COI QUERY

Country of Origin	**Somalia**
Title	**Major political, security, and humanitarian developments**
Reference period	1 April 2025 to 31 July 2025
Topics	1. Political developments
	2. Security developments
	3. Humanitarian developments
	4. Accessing and settling down in Hargeisa
Date of completion	13 August 2025
Query Code	Q24-2025
Contributing EU+ COI units	**N/A**

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Cite as: EUAA, Country of Origin Information Query, Somalia: Major political, security, and humanitarian developments, 13 August 2025, url

COI QUERY RESPONSE – Somalia

Major political, security, and humanitarian developments

1. Political developments

National Dialogue: In the context of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's (HSM) political engagements with the constitutional amendments, and the linked One Person One Vote agenda,[1] relations between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and opposition parties, including the Puntland and Jubbaland state administrations, continued to remain strained during the reference period of this query.[2] In consideration of this and even more so of the highly precarious security situation, already at the end of March 2025 President HSM decided to call for a National Dialogue conference, with the aim to reunite all major political actors and opposition leaders against the common enemy.[3] Convened for mid-June 2025, the conference, however, was significantly scaled down after having been dismissed by Puntland, Jubbaland, and the National Salvation Forum (also Somali Salvation Forum, Council or Alliance, SSA, see below for further details) as 'a performative exercise rather than a genuine attempt at inclusive dialogue'.[4] Still later in June, in a renewed attempt out of the political impasse, the HSM government and the SSA, led by former President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, agreed to launch formal discussions on national unity, constitutional review, security, and direct elections beginning on 3 July 2025.[5] By the end of July 2025 though, three rounds of talks between the parties had failed to reach tangible results, with a fourth round planned for 10 August 2025. The main contentious issues revolved around the government's plans to hold the OPOV elections in 2026, and the introduction of further amendments to the Provisional Constitution by removing Parliament's authority to confirm the Prime Minister.[6] At the end of July 2025, with the opposition (SSA) still highly divided on the matter, and the joint stance of Puntland and Jubbaland of 'no forward movement on elections or constitutional reform without genuine dialogue', and request to 'rollback [...] the most contested proposals', a constitutional crisis appeared imminent in Somalia.[7]

In the meantime, on 14 May 2025, the National Consultative Council (NCC), once considered a key vehicle for Somalia's political consensus,[8] was turned into a political platform for the

[1] See sources cited in EUAA, Country of Origin Information Somalia: Security Situation, May 2025, url, pp. 18-19
[2] Economist (The), Somalia's state-building project is in tatters, 24 July 2025, url
[3] Sahan, Somali Wire (The) - Somalia's Last Chance Saloon, Issue no. 806, 2 April 2025, n.a; Hiiraan Online, Somali President invites political rivals to unite in counterterrorism and state-building efforts, 30 March 2025, url; Hiiraan Online, Jubbaland, Somali leaders back peace talks as Puntland remains silent, 30 March 2025, url
[4] Wardheer News, Somalia's National Dialogue Conference Descends Into Political Theater Amid Key Boycotts, 17 June 2025, url; see also Somali Guardian, Somalia's president opens national consultative conference amid opposition boycott, 16 June 2025, url
[5] Shabelle Media Network, Somali president, opposition agree on key agenda as talks adjourn until July 3, 25 June 2025, url
[6] Horn Observer, Somalia's Political Crossroads – Reform, Resistance, and the Road to 2026, 23 July 2025, url
[7] Horn Observer, Somalia's Political Crossroads – Reform, Resistance, and the Road to 2026, 23 July 2025, url; see also Hiraan Online, Somali president meets opposition in third round of talks over constitution, elections, 20 July 2025, url
[8] All East Africa, Somalia's Political Mediation Mechanism Unravels as President Consolidates Power, 6 June 2025, url

launching of the Justice and Solidarity Party (see below for further details). The NCC's leaders were coopted together with federal member state (FMS) heads, key ministers, and ruling-party loyalists into the new political apparatus.[9] As a reaction to this, and in view of participating in the June national consultation conference,[10] at the end of May 2025, the Somali political opposition established the SSA with the aim to represent a credible challenge to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's government.[11]

Elections. The NCC political agreement from 27 May 2023 proposed two political parties, three electoral models - for local council, parliamentary and presidential elections - a vice president, unified election management, and a president directly elected by the public.[12] That agreement became the core of the constitutional amendments to Chapter 1-4 of the Somali Provisional Constitution, notably to Chapter 4,[13] which was finally adopted by the Parliament in March 2024. The approved revisions introduced a Prime Minister, who can be removed from office by the President, instead of a vice-president, and a three-party system, instead of the two originally proposed.[14] Despite Jubbaland and Puntland's continued opposition to the constitutional amendments and the ensuing OPOV electoral agenda, the new 18-member National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (NIEBC), which was established in November 2024,[15] started its voter registration process in the context of local council elections. As of July 2025, the process had started to take place in various locations across Somalia, including in: Mogadishu,[16] where it proved controversial with claims of coercive measures against residents,[17] Jowhar (Middle Shabelle, Hirshabelle),[18] Baidoa (South-West State),[19] and Dhusamareb (Galmudug),[20] with the last two respective state presidents, Laftagareen and Qoor-Qoor, accused of political orchestration and of being disconnected with on-the-ground realities.[21] In Gedo (Jubbaland), the planned deployment of federal troops had the objective to assert authority over key urban centres in order to oversee the voter

[9] Somali Digest (The), NCC Rebranded as Ruling Party as President Launches Bid for Reelection, 14 May 2025, url; see also Wardheer News, The Crisis in Somali Politics: A Nation at a Crossroads, 3 June 2025, url
[10] Hiraan Online, Somali opposition sets conditions for participation in upcoming national consultation forum, 2 June 2025, url
[11] All East Africa, Somalia's Opposition Forms New Coalition Amid Fears of Infiltration and Strategic Sabotage, 31 May 2025, url
[12] SPA, Three Years of the HSM Presidency: Progress, Challenges, and the Road Ahead, 10 May 2025, url
[13] SPA, Three Years of the HSM Presidency: Progress, Challenges, and the Road Ahead, 10 May 2025, url
[14] VOA, Somalia's Parliament Approves Historic Constitutional Amendments, 30 March 2024, url; SPA, Three Years of the HSM Presidency: Progress, Challenges, and the Road Ahead, 10 May 2025, url
[15] Horseed Media, Somalia Approves 18-Member Electoral and Boundaries Commission, 26 November 2024, url
[16] Hiraan Online, Mogadishu mayor, electoral commission chair discuss voter registration drive, 18 July 2025, url
[17] Garowe Online, Mogadishu residents report coercion in voter registration ahead of local council elections, 28 June 2025, url; Somali Guardian, Somalia's ex-president accuses govt of coercion in controversial voter registration drive, 27 May 2025, url
[18] Hiraan Online, Somalia launches voter registration in Jowhar ahead of one-person-one-vote elections, 13 July 2025, url
[19] Radio Dalsan, President Laftagareen Registers as First Voter in South West State Electoral Rollout, 3 July 2025, url; FTL, Laftagareen Launches Voter Registration Campaign in Baidoa, 3 July 2025, url
[20] Hiraan Online, Galmudug State launches "One Person, One Vote" voter registration in Dhusamareb town, 3 July 2025, url
[21] Waardheer News, Mock Democracy? Voter Registration Launches in Galmudug and South West Amid Mandate Expiry and Security Concerns, 3 July 2025, url

registration and electoral processes (see below section Security developments and conflict dynamics for further details).[22]

Political parties. Justice and Solidarity Party (JSP): in view of the 2026 Presidential elections, the JSP was newly launched in Mogadishu on 14 May 2025, with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud formally declared as the party leader and presidential candidate. Among others, deputy leaders are Abdiaziz Hassan Laftagareen, the current leader of Southwest State, and Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre.[23] The Justice Party, chaired by Abdi Aynte, was launched in Mogadishu on 16 July 2025,[24] describing itself as 'a people-powered movement committed to justice, equality, and national dignity'.[25] Other relevant parties in the context of the presidential elections include the Himilo Qaran, the party led by former President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, which opposes to any presidential term extensions,[26] and remains critical of the President's disregard of the country's constitution,[27] as well as of the unilateral election process.[28] Former president Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, alias Farmaajo, the secretary general of the Tayo Political Party,[29] as well as President of Puntland, Said Abdullahi Deni, chairman of the Kaah Political Association,[30] are also expected to compete for the presidential post.[31]

From UNSOM to UNTMIS, to UNCT: with resolution S/RES/2753 from 30 October 2024, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), which started its mandate in 2013, was renamed as United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS), and became operational for two years, from November 2024 until October 2026. During the first phase of its transition, until October 2025, UNTMIS is supposed to complete the transfer of its competences and functions to the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the FGS, and other stakeholders.[32]

Human rights. On 3 July 2025, the Somali Council of Ministers formally approved a list of nine candidates for appointment to the National Independent Human Rights Commission – NIHRC,[33] a significant institutional milestone in Somalia.[34] However, the appointment sparked

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[22] Horseed Media, Somalia: Government prepares to deploy troops to Gedo region amid rising tensions over voter registration, 12 July 2025, url; see also Hiraan Online, Gedo governor warns electoral body against uncoordinated voter registration, 17 April 2025, url

[23] FTL, Justice and Solidarity Party Officially Launched Ahead of 2026 Elections in Somalia, 14 May 2025, url

[24] Daily Somalia (The), Post on [X], 16 July 2025, url

[25] Xisbiga Xaqsoor, Post on [X], 17 July 2025, url

[26] Horn Observer, Somalia: Himilo Qaran Party Rejects Term Extensions, Warns of Escalating Conflicts Under Hassan Sheikh, 4 October 2024, url

[27] Somali Digest (The), Fake Election Plan Will Destabilize Somalia, Opposition Warns, 17 February 2025, url

[28] Hiraan Online, Himilo Qaran Party accuses electoral commission of pressuring students into unilateral election process, 27 May 2025, url

[29] Goobjoog, The 9th President of Somalia -Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo, 11 February 2017, url

[30] Somali Dispatch, Puntland: KAAH Party elects it Chairpersons, 18 July 2020, url

[31] Garowe Online, Power consolidation? Somalia Hassan Sheikh launches party before 2026 vote, 14 May 2025, url

[32] UNSC, Resolution 2753 (2024), S/RES/2753, 30 October 2024, url, para. 2-3, 7; AA, N Security Council approves transformation of Somalia mission, 30 October 2024, url

[33] Radio Dalsan, Council of Ministers Approves Nine Candidates for National Human Rights Commission, 4 July 2025, url; Goobjoog, Somali Cabinet Approves Nine Nominees for National Human Rights Commission, 4 July 2025, url

[34] SONNA, Somali Cabinet Approves Nine Candidates for National Independent Human Rights Commission, 3 July 2025, url

the strong opposition of the Somali Salvation Forum, which criticised the process for political interference and lack of transparency.[35] Similarly, the Coalition of Somalia Human Rights Defenders (CSHRD) issued a statement condemning the Commission as a political tool that 'excluded civil society' and 'ignored basic human rights standards'.[36]

In the context of the general security situation, the CSHRD has documented numerous cases where airstrikes, ground raids, and checkpoints have led to loss of civilian lives, destruction of homes, and restricted access to humanitarian aid.[37] For further information see section on Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties, including paragraph on airstrikes.

