



Home Office

# **Country Policy and Information Note**

## **Somalia - Mogadishu: Al Shabab and the security situation**

**Version: 2.0**

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# Executive summary

Somalia continues to experience armed conflict fought mainly between the Federal Government (FGS) and its allies, including African Union forces, and the Islamist armed group, Al Shabab (AS). Violence is concentrated in south and central Somalia.

The FGS and its allies maintain control of Mogadishu. However, Al Shabaab remains a persistent threat in Mogadishu, continuing to carry out high profile attacks that challenge government authority. Al Shabab mainly targets people or places linked to the government and its allies in the city. It has also attacked targeted business people, non-government organisations, international aid workers and journalists who have opposed or resisted it. While AS uses different methods to recruit members, there is no evidence that it forcibly recruits people in Mogadishu.

The security situation in Mogadishu remains stable. The number of documented civilian casualties remains relatively low, at around 165 in the year to May 2025 out of a population of 3 million, and is similar to levels reported in each year since 2012.

A fear of Al Shabab because of links to the government or for resisting the group falls with Refugee Convention on grounds of political opinion.

A fear of indiscriminate violence by itself does not fall within the Refugee Convention.

An ordinary person is not likely to be at risk of acts amounting to persecution by AS including forced recruitment. Only people seen as supportive of the government or opposed to Al-Shabaab such as peace activists, community leaders, clan elders, electoral delegates, cooperative businesspeople, or those refusing to pay Al-Shabaab taxes may be at risk of persecution.

There is not a real risk of serious harm in Mogadishu because of a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in an internal armed conflict, as defined in paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules.

The state is willing but not able to offer effective protection from Al Shabab.

People from other parts of Somalia who have not previously lived in Mogadishu may be able to relocate to the city.

Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

All cases must be considered on their individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

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# Assessment

Section updated: 30 June 2025

## About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of **whether in Mogadishu, in general**:

- a person faces a real risk of persecution/serious harm by Al Shabab and/or
- the security situation is such that there are substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict as within [paragraphs 339C and 339CA\(iv\) of the Immigration Rules](#)
- the state (or quasi state bodies) is unable to provide effective protection
- internal relocation to Mogadishu is possible to avoid persecution/serious harm
- a claim, if refused, is not likely certified as 'clearly unfounded' under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

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## 1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

### 1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 1.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 1.1.3 Decision makers must also consider making an international biometric data-sharing check, when such a check has not already been undertaken (see [Biometric data-sharing process \(Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process\)](#)).
- 1.1.4 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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## 1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Various groups in the conflict in Somalia have been responsible for serious human rights abuses.
- 1.2.2 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons to apply one (or more) of the exclusion clauses. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.
- 1.2.3 Somalia hosts several armed groups, including clan militias, Al Shabaab, and the Islamic State (IS). Al-Shabaab, an al-Qaeda affiliate, has resurged in recent years, exploiting political divisions to expand its influence and carry out high-profile attacks. The Islamic State in Somalia, originally a breakaway faction of Al-Shabaab, now serves as a key node in IS's global network, operating mainly from Puntland. Both Al-Shabaab and IS are proscribed terrorist organisations under UK law.
- 1.2.4 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.5 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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## 2. Convention reason(s)

### 2.1 Fear of Al Shabab

- 2.1.1 Actual or imputed political opinion.
- 2.1.2 Establishing a convention reason is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of an actual or imputed Refugee Convention reason.

### 2.2 Indiscriminate violence

- 2.2.1 A state of civil instability or where law and order has broken down, which might exist in some places outside of government control, do not of themselves give rise to a well-founded fear of persecution for a Refugee Convention reason.
- 2.2.2 In the absence of a link to one of the 5 Refugee Convention reasons necessary for the grant of asylum, the question is whether the person will face a real risk of serious harm to qualify for Humanitarian Protection (HP).

- 2.2.3 However, before considering whether a person requires protection because of the general security situation, decision makers must consider if the person faces persecution for a Refugee Convention reason. Where the person qualifies for protection under the Refugee Convention, decision makers do not need to consider if there are substantial grounds for believing the person faces a real risk of serious harm meriting a grant of HP.
- 2.2.4 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds, see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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### 3. Risk

#### 3.1 Al Shabab

- 3.1.1 A person who does not have links to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) - including the security forces, non-government or international organisations - or opposes/resists Al Shabab is not likely to be at risk of persecution or serious harm. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.
- 3.1.2 Al Shabab remains the primary militant group active in Somalia and the main threat to peace and security including in Mogadishu. Their goal is to establish an Islamic state across the country; it vigorously opposes the 'western' backed government and its allies. The group's strongholds are in south and central Somalia but its sphere of influence extends beyond these areas. While Mogadishu remains under the control of the FGS and Al Shabab does not have an overt presence, the group is able to infiltrate the city and maintains a network of informants and members there (see [Al Shabab](#) and [Areas controlled by armed actors](#)).
- 3.1.3 Al Shabab targets people who support or are perceived to support the FGS or resist the group's control. Sources agree that Al Shabab continues to be able to launch attacks in Mogadishu, mainly targeting people or places linked to the government and its allies, including African Union support forces. It has also targeted business people, NGOs, international aid workers and journalists. The group has reportedly attacked businesses in retaliation for installing surveillance cameras which might detect Al Shabab members linked to the group's 'tax' collection activities. Sources are, however, consistent in stating that Al Shabab does not target 'ordinary' Somalis but it has shown little regard in preventing 'collateral damage' - civilian casualties – when targeting the government and its allies. Al Shabab uses a range of methods to attack its targets including suicide bombings, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and assassinations (see [Al Shabab – Targets](#)).
- 3.1.4 AS uses a variety of methods to recruit its members, fighters and informers. The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) stated that recruitment could occur throughout the country as long as AS had a corresponding network to support the process. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NL MoFA) noted that AS mostly recruited people voluntarily with the GFOMR reporting that age, gender, educational background and employment are factors affecting who joins. The NL MoFA observed that AS has also sometimes forcibly recruited members, including children. In occupied areas, families are often required to release a certain number of children as recruits but this may depend on circumstances – for example, if the group needs to increase its numbers after losses on the battlefield – and

usually occurs in areas the group controls. No source consulted for this note indicated that AS forcibly recruits people in Mogadishu (see [Al Shabab – Recruitment](#) and [Bibliography](#)).

- 3.1.5 In the country guidance case of [of MOJ & Ors \(Return to Mogadishu\), Somalia CG \[2014\] UKUT 00442 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 10 to 13, and 25 February and 9 September 2014, promulgated 3 October 2014, the Upper Tribunal of the Immigration and Asylum Chamber (UT) held:

‘... Generally, a person who is “an ordinary civilian” (i.e. not associated with the security forces; any aspect of government or official administration or any NGO or international organisation) on returning to Mogadishu after a period of absence will face no real risk of persecution ... In particular, he will not be at real risk simply on account of having lived in a European location for a period of time of being viewed with suspicion either by the authorities as a possible supporter of Al Shabaab or by Al Shabaab as an apostate or someone whose Islamic integrity has been compromised by living in a Western country ... There has been durable change in the sense that the Al Shabaab withdrawal from Mogadishu is complete and there is no real prospect of a re-established presence within the city ...’ (Headnote, paragraphs ii and iii)

- 3.1.6 The UT in the country guidance case of [OA \(Somalia\) Somalia CG \[2022\] UKUT 00033 \(IAC\)](#), heard 14 to 18 and 21 June 2021, with further submissions on 21 September, and 8, 12 and 14 October 2021, promulgated 2 February 2022, which considered changes in the security and humanitarian situation in Mogadishu since MOJ observed in its analysis ‘... as we have already set out, the evidence suggests that the ongoing terrorist activity of Al Shabaab is not targeted at civilians.’ (paragraph 303). The UT also held in MOJ and Others that ‘... There is no real risk of forced recruitment to Al Shabaab for civilian citizens of Mogadishu, including recent returnees from the West.’ (Headnote, paragraph vi)

- 3.1.7 The UT in OA held in its country guidance that ‘The country guidance given in paragraph 407 of MOJ (replicated at paragraphs (ii) to (x) of the headnote to MOJ [see above]) remains applicable.’ (Headnote, paragraph 2)

- 3.1.8 The available country information does not indicate that there are very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to depart from the UT’s findings in MOJ (and affirmed by the UT in the case of OA).

- 3.1.9 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 3.2 Indiscriminate violence

- 3.2.1 There are not substantial grounds for believing there is a real risk of serious harm because there exists a serious and individual threat to a civilian’s life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of international or internal armed conflict in Somalia, as defined in paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules.

- 3.2.2 Paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules only apply to civilians who are non-combatants. This could include former combatants who have genuinely and permanently renounced armed activity.



- 3.2.3 Even where there is not in general a real risk of serious harm by reason of indiscriminate violence in a situation of armed conflict, a person may still face a real risk of serious harm if they are able to show that there are specific reasons over and above simply being a civilian affected by indiscriminate violence. Decision makers must consider each case on its facts.
- 3.2.4 The Grand Chamber of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in the case of [Elgafaji \(C-465/07\)](#), promulgated on 17 February 2009, considered the definition of a real risk of serious harm as a result of indiscriminate violence. It explained that:
- ‘... the existence of a serious and individual threat to the life or person of an applicant for subsidiary protection ... can exceptionally be considered to be established where the degree of indiscriminate violence characterising the armed conflict taking place ... reaches such a high level that substantial grounds are shown for believing that a civilian, returned to the relevant country or ... relevant region, would, solely on account of his presence on the territory of that country or region, face a real risk of being subject to that threat.’ (paragraph 43).
- 3.2.5 The England and Wales Court of Appeal (EWCA) in case of [QD \(Iraq\) v Secretary of State for the Home Department \[2009\] EWCA Civ 620, promulgated 24 June 2009](#), held that ‘... there is no requirement that the armed conflict itself must be exceptional. What is, however, required is an intensity of indiscriminate violence – which will self-evidently not characterise every such situation – great enough to meet the test spelt out ... [in Elgafaji]’ (paragraph 36)
- 3.2.6 The EWCA went on to frame the test as being where ‘... there is in ... [the country] or a material part of it [that is in the person’s home area or potential place of relocation] such a high level of indiscriminate violence that substantial grounds exist for believing that an applicant ... would, solely by being present there, face a real risk which threatens his life or person ...’ (paragraphs 36 and 40).
- 3.2.7 South and central Somalia, including the Banadir region which is primarily comprised of Mogadishu, continues to be in a state of internal armed conflict. This is mainly between the Islamist militant group, al Shabaab, and the FGS’ security forces supported by African Union peacekeepers and clan militias (see [Al Shabab](#) and [Overview of Somalia generally](#)).
- 3.2.8 The FGS and international forces pushed AS out of Mogadishu between 2011 and 2014. AS continued to control large areas of south and central Somalia until 2022, when the FGS supported by international forces and local militias, launched a military campaign to retake towns and strategic travel routes. After some initial FGS successes AS has reclaimed areas it lost including those close to Mogadishu during 2024 and 2025. The FGS and its allies continue to control Mogadishu but AS maintains a presence in the city and is able to perpetrate attacks. AS’ tactics include both direct combat (battles but also the use of IEDs and suicide bombings) and non-kinetic attacks such as financial targeting (tax collection) (see [Al Shabab](#), [Areas controlled by armed actors](#) and [Conflict and violence](#)).
- 3.2.9 Sources note that no organisation systematically records or maintains statistics on the number of violent incidents and casualties arising from the

civil conflict. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED), a US-based non-profit organisation, provides the most detailed data on the security situation - collating information on events and fatalities resulting from political violence - gathered from local, national and international sources. This data provides a useful guide to the levels and nature of violence although under-reporting is likely. Other sources, including the UN, also sometimes provide data on security incidents (see [Available data](#)).

- 3.2.10 Sources are consistent in reporting that the security situation in Mogadishu during 2024 and 2025 was stable. Landinfo, the Norwegian country information research service, noted that in 2024 the overall security dynamic in the city remained the same as 2012, when AS had just withdrawn from the city, and was much better than it had been for a long time. Similarly the UN Secretary General noted that between September 2024 and March 2025 Mogadishu remained 'relatively stable' although there was increased militant activity in surrounding regions. Landinfo also observed that the frequency and scale of incidents fluctuate in Mogadishu alternating between calm and periods when AS carries out multiple attacks. It added that while AS did not target civilians there is a risk of being in the 'wrong place at the wrong time' (see [Mogadishu – security incidents](#)).
- 3.2.11 These observations are consistent with ACLED's data on political violence in Mogadishu, which documented 325 events in the year to 31 May 2025 including 152 incidents involving 'civilian targeting' (see [Mogadishu – security incidents](#)) and 165 civilian fatalities, a relatively small number out of an estimated population of around 3 million (see [Mogadishu – fatalities](#) and [Country information](#)). Landinfo and ACLED's data also indicate that the levels of political violence, including those targeting civilians, and the numbers of civilian fatalities in 2024 and 2025, are consistent with the totals in each year since 2012 (but less than the most violent year of 2017). These include the years considered by the UT in the cases of MOJ and Others (2013 to 2014) and OA (2020 to 2021) (see [Mogadishu – security incidents](#) and [Mogadishu – fatalities](#)).
- 3.2.12 In MOJ the UT held that:
- '... Generally, a person who is "an ordinary civilian" (i.e. not associated with the security forces; any aspect of government or official administration or any NGO or international organisation) on returning to Mogadishu after a period of absence will face no real risk of ... risk of harm such as to require protection under Article 3 of the ECHR or Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive [as now set out in paragraphs 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules] ...
- 'The level of civilian casualties, excluding non-military casualties that clearly fall within Al Shabaab target groups such as politicians, police officers, government officials and those associated with NGOs and international organisations, cannot be precisely established by the statistical evidence which is incomplete and unreliable. However, it is established by the evidence considered as a whole that there has been a reduction in the level of civilian casualties since 2011, largely due to the cessation of confrontational warfare within the city and Al Shabaab's resort to asymmetrical warfare on carefully selected targets. The present level of casualties does not amount to a sufficient risk to ordinary civilians such as to represent an Article 15(c) risk.

‘It is open to an ordinary citizen of Mogadishu to reduce further still his personal exposure to the risk of “collateral damage” in being caught up in an Al Shabaab attack that was not targeted at him by avoiding areas and establishments that are clearly identifiable as likely Al Shabaab targets, and it is not unreasonable for him to do so.’ (Headnote, paragraphs ii, iv and v)

3.2.13 The UT in [OA](#) held in its analysis (not the country guidance):

‘There are no very strong grounds, supported by cogent evidence, not to follow the assessment of [MOJ](#) concerning the security situation in Mogadishu. While the security situation remains volatile, in Somali terms there has been relative stability over the last seven years. The withdrawal of Al-Shabaab remains complete, and the city is under the control of government forces and security officials. Terrorism and targeted bomb attacks continue to form a significant part of the security landscape and daily life, and so impact on humanitarian and other conditions accordingly, but it remains the case that, as held in [MOJ](#), an ordinary civilian does not face a real risk of a serious and individual threat to their person by reason of indiscriminate violence for the purposes of paragraph 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules (that is, the threshold contained in Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive).’ (paragraph 222)

3.2.14 The UT went on to hold in the country guidance for the case that: ‘The country guidance given in paragraph 407 of MOJ (replicated at paragraphs ii to x of the headnote to MOJ [see above]) remains applicable.’ (Headnote, paragraph 2)

3.2.15 The available country information does not indicate that there are very strong grounds supported by cogent evidence to depart from the UT’s findings in MOJ and Others (and affirmed by the UT in the case of OA).

