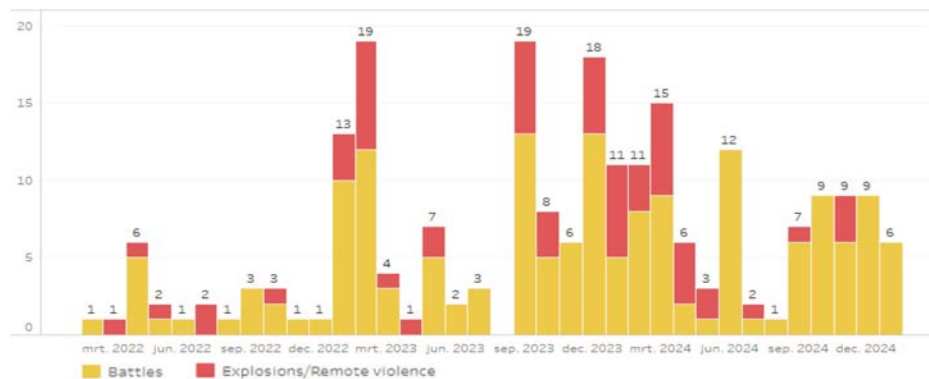
In the south of Mudug, which fell under Galmudug, fighting between al-Shabab and the government army was the main cause of violence. Pro-government militias (ma'awiisley) and state darwish supported the federal army and played an important role in the fight against Al-Shabab.⁴⁵⁷

North-Mudug (under the administration of Puntland)

The Puntland Security Forces (PSF) were active in Puntland.⁴⁵⁸ The authorities of Puntland refused to allow the national army to operate in the federal member state.⁴⁵⁹ In addition to the PSF, Puntland had a Maritime Police Force (MPF), which played an important role in the fight against piracy.⁴⁶⁰

Throughout the entire region, conflicts over natural resources regularly led to clan violence with many dozens of fatalities during the reporting period.⁴⁶¹

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence



Graph 24: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Mudug during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁷ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 184; BBC Monitoring, *Pro-government militia kills seven militants in central Somalia*, 12 January 2024 (Radio Mogadishu, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Somali army destroys al-Shabab bases in central region*, 8 January 2024 (Somali National Army Radio website); BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces seize village from al-Shabab in central region*, 17 September 2024 (Somali National TV, Mogadishu).

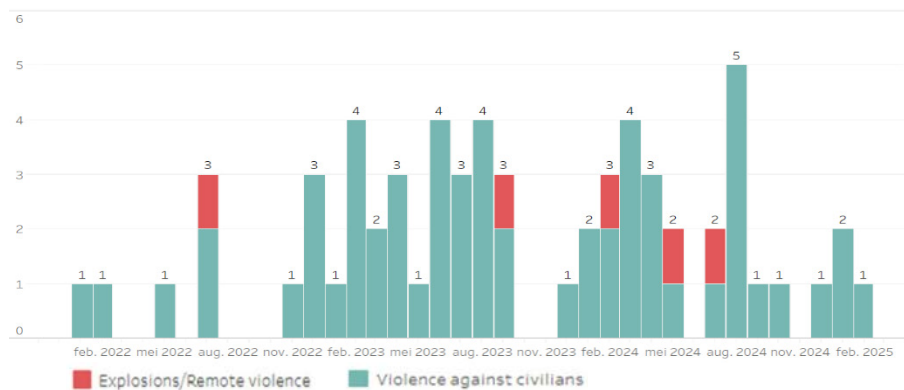
⁴⁵⁸ Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

⁴⁵⁹ Hiraan, *Minister Adala accuses Puntland of blocking national army deployment in Galgala mountains*, 9 October 2024.

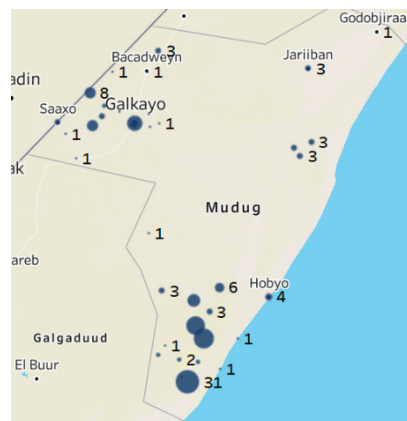
⁴⁶⁰ Somali Dispatch, *Police in Puntland nab pirate commander*, 18 June 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

⁴⁶¹ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 184; BBC Monitoring, *Clan clashes kill 15 people, wound 20 in central Somalia*, 12 September 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Twenty killed in central Somalia clan clashes*, 15 January 2025 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Twenty killed in central Somalia clan clashes*, 28 December 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Clan clashes displace over 5,820 people in central Somalia*, 9 July 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *More than 60 killed in fierce central Somalia clan clashes*, 28 June 2024 (Radio Shabelle, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Death toll from clan fighting in central Somalia reaches 50*, 9 June 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).

⁴⁶² ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Mudug; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.



Graph 25: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Mudug during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁴⁶³



Map 12: Distribution of violence in Mudug during the reporting period.⁴⁶⁴

2.2.6

Puntland

The federal member state of Puntland is the most north-eastern part of Somalia. In the west, it borders on SSC-Khatumo and Ethiopia, bordering in the south on the federal member state of Galmudug, in the east on the Indian Ocean and in the north on the Gulf of Aden.⁴⁶⁵ The federal member state was inhabited primarily by the Darood clan family.⁴⁶⁶

Puntland is composed of the regions of Bari and Nugaal, along with the northern part of Mudug (see also 2.2.5.2). The southern part of Mudug falls under the federal member state of Galmudug. The capital of Puntland is Garowe (in Nugaal), but the largest city with a major port is Bosaso (in Bari).⁴⁶⁷

Actors and incidents

⁴⁶³ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Mudug; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

⁴⁶⁴ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Mudug; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

⁴⁶⁵ OCHA, *Somalia administrative map* [120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf](#), consulted on 24 January 2025.

⁴⁶⁶ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, pp. 187, 189.

⁴⁶⁷ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, pp. 187, 189.

In Puntland, the Puntland Security Forces (PSF) were active in the fight against al-Shabab and IS-S.⁴⁶⁸ In January 2025, Puntland launched an offensive against IS-S and al-Shabab in Bari.⁴⁶⁹ Puntland was supported in this by the US.⁴⁷⁰ The United Arab Emirates also carried out airstrikes.⁴⁷¹ Civilians were called to arm themselves to liberate Puntland from terrorism.⁴⁷² This fighting marked the first time that IS-S had used armed drones against Puntland's forces.⁴⁷³ In February 2025, there were reports that IS-S leader Mumin had been killed in airstrikes.⁴⁷⁴ A senior IS-S commander surrendered during the same period.⁴⁷⁵ Later that month, Puntland's forces seized villages and an important IS-S base in the Miskaad mountains.⁴⁷⁶ According to the Puntland authorities, at least two thousand missiles were captured in the process, as well as a factory in which IS-S was making these missiles.⁴⁷⁷

The authorities of Puntland did not allow the national army to operate in the federal member state.⁴⁷⁸ In addition to the PSF, Puntland had a Maritime Police Force (MPF), which played an important role in the fight against piracy.⁴⁷⁹

In late 2024, according to the UN Panel of Experts, IS-S had no control over population centres, but it did have bases in four districts of Bari: Balidhidin, Hunbays, Iskushuban and Qandala.⁴⁸⁰

As shown in Graph 3, the security situation in Puntland was generally calm. In preceding reporting periods, IS-S had generally carried out far fewer wide-ranging attacks on Somali armed forces than al-Shabab had done elsewhere in Somalia.⁴⁸¹ During the reporting period, IS-S increased in size and strength (see also 2.1.7). In early 2025, Puntland launched an offensive against IS-S and al-Shabab, after IS-S had carried out a fatal attack on a military base on 31 December 2024.⁴⁸² In the offensive, Puntland received support from the United States in the form of airstrikes.⁴⁸³ IS-S and al-Shabab made increasing use of drones.⁴⁸⁴

2.2.6.1 Nugaal

⁴⁶⁸ Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

⁴⁶⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland state to launch new offensive against militants*, 22 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland launches military offensive against IS, al-Shabab*, 6 January 2025 (X).

⁴⁷⁰ BBC Monitoring, *US military says 1 February Somalia airstrikes killed 14 IS fighters*, 11 February 2025 (X); BBC Monitoring, *Somalia welcomes US airstrikes against Islamic State militants*, 1 February 2025 (Somali National TV); BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Air strikes hit IS camps in Somalia as Puntland steps up offensive*, 9 January 2025; United States Africa Command, *U.S. Forces conduct strike targeting ISIS*, 31 May 2024.

⁴⁷¹ BBC Monitoring, *UAE airstrike kills 25 IS militants in north-eastern Somalia*, 25 February 2025.

⁴⁷² BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland state to launch new offensive against militants*, 22 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland mobilises clan militias to fight IS militants*, 6 January 2025 (Hiiraan Online).

⁴⁷³ ACLED, *Expert Comment: January saw the first use of drone strikes by IS Somalia*, 13 February 2025.

⁴⁷⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Explainer: Was the recent military campaign a major setback for IS in Somalia?*, 10 February 2025; BBC Monitoring, *IS leader in Somalia 'believed' killed in US air strikes*, 3 February 2025.

⁴⁷⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Senior IS operative surrenders in Somalia's Puntland state*, 3 February 2025.

⁴⁷⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland forces seize another IS base in Al Miskad*, 23 February 2025; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali forces seize territories as UAE airstrike kills 25 IS militants*, 25 February 2025.

⁴⁷⁷ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland forces recover 2,000 missiles from IS camp*, 27 February 2025.

⁴⁷⁸ Hiiraan, *Minister Adala accuses Puntland of blocking national army deployment in Galgala mountains*, 9 October 2024.

⁴⁷⁹ Somali Dispatch, *Police in Puntland nab pirate commander*, 18 June 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024.

⁴⁸⁰ UNSC, *S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab*, 28 October 2024, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁸¹ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Puntland state to launch new offensive against militants*, 22 November 2024; ACLED, *The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia*, 31 July 2024.

⁴⁸² BBC Monitoring, *Roadside bomb blast kills 13 soldiers in Somalia's Puntland*, 21 January 2025 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: IS reports confronting army operations in Somalia's Puntland region*, 17 January 2025 (Al Naba); BBC Monitoring, *Somali regional forces capture IS bases, fighters 'flee to sea'*, 20 January 2025 (Garowe Online).

⁴⁸³ US Africa Command, *U.S. Forces Conduct Strike Targeting ISIS-Somalia*, 1 February 2025; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Air strikes hit IS camps in Somalia as Puntland steps up offensive*, 9 January 2025.

⁴⁸⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Militants 'step up use of drones' to counter Somali military offensive*, 16 January 2025; BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces in Puntland shoot down IS drones*, 15 January 2025 (Puntland Post website).

Geography and population

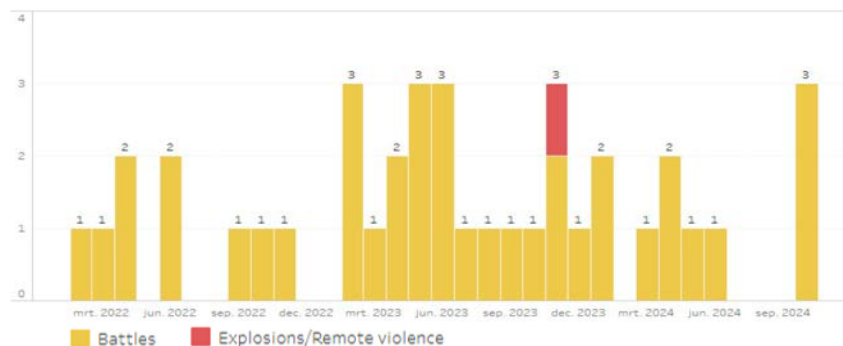
The region of Nugaal borders on the neighbouring country Ethiopia to the west and on the Indian Ocean to the east. To the north, it borders on the regions of Bari and Sool, with its southern border on the region of Mudug. Nugaal consists of three districts: Garowe, Burtinle and Eyl. The capital of Nugaal is Garowe.⁴⁸⁵

The main clans in the region are from the Darood-Harti group: Issa Mahmud in the south, around and to the north of Garowe, and the Omar Mahmud in the south.⁴⁸⁶

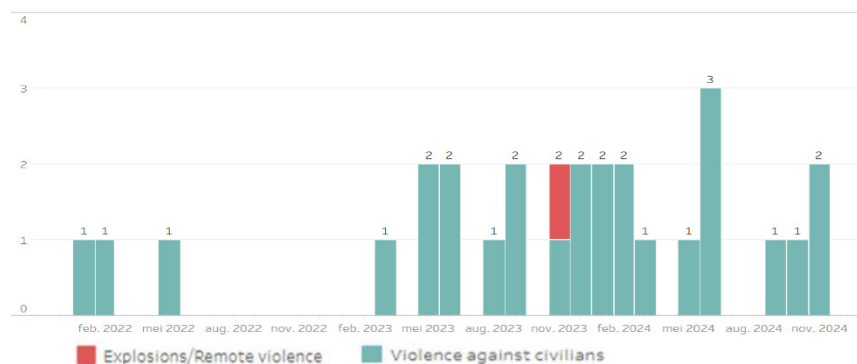
According to figures from the IPC, Nugaal had a population of 631,810 in January 2024.⁴⁸⁷ According to OCHA, Nugaal had a surface area of 27,568 km².⁴⁸⁸

According to IOM, there were 64,730 displaced persons in Nugaal in September 2024.⁴⁸⁹ In 2024, around ten thousand people became displaced in Nugaal, two hundred of whom were displaced due to conflict and insecurity.⁴⁹⁰

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence



Graph 26: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Nugaal during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁴⁹¹



⁴⁸⁵ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 154; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

⁴⁸⁶ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 154.

⁴⁸⁷ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, *Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification* (ipcinfo.org), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

⁴⁸⁸ OCHA, *Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange*, updated on 15 January 2025.

⁴⁸⁹ IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, *Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Nugaal.

⁴⁹⁰ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Nugaal; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

⁴⁹¹ ACLED, *ACLED Data*, consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Nugaal; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

Graph 27: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Nugaal during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁴⁹²



Map 13: Distribution of violence in Nugaal during the reporting period.⁴⁹³

2.2.6.2 Bari

Geography and population

The region of Bari borders on the Gulf of Aden to the north and on the Indian Ocean to the east. It is further surrounded by Sanaag and Sool (SSC-Khatumo) to the west and Nugaal (Puntland) to the south. The region consists of six districts: Caluula, Qandala, Bosaso, Qardho, Bandarbeyla and Iskushuban. The capital of Bari is Bosaso, a port city that attracts many displaced persons, particularly from the Rahanweyn clan. Bari is inhabited primarily by clans (and subclans) of the Darood clan family.⁴⁹⁴

According to figures from the IPC, Bari had a population of 1,232,231 in January 2024.⁴⁹⁵ According to OCHA, Bari had a surface area of 68,077 km².⁴⁹⁶

According to IOM, there were 116,560 displaced persons in Bari in September 2024.⁴⁹⁷ In 2024, around 22 thousand people became displaced in Bari, seven hundred of whom were displaced due to conflict and insecurity.⁴⁹⁸

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence

⁴⁹² ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Nugaal; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

⁴⁹³ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Nugaal; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

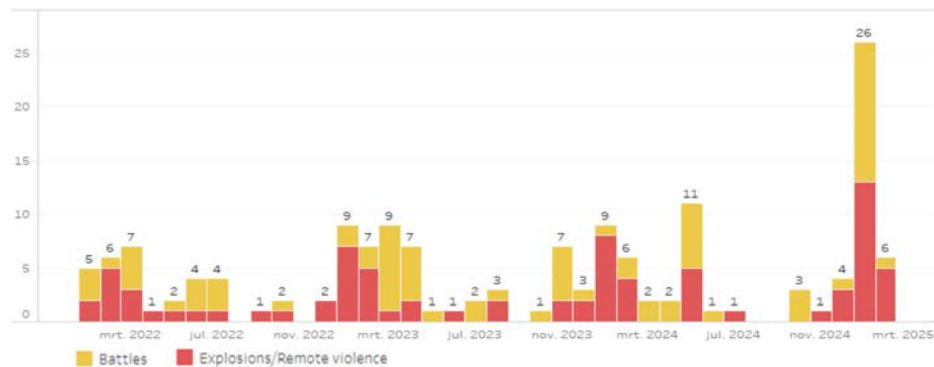
⁴⁹⁴ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 159; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805 ochasom administrative map somalia a0 1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

⁴⁹⁵ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](#), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

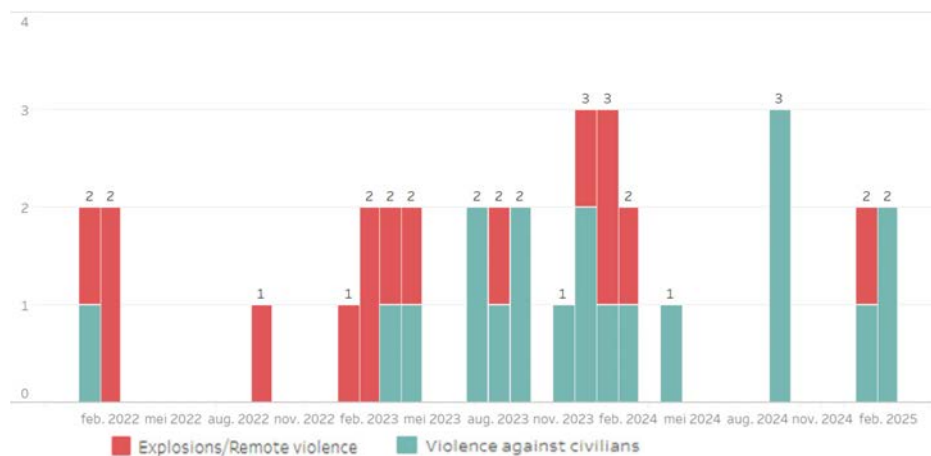
⁴⁹⁶ OCHA, [Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange](#), updated on 15 January 2025.

⁴⁹⁷ IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Bari.

⁴⁹⁸ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Bari; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).



Graph 28: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Bari during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁴⁹⁹



Graph 29: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Bari during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁵⁰⁰



Map 14: Distribution of violence in Bari during the reporting period.⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Bari; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

⁵⁰⁰ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Bari; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

⁵⁰¹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Bari; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

2.2.7 Somaliland and SSC-Khatumo

Somaliland

The federal member state of Somaliland comprises the north-western part of Somalia. It is bordered to the south by Ethiopia, to the west by Djibouti and to the north by the Gulf of Aden, with Yemen on the other side of the Gulf.⁵⁰² Somaliland declared independence in 1991, but is regarded internationally as a semi-autonomous federal member state of Somalia.⁵⁰³

Somaliland consists of several regions, with Sool, Sanaag and a part of Togdheer being the subject of dispute by SSC-Khatumo, with support from Puntland.⁵⁰⁴ Other regions of Somaliland include Awdal and Wogooy Galbeed. Hargeisa is the capital of Somaliland.⁵⁰⁵ The borders claimed by Somaliland are based on those of the former British protectorate of Somaliland.⁵⁰⁶

Somaliland is inhabited by the Dir and Isaaq clan families. Awdal is inhabited primarily by the Dir, whereas Isaaq clans are the most common in Wogooy Galbeed and Togdheer.⁵⁰⁷

SSC-Khatumo

During the reporting period, Sool Sanaag Cayn - Khatumo (SSC-Khatumo) increasingly split away from Somaliland, with the goal of becoming a federal member state. The areas were previously claimed by Puntland. The prospective federal member state is located on the border of Somaliland and Puntland. To the north, it borders on the Gulf of Aden and, to the south, it borders on Ethiopia.⁵⁰⁸ As indicated by the name of the prospective federal member state, the regions of Sool and Sanaag are part of SSC-Khatumo. The Buuhoodle district of the Togdheer region is claimed by the federal member state. This district was previously claimed by Puntland under the name of Cayn. The name SSC Khatumo thus also refers to that nomenclature.⁵⁰⁹ Las Anood is the capital of SSC-Khatumo.⁵¹⁰

Most inhabitants of this prospective federal member state belong to the Dhulbahante and Warsangali – clans of the Darood clan family, which is dominant in Puntland – whereas Somaliland is dominated by the Dir and Isaaq clan families. During the previous reporting period, the killing of several members of the Dulbahante clan in January 2023 caused fierce fighting to break out between Dulbahante militias and the Somaliland security forces. In the process, large numbers of people were displaced.⁵¹¹ On 6 February 2023, the Dhulbahante clan

⁵⁰² OCHA, *Somalia administrative map* [120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf](#), consulted on 24 January 2025.

⁵⁰³ Council for Foreign Relations, *Somaliland: The Horn of Africa's Breakaway State*, 21 January 2025; Confidential source, 12 November 2024.

⁵⁰⁴ Somali Dispatch, *Somaliland claims the death of SSC-Khatumo commander with Al Shabab ties – Somali Dispatch*, 3 November 2024; Confidential source, 1 December 2023.

