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2.3.1. Security Situation

○ (a) Background

Benadir (or Banadir/Benaadir) region is located on the south-eastern coast of Somalia and shares internal borders with Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle regions.849 It covers the same area as the municipality of Mogadishu and effectively constitutes a territory under direct FGS administration.850 Mogadishu city is divided into 20 municipal districts: Warta Nabada (formerly known as Wardhigley)851 Abdiaziz, Bondhere, Daynile, Hamar-Jajab, Hamar-Weyne, Hodan, Howl-Wadag, Huriwa (Heliwaa), Kaxda, Karan, Shangani, Shibis, Waberi, Wadajir, Yaqshid, Dharkenley, Darusalam, Garasbaley and Gubadley.852 The three last-mentioned districts were included into the city of Mogadishu in May 2024.853

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Benadir region at 3 171 391 (IPC),854 and 2 181 609 (IOM).855 While Mogadishu is inhabited by individuals from all Somali clans856 as well as minorities,857 it is dominated by the Hawiye clan,858 with the mayor, the deputy mayors and the majority of district commissioners appointed from among the Hawiye sub-clans.859 For more detailed background information on Benadir region and Mogadishu, including its demographic composition, see section 2.3.1. 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.

Forces present in the city include federal security forces, the Presidential Guard, police forces, security forces answering to the Benadir regional authorities, numerous private security firms and clan protection forces.860 Responsibility for ensuring general security of the Presidential Palace (Villa Somalia) was transferred from ATMIS to the SNA in late 2023.861 African Union (AU) peacekeeping forces were housed at Halane Base camp862 at Aden Adde International Airport863 and operated a forward operating base (FOB) at Mogadishu's seaport.864 Since 2017 Turkish forces also operated a military base, Camp Turksom, in the capital.865

Meanwhile, Mogadishu's security landscape has been described as 'porous'.866 While Al-Shabaab lacks permanent sites in Mogadishu, it has been operating in the city,867 relying on the presence of agents of its Amniyat intelligence service in government-held areas, whose operations state security services have struggled to disrupt.868 In September 2024, the Somali Digest news website reported that the group had set up a network of bases at strategic locations in the northern Mogadishu outskirts, collecting taxes and administering justice.869 More recently, in March 2025, it was reported that several other suburbs had witnessed a notable rise in Al-Shabaab operations, including Daynile district870 in the northwestern outskirts,871 long viewed as a relatively stable area with a strong security presence.872 Local residents in these areas were quoted as saying that militants were moving without hindrance and erecting checkpoints, conducting patrols and launching attacks.873

Conflict dynamics

Despite years of counter-terrorism efforts by the FGS and international forces874 that continued and intensified at certain points during the reference period875 (including in Daynile and Kaxda in August 2024876 and Hamarweyne in October 2024877) Al-Shabaab has shown resilience and adaptability.878 The group continued to find new ways to infiltrate Mogadishu879 and posed an ongoing threat to its security,880 mainly in the outskirts881 but also in well-protected and sensitive zones.882 Further threats to security stemmed from armed clans groups opposing the FGS.883

During the reference period, Al-Shabaab infiltrated and attacked at least two Somali military sites, including the Jaalle Siyaad Military Academy (July 2023)884 and the General Gordon military base (February 2024),885 as well as carrying out bomb attacks against checkpoints and members of the security forces.886 At least two bombings during the reference period targeted the General Kaahiye Police Academy in Hamar-

Jajab district[887] and its immediate vicinity.[888]

In a trend continuing from the previous reference period, Villa Somalia and UN facilities at Aden Adde International Airport areas remained frequent targets of mortar attacks by Al-Shabaab.[889] The group also targeted AU peacekeeping troops at the airport[890] and the Turkish military base.[891] The group's repeated mortars attacks on the Villa Somalia area struck the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources (April 2023),[892] the Presidential Palace (July 2023),[893] and residential areas where they caused civilian casualties.[894] Most recently, a bomb attack targeted the motorcade of Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who survived unharmed (March 2025).[895]

