2.6.2. Bari

○ (a) Background

Bari borders the Indian ocean to the east and the Gulf of Aden to the north. It shares internal borders with Nugal region to the south and Sool and Sanaag to the east. The region is divided into six districts: Qardho, Bandarbeyla, Iskushuban, Calula, Qandala, and Bossaso. The region's capital is the coastal city of Bossaso (also Boosaaso, Bosaso), situated on the Gulf of Aden.[1183]

IPC estimated Bari's population at 1 232 231 as of September 2024.[1184] In contrast, IOM estimated the region's population much lower at 723 755.[1185] The region's main clan is the Osman Mahmud sub-clan of the Majerteen clan; the Ali Suleman clan also is very relevant politically in the region.[1186] For more information on clans in the Bari region, please see section 2.6.2.1 of the EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (September 2021) and section 2.6.2 of the EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (February 2023).

○ (b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

Al-Shabaab control areas, presence and influence, along with other actors

Map 3 indicated Al-Shabaab's presence in the Al Madow mountains to the west, and the presence of Al-Shabaab or the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) in the Al Miskaad mountains to the east of Bossaso city. Possible ISS influence was also indicated in central and northeastern Bari. 'Autonomous armed forces (unionist)' were present across Bari region including its main urban centres, except for Habley, which was shown as under mixed, unclear and/or local control. In contrast, as of April 2023 (Map 2), the Al Miskaad mountains were assessed to be under mixed control of Al-Shabaab and the ISS. The remainder of the region was controlled by 'autonomous armed forces (unionist)', as were most of the main urban centres, with the exception of Timirshe (partially controlled by the ISS), Turmasale (ISS) and Dhadar (Al-Shabaab).[1188]

Conflict dynamics

The Somali Digest reported in April 2024 that the ISS had taken control over the Al Miskaad (also Calmiskaad) Mountains from Al-Shabaab after several years of fighting. However, the regional government continued to control access roads and the nearby population centres.[1189] According to an October 2024 UN Security Council report, Al-Shabaab remained present in the western Al Madow mountains while the ISS did not control any population centres but had established bases in four of Bari's districts: Balidhidin, Hunbays, Iskushuban, and Qandala,[1190] the home district of the Ali Saleban clan, of which also ISS leader Abdulqadir Mumin was a member.[1191] Both groups were running extortion schemes in Bossaso city.[1192]

The International Crisis Group noted that the ISS had become a 'key component' of the global IS network, financing other branches with funds gathered through extortion,1193 tax collection,1194 and gold mining, 1195 while ISS leader Mumin reportedly rose to the ranks of IS' global leader. Claims that he was killed in an U.S. airstrike in May 2024 were not confirmed.1196

 The UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team on ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaida highlighted in a report of February 2025 that, following the attack, ISS' operational capabilities had 'evolved' and that the group was using/testing unmanned aerial vehicles for reconnaissance and the deployment of explosives.1197
 Following an ISS car bomb attack on Puntland security forces in Dharjaale in December 2024, where at least 18 soldiers were killed and 30 injured, Puntland authorities launched a counteroffensive against the ISS,1198
 the so-called operation 'Hilaac' (lightning).1199 Moreover, airstrikes on ISS positions were reported in January,1200 February,1201 and March 2025.1202 On 10 February 2024, ISS launched a major suicide attack in the vicinity of Hararyo area. 27 soldiers and about 70 fighters were killed in the attack.1203
 Puntland president Deni claimed in March 2025 that ISS and Al-Shabaab had been expelled from Bari region, and that both groups had ceased to hold 'operational control' in Bossaso,1204 while Hiiraan Online cited regional authorities saying that ISS had regrouped in Togga Miraale valley near Bossaso city.1205

The October 2024 UN Security Council report pointed to the smuggling of weapons between Puntland and Yemen and in this context to the seizure of arms in Bossaso in May and August 2024, as well as to a re-emergence of piracy off the coast of Puntland.1206