⁵⁰⁵ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, pp. 178, 182, 186.

⁵⁰⁶ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 32.

⁵⁰⁷ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, pp. 178, 182, 186; EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 64.

⁵⁰⁸ OCHA, *Somalia administrative map* [120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf](#), consulted on 24 January 2025.

⁵⁰⁹ Somali Dispatch, *Somaliland claims the death of SSC-Khatumo commander with Al Shabab ties*, 3 November 2024.

⁵¹⁰ Somali Dispatch, *The SSC-Khatumo Administration today laid the foundation for the airport in Las Anod*, 25 January 2025.

⁵¹¹ Somali Digest, *SSC-Khatumo elects leadership and charts course for federal statehood*, 7 August 2023; Crisis Group, *Time for Somaliland and the Dhulbahante to Talk*, 19 May 2023.

elders decided to establish their own administration.⁵¹² In August 2023, Abdiqadir Ahmed Aw-Ali (also known as Firdhiye) was elected president of SSC-Khatumo by clan representatives.⁵¹³

On 19 October 2023, the federal government of Somalia stated that it would cooperate with SSC-Khatumo and its interim government.⁵¹⁴

Actors and incidents

As shown in Graph 3, the security situation in the regions in the northern federal member states was generally calm, as compared to other parts of Somalia. The incidents of violence registered in SSC-Khatumo involved fighting between militias of SSC-Khatumo and the Somaliland security forces, as a result of the conflict between Somaliland and the self-declared autonomous federal member state of SSC-Khatumo. Dozens were killed in the process.⁵¹⁵ According to one local source,⁵¹⁶ at least 43 thousand people were displaced in December 2024, due to fighting around the city of Ceerigaabo, which was controlled by Somaliland.⁵¹⁷ In late January 2025, the Dhulbahante and Warsangali clans announced a joint campaign to seize Ceerigaabo.⁵¹⁸

2.2.7.1 Sool (disputed by Somaliland and SSC-Khatumo)

Geography and population

Sool borders on the neighbouring country of Ethiopia to the south and is further surrounded by the regions of Bari and Nugaal (Puntland) to the west, Sanaag to the north and Togdheer to the west. Sool consists of four districts: Taleex (Taleh), Xudun (Hudun), Caynabo (Aynabo/Ainado) and Laas Caanood (Las Anood). The capital of the region is Las Anood. The population consists largely of the Harti-Darood (Dhulbahante clan), including in the cities. Only the city of Caynabo is inhabited primarily by the Isaaq.⁵¹⁹

According to figures from the IPC, Sool had a population of 548,975 in January 2024.⁵²⁰ According to OCHA, Sool had a surface area of 37,332 km².⁵²¹

⁵¹² OCHA, *Somalia; Flash Update No. 1: Fighting in Laas Caanood, Sool region*, 9 February 2023; Al Jazeera, *What's driving conflict in the disputed Somali city of Las Anod?*, 20 February 2023; Horseed Media, *Somali Federal Government Recognizes New SSC-Khatumo Administration*, 19 October 2023; Confidential source, 1 December 2023.

⁵¹³ Somali Digest, *SSC-Khatumo elects leadership and charts course for federal statehood*, 7 August 2023.

⁵¹⁴ Horseed Media, *Somali Federal Government Recognizes New SSC-Khatumo Administration*, 19 October 2023; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia to work with administration in breakaway region*, 19 October 2023 (Universal TV, London).

⁵¹⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Five killed in clashes between Somaliland, Khatumo state forces*, 28 August 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Restive Somali region seizes villages in disputed territories*, 11 October 2024 (Radio Shabelle, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Somaliland, local militia clashes kill 27 in disputed region*, 2 November 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Seven killed in clashes between Somaliland army, clan militias*, 18 December 2024 (Shabelle Media Network website, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Fighting between Somaliland army, clan militias displaces over 40,000*, 20 December 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Somaliland troops, militia seize village near restive Erigavo town*, 11 January 2025 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

⁵¹⁶ These figures were not (or not immediately) visible in the UNCHR figures.

⁵¹⁷ BBC Monitoring, *Fighting between Somaliland army, clan militias displaces over 40,000*, 20 December 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).

⁵¹⁸ Hiiraan Online, *Dhulbahante, Warsangali clans launch joint campaign to seize Erigavo from Somaliland*, 31 January 2025.

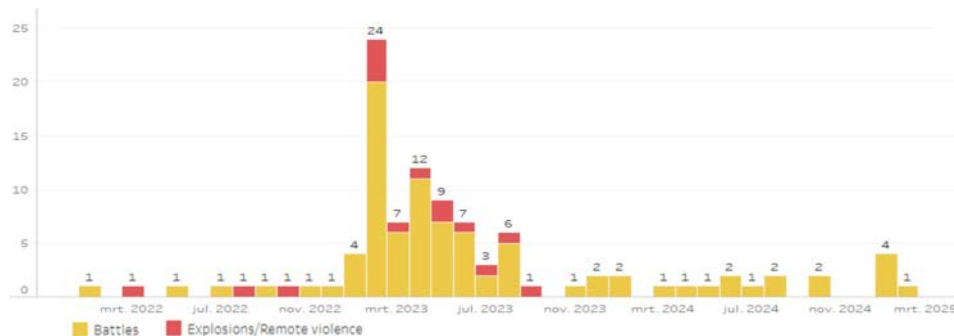
⁵¹⁹ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 167; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

⁵²⁰ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](https://ipcinfo.org), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

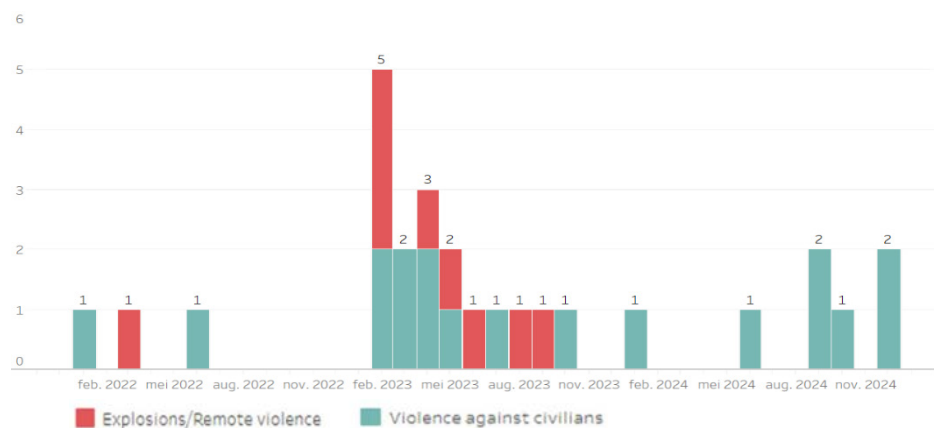
⁵²¹ OCHA, *Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange*, updated on 15 January 2025.

According to IOM, there were 12,900 displaced persons in Sool in September 2024.⁵²² In 2024, around seven thousand people became displaced in Sool, around two thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict and insecurity.⁵²³

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence



Graph 30: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Sool during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁵²⁴



Graph 31: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Sool during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁵²⁵

⁵²² IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Sool.

⁵²³ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Sool; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

⁵²⁴ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Sool; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

⁵²⁵ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Sool; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.



Map 15: Distribution of violence in Sool during the reporting period.⁵²⁶

2.2.7.2 Sanaag (disputed by Somaliland and SSC-Khatumo)

Geography and population

Sanaag is located in the north of Somalia, and it is bordered to the north by the Gulf of Aden. It is further surrounded by the regions of Wogooy Galbeed to the west, Sool to the south and Bari to the east. The region consists of three districts: Laasqoray, Ceerigaabo (also known as Erigabo or Erigavo) and Ceel Afweyn (also known as El Afweyne). The capital of Sanaag is Ceerigaabo.⁵²⁷

The east of Sanaag is inhabited primarily by the Harti-Darood (Warsangali subclan), whereas the Dhulbahante clan is present mainly in the south. The Isaaq (Habar Yunis subclan) mainly inhabit the west of the region. The Habar Yunis, the Gabooye and other minority groups live in the city of Ceerigaabo.⁵²⁸

According to figures from the IPC, Sanaag had a population of 428,699 in January 2024.⁵²⁹ According to OCHA, Sanaag had a surface area of 53,811 km².⁵³⁰

According to IOM, there were 21,462 displaced persons in Sanaag in September 2024.⁵³¹ In 2024, around seven thousand people became displaced in Sanaag, around five thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict and insecurity.⁵³²

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence

⁵²⁶ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Sool; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

⁵²⁷ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, August 2023, p. 172; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805 ochasom administrative map somalia a0 1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

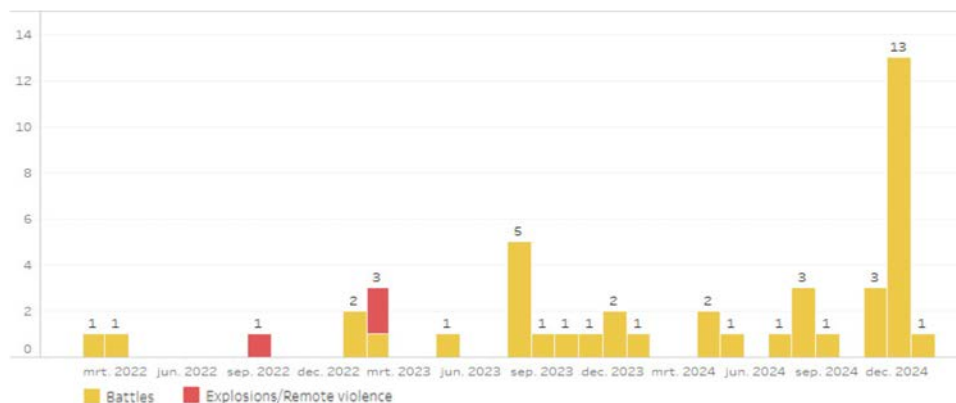
⁵²⁸ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 172.

⁵²⁹ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(ipcinfo.org\)](#), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

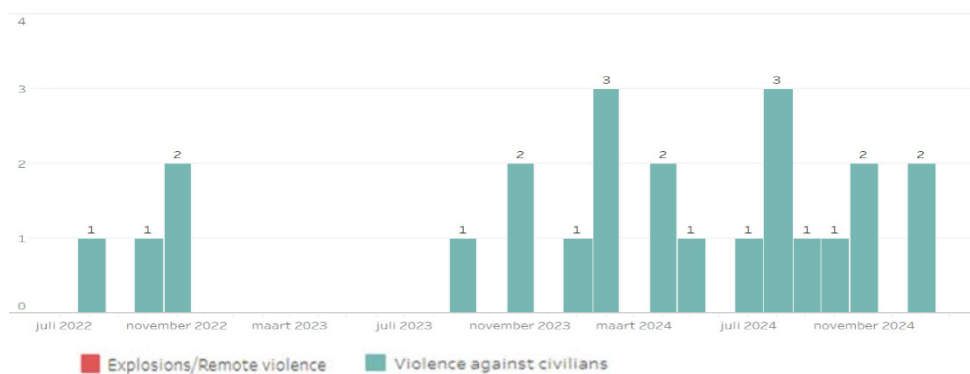
⁵³⁰ OCHA, [Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange](#), updated on 15 January 2025.

⁵³¹ IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Sanaag.

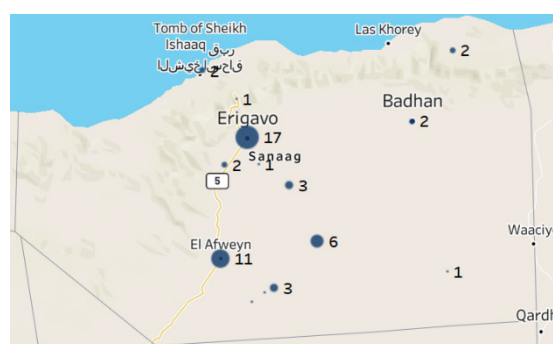
⁵³² UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Sanaag; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).



Graph 32: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Sanaag during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁵³³



Graph 33: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Sanaag during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁵³⁴



Map 16: Distribution of violence in Sanaag during the reporting period.⁵³⁵

2.2.7.3 Togdheer (partly disputed between Somaliland and SSC-Khatumo)

Geography and population

⁵³³ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Sanaag; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

⁵³⁴ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Sanaag; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

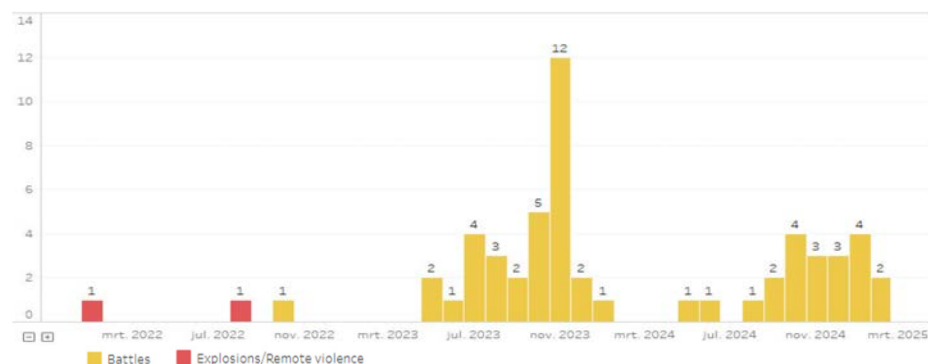
⁵³⁵ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Sanaag; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

The region of Togdheer borders on the neighbouring country of Ethiopia to the south, and it is further surrounded by the regions of Wogooy Galbeed, Sool and Sanaag. Togdheer consists of four districts: Sheikh, Owdweyne, Burco (or Burao) and Buuhoodle. The regional capital is Burco (or Burao). Togdheer is inhabited mainly by Isaaq clans, except in Buuhoodle, where the Dulbahante – a Darood clan – are in the majority.⁵³⁶

According to figures from the IPC, Togdheer had a population of 860,684 in January 2024.⁵³⁷ According to OCHA, Togdheer had a surface area of 34,175 km².⁵³⁸

According to IOM, there were 67,380 displaced persons in Togdheer in September 2024.⁵³⁹ In 2024, around 32 thousand people became displaced in Togdheer, around 29 thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict and insecurity. All of these displaced persons were from the district of Buuhoodle/Cayn,⁵⁴⁰ which SSC-Khatumo claimed from Somaliland.

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence



Graph 34: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Togdheer during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁶ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 186; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map* 120805 ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf, consulted on 24 January 2025.

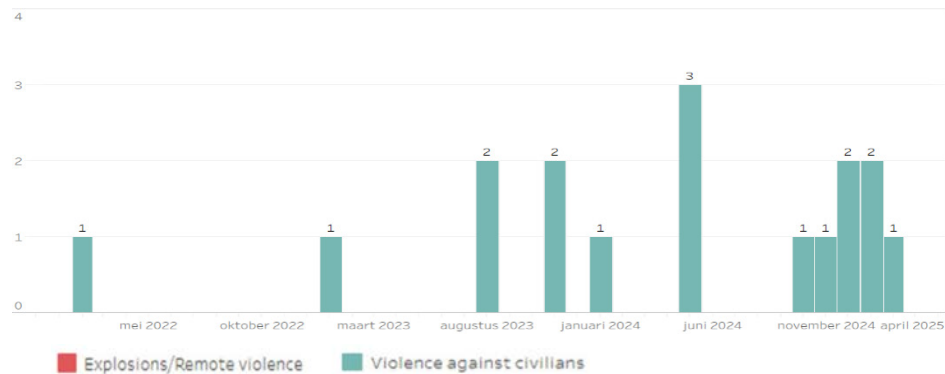
⁵³⁷ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, *Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification* (ipcinfo.org), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

⁵³⁸ OCHA, *Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange*, updated on 15 January 2025.

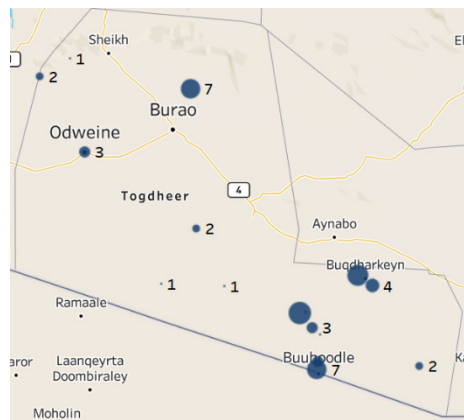
⁵³⁹ IOM, *Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix*, *Somalia September 2024 Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Togdheer.

⁵⁴⁰ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Togdheer; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

⁵⁴¹ ACLED, *ACLED Data*, consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Togdheer; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.



Graph 35: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Togdheer during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁵⁴²



Map 17: Distribution of violence in Togdheer during the reporting period.⁵⁴³

2.2.7.4 Wogooy Galbeed (Somaliland)

Geography and population

The region of Wogooy Galbeed is bordered by the neighbouring country of Ethiopia to the south and by the Gulf of Aden to the north. The region of Awdal is located to the west of the region, with the regions of Sanaag and Togdheer to the east. Wogooy Galbeed consists of three districts: Gebiley, Hargeisa and Berbera. The regional capital is Hargeisa, which is also the capital of Somaliland. Wogooy Galbeed is inhabited primarily by clans of the Isaaq clan family.⁵⁴⁴

The port city of Berbera was of major economic and political-strategic importance. On 1 January 2024, Somaliland concluded an MoU with Ethiopia that would allow Ethiopia to lease an army base in the port city of Berbera. This would give Ethiopia access to the sea. In return, Ethiopia would recognise Somaliland's independence. This led to major internal and international tensions in Somalia (see also Chapter 1 on Political developments).⁵⁴⁵ In addition to Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates

⁵⁴² ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Togdheer; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

⁵⁴³ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Togdheer; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

⁵⁴⁴ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 182; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map 120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf*, consulted on 24 January 2025.

⁵⁴⁵ BBC, *Ethiopia signs agreement with Somaliland paving way to sea access*, 2 January 2024.

(UAE) also expressed interest in building a military base in Somaliland. The country started construction on a base near the Berbera airport. According to Africanews, the UAE would be allowed to station troops there for thirty years.⁵⁴⁶

According to figures from the IPC, Wogooy Galbeed had a population of 1,447,484 in January 2024.⁵⁴⁷ According to OCHA, the region had a surface area of 28,247 km².⁵⁴⁸

According to IOM, there were 67,380 displaced persons in Wogooy Galbeed in September 2024.⁵⁴⁹ In 2024, around 32 thousand people became displaced in Wogooy Galbeed, around 29 thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict and insecurity.⁵⁵⁰

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence



Graph 36: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Wogooy Galbeed during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁵⁵¹



Graph 37: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Wogooy Galbeed during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁵⁵²

⁵⁴⁶ Africanews, *UAE to train Somaliland forces under military base deal*, 13 August, 2024.

⁵⁴⁷ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#) ([ipcinfo.org](#)), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

⁵⁴⁸ OCHA, [Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange](#), updated on 15 January 2025.

⁵⁴⁹ IOM, *Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix*, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Wogooy Galbeed.

⁵⁵⁰ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network PRMN Dashboard*, consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Wogooy Galbeed; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).

⁵⁵¹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Wogooy Galbeed; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

⁵⁵² ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Wogooy Galbeed; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.



Map 18: Distribution of violence in Wogooy Galbeed during the reporting period.⁵⁵³

2.2.7.5 Awdal (Somaliland)

Geography and population

The region of Awdal is located in Somalia's most north-western point, and it is part of Somaliland. To the west, it borders on the neighbouring countries of Ethiopia and Djibouti, with the Gulf of Aden to the north-east. In the south-west, it borders on the region of Wogooy Galbeed. The region consists of four districts: Zeylac, Lughaye, Baki and Borama. The capital of the region is Borama. Awdal is inhabited primarily by the Dir.⁵⁵⁴

According to figures from the IPC, Awdal had a population of 636,108 in January 2024.⁵⁵⁵ According to OCHA, the region had a surface area of 15,885 km².⁵⁵⁶

According to IOM, there were 67,380 displaced persons in Awdal in September 2024.⁵⁵⁷ In 2024, around 32 thousand people became displaced in Awdal, around 29 thousand of whom were displaced due to conflict and insecurity.⁵⁵⁸

Numbers and distribution of incidents of violence

⁵⁵³ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Wogooy Galbeed; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

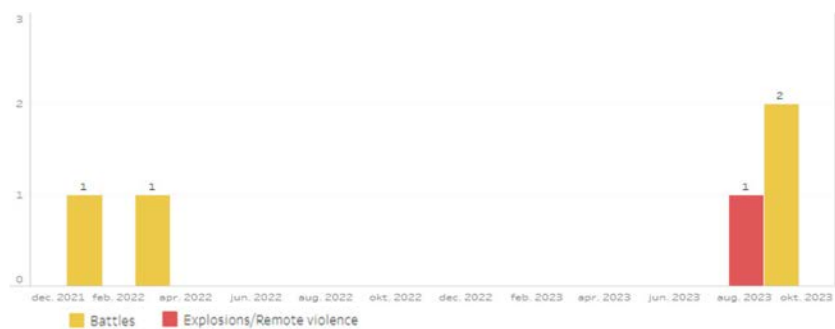
⁵⁵⁴ EUAA, *Somalia: security situation*, February 2023, p. 178; EUAA, *Country guidance: Somalia*, August 2023, p. 64; OCHA, *Somalia administrative map* [120805_ochasom_administrative_map_somalia_a0_1.pdf](#), consulted on 24 January 2025.

