



# Somalia

# Security situation

Country of Origin  
Information Report

September 2021





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# Acknowledgements

This report was jointly written by the COI Sector of EASO, together with contributions from ACCORD (Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation). EASO would like to acknowledge ACCORD as the co-drafter of this report.

The following departments and organisations have reviewed the report, together with EASO:

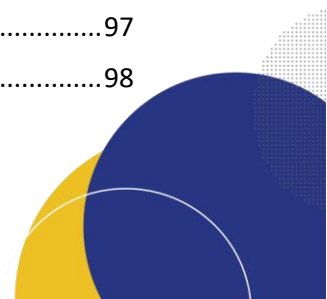
- The Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINBUZA), Country of Origin Information Unit
- Dr. Ken Menkhaus, Professor of Political Science at Davidson College, North Carolina (US). Professor Menkhaus is specialised on the politics of the Horn of Africa, with particular focus on Somalia, about which he has extensively published on topics including security, conflict analysis, peace operations, state failure, state-building, humanitarianism, and political Islam.

It must be noted that the drafting and review carried out by the mentioned departments, experts or organisations contributes to the overall quality of the report, but does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of EASO.

# Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Contents.....	4
Disclaimer.....	8
Glossary and Abbreviations .....	9
Introduction .....	11
Methodology .....	11
Defining the terms of reference.....	11
Collecting information.....	11
Quality control.....	12
Sources .....	12
Structure and use of the report.....	13
Note on transliteration .....	13
Maps .....	14
Approximate Territorial Control January 2020.....	15
Approximate Territorial Control June 2021.....	16
Clan Maps .....	17
Map by Lewis.....	18
Map by Abikar .....	19
Administrative Regions Map .....	20
Road Network Map.....	21
1. General description of the security situation in Somalia.....	22
1.1 Recent political and security developments.....	22
1.2 Armed actors .....	24
1.3 Layers of conflict.....	26
1.4 Recent security incidents and trends .....	29
1.4.1 Security incidents, violence against civilians, estimated civilian fatalities.....	30
1.4.2 Other impacts on civilian life.....	38
1.4.3 Internal Displacement .....	39
1.5 Checkpoints and road security in Somalia.....	42
2. Regional security situation and trends .....	44
2.1 Jubbaland .....	45

2.1.1 Gedo .....	45
2.1.1.1 Background.....	45
2.1.1.2 Conflict dynamics .....	46
2.1.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends .....	49
2.1.2 Middle Juba .....	52
2.1.2.1 Background.....	52
2.1.2.2 Conflict dynamics .....	54
2.1.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends .....	54
2.1.3 Lower Juba .....	58
2.1.3.1 Background.....	58
2.1.3.2 Conflict dynamics .....	60
2.1.3.3 Recent security incidents and trends .....	62
2.1.4 Jubbaland - Checkpoints and road security.....	66
2.2 South-West .....	67
2.2.1 Bakool .....	67
2.2.1.1 Background.....	67
2.2.1.2 Conflict dynamics .....	67
2.2.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends .....	69
2.2.2 Bay .....	73
2.2.2.1 Background.....	73
2.2.2.2 Conflict dynamics .....	74
2.2.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends .....	75
2.2.3 Lower Shabelle .....	79
2.2.3.1 Background.....	79
2.2.3.2 Conflict dynamics .....	80
2.2.3.3 Recent security incidents and trends .....	81
2.2.4 South-West - Checkpoints and road security .....	86
2.3 Benadir and Mogadishu .....	87
2.3.1 Background.....	87
2.3.2 Conflict dynamics .....	88
2.3.3 Recent security incidents and trends .....	90
2.3.4 Mogadishu - Checkpoints and road security .....	97
2.4 Hirshabelle .....	97
2.4.1 Hiraan .....	97
2.4.1.1 Background.....	97
2.4.1.2 Conflict dynamics .....	98



2.4.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends .....	100
2.4.2 Middle Shabelle .....	103
2.4.2.1 Background.....	103
2.4.2.2 Conflict dynamics .....	104
2.4.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends .....	105
2.4.3 Hirshabelle - Checkpoints and road security .....	109
2.5 Galmudug.....	109
2.5.1 Galgaduud.....	110
2.5.1.1 Background.....	110
2.5.1.2 Conflict dynamics .....	110
2.5.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends.....	112
2.5.2 Mudug.....	115
2.5.2.1 Background.....	115
2.5.2.2 Conflict dynamics .....	116
2.5.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends.....	118
2.5.3 Galmudug - Checkpoints and road security.....	121
2.6 Puntland .....	122
2.6.1 Nugal.....	122
2.6.1.1 Background.....	122
2.6.1.2 Conflict dynamics .....	123
2.6.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends.....	123
2.6.2 Bari.....	126
2.6.2.1 Background.....	126
2.6.2.2 Conflict dynamics .....	126
2.6.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends.....	128
Contested areas between Somaliland and Puntland .....	132
2.6.3 Sool .....	132
2.6.3.1 Background.....	132
2.6.3.2 Conflict dynamics .....	132
2.6.3.3 Recent security incidents and trends.....	134
2.6.4 Sanaag.....	137
2.6.4.1 Background.....	137
2.6.4.2 Conflict dynamics .....	138
2.6.4.3 Recent security incidents and trends.....	138
2.6.5 Puntland - Checkpoints and road security.....	142
2.7 Somaliland.....	142



