

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, Shibus, 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 district⁸⁸⁷ 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 airport⁸⁹⁰ 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](#)

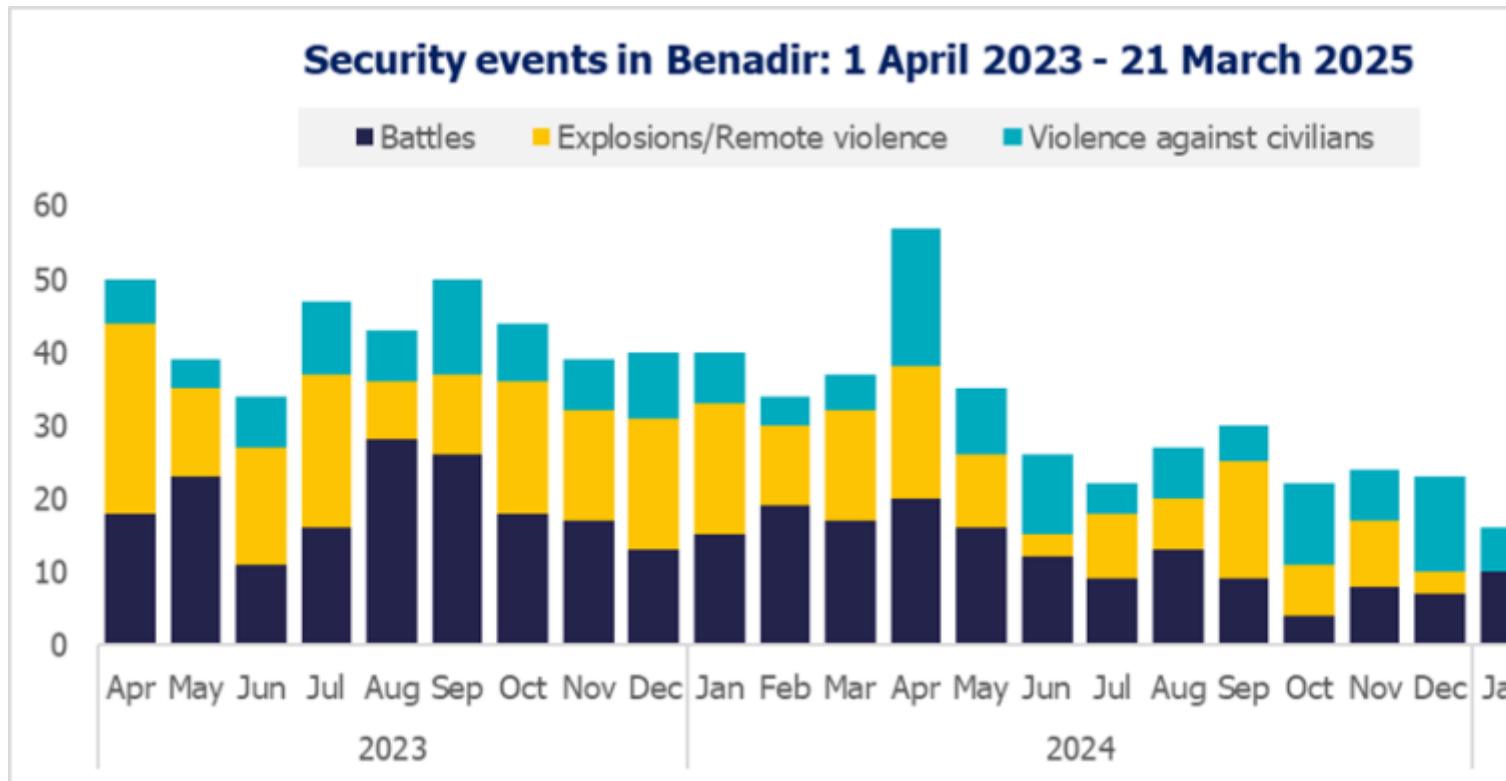


Figure 14. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Benadir.[911](#)

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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