⁵⁵⁵ IPC, *Population Tracking Tool*, [Population Tracking Tool | IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#) ([ipcinfo.org](#)), January 2024, consulted on 14 June 2024.

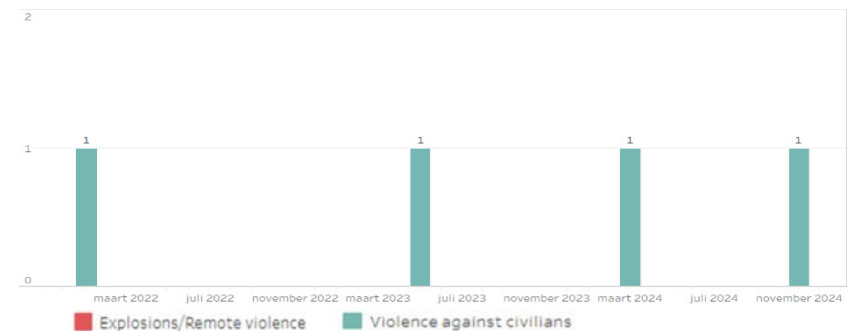
⁵⁵⁶ OCHA, [Somalia - Subnational Administrative Boundaries - Humanitarian Data Exchange](#), updated on 15 January 2025.

⁵⁵⁷ IOM, Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix, Somalia September 2024 [Somalia — Baseline Assessment 2024 — Dashboard | Displacement Tracking Matrix](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Population info; Population groups = IDP; Region name = Awdal.

⁵⁵⁸ UNHCR, *Protection and Return Monitoring Network* [PRMN Dashboard](#), consulted on 10 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Departure Regions = Awdal; (Reasons = Conflict/Insecurity).



Graph 38: Trend in numbers and nature of armed confrontations in Awdal during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁵⁵⁹



Graph 39: Trend in numbers of incidents of violence targeting civilians in Awdal during the previous (January 2022 – June 2023) and current reporting periods.⁵⁶⁰



Map 19: Distribution of violence in Awdal during the reporting period.⁵⁶¹

2.3 Freedom of movement

2.3.1 Restrictions on freedom of movement

⁵⁵⁹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Awdal; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence.

⁵⁶⁰ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Awdal; Period = January 2022 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians; Civilian targeting = True.

⁵⁶¹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 18 February 2025. Filters: Land = Somalia; Region = Awdal; Period = July 2023 – February 2025; Event type = Battles + Remote violence + Violence against civilians.

Freedom of movement was respected to some extent within Somalia, but traffic between Somaliland and Puntland was restricted by the authorities. Somaliland also restricted travel to and from Mogadishu.⁵⁶² Since the escalation of tensions between the federal government and Jubbaland and South-West State in particular, there were various reports (in September, November and December 2024) that the authorities had halted air traffic to and from those federal member states. On 24 December 2024, the government temporarily suspended all flights to Kismayo.⁵⁶³

Confidential sources indicated that the average Somali could travel throughout the country on the roads, but not without risks (see 2.3.2 and 2.3.3).⁵⁶⁴ This was because, even in the regions where it had been expelled from the urban centres and larger towns, al-Shabab retained sufficient capacity outside these centres to carry out violent actions, including in the vicinity of Mogadishu.⁵⁶⁵ According to various sources, control over the roads from Mogadishu to Lower Shabelle and Bay was a strategic objective of al-Shabab.⁵⁶⁶ This is supported by Maps 20 and 20a, where a concentration of attacks using explosives can be seen on the roads leading out of Mogadishu.

2.3.2 Incidents involving explosives

Based on Graph 40, it can be ascertained that 100 incidents involving explosives targeting civilians occurred during the reporting period (July 2023 – December 2024). This was an increase relative to the number of incidents involving explosives in the previous reporting period (January 2022 – June 2023), when 98 incidents were registered.

⁵⁶² USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 20 March 2024, pp. 24-25; Freedom House, *Freedom in the world 2024 – Somalia*, December 2024, G1.

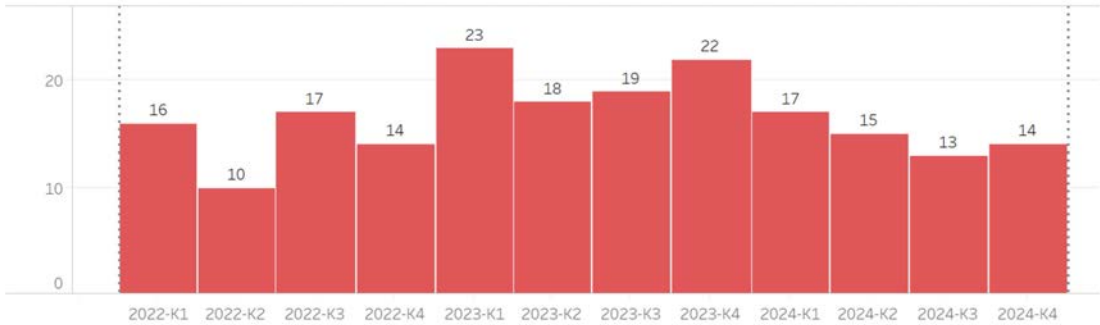
⁵⁶³ BBC Monitoring, *Flights between Somali capital, south-western city 'suspended'*, 17 September (Radio Mustaqbal); BBC Monitoring, *Somali aviation agency denies suspending flights to Baidoa city*, 17 September 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali government lifts ban on flights to towns in Jubbaland*, 26 December 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu); [Baidoa Online on X: "#UPDATE: The Somali government has today suspended civilian flights to Dolow due to an incident involving six government soldiers who recently left Mogadishu and were arrested in Dolow. These soldiers were apprehended by Ethiopian forces in charge of Doolow airport security and" / X](#), 20 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's Jubbaland warns against flights to southern town*, 2 December 2024; [Baidoa Online on X: "#UPDATE: The Federal Government of Somalia \(FGS\) has so far suspended to allow passenger flights to the southern regions of the country. \(Baidoa, kismayo, beladweyne, Dhusamareb \). This decision is linked to airline companies declining to operate flights to the town of Ras https://t.co/ppFQt360Ur" / X](#) 6 December 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia 'suspends flights' to Jubbaland regional state amid tensions*, 24 December 2024.

⁵⁶⁴ Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

⁵⁶⁵ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

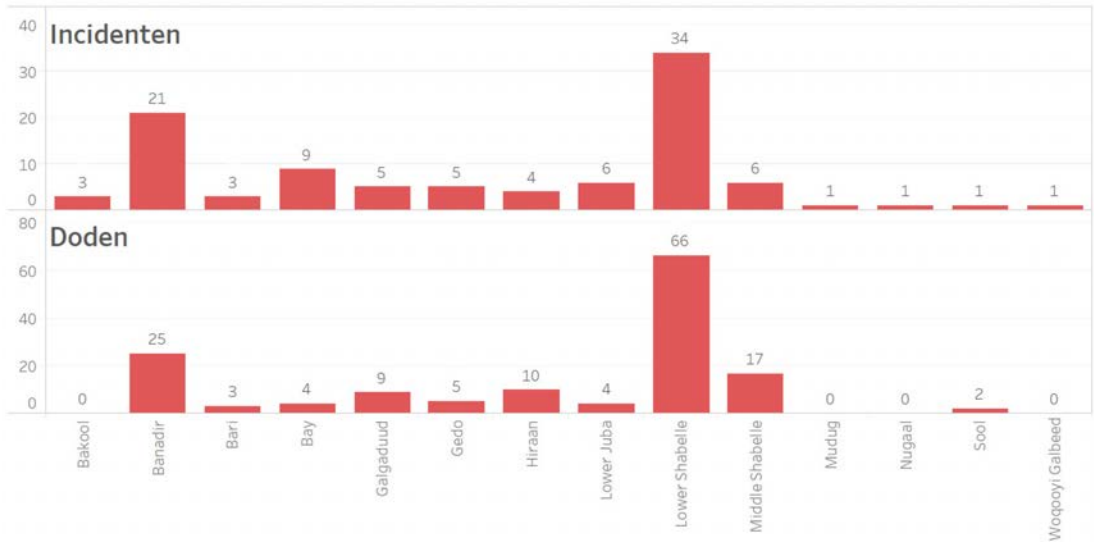
⁵⁶⁶ ACLED, *Somalia: Renewed counter-insurgency operations expected as al-Shabaab regroup*, 31 May 2024; ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

Aantal incidenten



Graph 40: Incidents involving explosives and resulting in civilian casualties.⁵⁶⁷

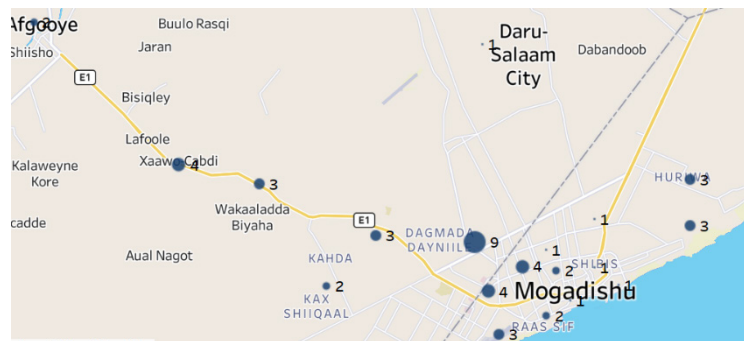
Per Regio



Graph 41: Incidents and fatalities involving explosives and resulting in civilian casualties during the reporting period, by region.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁷ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 23 December 2024. Filters: From: 01/01/2022; To: 31/12/2024; Event type: Explosions/Remote violence; Sub event type: Remote explosive/landmine/IED; Civilian targeting: True; Country: Somalia.

⁵⁶⁸ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 23 December 2024. Filters: From: 01/07/2023; To: 31/12/2024; Event type: Explosions/Remote violence; Sub event type: Remote explosive/landmine/IED; Civilian targeting: True; Country: Somalia.



Maps 20 and 20a: Incidents involving explosives in which civilians were killed during the reporting period.⁵⁶⁹

As shown in the graph and the maps, during the reporting period, by far the most incidents involving explosives took place in Lower Shabelle, followed by Mogadishu (Benadir region). As can be seen in Map 20a, a number of these incidents occurred on Mogadishu's inland exit roads.

2.3.3

Checkpoints

Regional and federal government parties, clan militias, ATMIS forces and al-Shabab continued to use checkpoints on the main roads throughout all of South and Central Somalia. Some of them were permanent, and others were temporary. At these checkpoints, travellers could be confronted with theft of their belongings, extortion, intimidation and violence. At many posts, travellers had to pay in order to continue their journeys.⁵⁷⁰ According to a report by the NGO PeaceRep, in the Hiraa region, in areas where the Hawadle clan was dominant, there was a proliferation of checkpoints that could appear and disappear on a daily basis. The report stated that

⁵⁶⁹ ACLED, [ACLED Data](#), consulted on 12 February 2025. Selected criteria: From: 01/07/2023; To: 31/12/2024; Event type: Explosions/Remote violence; Sub event type: Remote explosive/landmine/IED; Civilian targeting: True; Country: Somalia.

⁵⁷⁰ PeaceRep, *Checkpoints in Hiraa – 'Everything is Upside Down'*, 7 January 2025; USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 20 March 2024, p. 25; BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces target illegal checkpoints in central region*, 8 January 2025 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

the militia staffing these posts used threats and violence. Multiple drivers were purportedly killed at these checkpoints.⁵⁷¹

In some cases, the security forces took action against illegal checkpoints – particularly in South-West State and in Hiraaan – which could lead to fierce fighting.⁵⁷²

Al-Shabab staffed checkpoints in areas under their control, as well as in areas where control was unclear.⁵⁷³ At the end of the reporting period, al-Shabab was approaching Mogadishu to a distance of ten to several dozen kilometres.⁵⁷⁴ The internet newspaper *Somali Guardian* noted reports that al-Shabab had set up checkpoints in this area and had started inspecting cars.⁵⁷⁵ At Al Shabab checkpoints, individuals matching certain profiles could be confronted with violence – including summary executions – by al-Shabab.⁵⁷⁶ The individuals who were at greatest risk at al-Shabab checkpoints were civil servants, politicians and military personnel of the federal army, ATMIS or other military groups, as well as individuals who were suspected of cooperating with the government (such as militia members or clan elders) or of espionage for the government.⁵⁷⁷ They were at high risk of being abducted or killed by al-Shabab.⁵⁷⁸ Many senior officials and politicians travelled only by air between Somali cities.

For civilians, suspicion of espionage could be due to the fact that a person had spent time abroad, had a large amount of telephone contact outside the region,⁵⁷⁹ spoke poor Somali or did not dress in the typical Somali manner, or it could even be due to the way in which people gesticulated while speaking.⁵⁸⁰ Men without beards were suspect, and people were expected to be able to recite the Quran.⁵⁸¹ According to one confidential source, suspicion of espionage was more likely to occur in areas where al-Shabab had more control,⁵⁸² but al-Shabab's distrust of the population was greater in areas where the control of al-Shabab was less clear (see also 2.1.5.4). One source reported that men were at greater risk than women were, as men were more likely to be suspected of espionage.⁵⁸³

With regard to taxation at checkpoints, there was generally more uniformity between the al-Shabab checkpoints than there was between the checkpoints operated by the government and clan militias. Those who paid taxes at an al-Shabab checkpoint were given a receipt that allowed them free passage at another

⁵⁷¹ PeaceRep, *Checkpoints in Hiraaan – 'Everything is Upside Down'*, 7 January 2025.

⁵⁷² ACLED, *State officials in Somalia crack down on clan militia checkpoints*, 30 September 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces target illegal checkpoints in central region*, 8 January 2025 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto); BBC Monitoring, *Fifteen killed in clashes between Somali forces, clan militias*, 26 October 2024 (Caasimada Online, Mogadishu); BBC Monitoring, *Scores killed in army, militia clashes in south Somali town*, 22 August 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

⁵⁷³ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁵⁷⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Al-Shabab intensifies attacks in regions near Somali capital*, 16 March 2025.

⁵⁷⁵ Somali Guardian, *Ethiopia 'has no plans to deploy its infantry' in Somalia's Middle Shabelle region amid militant advance*, 17 March 2025.

⁵⁷⁶ Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁵⁷⁷ ACLED, *What's next for the fight against al-Shabaab?*, 4 September 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁵⁷⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab publicly kills three security officers in southern Somalia*, 21 August 2024 (Radio Andalus); Halqabsi News, *Al-Shabaab Executes Seven in Jilib Over Espionage Allegations*, 15 January 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

⁵⁷⁹ Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024

⁵⁸⁰ Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

⁵⁸¹ Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁵⁸² Confidential source, 1 April 2025.

⁵⁸³ Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

al-Shabab checkpoint.⁵⁸⁴ In government-controlled areas, there was often no cooperation between the various checkpoints. They were sometimes staffed by militias and, at other times by security forces of the federal member state or federal army soldiers,⁵⁸⁵ all of whom also charged money for passage.⁵⁸⁶ According to the PeaceRep NGO consortium, the number of illegal checkpoints operated by ma'awiisley militias in the Hiraan region of Hirshabelle state in particular had increased sharply since the offensive against al-Shabab. The consortium reported that transporters were therefore increasingly using armed escorts.⁵⁸⁷

Because it was necessary to pay at every passage in government-controlled areas, travel was not only dangerous, but also expensive.⁵⁸⁸

Al-Shabab continued to obstruct commercial activities and the delivery of relief supplies in the areas under its control. The group imposed taxes on the transport of commercial goods and, in many cases, it blocked the work of humanitarian organisations.⁵⁸⁹ In general, traders could move freely between government-controlled areas and those controlled by al-Shabab, as long as they paid taxes.⁵⁹⁰ According to one confidential source, it was in the interest of al-Shabab to allow this, as there was more money to be skimmed off. On the part of the government, however, suspicion of collaboration with al-Shabab could lead to prosecution for terrorism.⁵⁹¹ In February 2024, three businessmen were killed by a pro-government militia on suspicion of espionage for al-Shabab.⁵⁹²

Somalia was one of the countries with the world's worst humanitarian access (5 on a scale of 1 to 5).⁵⁹³

2.3.4 Travel by land between cities

Given the impossibility of providing a concrete delineation of the exact control areas of al-Shabab, it is also impossible to indicate the cities between which it was possible to travel by land without passing through al-Shabab territory. As noted in 2.1.1, although al-Shabab had lost control of towns and villages in several regions during the previous reporting period, it still had sufficient capacity to cause insecurity in those areas in the rural regions and along the main roads as well.

2.3.5 Flight connections

According to the Flight Connections website, the following foreign destinations could be reached from the Mogadishu airport in December 2024: Nairobi (Kenya), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Entebbe (Uganda), Djibouti, Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) and Istanbul (Türkiye).⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁸⁴ Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁵⁸⁵ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁵⁸⁶ ACLED, *State officials in Somalia crack down on clan militia checkpoints*, 30 September 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁵⁸⁷ PeaceRep, *Checkpoints in Hiraan – 'Everything is Upside Down'*, 7 January 2025.

⁵⁸⁸ Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁵⁸⁹ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 2024, pp. 17-18; UNSC, *S/2024/698 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 8; UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 7; UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 10.

⁵⁹⁰ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

⁵⁹¹ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁵⁹² BBC Monitoring, *Somali militia accused of killing traders over espionage claims*, 18 February 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

⁵⁹³ ACAPS, [Humanitarian access | ACAPS](#), consulted on 23 December 2024.

⁵⁹⁴ Flight Connections, www.flightconnections.com/flights-from-mogadishu-mgg, consulted on 23 December 2024.

On its website, the Somali airline Jubba Airways was offering domestic flights from Mogadishu to Adado, Baidoa, Bosaso, Galkayo, Garowe, Guriel, Hargeisa and Kismayo in December 2024.⁵⁹⁵ According to its website, the Djibouti airline company Daallo Airlines operated domestic flights from Mogadishu to Bosaso, Garowe and Hargeisa.⁵⁹⁶ According to its own website, the Kenyan airline company Freedom Airline operated domestic flights from Mogadishu to Galkayo and Garowe.⁵⁹⁷

2.3.6 Boat connection between Mogadishu and other cities

In the previous reporting period, two confidential sources had reported that there was a boat connection for passengers between Mogadishu and Marka. Civil servants and soldiers were said to be the main users of that boat connection.⁵⁹⁸ During the current reporting period, several sources were unable to confirm the existence of any sort of public line connection, whether to Marka or to any other city.⁵⁹⁹ According to two confidential sources, boats (including fishing vessels) did sail between Mogadishu and Marka and Barawe on an irregular basis, but people had to negotiate individually in order to be able to travel with them.⁶⁰⁰

2.4 Living conditions

In 2024, Somalia was ranked last (193) on the Human Development Index.⁶⁰¹ Even though the situation had improved slightly, Somalia headed the list of countries with the most hunger in 2024.⁶⁰²

In recent years, in addition to conflict, Somalia faced climate-related issues (such as floods and drought), within a context where the authorities did not have the capacity to take action on them.⁶⁰³ As a result, more than half the population was malnourished (after North Korea, the highest percentage in the world), and infant mortality was the third highest in the world (at ten percent).⁶⁰⁴

In 2024, around 6.9 million Somalis were in need of humanitarian aid, as compared to 8.25 million in 2023. This slight improvement was related to factors including the end of a long period of drought, which had reached its peak in 2022. Thousands of cases of cholera occurred, especially in drought-affected areas, due in part to inadequate health services, high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition.⁶⁰⁵ The decline was also related to the fact that the criteria for 'people in need' were applied more strictly. This was intended to reduce the worldwide demand for humanitarian aid in response to the elimination of US funding for humanitarian aid.⁶⁰⁶

⁵⁹⁵ Jubba Airways, *Destinations*, [:: Jubba Airways ::](#), consulted on 23 December 2024.

⁵⁹⁶ Daallo Airlines, *schedules*, consulted on 23 December 2024.

⁵⁹⁷ Freedom Airline, *Destinations – Freedom Air*, consulted on 23 December 2024.

⁵⁹⁸ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 48.

⁵⁹⁹ Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 16 January 2025.

⁶⁰⁰ Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁶⁰¹ UNDP, *Human Development Index 2024*, 13 March 2024.

⁶⁰² *2024 Global Hunger Index*, October 2024, p. 5.

