



2.7.2. Sanaag

Sanaag is divided into three districts: Lasqoray, Ceerigaabo (also known as Erigabo or Erigavo) and Ceel Afweyne (also known as El Afweyne). Ceerigaabo is the capital of Sanaag.[701](#) Sanaag's population was estimated at 445 736.[702](#) For more detailed background information on Sool, see section 2.7.2. of the EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (May 2025).

○ (a) Actors presence and conflict dynamics

According to [Map 3](#) Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 31 March 2026, the western part of Sanaag region (including the towns of Ceerigaabo, Jidali and El Afweyne) were controlled by the Somaliland administration, while southeastern areas were under mixed control by the 'federal-aligned coalition' and 'autonomous armed forces'. The central areas on the border to Puntland, including the towns of Elbuh and Badhan and the southern towns of Hingalol and Dhahar were controlled by 'autonomous armed forces', as was the coast town of Lasqoray.[703](#) Al-Shabaab had a presence in the Almadow (also known as Golis)[704](#) mountain range in the northern area.[705](#) The area has served as a strategic stronghold for Al-Shabaab's northern operations for more than a decade, and the group's relationship with the Warsangeli has proven indispensable to their operations in the area. On the other hand, Puntland's president Deni consulted with high-ranking Warsangeli clan elders and politicians to establish the foundations for military operations against Al-Shabaab and to counter the NES administration.[706](#) Reportedly, Al-Shabaab fighters were present near Galagala and in the south of NES[707](#) and utilised the northern coastline and access to the Red Sea to facilitate the smuggling of weapons and the movement of foreign fighters.[708](#)

In May 2025, a peace conference concluded in Ceel Afweyne town and resulted in the reconciliation of the Haber Yonis and Haber Jeclo, two Isaaq sub-clans that had been involved in recurring cycles of violence in recent years.[709](#) Following its establishment and recognition as FMS in July 2025, NES theoretically encompasses all Dhulbahante and Warsangeli territories. However, as of early 2026, the administration has secured only very limited backing from the Warsangeli, many of whom maintain their allegiance to Puntland.[710](#)

Puntland retained military positions in eastern Sanaag,[711](#) where sporadic clashes between Puntland forces and NES aligned militias were reported.[712](#) In July 2025, the president of Puntland warned SSC-Khatumo to cease interference in the Sanaag region.[713](#)

○ (b) Recent security trends

In the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, ACLED recorded 48 security incidents in Sanaag region, including battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence, and violence against civilians, causing 54 fatalities.[714](#)

Figure 37: Evolution of security events and fatalities in Sanaag per month, based on ACLED data.

Figure 37: Evolution of security events and fatalities in Sanaag per month, based on ACLED data.[715](#)

Figure 38: Evolution of security events in Sanaag per type, based on ACLED data.

Figure 38: Evolution of security events in Sanaag per type, based on ACLED data.[716](#)

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: 21 security incidents involved clashes between sub-clan militias, while 9 security incidents involved violence against civilians by sub-clan militias. 5 security incidents involved clashes between Military Forces of Somaliland and SSC. Moreover, Puntland forces were involved in 3 battles against the Darod-Warsangeli Sub-Clan Militia (Somalia).[717](#)

Illustrative security incidents

- On 17 April 2025, fighting broke out between Somaliland forces and SSC-Khatumo forces in Daanweyne area. SSC claimed that many pastoralists were killed and wounded.[718](#)
- On 5 July 2025, clashes involving Puntland security forces and pro-SSC armed fighters in Ceelbuh resulted in the killing of at least one civilian and the wounding of several others.[719](#)
- On 13 September 2025, a Warsangeli elder[720](#) was killed in an US airstrike near Badhan that reportedly targeted an Al-Shabaab arms dealer. Regional authorities

condemned the killing.[721](#)

- On 26 February 2026, according to the NES administration, civilians were allegedly attacked by Somaliland forces in Laasqoray district, resulting in casualties.[722](#)

- **Conflict-related displacement**

According to the UNHCR PRMN, 10 133 individuals were newly displaced from Sanaag region due to conflict or insecurity in the period from April 2025 to February 2026. The majority of the displaced individuals (8 968) were displaced within Sanaag, of which 5 086 were displaced from Dhahar. In the same period, 60 other individuals arrived from other regions.[723](#)

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 Laasqoray district. Most parts of Ceerigabo were marked as having 'limited restrictions' with smaller parts of 'heavy restrictions'.[724](#) Regarding the food insecurity situation as of January 2026, IPC reported that about 73 % of the total analysed population of 445 736 were either in Acute Food Insecurity IPC Phase 2 (stressed, 38 %), 3 (crisis, 25 %) or 4 (emergency, 10 %).[725](#) As of 30 January 2026, Sanaag was impacted by drought conditions, with effects on schools, health and nutrition systems.[726](#) NRC data for 2025 and early 2026 showed the eviction of 154 individuals.[727](#)

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