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2.1.1. Gedo

(a) Background

Gedo, Somalia's second-largest region,⁴¹⁸ is located in the southern part of the country. It shares international borders with Kenya to the west and Ethiopia to the north-west and internal borders with Bakool to the north-east, Bay to the east and Middle Juba and Lower Juba to the south. The region is divided into six districts: Garbahaarey (or Garbaharey), Luuq, Doolow, Belet Xaawo (or Bulo Hawa), Ceel Waaq (or El Waq/El Wak) and Bardhere (or Baardheere).⁴¹⁹ The region's capital is Garbahaarey.⁴²⁰ Due to its porous borders with Kenya and Ethiopia, Gedo has significant strategic value.⁴²¹ Long-standing disputes between the Jubbaland administration and the federal government over Gedo have kept the region in a state of semi-autonomy.⁴²²

As of September 2024, sources variously estimated the population of Gedo region at 975 586 (IPC),⁴²³ and 713 299 (IOM).⁴²⁴ Gedo's clan composition is diverse. The Marehan (Darood) is the most powerful clan in political and military terms, dominating virtually all of the territory west of the Juba river. On the eastern bank, the Rahanweyn clan predominates in rural areas.⁴²⁵ For more detailed information on Gedo region's clan composition, [see section 2.1.1.1. of the EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation \(September 2021\)](#).

(b) Actors' presence and conflict dynamics

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

A variety of armed actors were present in Gedo region.⁴²⁶ 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 controlled most of Gedo’s territory, including the towns and surroundings of El Adde (central Gedo) and Cows Qurun (western Gedo) as well as large rural territories extending across most of Ceel Waag and Belet Xaawo districts and parts of Garbahaarey district and southward into Middle Juba region. Control over the rural surroundings of Garbahaarey, Belet Xaawo, Burdhubo and Bardhere towns continued to be mixed between Al-Shabaab and the FGS-aligned coalition.⁴²⁷ In the remaining rural areas, including around Doolow, Luuq and Ceel Waaq towns, control has been mixed between Al-Shabaab and Jubbaland regional forces since FGS forces withdrew from parts of Gedo following a suspension of ties between the Jubbaland State and the FGS in November 2024.⁴²⁸

[Map 3](#) shows that as of 31 March 2025, the previously FGS-controlled⁴²⁹ towns of Doolow, Luuq and Ceel Waaq were under the control of the Jubbaland regional forces. Meanwhile, Garbahaarey, Belet Xaawo and Burdhubo remained in the hands of the FGS coalition, while control of Bardhere was mixed between the FGS coalition and Jubbaland forces.⁴³⁰ Other sources similarly noted that, as of December 2024, the FGS controlled Garbahaarey⁴³¹ and had a military presence in Belet Xaawo,⁴³² while the Jubbaland forces controlled Doolow.⁴³³

Gedo region continued to be a strategic target for Al-Shabaab’s activities due its proximity to Kenya.⁴³⁴ The group continued to sustain a significant presence in the region,⁴³⁵ where its operations aimed at weakening local governance and disrupting cooperation with Kenya in security matters.⁴³⁶ However, in August 2024, the SNA and the Jubbaland Dervish Force⁴³⁷ recaptured ten villages along the strategic Luuq–Doolow road that had previously served as military strongholds for Al-Shabaab to exert control, including by demanding bribes and instilling fear among residents.⁴³⁸

Attempts by both the FGS and the Jubbaland administration to gain control over Jubbaland resulted in military buildups in the Ceel Waaq area in November 2024.⁴³⁹ Amid escalating tensions with Jubbaland forces,⁴⁴⁰ the FGS mobilised forces the following month,⁴⁴¹ airlifting troops into the regional capital Garbahaarey.⁴⁴² In late 2024, Gedo further saw a buildup of Ethiopian forces⁴⁴³ who had reportedly seized key strategic airports in September 2024⁴⁴⁴ (including those in Garbahaarey, Bardhere, Luuq and Doolow)⁴⁴⁵ and taken control of several villages in the region’s north.⁴⁴⁶