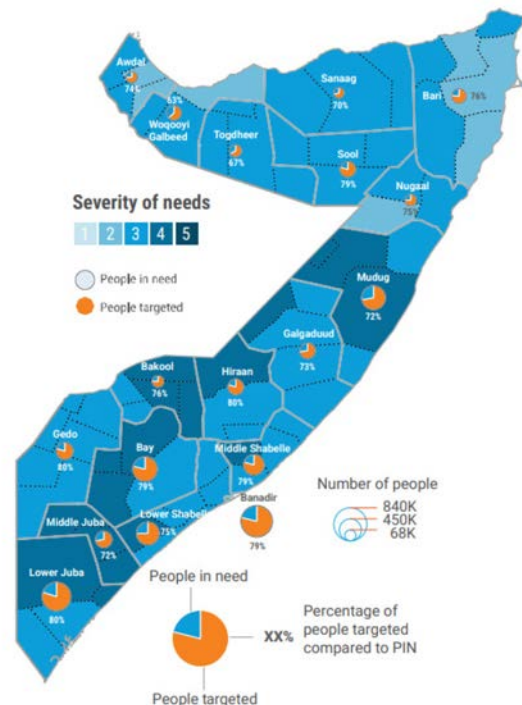
⁶⁰³ Concern worldwide, *Hunger in Somalia, explained: 5 things you need to know in 2024*, 22 October 2024; *2024 Global Hunger Index*, October 2024, p. 13; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁶⁰⁴ Concern worldwide, *Hunger in Somalia, explained: 5 things you need to know in 2024*, 22 October 2024; *2024 Global Hunger Index*, October 2024, p. 13.

⁶⁰⁵ ACAPS, *Somalia | ACAPS*, consulted on 23 December 2024.

⁶⁰⁶ Confidential source, 1 April 2025.

Map 21 provides insight into where the greatest humanitarian needs were in Somalia, according to the UN and the Somali authorities. The areas of focus were located primarily in south-central Somalia.



Map 21: Severity of humanitarian needs in Somalia, by region.⁶⁰⁷

Due to a lack of security, aid workers had very restricted access.⁶⁰⁸ For this reason, displaced persons often sought refuge in the vicinity of ATMIS/AUSSOM bases. These bases and the humanitarian organisations operating in the vicinity of these bases often offered only a minimum of services, such as access to water and simple medical services. Due to the withdrawal of ATMIS and the transition from ATMIS to AUSSOM, bases were either closed or taken over by Somali federal or state forces, that often lacked the capacity or resources to continue these services.⁶⁰⁹ There was a relatively high level of overlap between the areas with the highest humanitarian needs and the areas with the least humanitarian access. Wherever conflict created humanitarian need, access to humanitarian actors was also limited. This was an important cause of displacement.⁶¹⁰

In late November 2024, the World Food Programme (WFP) halted aid to SSC-Khatumo in response to the theft of 95 tonnes of food aid, which had been intended for around 52 thousand of the state's inhabitants.⁶¹¹ The SSC-Khatumo authorities denied that any theft had occurred, claiming that the packages had been confiscated

⁶⁰⁷ OCHA, *Humanitarian needs and response plan Somalia 2025*, January 2025, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁸ UNSC, S/2023/758 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 7; UNSC, S/2024/129 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 6; UNSC, S/2024/426 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, pp. 7-8; UNSC, S/2024/698 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 8.

⁶⁰⁹ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 1 April 2025.

⁶¹⁰ Confidential source, 1 April 2025.

⁶¹¹ BBC Monitoring, *WFP suspends aid in Somalia's restive regions over alleged theft*, 30 November 2024 (Caasimada Online).

because they had not been aware of the imports. The packages were returned to the WFP a day later.⁶¹²

Somaliland

The weak Somaliland economy and the limited opportunities for international trade and investment limited Somaliland's capacity to provide services to the population. The vast majority of national income consisted of transfers from relatives living abroad. Youth unemployment was high.⁶¹³

⁶¹² BBC Monitoring, *Somali region denies WFP's allegations of food aid theft*, 30 November 2024 (Radio Dajir, Galkayo).

⁶¹³ Confidential source, 12 November 2024.

3 Identity, nationality and documents

3.1 Identification requirement and identifying documents

According to the most recent figures of UNICEF and the World Bank, only 6 percent of all children younger than five years of age were officially registered.⁶¹⁴ As explained in previous COI reports, the possession of identifying documents did not play a major role in Somali society. Many Somali citizens did not have any identifying documents. Somalia did not have a comprehensive registration system or civil registry. Somalis thus had to rely on a patchwork of separately operating systems and documents to prove their identity.⁶¹⁵ This situation remained unchanged during the current reporting period.

During the previous reporting period (2022), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) conducted a survey of Somali asylum seekers and refugees who had returned to Somalia after a period of residence abroad. Of all respondents, 87 percent said they did not have official identity documents. Of this 87 percent, 86 percent said that this did not impede them in their daily activities.⁶¹⁶

3.2 False and forged documents

According to US authorities, most archives of the civil registry have been destroyed during the war since 1990.⁶¹⁷ It continued to be impossible to verify the authenticity of identity documents, as the government had no reliable system for recording personal data.⁶¹⁸ As described in previous COI reports, citizens use informal arrangers (fixers) to arrange identity documents. In this regard, it was necessary to consider the fact that corruption was common amongst Somali government agencies.⁶¹⁹ There is no evidence that this situation changed during the current reporting period. In 2024, Somalia moved to last place on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (from 178 in 2023 to 180 of the 180 countries in 2024).⁶²⁰

3.3 Nationality

The Somali nationality legislation was encoded in the Somali Citizenship Law of 22 December 1962.⁶²¹ As in the Provisional Constitution that had been in force since 2012,⁶²² the Somali federal constitution – including after the 2024 amendment –

⁶¹⁴ UNICEF, *A statistical update of birth registration in Africa*, October 2022, p. 29; World Bank, *Data; Completeness of birth registration (%) – Somalia; 2011-2020*, data.worldbank.org, consulted on 7 June 2024.

⁶¹⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, 21 December 2021, pp. 40-41; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 49.

⁶¹⁶ UNHCR, *Somalia; Post refugee return monitoring snapshot*, September 2022, p. 4.

⁶¹⁷ USDOS Bureau of Consular Affairs, [Somalia \(state.gov\)](https://state.gov), consulted on 7 June 2024.

⁶¹⁸ USDOS Bureau of Consular Affairs, [Somalia \(state.gov\)](https://state.gov), consulted on 7 June 2024; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, 21 December 2021, pp. 41-42; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 49.

⁶¹⁹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, 21 December 2021, pp. 41-42; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 49.

⁶²⁰ Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index*, [2023 Corruption Perceptions Index: Explore the... - Transparency.org](https://www.transparency.org), consulted on 7 June 2024.

⁶²¹ Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative, [Law No. 28 of 22 December 1962 on Somali Citizenship: Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative \(citizenshiprights-africa.org\)](https://citizenshiprights-africa.org), consulted on 7 June 2024.

⁶²² The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Provisional Constitution*, adopted August 1, 2012.

provided that Somali citizenship can never be revoked, even if a person has acquired another nationality. The nationality legislation required an individual to relinquish any other nationality in order to be Somali.⁶²³ The amended constitution continued to state that new nationality legislation would have to be passed.⁶²⁴

In June 2021, the Somali authorities launched a national action plan to counter statelessness. The plan was intended to correct a few deficiencies in the Citizenship Law of 1962 – including the provision that a woman could not transfer her citizenship to her children or foreign spouse, as well as the lack of a provision that would allow dual citizenship.⁶²⁵ The plan did not result in new legislation during the current reporting period.

⁶²³ Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative, [Law No. 28 of 22 December 1962 on Somali Citizenship: Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative \(citizenshiprightsafrika.org\)](#), consulted on 7 June 2024, Article 2.

⁶²⁴ The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Final version of constitutional amendments to chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4*, 31 March 2024, Article 8.

⁶²⁵ Somali Women Development Centre (SWDC) et al., *Joint submission to the Human Rights Council; Universal periodic review; 38th session, 3rd cycle, May 2021*, 15 October 2020; UNHCR, *Citizenship and statelessness in the Horn of Africa*, p. 59, December 2021; NRC, 'Who are you?'; *Linkages between legal identity and housing, land, and property rights in Somalia*, November 2022, pp. 17-18; UNHCR, *Somalia; Strategy 2022*, [reporting.unhcr.org/somalia](#), consulted on 4 April 2023.

4 Human rights

4.1 Human rights violations

The human rights situation in Somalia remained troubling during the reporting period. Freedom of expression was restricted, and arbitrary arrests and detentions occurred, as did torture and ill treatment. Persistent armed conflicts, insecurity, lack of state protection and recurrent humanitarian crises unabatedly exposed Somali citizens to severe violence. In general, impunity remained the norm. Many people were displaced.

This chapter addresses various types of violations. Information on sexual and gender-based violence is provided in 4.2.4. In addition, the position of specific groups is discussed, as well as the extent of protection by the authorities.

4.1.1 Arbitrary arrests and detentions by the Somali authorities

Somalia's federal constitution guaranteed rights intended to prevent arbitrary arrests and detentions.⁶²⁶ Nevertheless, arbitrary arrests and detentions by federal and state authorities and militias occurred.⁶²⁷ According to the United States Department of State (USDOS), in practice, only politicians and some businesspeople could claim their right to challenge their arrest or detention in court.⁶²⁸

Between June 2023 and September 2024,⁶²⁹ the UN registered twenty cases of arbitrary arrest and detention. All cases involved journalists or individuals who had posted statements on social media.⁶³⁰ According to the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), in December 2024, a cameraman was interrogated for several hours by security services after he and a colleague had filmed footage during demonstrations against the demolition of homes in Mogadishu.⁶³¹ Ten of these cases of arbitrary arrest and detention occurred in Somaliland, seven in Mogadishu, two in Jubbaland, one in Galmudug and one in Puntland.⁶³²

People expressing opinions that the authorities perceived as critical were particularly likely to be held in pre-trial detention for a long time, after which they were often

⁶²⁶ The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Final version of constitutional amendments to chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4*, 31 March 2024, Article 35.

⁶²⁷ UNSC, S/2023/758 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 9; UNSC, S/2024/129 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 10; UNSC, S/2024/426 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 10; UNSC, S/2024/698 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10; USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 7. USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 7.

⁶²⁸ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 7.

⁶²⁹ The most recent report on Somalia by the UN Secretary-General, which was compiled by UNSOM during the reporting period, dated from September 2024. UNSOM ceased to exist in November 2024. The successor to UNSOM, UNTMIS, will issue a report once every six months.

⁶³⁰ UNSC, S/2023/758 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 9; UNSC, S/2024/129 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 10; UNSC, S/2024/426 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 10; UNSC, S/2024/698 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10.

⁶³¹ NUSOJ website, *Female Journalist Brutally Assaulted by NISA Officers, Suffers Serious Injuries While Reporting on Mogadishu Protest*, 19 December 2024.

⁶³² UNSC, S/2023/758 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 9; UNSC, S/2024/129 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 10; UNSC, S/2024/426 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 10; UNSC, S/2024/698 *Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10; NUSOJ website, *Female Journalist Brutally Assaulted by NISA Officers, Suffers Serious Injuries While Reporting on Mogadishu Protest*, 19 December 2024.

released without charges.⁶³³ According to one confidential source, this was intended to intimidate these individuals, so that they would start self-censoring.⁶³⁴ In addition, social-media users were sometimes arrested when authorities deemed that the published content was not consistent with social, cultural or religious norms.⁶³⁵ It was not possible to establish whether all individuals who were arrested knew why they had been arrested.

4.1.2 Torture and ill treatment

Somalia's federal constitution prohibited torture and ill treatment,⁶³⁶ but there was no legal definition of the terms allowing for criminal prosecution.⁶³⁷ According to several sources, there were reports that government representatives had engaged in beating, breaking bones – particularly in order to make suspects confess to crimes – and sexual abuse.⁶³⁸ Human rights activists and journalists encountered this, as did individuals suspected of collaboration with al-Shabab.⁶³⁹ A journalist who was arrested and arbitrarily detained in August 2023 stated that he had been beaten during his detention.⁶⁴⁰ According to NUSOJ, in December 2024, a female journalist was assaulted by members of the Somali security services when she reported on demonstrations against the demolition of homes in Mogadishu.⁶⁴¹

Independent observers did not report any measures taken by the authorities to counter torture and ill treatment or to improve detention conditions. The security situation prevented observers from visiting detention facilities operated by al-Shabab or traditional authorities.⁶⁴²

4.1.3 Disappearances and abductions

During the reporting period, the human rights organisations Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch did not report any disappearances or abductions in Somalia.⁶⁴³ The human rights report by the US Department of State indicated that there had been no reports of enforced disappearances by the authorities of Somalia or Somaliland. According to the report, al-Shabab had indeed carried out abductions, including of humanitarian personnel.⁶⁴⁴ According to one source, al-Shabab carried out abductions primarily when they needed certain expertise; they were less interested in ransom payments.⁶⁴⁵ On 1 January 2024, al-Shabab

⁶³³ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 9; UNSC, *S/2023/758 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 9; UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 10; UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 10; UNSC, *S/2024/698 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10; Shabelle Media Network, *Startling Attacks on Somali Journalists Revealed in State of the Media Report*, 28 July 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁶³⁴ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁶³⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Somali state arrests social media users over 'harmful' content*, 14 January 2025; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia warns against misuse of social media platforms*, 30 May 2024 (Radio Mogadishu website); BBC Monitoring, *Somalia arrests TikTok users for spreading 'indecent' content*, 19 May 2024 (Somali National TV, Mogadishu).

⁶³⁶ The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Final version of constitutional amendments to chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4*, 31 March 2024, Article 14(2).

⁶³⁷ UN Committee Against Torture, *CAT/C/SOM/CO/1, Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia*, 2 December 2024, p. 2; USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 4.

⁶³⁸ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 4; Confidential source, 30 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁶³⁹ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 4; Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

⁶⁴⁰ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, pp. 8-9.

⁶⁴¹ NUSOJ website, *Female Journalist Brutally Assaulted by NISA Officers, Suffers Serious Injuries While Reporting on Mogadishu Protest*, 19 December 2024.

⁶⁴² USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 6.

⁶⁴³ HRW, *World Report 2024: Somalia*, 2023; Amnesty International, *The state of the world's human rights 2024*, April 2024.

⁶⁴⁴ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, pp. 4-5.

⁶⁴⁵ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

abducted a humanitarian worker in Gedo. He was released the next day, following negotiations by clan elders.⁶⁴⁶ In June 2024, twenty Sufi clerics were abducted by al-Shabab in Lower Shabelle.⁶⁴⁷

Pirates did engage in kidnapping for ransom.⁶⁴⁸ In December 2024, pirates in Puntland asked for ten million US dollars to release a Chinese fishing vessel with a crew of eighteen people. The pirates had doubled the initial ransom of five million US dollars when they claimed to have discovered that the ship had been fishing illegally in Somali waters for years.⁶⁴⁹

4.1.4 Extrajudicial executions and killings

Extrajudicial executions and killings were carried out by representatives of the authorities.⁶⁵⁰ Al-Shabab was the main perpetrator of civilian casualties, and clan militias were also frequently perpetrators. Between June 2023 and October 2024, the UN registered at least 149 civilian casualties due to the actions of security forces. For a large number of victims, it was unclear who the perpetrators were. Civilian casualties often resulted from airstrikes and explosives.⁶⁵¹

There were regular reports about individuals who had been executed by al-Shabab after having been tried by an al-Shabab court. In July 2023, a man was publicly executed for blasphemy.⁶⁵² During the reporting period, al-Shabab reported having executed at least 21 men for espionage.⁶⁵³ In addition, at least seven men were executed on accusation of belonging to the national army.⁶⁵⁴ In August 2024, al-Shabab publicly executed a regional police officer who had been accused of extortion.⁶⁵⁵ These executions were carried out in all three regions of the federal member state Jubbaland; in the Bay and Lower Shabelle regions of South-West State; and in the Hiraaan region of the federal member state Hirshabelle.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁴⁶ UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 10.

⁶⁴⁷ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'abducts' 20 Sufi clerics in southern Somalia*, 8 June (Caasimada Online).

⁶⁴⁸ UNSC, *S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab*, 28 October 2024, p. 3; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁶⁴⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Suspected Somali pirates hijack Chinese vessel off Puntland coast*, 6 December 2024 (Mareeg website); BBC Monitoring, *Somali pirates demand \$5m ransom to release Chinese vessel*, 7 December 2024 (Puntland Post website); BBC Monitoring, *Somali pirates demand \$10m ransom to free Chinese fishing vessel*, 19 December 2024 (Hiiraan Online, Toronto).

⁶⁵⁰ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 3.

⁶⁵¹ UNSC, *S/2023/758 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 9; UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, pp. 9-10; UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 10; UNSC, *S/2024/698 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10.

⁶⁵² BBC Monitoring, *Somali militants 'execute' man accused of blasphemy*, 6 July 2023 (Calamada website).

⁶⁵³ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'executes spy' in central Somali town*, 31 October 2023 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's al-Shabab kills seven over espionage claims*, 15 January 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab kills four for 'spying' in south-west Somalia*, 3 March 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab executes three Kenyans accused of spying, paper says*, 20 March 2024 (Daily Nation website); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab kills five alleged spies in southern Somalia*, 14 July 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab publicly kills three security officers in southern Somalia*, 21 August 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'beheads three civilians' in southern Somalia*, 17 December 2024 (Hiiraan Online).

⁶⁵⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab publicly kills three security officers in southern Somalia*, 21 August 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab publicly kills two soldiers in southern Somalia*, 5 September 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'executes' two security officers in south-west Somalia*, 19 September 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab's 'executes' two Somali soldiers in Lower Shabelle*, 13 November 2024 (Radio Andalus).

⁶⁵⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'beheads three civilians' in southern Somalia*, 17 December 2024 (Hiiraan Online).

⁶⁵⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'executes spy' in central Somali town*, 31 October 2023 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's al-Shabab kills seven over espionage claims*, 15 January 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab kills four for 'spying' in south-west Somalia*, 3 March 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab executes three Kenyans accused of spying, paper says*, 20 March 2024 (Daily Nation website); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab kills five alleged spies in southern Somalia*, 14 July 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab publicly kills three security officers in southern Somalia*, 21 August 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab publicly kills two soldiers in southern Somalia*, 5 September 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'executes' two security officers in south-west Somalia*, 19 September 2024 (Radio Andalus).

4.1.4.1 The death penalty

In Somalia, the authorities imposed the death penalty at least 31 times in 2023. With more than 38 documented executions, Somalia was the only country in Sub-Saharan Africa that actually carried out the death penalty in 2023.⁶⁵⁷ Between October 2023 and January 2024, the authorities carried out fourteen executions: nine former members of the security forces and five civilians.⁶⁵⁸ The military court also condemned civilians to the death penalty.⁶⁵⁹ One of those executed was a civilian with mental health problems who had killed his mother. On 10 November 2023, a former soldier was executed on the same day that his sentence was pronounced. He thus received no right to appeal.⁶⁶⁰ In August 2024, four young men were executed in Puntland for crimes they had committed as minors as members of al-Shabab.⁶⁶¹ In September 2024, a soldier was condemned to death for having fatally shot a civilian in Mudug during a dispute over food distribution cards.⁶⁶²

4.2 Position of specific groups

4.2.1 Ethnic minorities, occupational groups and specific clans

Somalia's political and social system has historically been based on clan origin. In general, Somalis used clan relations for protection, access to resources, jobs and justice, such that ethnic minorities, certain occupational groups and minority clans within this system were marginalised.⁶⁶³

The image emerging from the sources is that, during the reporting period, there was no systematic persecution of minorities during the reporting period, as had occurred in the 1990s. Members of minority groups could, however, be faced with discrimination and disadvantage in such areas as access to a social safety net or humanitarian aid. Furthermore, unlike the dominant clans, minorities did not have their own armed militias. For this reason, members of minority groups were at greater risk of becoming victims of human rights violations, abduction, land grabbing and displacement. Because the traditional common law (xeer) was also dominated by the major clan groups, minorities lacked opportunities to claim their rights or to negotiate effectively in case of dispute.⁶⁶⁴

The following is a description of several ethnic minorities, occupational groups and specific clans, based in part on information from before the reporting period. No information was found to give reason to believe that this situation had changed significantly during the reporting period.

(Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab's 'executes' two Somali soldiers in Lower Shabelle*, 13 November 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'beheads three civilians' in southern Somalia*, 17 December 2024 (Hiiraan Online).

⁶⁵⁷ Amnesty International, *Death sentences and executions in 2023*, 2024, pp. 35-36.

⁶⁵⁸ UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 10.

⁶⁵⁹ UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 10; Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

⁶⁶⁰ UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 10.

⁶⁶¹ UNSC, *S/2024/698 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10.

⁶⁶² BBC Monitoring, *Somali army court sentences soldier to death for killing civilian*, 19 September 2024.

⁶⁶³ EUAA, *Somalia, Country Guidance*, August 2023, p. 64; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, September 2022; Minority Rights Group, [Somalia - Minority Rights Group](#), consulted on 30 December 2024; Confidential source, 11 June 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 11 June 2024.

⁶⁶⁴ EUAA, *Somalia, Country Guidance*, August 2023, p. 64; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, September 2022, pp. 69-75; Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 11 June 2024.

