



2.2. South-West State

2.2.1. Bakool

Bakool region is divided into five districts: Xudur, Tayeeglow, Ceel Barde, Rab Dhuure, and Waajid. The region's capital is Xudur.[318](#) As of January 2026, Bakool's population was estimated at 564 958.[319](#) For more detailed background information on Bakool, see section 2.2.1. of the EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (May 2025).

○ **Actors presence and conflict dynamics**

Al-Shabaab remained present and active in Bakool.[320](#) However, in a notable development early in the reference period, Al-Shabaab[321](#) partially[322](#) lifted its longstanding blockades in Xudur[323](#) and Waajid districts.[324](#) 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 continued to hold the towns of Rab Dhuur and Tayeeglow, as well as rural areas around Tayeeglow. The group further controlled rural territories in eastern, southern, south-eastern Bakool that extended towards the northwest as far as Rab Dhuure. Meanwhile, the federal-aligned coalition continued to control the towns of Xudur, Waajid, Ceel Barde, Yeed and Ato, as well as a stretch of rural territory in the north along the Ethiopian border, delimited by Ceel Barde, Ato, and Yeed. Control over the remaining rural areas was mixed between Al-Shabaab and the federal-aligned coalition.[325](#)

Since counterinsurgency operations intensified in mid-2025,[326](#) the SNA, at times supported by Ma'awisleey local militias,[327](#) carried out a number of operations against Al-Shabaab positions and hideouts,[328](#) including in Lukugooraw, Dabgal, Ceel Lahelay, [329](#) Abal, Baani, Lafaale,[330](#) and Warta Eey Duure villages,[331](#) all located near Xudur town,[332](#) as well as along the route connecting Waajid and Xudur. Several Al-Shabaab militants[333](#) and commanders were killed,[334](#) while at least four members of the group were reported to have surrendered to FGS authorities.[335](#)

Late 2025 saw a reported rise in local clan conflicts in parts of Bakool.[336](#) Against this backdrop, the South-West State announced new steps to hold accountable individuals fuelling clan conflicts and revenge killings.[337](#)

○ Recent security trends

In the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, ACLED recorded 111 security incidents in Bakool region, including battles, explosions/other forms of remote violence, and violence against civilians, causing 100 fatalities.[338](#)

Figure 17: Evolution of security events and fatalities in Bay per month, based on ACLED data.

Figure 15: Evolution of security events and fatalities in Bakool per month, based on ACLED data.[339](#)

Figure 18: Evolution of security events in Bay per type, based on ACLED data.

Figure 16: Evolution of security events in Bakool per type, based on ACLED data.[340](#)

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 80 security incidents against Military and Police Forces of Somalia (including South-West State police forces) and 11 incidents of violence against civilians. Five security incidents involved clashes between (sub-)clan militias, while three incidents involved violence against civilians by (sub-)clan militias.[341](#)

Illustrative security incidents

- In mid-November 2025, five Al-Shabaab members, including three mid-level commanders, were killed in an offensive led by FGS forces along the road between Garasweyne and Moragabey in the vicinity of Xudur town.[342](#)

• Conflict-related displacement

According to the UNHCR PRMN, 2 837 individuals were newly displaced in Bakool region due to conflict or insecurity during the period from April 2025 to February 2026. The majority of them were displaced from areas located in Rab Dhuure (1 432) and Waajid (1 018) districts. Most displacement in Bakool occurred within the same region (2 412). During the same period, 648 displaced individuals arrived in Bakool from another region. Meanwhile, the same source recorded that 5 755 individuals had been displaced due to drought during the reference period.[343](#) Thousands were displaced to

Waaqid town due to drought in late 2025,[344](#) and to Xudur district as a result of drought, food shortages and clan conflicts in the first quarter of 2026.[345](#)

Other impacts on civilian life and humanitarian situation

A December 2025 map by UNOCHA showed ‘heavy’ and ‘very heavy restrictions’ regarding humanitarian access across most parts of Bakool, except in Waaqid and Xudur towns and their countrysides, as well as in some sections along the region’s northern border with Ethiopia, including around Ceel Barde town.[346](#) UNOCHA recorded two humanitarian access incidents over the year 2025. The lifting of long-standing blockades in Waaqid and Xudur eased some of the existing humanitarian access constraints and the movement of civilians and goods.[347](#) As of January 2026, the IPC reported that about 63 % of the total analysed population of 564 958 were either in Acute Food Insecurity IPC Phase 2 (stressed, 39 %), 3 (crisis, 19 %) or 4 (emergency, 5 %).[348](#) As of the end of the reference period, the region’s food and nutrition situation had worsened due to drought.[349](#) NRC recorded the eviction of 4 384 individuals in Bakool region in 2025 and early 2026.[350](#)

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