At the regional level, other notable political developments included:

SCC-Khatumo. In April 2025, the FGS announced the official recognition of SSC-K as a federal member state, and that SSC-Khatumo territories were part of the federal republic of Somalia and could not be referred to as '"disputed areas"'.[38] The following May, the SSC-Khatumo leader Abdikhadir 'Firdhiye' met with President HSM, on the backdrop of the NCC, and joined the newly launched party, the JSP.[39] On 13 July 2025, a controversial high level conference was launched in Las Anod, at the presence of high-level delegations from the FGS and the SSC-Khatumo and Sanaag regions,[40] with the aim to finalise the formation of the newly recognised SSC-Khatumo regional state,[41] and 'to expand beyond its Dhulbahante base into Sanaag's Warsangeli territories'.[42] The Warsangeli traditional leadership, however, strongly disputed the representativeness of the hand-picked delegates allegedly standing for the Sanaag and Haylaan regions.[43] Also the government of Puntland reacted defensively asserting that 'there is no legal basis for a separate regional government representing the Dhulbahante community', and that 'all clans residing in Sool, Cayn, and the wider Dhulbahante territories have been integral to Puntland since its founding in 1998'.[44] However, by the end of July 2025, the 417 delegates reportedly representing the Khatumo and Maakhir regions – approximately corresponding to Sool and part of Sanaag regions respectively, see Map 1 for further reference - had reached a consensus on: a) the name to be attributed to the new entity, the sixth federal member state of Somalia: the Northeastern State (NES); b) its regional

[35] Hiraan Online, Somali Cabinet approves Human Rights Commission candidates amid opposition criticism, 4 July 2025, url
[36] CSHRD, Hijacking Human Rights: Somalia's Human Rights Commission Exposed as Political Tool, 12 June 2025, url
[37] CSHRD, Somalia: Quarter II (Q2) 2025 Human Rights Situation Report, 30 June 2025, url
[38] Hiraan Online, Somalia recognizes SSC-Khaatumo, invites leader to national consultative council, 14 April 2025, url; Garowe Online, SSC-Khatumo joins Somalia Federal's Fold After Long Struggle,
[39] Sahan, The Somali Wire, What might 'SSC-Khaatumo State' mean for Puntland?, Issue no. 824, 19 May 2025, n.a.
[40] Wardheer News, SSC-Khaatumo State Formation Finalization Conference has opened in Laascaanood Under Cloud of Political Tensions, 13 July 2025, url
[41] Hiraan Online, SSC-Khaatumo state finalization conference to open in Las Anod amid tight security, 13 July 2025, url
[42] Somali Digest (The), Puntland Asserts Sool and Cayn as Its Sovereign Territory, 17 July 2025, url; see also Wardheer News, SSC-Khaatumo State Formation Finalization Conference has opened in Laascaanood Under Cloud of Political Tensions, 13 July 2025, url
[43] Wardheer News, Leadership Disputes Force Postponement of SSC-Khatumo Conference, 12 July 2025, url; Wardheer News, SSC-Khaatumo State Formation Finalization Conference has opened in Laascaanood Under Cloud of Political Tensions, 13 July 2025, url
[44] Hiraan Online, Puntland rejects SSC-Khaatumo administration, citing legal grounds, 17 July 2025, url; Somali Digest (The), Puntland Asserts Sool and Cayn as Its Sovereign Territory, 17 July 2025, url

constitution; c) and the parliamentary seat allocation, with 45 seats to SCC-Khatumo and 38 seats to Maakhir.[45] Both Somaliland and Puntland issued public statements against the 'fait accompli' orchestrated by the FGS.[46] For the security implications of the political developments in SSC-Khatumo see section on Security developments and conflict dynamics.

Benadir and Mogadishu. On 28 May 2025, President HSM reappointed Hassan Mohamed Hussein, known as Muungaab, as Governor of Banaadir Region and Mayor of Mogadishu, after having served in the same position already in 2014-2015.[47]

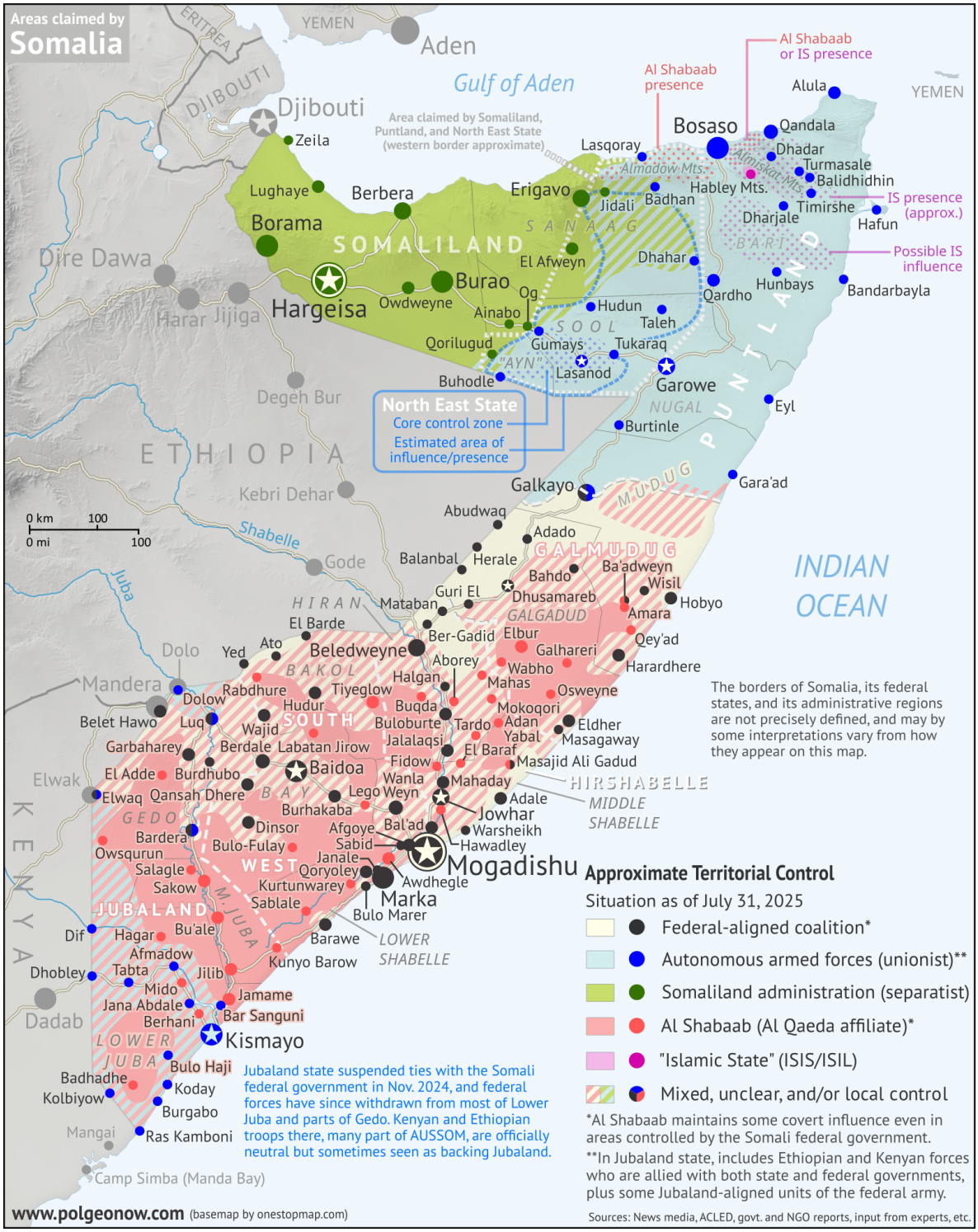
[45] Wardheer News, Somalia's Sixth Federal Member State Emerges from Las Anod- The Northeastern State, 30 July 2025, url; see also Shabelle Media Network, Somalia: SSC-Khaatumo Formation Moves Forward with MP Selection Phase, 31 July 2025, url

[46] Sahan, A New Fait Accompli In The Volatile North, Issue no. 855, 4 August 2025, n.a.

[47] Shabelle Media Network, Somalia's President Re-appoints Muungaab New Mayor of Mogadishu, 28 May 2025, url; Mogadishu 24, Who is the New Governor of Banaadir Region?, 29 May 2025, url

2. Security developments

Territorial control map



Map 1. Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, 31 July 2025, Political Geography Now

Please note: The depictions on **Map 1** does not imply any opinion whatsoever on the part of EUAA concerning legal status or effective control over any country, territory, city, or area. Every effort is made to ensure this map is free of errors, but there is no guarantee that the map or its features are either spatially or temporally accurate or fit for a particular use. This map is provided without any warranty of any kind whatsoever, either expressed or implied.

