



2.1.2. Middle Juba

Middle Juba region is divided into three districts: Bu'aale, Jilib and Saakow. The region's capital is Bu'aale.[249](#) As of January 2026, Middle Juba's population was estimated at 447 217.[250](#) For more detailed background information on Middle Juba, see section 2.1.2. of the EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (May 2025).

○ **Actors presence and conflict dynamics**

Middle Juba region remained an Al-Shabaab stronghold,[251](#) with the town of Jilib serving as the group's de facto capital[252](#) and command centre.[253](#) According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2026 and [Map 2](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025, Al-Shabaab has been in control of the entire region, including the towns of Bu'aale, Jilib, Saakow, and Salagle.[254](#)

Somali forces, including NISA, and supporting international forces carried out a number of targeted military operations against Al-Shabaab in Bu'aale,[255](#) Jilib,[256](#) and Saakow districts.[257](#) These resulted in the deaths of several senior Al-Shabaab commanders [258](#) and dozens of fighters,[259](#) as well as the destruction of an explosives production facility used by the group.[260](#) Meanwhile, the group continued to execute individuals it accused of 'spying'.[261](#)

○ **Recent security trends**

In the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, ACLED recorded 109 security incidents in Middle Juba region, including battles, explosions/other forms of remote violence, and violence against civilians, causing 312 fatalities.[262](#)

Figure 11: Evolution of security events and fatalities in Middle Juba per month, based on ACLED data

Figure 11: Evolution of security events and fatalities in Middle Juba per month, based on ACLED data.[263](#)

Figure 12: Evolution of security events in Middle Juba per type, based on ACLED data.

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In the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, the following actors (coded as either 'Actor 1' or 'Actor 2') were, among others, involved in security incidents: Al-Shabaab was involved in nine incidents against Military or Police Forces of Somalia and 54 incidents of violence against civilians.[265](#)

Illustrative security incidents

- In January 2026, Al-Shabaab carried out public executions of five men in Jilib town after accusing them of having provided intelligence to Somali and US security agencies that had allegedly facilitated targeted operations and airstrikes against the group's positions.[266](#)
- On 6 February 2026, a joint military operation by NISA and international forces led to the killing of eight Al-Shabaab fighters in the Arabow area of Bu'aale district.
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- **Conflict-related displacement**

According to the UNHCR PRMN, 4 805 individuals were newly displaced in Middle Juba region due to conflict or insecurity during the period from April 2025 to February 2026. Most of them were displaced from areas located in Bu'aale (2 424) and Jilib (1 497) districts. Nearly all of those displaced in Middle Juba fled to other regions (4 798), predominantly Lower Juba (4 704). During the same period, only a very small number of displaced individuals (12) arrived in Middle Juba from another region.[268](#)

Other impacts on civilian life and humanitarian situation

A December 2025 map by UNOCHA showed 'very heavy restrictions' regarding humanitarian access in all parts of Middle Juba region.[269](#) As of January 2026, the IPC reported that about 59 % of the total analysed population of 447 217 were either in Acute Food Insecurity IPC Phase 2 (stressed, 41 %), 3 (crisis, 14 %) or 4 (emergency, 4 %).[270](#) NRC's records on evictions in 2025 and 2026 did not include data on Middle Juba.[271](#)

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