3.2.16 For guidance on considering serious harm where there is a situation of indiscriminate violence in an armed conflict, including consideration of enhanced risk factors, see the Asylum Instruction, [Humanitarian Protection](#).

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## **4. Protection**

4.1.1 A person who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from Al Shabab is unlikely to obtain protection from the state.

4.1.2 This is because the state may be willing but is not able to offer effective protection, despite the presence of Federal Security Forces, Police Force, and Security Forces Answering to Benadir Regional Authorities, within Mogadishu. Al Shabab continue to be able to conduct attacks in Mogadishu, primarily aimed at people linked with the FGS and its allies, as well as places where they frequent (see [Al Shabab](#) and [Conflict and violence](#)).

4.1.3 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#)

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## **5. Internal relocation**

5.1.1 A person who is not from Mogadishu but is not able to demonstrate a risk from Al Shabab or other actors is likely to be able to internally relocate to the city.

- 5.1.2 For detailed information and guidance on internal relocation, see the Country Policy and Information Note, [Somalia: Humanitarian situation](#).
- 5.1.3 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## **6. Certification**

- 6.1.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 6.1.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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# Country information

## About the country information

This section contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment which, as stated in the [About the assessment](#), is the guide to the current objective conditions.

The structure and content follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before **30 April 2025**. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

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## 7. Geography

- 7.1.1 The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs report, 'General country of origin information report on Somalia', June 2023, (NL MOFA report 2023) citing other sources noted: 'Mogadishu is formally part of the administrative region of Benadir. In fact, that region consists solely of the capital, Mogadishu ...'<sup>1</sup> The EU Asylum Agency's Somalia: Country Focus, May 2025, (EUAA Focus 2025), based on a range of sources, noted:

'Mogadishu ... consists of 20 districts. The old ones are: Wadajir, Dharkenley, Daynile, Wardigley, Hawl Wadaag, Waberi, Hamar Jajab, Hamar Weyne, Bondere, Karaan, Yaqshid, Huriwaa, Kahda, Hodan, Shibis, Abdulaziz, Shangani ... Recently, in May 2024, three new districts were added: Gubadley, Darussalam, Garasbaaley ... As of February 2022, Benadir Region was the only region in Somalia completely controlled by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). Mogadishu hosts the FGS. Its international airport and port are the country's largest two revenue sources. Mogadishu is the only city where the FGS collects taxes ...'<sup>2</sup>

- 7.1.2 The EUAA Focus 2025 further noted:

'Mogadishu is inhabited largely by Hawiye from the clans Abgaal, Habar Gedir and Murosade. Besides, certain minority groups such as Reer Hamar are traditional inhabitants of the city ... Moreover, members from many other Somali clans reside in Mogadishu as students, professionals, business people or government workers ... Mogadishu is "not as segregated by clan as other areas of Somalia". Still, clan membership is important. Hawiye clan holds the most powerful positions ... Minority group members and members of other clans face exclusion and discrimination. ... Particularly in the oldest quarters Shangani and Hamar Weyne, Reer Hamar - which consist of many small groups ... have their ancestral homes ...'<sup>3</sup>

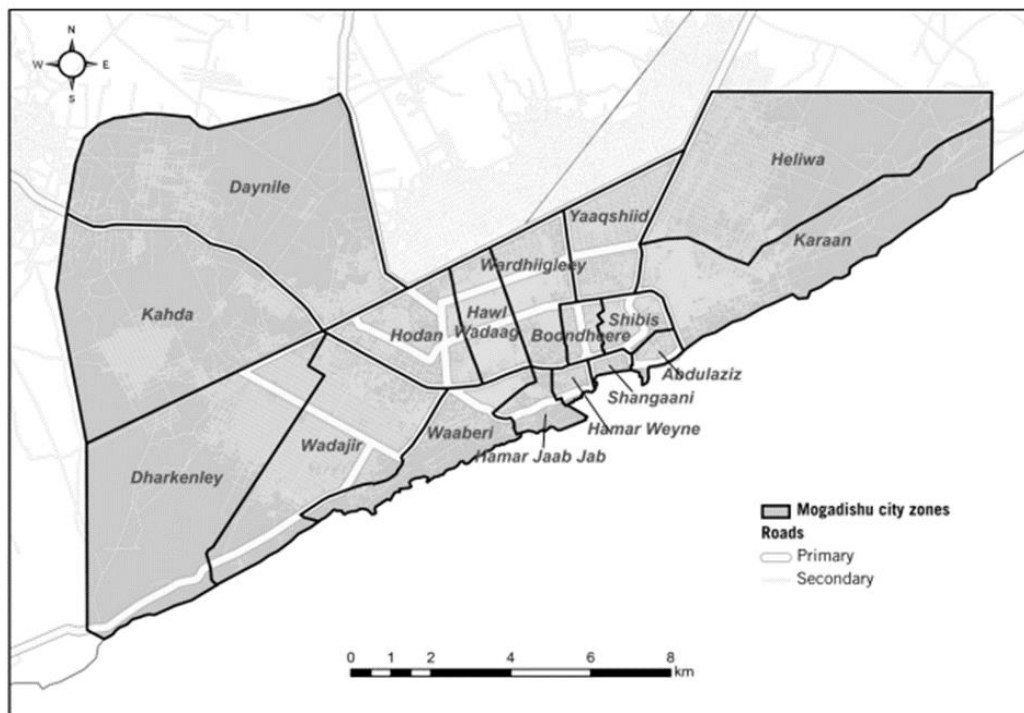
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<sup>1</sup> NL MOFA, [General country of origin information report on Somalia](#) (section 2.2.1), June 2023

<sup>2</sup> EUAA, [Somalia: Country Focus](#) (section 2.1.1), May 2025

<sup>3</sup> EUAA, [Somalia: Country Focus](#) (section 2.1.1), May 2025

- 7.1.3 The map below shows Mogadishu's 17 'old' districts and main and secondary roads<sup>4</sup>:



- 7.1.4 For additional maps of Mogadishu, see [OpenStreetMap](#), [Mapcarta](#), and [Satellites.pro](#).

NOTE: The maps in this section are not intended to reflect the UK Government's views of any boundaries.

- 7.1.5 The EUAA in their 'COI Report - Somalia: Security Situation' covering events between 1 July 2021 and 30 November 2022 and based on a range of sources (EUAA security situation report 2023), dated 23 February 2023, noted:

'While Mogadishu is inhabited by individuals from all Somali clans as well as minorities, it is dominated by the Hawiye clan family. The majority of its districts are closely identified with specific Hawiye clans. Among Hawiye groups, the Abgaal and Habar Gidir hold a particularly powerful position in the city. The dominance of the Hawiye is reflected by the fact that as of 2021, as many as 15 of the 17 district commissioners were Hawiye. While other groups are able to reside and conduct business in these districts, the dominant clans receive most of the benefits accrued from controlling the district, including local tax revenue, contracts, and jobs.

'Old city neighbourhoods like Wadajir (Medina), Hamar-Weyne, Hamar-Jaab, Shibus, Shingan, and Bondhere are known for their comparatively cosmopolitan outlook and are also home to "marginalised groups". The minority Reer Hamar (Benadiri) reside in Hamar-Weyne and Shangani, while Bondhere is mainly inhabited by Bantus. The Yibr (sab) live along Mogadishu's coast. But even in heterogenous neighbourhoods, less powerful groups must seek security arrangements with the locally dominant

<sup>4</sup> EUAA, [Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators...](#), (Districts Map of Mogadishu), September 2021



clan.’<sup>5</sup>

- 7.1.6 Population estimates vary for Somalia. The US CIA World Factbook stated that the country’s population in 2024 was around 13 million<sup>6</sup> however, the UN estimated the population to be about 18.3 million as of 2023<sup>7</sup>. While the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a ‘multi-stakeholder global initiative’ of international organisations which creates ‘a common global scale for classifying the severity and magnitude of food insecurity and malnutrition’<sup>8</sup>, in its March 2025 population tracker tool (IPC tracker 2025) estimated that the population was over 19.2 million<sup>9</sup>.
- 7.1.7 Population estimate also vary for Mogadishu. The CIA World Factbook reported Mogadishu’s population to be around 2.61 million in 2023<sup>10</sup> while the IPC tracker 2025 estimated that the population of the Banadir region (largely consisting of Mogadishu) was around 3.2 million, with about 350,000 in ‘peri-urban’ areas, 1.5 million [internally displaced persons] IDPs and 1.3 million in urban Mogadishu<sup>11</sup>.

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## **8. Government and allied forces**

### **8.1 Security forces and clan militias**

- 8.1.1 The CIA World Factbook described the Somali security forces as including:  
‘Somali Armed Forces (SAF; aka Somali Defense Force): Somali National Army (SNA; aka Land Forces), Somali Navy, Somali Air Force  
‘Ministry of Internal Security: Somali National Police (SNP, includes Coast Guard, commando unit) (2024)  
‘... Somalia has numerous militia ("macawisley") and regional/state forces operating throughout the country; these forces include ones that are clan- and warlord-based, semi-official paramilitary and special police forces ("darwish"), and externally sponsored militias.’<sup>12</sup>
- 8.1.2 The CIA World Factbook also noted that there were estimated to be ‘20,000 regular military personnel ... [and] tens of thousands of militia forces ... active in Somalia’.<sup>13</sup>
- 8.1.3 EUAA security situation report 2025 noted: ‘Forces present in the city include federal security forces, the Presidential Guard, police forces, security forces answering to the Benadir regional authorities, numerous private security firms and clan protection forces.’<sup>14</sup>
- 8.1.4 The German private foundation, Bertlesmann Stiftung, in its Transformation Index 2024 country report on Somalia based on the views of country experts from think tanks and universities covering the period January 2021 to January 2023, published April 2024 (BTI report 2024) noted: ‘The Somali

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<sup>5</sup> EUAA, [Somalia:Security Situation](#) (paragraph 2.3.1), 23 February 2023

<sup>6</sup> CIA, The World Factbook, [Somalia](#) (People and society), updated 13 March 2025

<sup>7</sup> UN WHO, [Somalia](#), no date

<sup>8</sup> IPC, [Frequently Asked Questions](#), no date

<sup>9</sup> IPC, [The IPC Population Tracking Tool](#) (Somalia), no date

<sup>10</sup> CIA, The World Factbook, [Somalia](#) (People and society), updated 25 June 2025

<sup>11</sup> IPC, [The IPC Population Tracking Tool](#) (Somalia), no date

<sup>12</sup> CIA, The World Factbook ([Somalia](#)), updated 13 March 2025

<sup>13</sup> CIA, The World Factbook ([Somalia](#)), updated 13 March 2025

<sup>14</sup> EUAA, [Somalia:Security Situation](#) (section 2.3.1), May 2025

National Army and police patrol the city [Mogadishu] but are poorly integrated and sometimes act as clan militias rather than a national security force. Al-Shabaab continues to penetrate the city and launch terrorist attacks aimed at governmental and civilian targets. Somali special forces are the most effective of the government security forces and can successfully attack al-Shabaab.’<sup>15</sup>

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## 8.2 International forces

8.2.1 Military Africa, an online defence industry resource providing industry professionals with access to essential datasets, publications, and analysis on military/defence technologies and procurement trends in Africa<sup>16</sup>, in their report ‘AMISOM transition to AUSSOM’, dated 15 January 2025, stated:

‘The African Union (AU) has announced a transition in its peacekeeping efforts in Somalia. As of 1 January [2025], the AU Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) has been rebranded as [the AU Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia](#) (AUSSOM). This marks the third name change in 18 years of AU efforts to bring peace to Somalia.

‘Originally established in January 2007, the mission began as AMISOM, which operated for 15 years. In April 2022, it was renamed the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) to reflect its evolving role in the region. The most recent transition to AUSSOM aligns with the mission’s new focus on support and stabilization.’<sup>17</sup>

8.2.2 The above report also noted:

‘Under its new mandate, AUSSOM will work closely with the Somali Security Forces (SSF) to implement the Somalia Transition Plan (STP). Developed by the Somali federal government and its partners, the STP serves as a comprehensive guide for transferring security responsibilities to the Somali National Security Forces (SNSF). Although the initial goal was to complete this transfer by 2021, delays led to the establishment of ATMIS to continue the process.’<sup>18</sup>

8.2.3 According to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), an American based non-partisan, non-profit, public policy research organization<sup>19</sup>, in their report Africa File, of 22 August 2024, ‘The new mission will prioritize ongoing peace-building measures—such as providing security to Somali citizens and degrading al Shabaab—while leaving international partners and the Somali Federal Government to work on state-building.’<sup>20</sup>

8.2.4 Voice of America (VOA), an US international broadcaster, providing news and information<sup>21</sup>, in their report AU, Somalia agree on troop numbers for new mission, dated 25 February 2025 reported:

‘AUSSOM, is expected to have 11,900 personnel operating on the ground in Somalia, including soldiers, police and civilian support staff, according to

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<sup>15</sup> Bertlesmann Stiftung, BTI, [2024 Country Report](#) (political transformation), 19 March 2024

<sup>16</sup> Military Africa, [What we do](#), no date

<sup>17</sup> Military Africa, [AMISOM transition to AUSSOM](#), 15 January 2025

<sup>18</sup> Military Africa, [AMISOM transition to...](#), (Mandate and Objectives of AUSSOM) 15 January 2025

<sup>19</sup> ISW, [Who we are](#), no date

<sup>20</sup> ISW, [Africa File, August 22, 2024: "AUSSOM" New AU Mission in...](#), (Somalia), 22 August 2024

<sup>21</sup> VOA, [VOA Mission](#), no date



Somali and AU officials.

‘The new arrangement allocates 4,500 soldiers to Uganda, 2,500 to Ethiopia, 1,520 to Djibouti, 1,410 to Kenya and 1,091 to Egypt, according to the official.