Conflict dynamics

As of late December 2024, the situation in Gedo has been described as being ‘volatile’⁴⁴⁷ and affected by crisis as tensions between Jubbaland authorities and the FGS were escalating into violent clashes.⁴⁴⁸

In the early months of the reference period, Al-Shabaab carried out a number of attacks

on military bases that were being operated by ATMIS troops (on the outskirts of Doolow town⁴⁴⁹ and near Bardhere airport, both in June 2023)⁴⁵⁰ or had been handed over from ATMIS to local forces⁴⁵¹ (at Giriley in July 2023).⁴⁵² Attacks on such military sites involved twin bombings using explosive-laden cars⁴⁵³ or were carried out with firearms.⁴⁵⁴ Giriley base, a military site whose control had been transferred to the Jubbaland Dervish Force, notably first came under Al-Shabaab attack on 4 July 2023⁴⁵⁵ and was then briefly⁴⁵⁶ captured on 13 July 2023,⁴⁵⁷ the second attack leaving at least one civilian dead.⁴⁵⁸ The temporary capture of the base highlighted vulnerabilities of the state forces, raising fears that Al-Shabaab could exploit a vacuum left by the departure of ATMIS forces.⁴⁵⁹

In early August 2023, the FGS launched a new counter-insurgency campaign named Operation Black Lion.⁴⁶⁰ Forces of the SNA and Jubbaland Dervishes retook strategic sites from Al-Shabaab along the Luuq-Doolow road (August 2023),⁴⁶¹ with further operations by Jubbaland and Ethiopian forces reported the following month.⁴⁶² At least one suspected Kenyan airstrike in Al-Shabaab-held El Adde town caused civilian deaths (September 2023).⁴⁶³

The launch of Operation Black Lion in the summer of 2023 was followed by a rise in Al-Shabaab attacks on local officials supporting counter-insurgency.⁴⁶⁴ The reference period also saw Al-Shabaab publicly executing five men it accused of spying for the FGS, the Jubbaland State or the USA (June 2023).⁴⁶⁵ The group further carried out deadly bombings against SNA forces travelling between Luuq and Doolow,⁴⁶⁶ as well as in Belet Xaawo.⁴⁶⁷ Moreover, unclaimed IED attacks killed civilians on the Belet Xaawo-Doolow road (May 2024)⁴⁶⁸ and a senior official in Belet Xaawo (January 2025).⁴⁶⁹

Amid escalating tensions between FGS and Jubbaland authorities, their forces recently clashed in Doolow in December 2024⁴⁷⁰ (leaving at least four people dead),⁴⁷¹ Ceel Waaq in January 2025 (leaving two dead)⁴⁷² and Bardhere in February 2025⁴⁷³ (leaving six dead).⁴⁷⁴

Gedo is one of the country's regions in which clan violence has been reported to be particularly widespread.⁴⁷⁵ Indeed, 2024 saw a notable increase in clan violence.⁴⁷⁶ In early July 2024, fighting between two rival clan-based militia groups in Luuq district involving both light and heavy weaponry⁴⁷⁷ resulted in a death toll ranging between four and 30 or more fatalities.⁴⁷⁸ It was believed that these clashes had been sparked by land disputes.⁴⁷⁹ Further clashes between tribal/clan militias were reported in the same district in October 2024 (resulting in between six and 20 or more deaths)⁴⁸⁰ and February 2025 (causing an unconfirmed number of deaths).⁴⁸¹

□ (c) Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

Between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025, ACLED reported 248 security incidents in Gedo region, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 180 fatalities. **Figure 8** below shows their evolution per type across the reference period.[482](#) At district level, Bardhere district recorded the most security incidents (60 incidents), followed by Belet Xaawo (48 incidents) and Garbahaarey and Luuq districts (47 incidents each).[483](#)