2.7.1 Awdal ..... 142

    2.7.1.1 Background..... 142

    2.7.1.2 Conflict dynamics ..... 143

    2.7.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends ..... 143

2.7.2 Wogooyi Galbeed ..... 146

    2.7.2.1 Background..... 146

    2.7.2.2 Conflict dynamics ..... 147

    2.7.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends ..... 147

2.7.3 Togdheer..... 150

    2.7.3.1 Background..... 150

    2.7.3.2 Conflict dynamics ..... 151

    2.7.3.3 Recent security incidents and trends ..... 152

2.7.4 Sool ..... 155

2.7.5 Sanaag..... 155

2.7.6 Somaliland - Checkpoints and road security ..... 155

Annex 1: Bibliography ..... 156

Annex 2: Terms of Reference..... 176



## Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EASO COI Report Methodology (2019)<sup>1</sup>. The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

'Refugee', 'risk' and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither EASO nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 20 August 2021, however the reference period of the report covers the period 2020 – 30 June 2021, or earlier whenever relevant. Any event taking place after 30 June is not included in this report. Some additional information was added during the finalisation phase in response to feedback received during the quality control process, until 27 August 2021. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the [methodology](#) section of the Introduction.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2019 EASO COI Report Methodology can be downloaded from the EASO COI Portal [url](#)



## Glossary and Abbreviations

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AFRICOM	The United States Africa Command
AS	Al-Shabaab, militant Islamist organisation in Somalia
ASNE	Al-Shabaab North-East
ASWJ	Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a
Benadir	Benadir is an administrative region in southeastern Somalia (official name is Benadir Regional Administration). It covers the same area as the city of Mogadishu, Somalia's capital.
BRA	Benadir Regional Administration
Casualty	A person who is killed, wounded or incapacitated
<i>Darwish</i> (State level)	State level armed forces/militias/paramilitary/special police
<i>Darwish</i> (Federal Police)	Paramilitary unit of the Somali Police Force distinct from the state level unofficial darwish
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defence Force
Fatality	A person who is killed by a security incident or by violence
FGM/C	Female genital mutilation and cutting
FOB	Forward Operating Base
FFM	Fact-Finding Mission
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member States
<i>Gobol</i>	Somali administrative region
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISIS-Somalia	Islamic State in Somalia, or ISS; a Somalia-based affiliate of the Iraq/Syria-based IS (also called the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant/Syria (ISIS), or Daesh)
<i>Jaysh</i>	Al-Shabaab 'army', battalion
KDF	Kenya Defence Force
<i>Macawiisleey</i>	Clan militia operating in the Lower Shabelle region
NISA	(Somali) National Intelligence and Security Agency
PMP	Puntland Maritime Police
PMPF	Puntland Maritime Police Force
<i>rer guri</i>	Indigenous Gedo region Marehan
<i>rer galti</i>	Marehan who relocated to Gedo from central Somalia or Mogadishu
SEMG	UN Security Council Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea
SNA	Somali National Army

SNAF	Somaliland National Armed Forces
SPF	Somali Police Force
S/VBIED	Suicide/Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant context information in view of the assessment of international protection status determination, including refugee status and subsidiary protection. Among others, the report is intended to inform the development of EASO's country guidance development on Somalia (2022).

The report provides background information and mapping of the security situation in Somalia at regional level (for the 18 administrative regions foreseen by the Somali provisional constitution, as they existed before 1991)<sup>2</sup>. The report builds upon preceding EASO COI reports of the same project/study with focus on [Somalia: Actors](#),<sup>3</sup> [Targeted profiles](#)<sup>4</sup> and [Key socio-economic indicators](#).<sup>5</sup> They were published in the period July-September 2021.

This report provides an overview of the main security trends and incidents in the reference period (January 2020 – 30 June 2021). For an overview of the main state and non-state (armed) actors in the Somali context, operating at federal as well as at member state level see the report on [Somalia: Actors](#). This report on the security situation provides details on conflict dynamics, territorial control/influence, and (armed) actors at regional level. Finally, the report provides regional details about security trends, incidents, their impact on civilian life, internal displacement, and conflict related humanitarian issues.

## Methodology

The reference period is from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021. The information gathered is a result of desk research and expert interviews and input until 27 August 2021. Some limited additional information was added during the finalisation of this report in response to feedback received during the quality control process, until 3 September 2021.

This report is produced in line with the EASO COI Report Methodology (2019)<sup>6</sup> and the EASO COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2019).<sup>7</sup>

## Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference for this report build on the input received from policy experts from EU+ countries<sup>8</sup> within the context of country guidance development on Somalia. Terms of reference for this report can be found in [Annex 2](#).

