



1. General description of the security situation in Somalia

1.1. Recent political and security developments

At the end of March 2026, Somalia's political situation looked fractured and highly volatile.³² Both the parliament and the President's mandate were about to expire – on 14 April and on 15 May 2026 respectively – while the country still lacked a nationally shared political agenda on the way forward,³³ including agreement on the electoral model.³⁴ While the incumbent President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (HSM), continued to push for the controversially adopted Constitutional reviews – which, among others, extended the mandate of both the President and the Parliament of one year, from four to five – Somalia's political arena remained highly divided and polarised.³⁵ Opposition leaders, grouped under the Somali Future Council, refused to accept the term extension and,³⁶ after having failed to find an agreed solution in the framework of the so called National Dialogue conference,³⁷ called for an alternative forum with the aim to 'defend' the 2012 Constitution.³⁸ Initially scheduled for 10 April 2026,³⁹ the conference was later postponed indefinitely.⁴⁰

Political divisions at Federal Government level continued to reverberate at Federal Member State (FMS) level, where relations were, at time, tense or outrightly broken.⁴¹ While Madobe's Jubbaland and Deni's Puntland continued to disavow HSM's government,⁴² the leaders of the less economically viable South-West, Hirshabelle, and Galmudug states, traditionally more aligned with the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS),⁴³ remained subject to its influence and outreach.⁴⁴ At the end of March 2026, when relations with the later deposed leader Laftagareen fell apart completely,⁴⁵ the FGS deployed the army to regain control of Baidoa,⁴⁶ and then established a friendly ad-interim administration in the South West State.⁴⁷ At the same time, with the mandate of their respective leaders long expired, overdue regional elections were expected to take place in all three FMS mentioned above, supposedly adopting, at the request of the FGS, the One Person One Vote (OPOV) system.⁴⁸ In the federal government's aligned North-East State instead, an indirect vote had taken place in August 2025.⁴⁹ However, the newly established administration remained challenged by competing territorial claims and affiliations of its main constituencies.⁵⁰ Against this general backdrop, at the end of December 2025, the Israel's recognition of Somaliland further exacerbated its distance from Somalia's political project and aggravated the friction between the two political entities.⁵¹

In parallel to all these political developments, in the course of the reference period of the report, the FGS concluded or further deepened a number of bilateral military and defence cooperation agreements with regional states and powers, notably with Türkiye,⁵² Egypt,⁵³ Qatar,⁵⁴

Djibouti,[55](#) Saudi Arabia,[56](#) Uganda,[57](#) Pakistan,[58](#) and Italy.[59](#) At the same time, all agreements with the United Arab Emirates, spanning key port operations, security cooperation and defence, were severed.[60](#) Often involving the supply of military equipment, the above-mentioned agreements contributed to, among others, secure regional support to Somalia in the controversy with Israel,[61](#) and de facto ease the pressure on the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), whose financial sustainability remained particularly strained.[62](#)

Within this framework, in the period April 2025 – March 2026, instances of political violence took place predominantly in two separate areas of the country, namely in South-Central Somalia and in Puntland in the north.[63](#) These regions were the location of security events that comprised all type of political violence – battles, remote violence, and violence against civilians – and that were explained by various conflict drivers, notably the Al-Shabaab anti-Al-Shabaab conflict, which accounted for about 62 % of all events, but also clan rivalries – ~ 11 % – and other types of conflicts. In Puntland, Bari region, most events were to be attributed to the military operations against the Islamic State in Somalia and related security incidents, which accounted for about 15 % of the total registered in the period.[64](#)

As a consequence, during the reference period of the report (April 2025 – March 2026), Somalia experienced a renewed cycle of political violence that resulted in a peak number of fatalities and recorded security events. Based on ACLED data, they were 8 753 and 4 676 respectively, compared to 7 237 and 3 041 in the period April 2024 – March 2025, when they were more aligned with similar figures from previous periods.[65](#)

Figure 1: Fatalities and security events – coded as ‘battles’, ‘explosions/remote violence’ and ‘violence against civilians’ in the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2026.

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In line with the overview sketched above, the regions mostly affected were Lower Shabelle (1 905 fatalities, 976 security events), Lower Juba (1 334, 500), Middle Shabelle (1 149, 457), and Hiraaan (1 139, 352) in South-Central Somalia, as well as Bari (1 034, 719) in Puntland.[67](#)

Within this context, the number of air or drone strikes – which had surged substantially in the course of the last few years – passing from 70 instances in the period April 2022 – March 2023 to 433 in the period April 2025 – March 2026, resulted in 1 694 estimated fatalities, based on ACLED data.[68](#) All this notwithstanding, the overall security situation in Mogadishu (Benadir) experienced a further decline in the overall number of security events and resulting fatalities – 354 and 225 respectively – in line with late periods.[69](#) Reportedly, within Mogadishu, Al-Shabaab focused more on military targets than on mass civilian casualties.[70](#)

The country’s deepening political and security fragmentation is well captured by Map 3 – section [1.2.1 Territorial control maps](#), which depicts the situation as of 31 March 2026. While comparing it with the territorial control at the beginning of the reference period, from south to north, the following major changes stand out: Al-Shabaab increased marginally the areas under its control in Lower Juba, Middle Juba, and Gedo, as well as in Bay and Bakool, exception made for the area surrounding Lego along the Mogadishu – Baidoa corridor; the militant group’s territorial control expanded instead much more substantially in Hiraaan and Middle Shabelle, east of the Shabelle

river, where it regained control of strategic towns such as Mahas, Mokoqori, Adan Yabal, Nur Dugle, El Baraf, and Hawadley. Actors and exerted territorial control remained more or less unchanged in Galgadud, Mudug, Nugal, and Bari, as well as in Somaliland's uncontested regions. However, in the newly established North-East State (NES), competing claims and affiliations made the situation on the ground particularly intricate, notably in Sanaag, where large chunks of the territory were, at the end of the reference period, either contested, de facto controlled by, or affiliated with a different administration than the NES.[71](#)

Against this general political and security backdrop, at the end of the reference period (March 2026) the humanitarian situation in the country continued to experience 'an intensifying humanitarian crisis caused by consecutive failed rainy seasons, a harsh Jilaal dry period, and an emerging national drought, particularly severe in Puntland, central, and southern regions'. At the same time, humanitarian operations were increasingly challenged by rising operational costs and funding shortfalls that were 'forcing humanitarian actors to prioritize only the most life-saving interventions, leaving millions at risk of hunger, displacement, and protection concerns'.[72](#)

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