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1.1. Recent political and security developments

This report updates and builds upon the previous EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (February 2023,35 and EASO COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (September 2021).36 Ample reference is also made to other reports of the same package that provide for further context information and details, such as the EASO COI Report Somalia: Actors (July 2021),37 and the EASO COI Report Somalia: Targeted profiles (September 2021).38

Main political developments. After assuming power in May 2022,39 and launching the all-out war against Al-Shabaab in August the same year,40 the second political cycle of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (HSM) started with promises of peace and reconciliation,41 and raised expectations at country level.42 However, his later political engagements with the constitutional amendments43 and the linked One Person One Vote agenda44 alienated political supporters and key stakeholders along the process, among others for lack of consultation and consensus-building,45 while they diverted the country's attention from tackling more pressing security issues.46 The Federal Government of Somalia's (FGS) unilateral political push towards the above-mentioned reforms,47 which were in part adopted in March 2024,48 also contributed to divide the President's own clan power base,49 which otherwise had supported his political project in the beginning.50 Among others, Puntland stopped to recognise the FGS as from 31 March 2024,51 while Jubbaland severed his ties with it in November 2024,52 after the FGS contested the re-election of Madobe at the head of the regional state, which also led to a military confrontation between Jubbaland regional forces and federal security forces.53

In another development, in the Sool and Sanaag regions, which are contested between Puntland and Somaliland, a new administrative entity, Sool Sanaag Cayn-Khatumo state (SSC-K), was established in February 2023,54 and also recognised by the FGS of Somalia as from October 2023,55 after the militia of the locally dominant clan heavily clashed with Somaliland's security forces.56 At the same time, at the beginning of 2024, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ethiopia and Somaliland further challenged the authority of the FGS and widened the distance between the two political projects.57 As a reaction, the FGS threatened to expel Ethiopian armed forces from its soil, in a move that also triggered strong reactions from the concerned local communities in extended areas of the country.58

These and other political developments signal the chronic fragmentation and fragility of Somalia's political settlement.59 Against this backdrop, at the end of 2024, the renewal of the African Union Mission in Somalia, rebranded AUSSOM, replaced a phasing out ATMIS (1 April

2022 – 31 December 2024), and was crucial to prevent a ‘security vacuum’.60 However, ‘perennial funding challenges’ undermined the financial sustainability of the mission, while at the time of writing there was still lack of clarity on its hybrid cost sharing mechanism.61 After successfully unleashing its Shabelle offensive,62 at the end of March 2025 Al-Shabaab group started to impinge on Mogadishu,63 raising national security concerns.64 By the same time, the FGS seemed incapable of exerting full control even in parts of capital.65 It is against this backdrop that, at the end of March 2025, the state President, after having survived a major attack on his life some days earlier,66 decided to call for a National Dialogue, with the aim to reunite all major political actors and opposition leaders against the common enemy.67

Main security developments. Based on ACLED data, in the period April 2023 – March 2025, Somalia has been the theatre of almost 6 000 reported security events, resulting in almost 15 000 estimated fatalities.68 In the two preceding years, with a comparable number of security events – 5 724 – the number of estimated fatalities was substantially lower, around 11 450.69 In the reference period of this report, the average number of security events per month was almost 250. With just a few exceptions, it remained constantly above 200 throughout the entire period, while it raised sensibly in July-September 2023 and February-March 2025, when it respectively reached almost 300 per month, and then peaked at 331 reported events in February 2025, as shown in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** below. The resulting number of recorded fatalities peaked during the same periods. More than one third of all estimated fatalities recorded between April 2023 and March 2025 - about 5 800 out of 15 000 - were registered during the two intervals above, which corresponded with the following major military and security operations:70

- first, operation Black Lion, a renewed joint offensive against Al-Shabaab, unleashed in the period August-September 2023, notably in Galgaduud, Middle Shabelle, Hiraan and Mudug regions;71 concomitantly with it, other intense armed interactions took place in Lower Shabelle, Lower Juba and Bakool regions in July-September 2023; these two sets of events alone resulted in more than 2 800 fatalities;72

- second, a renewed Al-Shabaab offensive against Government and allied forces, launched in February 2025 and still on-going at the end of March 2025, which took place notably in Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, and Lower Shabelle regions;73 concomitantly with it, in Puntland the Hilaac offensive against ISIS was deployed in the al-Miskaad mountains in the Bari region during January and February 2025,74 and was still on-going at the time of writing (April 2025). Almost another 2 000 fatalities were estimated to have been caused by the unleashing of these two other sets of operations in the period January - 21 March 2025.75

In addition, other military operations and confrontations against Al-Shabaab,76 indiscriminate and widespread forms of targeting across the country,77 rising levels of clan conflicts,78 and other layers of conflict, which will be discussed in more detail in the remainder of this chapter, have contributed to ongoing sources of insecurity in the country. For further details see section on 1.4 Recent overall security trends.

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