Security developments and conflict dynamics

This section should be read in consultation with Map 1. Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, 31 July 2025, Political Geography Now referenced above. In the reference period of the query (1 April – 31 July 2025), the main developments in terms of conflict dynamics, military offensives, and territorial control, included:

- **Hilaac offensive.** Puntland forces, with airstrike support from UAE and US, managed to rapidly gain terrain and positions on the Al-Miskaad mountain range, with ISIS forces mostly fleeing ahead of their advance,[48] including their leader Abdulkadir Mumin.[49] At the beginning of July 2025, the offensive, in its third phase, had cleared 420-kilometre stretch of mountain terrain (or, reportedly, 98 % of the relevant area), killed seven senior leaders, wiped-out 85% of the leadership,[50] and substantially degraded the group's fighting force.[51] By then the offensive entered its fourth phase, meant to eliminate the remaining ISIS fighters from the region and to prepare for operation Onkod, whose objective instead is to clear Al-Shabaab presence from the near Al-Madow mountain range in the Sanaag region.[52] On 26 July 2025, in a ground raid US forces captured ISIS finance emir in Somalia, Abdiweli Mohamed Yusuf, reportedly also head of the Islamic State's Al Karrar regional office.[53]

- **Shabelle (and Hiraan) offensive**. The military confrontation between Al-Shabaab and the coalition of state-aligned forces continued in the reference period with following notable developments at regional level:

Hiraan front. On 16 April 2025, Al-Shabaab ultimately seized the strategic town of Aborey,[54] and in June 2025 the group retook control of various locations in the eastern part of the Hiiraan region (western flank), specifically around the Yasooman area, home to the Hawadle clan uprising from 2022.[55] Still in eastern Hiraan, in the course of June-July 2025, Al-Shabaab retook control of various other locations on its eastern flank, across the territory previously liberated by the Somali security forces, namely in Ceel-Hareeri, Ceel-Qooxle, Mokoqori, and Tardo,[56] all of them strongholds of Ma'awisley clan militias.[57] Labelled as the 'Hiraan fiasco', the fall of these sites engendered growing resentment towards the FGS in the region for

[48] PolGeoNow, June 2025 Somalia Control Map & Timeline: Al Shabaab Resurgence, ISIS Retreat, Jubaland Defiant, 19 June 2025, n.a.
[49] Garowe Online, Puntland says ISIS leader escaped amid on-going offensive in Cal-Miskaad mountains, 16 June 2025, url
[50] Garowe Online, Puntland says key ISIS leaders killed in Calmiskaad offensive, new phase underway, 5 July 2025, url; see also Gaahsaan Dialogue, Al-Shabaab and IS-Somalia: 2025 Activity Report, July 2025, url, p. 5, pp. 10-11
[51] PolGeoNow, June 2025 Somalia Control Map & Timeline: Al Shabaab Resurgence, ISIS Retreat, Jubaland Defiant, 19 June 2025, n.a.; see also Gaahsaan Dialogue, Al-Shabaab and IS-Somalia: 2025 Activity Report, July 2025, url, p. 5, pp. 10-11
[52] Garowe Online, Puntland says key ISIS leaders killed in Calmiskaad offensive, new phase underway, 5 July 2025, url; see also Radio Dalsan, President Deni Briefed on Anti-Terror Operation in Al-Miskaad Mountains, 22 July 2025, url
[53] Weiss, C., US ground raid captures Islamic State leader in northern Somalia, 26 July 2025, url; Gaahsaan Dialogue, Al-Shabaab and IS-Somalia: 2025 Activity Report, July 2025, url, p. 5, pp. 10-11
[54] Garowe Online, How SNA troops lose strategic village to Al-Shabaab, 17 April 2025, url
[55] Crisis Watch, Somalia, April 2025, url
[56] Baidoa Online, Post on [X], 14 July 2025, url; see also AAGA_CAWLLAN, Post on [X], 7 July 2025, url
[57] International Crisis Group, Al-Shabaab Recaptures Key Town, While Mogadishu Struggles to Regain the Upper Hand, 9 July 2025, url; Mustaqbal Media, Setback for Somali Forces as Alshabab Militants Retake Tardo, a Key Ma'awisley Stronghold, 14 July 2025, url

having abandoned the Hawadle Ma'awisley resistance to its own.[58] With critical hubs in the area, such as Buulo Burde, Jalalaqsi, and Mahaas, now in Al-Shabaab's sight,[59] as of 14 July 2025 hundreds of SNA troops amassed in Mahaas district.[60] Yet, on 27 July the militant group managed to seize control of Mahaas - eastern Hiraan, eastern flank – with SNA soldiers reportedly fleeing the scene while confronted by around 60 Al-Shabaab fighters.[61] The town had been freed from the militant's control over 12 years earlier,[62] and it had served for years as a logistics hub for the Macawisley.[63]

Middle Shabelle front. By mid-May 2025, al-Shabaab had managed to recapture most of the territory it had lost in Middle Shabelle since 2022.[64] Among others, on 16 April 2025, Al-Shabaab seized Adan Yabal, the group's regional centre of operations until December 2022;[65] on 2 June Al-Shabaab captured Xawaadley town, which had served as a defensive buffer for Balcad.[66] By the end of July 2025, Al-Shabaab had deployed a significant number of troops and armored vehicles along the strategic road linking Jowhar and Balcad.[67] At the same time, at the end of June 2025, the SNA and allied forces managed to reclaim control of Geel-Gub and Masajid Ali Gaduud, in a zone long exploited by Al-Shabaab for recruitment and attacks,[68] and still highly contested.[69]

Lower Shabelle front. In March 2025 Al-Shabaab had seized control of three out four strategic locations and relative bridges, in Lower Shabelle (Afgoye district), namely, from north to south: Sabiid, Bariire, Awdheegle, and Janaale, with this last one still under government and AU control.[70] In June 2025 the SNA army and allied forces launched 'Operation Silent Storm', aimed at liberating these areas from the militant group's control.[71] As of July 2025, the operation was only partially successful and had led to the recapture of the Forward Operating Bases (FOB) and villages of Sabiid and Anole,[72] whose control however remained contested

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[58] Sahan, The Somali Wire, The Fall of Moqokori – Implications, Issue No. 847, 16 July 2025, n.a.
[59] Baidoa Online, Post on [X], 14 July 2025, url;
[60] Mustaqbal Media, Setback for Somali Forces as Alshabab Militants Retake Tardo, a Key Ma'awisley Stronghold, 14 July 2025, url
[61] Garowe Online, Strategic town lost as SNA troops flee: Al-Shabaab gains ground amid crumbling defences, 30 July 2025, url; Mareeg, Ali Jayte Blames SNA for Mahas Loss, 30 July 2025, url
[62] Garowe Online, Former President warns of Al-Shabaab threat after Govt fails to protect towns, 28 July 2025, url; Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Retakes Mahaas as Federal Forces Target Jubaland Instead, 27 July 2025, url
[63] Somali Digest (The), Al-Shabab Retakes Mahaas as Federal Forces Target Jubaland Instead, 27 July 2025, url
[64] Muibu, D., and Mbengue, Y., Somalia at a Crossroads: Resurgent Insurgents, Fragmented Politics, and the Uncertain Future of AUSSOM, CTC Sentinel, May 2025, url, p. 3
[65] Muibu, D., and Mbengue, Y., Somalia at a Crossroads: Resurgent Insurgents, Fragmented Politics, and the Uncertain Future of AUSSOM, CTC Sentinel, May 2025, url, p. 3
[66] Baidoa Online, Post on [X], 2 June 2025, url; see also Shabelle Media Network, Somali President orders military to retake Adan Yabal town after strategic setback, 20 April 2025, url
[67] Shabelle Media Network, Al-Shabaab Reinforces Positions Between Balcad and Jowhar Amid Military Tensions, 27 July 2025, url
[68] Radio Dalsan, Operation "Silent Storm": Somali Army and Local Forces Reclaim Key Strongholds in Middle Shabelle, 25 June 2025, url
[69] Horn Observer, Somali Forces Launch Military Operation Near Masajid Ali Gadud Mosque to Reclaim Territory from Al-Shabaab, 26 June 2025, url
[70] International security and governance expert based in Somalia, Email exchange, 2 April 2025; see also Cirka News, Post on [X], 21 March 2025, url
[71] AUSSOM, SNA troops recapture strategic villages in Lower Shabelle, 22 June 2025, url
[72] Amani Africa, Update on the situation in Somalia and AUSSOM operations, 2 July 2025, url; AUSSOM, SNA troops recapture strategic villages in Lower Shabelle, 22 June 2025, url

until the time of writing.[73] Moreover, in the context of the military clashes, Al-Shabaab strategically destroyed the Sabiid and Anole bridge,[74] as well as the Barire bridge, while the bridge in Awdheegle 'remain[ed] under Al-Shabaab control, with no reported breakthroughs by government forces'.[75] As a consequence of the repeated clashes in the region, many civilians were forcibly displaced.[76] See section below on Conflict-related displacement for further details.