‘There will also be several hundred police personnel from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Egypt, to be based in Mogadishu, Jowhar, and Baidoa.’<sup>22</sup>

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## 9. **Al Shabab**

### 9.1 **Ideology and aims**

#### 9.1.1 The February 2023 US Congressional Research Service report, In Focus on Al Shabab (USCRS focus 2023), based on various sources, noted:

‘Al Shabaab rejects democracy, broadly ascribing to a vision of uniting ethnic Somali-inhabited areas of Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia in [an Islamic state under its version of Sharia law](#). It characterizes the Somali government as an illegitimate apostate authority that is beholden to foreign powers. Al Shabaab leaders have repeatedly expressed their commitment to global jihad. They justify attacks outside Somalia as retaliation against countries conducting military operations in Somalia and as retribution for alleged abuses against Muslims. Al Shabaab described the Manda Bay [airfield] and DusitD2 [hotel] attacks in Kenya as consistent with Al Qaeda directives to target U.S. and Israeli interests, and referred to the airfield as one of the "launch pads for the American crusade against Islam in the region." Al Shabaab activities in Kenya more broadly appear focused on sowing internal dissent and fomenting an insurgency. Its fighters have specifically targeted non-Muslims in some attacks there.’<sup>23</sup>

#### 9.1.2 The EUAA security situation report 2023, citing various sources, noted:

‘Al-Shabaab is Somalia’s “armed Islamist extremist and self-declared al-Qaeda affiliate organisation” ... As indicated by the UN Panel of Experts on Somalia, in its October 2022 report, “the group maintains a presence and the capacity to conduct operations throughout most of Somalia, including Mogadishu”, while its “sphere of influence extends beyond areas it physically controls” ... According to the [Council of Foreign Relations] CFR backgrounder, the group’s overall goal remains the establishment of an Islamic State in Somalia, and its main unifying idea is the “opposition to the Western-backed government.” ...’<sup>24</sup>

#### 9.1.3 The Council for Foreign Relations, a US nonpartisan think tank covering world affairs,<sup>25</sup> noted in a backgrounder, Conflict With Al-Shabab in Somalia, updated 15 October 2024, that:

‘Al-Shabaab in Somalia remains one of al-Qaeda’s strongest and most successful affiliates. The terrorist organization continues to exploit the Somali government’s limited state capacity and the country’s dire humanitarian crises to launch indiscriminate attacks against government forces, foreign peacekeepers, and civilians. Their goals are to destroy the

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<sup>22</sup> VOA, [AU, Somalia agree on troop numbers for new mission](#), 25 February 2025

<sup>23</sup> USCRS, [In Focus – Al Shabab](#), 14 February 2023

<sup>24</sup> EUAA, [Somalia: Security Situation](#) (paragraph 1.31), 23 February 2023

<sup>25</sup> CFR, [About CFR](#), no date

Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), rid their country of foreign forces, and establish a “Greater Somalia,” joining all ethnic Somalis across East Africa under strict Islamic rule. A joint United Nations and African Union (AU) peacekeeping force, now known as the African Union Transitional Mission to Somalia (ATMIS) [now the AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM)], the United States, and several East African nations have been actively involved in combating al-Shabaab since it rose to prominence in the early 2000s. However, al-Shabaab has proven its resilience against numerous counterinsurgency campaigns, posing a threat to the stability of Somali and the region.’<sup>26</sup>

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## 9.2 Size and capability

9.2.1 The EUAA security situation report 2023 noted:

9.2.2 ‘In the reference period (1 July 2021 – 30 November 2022), and reportedly as a consequence of the pull-out of the US troops (January 2021) - even though it was temporary - Al-Shabaab had increased in size, in financial resources, and in territorial control ... At the beginning of September 2022, the Somali president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (HSM) spoke about between 15000 and 18000 fighters, compared to previous estimates between 5000 and 7000.

‘During the reference period Al-Shabaab increased recruitment and training activities in Ethiopia, where close to 1000 fighters were estimated to be present as of October 2022.’<sup>27</sup>

9.2.3 The final report of the UN Panel of Experts on Somalia 17 September October 2024 (UN PoE report 2024) observed:

‘Al-Shabaab ... remains the most significant threat to peace and security in Somalia and has managed to withstand repeated Government-backed military offensives against it. Not only has Al-Shabaab managed to withstand those operations, but has also recaptured previously liberated areas, including Ceel Buur and Cowsweyne in Galmudug ... The group benefits from the presence of its Amniyat intelligence service in Government-controlled areas, which has proved difficult for security services to disrupt.’<sup>28</sup>

9.2.4 ACLED in their report Somalia: Al-Shabaab’s Infiltration of a Military Base in Mogadishu and Somaliland’s Conflict, dated 1 March 2024 noted:

‘Al-Shabaab militants continued to launch attacks against security forces and civilians across several regions. In February [2024], the militant group adopted a new tactic to target an Emirati-run military base in Mogadishu by infiltrating its forces into the base, killing at least 18 soldiers. The attack, which is not the first one staged by the militant group in Somalia, highlights the Somali security forces’ vulnerability and inability to deter al-Shabaab’s sophisticated attacks.’<sup>29</sup>

9.2.5 ACLED in their report Mapping al-Shabaab’s activity in Somalia in 2024, dated 13 December 2024 noted: ‘Despite the Somali government’s security operation against al-Shabaab for the past two years, the group continues to

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<sup>26</sup> CFR, [Conflict With Al-Shabaab in Somalia](#), updated 15 October 2024

<sup>27</sup> EUAA, [Somalia: Security Situation](#), (Paragraph: 1.3) 23 February 2023

<sup>28</sup> UNSC, [Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of ...](#) (paragraph 6), 28 October 2024

<sup>29</sup> ACLED, [Somalia: Al-Shabaab’s Infiltration of a Military Base in Mogadishu...](#), (1 March 2024)

pose a threat to the state. Violence involving al-Shabaab drove political violence in Somalia in 2024. However, al-Shabaab's violence decreased slightly and its pattern of activity changed.'<sup>30</sup>

9.2.6 The US State Department's (USSD) Country Reports on Terrorism 2023, released in December 2024 (USSD CRT 2023) noted: 'Al-Shabaab is estimated to have between 7,000 and 12,000 members.' Further noting: 'Al-Shabaab receives and generates enough income to launch attacks throughout East Africa, including against ATMIS bases and various civilian targets. The group obtains funds through illegal charcoal production and exports, through taxation of local populations and businesses, and by means of remittances and other money transfers from the Somali diaspora (although these funds are not always intended to support al-Shabaab members).'<sup>31</sup>

9.2.7 The May 2025 EUAA security situation report (reference period: 1 April 2023 - 30 March 2025), citing various sources, noted:

'Relatively recent estimates indicate that Al-Shabaab had between 7 000 and 12 000 fighters at the end of 2023... However, Al-Shabaab's "true strength remains unknown". The militants recursively replenish their losses through forcible recruitment and by cutting deals with clans ... During the reference period, Al-Shabaab has launched massive recruitment campaigns, including: on occasion of the signing of the MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland, on 1 January 2024, when the militant group called for the Somalis "to join in defending their land from Ethiopia and other foreigners" ... during the first half of 2024, when the group was reported to make renewed efforts to recruit fighters to counter the offensives by the FGS, and to look for "individuals with engineering expertise to assist with drone modifications, as well as clerics for propaganda dissemination" ... At the beginning of March 2025, in the course of Al-Shabaab offensive in Hiraan and Middle Shabelle, the group released a "video purportedly showing hundreds of newly trained militants" ... This happened again at the end of March 2025 ...'<sup>32</sup>

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### 9.3 Targets

9.3.1 The NL MOFA report 2023 noted:

' ... [T]he group (AL-Shabab) mainly carried out targeted attacks in Mogadishu during the reporting period, which also resulted in civilian casualties. The main targets of the attacks were government officials, politicians and ATMIS and SNL forces. Electoral delegates, journalists, human rights activists, NGO workers, pro-government clan elders, businesspeople who cooperated with the authorities or refused to cooperate with al-Shabab, and locations where these individuals were in the habit of gathering - such as certain hotels and restaurants - could also be targets for al-Shabab violence.'<sup>33</sup>

9.3.2 The NL MOFA report 2023 also noted :

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<sup>30</sup> ACLED, [Mapping al-Shabaab's activity in Somalia in 2024](#), 13 December 2024

<sup>31</sup> USSD, [Country Report on Terrorism](#) (Al Shabab), 12 December 2024

<sup>32</sup> EUAA, [Somalia: Security Situation](#), (paragraph 1.2.2) May 2025

<sup>33</sup> NL MOFA, [General country of origin information report on Somalia](#) (section 2.2.1), June 2023

‘Most sources consulted stated that, as a rule, al-Shabab’s acts of violence were not specifically directed against civilians, provided they did not belong to a group seen by al-Shabab as a legitimate target (such as government officials, certain businesspeople, journalists, NGO workers or others perceived as loyal to the government or foreign powers). However, because al-Shabab regularly carried out large-scale attacks, often in busy areas of Mogadishu, citizens of the city were at risk of becoming victims of such attacks.’<sup>34</sup>

9.3.3 The NL MOFA report 2023 further noted:

‘Some sources stated that al-Shabab tried to minimise civilian casualties in its attacks. Especially with more and more of the Somali population turning away from the group and with the military offensive intensifying, it was not in al-Shabab’s interests to be responsible for large numbers of civilian casualties, it was claimed. The group was also said to warn citizens not to go to the hotels, restaurants and government buildings that it regarded as legitimate targets. However, al-Shabab clearly accepted the risk of civilian casualties in opting for large-scale attacks in often crowded places in Mogadishu.’<sup>35</sup>

9.3.4 The US State Department’s human rights report for 2023 (USSD HR 2023 report) noted al Shabab:

‘... committed religiously and politically motivated killings that targeted civilians affiliated with the government and attacked humanitarian NGO employees, UN staff, and diplomatic missions. The group attacked soft targets such as popular hotels in Mogadishu and other cities, often using suicide bombers, mortars, and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices to kill noncombatants. Al-Shabaab also killed prominent peace activists, community leaders, clan elders, electoral delegates, and their family members for their roles in peace building, in addition to beheading persons accused of spying for and collaborating with state security forces and allied militias.’<sup>36</sup>

9.3.5 The USSD CRT 2023 noted ‘Al-Shabaab has used intimidation and violence to exploit divisions in Somalia and undermine the Somali government, recruit new fighters, extort funding from local populations, and kill activists working to bring about peace through political dialogue. Al-Shabaab has assassinated numerous civil society figures, government officials, journalists, international aid workers, and members of NGOs.’<sup>37</sup>

9.3.6 The UN PoE report 2024 noted ‘The group continues to carry out complex attacks against the Government, ATMIS and international targets, as well as civilians and the business community, including attacks targeting busy markets in Mogadishu.’<sup>38</sup>

9.3.7 Landinfo, ‘an independent body within the Norwegian Immigration Authorities’ providing information primarily for the use of asylum decision makers<sup>39</sup>, published a response on the security situation in Mogadishu in

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<sup>34</sup> NL MOFA, [‘General country of origin information report on Somalia’](#) (section 2.2.1), June 2023

<sup>35</sup> NL MOFA, [‘General country of origin information report on Somalia’](#) (section 2.2.1), June 2023

<sup>36</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia](#) (section 1i), 23 April 2024

<sup>37</sup> USSD, [Country Report on Terrorism](#) (Al Shabab), 12 December 2024

<sup>38</sup> UNSC, [Letter dated 17 September 2024 from the Panel of ...](#) (paragraph 6), 28 October 2024

<sup>39</sup> Landinfo, [About Landinfo](#), no date

November 2024 based on a fact finding visit in May 2024 and open source research, which has been translated into English using ChatGPT and DeepL (Landinfo response 2024). The response noted that al Shabab's attacks in Mogadishu '... which include suicide bombings, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and targeted assassinations—are primarily aimed at government officials and their allies. However, the group shows no regard for civilian safety during such attacks. The number of civilian casualties in connection with larger attacks can therefore be high.'<sup>40</sup>

### 9.3.8 The Landinfo response 2024 also noted:

'Local sources that Landinfo met in Mogadishu in May 2024 agreed that the general civilian population is not the target of al-Shabaab (Sources A; B; C; G, meetings 2024). The group mainly directs its attacks at government forces, officials, and locations frequented by such individuals. This is supported by ACLED (2024) data, showing that the attacks were primarily aimed at people or places linked to the authorities. However, as in previous visits to Mogadishu, sources emphasized that al-Shabaab shows little regard for collateral damage when targeting its objectives.

'There is therefore a risk of being in the "wrong place at the wrong time"—for example, if a bomb detonates before reaching its intended target. Checkpoints are vulnerable to such attacks because they may be a direct target or because a suicide bomber might choose to detonate upon being discovered.

'There is a general awareness among locals of what constitutes typical al-Shabaab targets in Mogadishu, and people try to avoid unnecessary stops near government buildings and checkpoints (Sources B; C; G, meetings 2024).

'In addition to attacks on government targets, there appears to be an increase in attacks directed at businesspeople and enterprises. Over the past year, these have made up about 25% of registered al-Shabaab attacks on civilians in Mogadishu. The motivations behind many of these attacks are unclear. Source A believed that several of them are likely carried out by other actors pretending to be al-Shabaab, but sources (A; C; G, meeting 2024) agreed that al-Shabaab is also behind many. These attacks are linked, among other things, to the group's tax collection efforts in the city.

'Over the years, many have pointed out that al-Shabaab has significant financial interests in Mogadishu, including taxation of businesses of a certain size (see also Hiraal Institute 2020; Landinfo 2022). As part of a military offensive against al-Shabaab in the summer of 2022, the authorities attempted to disrupt the group's finances and reiterated previous threats of prosecuting individuals and companies that pay taxes to the group (AFP 2022).

'At the beginning of 2024, the authorities also ordered several businesses to install surveillance cameras outside their premises, partly to detect al-Shabaab activity. Al-Shabaab, in turn, demanded that the cameras be removed and threatened retaliation if they were not (The Somali Digest 2024e; Libyan Express 2024).

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<sup>40</sup> Landinfo, [Somalia: Klan- og sikkerhetsrelaterte forhold i Mogadishu](#) (page 4), 7 November 2024



‘Several news reports and entries in the ACLED database link attacks on businesses to either the installation of surveillance cameras or failure to pay taxes to al-Shabaab (The Somali Digest 2024b, e; Libyan Express 2024). These attacks can therefore be understood as al-Shabaab's way of (re)establishing its deterrent power over the business community in Mogadishu. In line with this, Source G (2024) stated that many businesses had resumed paying taxes to al-Shabaab, either via mobile payment services or more often than before, in cash. According to the source, authorities may respond against the businesses, but they lack the capacity to monitor all tax payments.’<sup>41</sup>

- 9.3.9 The Report of the Secretary General on Somalia to the UN Security Council, 28 March 2025, covering the period 23 September 2024 to 23 March 2025 (UN SG report 2025) noted with regard to the situation in Somalia generally: ‘Most [security] incidents continue to be perpetrated by Al-Shabaab using improvised explosive devices and indirect fire attacks, including the use of 107-mm rockets, targeting government institutions and security forces.’<sup>42</sup>

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## 9.4 Recruitment

- 9.4.1 Citing various sources NL MOFA report 2023 noted:

‘Since its formation, al-Shabab has used a variety of methods to recruit members, fighters and informers. The picture that emerges from the sources consulted is that the majority of the recruits joined al-Shabab on a voluntary basis, but that forced recruitment also occurred on a smaller scale ...