○ (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

In the reference period from 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, ACLED recorded 191 security incidents in Bari region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, resulting in 830 fatalities. Figure 20 below shows their evolution per type across the reference period. At district level, the highest number of incidents was recorded in Qandala (102), followed by Bossaso (64), Iskushuban (14), Qardho (8), Calula (2) and Bandarbeyla (1 incident).1207

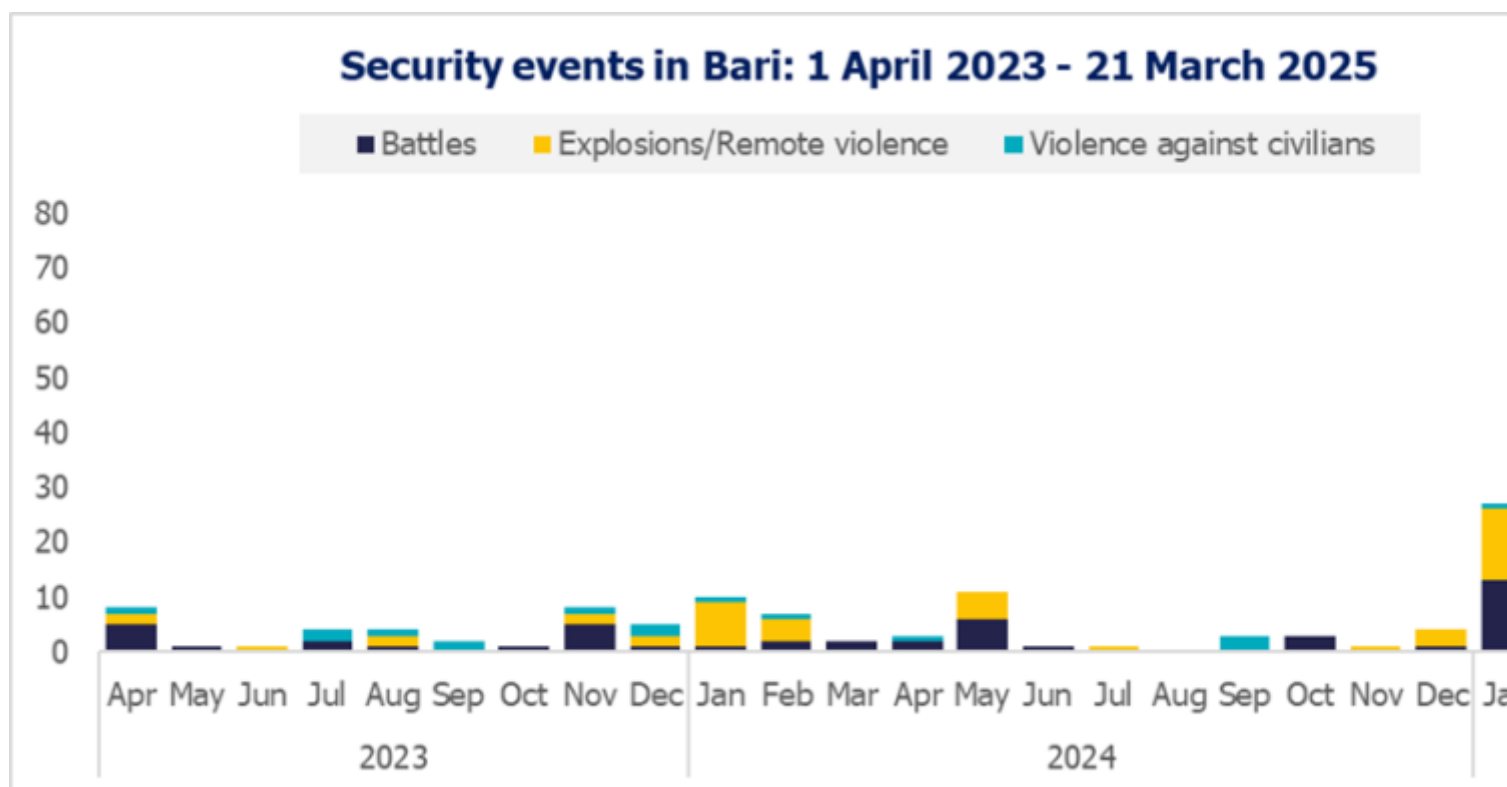**Security events in Bari: 1 April 2023 - 21 March 2025**