In the reference period of the query, other relevant security developments and outstanding security hotspots included:

Benadir/Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab's recurring mortar attacks on Mogadishu Aden Adde International Airport (AAIA) coupled with IED targeted explosions and bombings, continued in the period April-July 2025. Main events included: several rounds of mortar shells, causing an unspecified number of casualties, on AAIA on 6 April,[77] 20 May,[78] 5 June,[79] as well as on the nearby Halane base camp and surrounding residential areas on 28 April;[80] bombing of Damanyo military base while young new recruits were queuing at the gate to register for military service on 18 May (around 50 casualties);[81] IED checkpoint attack in the vegetable section of the Bakaara market on 28 June; suicide bombing at Jaalle Siyaad military training school in Mogadishu on 9 July (unspecified number of casualties).[82]

Sanaag, SSC-Khatumo vs Puntland. The controversial conference held in Las Anod in July 2025, in the context of the SSC-K state formation process, aimed at, among others, merging part of Sanaag (Warsengeli inhabited) to Sool in a new political entity.[83] Against this backdrop, clashes between SSC-Khatumo (allied) forces and Puntland security forces were registered on various occasions: on 5 July 2025 in Ceelbuh, where they involved armed fighters loyal to former Puntland Parliament Speaker Abdirashid Yusuf Jibriil, who openly supports bringing

[73] UPDF, AUSSOM Forces Repel Al Shabaab Attack On Sabiid-Anole Forward Operating Bases, 25 July 2025, url; Shabelle Media Network, Heavy fighting erupts in southern Somalia after Al-Shabaab attack, 25 July 2025, url; Somali Guardian, Al-Shabaab captures strategic towns near Somalia's capital After AU, Somali troop withdrawal, 21 July 2025, url; see also Sahan, Unlearning the lessons from Ras Kamboni, Issue no. 850, 23 July 2025, n.a.
[74] Somaliland Standard, Local residents return to Sabiid and Anole settlement after Somali troops take over the security, 24 June 2025, url
[75] Mustaqbal Media, Al-Shabaab Destroys Barire Bridge Amid Renewed Military Offensive in Lower Shabelle, 17 June 2025, url
[76] UNOCHA, Somalia - Afgoye Displacement Map, 24 June 2025, url; UNOCHA Somalia, Post on [X], 3 July 2025, url
[77] Horn Observer, Turkish Airlines Flight Diverted After Mortar Attack on Mogadishu Airport, 6 April 2025, url
[78] Garowe Online, Mortar attack targets Mogadishu International Airport residents, 20 May 2025, url
[79] Somali Guardian, Heavy mortar shells strike Mogadishu airport, 5 June 2025, url
[80] Wardheer News, Mortar Shells Hit Xalane Compound and Aden Adde Airport in Mogadishu, 28 April 2025, url
[81] Somali Digest (The), Damanyo Attack Reveals Security Gaps, Shaken Army Morale, 18 May 2025, url
[82] AP, Al-Shabab claims responsibility for an explosion at a Somalia military training school, 9 July 2025, url
[83] Wardheer News, Leadership Disputes Force Postponement of SSC-Khatumo Conference, 12 July 2025, url; see also Hiraan Online, SSC-Khaatumo state finalization conference to open in Las Anod amid tight security, 13 July 2025, url; Goobjoog, Las Anod Hosts Key Talks to Finalize SSC-Khaatumo Governance, 13 July 2025, url

Sanaag under SSC-Khaatumo's control;[84] and on 15 July in Dhahar, the capital of Haylaan region in Sanaag.[85]

Gedo. In the last few years, Gedo region has been the site of the political and military infighting between the FGS and the regional administration based in Kismayo, with forces loyal to Jubbaland President Ahmed Madobe clashing with federal forces deployed in the region.[86] The control of the region's main towns is divided between Mogadishu-aligned forces and Jubaland troops.[87] At the end of July 2025, Garbahareey, Bardhere, Beled Hawo and Burdhubo were under the control of pro-government troops, Eel Waaq and Dollow fell under Jubbaland's security forces, while Luuq was contested.[88] The Mareehaan-majority districts - Luuq, Dollow, Bardheere, Beled Hawo and Garbahareey – all face varying amounts of coercion, exercised by the FGS, to split from the administration in Kismaayo.[89] In some of these districts clashes have been triggered by the FGS's attempts to install loyal district commissioners and forces.[90] As of mid-July 2025, the FGS planned a new military deployment to some of these locations, with the reported objective to bring the entire Gedo region under the direct control of Villa Somalia.[91] The operation, led by former Jubaland State Minister of Security, Abdirashid Janan, a controversial figure who was implicated in crimes against humanity,[92] started on 22 July 2025, when he redeployed to Beled Hawo together with senior officers and additional troops.[93] Jubbaland forces reacted fiercely, triggering clashes near the regional administration compound and other key sites in Beled Hawo.[94] After days of intense fighting and shifting outcomes,[95] on 30 July 2025 Somali government forces regained full

[84] Hiraan Online, Clashes erupt in Sanaag region between Puntland forces and pro-SSC administration politicians, 5 July 2025, url
[85] Galkacyo Online, Post on [X], 15 July 2025, url; Garowe Online, Post on [X], 15 July 2025, url; see also Radio Dalsan, Dagaal Ka Qarxay Magaalada Dhahar oo Dhexmaray Ciidamada Puntland iyo Kuwa Deegaanka Beesha Maakhir [Fighting erupts in Dhahar town between Puntland forces and local Maakhir community], 15 July 2025, url
[86] EUAA, Country of Origin Information Somalia: Security Situation, September 2021, url, pp. 47-48; EUAA, Country of Origin Information Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, url, p. 61
[87] Sahan, The Somali Wire, Villa Somalia turns to destabilising Gedo, again, Issue no. 825, 21 May 2025, n.a.
[88] Garowe Online, Federal forces seize Beled-hawo from Jubbaland, escalating Somalia's internal power struggle, 31 July 2025, url
[89] Sahan, The Somali Wire, Villa Somalia turns to destabilising Gedo, again, Issue no. 825, 21 May 2025, n.a.
[90] Sahan, The Somali Wire, Somalia's Code-Red: Looming Security Crisis in the Horn, Issue no. 849, 21 July 2025, n.a.
[91] Wardheer News, Villa Somalia Troop Deployment to Gedo Sparks Renewed Conflict with Jubaland and The Region, 15 July 2025, url; Garowe Online, Backroom deals and troop buildup: FGS moves to undermine Ahmed Madobe in strategic Gedo region, 15 July 2025, url; see also Sahan, The Somali Wire, After the embargo: The MV Sea World debacle, Issue no. 851, 25 July 2025, n.a.
[92] Garowe Online, Backroom deals and troop buildup: FGS moves to undermine Ahmed Madobe in strategic Gedo region, 15 July 2025, url; see also Sahan, Unlearning the lessons from Ras Kamboni, Issue no. 850, 23 July 2025, n.a.
[93] Hiraan Online, Jubbaland says it retakes Beled Hawo after federal troop deployment reignites Gedo clashes, 22 July 2025, url
[94] Hiraan Online, Jubbaland says it retakes Beled Hawo after federal troop deployment reignites Gedo clashes, 22 July 2025, url
[95] Somali Dispatch, Heavy fighting erupts in Gedo, 29 July 2025, url; Hiraan Online, Jubbaland says it retakes Beled Hawo after federal troop deployment reignites Gedo clashes, 22 July 2025, url; see also Garowe Online, Jubaland forces surround Janan-linked camp in Gedo amid deepening federal tensions, 23 July 2025, url; Sahan, Unlearning the lessons from Ras Kamboni, Issue no. 850, 23 July 2025, n.a.; Somali Guardian, Fierce clashes erupt between Somalia's federal forces and Jubaland troops in Balad-Hawo town, 22 July 2025, url

control of the town,[96] while causing widespread destruction and civilian deaths.[97] Some days earlier, on 28 July, clashes between the two opposing sides broke out also in Dolow with Jubbaland regional forces reportedly seizing key locations and facilities in the town,[98] supported by Ethiopian troops.[99]

Bay. In April 2025, Al-Shabaab militants, after having lost control of Deeynuunay, a strategic centre close to Baidoa,[100] and having been repelled in the surprise attack in Baay Burjeed, another village on the outskirts of Baidoa,[101] resurfaced in rural areas near the regional capital Baidoa, including in villages like Gasarta, Dambalka, and Baay-Burjeet.[102] Locals reported that militants were verbally warning civilians to stay away from the fields.[103] Still in April 2025, Al-Shabaab lifted a nearly decade-long blockade in several towns in South West state's Bay and Bakool regions,[104] with NGOs workers and public servants then allowed to travel between them.[105] Allegedly, the lifting was a way to improve local support in the south,[106] while redeploying forces to the Shabelle region, closer to Mogadishu.[107] Yet, at the end of July 2025, 'key roads' connecting Bay and Bakool regions, as well as the road between Mogagishu and Baidoa, remained closed with the long-standing blockade still in effect.[108]

Somaliland. On 15 May 2025, while the Somaliland government was allegedly preparing to release a number of SSC-Khatumo prisoners held in Burao (the capital of Togdheer region), violent protests broke out in the city, with demonstrators opposing to it.[109] The protests were violently curbed, causing at least the death of 6 people, mostly youth,[110] the injuries of over 30,[111] and the arrest of hundreds of people, later released by the local authorities.[112]

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[96] Garowe Online, Federal forces seize Beled-hawo from Jubbaland, escalating Somalia's internal power struggle, 31 July 2025, url
[97] Somali Guardian, Somalia's army retakes Balad Hawo town after days of clashes with Jubaland forces, 31 July 2025, url
[98] Garowe Online, Heavy clashes erupt in Dolow between Jubaland forces and Somali federal troops, 28 July 2025, url; see also Somali Guardian, Somalia's army retakes Balad Hawo town after days of clashes with Jubaland forces, 31 July 2025, url
[99] Sahan, Gedo: the bellwether of Somalia's fragmentation, Issue no. 853, 30 July 2025, n.a.
[100] Goobjoog News, Somali Forces Seize Strategic Town from Al-Shabaab in Fresh Bay Region Offensive, 14 April 2025, url
[101] Horn Observer, Somalia: South West State Repels Surprise Al-Shabaab Attack Near Baidoa, 18 April 2025, url
[102] Hiraan Online, Al-Shabaab launches attack near Baidoa, warns farmers to stay away from fields, 20 April 2025, url
[103] Hiraan Online, Al-Shabaab launches attack near Baidoa, warns farmers to stay away from fields, 20 April 2025, url
[104] Crisis Watch, Somalia April 2025, url; see also Jackson, A., Failing State: The Resurgence of al-Shabaab in Somalia, 3 June 2025, url
[105] Somali local judge based in South-West State, Telephone interview, 4 August 2025. The Somali local judge is a legal expert and practitioner in criminal law in Somalia
[106] Crisis Watch, Somalia April 2025, url; see also Jackson, A., Failing State: The Resurgence of al-Shabaab in Somalia, 3 June 2025, url
[107] Jackson, A., Flailing State: The Resurgence of al-Shabaab in Somalia, 3 June 2025, url
[108] Garowe Online, Southwest state president travels by air to besieged Bakool region amid mounting criticism, 30 July 2025, url
[109] Horn Observer, Somaliland Police Kill 6, 18 Others Injured During Violent Burao Protest, 17 May 2025, url; Horseed Media, Somalia: Violent protest in Burco, Somaliland, 15 May 2025, url
[110] Horn Observer, Somaliland Police Kill 6, 18 Others Injured During Violent Burao Protest, 17 May 2025, url
[111] Garowe Online, Post on [X], 16 May 2025, url
[112] Horn Observer, Somaliland Police Kill 6, 18 Others Injured During Violent Burao Protest, 17 May 2025, url

Please note that this query update does not include major developments in terms of clan conflicts/rivalries across the country, and their impact on the civilian population.