‘Most sources state that al-Shabab only recruited members under direct duress in exceptional cases ... In some cases, however, the distinction between “voluntary” and “forced” membership of al-Shabab was not obvious. The sources show that recruitment by al-Shabab was firstly based on economic and social discontent among the population. That discontent could be fuelled and exploited by al-Shabab, leading recruits to join the group apparently on their own initiative... Secondly, al-Shabab ordered communities and sub-clans on a large scale to hand over specified numbers of young people to the group. These were then inducted into al-Shabab's ranks, or were first sent to religious schools (madrassas) affiliated with the group with a view to induction at a later date.’<sup>43</sup>

- 9.4.2 The above report also noted:

‘The extent to which al-Shabab has engaged in forced recruitment has historically depended very much on the situation. Thus there has been more forced recruitment in periods when al-Shabab felt a greater need to replenish its ranks, for example after losses on the battlefield or during offensives directed against it. In recent years, there have been signs that forced recruitment by al-Shabab has declined, as local communities have increasingly resisted the group's indoctrination and the practice of recruitment. This growing resistance from communities was one of the main reasons why many clans joined the offensive against al-Shabab in the second half of 2022. However, there were also signs in the initial phase of

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<sup>41</sup> Landinfo, [Somalia: Klan- og sikkerhetsrelaterte forhold i ...](#) (pages 6 and 7), 7 November 2024

<sup>42</sup> UNSC, [Report of Secretary General on Somalia](#) (paragraph 11), 28 March 2025

<sup>43</sup> NL MOFA, [General country of origin information report on Somalia](#) (section 2.5.2), June 2023

the uprising against the group that the same offensive had in fact led to an increase in forced recruitment, because al-Shabab needed to replenish its ranks.’<sup>44</sup>

9.4.3 The NL MOFA report 2023 commenting on groups at risk of forced recruitment by Al-Shabab noted,

‘... there was forced recruitment by al-Shabab particularly in areas under its direct control. Forced recruitment also took place outside these areas, but to a considerably lesser extent. In the areas controlled by al-Shabab, underage boys were particularly at risk of forced recruitment ... the sources do not provide a clear picture as to which (minority) clans were at especial risk. Most sources state that in areas under its control, al-Shabab played on local tensions between populations by telling minority groups that joining al-Shabab would put them in a more powerful position... if a minority clan did not voluntarily meet the imposed quota, coercive measures could follow. Locally stronger clans, by contrast, could pay al-Shabab if they were faced with recruitment quotas so that they did not have to fulfil them. This option was less available to clans with fewer financial resources, which meant that their members were at greater risk of forced recruitment.’<sup>45</sup>

9.4.4 The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (FOMR) in their ‘Country report 71 – Somalia Fact Finding Mission - General situation’, in cooperation with the German Embassy in Nairobi from 4 December 2023 to 8 December 2023, based on interviews with sources, published July 2024 (FOMR FFM report 2023) noted:

‘Recruitment by al-Shabaab - including of minors and women - is widespread in Somalia. Factors such as age, gender, educational background and previous employment are decisive for recruitment. As there are also tasks outside of combat operations, for example in administration, fighters are not the only ones needed ... Al-Shabaab uses various recruitment methods and recruitment is possible in all areas of Somalia, provided there is a corresponding network ... In addition to voluntary recruitment, which is often motivated by external circumstances, there is also forced recruitment, whereby voluntary and forced recruitment often go hand in hand. Economic and religious reasons play particularly a role here ...

‘The children's aid organisation UNICEF reports hundreds of forcibly recruited children. In 2023, there are said to have been around 500 forced recruitments between the months of January and September ... Information on the age at which minors join varies. They are often recruited between the age of 11 and 25 ... However, there are also reports of children aged nine or younger being recruited. In occupied areas, al-Shabaab often requires families to release a certain number of children as recruits. False promises are often made to parents and families, including the prospect of education and income. Little is known about the recruitment process and training under al-Shabaab.’<sup>46</sup>

9.4.5 The EUAA Country focus 2025 noted:

‘According to Zakia Hussen, former Deputy Police Commissioner General, who was interviewed for this report, Al-Shabaab recruitment works differently

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<sup>44</sup> NL MOFA, [‘General country of origin information report on Somalia’](#) (section 2.5.2), June 2023

<sup>45</sup> NL MOFA, [General country of origin information report on Somalia](#), (section 2.5.2), June 2023

<sup>46</sup> FOMR, [Country report 71 – Somalia Fact Finding Mission...](#), (paragraph 1.3), July 2024

in different areas, depending on the level of control the group exercises in a place and what it needs at a given moment in time.<sup>16</sup> The group recruits female and male persons, from majority and minority groups and it recruits fighters and suicide bombers, as well as informants and those offering logistic support or aiding otherwise.<sup>147</sup>

#### 9.4.6 EUAA Country focus 2025 also noted:

‘Recruitment in Mogadishu became more complicated for Al-Shabaab, according to Police General Zakia Hussen. Previously, the group recruited in Koranic schools in the Somali capital. Yet, according to the source, over the last few years, many young people in Mogadishu have been more interested in money and worldly success than in joining the potentially deadly struggle of Al-Shabaab for ideological reasons. In the capital city, Al-Shabaab focuses on recruiting persons with social influence, including university teachers, school teachers, elders and medical professionals. Also IDPs residing in the outer districts of Mogadishu, where Al Shabaab has a very substantial influence, are frequently recruited by Al-Shabaab. IDPs serve not so much as fighters or suicide bombers but as informants, spies, and/or persons who can offer hiding places for weapons, ammunition, or explosives. They may receive a moderate remuneration, but many also collaborate because they are scared.’<sup>148</sup>

#### 9.4.7 There was no further information in the sources consulted indicating that al Shabab is actively forcibly recruiting people in Mogadishu (see [Bibliography](#)).

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### 9.5 Presence in Mogadishu

#### 9.5.1 The UN PoE report 2024 noted: ‘Al-Shabaab continues to carry out high-profile attacks in Mogadishu. These attacks serve to challenge the authority of the Government and demonstrate Al-Shabaab’s continued ability to gain access to sensitive and protected areas.’<sup>149</sup>

#### 9.5.2 The above report also noted:

‘The Government has invested in mitigation measures to prevent Al-Shabaab from carrying out complex attacks, including installing cameras at checkpoints entering Mogadishu, frequent rotations and co-location of security force personnel and enhanced screening of vehicles entering Mogadishu. Internal investigations and the review of camera footage have in some cases led to the arrest of security forces personnel, but also suggest improved concealment of explosive containers by Al-Shabaab that may require additional training and explosive detection equipment to intercept.’<sup>150</sup>

#### 9.5.3 The Landinfo response 2024, citing various sources, observed:

‘The picture painted by sources during Landinfo’s stay in Mogadishu in May 2024 largely matches that of previous visits. In short, al-Shabaab does not have an open presence in Mogadishu but operates covertly, recruiting informants, collecting taxes from businesses, and attacking selected targets.

‘... However, sources agreed that the number of large-scale al-Shabaab

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<sup>47</sup> EUAA, [country of origin information , Somalia: Country Focus](#), (page 18), May 2025

<sup>48</sup> EUAA, [country of origin information , Somalia: Country Focus](#), (page 21), May 2025

<sup>49</sup> UN Security council, [Letter dated 15 October 2024 from the...](#), (paragraph 10), 28 October 2024

<sup>50</sup> UN Security council, [Letter dated 15 October 2024 from the...](#), (paragraph 12), 28 October 2024



attacks had decreased over the past year. They attributed the decline to the government's offensive against the group and improved organization of checkpoints entering and within Mogadishu (Sources C; F; G; H, 2024).

‘One specific measure mentioned was that checkpoints are now manned by personnel from various units within the police and security services to make them less vulnerable to bribery, infiltration, and extortion.

‘At the same time, the sources emphasized that al-Shabaab has previously shown an ability to adapt to and bypass security measures. The attack on the Beach View Hotel was thus cited as an example that the group still has the capability to bypass or pass through checkpoints into central areas of the capital ...’<sup>51</sup>

- 9.5.4 The ISW in their report ‘Africa File, March 20, 2025’, based on a range of sources dated 20 March 2025 noted:

‘Al Shabaab has infiltrated parts of Mogadishu and the capital’s southern outskirts and conducted several prominent attacks, including an attempt to assassinate the Somali president, since the beginning of Ramadan at the end of February. The group launched two coordinated attacks on March 15 [2025] against Somali positions in Awdhiigle and Hawo Adbi, roughly 27 and three miles, respectively, from the Mogadishu administrative limits. Somali officials claimed to repel the attacks, while al Shabaab claimed to overrun Somali positions and kill at least 30 Somali soldiers. Somali media reported that al Shabaab militants peacefully entered several districts in the Mogadishu administrative outskirts and patrolled the areas for two consecutive nights on March 15 and 16. Al Shabaab then attempted to assassinate Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud for the first time since 2014 with a large improvised explosive device (IED) that was possibly a house-borne IED, as his convoy passed the area on the way to the Mogadishu airport. The explosion killed at least four people but did not injure Mohamud. The group has not escalated the rate or severity of its attacks in Mogadishu or its southern outskirts, but the brazenness of al Shabaab activity highlights the group’s infiltration around Mogadishu.’<sup>52</sup>

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## 10. Other armed groups

### 10.1 Islamic State

- 10.1.1 The UN Panel of Experts report covering the period 16 December 2022 to 15 August 2023, dated 2 October 2023, (UN PoE report 2023) noted ‘The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) faction in Somalia continues to function and carry out attacks with the group’s operations largely confined to Bari Region in north-east Puntland. The death in January 2023 of Bilal al-Sudani, the leader of the Al-Karrar office of ISIL-Somalia and chief financial facilitator, is a setback for the group. The Panel also noted continued armed conflict between the group and Al-Shabaab during the mandate.’<sup>53</sup>
- 10.1.2 The UN SG report 2025 noted: ‘The increasing threat posed by Islamic State in Somalia is concerning and underscores the evolving complexity of the country’s security landscape. I commend the authorities and their partners

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<sup>51</sup> Landinfo, [Somalia: Klan- og sikkerhetsrelaterte forhold i ...](#) (page 8), 7 November 2024

<sup>52</sup> ISW, [Africa File, March 20, 2025: Qatari-Mediated Ceasefire in...](#), (Somalia excerpt) 20 march 2025

<sup>53</sup> UNSC, [Letter dated 29 September 2023 from the Chair ...](#) (Summary), 2 October 2023

for their efforts in countering Islamic State in Somalia, including recent operations aimed at dismantling its networks.<sup>54</sup>

10.1.3 See also map below in [Areas controlled by conflict actors](#).

10.1.4 There is no further information in the sources consulted to indicate that ISIL had a significant presence in Mogadishu or the surrounding areas (see [Bibliography](#)).

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## 11. Areas controlled by armed actors

11.1.1 The USCRS focus 2023 noted: 'AMISOM and neighboring militaries pushed Al Shabaab from Mogadishu and other urban centers and ports between 2011 and 2014. Al Shabaab's control of large areas of south and central Somalia, however, remained largely unchanged from 2015, when AMISOM's major offensive operations ceased, until 2022, when the Somali government launched a new offensive in coordination with local militias and a [grassroots uprising](#).'<sup>55</sup>

11.1.2 The NL MOFA report 2023 noted: 'A-Shabab has not had any part of Mogadishu under its de facto control for years. Despite this, the group still maintained a considerable network of members and informants in the city during the reporting period. This network enabled al-Shabab to continue to carry out attacks.'<sup>56</sup>

11.1.3 The UN PoE report 2024 noted

'Since the height of the Government-led offensive against Al-Shabaab in 2022 and 2023, the Government has faced some significant setbacks that have highlighted challenges associated with force generation and holding liberated areas [in south and central Somalia]. The ability of Somalia special forces to fight on multiple fronts at the same time, and issues with Al-Shabaab infiltration of the security forces, moreover, have come into sharp focus as a result of these military losses.

'Al-Shabaab continues to carry out attacks against ATMIS and the Somali National Army, particularly in Lower and Middle Shabelle, surrounding Mogadishu ... Al-Shabaab uses routes in these areas to tax local traders and move its fighters, finance and weapons. The most direct route from Jilib and Bu'aale to Mogadishu passes through Baraawe, Buulo Mareer and Merca. Although those towns are controlled by the Government, the surrounding areas are contested. Other key transit routes from Mogadishu pass through Afgoye in Lower Shabelle and Balcad in Middle Shabelle. These towns, with close proximity to Mogadishu, continue to experience insecurity, intimidation and violence against civilians by Al-Shabaab and other armed actors.

'...Attacks using improvised explosive devices continue to target the Somali National Army and ATMIS convoys, presenting significant security risks for troop movements and resupply, as well as casualty evacuation and medical evacuation operations, which has knock-on effects for offensive operations and force morale. Al-Shabaab's ability to disrupt Army logistics, including

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<sup>54</sup> UN Security Council, [Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia](#), (Paragraph 77), 28 March 2025

<sup>55</sup> USCRS, [In Focus – Al Shabab](#), 14 February 2023

<sup>56</sup> NL MOFA, [General country of origin information report on Somalia](#) (section 2.2.1), June 2023

ammunition resupplies, remains a key challenge and vulnerability.

‘... Despite these challenges, the Government continues to hold key liberated areas in Ceel Dheer, Xarardheere, the natural port at Ceel-Huur and Masagaway in Galmudug ... In August 2023, the Government-led offensive faced significant setbacks in Budbud, Ceel Buur, Cowsweyne and Galcad. These locations remained under Al-Shabaab control as of August 2024.

‘... Between 9 and 14 March 2024, Al-Shabaab recaptured several key towns in the Mudug region that had previously been liberated in 2022 and 2023 ...’<sup>57</sup>

- 11.1.4 The EUAA report on the security situation of May 2025 stated, citing various sources:

‘Al-Shabaab, aiming to gain control over the main routes connecting Lower Shabelle, Bay, and Benadir regions,... carried out multiple attacks on key supply routes heading into Mogadishu, especially the Mogadishu–Afgooye road and the Mogadishu–Balcad road... The group’s attacks targeted security checkpoints in Daynile (September 2023)... Garasbaley (August 2024)... and Kaxda districts (September 2024),... causing a number of casualties... and briefly enabling the group to gain control of Kaxda’s Burta Ali Janaale checkpoint, a strategic entry gate into the city.... Roadside bombings reportedly also resulted in several casualties in Daynile... and Huriwa,... as well as in the March 2025 attack targeting the convoy of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud near Villa Somalia... Moreover, Al-Shabaab reportedly set up checkpoints of its own in the Mogadishu suburbs... On the night of 21 October 2024, federal forces launched a security campaign in the Hamar-Weyne district. They executed house-to-house searches and installed checkpoints to control traffic of vehicles and pedestrians, mainly targeting young males, some of whom were arrested...’<sup>58</sup>

