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1. General remarks

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: October 2025

1.1. The structure of the Somali governance

The information below is retrieved from the following EUAA COI report and query: Security Situation 2025, 1.1.; COI Update 2025, 1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Somalia is a Federal State composed of two levels of government: the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS), which include both state and local governments. FMS also have their own constitutions and armed forces.

South-Central Somalia includes the following FMS: Jubbaland, South-West, Benadir, Hirshabelle and Galmudug. Mudug region is divided between Galmudug and Puntland, with Galmudug controlling the southern half of the region.

Puntland, as an autonomous state within the Somali Federal State, was established on 1 August 1998. As of March 2024, Puntland stopped recognising the FGS. Relations between the FGS and Puntland have remained strained until 31 July 2025. Following the refusal of Puntland in March 2025 to participate in the National Dialogue conference, Puntland and Jubbaland exhibited a joint stance of ‘no forward movement on elections or constitutional reform’, and therefore a constitutional crisis appeared imminent in Somalia.

Somaliland declared its independence in 1991 while the civil war was occurring in the rest of Somalia. Somaliland remains internationally unrecognised.

In terms of territorial control and influence, some areas of Sool and Sanaag regions and the area of Ayn (Togdheer region) are contested between Somaliland and Puntland. In the Sool and Sanaag regions, the FGS recognized Sool Sanaag Cayn-Khatumo (SSC-K) as a new administrative entity in October 2023. In April 2025, the FGS officially recognized SSC-K as a federal member state, declaring its territories part of Somalia and not 'disputed areas'. For a depiction of the territorial control and influence in Somalia (South-Central Somalia, Somaliland, Puntland) see Map: areas of control and influence.

○ 1.2. The role of clans in Somalia

The information below is retrieved from the following EUAA COI reports: Country Focus 2025, 1.4., 1.5.; Actors 2021, 1., 2., 3.2., 3., 3.2.; Targeting 2021, 4.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Group belonging is important in Somalia. Layered in all aspects of life, the clan is both a tool for identification and a way of life. Clans define the relationship between people and belonging to a strong clan matters in terms of access to the job market, resources, political influence, justice, and security.

Somalis are roughly divided in five large clan families: the Dir, the Isaaq, the Darood, the Hawiye and the Rahanweyn. Large segments of the Somali population are considered as minorities, either in local context or in Somalia in general, due to living amongst larger clans or due to their occupational status. Somalis are traditionally attached to a territory where their kin are more numerous. Until today, most Somalis still rely on support from patrilineal clan relatives.

Clans often compete against each other, as well as against other actors. However, they also find alliances with other clans or actors. Those fluid relationships are influencing the power balance in the local context. Clan militias are also important actors of political life across Somalia.

Under the customary clan law, the *xeer* system, clan elders act as mediators, arbiters and judges, playing a central role in the resolution of local and intra-clan disputes. It is estimated that 80 % of all civil and criminal cases in Somalia are settled through the *xeer* system which in 2014 was adopted by the Ministry of Justice as a supplementary approach to justice, renaming it as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

Therefore, clan affiliation can be both a factor of support and of risk, varying by region and local power dynamics. For more information on the clan composition of the regions

in Somalia, see EUAA COI report: Security Situation, 2025.

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