Armed actors

In the reference period of the query (1 April – 31 July 2025), main developments in the armed actors, included:

- **NISA**. On 1 June 2025, Mahad Salad, who hails from the Hawiye/Habar Gedir/Ayr sub clan,[113] was reappointed as director of NISA replacing Abdullahi Mohamed Ali, known as Sanbaloolshe. Salad had served in the same position between August 2022 and April 2024.[114]

- **AUSSOM**. On 25 April 2025, the Kampala Summit of Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), underscored the need to increase AUSSOM troop strength – currently at 11 146 - by at least 8 000 additional troops, through bilateral agreements, to address the 'prevailing' security situation in Somalia.[115] However, despite its official commencement on 1 July 2025, AUSSOM still faced significant funding challenges at the time of writing. The estimated mission budget for the period July 2025 - June 2026 was $166.5 million - based on a troop reimbursement rate at $ 828 – but its overall financial demands were more than double that figure, while as of July the committed funding amounted to $16.7 million.[116] Within this context, the AU's Peace and Security Council, in its latest communiqué from 3 July 2025, while expressing 'deep concern over the financial gaps' of the mission, invited the AU Commission to engage the UN, EU, UK, Somalia and other bilateral partners to convene an AUSSOM Financing Conference.[117] According to analysts sourced by local media outlets, foreign troops stationed in Somalia have gone several months without pay.[118]

- **Türkiye**. In April 2025, Türkiye dispatched 400 troops – which will support joint Turkish-Somali strategic projects, as well as provide training, advisory, and air asset support to Somali security forces.[119] They represented the first batch of a planned 2 500-strong contingent that was approved by the Turkish parliament in July 2024 for a two years' mission.[120] Additional 500 troops were deployed at the beginning of June 2025.[121] They included 300 elite

[113] Sahan, The Politicised Revival of Mahad Salad at NISA, Issue no. 830, 4 June 2025, n.a.
[114] Hiraan On-line, Mahad Salad returns to lead Somalia's intelligence agency, 1 June 2025, url; see also TRT GLOBAL, Mahad Salad: Why Somalia is banking on new intelligence chief's playbook for security, 12 June 2025, url
[115] AU, Report of the ministerial meeting for the troop contributing countries (TCCs) to the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) plus the Federal Government of Somalia, 24 April 2025, url, para. 4.2.1
[116] Amani Africa, Update on the situation in Somalia and AUSSOM operations, 2 July 2025, url
[117] AU, Communiqué from the 1287th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, held on 3 July 2025, on Update on the Situation in Somalia and Operations of the AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), 4 July 2025, url; see also Amani Africa, Update on the situation in Somalia and AUSSOM operations, 2 July 2025, url
[118] Mogadishu 24, AUSSOM Troops Go Nine Months Without Pay Amid Financial Crisis, 11 April 2025, url; Baidoa Online, Post on [X], 29 June 2025, url
[119] Mustaqbal, Hundreds of Turkish Troops Arrive in Mogadishu to Boost Somalia-Turkey Security and Development Cooperation, 22 April 2025, url; see also Hiraan Online, Turkey deploys troops to Somalia as al-Shabaab reclaims territory and U.S. pulls back, 24 April 2025, url; Middle East Eye, Turkey doubles troops in Somalia amid Al-Shabab offensive, 25 April 2025, url
[120] Military Africa, Turkey deploys counter-terror troops to Somalia, 23 April 2025, url
[121] The Eastleigh Voice, Turkey deploys 500 special forces to Somalia to combat Al-Shabaab, 3 June 2025, url

commandos and 200 support personnel.[122] On the same occasion, Türkiye handed over other military equipment, including three T129 ATAK helicopters, two utility helicopters, and two Akinci drones.[123]

- **Egypt.** On 7 July 2025, on the occasion of President HSM's official visit to al-Sisi, Egypt and Somalia agreed to activate the military cooperation protocol signed in August 2024. Egypt also reaffirmed its commitment to AUSSOM.[124] However, as of beginning of July 2025, pending the completion of 'the AU and UN procedures to expediate the deployment of Egyptian troops,' Burundian troops and Ghana's Formed Police Unit (FPU), as well as the Sierra Leone FPU remained in Somalia.[125]

- **Djibouti.** On 31 July 2025, FGS and Djibouti signed a landmark Status of Forces Agreement (SoFA), which enhanced bilateral defence cooperation, and defined the legal and operational framework for the deployment of Djiboutian troops in Somalia, including outside the scope of AUSSOM.[126]

- **Ma'awisley.** In mid-June 2025 a mass defection of Ma'awisley forces, although facts and figures are contested,[127] took place in Hawaadley, where more than 150 members of the 'SNA and Ma'awisley clan militia' reportedly surrendered to Al-Shabaab. The fighters, most of them belonging to the Jareer Weyne handed over their weapons in exchange for cash and amnesty.[128] Reportedly, adding to the lack of logistical and military support,[129] a key triggering factor was the death of General Sheegow Ahmed Ali, a Jareer Weyne military officer who had been arrested in Mogadishu in late 2023.[130] In general, starting from 2024 until the time of writing, while the federal government focused more on its political agenda, Ma'awisley clan militias lacked support and felt 'abandoned' in their fight against Al-Shabaab, with many disheartened units withdrawing from the fight.[131]

- **Desertion of security forces**. Several instances of mass desertion have taken place in the reference period of the query. Among others: in June 2025 more than 150 members of the SNA (and Ma'awisley clan militia, see above) reportedly surrendered to Al-Shabaab;[132] at the

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[122] Mustaqbal Media, Turkey to Deploy 500 Additional Special Forces to Somalia in Expanded Counterterrorism Push, 4 June 2025, url
[123] Middle East Eye, Turkey delivers T129 Atak helicopters to Somalia, 4 June 2025, url
[124] Daily News Egypt, Egypt, Somalia leaders discuss strategic partnership, counterterrorism in New Alamein, 7 July 2025, url
[125] Amani Africa, Update on the situation in Somalia and AUSSOM operations, 2 July 2025, url
[126] Hiraan Online, Somalia and Djibouti sign Status of Forces Agreement to strengthen defense cooperation, 31 July 2025, url; Shabelle Media Network, Somalia, Djibouti sign troop deployment deal, 31 July 2025, url; Dawan Africa, Djibouti and Somalia Sign SoFA to Expand Troop Presence in Somalia, 30 July 2025, url
[127] Halqabsi News, Macawisley Have Not Surrendered to Al-Shabaab, Says Army Commander, 16 June 2025, url; Shabelle Media Network, Dozens of Clan Fighters Surrender to Al-Shabaab in Central Somalia: Sources, 19 June 2025, url
[128] Horn Observer, Over 150 Somali Soldiers and Clan Militia Surrender to Al-Shabaab in Middle Shabelle, 16 June 2025, url; see also Baidoa Online, Post on [X], 15 June 2025, url
[129] Shabelle Media Network, Dozens of Clan Fighters Surrender to Al-Shabaab in Central Somalia: Sources, 19 June 2025, url; Horn Observer, Over 150 Somali Soldiers and Clan Militia Surrender to Al-Shabaab in Middle Shabelle, 16 June 2025, url
[130] Horn Observer, Over 150 Somali Soldiers and Clan Militia Surrender to Al-Shabaab in Middle Shabelle, 16 June 2025, url
[131] Caasimada, How Mohamud's power play undid Somalia's war gains, 29 July 2025, url
[132] Horn Observer, Over 150 Somali Soldiers and Clan Militia Surrender to Al-Shabaab in Middle Shabelle, 16 June 2025, url; see also Baidoa Online, Post on [X], 15 June 2025, url

beginning of April 2025, 145 police officers disappeared from the local Police Academy in Mogadishu, and had reportedly abandoned their post with some of them suspected to have defected to Al-Shabaab;[133] still in early April 2025, members of the Somali Custodial Corps, after having been deployed in an emergency measure in the war against Al-Shabaab, fled from the frontlines in Lower Shabelle, and were later arrested and imprisoned in April 2025;[134] on this event their Commander, General Mahad Abdirahman Adan - known as Taliye Shub - indicated that 'those who fled from the frontlines were not allowed to freely return to the capital, and strict disciplinary measures have been taken against them', with some arrested and jailed, others returned to the frontlines, and a few more still being pursued. He also added that 'while punishment for desertion is based on military law, which allows for harsh penalties, including death in extreme cases', execution would not be easily applied.[135] At the beginning of April 2025, confronted with soaring desertion rates, government officials and religious scholars labelled fleeing soldiers "infidels" and threatened reprisals against their families;[136]

According to a July 2025 open editorial in the Addis Standard by Adam Daud Ahmed, a security analyst in Hargeisa, ever since the launching of the military campaign against Al-Shabaab in August 2022, more than 4 300 regular troops abandoned their posts, alongside 620 deserters from the Abu Dujaana special forces.[137] However, figures on this point remain highly contested.[138]

[133] Horn Observer, INTERPOL-Trained Somali Police Officers Among 145 Missing in Mass Defection, Some Suspected of Joining Terrorists, 3 April 2025, url
[134] Wardheer News, From Guardians to Scapegoats: The Betrayal of Somalia's Custodial Corps, 12 April 2025, url; Mogadishu 24, Custodial Corps Command: Soldiers Who Fled the Frontlines Are Selling Their Weapon, 10 April 2025, url
[135] Mogadishu 24, Custodial Corps Command: Soldiers Who Fled the Frontlines Are Selling Their Weapon, 10 April 2025, url
[136] Somali Guardian, Somalia's war effort unravels: Soldiers flee, officials respond with brutal threats, 5 April 2025, url
[137] Addis Standard, Op-ed: Three Years of Somalia's 'Total War': How Mogadishu's Al-Shabaab offensive unraveled, 14 July 2025, url
[138] Security expert based in Puntland, Email exchange, 16 July 2025. The security expert based in Puntland has long-standing experience working as a security and military consultant. International scholar with decades-long experience on security and political Islam in Somalia, Email exchange, 16 July 2025

Recent security trends

Security incidents, estimated civilian fatalities and casualties

In the reference period of the query, ACLED tracked 1 325 security events – 854 battles, 256 explosions/remote violence, and 215 violence against civilians - resulting in 3 280 overall estimated fatalities, including civilians. **Figure 1** below shows events and fatalities regional distribution in the period 1 April – 31 July 2025.