## Collecting information

The information gathered results from two main sets of sources: extensive desk research using predominantly public, specialised paper-based, and electronic sources until 20 August 2021; and a number of interviews with oral sources and experts conducted by EASO for the purposes of the report between 20 June and 3 August 2021. All these sources, including when restricted or non-public information has been used to cover specific details, were duly referenced and described.

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<sup>2</sup> Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 1 August 2012, [url](#), Art. 49 (5), 72

<sup>3</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#)

<sup>4</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>5</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>6</sup> EASO, EASO Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, June 2019, [url](#)

<sup>7</sup> EASO, Writing and Referencing Guide for EASO Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports, June 2019, [url](#)

<sup>8</sup> EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland



The sources used are referenced in the [Bibliography](#). Wherever information could not be found within the timeframes for drafting this report after carefully consulting a range of sources, this is stated in the report. The sources used and cited in the report are included in the bibliography.

## Quality control

To ensure that the authors respected the EASO COI Report Methodology and the [Terms of Reference](#) were comprehensively addressed, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries and organisations listed as reviewers in the [Acknowledgements](#) section. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and almost all of them were implemented in the final draft of this report, which was finalised on 3 September 2021. EASO also performed the final quality review and editing of the text.

## Sources

In accordance with EASO COI methodology, a range of different published documentary sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include: academic publications and think tank reports and specialised sources covering Somalia; COI reports by governments; information from civil society, advocacy groups, humanitarian organisations, and NGOs; reports produced by various bodies of the United Nations; and Somali and regionally-based media.

In addition to using publicly available documentary sources, 8 oral sources and experts were contacted for this report. They were interviewed in the period June-August 2021. The types of oral sources contacted include: scholars, international experts, Somali experts, development practitioners, and sources based in Somalia with reliable knowledge of the situation on the ground. See the [Bibliography](#) for additional details. In addition, during his quality review of this report, Professor Ken Menkhaus provided extensive and detailed contributions to supplement the available research information and add to the overall content of the report. The additional information provided by Professor Menkhaus has been duly cited.

### Security incidents and estimated fatality data

Reliable data and sources on security incident and casualty recording in Somalia was limited and difficult to obtain.

Among other sources, data on security incidents are drawn substantially from publicly available curated datasets from the organisation **Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)**.<sup>9</sup> ACLED collects data on violent incidents in Somalia, among other countries, coding each incident with the time and place, type of violent incident, the parties involved and an estimate on the number of fatalities. It also provides relevant breakdowns per region, actor, type of incident, and period. The information is collected in a database that is accessible via registration, searchable and kept continuously up to date.

ACLED codes security incidents as follows: battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians, riots, protests, and strategic developments.<sup>10</sup> For the purpose of this report the following type of events were included in the quantitative analysis and graphs of the incidents: **battles**, **explosions/remote violence**, and **violence against civilians**. Additionally, ACLED codes actors involved in security incidents as follows: ACTOR 1 is the 'named actor involved in the event' and ACTOR 2 is the 'named actor involved in the event, while '[i]n most cases, an event requires two actors, noted in

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<sup>9</sup> ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>10</sup> ACLED, ACLED Codebook, 2019, [url](#), pp. 7-14

columns 'ACTOR1' and 'ACTOR2'. However, event types 'Explosions/Remote violence', 'Riots', 'Protests', and 'Strategic developments' can include 'one-sided events'.<sup>11</sup>

Characteristics and potential limits for COI use of ACLED data are:

1. Data primarily come from secondary sources such as media reports. Lack of or under-reporting might critically affect the depiction and the assessment of the situation on the ground.
2. ACLED's database only provides figures of deaths (fatalities) per event, not of injured persons or other casualties.
3. ACLED's database does not distinguish between civilian and non-civilian fatalities.
4. All ACLED fatality figures provided in this EASO's COI report are estimates based on ACLED's methodology. In ACLED's codebook their methodology is explained.<sup>12</sup> According to its 2020 Fatality methodology, incidents of which the original source has reported that they had led to an unknown number of fatalities, ACLED codes the number of fatalities as 10 in 'an active warzone' or 'a significant attack outside of a warzone', and as 3 in 'an attack of more limited scope, in an active warzone' or 'an attack outside of a warzone'.<sup>13</sup> This method may have an impact on overall numbers of fatalities reported/estimated.

In various instances, particularly at general country level, whenever other sources on security incidents were available over the reference period, ACLED's data have been corroborated/contrasted with other data.

Based on UN data, ACLED data and local media consulted, the drafters conducted a selection of illustrative incidents per each administrative region (18 in total). This selection is not exhaustive. It aims to present incidents relevant to evaluate the nature of the violence in the country. When ACLED data were used for illustrative incidents, where possible, efforts were made within time constraints to identify the original source of the information referenced in ACLED's raw data files.

## Structure and use of the report

The report is divided into two parts: Section 1. General description of the security situation in Somalia, and Section 2. Regional security situation and trends. In section 1, after displaying various security relevant maps (territorial control, clan distribution, administrative regions, and road network), the report provides a general description of the security situation at country level (including Somaliland), including charts and analysis of aggregate security trends and data in the reference period (January 2020 – June 2021). In section 2, the report goes on to describe background, conflict dynamics, and security trends at regional level (for each one of the 18 administrative regions foreseen by the Somali provisional constitution<sup>14</sup>).<sup>15</sup>

## Note on transliteration

A national orthography for the Somali language was codified relatively late by adopting a Latin script (21 October 1972). Nevertheless, even today, Somali lacks a commonly applied and binding orthography.