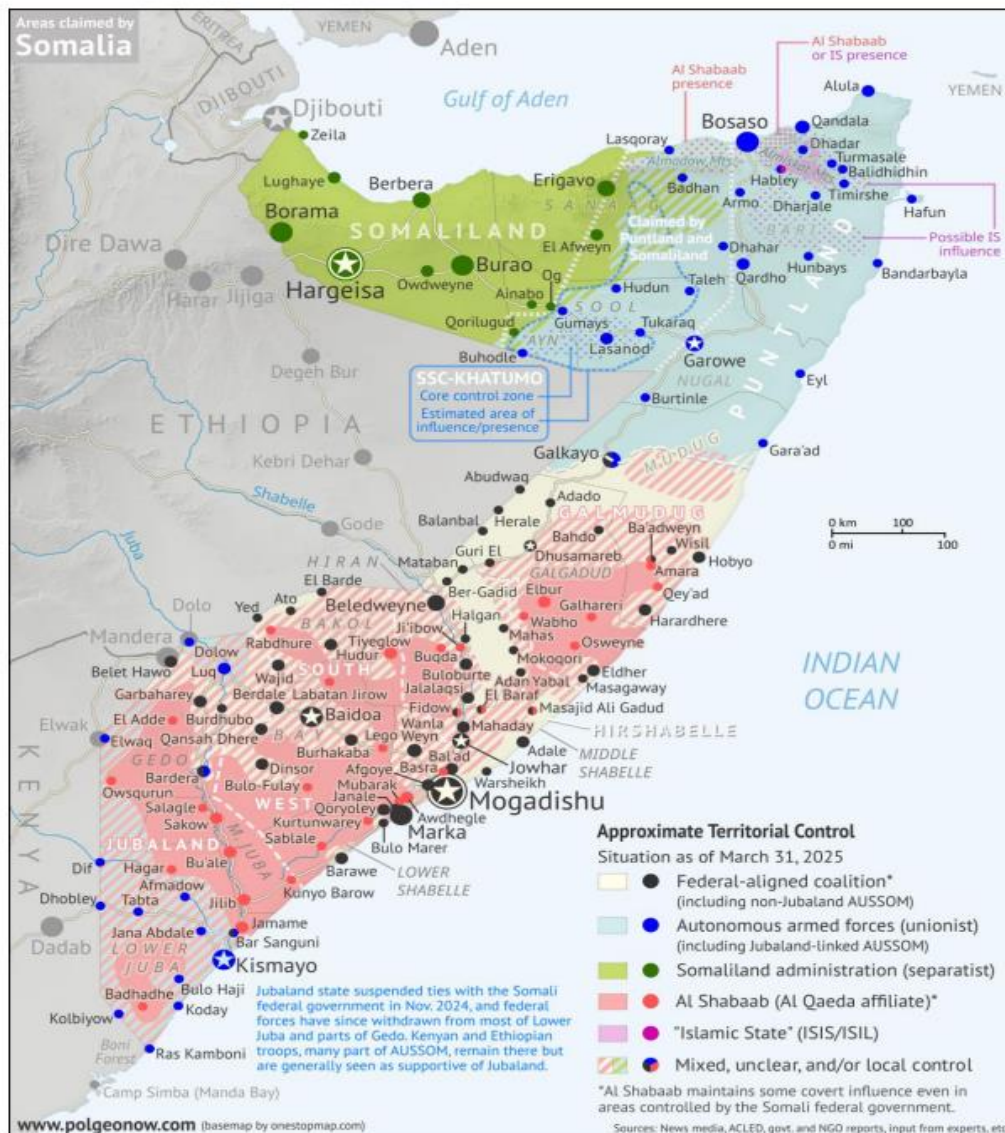
- 11.1.5 Political Geography Now (PolGeoNow), a subscription service which creates maps of, amongst other things, conflict zones and disputed territories based on news media and academic sources,<sup>59</sup> produced a map of Somalia showing the areas controlled by different armed actors as of 31 March 2025:

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<sup>57</sup> UNSC, [Letter dated 17 September 2024 ...](#) (paragraphs 13, 14, 16 and 20), 28 October 2024

<sup>58</sup> EUAA, [Somalia: Security Situation](#), (Paragraph 2.3.2), May 2025

<sup>59</sup> PolGeoNow, [About PolGeoNow](#), no date



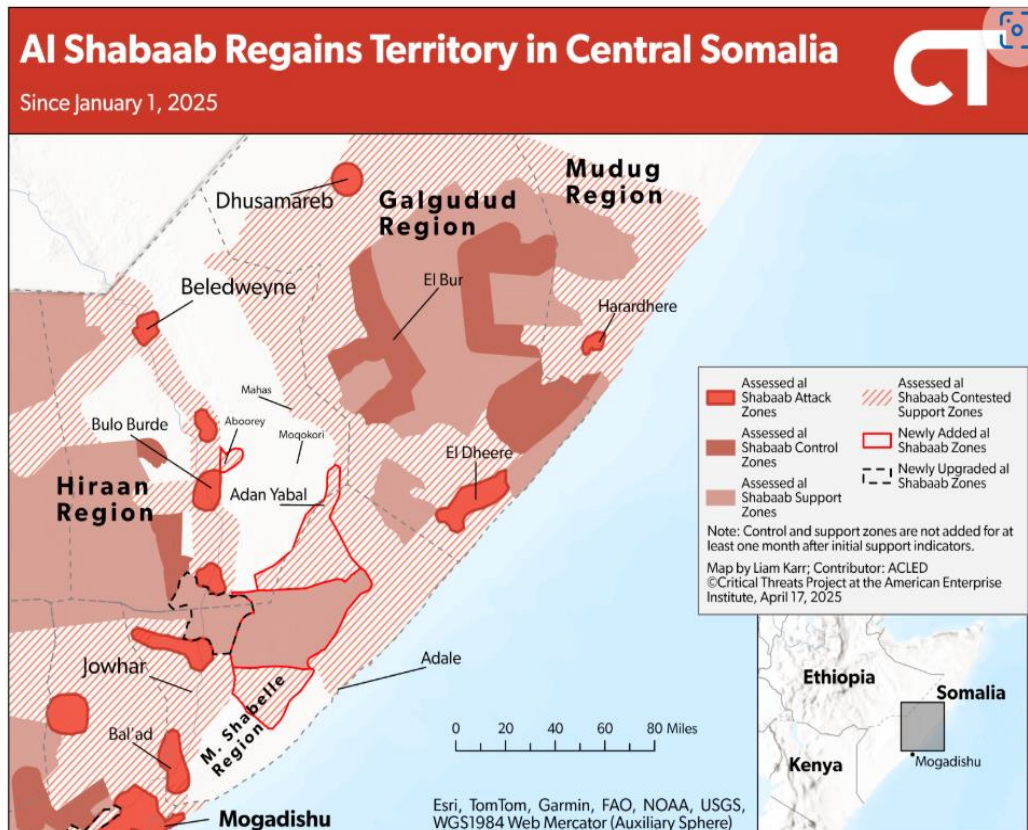
Map 3. Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, 31 March 2025, [Political Geography Now](https://www.polgeonow.com).<sup>60</sup>

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11.1.6 The ISW in an Africa File article of 24 April 2025, produced the following map of areas to the north and east of Mogadishu showing al Shabab gains since 1 January 2025:

<sup>60</sup> Polgeonow, Somalia (accessed [EUAA Security situation report 2025](https://www.polgeonow.com), page 22), no date





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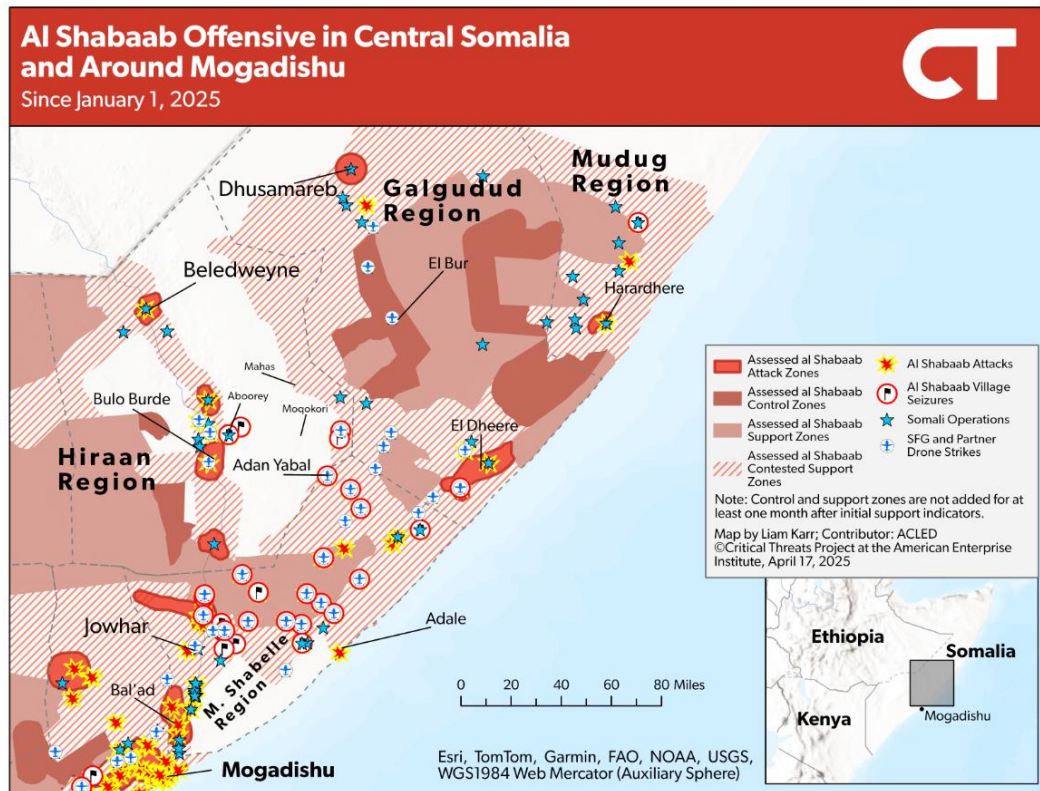
11.1.7 An ISW article of 17 April 2025 observed: ‘Al Shabaab captured two key areas in central Somalia that could enable the group to reestablish support zones there and connect them to its center of gravity in southern Somalia. This would undo the US-backed Somali counterterrorism offensive in 2022 and allow al Shabaab to pressure the remaining federal government-controlled areas in central Somalia. This comes as al Shabaab opened a second front south of Mogadishu in March 2025.’<sup>62</sup>

11.1.8 The ISW article of 17 April 2025 also provided the following map showing al Shabab’s offensive in areas to the north and east of Mogadishu, including zones which were assessed as being controlled by al Shabab control or contested<sup>63</sup>:

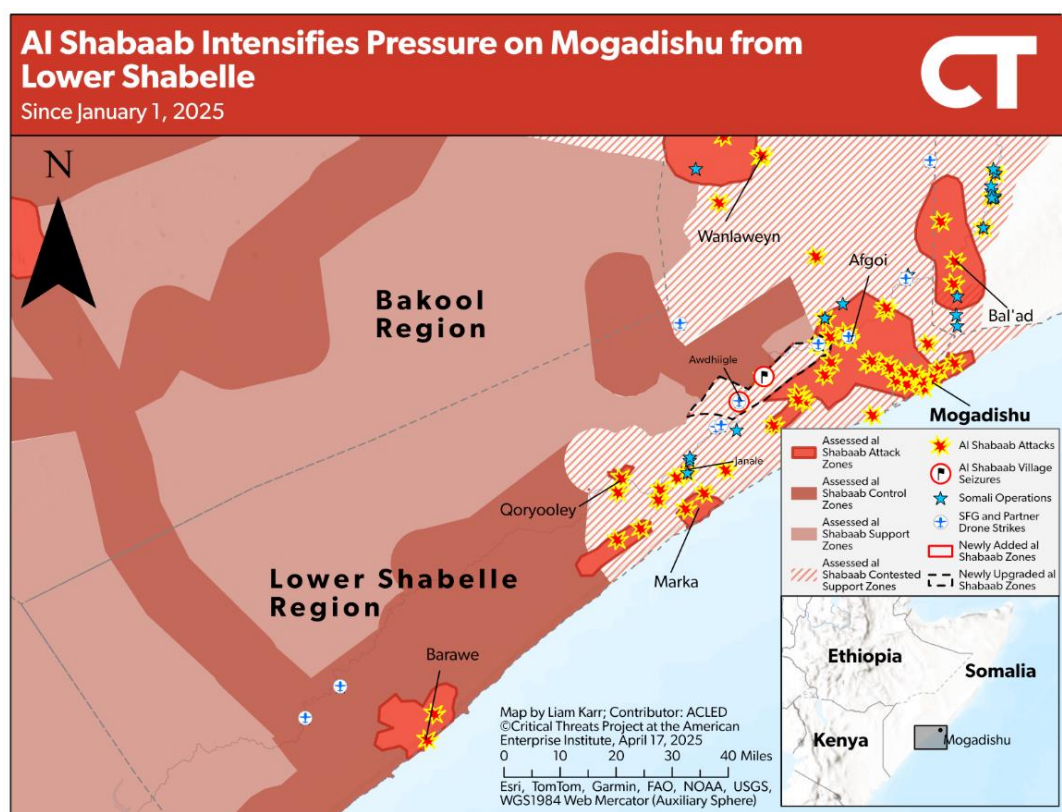
<sup>61</sup> ISW, [Africa File ...](#), 24 April 2025

<sup>62</sup> ISW, [Africa File ...](#), 17 April 2025

<sup>63</sup> ISW, [Africa File ...](#), 17 April 2025



11.1.9 The ISW article of 17 April 2025<sup>64</sup> also provided the following map showing al Shabab's offensive to the south and west of Mogadishu, including zones which were assessed as being controlled by al Shabab control or contested:



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<sup>64</sup> ISW, [Africa File ...](#), 17 April 2025

## 12. Conflict and violence

### 12.1 Available data

#### 12.1.1 The Landinfo response 2024 observed:

‘In Somalia, there are no institutions that record and maintain statistics on killings and other violent incidents. ACLED collects information on violent events in Mogadishu and elsewhere in Somalia from sources such as media and local organizations, storing the data in a database (ACLED 2022) that provides details about the actors involved, the course of events, and the number of fatalities. The extent to which local media and organizations—and thus ACLED—capture violent events likely varies throughout Somalia and over time, but in Landinfo’s assessment, serious violent incidents in Mogadishu are generally recorded.

‘Given the challenges related to information gathering, and the fact that there is no comprehensive overview of violent incidents in Somalia, Landinfo considers that ACLED’s information provides a good indication of the level of violence in Mogadishu, including the number of people killed, the perpetrators, and the victims. Although ACLED presents exact figures, and these are reproduced in the response, they should be viewed as estimates.’<sup>65</sup>

#### 12.1.2 ACLED is a non-profit, non-government organisation registered in the US<sup>66</sup>. It gathers ‘disaggregated incident information on political violence, demonstrations, and select related non-violent developments around the world’<sup>67</sup> by ‘systematically collect[ing] and review[ing] the latest reports from selected local, national and international sources, including media, vetted social media accounts, government and NGO reports, and partner organizations.’ ACLED further noted that its ‘researchers work to triangulate reports when and where possible, but they do not independently verify events or gather first-hand information on the ground. ACLED’s [local partners](#) often verify and collect first hand information. ACLED employs [a range of sourcing strategies](#) to ensure the data are timely and reliable.’<sup>68</sup>

#### 12.1.3 ACLED collects information on,

‘... six types of events, both violent and non-violent, that constitute political disorder. These include:

‘1. Battles: Violent interactions between two organized armed groups;

‘2. Explosions/Remote violence: An event involving one side using remote weapons (e.g. artillery). These events can be against other armed actors, or used against civilians;

‘3. Violence against civilians: Violent events where an organized armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants;

‘4. Protests: Public demonstrations in which the participants are not violent;

‘5. Riots: Violent events where demonstrators or mobs engage in destructive acts against property and/or disorganized acts of violence against people;

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<sup>65</sup> Landinfo, [Somalia: Klan- og sikkerhetsrelaterte forhold i Mogadishu](#) (page 1), 7 November 2024

<sup>66</sup> ACLED, [About ACLED](#), no date

<sup>67</sup> ACLED, [FAQs – What are ACLED data?](#), updated 1 November 2023

<sup>68</sup> ACLED, [FAQs - How is information collected?](#), updated 1 November 2023



‘6. Strategic developments: Strategically important instances of non-violent activity by conflict actors and other agents within the context of conflict or broader political disorder. These can include recruitment drives, incidents of looting, and arrests are some examples of what may be included under this event type. Note that [strategic developments are coded differently from other event types](#), and hence users must remember that they should be used differently from other event types in analysis.

