



2.8. Somaliland

2.8.1. Awdal

Awdal is divided into four districts: Zeyla, Lughaye, Baki and Borama. The region's capital is Borama.⁷²⁸ As of January 2026, Awdal's population was estimated at 661 373.⁷²⁹ For more detailed background information on Awdal, see section 2.8.1. of the EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (May 2025).

○ Actors presence and conflict dynamics

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, the entire region including the cities of Zeyla (Zeila), Lughaye, and Borama was reported to be under the control of the 'Somaliland administration (separatist)'.⁷³⁰

In the last quarter of 2025,⁷³¹ Awdal region faced tensions surrounding celebrations of Xeer Ciise, the customary legal code of the Issa (also Isse or Ciise) clan, after plans were announced to hold a related cultural event in Zeyla.⁷³² Early December 2025, the planned commemoration led to protests in Borama,⁷³³ as the Gadabuursi community⁷³⁴ linked it to broader disputes over influence and territory in the region.⁷³⁵ The conflict assumed greater significance following Israel's recognition of Somaliland.⁷³⁶ The Gadabuursi and Issa clans both extend into Djibouti and Ethiopia's Somali Region. Djibouti's media amplifies a narrative of the Issa community as an entity spanning Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Somaliland, allowing Djibouti to allegedly use it as a tool to maintain influence on the western Somali coast.⁷³⁷ Ethiopia has maintained strategic interests in Zeyla, especially regarding maritime access.⁷³⁸

During the Borama protests, some demonstrators carried the flag of the Awdal State movement,⁷³⁹ as these demonstrations also signalled demands for regional autonomy and a desire for closer alignment with the FGS.⁷⁴⁰

Clashes between protesters and security forces⁷⁴¹ reportedly resulted in at least 10,⁷⁴² 16⁷⁴³ or 20 persons killed and dozens others injured.⁷⁴⁴ End of December 2025,

[745](#) and in February 2026, [746](#) clashes between clans in Zeyla and its surroundings were also linked to Xeer Ciise ceremonies. [747](#) According to the International Crisis Group, as of end of February 2026, communal violence persisted in the region, with clashes between the Gadabuursi and Issa communities occurring on an almost daily basis. [748](#)

○ Recent security trends

In the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, ACLED recorded 64 security incidents in Awdal region, including battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence, and violence against civilians, causing 96 fatalities. [749](#)

Figure 39: Evolution of security events and fatalities in Awdal per month, based on ACLED data.

Figure 39: Evolution of security events and fatalities in Awdal per month, based on ACLED data. [750](#)

Figure 40: Evolution of security events in Awdal per type, based on ACLED data.

Figure 40: Evolution of security events in Awdal per type, based on ACLED data. [751](#)

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: 46 security incidents involved clashes between various Dir (sub-)clan militias (mainly Gadabuursi militias against Issa or Cisse militias) resulting in 73 fatalities, while 8 incidents involved violence against civilians by different (sub-)clan militias. [752](#)

Illustrative security incidents

- In February 2026, reportedly nearly 30 people were killed and over 20 others injured in clashes between Issa and Gadabuursi clans. [753](#)
- In December 2025, reportedly 19 people were killed and over 200 injured in clashes between security forces and protesters in Borama. [754](#)

Conflict-related displacement

According to the UNHCR PRMN, no individuals were newly displaced from Awdal region due to conflict or insecurity in the period from April 2025 to February 2026, and no other individuals arrived from other regions. [755](#)

Other impacts on civilian life and humanitarian situation

In February 2026, the burning of homes was reported, following inter-clan clashes.^{[756](#)} A December 2025 map by UNOCHA showed 'limited' to 'moderate restrictions' regarding humanitarian access in parts of Baki district, while Borama, Lughaye and Zeyla districts showed 'very limited' restrictions.^{[757](#)} In total, UNOCHA recorded four humanitarian access incidents in 2025,^{[758](#)} of which one was recorded in the period between July and September 2025.^{[759](#)} Regarding the food insecurity situation as of January 2026, IPC reported that about 57 % of the total analysed population of 661 373 were either in Acute Food Insecurity IPC Phase 2 (stressed, 44 %), 3 (crisis, 11 %) or 4 (emergency, 2 %).^{[760](#)} In July 2025, the Somaliland authorities declared a humanitarian emergency in response to prolonged drought, with Awdal being among the most severely affected regions.^{[761](#)} As of 30 January 2026, drought conditions negatively impacted education.^{[762](#)} NRC recorded no evictions in Awdal in 2025 and early 2026.^{[763](#)} NRC data for 2025 and early 2026 showed the eviction of 3 420 individuals.^{[764](#)}

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