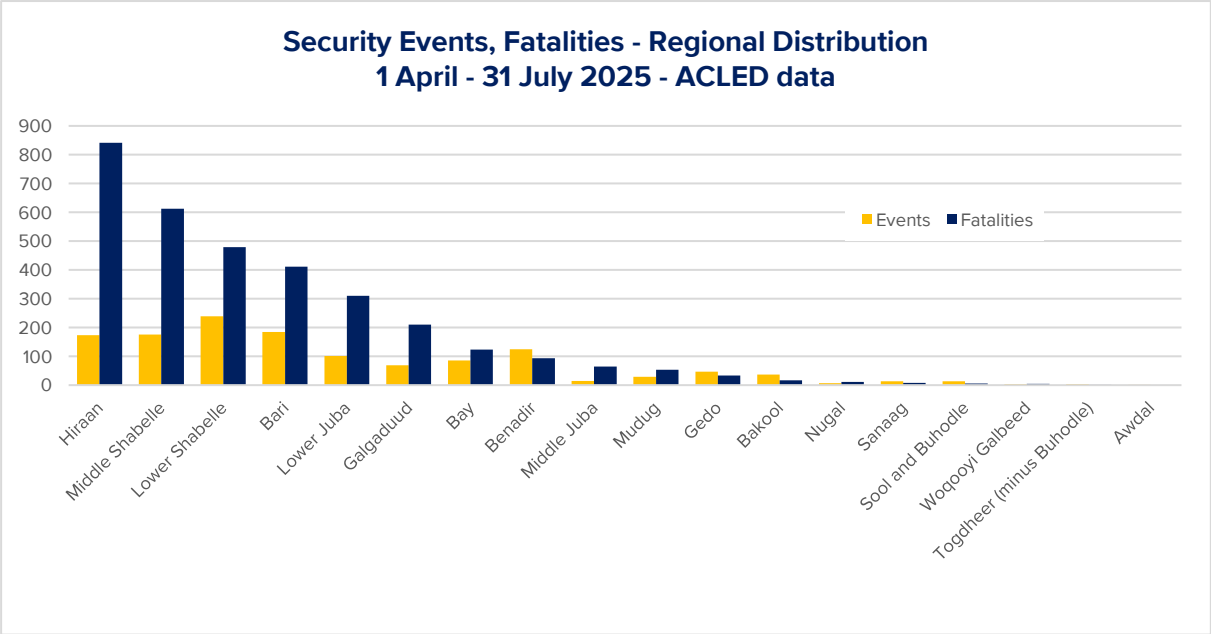


Figure 1. Regional distribution of security events and estimated fatalities in the reference period of the query, 1 April - 31 July 2025, based on ACLED data.[139]

In the previous reporting period – April 2023 to March 2025, EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (May 2025)[140] – based on ACLED data, the average number of security events per month was ~254, resulting in ~ 632 estimated fatalities (per month). In the period of the query update these averages raised respectively to ~ 331 security events and 820 estimated fatalities per month.[141] **Figure 2** below shows the monthly evolution of security events and estimated fatalities for the entire period 1 April 2023 – 31 July 2025.

[139] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, 31 July 2025, url
[140] EUAA, Country of Origin Information Somalia: Security Situation, May 2025, url, pp. 42-43
[141] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, 31 July 2025, url

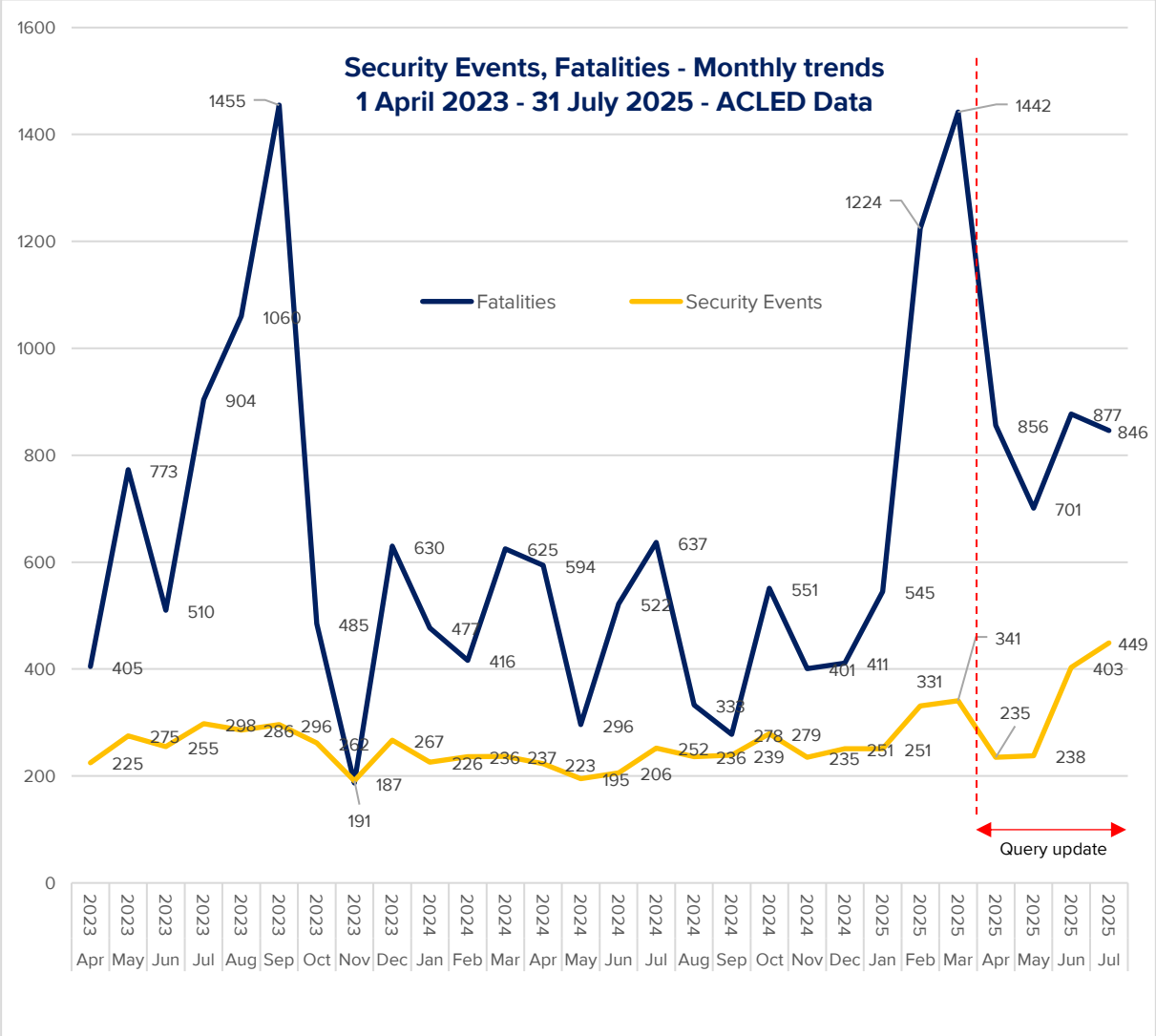


Figure 2. Country level monthly evolution of security events and estimated fatalities based on ACLED data in the period 1 April 2023 – 31 July 2025. The chart covers the reference period of the preceding EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation Report (1 April 2023 – 21 March 2025)) and that of the query update (1 April – 31 July 2025).[142]

Airstrikes: With the start of US President Trump's second term, which overlaps with the reference period of this query (April – July 2025), there was a significant surge in the number of air and drone strikes in Somalia due to the easing of restrictions on strike authorisations.[143]

Data and reporting on airstrikes vary across sources. According to ACLED, in the period April 2023 – July 2025, the overall number of Airstrikes was 431 resulting in 2 664 estimated fatalities (combatants and civilians). Most airstrikes are attributed to 'unidentified military forces', often described as 'international allied forces' or 'friends' (230), as well as to the Military Forces of the United States (93), and the Military Forces of the United Arab Emirates

[142] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, 31 July 2025, url
[143] FDD, Trump admin ups the tempo of airstrikes against jihadist groups in Somalia, 30 March 2025, url; New America, The War in Somalia, 31 July 2025, url

(39).[144] **Figure 3** below shows air/drone strikes monthly evolution, and resulting fatalities, in the period 1 April 2023 – 31 July 2025 based on ACLED data.