‘Within these broad event categories, ACLED codes [25 sub-event types](#) that classify different actions ...’<sup>69</sup>

#### 12.1.4 ACLED also desegregated data by civilian targeting, noting:

‘In order to facilitate the analysis of all events in the ACLED dataset that feature violence targeting civilians, the “Civilian targeting” column allows for filtering of events in which civilians were the main or only target of an event. Besides events coded under the “Violence against civilians” event type, civilians may also be the main or only target of violence in events coded under the “Explosions/Remote violence” event type (e.g. a landmine killing a farmer), “Riots” event type (e.g. a village mob assaulting another villager over a land dispute), and “Excessive force against protesters” sub-event type (e.g. state forces using lethal force to disperse peaceful protesters). Events in which civilians were incidentally harmed are not included in this category.’<sup>70</sup>

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## 12.2 Overview of Somalia generally

### 12.2.1 The Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), part of the Austrian Red Cross and co-funded by the EU, the Austrian Ministry of Interior and the UNHCR which gathers information for use in asylum decision making<sup>71</sup>, in its Somalia – Country Briefing, updated 11 March 2024 based on a range of sources noted:

‘Since late 2006, al-Shabaab and allied militias have been waging an armed insurgency against the government ... Despite ongoing efforts by the Somali and international armed forces to limit the operational capacities of al-Shabaab, the group is still able to carry out complex, asymmetric attacks in Somalia ... The so-called Islamic State in Somalia has been operating as an organised group in Puntland since October 2015 ... and is led by former Al Shabaab commander Abdulqadir Mumin ... The group is still active and carries out attacks, although its operations are largely confined to the Bari region in north-east Puntland ...’<sup>72</sup>

### 12.2.2 In its Somalia – Country Briefing, updated 13 June 2025, ACCORD stated, drawing on various sources:

‘Al Shabaab remains the biggest threat to peace and security in Somalia. The group continues to prove resilient to the military operations conducted against it by the government. Al Shabaab continues to carry out complex attacks against the government and international forces as well as civilians and businessmen, including those in protected areas of Mogadishu. Al

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<sup>69</sup> ACLED, [FAQs - What types of events does ACLED code?](#), updated 1 November 2023

<sup>70</sup> ACLED, [Armed Conflict Location & Event Data \(ACLED\) Codebook](#), updated 3 October 2024

<sup>71</sup> Austrian Red Cross, [ACCORD](#), no date

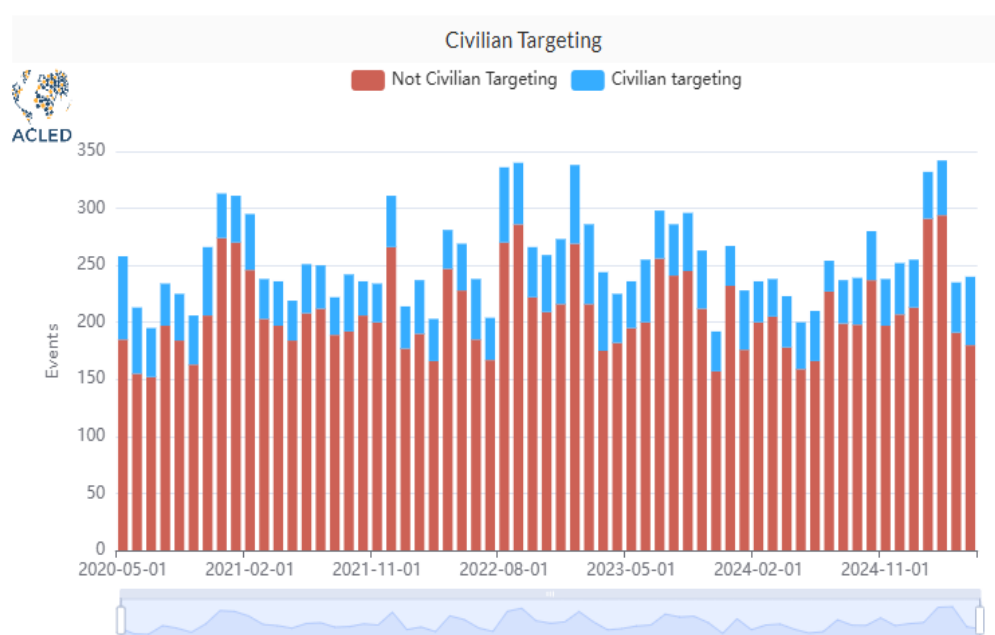
<sup>72</sup> ACCORD, [Somalia - Country Briefing](#) (Armed insurgent groups), 11 March 2024



Shabaab has a solid financial base thanks to sophisticated business strategies. The group uses legal and illegal methods to generate funds for its operations. These include checkpoints, extortion of companies, forced taxation and the use of third-party companies and their accounts (UN Security Council, 28 October 2024, p. 3). Since its founding in 2015, the so-called Islamic State in Somalia (ISIL-Somalia) has actively sought to establish itself as an important wilaya (province) within the global ISIL structure (Hasan, 27 February 2025). ISIL-Somalia is particularly active in the Bari region of Puntland, where extortion and smuggling are on the rise and the group has recently received an influx of foreign fighters. ISIL-Somalia is led by a group of former Al Shabaab fighters (UN Security Council, 28 October 2024, pp. 4, 11).<sup>73</sup>

12.2.3 ACLED's Explorer tool, drawing on incidents of political violence its researchers have documented, allows users 'to filter and summarize data via an intuitive form that produces data tables and charts in answer to ... questions about event types, actors, locations, and time periods dating back to 2018'. The tool is thus able to show trends in political violence – battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians, excessive force against protestors and mob violence – over time<sup>74</sup>.

12.2.4 The ACLED Explorer tool created the graph below showing the number of events per month where non-civilians (combatants) and civilians were targeted between 1 May 2020 to 31 May 2025 in Somalia. The total number incidents for this period was 15,500, of which 2,750 targeted towards civilians and 12,750 targeted towards non civilians<sup>75</sup>:



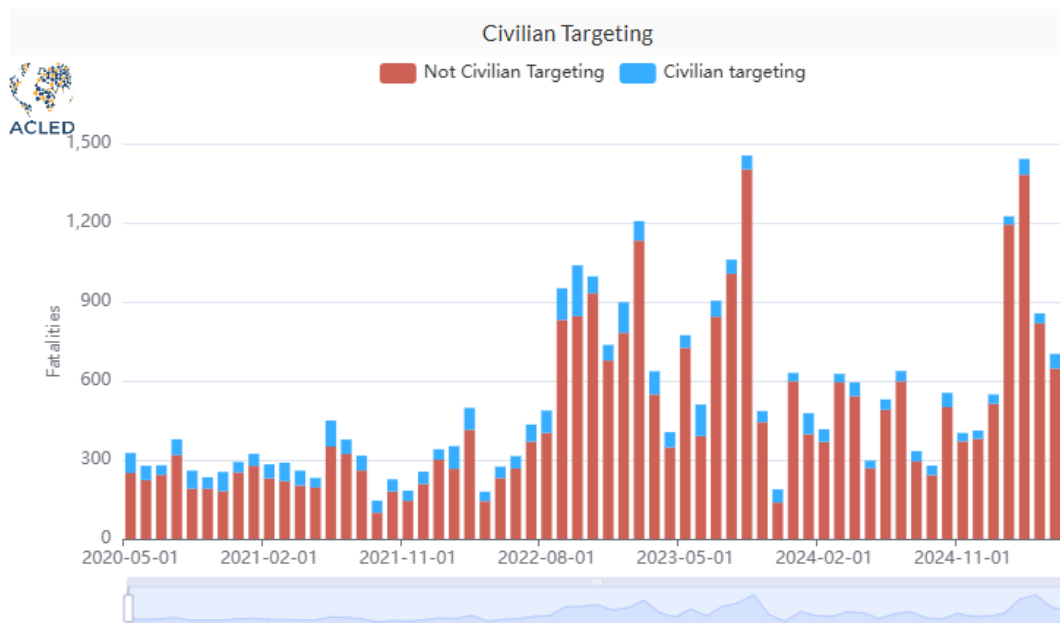
12.2.5 ACLED's explorer tool created the graph below showing the number of fatalities of non-civilians (combatants) and civilians by month between 1 May 2020 to 31 May 2025 in Somalia. The total number of fatalities was 31,709, of whom 3,547 were civilians<sup>76</sup>:

<sup>73</sup> ACCORD, [Somalia - Country Briefing](#), (Armed insurgent groups), 13 June 2025

<sup>74</sup> ACLED, [ACLED Explorer](#), no date

<sup>75</sup> ACLED, [ACLED Explorer](#) (Filter –Political violence/Africa/Somalia/Banadir), no date

<sup>76</sup> ACLED, [ACLED Explorer](#) (Filter –Political violence/Africa/Somalia/Banadir), no date



- 12.2.6 Focussing on the security situation over 2024, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, an academic institution within the US Department of Defense established and funded by Congress for the study of security issues relating to Africa and serving as a forum for bilateral and multilateral research, communication, training, and exchange of ideas involving military and civilian participants<sup>77</sup>, in their report *Militant Islamist Groups in Africa Sustain High Pace of Lethality*, dated 18 February 2025 noted: ‘The majority of violent events were linked to battles (66 percent), reflecting the continued focus of security forces against al Shabaab in combination with other, non-kinetic, attacks on the militant groups—such as on their financing.’<sup>78</sup>
- 12.2.7 The Report of Secretary General to the UN Security Council (UNSC) on the situation in Somalia covering the period 24 May to 20 September 2024 (UN SG report 2024), published 27 September 2024, noted:
- ‘The Somali authorities announced that operations to counter Al-Shabaab had been conducted in the Banaadir region and in Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubbaland and South-West States during the reporting period. In June and July [2024], federal and state forces were able to retake territory and subsequently repel Al-Shabaab attacks in the villages of Harbolle and Bulu Haji, Lower Juba region.
- ‘During the reporting period, a total of 850 security incidents were recorded, including 126 attacks involving improvised explosive devices, resulting in at least 670 casualties. Incidents of inter-clan violence were reported in South-West, Jubbaland and Galmudug States.’<sup>79</sup>
- 12.2.8 An English summary of a COI focus published by the Belgian Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons country of origin information research unit (Cedoca) on the security situation in Somalia between January and December 2024, published March 2025, observed:
- ‘ACLED data show that the main type of violence during the reporting period was fighting between state forces (both national and at member state level)

<sup>77</sup> The Africa Center, [Who we are- \(Mandate\)](#), No date

<sup>78</sup> The Africa Center, [Militant Islamist Groups in Africa Sustain High...](#) (Somalia), 18 February 2025

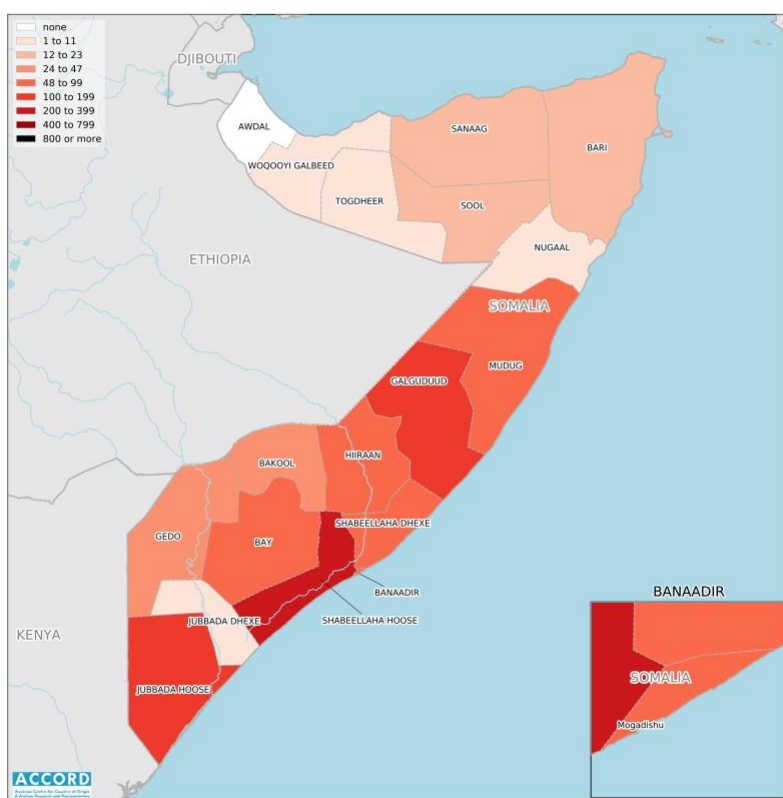
<sup>79</sup> UNSC, [Report of Secretary General on Somalia](#) (paragraphs 11 and 12), 27 September 2024

and terrorist groups, mainly [al Shabab] AS. ACLED identifies the terrorist group AS as the main actor of the violence. This group was involved in 80% of the registered incidents. The centre of the violence is in the south of the country, namely the Lower Shabelle region (South West) with 27% of the total number of recorded incidents, followed by the Banadir region (Banadir) [Mogadishu] with 14%, and the Bay region (South West) with 13%.