■ Battles ■ Explosions/Remote violence ■ Violence against civilians

Figure 20. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Bari.[1208]

The Military Forces of Somalia (including Puntland Dervish Force, Puntland Intelligence Agency and Puntland Security Force) were involved in 105 incidents with the ISS (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2'), and in five incidents with Al-Shabaab. Moreover, they were involved in seven incidents with unidentified groups (including unidentified armed groups, unidentified clan militia, and unidentified military forces). The Puntland Maritime Police Force was involved in 97 incidents with the ISS, causing 676 fatalities.[1209]

For incidents involving civilian fatalities, please see below an illustrative and non-exhaustive list:

- several civilians, including women and children, were killed in an ISS attack on a military base in Dharjaale on 31 December 2024. While military facilities were targeted, several civilians were killed too in the suicide bombing;[1210]

- at least four civilians were accidentally killed by the strike of an unidentified military drone in Qandala district in January 2025. The drone had been targeting ISS positions in the area.[1211]

Conflict-related displacement

UNHCR PRMN data indicated that 15 778 individuals were newly displaced from Bari region due to conflict or insecurity in the period from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025. Almost all of them, 15 749 individuals, were displaced within Bari region, while a small number, 29 individuals (all of them from Bossaso), left for other regions, including Nugal and Hiraan. In the same period, 6 637 individuals were recorded to have arrived in Bari region from other regions. The district most affected by arrivals from other regions was Bossaso (4 842), while the district most affected by arrivals from other locations within Bari region was Qandala district (5 881 individuals), followed by Iskushuban (4 567 individuals), including movements within the district. [1212] For information on conflict-related displacement in Bari region prior to April 2023, please see section

2.6.2 of the EUAA COI report on Somalia – Security Situation (February 2023).

Other impacts on civilian life

Several hospitals in Bossaso city shut down over extortion demands by the ISS.1213 Similarly, local businesses reportedly faced extortion demands and threats against their business.1214 Horseed Media quoted regional police saying that most businesses, NGOs and charities in the region were extorted by 'terrorist groups', and those who refused were often killed or met with violence,1215 including IED and grenade attacks on their businesses.1216

Hiiraan Online reported in March 2025 that due to the ongoing conflict between Puntland security forces and the ISS, local farmers cultivating frankincense trees were unable to reach their trees as they feared getting caught in the crossfire or bombings. Without the possibility to earn an income with the trees' harvest, many lacked the funds to pay for food, water or their children's school.1217

UNOCHA recorded three humanitarian access incidents (such as, for example, attacks on humanitarian personnel) in Bari region in 2024,1218 and an equal number of such incidents in the period from April to December 2023.1219 The driver of a car belonging to a local humanitarian organisation, the Horn of Africa Integrated Development Activities (HIDA), was injured when a landmine exploded in the Timirshe area in Iskushuban district in March 2024. The attack was reportedly targeting HIDA's director, who had been threatened in the past, but who remained unharmed.1220

1183

UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Reference Map, as of 20 July 2023, url

1184

IPC, Somalia Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis July – December 2024, 23 September 2024, url, p. 3

1185

IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, url

1186

EASO, Somalia – Security Situation, September 2021, url, p. 126

1188

PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

1189

Somali Digest (The), Islamic State in Somalia Strategically Takes over Al Miskaad, 21 April 2024, url

1190

UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, url, para. 41-42

1191

ACLED, The looming threat: A resurgence of Islamic State and inter-clan fighting in Somalia, 31 July 2024, url