4.2.1.1 Benadiri, including Reer Hamar

'Benadiri' is a collective name for a variety of minorities who live mainly along the Benadir coastline. Many Benadiri fled the country in the early 1990s. It was estimated that approximately 10,000 Benadiri were still living in Mogadishu. The Reer Hamar are counted amongst the Benadiri. Hamar is the local name for the neighbourhoods in the old part of Mogadishu, and 'Reer Hamar' refers to the population of this urban district.⁶⁶⁵

No significant changes in the security situation of the Reer Hamar have been reported since July 2023. Although discrimination and social exclusion continue to exist, sources indicated that they are not systematic victims of targeted violence based on their ethnicity. Their position in society is still estimated as relatively stronger than that of other minority groups. It still occurs that members of the Reer Hamar hold government positions or marry members of dominant clans, which strengthens their social protection. For some Reer Hamar, such marital ties continue to be a strategic manner of improving their position within the clan structures.⁶⁶⁶

4.2.1.2 Bantu and Bajuni

During the reporting period, the Bantu and Bajuni continued to be amongst the most marginalised groups. They experienced structural discrimination, social exclusion and stigmatisation. In some cases, there was land grabbing and limited access to the legal system, especially in disputes with members of dominant clans. Despite a few local initiatives for inclusion, their social-economic position barely improved. Members of the majority clans often regarded them as inferior, as they were said to have no Somali roots.⁶⁶⁷

4.2.1.3 Occupational groups

As described in the previous COI Report, some groups in Somalia are defined according to the occupations that have historically been practiced by their members. The three largest of these occupational groups were the Gabooye, the Tumaal and the Yibir. The Gabooye traditionally worked as hunters, hairdressers, shoemakers, tanners, well diggers, basket makers or water carriers (amongst others) for their hosts from dominant clans. The Tumaal worked primarily as ironsmiths and carpenters, and the Yibir worked as tanners and traditional healers. These groups fall outside the traditional clan structures.⁶⁶⁸ Confidential sources confirmed that these groups encountered discrimination and exclusion, including during the reporting period.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 53; EUAA, *Somalia, Country Guidance*, August 2023, pp. 111-112; Minority Rights Group, [Somalia - Minority Rights Group](#), consulted on 30 December 2024.

⁶⁶⁶ EUAA, *Country Guidance: Somalia*, p. 102, June 2022; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, pp. 70, 73, September 2022; UK Home Office, *Guidance: Country policy and information note: security and humanitarian situation in Mogadishu, Somalia, May 2022 (accessible)*; Updated 17 October 2022, 17 October 2022; Confidential source, 1 April 2025.

⁶⁶⁷ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, pp. 110-111; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, September 2022; Confidential source, 30 August 2024; Confidential source, 1 April 2025.

⁶⁶⁸ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 54; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, September 2022, pp. 74-75; Minority Rights Group, [Somalia - Minority Rights Group](#), consulted on 30 December 2024.

⁶⁶⁹ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, pp. 108-109; Confidential source, 30 August 2024; Confidential source, 1 April 2025.

4.2.2 Religious minorities

Article 2 of Somalia's federal constitution provided that Islam is the country's national religion, that no religion other than Islam could be propagated and that all laws must be consistent with the sharia. Whereas Article 16 of the constitution stated that all individuals are free to practise their own religions, Section 2 reiterated the prohibition on the propagation of religions other than Islam.⁶⁷⁰ The separate federal member states had their own constitutions. The US Department of State indicates that the constitutions of Somaliland, Jubbaland, South-West State, Hirshabelle and Galmudug also prescribe Islam as the official religion.⁶⁷¹

The Somali Penal Code applies in all federal member states. The Penal Code does not contain any provisions that criminalise apostasy. The sharia nevertheless does forbid apostasy. The Penal Code does contain a provision that criminalises blasphemy. Article 313 of the law prescribes a prison sentence of 2 years for anyone who publicly 'disdains' or 'insults' Islam.⁶⁷² During the reporting period, no cases were found of individuals who were criminally prosecuted on the basis of this provision.

Virtually the entire population of Somalia is Sunni Muslim. Other religious groups together accounted for less than one percent of the population, including a small Christian community. The image emerging from the sources consulted is that the public confession of a religion other than Islam in Somalia is not accepted. During the reporting period, being suspected of apostasy or conversion to another religion or making statements that could be considered blasphemous could lead to discrimination or violence from the community. As a rule, non-Muslims did not practice their religion in public.⁶⁷³

Communities adhering to Sufi Islam often had norms and customs that differed from Salafism. Sufism was the dominant form of Islam in Somalia until the 1970s. According to one source, it was currently difficult to indicate precisely where these communities were located.⁶⁷⁴ In June 2024, twenty Sufi clerics were abducted by al-Shabab in Lower Shabelle and taken to Middle Juba. Other clerics who were present managed to escape. The abducted clerics were purportedly from Mogadishu, Bay and Middle Shabelle, and they had been attending an annual religious gathering at the time of their abduction.⁶⁷⁵

Again during the current reporting period, al-Shabab used violence to impose its interpretation of Islam in the areas under its control. The group applied a strict interpretation of the sharia. For example, they prohibited televisions, cinemas, music, internet, smoking and other matters that they deemed 'un-Islamic'. Harsh action was taken against non-compliance with religious rules. Penalties used by al-Shabab in this regard included corporal punishment and the death penalty. Reports were made of the execution of individuals suspected of apostasy or blasphemy.⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷⁰ The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Final version of constitutional amendments to chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4*, 31 March 2024, Articles 2, 16.

⁶⁷¹ USDOS, *2023 Report on International Religious Freedom: Somalia*, April 2024, p. 4.

⁶⁷² *Somalia: Penal Code*, 3 April 1964, www.refworld.org/docid/4bc5906e2.html, consulted on 30 December 2024.

⁶⁷³ Freedom House, *Freedom in the world 2024 – Somalia*, 2024; USDOS, *2023 Report on international religious freedom: Somalia*, April 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁶⁷⁴ Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

⁶⁷⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'abducts' 20 Sufi clerics in southern Somalia*, 8 June (Caasimada Online).

⁶⁷⁶ Freedom House, *Freedom in the world 2024 – Somalia*, 2024; USDOS, *2023 Report on international religious freedom: Somalia*, April 2024, p. 10; EUAA, *Country Guidance: Somalia*, August 2023, pp. 98-99; BBC Monitoring, *Somali militants 'execute' man accused of blasphemy*, 6 July 2023 (Calamada website); Confidential source, 30 August 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024.

Somalia was listed in second place on the Open Doors World Watch List 2025. In this list, the NGO indicates the countries in which Christians face the most restrictions.⁶⁷⁷

4.2.3 LGBTIQ+

As explained in previous COI reports, little concrete information was available on the situation of LGBTIQ+ people in Somalia.⁶⁷⁸ There was no significant change in this regard during the current reporting period. According to multiple sources, the lack of information in the current reporting period too could be attributed to the fact that the LGBTIQ+ issue was taboo in Somalia. As a result of this taboo, people were exposed to stigmatisation, isolation and discrimination, or ill treatment, particularly from their own communities (for example, family, neighbours).⁶⁷⁹ According to one confidential source, the authorities exercised restraint in prosecuting LGBTIQ+ people, in order to prevent problems with the international community. According to this source, the authorities preferred to leave the situation to society. This could result in people being beaten, subjected to ill treatment or forced to marry someone of the opposite sex.⁶⁸⁰ In general, this discouraged LGBTIQ+ people from speaking openly about their sexual preferences or gender identities.⁶⁸¹

4.2.3.1 Legislation

Sexual relations between individuals of the same sex was punishable by law in Somalia. Prosecution could occur on the grounds of Article 409 of the Penal Code. Conviction under this article could result in a prison sentence of up to 3 years.⁶⁸² Somalia nevertheless has a pluralistic legal system, in which common law (xeer), religious law (sharia) and secular law exist alongside each other. A strict interpretation of the sharia could legitimise application of the death penalty in cases of sexual contact between individuals of the same sex.⁶⁸³ According to Freedom House, under al-Shabab, sexual acts with someone of the same sex were subject to the death penalty.⁶⁸⁴

There were no known cases involving the application of Article 409 of the Penal Code during the reporting period. It is also not known whether the death penalty was applied during the reporting period due to sexual contact between people of the same sex. However, there were examples of executions by al-Shabab of suspected homosexuals that occurred before the current reporting period.⁶⁸⁵

4.2.4 Women

⁶⁷⁷ Open Doors, *World Watch List 2025*.

⁶⁷⁸ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, March 2020, p. 41; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, 21 December 2021, pp. 47-49; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 55.

⁶⁷⁹ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, pp. 29-30; Human Dignity Trust, *Somalia*, www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/somalia/, consulted on 19 December 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁶⁸⁰ Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁶⁸¹ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, pp. 29-30; Human Dignity Trust, *Somalia*, www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/somalia/, consulted on 19 December 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁶⁸² *Somalia: Penal Code*, 3 April 1964, www.refworld.org/docid/4bc5906e2.html, consulted on 17 May 2024; Freedom House, *Somalia: Freedom in the world, country report 2024*, 2024, F4.

⁶⁸³ USDOS, *2022 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 34; Human Dignity Trust, *Somalia*, www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/somalia/, consulted on 19 December 2024; Confidential source, 12 November 2024.

⁶⁸⁴ Freedom House, *Somalia: Freedom in the world, country report 2024*, 2024, F4.

⁶⁸⁵ Reuters, *Somali Islamists kill man and teenager for gay sex, another man for spying*, 11 January 2017; CBS, *Al-Shabab militants in Somalia announce public execution of homosexuals*, 10 January 2017.

As in previous reporting periods,⁶⁸⁶ the position of women remained a matter of concern during the current reporting period. According to several sources, women encountered gender-based violence and a lack of effective opportunities for legal and social protection in this regard. Their situation was also characterised by discrimination in such areas as social and political participation.⁶⁸⁷ According to one confidential source, the more stable parts of Somalia – Somaliland and Puntland – were the most conservative, particularly with regard to the position of women.⁶⁸⁸

4.2.4.1 Gender-based and sexual violence

According to several sources, women in Somalia continued to encounter gender-based and sexual violence to a large extent during the reporting period.⁶⁸⁹ According to the UN, the reported figures on sexual violence are far from representative. Reasons why victims do not file reports include the fact that victims fear retribution, the fact that they are living in areas where they cannot file charges, and the fear of stigma.⁶⁹⁰

One reason for gender-based violence was the continuation of armed conflict. In 2023, the UN verified 261 cases of conflict-related sexual violence; 49 girls were victims of sexual violence within the context of abductions. Most perpetrators were unidentified armed men, primarily from al-Shabab and clan militias. The Somali national army and national police force were also mentioned as perpetrators, as were the police forces of Hirshabelle and Puntland, Jubbaland and Ethiopian regional forces (Liyu).⁶⁹¹ Widows, divorced women, single mothers, women with disabilities, and women and girls from minority clans were at particular risk of becoming victims of conflict-related sexual violence.⁶⁹²

In addition, the persistent drought and food shortage due to climate change led to large flows of displaced persons. Because more women and girls were displaced, they became more vulnerable to gender-based and sexual violence.⁶⁹³ This was because, in displacement camps, they encountered living spaces (often tents) that were relatively easy for strangers to enter, usually with poor lighting and longer distances to latrines, water taps, health centres, schools and markets. Partly for this reason, the risk that girls and women would be confronted with violence increased.⁶⁹⁴

4.2.4.2 Opportunities for protection

The opportunities that women and girls had to receive protection from gender-based and sexual violence remained limited during the reporting period.⁶⁹⁵ The law

⁶⁸⁶ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, 21 December 2021, pp. 49-50; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, pp. 56-59.

⁶⁸⁷ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁶⁸⁸ Confidential source, 6 November 2024.

⁶⁸⁹ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 27; HRW, *World Report 2024: Somalia*, 2023, p. 561; Amnesty International, *The state of the worlds' human rights 2024*, April 2024, p. 336; United Nations Secretary-General, *Conflict-related sexual violence S/2024/292*, 4 April 2024, p. 5.

⁶⁹⁰ OHCHR and UNSOM, *Tackling sexual violence in Somalia: prevention and protection*, 9 May 2024, pp. 11-12.

⁶⁹¹ OHCHR and UNSOM, *Tackling sexual violence in Somalia: prevention and protection*, 9 May 2024, pp. 6, 10; United Nations Secretary-General, *Conflict-related sexual violence S/2024/292*, 4 April 2024, p. 5.

⁶⁹² United Nations Secretary-General, *Conflict-related sexual violence S/2024/292*, 4 April 2024, p. 5.

⁶⁹³ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 27; Amnesty International, *The state of the worlds' human rights 2024*, April 2024, p. 336; OHCHR and UNSOM, *Tackling sexual violence in Somalia: prevention and protection*, 9 May 2024, p. 6; UNFPA, *Gender Based Violence Area of Responsibility Somalia EL Nino Preparedness & Response Plan*, 16 November 2023.

⁶⁹⁴ UNFPA, *Somalia, GBV Brief, July-September 2024*, 25 September 2024, p. 2; Confidential source, 13 November 2024.

⁶⁹⁵ UNOPS website, *Supporting access to justice and increasing stability in Somalia*, 15 April 2024; USAID website, *Expanding access to justice in Somalia*, consulted 23 May 2024; UNFPA, *Somalia, GBV Brief, July-September 2024*, 25 September 2024, p. 4.

criminalised the rape of women,⁶⁹⁶ with penalties from five to fifteen years in prison. The military criminal law allowed the death penalty for rape. In practice, these laws were hardly ever enforced. There were no laws against violence and/or rape within marriage.⁶⁹⁷

In 2024, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) reported that the lack of protection was related to a combination of factors, including the lack of capacity on the part of aid workers, interference from communities and families, the stigmatisation of victims and limited support for access to legal services.⁶⁹⁸ In addition, matters of gender-based and sexual violence were often settled by clan elders using traditional common law (xeer). This system was directed more towards the interests of the clan and interrelationships than towards the interests of the victim.⁶⁹⁹ According to one source, in the case of gender-based violence, the xeer was usually invoked, as other forms of law were less accessible.⁷⁰⁰

4.2.4.3 Legislative proposals

During the current reporting period, no progress was made with legislation related to gender-based violence.⁷⁰¹ In 2018, the Somali cabinet passed the Sexual Offences Bill. The bill was regarded as progressive, and it was aimed at criminalising a broad range of forms of gender-based violence, including rape and child marriages. The bill clearly specified duties for the police, investigators and public prosecutors, and it provided specific protection to vulnerable groups, including children, people with disabilities, and displaced persons. In response, religious-conservative elected representatives submitted a counter-proposal known as the Sexual Intercourse Bill in 2020. This proposal reversed many of the improvements from the Sexual Offences Bill. In contrast to the provisions of the Sexual Offences Bill, the provisions of the Sexual Intercourse Bill rather undermined the protection of victims of gender-based violence.⁷⁰²

In 2023, the federal government developed a new bill, the Rape and Immorality Bill, with the objective of criminalising rape and immorality within the framework of the sharia. This bill was also widely criticised, including because the law would purportedly reinforce legal inequality for women.⁷⁰³ None of the bills had been passed by the parliament at the end of the reporting period.

A similar dynamic could be seen in Somaliland. There, then-President Bihi Abdi signed the relatively progressive Rape and Sexual Offences Act in 2018. Religious-conservative forces rose up in protest against this, forcing the act to be repealed. In 2020, they came up with an alternative bill – known as the Rape, Fornication (Zina) and Other Related Offences Bill – which was formulated by religious leaders, without any consultation with women. Many of the improvements and protective provisions

⁶⁹⁶ There were no laws that criminalised the rape of men.

⁶⁹⁷ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, pp. 34-35; Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024.

⁶⁹⁸ UNFPA, *Somalia, GBV Brief, July-September 2024*, 25 September 2024, p. 4.

⁶⁹⁹ OHCHR and UNSOM, *Tackling sexual violence in Somalia: prevention and protection*, 9 May 2024, pp. 21-22; Clayton Boeyink et al., 'Pathways to care: IDPs seeking health support and justice for sexual and gender-based violence through social connections in Garowe and Kismayo, Somalia and South Kivu, DRC,' in: *Journal of Migration and Health* (6), 2022, p. 8; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁷⁰⁰ OHCHR and UNSOM, *Tackling sexual violence in Somalia: prevention and protection*, 9 May 2024, pp. 21-22

⁷⁰¹ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁷⁰² Legal Action Worldwide, *Somalia Sexual Intercourse Bill: A brief*, 8 August 2020; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, p. 51, 21 December 2021; Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), *Stop using religion to justify sexual violence against women and girls in Somalia*, 17 January 2023.

⁷⁰³ Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), *Briefing paper. Addressing sexual offences in Somalia and Somaliland – Legal challenges and legislative responses*, August 2024, p. 9.

from the previous act were eliminated in this bill. At the end of the reporting period, the Somaliland parliament had not yet passed the bill.⁷⁰⁴

Since 2016, Puntland has had a law that criminalises all forms of sexual violence in the federal member state. In practice, however, this law was not enforced.⁷⁰⁵ In 2023, a study indicated that more than 80% of all respondents were convinced that a lack of law enforcement against rapists was an important cause of rape in Puntland.⁷⁰⁶

4.2.4.4 Single women

Single women in Somalia remained vulnerable, particularly those living in displacement camps or informal displacement sites. In these places, they were at greater risk of encountering sexual and gender-based violence. The risk was even greater for women with no access to a clan network.⁷⁰⁷ In Somalia, a woman's extended family⁷⁰⁸ still constituted the main actor in terms of protection. Whenever a woman was not in the presence of her extended family, her security decreased. Women belonging to a majority clan (whether or not at the local level) could therefore count on at least some extent of protection. For women, however, such protection was limited as a result of unequal gender relations⁷⁰⁹

In Somalia, there were no formal restrictions with regard to women's access to the labour market. According to one source, the extent to which single women in Somalia could sustain themselves economically and the economic leeway that they had were largely dependent on several individual factors. The extended family, clan and subclan played an important role in this regard. For example, women could arrange employment or access to financial resources through their family network or clan/subclan network. A woman's educational level was important as well. Women with higher levels of education were better able to sustain themselves economically. Lack of education was the greatest challenge for women on the labour market. This is because schooling was generally more likely to be provided to boys than to girls.⁷¹⁰ According to one confidential source, women often encountered sexual intimidation in the labour market and in politics.⁷¹¹

4.2.4.5 Forced marriage

Information on child marriage is provided in 4.2.5.3. No figures were available on forced marriages of women eighteen years of age and older, but one confidential source reported that this did occur. In this regard, the source noted that the distinction between forced and arranged marriage was not always clear.⁷¹²

⁷⁰⁴ Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), *Briefing paper. Addressing sexual offences in Somalia and Somaliland – Legal challenges and legislative responses*, August 2024, p. 12; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁷⁰⁵ UNFPA Somalia, *Puntland passes new law against sexual offences*, 5 September 2016; Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), *Briefing paper. Addressing sexual offences in Somalia and Somaliland – Legal challenges and legislative responses*, August 2024, p. 10; Confidential source, 14 November 2024.

⁷⁰⁶ Yusuf, M., & Mohamed, A. (2023). 'The Determinants of Rape in Puntland', *East African Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 6(2), p. 260.

⁷⁰⁷ OCHA, *Somalia, humanitarian needs and response plan 2025*, 4 December 2024; UNFPA, *Somalia, GBV Brief, July-September 2024*, 25 September 2024, p. 2; Confidential source, 13 November 2024.

⁷⁰⁸ In addition to father, mother and children, the extended family could include grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins.

⁷⁰⁹ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, pp. 34-35; Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), *Briefing paper. Addressing sexual offences in Somalia and Somaliland – Legal challenges and legislative responses*, August 2024, p. 6; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁷¹⁰ National Economic Council of Somalia, *Assessment of Women's Economic Participation in Somalia*, March 2024, p. 17; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, July 2023, p. 59; Confidential source, 12 November 2024;

⁷¹¹ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷¹² Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

During the reporting period, al-Shabab continued to force many girls and women into marriage. Displaced persons and members of minority clans were at particular risk of becoming victims of this. Even when families or clans/subclans were unable to meet the group's financial demands, al-Shabab could rape, abduct or force these women and girls into marriage.⁷¹³ The UN Panel of Experts noted that there had been reports that al-Shabab had also engaged in the trafficking of Kenyan women and girls to Somalia for sexual slavery and forced marriages. False pretences, force and abduction were used in the process.⁷¹⁴

4.2.4.6 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Virtually all (99%) women in Somalia had undergone at least some form of genital mutilation (FGM).⁷¹⁵ Given prevalence of nearly one hundred percent, no clear distinction could be made between different regions or population groups.⁷¹⁶ In general, FGM was done at a young age, although it also occurred at older ages (for example, prior to marriage).⁷¹⁷ In some cases, girls from the diaspora were sent to Somalia by their parents to undergo FGM.⁷¹⁸

There was anecdotal information that a shift might be occurring away from the most severe form of FGM (referred to as Type III, pharaonic or infibulation) towards other types (referred to as *sunna*), but there was no numerical information to support this observation.⁷¹⁹

Article 14 of Somalia's federal constitution equated FGM with torture and prohibited it.⁷²⁰ The Somali federal government nevertheless had no legislation criminalising FGM.⁷²¹ A bill to this effect was the subject of criticism during the reporting period, and no progress was made on it.⁷²²

In Puntland, FGM was prohibited in 2021. Up to the end of the reporting period, however, no legislation had been passed to criminalise the practice.⁷²³ In the federal member state of Galmudug, a law passed in May 2024 criminalising all forms of FGM (a 'zero-tolerance' law).⁷²⁴ No information was found on the enforcement of this law.

