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2.8.1. Awdal

(a) Background

According to a UNOCHA Administrative Reference Map, Awdal region shares international borders with Djibouti and Ethiopia. It borders the Gulf of Aden to the north and the region of Wogoyi Galbeed to the east. It is divided into four districts: Zeylac, Lughaye, Baki and Borama. The region's capital is Borama.1325

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Awdal region at 636 108 (IPC),1326 and 303 218 (IOM).1327 Awdal region is inhabited by members of the Gadabursi (Isaaq-Dir)1328 and Issa clans.1329 In the port town of Zeylac and throughout the Awdal region, the majority of the population is Gadabursi.1330

For additional details on clans in Awdal region, please see section 2.7.1.1 of the EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (September 2021) and section 2.8.1 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

According to **Map 3** Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025 and **Map 2** Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 1 April 2023, Al-Shabaab did not control any territory in Awdal region. The entire region including the cities of Zeylac (Zeila), Lughaye, and Borama was reported to be under the control of the 'Somaliland administration (separatist)'.1331

Conflict dynamics

In May 2023, clashes between protesters and security forces were reported in different locations in Somaliland, including Borama city,1332 'where local clan members have long complained about marginalisation.'1333

At a conference in Ottawa, Canada, in September 2023, Gadabursi clan chiefs stated their desire for the Awdal region to secede from Somaliland.1334 In a declaration all Awdal officers and troops who were currently serving in the Somaliland army were urged to leave to the front and return to Awdal 'in order to liberate it as soon as possible.'1335 In October 2023, election-related tensions remained simmering, as Gadabursi clan leaders were trying to organise both inside and outside of Somaliland.1336 However, as of April 2025, no further information on this subject could be found. Please see section 2.8.3 Togdheer on information regarding the Somaliland presidential elections in November 2024.

☐ (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported six security incidents in Awdal region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing one fatality. **Figure 23** below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.1337 At district level, Borama recorded three security incidents, followed by Baki district (two incidents) and Zeylac district (one incident).1338

1339_ACLED_somalia_security_2025

Figure 23. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Awdal.1339

Gadabursi (sub-) clan militias were involved in three incidents, while Police Forces of Somaliland were involved in two incidents. The one fatality was recorded in Zeylac district and involved the killing of an off-duty Somaliland police officer, the deputy commander of the Awdal coastal naval forces,1340 by Somaliland police forces in Lawyacaddo village.1341

Conflict-related displacement

According to the UNHCR PRMN, eight individuals were newly displaced from Awdal region due to conflict or insecurity in the period from 1 April 2023 to 16 March 2025. All were displaced from Borama district to Garowe district, Nugal region in August 2023. In the same period, no individuals arrived from other regions or were displaced within the region.1342 For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, please see section 2.8.1 of the EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (February 2023).

Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded no humanitarian access incidents1343 in Awdal region in the period from April to December 2023.1344 In 2024, two humanitarian access incidents were recorded.1345

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

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

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  IOM, DTM Somalia – Baseline Assessment Dataset – Round 3 (February 2024 – September 2024), 3 December 2024, url; IOM notes that 'Regarding the regions in Somaliland state, DTM teams reached a low coverage of the settlements to be assessed. Therefore, the population figures displayed in this report are underestimated and should be interpreted with caution'.

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  Somali Digest (The), Analysis: The prospect of conflict in the Awdal region, 28 September 2023, url

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  Daljir, Awdal, the sacrificial lamb, and the Devil's bargain between IOG of Djibouti and Habar Awal clansmen of Somaliland, 23 May 2023, url

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  Reporter (The), Ethiopia's pursuit of a naval base: Navigating Somalia's clan politics, 4 November 2023, url

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PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 31 March 2025, n.a.; PolGeoNow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of 1 April 2023, n.a.

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  Hiiraan Online, Protests turn violent in Borama: demonstrators seek justice for fallen coast guard officer, 8 May 2023, url

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  International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., url

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  Somali Digest (The), Breaking: Awdal announced it is breaking away from Somaliland, 4 September 2023, url

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  Somali Digest (The), Breaking: Awdal announced it is breaking away from Somaliland, 4 September 2023, url

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  International Crisis Group, CrisisWatch – Somaliland: April 2023 – March 2025, n.d., url

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  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

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  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

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  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.

- 1340

  VOA Somali, Taliye ku-xigeenkii ciidamada badda xeebta Awdal oo la dilay [The deputy commander of the Awdal coastal naval forces has been killed], 5 May 2023, url

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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

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

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  The term is used by UNOCHA to describe events or actions that impede humanitarian operations, such as, for example, violence against humanitarian staff, the carjacking of humanitarian vehicles or restrictions on the movement of humanitarian staff or humanitarian supplies. UNOCHA, Somalia: Humanitarian Access Snapshot: October – December 2023, 1 January 2024, url, p. 1

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  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

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

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