In this text, Somali place, clan and personal names usually follow Somali orthography: 'long vowels are indicated by doubling them', as in *Darood* or *Abbaan*, 'the Latin 'c' stands for a sound close to the

<sup>11</sup> ACLED, *Acled Codebook*, 2019, [url](#), pp. 5, 18

<sup>12</sup> ACLED, *Acled Codebook*, 2019, [url](#), pp. 7-14

<sup>13</sup> ACLED, *FAQs: ACLED Fatality Methodology*, 2020, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>14</sup> Somalia, *Provisional Constitution*, 1 August 2012, [url](#), art. 49 (5), 72

<sup>15</sup> Please note that this partition, besides being the official partition for the Federal Government of Somalia, is widely used by national and international bodies, organisations, research institutes, and NGOs.

Arabic ع (ayn), while 'x' denotes the strongly aspirated ح (ha').<sup>16</sup> However, given the fact that other sources adopt different conventions, the reader will sometimes find other forms of place, clan, and personal names in the text, including where direct citations are used or in references. See also the introductory note on [Clan Maps](#).

Somalis, notably Somali men, are frequently better known by their nicknames than by their formal names. The same applies to public figures and politicians mentioned in the text, whose nickname is provided in quotation marks, such as in 'better known' or 'also known' as 'Qoor Qoor'.

## Maps

See next pages.

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<sup>16</sup> Hoehne M., Between Somaliland and Puntland, 2015, [url](#), p. 7