⁷¹³ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 36; UNSG, *Conflict-related sexual violence (S/2024/292)*, 4 April 2024, p. 19.

⁷¹⁴ UNSC, *S/2024/748, Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of Experts pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Al-Shabaab*, 28 October 2024, p. 14.

⁷¹⁵ UNFPA, [UNFPA Somalia | Female Genital Mutilation](#), consulted on 21 May 2024; FGM/C Research Initiative, [Somalia | FGM/C Research Initiative](#), consulted on 18 December 2024; Cedoca, *COI Focus, Somalië: Vrouwelijke genitale verminking (VGV) (Update)*, 8 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷¹⁶ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 37; UNFPA website, *Somalia: Female Genital Mutilation*, consulted on 24 May 2024; Cedoca, *COI Focus, Somalië: Vrouwelijke genitale verminking (VGV) (Update)*, 8 November 2024, pp. 21-22; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷¹⁷ FGM/C Research Initiative, [Somalia | FGM/C Research Initiative](#), consulted on 18 December 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁷¹⁸ Confidential source, 14 November 2024.

⁷¹⁹ Cedoca, *COI Focus, Somalië: Vrouwelijke genitale verminking (VGV) (Update)*, 8 November 2024, pp. 13-14; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024.

⁷²⁰ The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Final version of constitutional amendments to chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4*, 31 March 2024, Article 14(4).

⁷²¹ UNFPA, *Joint declaration against FGM*, 6 February 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁷²² Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁷²³ Cedoca, *COI Focus, Somalië: Vrouwelijke genitale verminking (VGV) (Update)*, 8 November 2024, p. 32; UNFPA, *Somalia. Community knowledge, attitudes and practices on FGM Puntland*, 14 April 2022; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷²⁴ Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), *Press statement: Galmudug State of Somalia Outlaws Female Genital Mutilation, Marking a Historic Milestone*, 22 May 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

According to the Belgian government agency that collects country information – Cedoca – research on the practice of FGM in areas controlled by al-Shabab continues to be difficult. In the past, various sources have indicated that al-Shabab had purportedly prohibited FGM, or that it allowed only the sunna form, but that Type III was still being done in these areas.⁷²⁵ According to sources from the reporting period, almost all girls in those areas had also undergone FGM, and any ban that may have existed was not enforced.⁷²⁶

4.2.5 Minors (including unaccompanied minors)

4.2.5.1 Age of majority

Article 29 of the 2012 provisional constitution defined a child as any individual under the age of eighteen, stating that ‘Every child has the right to be protected from mistreatment, neglect, abuse, or degradation’.⁷²⁷

During the reporting period, concerns were expressed about the proposed amendments to Somalia’s federal constitution concerning the age of majority. It was purportedly to be changed from eighteen to fifteen years, whereas the age of criminal responsibility remained at eighteen years. In the proposals, ‘physical development’ was also considered as a factor determining majority. Human Rights Watch and Save the Children feared that lowering the age of majority would increase the risk of child marriages, according to the international definition⁷²⁸ (additional information on forced marriage is provided in 4.2.4.5).⁷²⁹ The voting on this proposed amendment was eventually postponed to a later date, and the age of majority remained eighteen years for the time being.⁷³⁰

In practice, the federal constitution had little effect on compliance with the legal age limits, given that the sharia and the traditional xeer law (which focused more on physical development) took precedence, particularly in rural areas.⁷³¹

4.2.5.2 Legal framework

In 2015, Somalia signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, but expressed the reservation that it did not feel bound to Articles 14, 20 and 21, as it considered these articles to be contrary to the sharia. Article 14 of the Convention concerns freedom of thought, conscience and religion for minors, and Articles 20 and 21 have to do with state protection for children and adoption, respectively.⁷³²

⁷²⁵ Cedoca, *COI Focus, Somalië: Vrouwelijke genitale verminking (VGV) (Update)*, 20 February 2025, p. 15.

⁷²⁶ Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024.

⁷²⁷ The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Provisional Constitution*, adopted August 1, 2012 <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/51b6d0c94.pdf>, consulted on 4 June 2024.

⁷²⁸ UNGA, *Resolution 44/25 Convention on the rights of a child*, 20 November 1989.

⁷²⁹ Human Rights Watch, *Somalia: constitutional proposals put children at risk*, 29 March 2024; Save the Children, *Somalia: Children’s rights at risk as lawmakers approve constitutional amendments*, 31 March 2024; VOA, *Somalia’s Parliament Approves Historic Constitutional Amendments*, 30 March 2024.

⁷³⁰ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁷³¹ Peterson, Brenton D., and Manar Zaki, *Reforming Somali customary justice. Pathways to adapting Xeer procedures and practices*, 15 December 2023, p. 4; UNESCO, *The xeer traditional legal system in Somalia, Individual case study - intangible heritage - Culture Sector - UNESCO*, consulted on 4 June 2024; OHCHR and UNSOM, *Tackling sexual violence in Somalia: prevention and protection*, 9 May 2024, pp. 21-22; Confidential source, 12 November 2024.

⁷³² United Nations Treaty Collection, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, [UNTC](https://www.unhcr.org/refworld/doc/3a6b6b6b.html), consulted on 18 December 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

The Penal Code of 1962 provides that individuals may be criminally prosecuted from the age of fourteen (Article 70).⁷³³ The Labour Code provides that fifteen years is the minimum age for performing labour. At the same time, however, the law provides that light activities may be performed from the age of twelve, without clear information on the types of activities referred to. The number of hours per week that such activities are permitted is also unclear.⁷³⁴ According to the US Department of Labor, children in Somalia are exposed to the most serious form of child labour, including participation in armed conflict.⁷³⁵

Article 29 of Somalia's amended constitution states that every Somali citizen has the right to free education up to secondary school, and that primary education is compulsory.⁷³⁶

No information was found on the enforcement of the aforementioned laws.

4.2.5.3 Child marriages

The provisional constitution of 2012 stated that a marriage was legal only if it was established with the consent of both the man and the woman. In addition, both must have reached the age of majority.⁷³⁷ The article on the family was amended in March 2024. The new formulation of the article stated that all adults have the right to marry of their own free will and with consent, in accordance with the sharia.⁷³⁸ The Family Code of 1975 also states that the legal age for marriage is eighteen years, but it allows for girls to marry at younger ages, as long as they have permission from a guardian.⁷³⁹

Child marriages occurred frequently both before and during the reporting period. This was a culture-specific phenomenon that occurred throughout Somalia, particularly in the more rural areas.⁷⁴⁰ According to the 2020 Somali Health and Demographic Survey, 16% of all Somali girls were married before the age of fifteen, and 34% were married before the age of eighteen.⁷⁴¹ According to the website of the NGO Girls Not Brides, 8% of all girls were married before the age of fifteen, and 45% were married before the age of eighteen.⁷⁴² Girls could be married off from the time they reached puberty. In rural areas, this occurred from the age of 11 or 12. In urban areas, it was often a few years later, but in many cases before the age of 18.⁷⁴³

The proposed amendments to the federal constitution (see also 1.2) also included proposals for changing the age of majority from eighteen to fifteen years, whereas the age of criminal responsibility remained at eighteen years.⁷⁴⁴ Human Rights

⁷³³ *Somalia Penal Code*, 1964, Article 59, [Somalia: Penal Code | Refworld](#), consulted on 4 June 2024.

⁷³⁴ *Somalia Labour Code*, 1972, Article 93, [Labour Code - extracts - ILO](#), consulted on 4 June 2024.

⁷³⁵ US Department of Labor, *2023 Findings on the worst forms of child labor: Somalia*, 2024, p. 1; Confidential source, 6 November 2024.

⁷³⁶ The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Final version of constitutional amendments to chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4*, 31 March 2024, Article 29.

⁷³⁷ The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Constitution*, adopted August 1, 2012, Article 29, [Somalia 2012 Constitution - Constitute \(constituteproject.org\)](#), consulted on 4 June 2024.

⁷³⁸ The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Final version of constitutional amendments to chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4*, 31 March 2024, Article 27.

⁷³⁹ *Somalia Family Law*, 1975, Article 16, [Family-Law-No.-23-1975.pdf \(muslimfamilylawindex.com\)](#), consulted on 4 June 2024.

⁷⁴⁰ Marginalized Inclusion Network, *Comprehensive Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Assessment Report*, August 2024, p. 15; USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 37; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷⁴¹ Somalia, *The Somali Health and Demographic Survey*, 2020, p. 70.

⁷⁴² Girls Not Brides, [Somalia - Girls Not Brides](#), consulted on 18 December 2024.

⁷⁴³ UNICEF, *A call to action for the future of Somali women and girls*, 6 February 2024; USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 37; Confidential source, 20 February 2023.

⁷⁴⁴ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024.

Watch and Save the Children feared that lowering the age of majority would increase the risk of child marriages.⁷⁴⁵ The voting on the proposed amendments was eventually postponed to a later date.⁷⁴⁶ No initiatives were known from the authorities to counter child and forced marriages.⁷⁴⁷

According to the UNFPA, the persistent drought and food shortage faced by the Somali population led to an increase in child marriages. Displaced families were particularly likely to be inclined to marry off their daughters.⁷⁴⁸

4.2.5.4 Access to education

Official figures on access to education were not available.⁷⁴⁹ According to the US government, however, 85% of all Somali children were not enrolled in school.⁷⁵⁰ According to the Somali government, the low school enrolment rate was reinforced by the perceptions of Somali parents regarding the age at which children should have to go to school. In addition, parents in rural and nomadic areas preferred to enrol their children in informal Quranic schools instead of in formal primary education.⁷⁵¹

4.2.5.5 Care of minors

As provided by Article 27(4) of the Somali constitution: 'Every child has the right to care from their parents, including education and instruction'. In cases in which such care is not available from within the family, it must be provided by others.⁷⁵²

In 2018, UNICEF published a report on minors in Somalia. No information is available to suggest that the situation relating to minors has changed substantially since that time. Somalia had no legal framework for children's rights. During the reporting period, a bill was being developed, but there was considerable opposition to it from conservative and religious quarters.⁷⁵³ Islam proceeds from the view that the rights of children must be respected regardless of the family situation. The interpretation is subjective and, in practice, it depends on extended families, clans and religious leaders.⁷⁵⁴

As stated in the previous COI Report, the Somali government had no formal, organised child protection system.⁷⁵⁵ This did not change during the reporting period. No specific authority was charged with the protection of children in Somalia. Various ministries and departments contributed to the general welfare of children at the federal level, as did their equivalents within the federal member states.⁷⁵⁶

⁷⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch, *Somalia: constitutional proposals put children at risk*, 29 March 2024; Save the Children, *Somalia: Children's rights at risk as lawmakers approve constitutional amendments*, 31 March 2024.

⁷⁴⁶ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁷⁴⁷ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 43; Girls Not Brides, [Somalia - Girls Not Brides](#), consulted on 18 December 2024.

⁷⁴⁸ UNFPA, *Gender Based Violence Area of Responsibility Somalia EL Nino Preparedness & Response Plan*, 16 November 2023.

⁷⁴⁹ UNICEF data website, Education, [Somalia \(SOM\) - Demographics, Health & Infant Mortality - UNICEF DATA](#), consulted on 4 June 2024.

⁷⁵⁰ USAID website, *Education and Health*, [Education and Health | Somalia | U.S. Agency for International Development \(usaid.gov\)](#), consulted on 4 June 2024.

⁷⁵¹ The Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, *Somalia National Development Plan 2020 to 2024*, 1 January 2020, p. 261.

⁷⁵² The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Final version of constitutional amendments to chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4*, 31 March 2024, Article 27(4).

⁷⁵³ Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁷⁵⁴ UNICEF, *Child Notice Somalia*, 2018, p. 40.

⁷⁵⁵ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 61.

⁷⁵⁶ UNICEF, *Child Notice Somalia*, 2018, p. 40; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

The most common form of alternative care in Somalia was informal family care, in which children were cared for by family members (or members of the extended family). Many children were given shelter within the clan through such informal arrangements.⁷⁵⁷ There was a regional and community-based approach established by donors and communities, within which programmes were implemented.⁷⁵⁸ There was no official system for tracing families. Given the manner in which society was structured, however, it was usually possible to find relatives with the assistance of local NGOs.⁷⁵⁹

Non-regulated orphanages and NGO-run shelters (mainly for victims of gender-based violence) existed throughout Somalia. The number of such institutions is not known. There was no formal supervision of these institutions, most of which were privately managed. There were reports that abuse was widespread within the institutions. Corporal punishment was often applied, despite the federal constitution's ban on the ill treatment and abuse of children.⁷⁶⁰ According to a study on child protection in Quranic schools, only 10% of all schools had any extent of policy in this area.⁷⁶¹

Shelters were intended for very short transitional reception (two weeks), sufficient for tracing family. In some cases, children remained in care longer (for example, if they had been born out of wedlock and abandoned, or if they had no nationality because the father was not Somali).⁷⁶²

4.2.5.6 Humanitarian situation

Persistent insecurity, armed conflict, drought and food insecurity took a heavy toll on children in Somalia during the reporting period.⁷⁶³ In April 2024, UNICEF stated that more than 4.5 million of the 6.9 million people in urgent need of humanitarian aid were minors.⁷⁶⁴ According to data from the UNHCR, in January 2024, 69% of all displaced persons were minors.⁷⁶⁵

Humanitarian organisations applied the term 'separated children'. These minors were not always unaccompanied. In some cases, they were accompanied by adults who were not their own parents or guardians. No disaggregated figures were known. It was estimated that, during the reporting period, there were about ten thousand separated children in Somalia.⁷⁶⁶

4.2.6 Members of opposition parties/political activists

Article 15 of the Somali Constitution provides for freedom of association and assembly.⁷⁶⁷ In practice, however, the government restricted these rights during the reporting period, as it had during the previous period. The general lack of security in

⁷⁵⁷ UNICEF, *Child Notice Somalia*, 2018, p.42.

⁷⁵⁸ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 61; UNICEF, *Child Notice Somalia*, 2018, p. 40; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷⁵⁹ Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 13 November 2024.

⁷⁶⁰ The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Final version of constitutional amendments to chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4*, 31 March 2024, Article 28; UNICEF, *Child Notice Somalia*, 2018, p.42; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷⁶¹ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷⁶² Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷⁶³ UNHCR, *Internal displacements monitored by Protection & Return Monitoring Network (PRMN)*, January 2024; UNICEF, *Somalia Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4*, 1-30 April 2024, p. 2; Amnesty International, *The state of the world's human rights 2024*, April 2024, p. 335.

⁷⁶⁴ UNICEF, *Somalia Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4*, 1-30 April 2024.

⁷⁶⁵ UNHCR, *Internal displacements monitored by Protection & Return Monitoring Network (PRMN)*, January 2024.

⁷⁶⁶ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷⁶⁷ The Federal Republic of Somalia, *Final version of constitutional amendments to chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4*, 31 March 2024, Article 15.

the country also constituted a practical restriction on the right of association and assembly.⁷⁶⁸

During the reporting period, the sources consulted had no reports on the large-scale repression of political opponents by the authorities in Southern and Central Somalia. Some incidents did occur. Tensions between the federal government and the southern federal member states concerning electoral reforms (see also 1.3 and 1.4) and the presence of Ethiopian forces in Somalia led to some restrictions on politicians' freedom of movement and freedom of assembly. Both the federal authorities and those of Jubbaland prevented members of parliament from travelling by air on several occasions. In September 2024, at least two members of parliament were prevented from flying from Mogadishu to Baidoa (South-West State) and, in December 2024, Jubbaland authorities prevented a former Member of Parliament from Jubbaland from flying to Mogadishu.⁷⁶⁹

In late November 2024, the authorities issued an international arrest warrant against President Madobe of Jubbaland, as they did not deem his re-election that month legitimate.⁷⁷⁰ After a group of 25 federal members of parliament had expressed concerns about the possible deployment of Egyptian forces in Somalia, the chair of the parliament prohibited all press conferences and interviews with members of parliament in September 2024.⁷⁷¹ In addition, a hotel manager in Mogadishu was arrested for facilitating a pro-Jubbaland meeting.⁷⁷²

In June 2024, the Somaliland police arrested a member of the Waddani party for purportedly disseminating false information. Ten days later, he was released on bail for medical reasons.⁷⁷³ In September 2024, the Somaliland authorities also arrested an opposition Member of Parliament of the Waddani party for reasons that were not clear. Earlier, in July 2024, the public prosecutor of Somaliland had requested the parliament to suspend the Member of Parliament's immunity so that he could be prosecuted.⁷⁷⁴ The parliament refused.⁷⁷⁵ On 30 September 2024, the Somaliland Supreme Court ordered the release of the Member of Parliament.⁷⁷⁶ In November 2024, the candidate from the Waddani party won the presidential elections (see also 1.6).

4.2.7

Individuals perceived by al-Shabab as government collaborators

Individuals active in politics, government officials, clan elders, judges and humanitarian workers were perceived by al-Shabab as collaborating with a government of apostates. During the reporting period, al-Shabab regularly carried out attacks, including on current or former members of federal and state parliaments, government officials, police officers, a judge and a prison guard. Most

⁷⁶⁸ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 23.

⁷⁶⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia female MP blocked from traveling to Baidoa*, 19 December 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali MPs reportedly barred from travelling to SouthWest state*, 25 September 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Former Somali regional MP says blocked from travelling to capital*, 23 December 2024.

⁷⁷⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali court issues arrest warrant for Jubbaland leader amid tensions*, 27 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's cabinet orders legal action against leader of Jubbaland state*, 26 November 2024; Robert Lansing Institute, *Tension Rises Between Somalia And Jubbaland*, 29 November 2024.

⁷⁷¹ BBC Monitoring, *Somalia's parliament bans press conferences amid row with Ethiopia*, 7 September 2024.

⁷⁷² BBC Monitoring, *Somalia arrest hotel staff for hosting pro-Jubaland meeting*, 3 December 2024.

⁷⁷³ UNSC, *S/2024/698 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10.

⁷⁷⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Somaliland arrests president's critic after return from UAE*, 2 September 2024.

⁷⁷⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Somaliland parliament rejects motion to strip immunity from MP*, 3 September 2024.

⁷⁷⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Somaliland MP freed after apex court declares arrest illegal*, 30 September 2024.

of the attacks took place in Mogadishu. A non-exhaustive number of incidents is included in this footnote.⁷⁷⁷

4.2.8

Businesspeople

During the reporting period, businesspeople continued to encounter violence from al-Shabab under certain circumstances. The risks they faced were related mainly to their ability and willingness to meet the demands of al-Shabab. As in the previous period, one key demand was to render 'tax money' (see also 2.1.6). During the reporting period, this was compounded in Mogadishu by the requirement that companies do not install cameras as required by the authorities (see also 2.2.1.3).

Businesspeople refusing to pay or to remove cameras could be confronted with sanctions from al-Shabab. For example, the group could confiscate their goods or detonate an explosive on their premises. In some cases, al-Shabab killed businesspeople who refused to meet their demands.⁷⁷⁸

In general, businesspeople paid the taxes to al-Shabab, not only under pressure of violence from the group, but also because it was the only means of gaining access to the fertile and densely populated (and thus economically lucrative) areas under the group's control.⁷⁷⁹ According to one confidential source, it was lucrative for al-Shabab to allow businesspeople to move between the various checkpoints, as businesspeople who made more profit could also pay more taxes.⁷⁸⁰

Even outside areas controlled by al-Shabab, the group managed to collect taxes during the reporting period. The threat of violence (for example, the executions related to the installation of cameras) had a sufficiently deterrent effect to induce businesspeople to do so.⁷⁸¹

Businesspeople suspected of collaborating with al-Shabab – including paying taxes – and/or not wishing to install cameras on their business premises in Mogadishu could face problems with the authorities.⁷⁸² In November 2023, the authorities closed several businesses that had refused to install cameras (see also 2.2.1.3).⁷⁸³ In June

⁷⁷⁷ BBC Monitoring, *Somali lawmakers wounded in central town suicide bombing*, 15 September 2023; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'kills electoral delegate' in Somali capital*, 4 October 2023; BBC Monitoring, *Mortar attack on Somali MP's home in capital kills son*, 9 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Suspected militants detonate bomb near Somali MP's home*, 4 November 2023; BBC Monitoring, *Gunmen kill former Somali lawmaker in Mogadishu*, 30 December 2023; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab claims Somali MPs wounded in Mogadishu hotel attack*, 15 March 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab gunmen kill former Somali regional MP in Mogadishu*, 27 April 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab kills regional MP in Somali capital*, 23 May 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Ex-Somali prison commander 'wounded' in bomb attack*, 5 January 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Soldiers killed in al-Shabab attack on residence of Somali official*, 11 January 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Gunmen kill local official in Somali capital*, 13 January 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab blast targets police convoy in Somalia's Puntland*, 7 February 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab kills former police commander in Somali capital*, 4 March 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Ex-Somali official survives suspected al-Shabab bomb attack*, 22 April 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab claims killing judicial officer in Somali capital*, 12 July 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab claims responsibility for killing of Somali official*, 23 July 2024; Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

⁷⁷⁸ EUAA, *Country Guidance: Somalia*, August 2023, p. 94; The Hiraal Institute, ODI and Centre on Armed Groups, *Playing the long game Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control*, August 2023, p. 13; BBC Monitoring, *Businesses in Somali capital bombed after installing CCTV cameras*, 2 October 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Suspected al-Shabab militants kill businessman in Somali capital*, 5 November 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Suspected al-Shabab blasts destroy mall outside Somali capital*, 31 August 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somalia arrests two for facilitating treatment for militants*, 16 November 2023 (Somali News Agency Website, Mogadishu); Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷⁷⁹ Bahadur, J., *Terror and taxes; Inside al-Shabab's revenue-collection machine*, p. 5, December 2022; Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

⁷⁸⁰ Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷⁸¹ Africa Center for Strategic Studies, *Reclaiming Al-Shabaab's revenue*, 27 March 2023, p. 3; Jay Bahadur, *TERROR AND TAXES. Inside al-Shabaab's revenue-collection machine*, December 2022, p. 1; BBC Monitoring, *TV says businesses in Somali capital closing over al-Shabab fears*, 28 November 2023 (Radio Shabelle, Mogadishu).

