

2.4.3. Hirshabelle - Checkpoints and road security

In April 2023, local media reported on illegal checkpoints across Hirshabelle State,^{[1037](#)} which were often set up by FGS troops and clan militias in areas re-captured from Al-Shabaab. Established along important transportation routes, these checkpoints had reportedly become 'hubs of extortion' for travellers.^{[1038](#)}

According to a report published by the RVI, 18 % of all of Somalia's checkpoints were located in Hirshabelle State as of October 2023, predominantly in the Middle Shabelle region (76 %).^{[1039](#)} For an overview on checkpoints at country level see section [1.7](#) and [Map 4](#).

According to a report by the University of Edinburgh's Peace and Conflict Resolution Evidence Platform (PeaceRep) of January 2025, checkpoints in and near the towns of Belet Weyne and Jowhar – both located along important trade routes connecting their respective regions with the south – generated tens of thousands of dollars per week in taxation revenues, while distribution was unclear and control was in the hand of 'key individuals'.^{[1040](#)} The income from checkpoints in Hiraan was, according to the authors, 'effectively a clan resource' for the Hawadle or any other clan entity that had control over the respective checkpoint.^{[1041](#)}

In April 2024, ACLED pointed to Al-Shabaab fighters patrolling along the Balcad-Mogadishu road and using hidden checkpoints to collect taxes from commercial and private transport, and to watch over the presence and activities of security forces in certain areas.^{[1042](#)} Local media reported on improvised explosive devices (IEDs) along the Balcad-Jowhar road, resulting in civilian casualties in September 2024.^{[1043](#)} As of November 2024, Al-Shabaab reportedly continued to control the road connecting Balcad to Jowhar. Sporadic shooting and the threat of new attacks made the road 'practically a no-go zone', according to a resident of the area.^{[1044](#)} The Horn Observer noted that, as of February 2025, Al Shabaab had flooded the main road between the cities of Jowhar and Mogadishu, forcing vehicles to take Al-Shabaab-controlled detours where 'heavy extortion' was imposed.^{[1045](#)}

Two strategic towns along the Main Supply Routes from Mahadaay to Adan Yabaal were reportedly re-captured by Al-Shabaab in April 2024.^{[1046](#)}

^{[1037](#)}

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Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Regains Strategic Locations in Middle Shabelle Amid Clan Rivalries, 27 April 2024, [url](#)