## Approximate Territorial Control January 2020

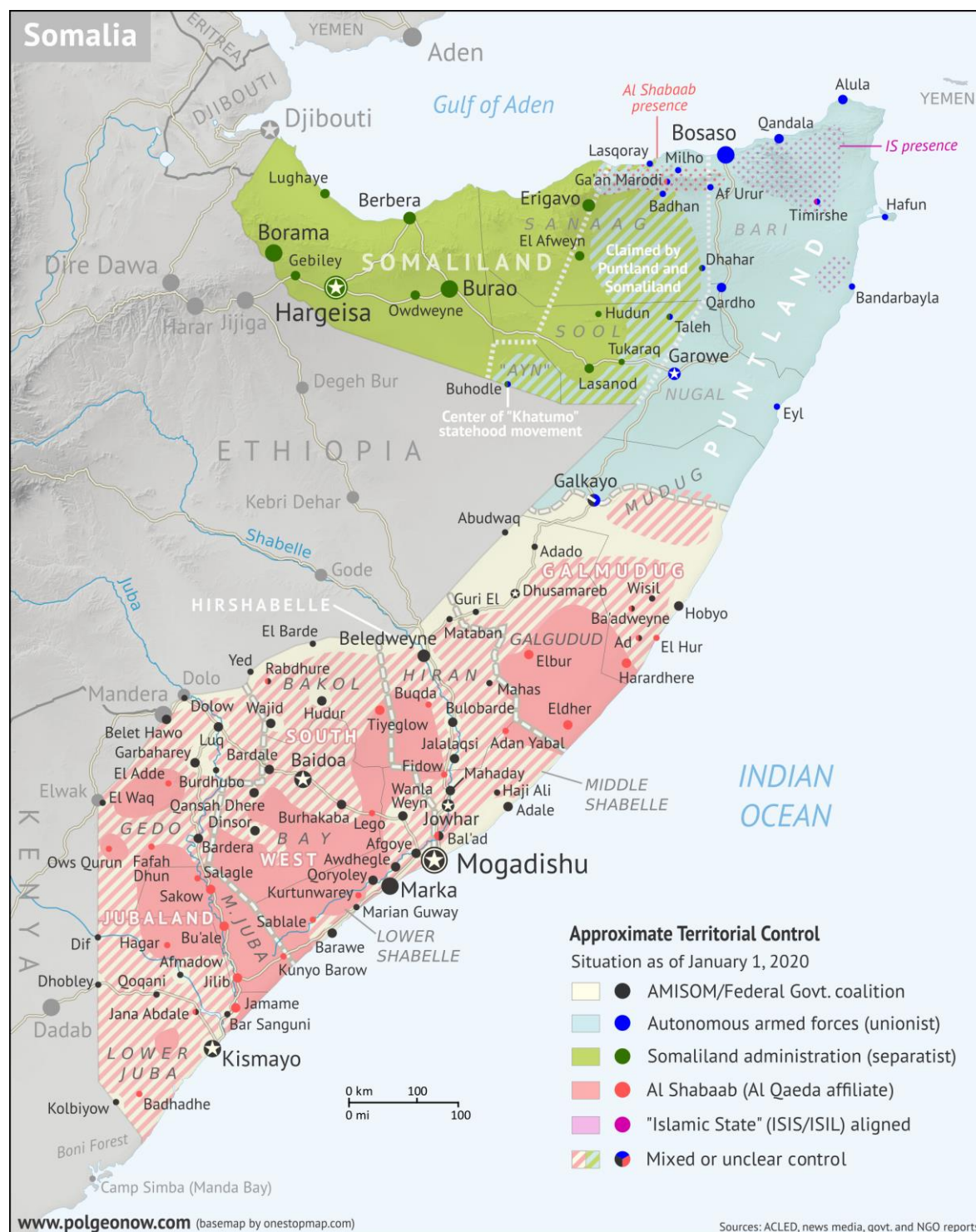


Figure 1. Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, 1 January 2020, by Political Geography Now ([www.polgeonow.com](http://www.polgeonow.com)).<sup>17</sup>

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

<sup>17</sup> Polgeonow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of June 2021, n.d., non public source



## Approximate Territorial Control June 2021

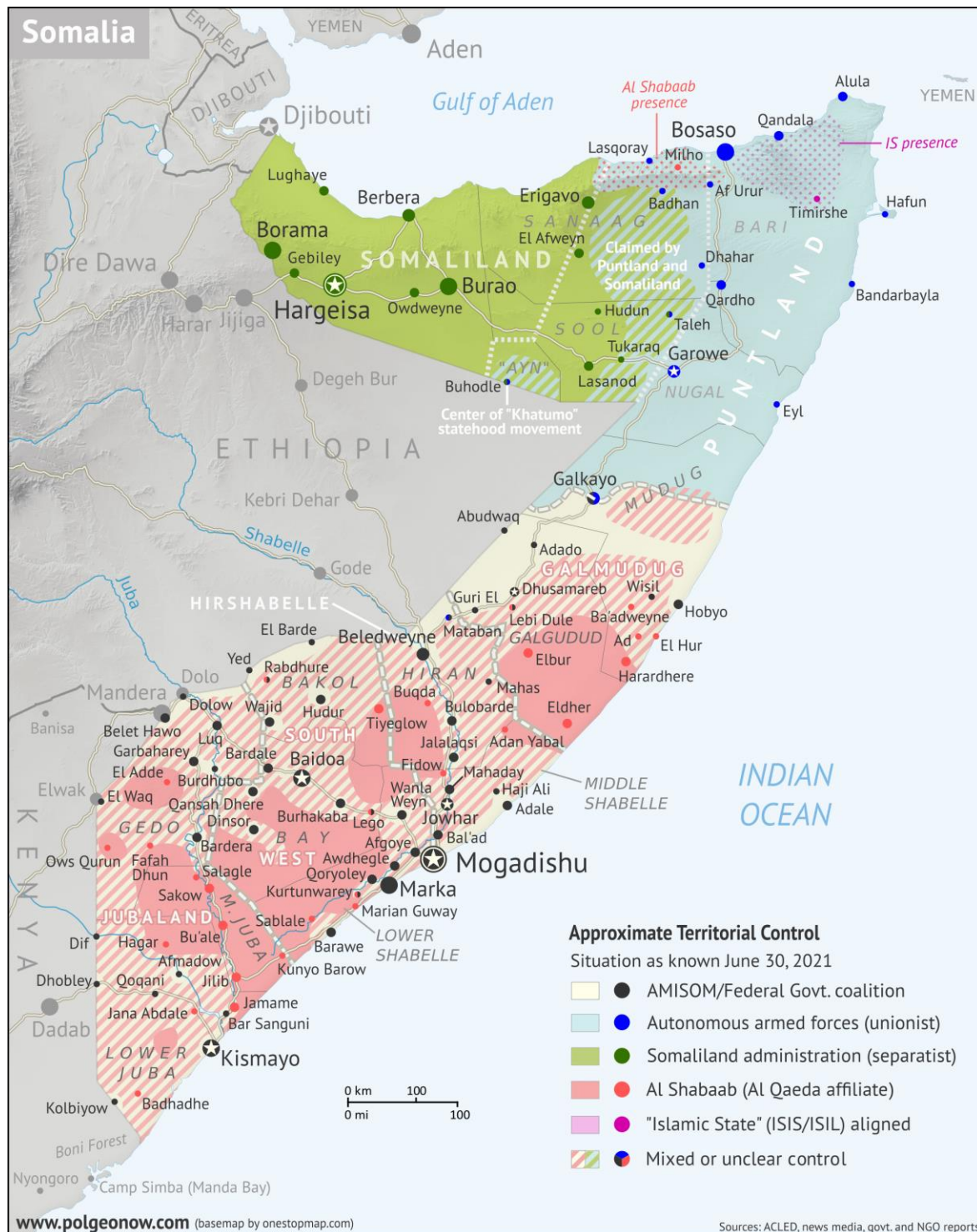


Figure 2. Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, 30 June 2021 by Political Geography Now ([www.polgeonow.com](http://www.polgeonow.com)).<sup>18</sup>

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

<sup>18</sup> Polgeonow, Somalia Approximate Territorial Control, as of June 2021, n.d., non public source

## Clan Maps

Below two maps showing clan distribution at a detail level (mostly sub-clan). Originally, they are based respectively on: (1) the map by the British anthropologist and expert in Somali clans, Ioan M. Lewis, attached to his 1955 book *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar and Saho*;<sup>19</sup> and (2) the map by Abdulqaadir Abikar (1999).<sup>20</sup> Both maps are published below in an edited version, as reworked by SEM Laenderanalyse, to make them more readable and more clearly laid-out than the original.