Moreover, the group carried out deadly complex/suicide attacks targeting, among others reported events, the Pearl Beach Hotel on Lido Beach (June 2023),[896] a tea shop (September 2023)[897] and a hotel near Villa Somalia (March 2024), a coffee shop in Bondhere district (July 2024) and, notably, a restaurant on Lido Beach (August 2024)[898] in what was reported as the most lethal attack in Mogadishu since October 2022.[899] Unclaimed bombings further killed six telecom workers in Garasbaley district (April 2024),[900] and five further individuals near the National Theatre in the vicinity of Villa Somalia (September 2024).[901]

Furthermore, Al-Shabaab carried out attacks against businesses that had complied with orders from the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) to install CCTV cameras,[902] with reports of bombings in the city's commercial districts of Laba Dhagax and Bakaro market.[903] Several suburbs including Daynile also saw bombings,[904] as well as killings of businessmen.[905]

Several individuals were reported to have been killed or injured by security forces in the context of protests led by members of the Hawiye/Abgaal clan in central Mogadishu (March 2024).[906] Moreover, forces aligned with the President of Somalia clashed with gunmen allegedly linked to the opposition in the city's outskirts (February 2025).[907]

○ (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED recorded 830 security incidents in Benadir region/Mogadishu (battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians), causing 869 fatalities. Figure 14 below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.[908] At municipal district level,[909] Daynile district recorded the most security incidents between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 (190 incidents), followed by Hodan district (115 incidents) and Dharkenley district (84 incidents).[910]

Security events in Benadir

Figure 14. Evolution of ACLED security events coded ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Benadir.[911]

ACLED recorded 624 incidents involving Al-Shabaab (coded as either ‘Actor 1’, ‘Associated Actor 1’, ‘Actor 2’, or ‘Associated Actor 2’). Of these, 462 incidents involved both Al-Shabaab and the Military or Police Forces of Somalia, while 190 incidents involved both Al-Shabaab and Somali civilians.[912]

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

- on 9 June 2023, Al-Shabaab carried out a complex attack on the busy Pearl Beach Hotel on Lido Beach. The attackers used suicide bombings to gain access to the facility and carried out ‘random shootings’ while taking hostages,[913] leaving nine people dead,[914] and another 10 injured;[915]

- on 14 and 15 March 2024, Al-Shabaab carried out a complex attack[916] against the Syl Hotel, often frequented by government officials. The attack left three soldiers dead and 27 other people injured;[917]

- on 2 August 2024, Al-Shabaab carried out another complex attack on Lido Beach, targeting civilians at a restaurant.[918] The attack involved suicide bombings and indiscriminate firing into crowds.[919] UN estimates on fatalities ranged from at least 37 to nearly 100, with injuries estimated at between around 184 and 250; [920]

- in early October 2024, Al-Shabaab killed four businessmen in the suburbs of Daynile and Suqa Holaha for complying with the authorities' order to install CCTV cameras.[921]

For additional information on illustrative incidents in Mogadishu see paragraph on Armed attacks in the section 1.2.2 Al-Shabaab control areas, presence, and influence.

Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 1 952 individuals were newly displaced from areas of Benadir due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. Of this group, 492 individuals were displaced within the same administrative region, while 1 460 individuals were displaced to other regions, including Lower Juba, Nugal, and Bari. During the same period, 78 177 individuals arrived from other regions (Lower Juba, Middle Juba, Bakool, Bay, Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Hiraan, Galgaduud, and Mudug).[922] For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, see section 2.2.3. of the EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (February 2023).

Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded 55 humanitarian access incidents in Benadir region between April and December 2023[923] and another 43 over the year 2024,[924] the highest prevalence among all regions.[925] These incidents, which complicated access to aid and services, included evictions of thousands of IDP households,[926] the demolishing of a nutrition facility (Hodan district),[927] mortar attacks on Aden Adde International Airport housing UN personnel, and intensifying security operations in Kahda and Daynile hampering access to IDP camps.[928] According to data recorded by the NRC, 49 122 individuals were evicted in Benadir during 2024. Most evictions occurred in Kaxda (21 635), Daynile (13 147) and Garasbaley districts (12 264).[929]

In August 2024, Al-Shabaab attacked the Safa and Marwa markets on the city's outskirts with explosives and fire, inflicting significant damage to goods and property, estimated at 4 million USD.930

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