⁷⁸² BBC Monitoring, *Somali army warns traders against working with al-Shabab*, 30 September 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁷⁸³ BBC Monitoring, *TV says businesses in Somali capital closing over al-Shabab fears*, 28 November 2024.

2024, the security services arrested several businesspeople for having paid taxes to al-Shabab.⁷⁸⁴ In September 2024, the Somali army threatened to persecute businesspeople who had travelled to areas controlled by al-Shabab and who had done business with al-Shabab there.⁷⁸⁵ Owing to the pressure from both sides, other companies felt compelled to shut down themselves.⁷⁸⁶

In February 2024, three businessmen were killed by a pro-government militia on suspicion of espionage for al-Shabab.⁷⁸⁷

In December 2024, the prime minister of Somalia called on businesspeople to arm themselves in order to avoid paying taxes to al-Shabab.⁷⁸⁸

4.2.9 Soldiers of the government army

During the reporting period, soldiers continued to be amongst the primary targets of al-Shabab. In addition to the victims of attacks on the army, at least seven men were executed by al-Shabab during the reporting period on accusation of belonging to the national army.⁷⁸⁹

4.2.10 Journalists and human rights activists

During the reporting period, journalists continued to be at risk of encountering violence from the federal member state and federal authorities, as well as from al-Shabab. In 2024, the country was ranked 3rd on the annual Global Impunity Index of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). This index ranks the countries with the highest number of unsolved killings of journalists per head of the population. This was after having been ranked 1st on the index for eight years.⁷⁹⁰ In the World Press Freedom Index of Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Somalia dropped from 140 in 2022 and 141 in 2023 to 145 in 2024 (of 180 countries).⁷⁹¹

Intimidation, threats, arbitrary arrest and persecution of journalists and individuals expressing views that were disagreeable to the authorities occurred in all parts of Somalia (see also 4.1.1). Journalists publishing independently on politically sensitive topics,⁷⁹² security-related topics, human rights and corruption were particularly at risk. Female journalists were said to run additional risks.⁷⁹³ Between June 2023 and early September 2024,⁷⁹⁴ the UN registered twenty cases of the arbitrary arrest and detention of members of the press. Ten of these cases of arbitrary arrest and detention occurred in Somaliland, seven in Mogadishu, two in Jubbaland, one in

⁷⁸⁴ BBC Monitoring, *Somali traders arrested for paying extortion money to al-Shabab*, 1 June 2024.

⁷⁸⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Somali army warns traders against working with al-Shabab*, 30 September 2024.

⁷⁸⁶ BBC Monitoring, *TV says businesses in Somali capital closing over al-Shabab fears*, 28 November 2023 (Radio Shabelle, Mogadishu); Confidential source, 4 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁷⁸⁷ BBC Monitoring, *Somali militia accused of killing traders over espionage claims*, 18 February 2024 (Radio Kulmiye, Mogadishu).

⁷⁸⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Briefing: Somali PM calls on traders to arm against al-Shabab's 'taxation'*, 15 December 2024.

⁷⁸⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab publicly kills three security officers in southern Somalia*, 21 August 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab publicly kills two soldiers in southern Somalia*, 5 September 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'executes' two security officers in south-west Somalia*, 19 September 2024 (Radio Andalus); BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab's 'executes' two Somali soldiers in Lower Shabelle*, 13 November 2024 (Radio Andalus).

⁷⁹⁰ Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), *2024 Global Impunity Index*, 30 October 2024.

⁷⁹¹ Reporters Without Borders (RSF), *Index: Somalia*, rsf.org/en/index, consulted on 24 April 2023.

⁷⁹² Politically sensitive topics are topics that could make rulers feel as if their power is being threatened. This depends on context, timing and the person/institution concerned.

⁷⁹³ EUAA, *Country Guidance: Somalia*, August 2023, pp. 96-97; Reporters Without Borders website, (RSF), [Somalia](https://rsf.org/en/index), [RSE](https://rsf.org/en/index), consulted on 2 January 2025; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, September 2022, pp. 76-82; National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), *State of the media report 2022*, 14 February 2023; UNDP, *It's dangerous being a female journalist in Somalia. But, one year on, we are still shining our light*, 12 April 2023; Confidential source, 6 November 2024.

⁷⁹⁴ During the reporting period, the most recent report on Somalia by the UN Secretary-General dated from September 2024.

Galmudug and one in Puntland.⁷⁹⁵ In October 2024, a radio journalist was arrested⁷⁹⁶ and, according to the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), a female journalist was subjected to ill treatment by the security services in December 2024 when she reported on demonstrations against the demolition of homes. Her cameraman was subsequently interrogated by the security services for several hours.⁷⁹⁷

The authorities – of both Somalia and Somaliland – regularly prosecuted journalists under provisions of the Somali Penal Code, including ‘spreading fake news’, ‘promoting sectarianism’, ‘sedition’ or ‘undermining national security’. These provisions were worded so broadly in the Penal Code that they provided the authorities with broad powers to deal with journalists who published facts or opinions that were disagreeable to them.⁷⁹⁸ In October 2024, President Mohamud warned that no one had the right to express criticism of Somalia in public and to talk about this to foreigners. According to him, this would be a crime.⁷⁹⁹

Al-Shabab was also responsible for attacks on journalists during the reporting period. In addition, during the reporting period, the press announced that a journalist was injured and two others were killed in a targeted attack by al-Shabab. The victims included a former journalist known for her reports on al-Shabab.⁸⁰⁰

4.2.11 NGO employees

Employees of humanitarian organisations were at risk of being accused by al-Shabab of collaborating with Western powers, and they could therefore become targets of violence or abduction by the group. For example, a humanitarian worker was abducted by al-Shabab on 1 January 2024. He was released the next day, following negotiations by clan elders.⁸⁰¹ In addition, two humanitarian workers were killed in Gedo as a result of clan violence.⁸⁰²

During the reporting period, al-Shabab continued to obstruct the delivery of relief supplies in the areas under its control. In many cases, they blocked the operations of humanitarian organisations (for example, by attacking convoys of personnel and assets from humanitarian organisations).⁸⁰³ Most of the attacks on convoys occurred in Jubbaland, South-West State and Hirshabelle.⁸⁰⁴ In 2023, OCHA registered 376 incidents involving their access to people in need, and 124 incidents between January and August 2024.⁸⁰⁵ This was a considerable decline relative to the 656 access incidents occurring in 2022.⁸⁰⁶

⁷⁹⁵ UNSC, *S/2023/758 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 13 October 2023, p. 9; UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 10; UNSC, *S/2024/426 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 3 June 2024, p. 10; UNSC, *S/2024/698 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 27 September 2024, p. 10.

⁷⁹⁶ BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces arrest journalist in Mogadishu after warning by president*, 18 October 2024.

⁷⁹⁷ NUSOJ website, *Female Journalist Brutally Assaulted by NISA Officers, Suffers Serious Injuries While Reporting on Mogadishu Protest*, 19 December 2024.

⁷⁹⁸ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, p. 97; BBC Monitoring, *Somali police arrest journalist over ‘false reporting’*, 22 July 2024; BBC Monitoring, *Somaliland court jails journalist for one year*, 15 August 2024; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, September 2022, pp. 76-77.

⁷⁹⁹ BBC Monitoring, *Somali forces arrest journalist in Mogadishu after warning by president*, 18 October 2024.

⁸⁰⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Somali TV reporter wounded in militant attack*, 15 September 2023; BBC Monitoring, *Journalist among people killed in Somali capital bombing*, 17 October 2023; BBC Monitoring, *Gunmen kill former journalist in southern Somalia*, 22 October 2024.

⁸⁰¹ UNSC, *S/2024/129 Report of the Secretary-General, Situation in Somalia*, 2 February 2024, p. 10.

⁸⁰² OCHA, *2024 Humanitarian Access Overview*, December 2024, p. 14.

⁸⁰³ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, April 2024, pp. 4, 17; Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), *CrisisInSight: Humanitarian access overview*, July 2024, p. 12; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, September 2022, pp. 61-62.

⁸⁰⁴ ACAPS, *Humanitarian Access Overview*, July 2024.

⁸⁰⁵ OCHA Somalia, *2023 Annual Humanitarian Access Overview*, January 2024; OCHA, *2024 Humanitarian Access Overview*, December 2024, p. 14.

⁸⁰⁶ OCHA Somalia, *2022 Annual Humanitarian Access Overview*, 19 January 2023.

4.2.12 Religious leaders

In the past, al-Shabab has carried out targeted attacks against religious leaders who had opposed the group or did not adhere to its strict interpretation of the faith.⁸⁰⁷ In June 2024, twenty Sufi clerics were abducted by al-Shabab in Lower Shabelle and taken to Jilib in Middle Juba. Other clerics who were present managed to escape. The abducted clerics had been attending an annual religious gathering at the time of their abduction.⁸⁰⁸

4.2.13 Clan elders

During the current reporting period, clan elders encountered targeted violence from al-Shabab. In areas under its direct control, al-Shabab used the traditional clan structures to consolidate its grip on those territories. Clan elders played a key role in the process. For example, clan elders were expected to meet al-Shabab's recruitment quotas and render tax money on behalf of the clan. Clan elders who did not provide sufficient (or any) collaboration were at risk of encountering violence. In some cases, such elders were intimidated, abducted or killed by al-Shabab.⁸⁰⁹ For example, in March 2024, a clan elder was killed by alleged al-Shabab fighters in Mogadishu.⁸¹⁰

Clan elders have historically played a key role in the election process as well. They appoint delegates to electoral colleges, who in turn appoint members of the Senate and House of the People. Al-Shabab regarded democratic elections as un-Islamic, and all who participate in elections as apostates.⁸¹¹

4.3 Protection

4.3.1 Protection against violence

The state was not the main perpetrator of violence against civilians (see also 2.1.9), but it also hardly had the capacity to protect citizens against violence⁸¹² or to enforce accountability for violations of the law of war or human rights,⁸¹³ regardless of the perpetrators of the violence: al-Shabab, clan militias or international allies.⁸¹⁴

According to one confidential source, the Somali authorities were not able to seek reparations for civilian casualties caused by their own allies, and the Somali authorities did not launch any investigations into incidents leading to civilian casualties.⁸¹⁵ The capacity of the Somali armed forces was limited (see also 2.1.3),

⁸⁰⁷ Tricia Bacon, *Inside the minds of Somalia's ascendant insurgents: An identity, mind, emotions and perceptions analysis of Al-Shabaab*, March 2022, p. 38; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, pp. 68-69, September 2022; Africa Center for Strategic Studies, *Reclaiming Al-Shabaab's revenue*, 27 March 2023.

⁸⁰⁸ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab 'abducts' 20 Sufi clerics in southern Somalia*, 8 June (Caasimada Online).

⁸⁰⁹ UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, September 2022, pp. 57-58; Africa Center for Strategic Studies, *Reclaiming Al-Shabaab's revenue*, 27 March 2023; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

⁸¹⁰ BBC Monitoring, *Somali police arrest al-Shabab suspects over killing of elder*, 4 March 2024.

⁸¹¹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, 21 December 2021 pp. 60-61; EUAA, *Country Guidance: Somalia*, pp. 81-82, June 2022; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, pp. 57-58, September 2022.

⁸¹² Confidential source, 30 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁸¹³ Amnesty International, *The state of the world's human rights 2024*, April 2024, p. 336.

⁸¹⁴ Confidential source, 30 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁸¹⁵ Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

and the judiciary was weak.⁸¹⁶ According to one confidential source, the capacity of the security services had weakened in Mogadishu since a new head took office in April 2024, as he had allegedly deployed all capacity of the security services outside Mogadishu.⁸¹⁷

4.3.2 Rule of law

The legal system and law enforcement differed by federal member state.⁸¹⁸ The many administrative layers did not always communicate with each other and, according to one confidential source, they operated more as their own little kingdoms.⁸¹⁹ The official legal system was not present in areas controlled by al-Shabab.⁸²⁰

Somalia had a pluralistic legal system, in which common law (xeer), religious law (sharia) and secular law existed alongside each other. These different sources of law were not fully integrated into a single official legal system. They were often used interchangeably, and not always in a consistent manner. In all parts of Somalia, most cases were settled according to common law.⁸²¹ According to one confidential source, al-Shabab explicitly undermined the official legal system by eliminating the least corrupt and most courageous judges.⁸²²

In addition, the judiciary was highly vulnerable to clan dynamics.⁸²³ In many cases, politicians or clan elders interfered in legal cases based on the origin of a suspect or a victim. Often, the perpetrator was then released and the problem was nevertheless resolved 'in the Somali manner': through negotiation by clan elders. Such 'solutions' were often not consistent with human rights standards. For example, clan elders sometimes reached a compromise in which there was no consultation with the victim, or they made reparation agreements that did not benefit the victim. For example, women could be forced to marry their rapists.⁸²⁴ One confidential source provided the example of a twelve-year-old girl who had been raped, after which the clan elders had divided reparations amounting to 250 US dollars amongst themselves.⁸²⁵

Individuals belonging to a powerful clan (or subclan) could sometimes mobilise protection within that context. Clans were able to use their militias to provide some extent of protection against violence, although this was more likely to involve clan violence than violence by al-Shabab.⁸²⁶ Those wishing to appeal to the protection of a clan needed to know how to claim it. This required maintaining a network. This became more difficult the longer a person had been out of Somalia.⁸²⁷

In addition, the help that could be expected from a powerful clan also depended on the subclan to which an individual belonged. This was because marginalised

⁸¹⁶ Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁸¹⁷ Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁸¹⁸ OHCHR and UNSOM, *Tackling sexual violence in Somalia: prevention and protection*, 9 May 2024, pp. 21-22.

⁸¹⁹ Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁸²⁰ USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 12.

⁸²¹ OHCHR and UNSOM, *Tackling sexual violence in Somalia: prevention and protection*, 9 May 2024, pp. 21-22; Confidential source, 12 November 2024.

⁸²² Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁸²³ Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁸²⁴ Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 12 November 2024.

⁸²⁵ Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

⁸²⁶ Confidential source, 30 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁸²⁷ Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

subclans also existed within powerful clans.⁸²⁸ Individuals belonging to a marginalised clan were vulnerable. According to one confidential source, they would sometimes have to pay for crimes they had not committed.⁸²⁹

In Somaliland and Puntland, the state was stronger, and clans played a less important role in protection.⁸³⁰

4.3.3

Al-Shabab courts

Al-Shabab's courts ruled according to a strict interpretation of the sharia. According to some sources, al-Shabab courts also applied elements of *xeer*.⁸³¹ Punishment by these courts could be brutal. For example, courts could impose corporal punishment, amputations or execution following conviction for such crimes as murder, theft, apostasy and homosexuality.⁸³²

During the reporting period, al-Shabab administered justice both within and beyond the areas under its control. Enforcement of sentences imposed within areas controlled by al-Shabab was generally in the hands of the Islamic police (the *hisbah*). In areas where al-Shabab had less control, including Mogadishu, this was the duty of al-Shabab's security services (the *amniyat*).⁸³³

Amongst a part of the Somali population, al-Shabab's courts have a reputation for being more accessible, transparent, fairer, faster and economical than the official Somali legal system.⁸³⁴ Unlike the Somali authorities, al-Shabab was also able and willing to enforce judicial rulings strictly and vigorously.⁸³⁵

⁸²⁸ Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024; Confidential source, 11 June 2024.

⁸²⁹ Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 30 August 2024.

⁸³⁰ Confidential source, 6 November 2024.

⁸³¹ Africa Center for Strategy & Policy, *Justice and terror: Al-Shabaab's informal justice mechanism*, 5 January 2019; Harvard International Review, *No justice, no peace: Al-Shabaab's court system*, 27 March 2023.

⁸³² USDOS, *2023 Country report on human rights practices: Somalia*, 22 April 2024, p. 12; Africa Center for Strategy & Policy, *Justice and terror: Al-Shabaab's informal justice mechanism*, 5 January 2019; EUAA, *Country Guidance: Somalia*, pp. 34-35, 108, 121, 123, June 2022; Harvard International Review, *No justice, no peace: Al-Shabaab's court system*, 27 March 2023.

⁸³³ Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 11 June 2024.

⁸³⁴ Africa Center for Strategy & Policy, *Justice and terror: Al-Shabaab's informal justice mechanism*, 5 January 2019; Expanding access to justice program, *The shari'ah in Somalia*, p. 25, March 2020; Anadolu Agency, *Somali government vows to eliminate al-Shabab terrorists' so-called courts*, 16 August 2022; Al Jazeera, *In Somalia, al-Shabab's courts win more converts*, 14 September 2022; Harvard International Review, *No justice, no peace: Al-Shabaab's court system*, 27 March 2023.

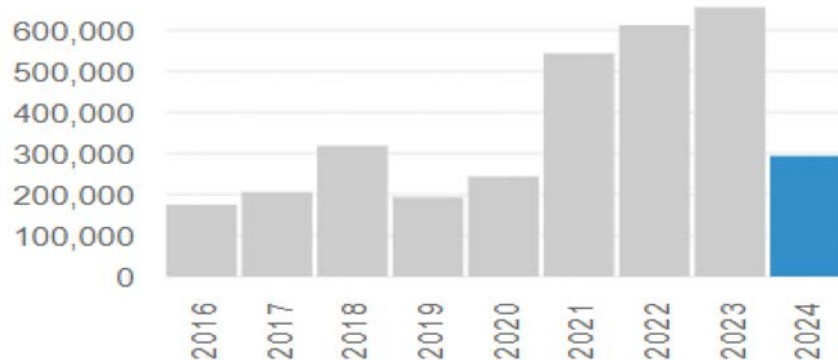
⁸³⁵ Confidential source, 11 June 2024.

5 Displaced persons and refugees

5.1 Displaced persons

In September 2024, Somalia had an estimated total of more than 3.2 million displaced persons.⁸³⁶ Additional information on the number of displaced persons in each region is provided in 2.2.

From July 2023 through December 2024, 2,151,000 people were displaced (or re-displaced) in Somalia, with a spike in November 2023.⁸³⁷ In 2023, floods were the main cause of displacement.⁸³⁸ The number of newly displaced persons due to conflict decreased during the current reporting period relative to the previous reporting period (see Graph 42 below).



Graph 42: Number of persons displaced due to conflict in Somalia, by year.⁸³⁹

In 2024, most of those displaced due to conflict were from (in order of highest number) the regions of Gedo, Lower Juba and Middle Juba (Jubbaland); Bay, Lower Shabelle and Bakool (South-West State); and Mudug (Galmudug).⁸⁴⁰

5.1.1 Displacement settlements

The largest share of all displaced persons lived in more than 2,400 overpopulated, often informal settlements. Three quarters of the settlements were located in urban areas, and 85% were located on privately owned land with informal settlement managers. These settlements therefore had no accountability for minimum shelter standards. Evictions were frequent, thus forcing displaced persons to look for new places to stay.⁸⁴¹

⁸³⁶ UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal*; *Horn of Africa Somalia Situation/Somalia*, [Situation Horn of Africa Somalia Situation](#), consulted on 5 January 2025.

⁸³⁷ UNHCR, *Somalia Protection and Return Monitoring Network* [PRMN Dashboard](#), consulted on 31 January 2025. Filters: Jul – Dec 2023 = 1,599,000 + Jan – Dec 2024 = 552,000.

⁸³⁸ UNHCR, *Somalia Protection and Return Monitoring Network* [PRMN Dashboard](#), consulted on 31 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2023.

⁸³⁹ UNHCR, *Somalia Protection and Return Monitoring Network* [PRMN Dashboard](#), consulted on 31 January 2025. Filters: Reasons = Conflict.

⁸⁴⁰ UNHCR, *Somalia Protection and Return Monitoring Network* [PRMN Dashboard](#), consulted on 31 January 2025. Filters: Year = 2024; Reasons = Conflict.