‘The violence in Somalia also affects the civilian population ... As regards violence against civilians, both [UN Somalia mission] UNSOM and ACLED conclude that AS was responsible for most civilian casualties, including deaths, during this reporting period. ACLED recorded the highest number of civilian deaths in the Banadir region (167), which represents 35% of the total number of recorded civilian deaths in the country (474) during this reporting period. The Lower Shabelle region follows with 66 recorded civilian deaths (14%), and Galgaduud with 52 (11%).’<sup>80</sup>

- 12.2.9 ACCORD produced a map based on ACLED data of incidents of political violence which resulted in at least one fatality in 2024 across Somalia, including an inset for Banadir (Mogadishu)<sup>81</sup>:

#### Number of reported incidents with at least one fatality



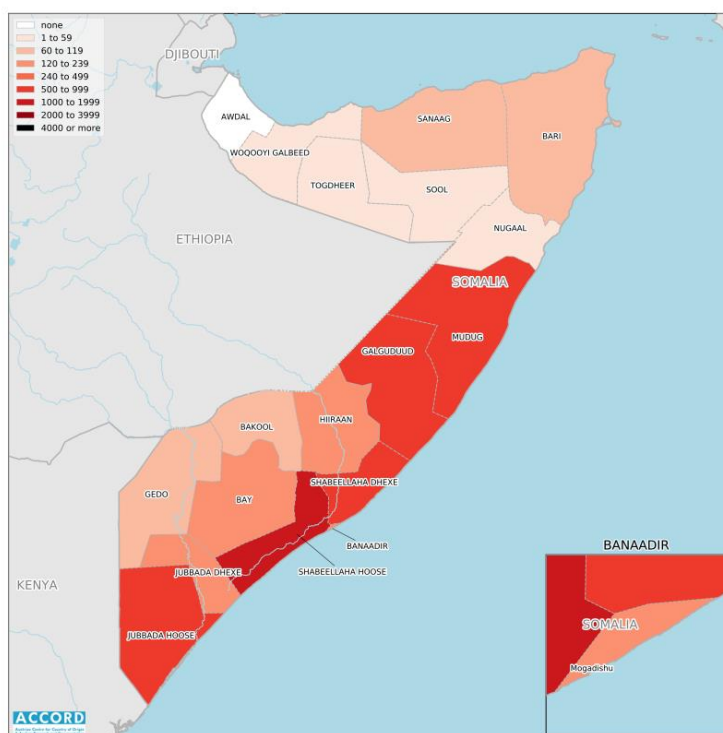
- 12.2.10 ACCORD also produced a map of the number of reported fatalities (as documented by ACLED) in 2024, including an inset for Mogadishu<sup>82</sup>:

<sup>80</sup> Cedoca, [COI Focus – Somalië, Veiligheidssituatie](#) (Summary), 25 March 2025

<sup>81</sup> ACCORD, [Somalia - Update on conflict-related incidents ...](#), 5 February 2025

<sup>82</sup> ACCORD, [Somalia - Update on conflict-related incidents ...](#), 5 February 2025

## Number of reported fatalities



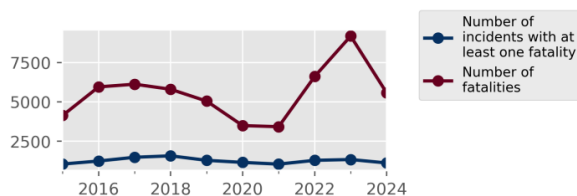
12.2.11 ACCORD also produced a table of conflict incidents and fatalities by category of political violence and a line graph showing the conflict incidents and fatalities from 2015 to 2024 based on ACLED data:

### Conflict incidents by category

Category	Number of incidents	Number of incidents with at least one fatality	Number of fatalities
Battles	1780	616	3917
Explosions / Remote violence	672	267	1295
Strategic developments	461	5	16
Violence against civilians	351	229	329
Protests	152	4	10
Riots	24	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3440</b>	<b>1124</b>	<b>5570</b>

This table is based on data from ACLED (datasets used: [ACLED, 31 January 2025](#)).

### Development of conflict incidents from 2015 to 2024



This graph is based on data from ACLED (datasets used: [ACLED, 31 January 2025](#)).

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<sup>83</sup> ACCORD, [Somalia - Update on conflict-related incidents ...](#), 5 February 2025

#### 12.2.12 UN SG report 2025 noted :

‘During the reporting period, the Federal Government of Somalia continued security operations in Hirshabelle, South-West and Galguduud States. The Somali National Army, supported by community defence forces and international partners, conducted operations to take control of the main road south of Beledweyne in the direction of Buulobarde in Hirshabelle. In the Cal Miskaat Mountains in Bari region, Puntland security forces, with the support of international partners, commenced a major counter-terrorist operation against Islamic State in Somalia. Al-Shabaab managed, however, to seize at least temporarily some areas in the Shabelle Hoose and Shabelle Dhexe regions.

‘A monthly average of 290 incidents were recorded during the reporting period (23 September 2024 to 23 March 2025). Most incidents continue to be perpetrated by Al-Shabaab using improvised explosive devices and indirect fire attacks, including the use of 107-mm rockets, targeting government institutions and security forces.’<sup>84</sup>

#### 12.2.13 The UNSG report 2025 noted:

‘UNTMIS recorded 402 civilian casualties (179 killed [132 men, 26 women, 12 boys and 9 girls] and 223 injured [140 men, 44 women, 21 boys, 10 girls and 8 unspecified]) during the reporting period [23 September 2024 to 23 March 2025], a 34 per cent increase compared with the 609 civilian casualties recorded during the previous period. Al-Shabaab remained the main perpetrator, responsible for 199 civilian casualties (49 per cent of all recorded casualties), followed by 97 attributed to unidentified elements, 74 to clan militia, 28 to the Somali security forces and 4 to Islamic State in Somalia.’<sup>85</sup>

#### 12.2.14 The EU Security situation report 2025 noted:

‘Based on ACLED data, in the period April 2023 – March 2025, Somalia has been the theatre of almost 6 000 reported security events, resulting in almost 15 000 estimated fatalities. 68 In the two preceding years, with a comparable number of security events – 5 724 – the number of estimated fatalities was substantially lower, around 11 450 ... In the reference period of this report, the average number of security events per month was almost 250. With just a few exceptions, it remained constantly above 200 throughout the entire period, while it raised sensibly in July-September 2023 and February-March 2025, when it respectively reached almost 300 per month, and then peaked at 331 reported events in February 2025 ... The resulting number of recorded fatalities peaked during the same periods. More than one third of all estimated fatalities recorded between April 2023 and March 2025 - about 5 800 out of 15 000 - were registered during the two intervals above, which corresponded with the following major military and security operations: ...

- first, operation Black Lion, a renewed joint offensive against Al-Shabaab, unleashed in the period August-September 2023, notably in Galgaduud, Middle Shabelle, Hiraan and Mudug regions; ... concomitantly with it, other intense armed interactions took place in Lower Shabelle, Lower Juba and Bakool regions in July-September 2023; these two sets of

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<sup>84</sup> UN Security Council, [Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia](#) (paragraph 11), 28 March 2025

<sup>85</sup> UNSC, [Report of Secretary General on Somalia](#) (paragraph 38), 28 March 2025

events alone resulted in more than 2 800 fatalities; ...

- second, a renewed Al-Shabaab offensive against Government and allied forces, launched in February 2025 and still on-going at the end of March 2025, which took place notably in Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, and Lower Shabelle regions; ... concomitantly with it, in Puntland the Hilaac offensive against ISIS was deployed in the al-Miskaad mountains in the Bari region during January and February 2025 ... and was still on-going at the time of writing (April 2025). Almost another 2 000 fatalities were estimated to have been caused by the unleashing of these two other sets of operations in the period January - 21 March 2025 ...

‘In addition, other military operations and confrontations against Al-Shabaab ... indiscriminate and widespread forms of targeting across the country ... rising levels of clan conflicts ... and other layers of conflict, which will be discussed in more detail in the remainder of this chapter, have contributed to ongoing sources of insecurity in the country.’<sup>86</sup>

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### 12.3 Mogadishu - security incidents

- 12.3.1 Professor Afyare Elmi of City University Mogadishu and Faisal Ali of the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, which describes itself as a Somali non-profit entity<sup>87</sup>, as part of an Africa Cities Research Consortium project, observed in the Mogadishu City report dated August 2024:

‘Since the complete collapse of the state in 1991, the city’s security situation has fluctuated, displaying varying forms and intensities over time.

Mogadishu’s violent history has fostered complex patterns of inclusion and exclusion, grievances, aspirations and diverse coping mechanisms among urban residents against physical threats. Currently, insecurity in Mogadishu manifests in various ways, from al Shabaab attacks targeting government officials to intercommunal conflicts, robberies and physical assaults. The underlying spatial and social logics of these threats reflect historical settlement patterns, class dynamics, gender divisions and the varying degrees of social capital among the population.’<sup>88</sup>

- 12.3.2 The Landinfo response 2024 observed:

‘Landinfo has visited Mogadishu regularly since February 2012, when many of the city’s districts were nearly deserted following the 2011/12 withdrawal. Since then, the city has experienced significant growth. Many people returned after the fighting subsided, and there has also been substantial migration from surrounding regions, driven by deteriorating rural livelihoods and the economic opportunities available in the capital. IPC ... estimates that approximately 2.9 million people now live in the city, including in the informal settlements ... There has also been considerable urban development, particularly in areas inhabited by the capital’s upper middle class, including modern apartment complexes, office buildings, and high-rises.

‘The overall security dynamic in the city has largely remained the same since Landinfo’s first visit in 2012: Al-Shabaab has not had an open presence since their withdrawal in 2011/12, but they are behind most of the violent

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<sup>86</sup> EUAA, [Somalia: Security Situation](#) (section 1.1), May 2025

<sup>87</sup> HIPS, [About Heritage](#), no date

<sup>88</sup> HIPS, [Mogadishu – City report](#) (page 29), August 2024

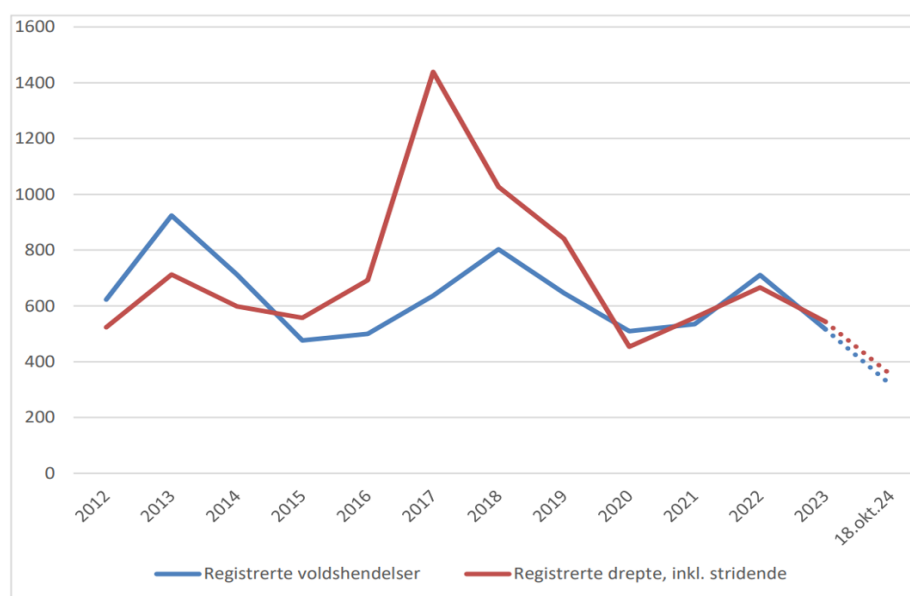


incidents ... The frequency and scale of attacks fluctuate, and the city alternates between relatively calm periods and periods when Al-Shabaab carries out multiple attacks. That said, the overall trend—especially when considering the significant population increase—is that the level of violence in recent years has somewhat declined ...

‘When Landinfo visited the city in May 2024, sources unanimously stated that the security situation was better than it had been in a long time, pointing to greater freedom of movement at night and the fact that there had been few large-scale attacks in the past year. In the period following our visit, Al-Shabaab carried out several attacks, including a major one on the Beach View Hotel & Restaurant ... However, in Landinfo's assessment, these attacks do not represent a qualitatively new development in the security situation compared to what has been described over several years, but rather reflect the fluctuating frequency and intensity of such incidents.’<sup>89</sup>

The Landinfo response 2024 included the graph below based on ACLED data showing violent events (blue line) and fatalities of both combatants and civilians (red line)<sup>90</sup>:

Diagram 1: Violence in Mogadishu, 2012–18 October 2024<sup>2</sup>



Registrerte voldshendelser = registered incidents of violence

Registrerte drepte, inkl. Stridende = registered deaths, including combatants

12.3.3 The UN SG report 2025 noted: ‘Although the security situation in Mogadishu was relatively stable during most of the period [23 September 2024 to 23 March 2025], recently there has been increased Al-Shabaab activity in districts bordering Banaadir, the capital region.’<sup>91</sup>

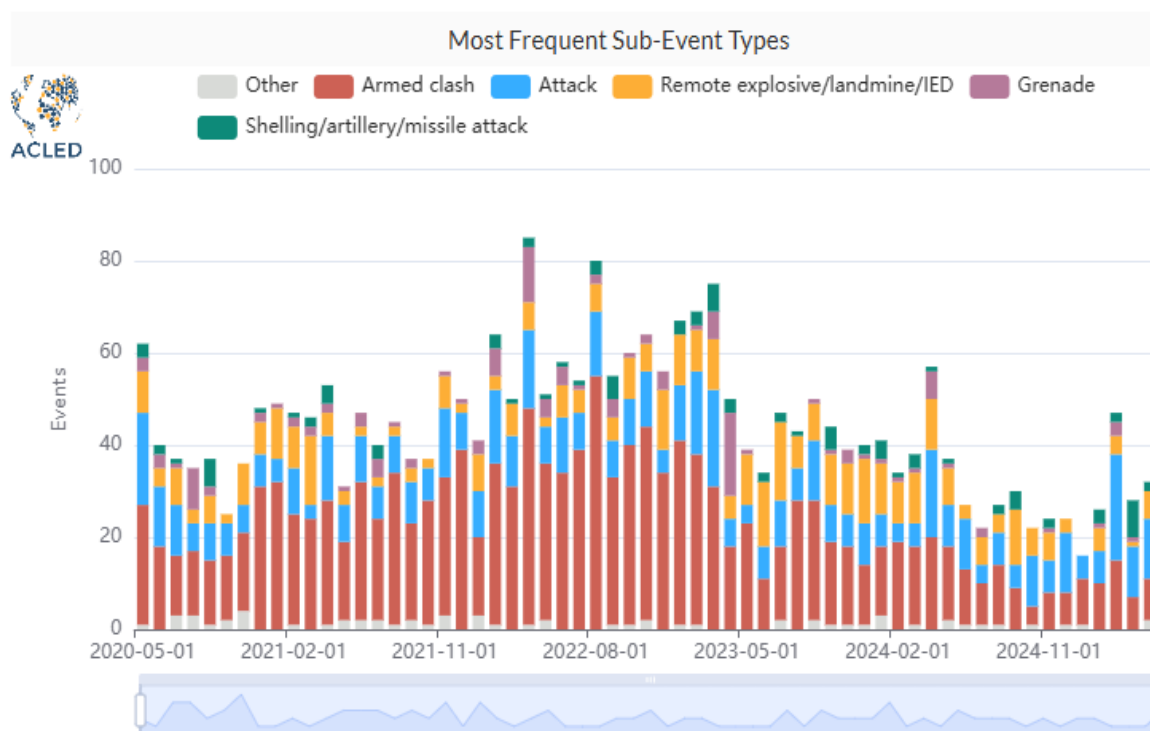
12.3.4 ACLED’s explorer tool created the graph below showing events of political violence per month by all actors in Banadir (Mogadishu) for the period 1 May 2020 to 31 May 2025, broken down by the most frequent sub-event types. ACLED documented a total of 2,705 events in this period<sup>92</sup>.