Focusing on the airstrikes conducted by US forces, based on ACLED, 46 were carried out in the period April 2023 - December 2025, and another 47 in the period January – July 2025,[145] with the latter mostly targeting ISIS in Puntland,[146] but also trying to counteract Al-Shabaab gains in South Central Somalia.[147] US AFRICOM reported for the same period 74 airstrikes, 19 in the period April 2023 – December 2025, and 45 in the period January – July 2025;[148] New America reported 77 airstrikes, 54 of which in the period January – July 2025 alone;[149] Airwars recorded, in the same period, 47 airstrike incidents attributed to the US, and another 22 attributed to international unknown forces.[150]

Against this backdrop, in the period January – July 2025, according to New America, the number of civilian deaths caused by the US drone strikes alone was estimated at between 33 and 123 civilians, out of 1 849 – 2450 total deaths.[151] As indicated by Somali journalist Mohamed Gabobe, 'the complexity in the battle space in Somalia is that groups like al-Shabab often live and operate among the civilian population', and that 'those at war with the armed groups rarely differentiate between civilians and fighters when striking targets'. Overreliance on shaky human intelligence in the rural areas also increases the chances of harming the civilian population.[152] The CSHRD was particularly concerned about 'indiscriminate' drone attacks in the Al-Miskaad mountains as well as in the gold mining area of Puntland, which severely affected the civilian population.[153]

[144] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 31 July 2025, url
[145] EUAA analysis based on ACLED data. Curated Data Files, Somalia, 31 July 2025, url
[146] FDD, Trump admin ups the tempo of airstrikes against jihadist groups in Somalia, 30 March 2025, url; EUAA analysis based on New America data, 30 July 2025, url
[147] Al Jazeera, Under Trump, US strikes on Somalia have doubled since last year. Why?, 24 June 2025, url
[148] US AFRICOM, 2025, 2024, 2023 Airstrikes, 31 July 2025, url
[149] New America, The War in Somalia, 31 July 2025, url
[150] Airwars, Civilian Casualty Archive, 31 July 2025, url
[151] New America, The War in Somalia, 31 July 2025, url
[152] Al Jazeera, Under Trump, US strikes on Somalia have doubled since last year. Why?, 24 June 2025, url
[153] CSHRD, Somalia: Quarter I Human Rights Report 2025, 26 April 2025, url

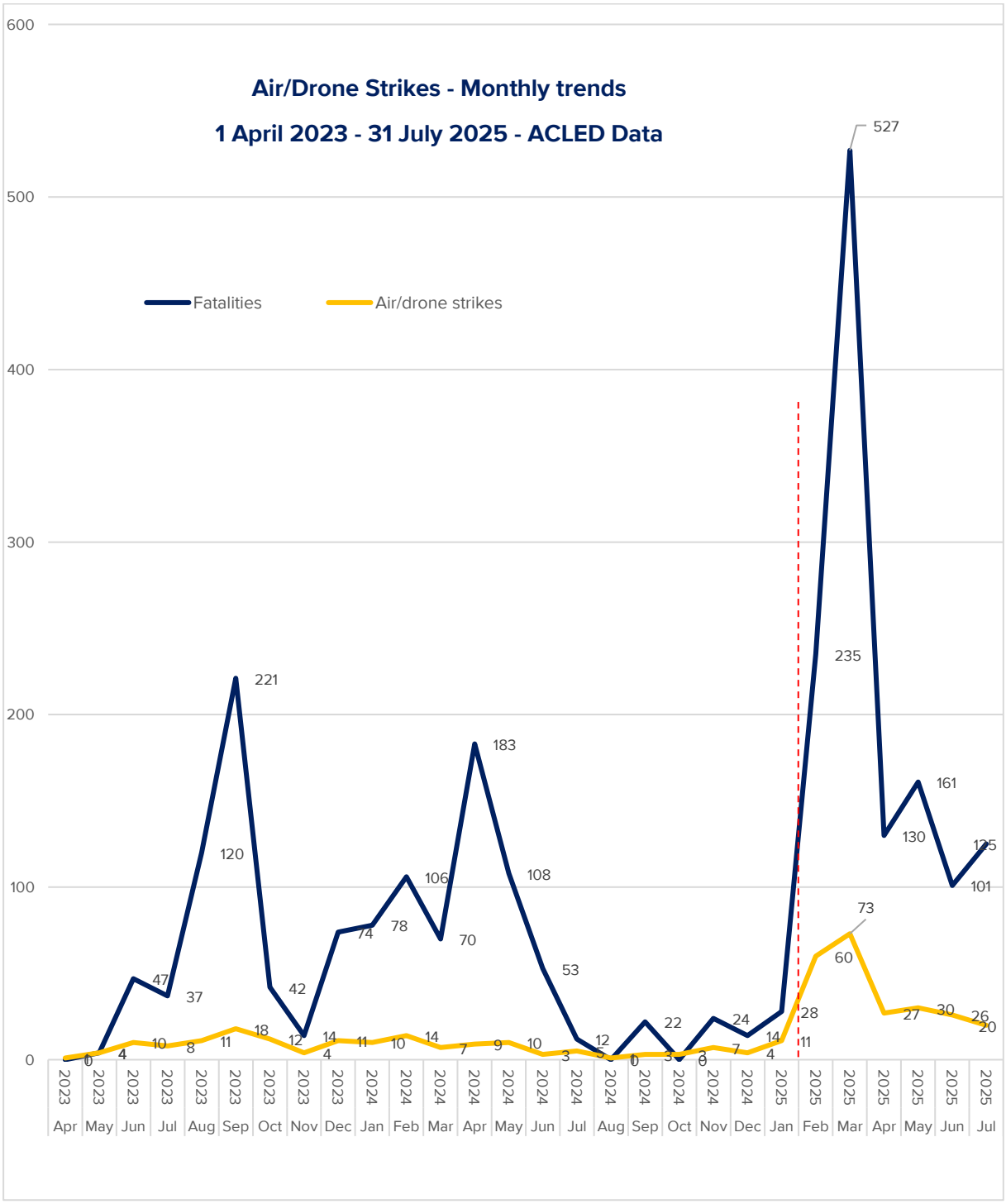


Figure 3. Air/drone strikes, including resulting estimated fatalities, conducted in Somalia in the period 1 April 2023 - 31 July 2025 based on ACLED data.[154]

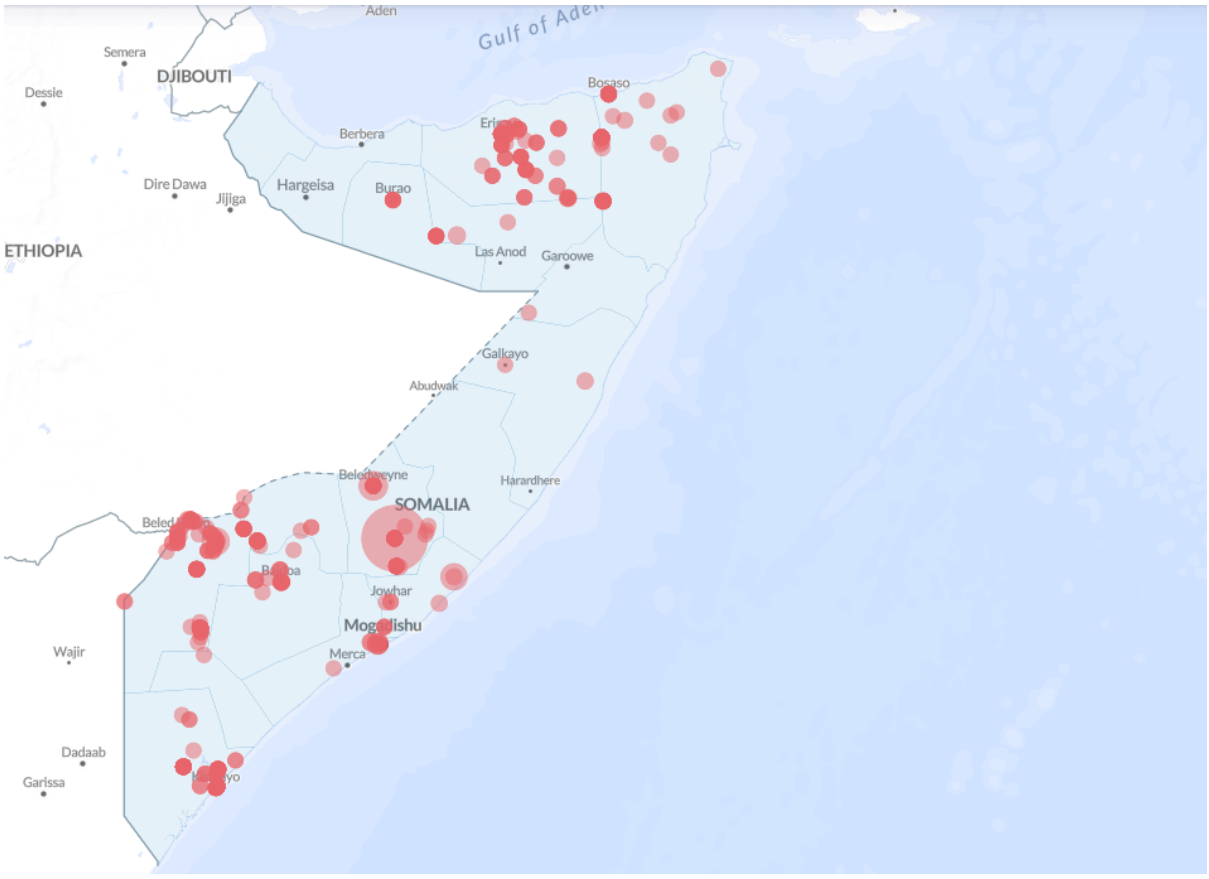
Conflict-related displacement

As indicated in the EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (May 2025),[155] in the period April 2023 – March 2025, conflict and insecurity were the drivers for the displacement of

[154] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, 31 July 2025, url
[155] EUAA, Country of Origin Information Somalia: Security Situation, May 2025, url, pp. 42-43

about 600 000 people - out of about 2 788 000 newly displaced - notably from the following regions: Gedo, Benadir, Lower Juba, Nugaal, Togdheer.[156]

In the reference period of the query, estimates of conflict-related displacement varied substantially across sources. According to UNHCR PRMN data, in the period April – July 2025, the number of newly displaced people in Somalia was 111 355. In particular, main regions affected by conflict and insecurity as drivers of displacement ['previous' regions] were Hiraan (13 162), Sanaag (9 186), Gedo (5 084), Lower Shabelle (3 031), and Middle Shabelle (2 038).[157]



Map 2. Conflict-related displacement in the period April - July 2025 based on UNHCR PRMN data and visual, as elaborated by EUAA.[158]

According to Gaahsaan Dialogue instead, in Hiraan alone for instance, about 12 500 families – or ~60 000 people - have been displaced by the Al-Shabaab's seizure of Moqokori and Tardo in July 2025.[159] SONNA, the Somali National News Agency, reported a similar figure in relation to the 'recent intense clashes' with Al-Shabaab in Hiraan region, which led to acute shelter deficiencies, widespread food insecurity, and critical water scarcity for the displaced population.[160] Comparably, in its August update, UNOCHA estimated that about 62 000 people had been displaced in the two preceding months across the entire of Hiraan, including