1192

International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Somalia: Responding to an Evolving Threat, 12 September 2024, url, p. 8

1193

International Crisis Group, The Islamic State in Somalia: Responding to an Evolving Threat, 12 September 2024, url, p. 2

1194

Somali Digest (The), Islamic State in Somalia Strategically Takes over Al Miskaad, 21 April 2024, url

1195

Horn Observer, ISIS Believed to Engage in Gold Mining in Puntland to Fund Its Activities, 5 January 2025, url

1196

BBC News, Why Trump is on the warpath in Somalia, 7 February 2025, url

1197

UNSC, Thirty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, S/2025/71/Rev.1, 6 February 2025, url , para. 38

1198

SMN, Death toll from deadly ISIS attack in Puntland rises to 18, injuries climb to 30, 1 January 2025, url

1199

International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., url; Somali Digest (The), Puntland Unleashes 'Hilac' Offensive, Targeting IS-Somalia and Al-Shabab, 26 December 2024, url

1200

Garowe Online, Puntland Forces, With International Support, Target ISIS in Bari Region, 9 January 2025, url

[1201](#)

International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

[1202](#)

Hiiraan Online, U.S. airstrikes target ISIS militant group in Somalia's Puntland State, 29 March 2025, [url](#); SMN, U.S.-Somali Forces Target ISIS in Puntland's Bari Mountains, 26 March 2025, [url](#)

[1203](#)

International Crisis Group, Crisis Watch – Somalia: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., [url](#)

[1204](#)

Hiiraan Online, Puntland President Deni vows zero tolerance for Al-Shabaab, ISIS resurgence, 9 March 2025, [url](#)

[1205](#)

Hiiraan Online, U.S. airstrikes target ISIS militant group in Somalia's Puntland State, 29 March 2025, [url](#)

[1206](#)

UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, [url](#), para. 142, 144-145, 149 and Figure III Map of attacks by Somali Pirates March 2023 to August 2024, p. 34

[1207](#)

EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

[1208](#)

EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#). Please note that data covering the entire month of March 2025 was not yet available during the drafting of this report.

[1209](#)

EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, data covering 1 April 2023 to 21 March 2025, as of 26 March 2025, [url](#)

[1210](#)

Hiiraan Online, Deadly clashes as Puntland forces foil ISIS attack in Bari region, 1 January 2025, [url](#)

[1211](#)

Hiiraan Online, Unidentified drone strike kills four civilians near ISIS stronghold in Bari region, 28 January 2025, url; Garowe Online, Somalia: An airstrike kills four civilians from the same family in Puntland, 28 January 2025, url

1212

UNHCR, PRMN Datafile – Somalia, as of 21 March 2025, url

1213

Halqabsi News, Bosaso Hospitals Shut Down Amidst ISIS Extortion Demands, 24 June 2024, url; Garowe Online, ISIS Extortion Threats Force Business Closures in Bosaso, Somalia, 18 June 2023, url

1214

Garowe Online, ISIS Extortion Threats Force Business Closures in Bosaso, Somalia, 18 June 2023, url; Garowe Online, Somalia: Puntland's Business Center Faces Terrorist Threats as Businesses Close Down, 12 April 2023, url

1215

Horseed Media, A powerful explosion rocked the Timirshe area in at Iskushuban district of Bari region of Somalia today, 16 March 2024, url

1216

UNSC, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023), S/2024/748, 28 October 2024, url, para. 48

1217

Hiiraan Online, Puntland war against Daesh displaces frankincense farmers in Bari region, 11 March 2025, url

1218

UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: January – December 2024, 22 January 2025, url, p. 2

1219

UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, url, p. 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: July to September 2023, 2 November 2023, url, p 1; UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: April – June 2023, 25 July 2023, url, p. 1

1220

Horseed Media, A powerful explosion rocked the Timirshe area in at Iskushuban district of Bari region of Somalia today, 16 March 2024, url