**Please note:** the nomadic lifestyle of many Somalis, the extensive migration movements since 1991 and the **disagreements** regarding **clan genealogies** and **clan distribution** make it virtually impossible to produce a precise map. These **discrepancies** are clearly visible when comparing the two maps below, for example the distribution of the Hawiye in Southern Somalia. Contrary to what the maps show, for the most part there are no exact and clearly defined borders between clan territories.

As already noted in the Note on Transliteration, it is equally important to notice that the spelling of clan names may vary. In the maps below, the spellings used by the original authors have been reproduced verbatim. The spelling variations between the two authors are reflected in the maps (e.g. *Gelimes* by Lewis 1955 vs *Gilmays* by Abikar 1999).

Although there is a long time-span between the publication of these maps (1955 and 1999 respectively), the differences between the maps should not be understood as changes in the Somali clan distribution within this timeframe.

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<sup>19</sup> Lewis, I.M., *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar and Saho*, International African Institute, 1955

<sup>20</sup> Abikar, A., *Clan Distribution of the Somalis in Horn of Africa*, 1999, as in: ACCORD, *Clans in Somalia*. Report on a Lecture by Joakim Gundel, December 2009, [url](#), p. 30



## Map by Lewis

Please see note on [Clan maps](#) while consulting this map

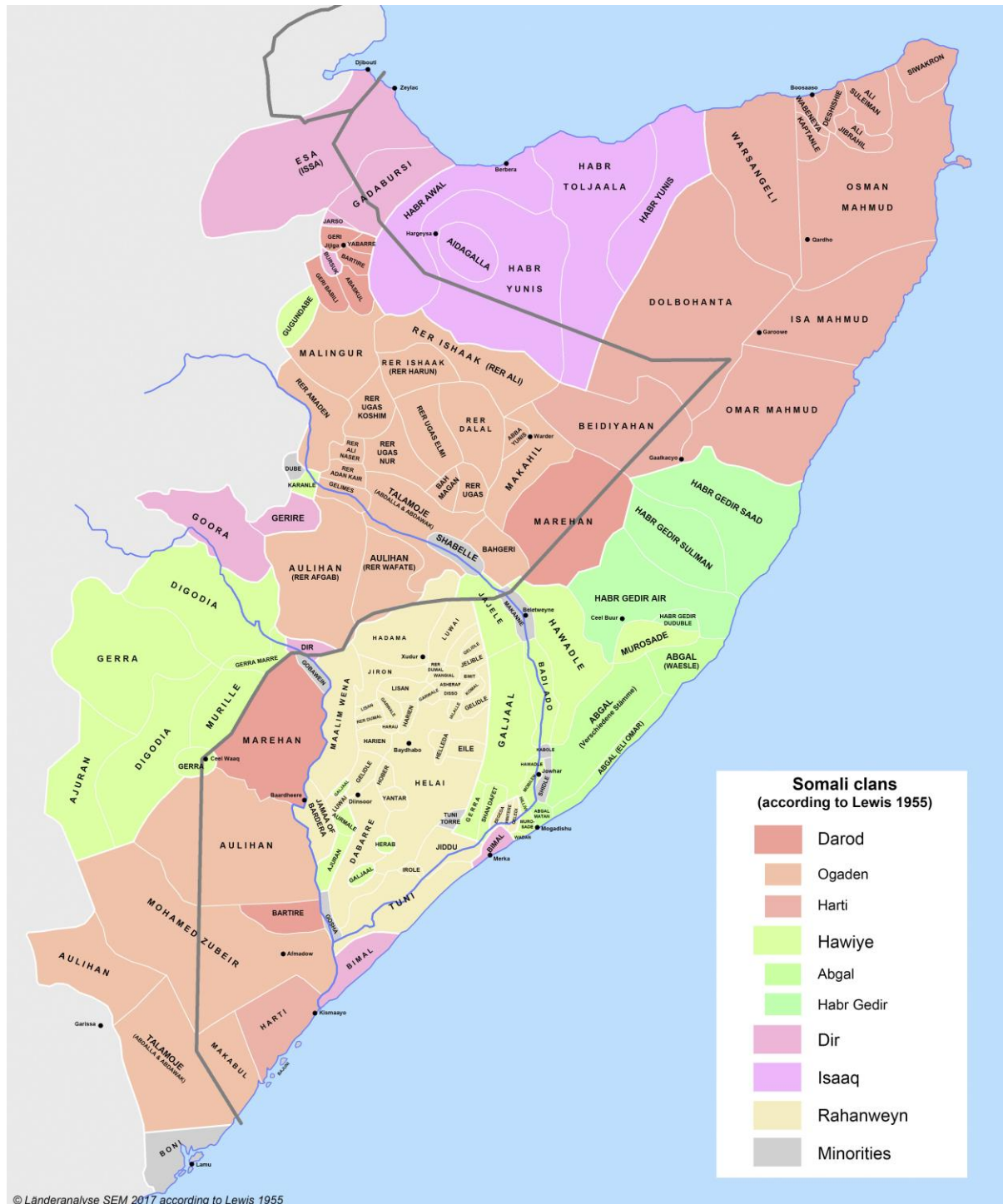


Figure 3. Clan Distribution by Lewis (1955).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Lewis, I.M., Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar and Saho, International African Institute, 1955



