



2.7. Sool, Sanaag, Cayn and North-Eastern State (NES)

Following protests in Las Anod in late 2022, the situation escalated into an armed conflict between Somaliland forces and the newly formed SSC-Khatumo forces in February 2023. In August 2023, SSC-Khaatumo forces consolidated control over Las Anod after Somaliland troops withdrew from the city. In late July 2025, the 'North-East Somalia' state (NES, also Northeastern State and North East State) was established,[674](#) and recognised as Somalia's sixth federal member state[675](#) by the FGS.[676](#) The territory of NES officially encompasses Sool, Sanaag, and Buhodle with its surrounding areas[677](#) in Cayn (southern parts of Togdheer region)[678](#). However, the NES administration's control was reportedly confined to eastern Sool region, and it had 'no actual presence' in Sanaag.[679](#) Somaliland continued to claim the Sool and Sanaag regions based on its claim to the borders of the former British Somaliland protectorate, while Puntland maintained claims grounded in clan affiliation.[680](#)

○ **Actors presence and conflict dynamics**

According to Map 3 Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2026, the area between Gumays, Buhodle, Boocame, Xudun, and Taleex, including Laas Caanood, was controlled by the 'Federal-aligned coalition'. These towns, apart from Boocame, were also directly controlled by the coalition. Meanwhile, Qorilugud, Caynabo and Oog were reportedly under the control of the Somaliland administration, and small areas west of Xudun, Gumays, and Buhodle were under mixed control between the 'Federal-aligned coalition' and the 'Somaliland administration (separatist)', while areas on the eastern border including the town of Boocame were under mixed control by the 'Federal-aligned coalition' and 'Autonomous armed forces (unionist)'.[683](#) Map 2 Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2025, showed the areas and towns that are now controlled by the 'Federal-aligned coalition',[684](#) as 'Core control zone' of SCC-Khatumo.[685](#)

As noted above, the interim SSC-Khatumo was transitioned into a permanent FMS in July 2025. The formation of NES constitutes a significant change within Somalia's

political framework, specifically as it intersects with Somaliland's territorial claims.[686](#) The Somaliland army was reportedly stationed near Oog and in the areas of Qorilugud near Buhodle, while SSC forces were stationed in the town of Buhodle.[687](#) Along the frontier between Puntland and NES, localised armed incidents were reported.[688](#)

○ Recent security trends

In the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, ACLED recorded 43 security incidents in Sool region (including Buhodle), including battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence, and violence against civilians, causing 26 fatalities.[689](#)

Figure 35: Evolution of security events and fatalities in Sool per month, based on ACLED data.

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Figure 36: Evolution of security events in Sool 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: 12 security incidents involved clashes between (sub-)clan militias and 12 incidents involved violence by (sub-)clan militias against civilians. Moreover, SSC militias were involved in 4 battles against military forces of Somaliland, while 3 incidents involved clashes between different security forces (including Puntland, Somaliland and SSC Khatumo forces).[692](#)

Illustrative security incidents

- On 22 July 2025, a herder was injured by members of a clan militia in Buhodle district.[693](#)
- On 31 October 2025, fighting erupted in Boocame, after Puntland forces allegedly attacked forces loyal to the new NES administration. Several people were reportedly injured.[694](#)
- On 4 February 2026, clashes between clan militias were reported near Qorilugud, in Buhodle district. No casualties were reported.[695](#)

- **Conflict-related displacement**

According to the UNHCR PRMN, 419 individuals were newly displaced from Sool region (including 47 from Buhodle district) due to conflict or insecurity in the period from April 2025 to February 2026. The majority of the displaced individuals (341) were displaced within Sool between April and June 2025, moving within Caynabo and Xudun districts. 36 of the 47 individuals displaced from Buhodle district moved to Burco district of Somaliland. No individuals arrived from other regions.[696](#)

- **Other impacts on civilian life and humanitarian situation**

A December 2025 map by UNOCHA showed 'moderate' to 'very heavy restrictions' regarding humanitarian access in northern parts of Xudun and Taleex districts. Parts of the border between Caynabo and Buhodle districts were shown as having 'heavy restrictions'.[697](#) Regarding the food insecurity situation as of January 2026, IPC reported that about 72 % of the total analysed population of 570 788 (excluding Buhodle) were either in Acute Food Insecurity IPC Phase 2 (stressed, 39 %), 3 (crisis, 23 %) or 4 (emergency, 10 %).[698](#) As of September 2025, Taleex, Godaalo, Xudun, and Buhodle areas, were facing water shortages and the situation was aggravated by shortages of health and nutrition services due to less humanitarian funding.[699](#) NRC data for 2025 and early 2026 (excluding Buhodle) showed the eviction of 1 922 individuals.[700](#)

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