⁸⁴¹ UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal*; *IDP Situations*, data.unhcr.org/en/situations/cccm_somalia, consulted on 28 January 2025.

5.2 Refugees in Somalia

Somalia is a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, New York, 31 January 1967 and the 1969 Convention of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, now the African Union) on the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.⁸⁴² In South and Central Somalia, the National High Commission for Refugees & IDPs (NCRI) is responsible for the registration of asylum seekers. In Puntland, this responsibility rests with the Human Protection Department (HPD) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Somaliland, the National Displacement and Refugee Agency (NDRA) is responsible. In all three of these areas, the UNHCR coordinates the registration process and data collection within the context of asylum applications, and it issues certificates of registration to asylum seekers. The UNCHR is responsible for the ultimate determination of status.⁸⁴³

According to figures from the UNCHR, there were more than 41 thousand refugees and asylum seekers in Somalia in November 2024. This was around six thousand more than in the previous reporting period.⁸⁴⁴ More than half were from Ethiopia, and slightly more than one fourth were from Yemen. Other countries of origin included Syria and Tanzania. The vast majority of these refugees and asylum seekers stayed in Somaliland (about eighteen thousand) and Puntland (more than ten thousand).⁸⁴⁵

5.3 Shelter in the region

In November 2024, according to UNCHR data, most Somali refugees and asylum seekers were staying in Kenya (465,631⁸⁴⁶ as compared to 281,000 in March 2023),⁸⁴⁷ Ethiopia (361,691⁸⁴⁸ as compared to 254,000 in 2023),⁸⁴⁹ Uganda (50,832⁸⁵⁰ as compared to 70,000 in 2023)⁸⁵¹ and Yemen (38,971⁸⁵² as compared to 64,000 in 2023).⁸⁵³

5.3.1 Kenya

Since 2016, the Kenyan authorities have no longer automatically recognised fugitive Somalis as refugees. For a long time, no Somali asylum seekers were registered. In March 2023, the Kenyan authorities resumed the registration of Somali asylum

⁸⁴² UNHCR website [Refugee Treaty and Legislation Dashboard | Rights Mapping and Analysis Platform](#), consulted on 6 January 2025.

⁸⁴³ UNHCR, Help Somalia, [help.unhcr.org/somalia/en/](#), consulted on 6 January 2025; African Union website, [36400-sl-OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.pdf](#), consulted on 6 January 2025.

⁸⁴⁴ UNHCR, *Somalia operational update*, November 2024, p. 3.

⁸⁴⁵ UNHCR, *Somalia: Refugees and asylum seekers*, 31 March 2024.

⁸⁴⁶ UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal; Refugee Situations; Kenya*, [data.unhcr.org/en/country/ken](#), consulted on 6 January 2025.

⁸⁴⁷ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 75.

⁸⁴⁸ UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal; Refugee Situations; Ethiopia*, [data.unhcr.org/en/country/eth](#), consulted on 6 January 2025.

⁸⁴⁹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 75.

⁸⁵⁰ UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal; Refugee Situations; Uganda*, [data.unhcr.org/en/country/uga](#), consulted on 6 January 2025.

⁸⁵¹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 75.

⁸⁵² UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal; Refugee Situations; Yemen*, [data.unhcr.org/en/country/yem](#), consulted on 6 January 2025.

⁸⁵³ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 75.

seekers on an ad hoc basis.⁸⁵⁴ According to a refugee expert cited by Refugees International, a backlog occurred in the registration of more than one hundred thousand asylum seekers and refugees.⁸⁵⁵

In Kenya, there were two documents for the registration as an asylum seeker: the mandate certificate issued by the UNHCR and the alien card issued by the Kenyan authorities. A mandate certificate indicated that the UNHCR recognised the person as a refugee. This certificate was generally issued to an entire family. An alien card was issued on a personal basis, and it indicated that the Kenyan authorities recognised the person as a refugee. According to a report by Refugees International, it was difficult to obtain these documents due to legal, bureaucratic and practical obstacles, such as high costs, lack of information about the procedures, and discrimination and distrust by the authorities.⁸⁵⁶ In September 2023, the Kenyan authorities announced six new documents that refugees needed in order to be eligible for government services: an asylum seeker pass, a proof of registration document, a movement pass, a letter of recognition, a refugee identity card and a conventional travel document.⁸⁵⁷ In practice, these requirements led to even more bureaucracy, travel time and expenditures.⁸⁵⁸ One confidential source also noted that these documents were not always recognised by the private sector.⁸⁵⁹

Without registration, asylum seekers and refugees did not have access to protection and assistance. Unregistered asylum seekers and refugees had to appeal to registered asylum seekers and refugees (for example, for food). For access to medical assistance, asylum seekers and refugees needed a pass, and such passes were not issued to unregistered asylum seekers and refugees. Access to education was also dependent on registration.⁸⁶⁰

5.3.2

Ethiopia

The number of Somali asylum seekers and refugees in Ethiopia increased during the reporting period. Whereas this had amounted to 254,000 people in the previous reporting period,⁸⁶¹ it had risen to more than 360,000 people by the beginning of 2025. The vast majority of these people were situated in two groups of camps in Ethiopia's Ogaden region. The largest share of Somali asylum seekers and refugees were situated in camps at the border with the region of Gedo, with another share in camps at the border with Somaliland. A small share (more than one thousand) of Somali asylum seekers were situated in Addis Abeba.⁸⁶²

⁸⁵⁴ Refugees International, *Lessons and Recommendations for Implementing Kenya's New Refugee Law*, August 2024, pp. 18-19; International Rescue Committee, *Humanitarian needs mount as almost 60,000 refugees from Somalia arrive in Dadaab camp due to impact of climate change*, warns IRC, 7 November 2022; European Commission, *European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations: Kenya*, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/kenya_en, consulted on 6 January 2025; Confidential source, 3 February 2025.

⁸⁵⁵ Refugees International, *Lessons and Recommendations for Implementing Kenya's New Refugee Law*, August 2024, pp. 18-19.

⁸⁵⁶ Refugees International, *Lessons and Recommendations for Implementing Kenya's New Refugee Law*, August 2024, pp. 18-19.

⁸⁵⁷ Republic of Kenya, *Refugees Act, The refugee identification documents, legal notice 143 of 2023, commenced on 19 September 2023, published in Kenya Gazette Vol. CXXV – No 234*, 27 October 2023.

⁸⁵⁸ Refugees International, *Lessons and Recommendations for Implementing Kenya's New Refugee Law*, August 2024, pp. 18-19.

⁸⁵⁹ Confidential source, 3 February 2025.

⁸⁶⁰ Refugees International, *Lessons and Recommendations for Implementing Kenya's New Refugee Law*, August 2024, pp. 18-19.

⁸⁶¹ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia*, June 2023, p. 75.

⁸⁶² UNHCR, *Operational Data Portal; Horn of Africa Somalia Situation/Ethiopia*, [Situation Horn of Africa Somalia Situation](#), consulted on 5 January 2025.

Ethiopia's asylum policy is established in *Proclamation 1110/2019*.⁸⁶³ According to the policy, refugees are allowed to move freely outside of refugee camps if they meet the condition of being able to provide for their own support. According to one confidential source, this policy was not carried out in practice, with the consequence that 90% of all refugees were situated in refugee camps.⁸⁶⁴

Refugees and asylum seekers in Ethiopia received a refugee identity card, a certificate of *fayda*⁸⁶⁵ registration (proof of registration, PoR) and civil registry certificates (for example, for birth, marriage and death). According to one confidential source, individuals meeting certain additional criteria could also claim work permits, residence permits, business licences, refugee passports (*Convention Travel Documents*) and exit permits^{866, 867}

The registration of new asylum seekers and issuance of documents to asylum seekers by the Refugees and Returnees Service (RRS) was halted in 2021 due to COVID-19, and it was subsequently further hindered by a lack of capacity (amongst other factors).⁸⁶⁸ Since that time, the registration of individual asylum seekers has not been resumed. There were only a few exceptions to this for certain groups in urgent situations. For example, in 2023, around 100,000 individuals with Somali nationality from Las Anood were *prima facie* recognised and registered as refugees.⁸⁶⁹ According to one confidential source, no other registrations of individuals with Somali nationality occurred during the reporting period.⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶³ Ethiopia, *Proclamation 1110/2019* [Ethiopia: Proclamation No. 1110/2019, Refugees Proclamation | Refworld](#)

⁸⁶⁴ Confidential source, 24 February 2025.

⁸⁶⁵ Fayda is explained in Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, pp. 42-43.

⁸⁶⁶ See also Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report*, January 2024, p. 74.

⁸⁶⁷ Ethiopia, *Proclamation 1110/2019* [Ethiopia: Proclamation No. 1110/2019, Refugees Proclamation | Refworld](#), Art. 32 and 36; Confidential source, 24 February 2025.

⁸⁶⁸ Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *General Country of Origin Information Report on Ethiopia*, January 2024, p. 71.

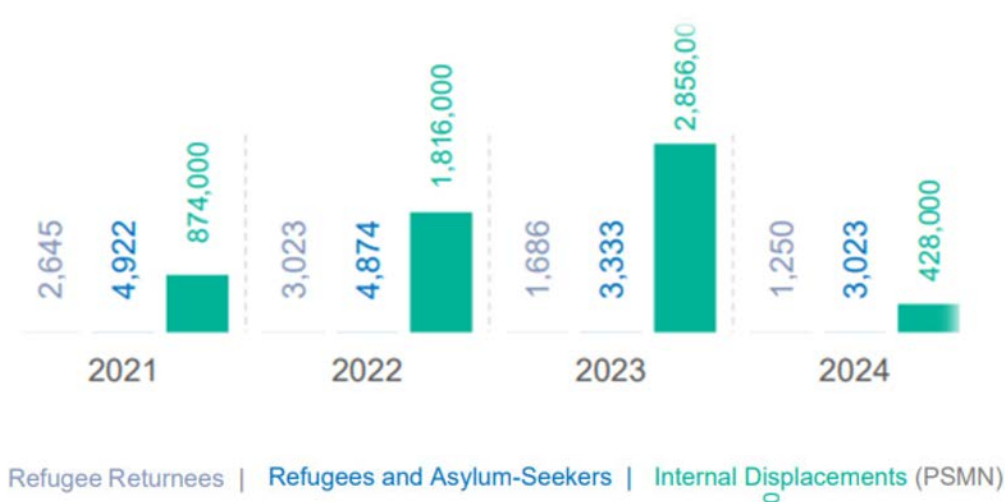
⁸⁶⁹ UNHCR, *Help Ethiopia* [Refugee status determination - UNHCR Ethiopia](#), consulted on 25 March 2025.

⁸⁷⁰ Confidential source, 24 February 2025.

6 Return

6.1 Return from the region

Since 2014, the vast majority of Somali returnees came back from Yemen and Kenya. No figures were available on the number of returnees from Kenya in 2023 and 2024. Between July 2023 and June 2024, 1737 refugees returned from Yemen, with a spike of more than six hundred in November 2023.⁸⁷¹



Graph 43: Numbers of refugees returning to Somalia facilitated by the UNHCR. The figures for 2024 run from January to October 2024.⁸⁷²

Return from Western countries

The pressure on the Somali authorities to take back asylum seekers who had exhausted all legal avenues increased during the reporting period.⁸⁷³ According to the European Commission, in 2023, the European member states made few attempts at return operations, due to a lack of cooperation from Somalia throughout the entire process. As a result, the Commission deemed it necessary to take further measures.⁸⁷⁴ What these measures were was not yet known.

The United States extended the period during which Somalis in that country received temporary protection until 17 March 2026.⁸⁷⁵

6.2 Situation after return

⁸⁷¹ UNHCR, *Somalia; Refugee returnees*, 30 June 2024.
⁸⁷² UNHCR, *Somalia Operational Update*, November 2024.
⁸⁷³ European Commission, *Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the suspension of certain provisions of Regulation (EC) 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council with respect to Somalia*, 23 July 2024, pp. 1-2; The Horn Observer, *Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland Pressure Somalia to Accept Mass Deportation of Asylum Seekers*, 4 July 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024.
⁸⁷⁴ European Commission, *Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the suspension of certain provisions of Regulation (EC) 810/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council with respect to Somalia*, 23 July 2024, pp. 1-2.
⁸⁷⁵ USCIS, [Temporary Protected Status Designated Country: Somalia | USCIS](#), consulted on 7 January 2025.

Little concrete information appeared to be available on possible problems experienced by returning asylum seekers and refugees in Somalia. Overall, the sources suggest that the extent to which returnees were at risk in Somalia was strongly related to their individual circumstances and their social networks. Returnees who could afford to live in secure areas of Mogadishu tended to be less at risk, as did those returning to areas where they had strong clan or other social ties.⁸⁷⁶ Information on living conditions in Somalia is provided in 2.4.

According to confidential sources, returnees from Western countries were usually easy to recognise after returning to Somalia.⁸⁷⁷ Returnees from Western countries, especially if they had lived there for a longer period of time, often brought with them habits that were unknown in Somalia and that in Somali society could be seen as un-Islamic or un-Somali.⁸⁷⁸ For example, they could be identified by a different accent, manner of dress, way of walking, gesticulation or posture. They could therefore have difficulty integrating into Somali society.⁸⁷⁹

According to two confidential sources, Somali youth in the diaspora were regularly sent to so-called reform schools⁸⁸⁰ in Somalia by their parents. This happened when parents felt that their children had become 'too Western'.⁸⁸¹ According to one source, these schools were very expensive, and for this reason, some youth were also sent to relatives.⁸⁸² According to both sources, there were no regulations for or inspections of these schools, and there were reports of ill treatment.⁸⁸³

According to one confidential source, there was a widespread perception in Somali society that if individuals had been forcibly returned, it must have been due to 'bad' behaviour (for example, alcohol or drug use, apostasy, extramarital affairs, homosexuality). This affected the extent to which the clan would take care of such individuals, and these people often could not find work.⁸⁸⁴

6.3 Return to areas under the control of al-Shabab

Concrete and verifiable information on Somalis returning to al-Shabab territory was lacking during the current reporting period too. According to confidential sources, individuals perceived as outsiders were in danger of being arrested and executed as spies (see also 2.9.2).⁸⁸⁵ According to confidential sources, return to al-Shabab territory could possibly be negotiated by a clan elder who had the trust of al-Shabab, after which the person concerned would have to demonstrate loyalty by adhering to the rules of al-Shabab.⁸⁸⁶

⁸⁷⁶ EUAA, *Somalia: country guidance*, August 2023, pp. 100-102; UNHCR, *International protection considerations with regard to people fleeing Somalia*, September 2022, p. 86; Confidential source, 13 November 2024; Confidential source, 1 December 2024; Confidential source, 14 November 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 21 August 2024.

⁸⁷⁷ Confidential source, 30 November 2023; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁸⁷⁸ EUAA, *Somalia: targeted profiles*, September 2021, p. 55; Confidential source, 14 November 2024.

⁸⁷⁹ EUAA, *Somalia: targeted profiles*, September 2021, p. 55; Confidential source, 14 November 2024; Confidential source, 5 November 2024.

⁸⁸⁰ The Guardian, *Somali 'rehab': re-education camps where children are locked up, beaten and abused*, 12 March 2023.

⁸⁸¹ Confidential source, 14 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁸⁸² Confidential source, 14 November 2024.

⁸⁸³ Confidential source, 14 November 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024.

⁸⁸⁴ Confidential source, 14 November 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

⁸⁸⁵ BBC Monitoring, *Al-Shabab publicly kills three security officers in southern Somalia*, 21 August 2024 (Radio Andalus); Halqabsi News, *Al-Shabaab Executes Seven in Jilib Over Espionage Allegations*, 15 January 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024; Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 7 November 2024; Confidential source, 30 November 2023.

⁸⁸⁶ Confidential source, 21 August 2024; Confidential source, 19 November 2024.

7 Appendices

7.1 Abbreviations

Abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Events Data Project
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ATMIS	African Union Transition Mission in Somalia
AUSSOM	African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission
ASWJ	Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a
FOB	Forward Operation Basis
HPD	Human Protection Department (Puntland)
IOM	International Office for Migration
IPC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
IS-S	Islamic State Somalia
NCC	National Consultative Council
NCRI	National High Commission for Refugees & IDPs (Somalia)
NDRA	National Displacement and Refugee Agency (Somaliland)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NISA	National Intelligence and Security Agency
NUSOJ	National Union of Somali Journalists
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SSC-Khatumo	Sool, Sanaag, Cayn Khatumo
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
UNTMIS	United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission to Somalia
WFP	World Food Programme

7.2 List of sources

7.2.1 News sources

Africanews	The Somali Digest
Al Jazeera	The Somali Wire
AllAfrica.com	Voice of America (VOA)
Anadolu Agency	Xinhua News
AP News	
BBC News	
CBS	
Deutsche Welle (DW)	
Garowe Online	
Halqabsi News	
Horn Examiner	
Horseed Media	
Mareeg Media	
NBC News	
Reuters	
Somali Dispatch	
Somali Guardian	
The East African	
The Guardian	
The Horn Observer	

BBC Monitoring (local news sources):	Radio Al-Furqaan
Al Naba	Radio Dajir
Caasimada Online	Radio Kulmiye
Calamada website	Radio Shabelle
Daily Nation	Shabelle Media Network
Hiiraan Online	Somali National Army Radio
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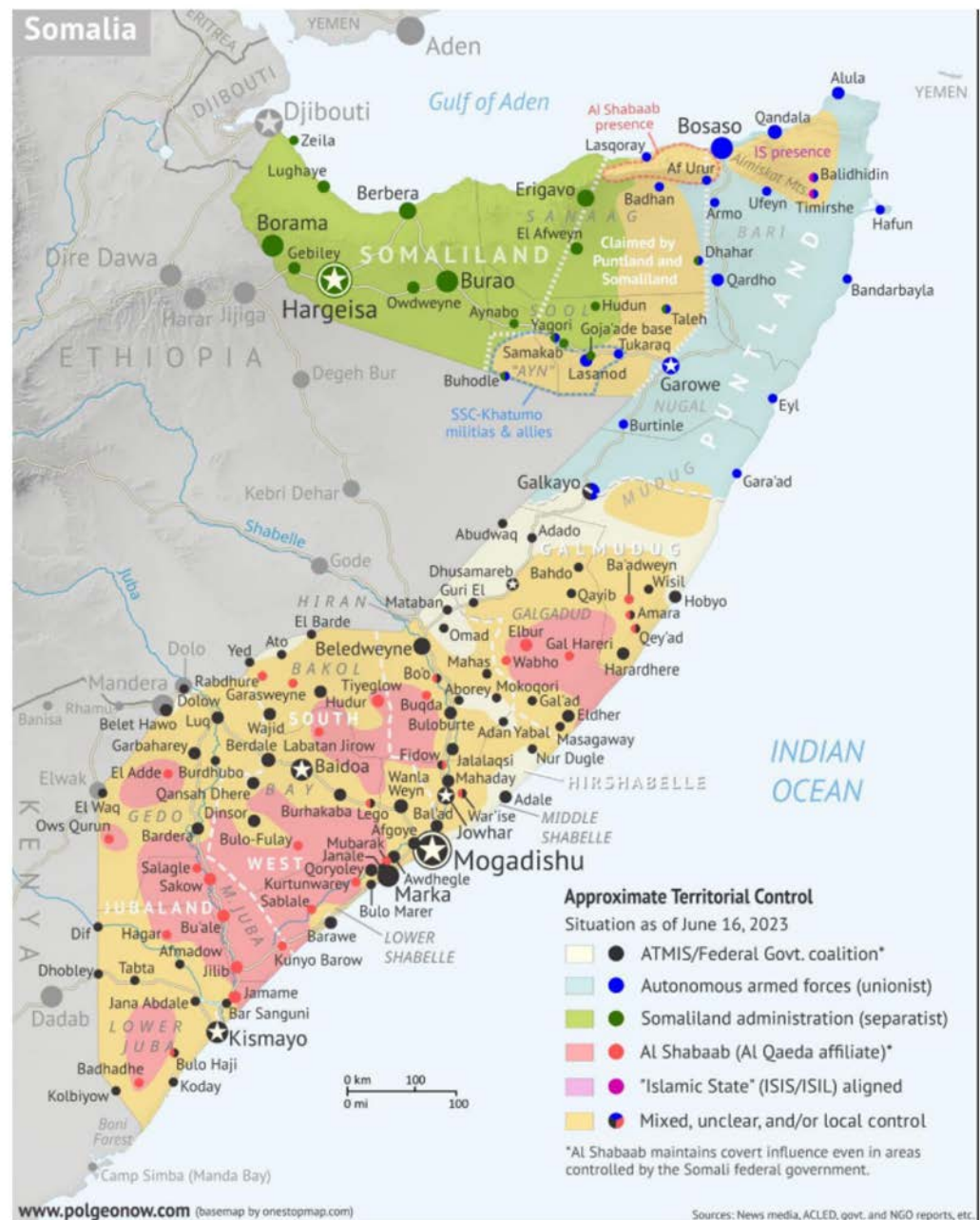
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7.3 Map of control areas in Somalia during the previous reporting period



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