## Map by Abikar

Please see note on [Clan maps](#) while consulting this map

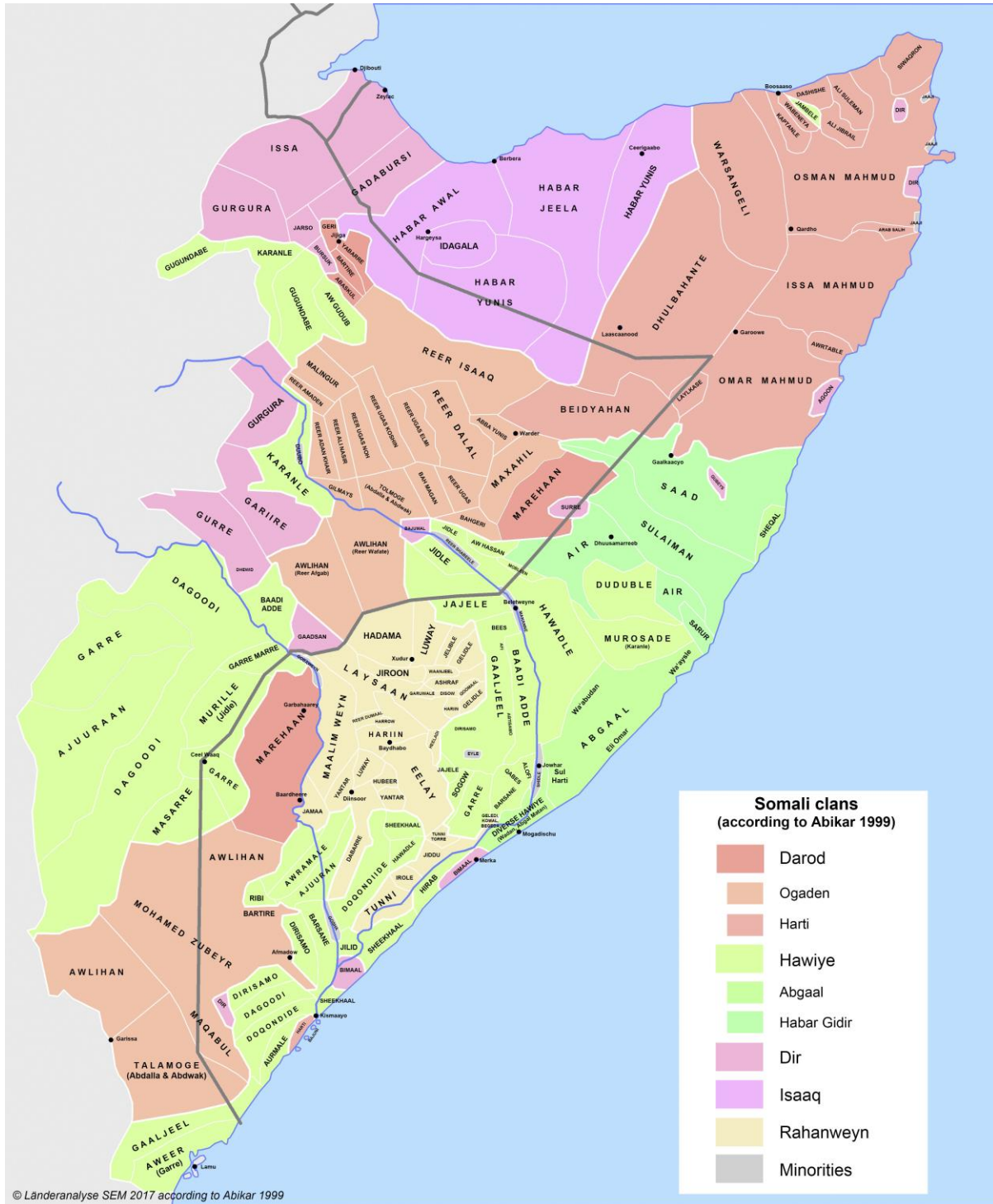


Figure 4. Clan Distribution by Abikar (1999).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Abikar, A., Clan Distribution of the Somalis in Horn of Africa, 1999, as in: ACCORD, Clans in Somalia. Report on a Lecture by Joakim Gundel, December 2009, [url](#), p. 30