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Figure 8. Evolution of ACLED security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' between 1 April 2023 and 21 March 2025 in Gedo.[484](#)

ACLED recorded 191 incidents involving Al-Shabaab (coded as either 'Actor 1', 'Associated Actor 1', 'Actor 2', or 'Associated Actor 2'). Of these incidents, 135 involved both Al-Shabaab and the Military or Police Forces of Somalia, including 16 incidents involving Al-Shabaab and Jubbaland security forces. A further six incidents involved both the Rahanweyn-Moalim Weyne and Rahanweyn-Gawaweene subclan militia, while another seven incidents involved Rahanweyn-Moalim Weyne subclan militia and Marehan clan militia.[485](#)

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

- on 13 July 2023, Al-Shabaab captured the strategic Giriley military base from Jubbaland forces following a firefight. At least one civilian was killed in the attack, along with two soldiers.[486](#) The Jubbaland Dervish Forces recaptured the base the next day;[487](#)
- on 16 May 2024, at least two civilians were killed and five others injured when an unclaimed landmine struck their vehicle on the Belet Xaawo–Doolow road;[488](#)
- on 5 February 2025, FGS forces attacked the Bardhere district headquarters.[489](#) Six people were killed in ensuing clashes with Jubbaland forces;[490](#)
- on 20 October 2024, clashes between rival clans in Luuq district left between six and 20 or more people dead.[491](#)

Conflict-related displacement

Between 1 April 2023 and 16 March 2025, 94 452 individuals were newly displaced from Gedo due to conflict or insecurity, according to the UNHCR PRMN. Of this group,

the vast majority (90 641 individuals) were displaced within the same administrative region, while 3 811 individuals were displaced to other regions, including Middle Juba, Lower Juba, Bakool, Bari, and Nugal. During the same period, 26 778 individuals arrived from other regions (Middle Juba and Lower Juba, Bakool, Bay, Hiraan, Middle and Lower Shabelle, and Galgaduud). At district level, Luuq, by a wide margin, was both the district most affected by IDPs departures to other regions (3 540, including 3 510 who were displaced in July 2024) and by intra-regional IDP departures to other locations within Gedo region (84 611 including around 45 000 in July 2024 and another 36 000 in October 2024).[492](#)

According to UNOCHA data, some 42 000 people were displaced due to violence between clans in the Luuq area between 5 and 7 July 2024, including 12 000 who fled to hard-to-access areas outside Luuq town such as Ceel Boon, Yurkud, and Bashiiro. Some of the IDPs fled towards Wajid town in South West State.[493](#) Further clashes in October 2024 displaced another 30 000 people, including individuals who had previously been affected by displacement or had recently returned.[494](#) Additional large-scale displacement resulted from escalating violence between FGS and Jubbaland forces in Bardhere in early February 2025.[495](#)

For information on conflict-related displacement prior to April 2023, [see section 2.1.1. of the EUAA COI Report on Somalia: Security Situation \(February 2023\)](#).

Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA recorded 28 humanitarian access incidents in Gedo region between April and December 2023[496](#) and another 29 over the year 2024,[497](#) including security forces opening fire on a vehicle of humanitarian workers at an IDP camp and hitting one aid worker (first quarter of 2024),[498](#) the killing of two humanitarian workers amid the clan conflict in Luuq (July 2024), the hijacking of a lorry transporting humanitarian supplies in Doolow (third quarter of 2024),[499](#) an attack by clan militias on an NGO office in Burdhubo, and the detention of humanitarian staff (fourth quarter of 2024).[500](#) Earlier, the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition recorded the hijacking of a lorry carrying medical supplies (third quarter of 2023).[501](#) Moreover, the inter-clan clashes that erupted in Luuq town in early July 2024 led to the burning of a main market with hundreds of shops.[502](#)

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