<sup>89</sup> Landinfo, [Somalia: Klan- og sikkerhetsrelaterte forhold i Mogadishu](#) (page 4), 7 November 2024

<sup>90</sup> Landinfo, [Somalia: Klan- og sikkerhetsrelaterte forhold i Mogadishu](#) (page 4), 7 November 2024

<sup>91</sup> UNSC, [Report of Secretary General on Somalia](#) (paragraph 11), 28 March 2025

<sup>92</sup> ACLED, [ACLED Explorer](#) (Filter –Political violence/Africa/Somalia/Banadir), no date



12.3.5 The ACLED Explorer tool indicated that there were 325 incidents of political violence in Banadir from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025. The table below shows these by sub-category:

Armed clash	113
Attack	117
Excessive force against protestors	3
Grenade	8
Remote explosive/landmine/improvised explosive device	56
Shelling/artillery/missile attack	23
Suicide bomb	4
Abduction/forced disappearance	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>

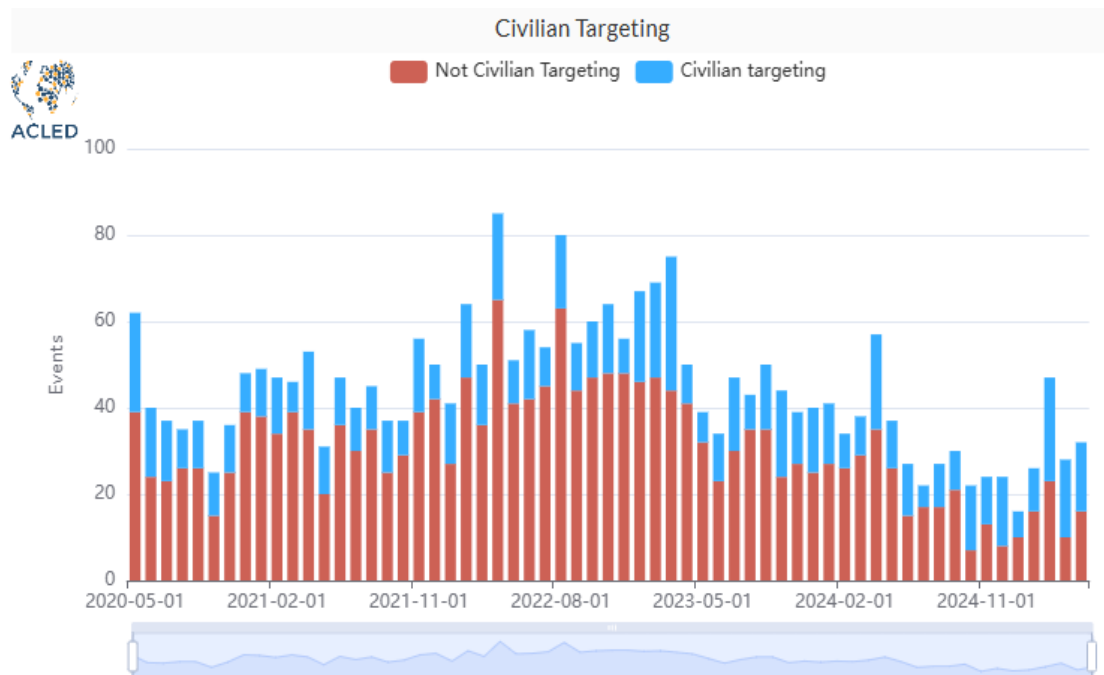
93

12.3.6 ACLED's explorer tool created the graph below showing the number of events where non-civilians (combatants) and civilians were targeted per month between 1 May 2020 to 31 May 2025 in Banadir (Mogadishu)<sup>94</sup>. The total number incidents was 2,705, of which 808 targeted civilians:

<sup>93</sup> ACLED, [ACLED Explorer](#) (Filter –Political violence/Africa/Somalia/Banadir), no date

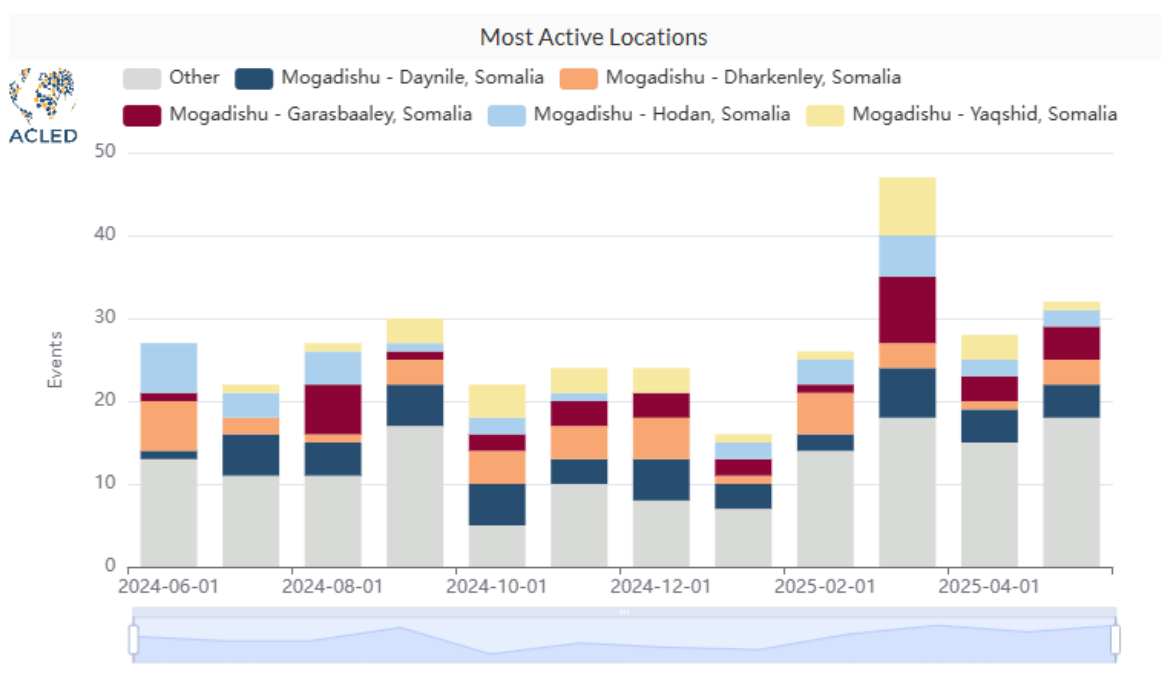
<sup>94</sup> ACLED, [Explorer](#) (filter by Somalia/Banadir/Civilian targeting), no date





12.3.7 The ACLED Explorer tool reported that from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025 there were 325 events of political violence, 173 were targeted at non civilians and 152 were targeted at civilians<sup>95</sup>.

12.3.8 The ACLED Explorer created the chart below shows the number of security incidents by district within Mogadishu per month, there were 325 Total events in 20 locations between 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025<sup>96</sup>.



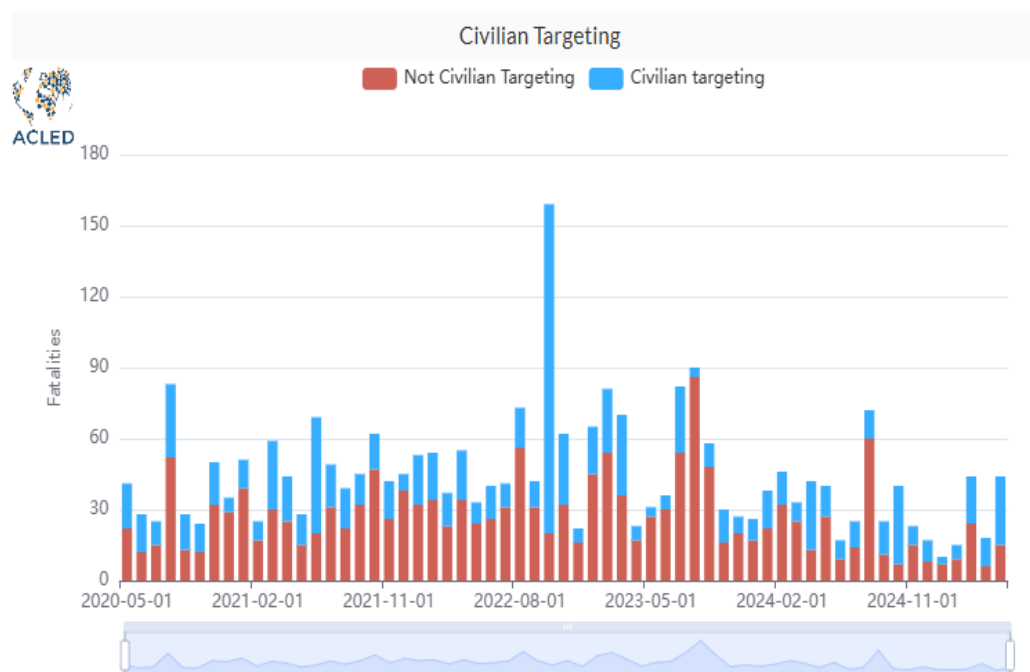
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<sup>95</sup> ACLED, [Explorer](#) (filter by Somalia/Banadir/Civilian targeting), no date

<sup>96</sup> ACLED, [Explorer](#) (filter by Somalia/Banadir/Civilian targeting), no date

## 12.4 Mogadishu - fatalities

12.4.1 ACLED's Explorer tool created the graph below showing the number of fatalities from political violence of non-civilians (combatants) and civilians by month between 1 May 2020 to 31 May 2025 in Banadir (Mogadishu)<sup>97</sup>. The total number of fatalities was 2,711, of whom 1,069, were civilians:



12.4.2 The ACLED Explorer tool indicated that from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025 there were 350 fatalities documented of non civilians (combatants) and civilians in Banadir<sup>98</sup>. The table below shows these by sub-category type:

Armed clash	134
Attack	87
Excessive force against protestors	0
Grenade	0
Remove explosive/landmine/IED	67
Shelling/artillery/missile	15
Suicide bomb	47
Abduction/forced disappearance	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>

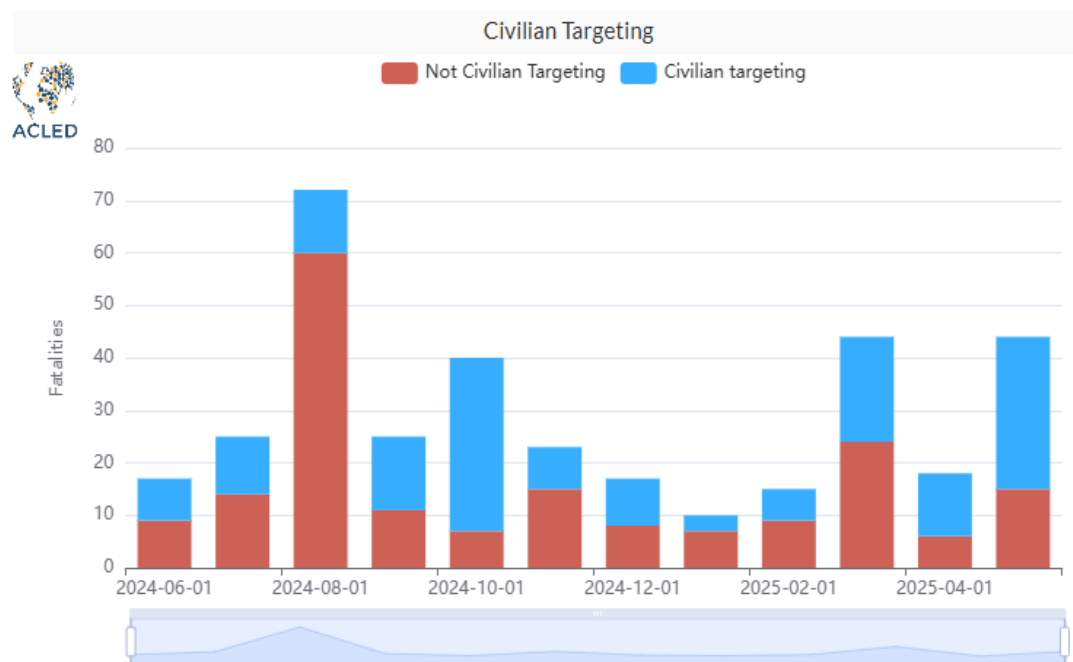
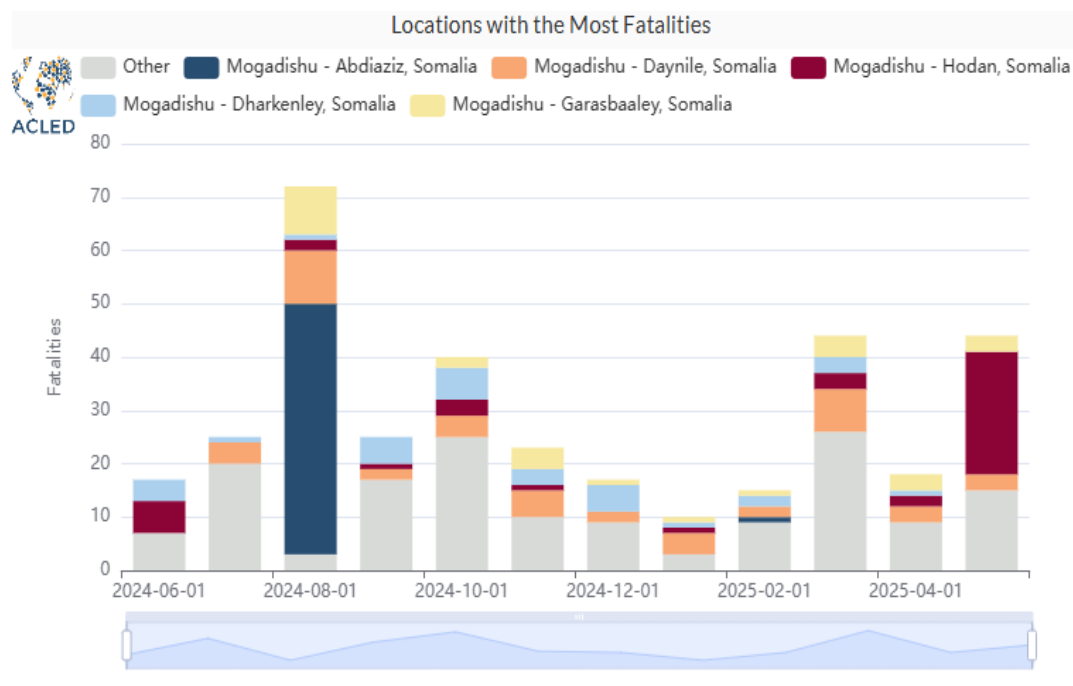
12.4.3 The ACLED Explorer indicated that of the 350 fatalities documented in the year to 31 May 2025, 185 were non-civilians and 165 were civilians<sup>99</sup>.

12.4.4 The ACLED Explorer also provided a breakdown of fatalities (both non-civilian and civilian) in the different districts of Mogadishu between 1 June 2024 and 31 May 2025 in the chart below:

<sup>97</sup> ACLED, [ACLED Explorer](#) (Filter – Political violence ... Somalia/Banadir), no date

<sup>98</sup> ACLED, [ACLED Explorer](#) (Filter – Political violence ... Somalia/Banadir), no date

<sup>99</sup> ACLED, [ACLED Explorer](#) (Filter – Political violence ... Somalia/Banadir), no date



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<sup>100</sup> ACLED, [ACLED Explorer](#) (Filter – Political violence ... Somalia/Banadir), no date

# Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

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# Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- Geography
  - Demography (if possible break down by district)
  - Location of main government/military facilities
  - Maps of Mogadishu
- Protagonists
  - Al Shabab
    - purpose/ideology
    - size
    - capability
    - tactics including targets
    - forced recruitment
  - Somali armed forces – size and capability
  - Other forces – including other armed groups (Islamic State), clan militias and international forces – size and allegiance
- Areas of control
- Conflict and violence (covering 2024 and 2025)
  - Number of security incidents and their nature, trends
  - Number of civilian casualties
  - Geographical scope - where does it happen in Mogadishu
  - Indication of impact differing by group

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# Version control and feedback

## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **2.0**
- valid from **1 July 2025**

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**Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section**

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

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## Changes from last version of this note

Updated COI.

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