[156] UNHCR, PRMN – Somalia, 21 March 2025, url
[157] UNHCR, PRMN – Somalia, 31 July 2025, url. EUAA analysis based on UNHCR, PRMN data
[158] UNHCR, PRMN – Somalia, 31 July 2025, url. EUAA analysis based on UNHCR, PRMN data
[159] Gaahsaan Dialogue, Al-Shabaab and IS-Somalia: 2025 Activity Report, July 2025, url, p. 13;
[160] SONNA, Urgent Humanitarian Crisis Unfolds in Hiiraan as SoDMA and Hirshabelle Plan Joint Response, 13 July 2025, url

over 36 000 from Moqokori and over 22 000 from Mahaas.[161] According to UNOCHA, in and around Afgooye alone, in Lower Shabelle, on the backdrop of the military operations over the control of the Lower Shabelle bridges – Sabiid/Canole, Bariire, Awdheegle, and Janaale – as of 24 June 2025, more than 8 310 people had been displaced, primarily women, children, and elderly,[162] and were in need of life-saving assistance.[163] In Gedo region, as a consequence of the conflict erupted in Belet Hawo – see section on Security developments and conflict dynamics – between 38 000 and over 42 000 people have been displaced to nearby areas and to Mandera in Kenya.[164]

3. Humanitarian developments

At the beginning of 2025, Somalia had almost 6 million people estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in the course of the year.[165] Among those, in the period April – June 2025, the number of people projected to experience high levels of acute food insecurity was 4.4 million, one million more compared to the period January – March 2025.[166] Moreover, due to changes in the humanitarian situation affecting 21 areas across the country – and re-assessed ad-hoc in March 2025 - an additional 160 000 people were projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity in the period April – June 2025.[167]

In terms of acute malnutrition, the situation had also been projected to worsen during the reference period of the query (April – July 2025), notably because of the major reduction in humanitarian assistance funding. By the end of March 2025, 1.8 million children aged 6-59 months, including 479 000 children likely to be severely malnourished, were estimated to be experiencing acute malnutrition in the period April – June 2025 compared to 1.7 million estimated in January 2025.[168] Regions particularly affected were, from north to south, Awdal, Nugal, Mudug, Galgadud, Hiraan, Bay, part of Bakool, Lower Juba, as well as the area at the confluence between Benadir, Middle Shabelle, and Lower Shabelle.[169]

By July 2025, at the end of the re-prioritisation process, which was meant to ensure the most urgent and 'life-saving interventions' against 'unprecedented' funding reductions, UNOCHA identified 32 reprioritised districts.[170] These were concentrated in the whole of South-Central

[161] UNOCHA, SOMALIA: Conflict displacement in Hiraan and Gedo Regions, Flash Update No. 2, 3 August 2025, url; see also Save the Children, Over 11,000 thousand children displaced as fighting cuts off Mahaas in Somalia, 7 August 2025, url
[162] UNOCHA, Somalia – Afgooye Displacement Map, 24 June 2025, url; see also UNOCHA, Somalia – Monthly Humanitarian Update, June 2025, url, p. 3
[163] UNOCHA, Somalia – Monthly Humanitarian Update, June 2025, url, p. 3
[164] UNOCHA, SOMALIA: Conflict displacement in Hiraan and Gedo Regions, Flash Update No. 2, 3 August 2025, url
[165] UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan – Somalia 2025, January 2025, url, p. 10
[166] IPC, Acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analysis, Somalia, January – June 2025, 24 February 2025, url, pp. 1-3
[167] IPC, Somalia: Acute Food Insecurity Projection Update April - June 2025, 29 March 2025, url; see also UNHCR, Somalia - Operational Update June 2025, 21 July 2025, url, 1
[168] IPC, Somalia: Acute Malnutrition Projection Update for April - June 2025, 29 March 2025, url; see also UNHCR, Somalia - Operational Update June 2025, 21 July 2025, url, 1
[169] IPC, Somalia: Acute Malnutrition Projection Update for April - June 2025, 29 March 2025, url
[170] UNOCHA, Somalia – Impact of funding reductions, July 2025, url, pp. 1-2

Somalia, as well as in Bari (1) and in Awdal (2),[171] and required a reprioritised budget of 367 million, which was funded at 15.6 % as of 8 July 2025.[172]

Against this general backdrop, as of June 2025, there were about 3.5 million IDPs in Somalia, who depended on humanitarian aid for survival.[173] At the time, UNHCR, which is mandated to protect and assist them, was operating through 16 key implementing partners: 10 Government, 4 local or national NGOs, and 2 international NGOs.[174] Budget funding was a major issue of concern in the sector, with following cluster responses only partially funded by then: 12 % of the overall UNHCR 2025 budget (157 million),[175] 13.2 % of the protection cluster budget, 5 % of the shelter cluster budget, and 20 % of the CCCM cluster budget.[176]

Under the extraordinary financial circumstances, other aid agencies were also forced to scale down and, in some cases, close critical programmes, as indicated by UN OCHA in July 2025.[177] In Somaliland, at least 79 nutrition facilities ceased to function; in Puntland 79 health facilities have been non-functional since the beginning of 2025; in Galmudug at least 13 800 people lost access to clean water, while health services have been disrupted from more than 372 000 people; in Hirshabelle, more than 28 nutrition sites were due to close in July 2025; in Benadir 20 supplementary feeding sites for malnourished children were facing imminent closure; in South West State, 40 health facilities had closed, while the number of outreach mobile teams dropped from 74 to 25; in Jubbaland the closure of two maternal and a child health centre in Garbahaarey left 11 200 IDPs without access to health and nutrition services.[178] At the end of July 2025, while traditional donor support remained under strain, India dispatched 10 tons of medical aid.[179]

At the climate level, in the period April-June 2025, the *Gu* rainy season did better than forecasted, with southern and central regions experiencing improved pasture, water availability, and crop growth. However, many northern and northeastern districts remained dry and under stress, which also led to livestock migration.[180] Among others, as of July 2025, severe drought remained an issue of concern in the Awdal region, particularly in the districts of Zeylac and Lughaya and surrounding villages,[181] and parts of Galmudug, particularly near the Ethiopian border.[182] At the end of July 2025, worsening drought conditions in eastern and southern Somaliland, threatening both livelihoods and livestock in already vulnerable communities, were reportedly affecting more than 100 000 people.[183]

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[171] UNOCHA, Somalia - Humanitarian Dashboard - Re-Prioritized (32 Districts) January – May 2025, 15 July 2025, url
[172] UNOCHA, Somalia – Impact of funding reductions, July 2025, url, pp. 1-2; see also UNOCHA, Somalia - Humanitarian Dashboard - Re-Prioritized (32 Districts) January – May 2025, 15 July 2025, url; UNOCHA, Somalia – Monthly Humanitarian Update, June 2025, url, pp. 1-2
[173] UNOCHA, Somalia – Impact of funding reductions, July 2025, url, pp. 1-2
[174] UNHCR, Somalia - Operational Update June 2025, 21 July 2025, url, 1
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[176] UNHCR, Somalia - Operational Update June 2025, 21 July 2025, url, 1-3
[177] UNOCHA, Somalia – Impact of funding reductions, July 2025, url, p. 1
[178] UNOCHA, Somalia – Monthly Humanitarian Update, June 2025, url, p. 2
[179] Dawan Africa, India Sends 10 Tonnes of Medical Aid to Somalia Amid Worsening Humanitarian Crisis, 27 July 2025
[180] UNOCHA, Somalia – Monthly Humanitarian Update, June 2025, url, p. 3
[181] Hiraan Online, Somali PM orders urgent relief for drought-hit Awdal region, 17 July 2025, url
[182] Hiraan Online, Galmudug urges SoDMA to deliver emergency aid as drought worsens, 12 July 2025, url
[183] Shabelle Media Network, Somaliland President Calls for Emergency Aid as Severe Drought Hits Thousands, 30 July 2025, url

4. Accessing and settling in Hargeisa

This section is meant to supplement section 2.2.2 (c) Accessing and settling in the city and 2.2.2 (d) Documents and procedures for accessing and settling in the city of chapter 2.2 Hargeisa of the EUAA COI Report Somalia: Country Focus (May 2025).[184] Moreover, this information has to be read in conjunction with chapter 1.5.2 Documents for accessing Somaliland for Somalis and ethnic Somalis by air and land of the EUAA COI Report Somalia: Security Situation (February 2023).[185]

Anybody travelling to Hargeisa by air from abroad requires a valid passport for entering the territory of Somaliland. Somalilanders travelling with a passport issued by the Somaliland state administration do not require a visa. All other Somalis, including ethnic Somalis travelling with a passport issued either by the FGS or another foreign state administration, require a visa - usually granted upon arrival - for entering the territory of Somaliland. Other times, however, the visa can be issued through Somaliland representative missions abroad, or the visa applications, after having been shared on-line, can be pursued by a local contact in Somaliland. For the granting of the visa, sometimes a letter of invitation or travel justification is also required. In their absence the visa can be refused. Some air companies – e.g Ethiopian airline – require the flight travellers to obtain a visa prior to travelling to Somaliland.[186]

When settling in the city, no particular formal requirement is needed to buy land or properties or engage in business and other legal activities, provided that, at the social level, the individual in question is informally 'identified' by the hosting community through clan connections or local contacts that can vouch for him/her. ID and other formal documentations are instead needed in case people intend to officially register – with the local administration – their activities and properties. In this case, women need to be escorted by a male guarantor and witness, in whose absence two female witnesses are needed.[187]

[184] EUAA, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Country Focus, May 2025, url, p. 114
[185] EUAA, Country of Origin information Report on Somalia: Security Situation, February 2023, url, pp. 56-58
[186] Sagal Mohamed, Telephone interview and email exchange, 4, 5 August 2025. Sagal Mohamed is a Somalilander and a healthcare consultant partially based in Somaliland and partially in the UK with frequent travels between the two.
[187] Sagal Mohamed, Telephone interview and email exchange, 4, 5 August 2025

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Sagal Mohamed, Telephone interview and email exchange, 4, 5 August 2025. Sagal Ashour is a Somalilander and a healthcare consultant partially based in Somaliland and partially in the UK with frequent travels between the two.

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