## Administrative Regions Map

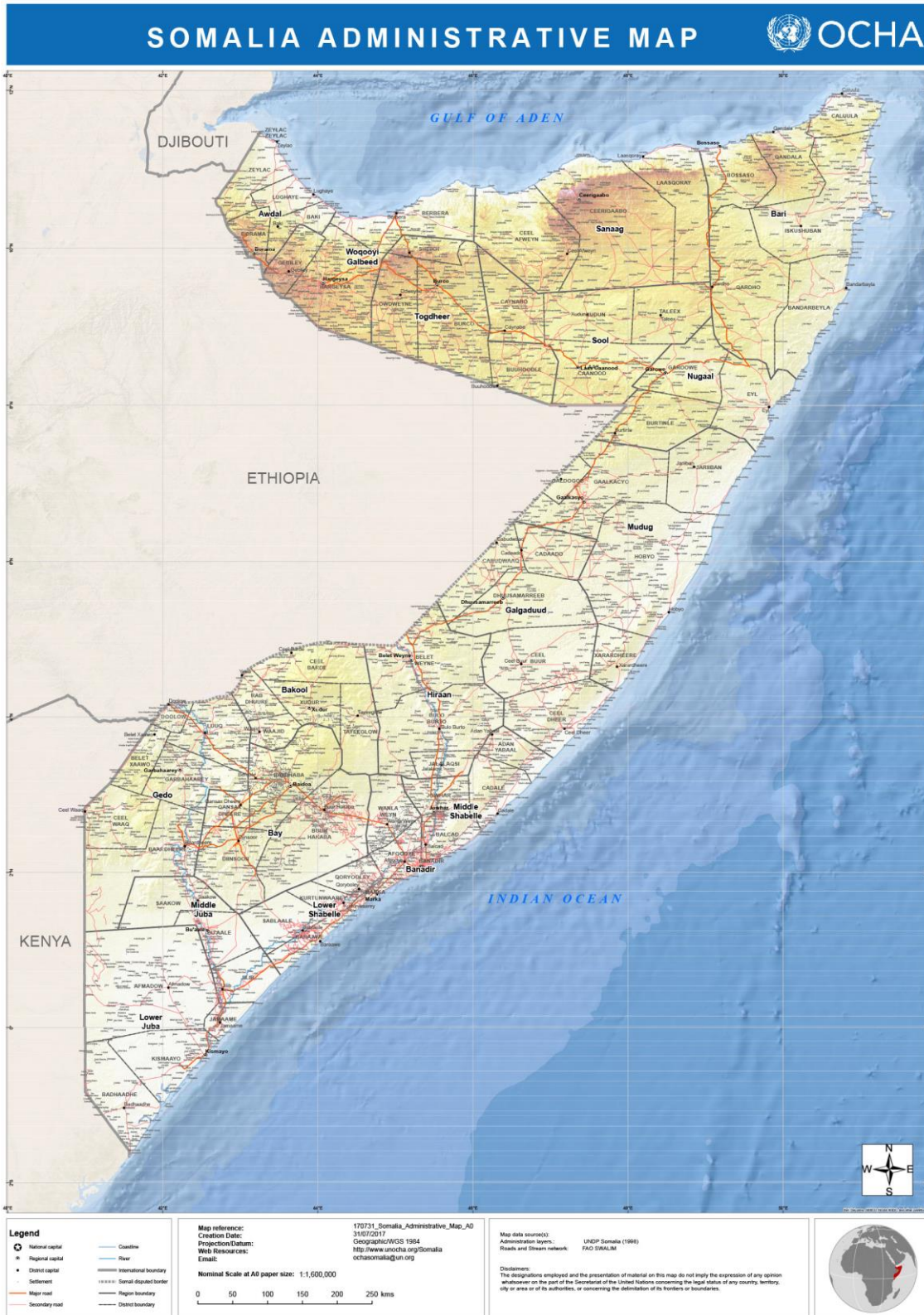


Figure 5. UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, n.d., non public source



# Road Network Map



Figure 6. WFP, General Logistics Planning Map, August 2021.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> WFP, General Logistics Planning Map, August 2021, n.d., non public source

# 1. General description of the security situation in Somalia

## 1.1 Recent political and security developments

Somalia is currently in a period of unusually high political turbulence.<sup>25</sup> As of August 2021, the country is slated to complete a long-delayed parliamentary and presidential election between July and October 2021.<sup>26</sup> Ongoing disagreements over electoral procedures threaten to delay elections still further, and reflect fundamental absence of consensus on the electoral model and lack of trust among Somalia's political leaders. Following months of electoral impasse,<sup>27</sup> that at times turned violent (February<sup>28</sup> and April<sup>29</sup> 2021), the Somali political leaders agreed on the main contending issues and the timetable of indirect parliamentary elections in 2021:<sup>30</sup> 25 July for Upper House elections, August 10-September 10 for the Lower House elections, and 10 October for presidential elections.<sup>31</sup> For further details about Somalia's electoral system, governance structure and institutions see the EASO's COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>32</sup>

Security surrounding the election process is a concern and a high priority.<sup>33</sup> The National Consultative Council (NCC) agreed on the establishment of a 9-member election security task force, to be placed under the leadership of the Prime Minister (Mr. Hussein Roble).<sup>34</sup> The task force comprises all police commanders of the Federal government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS), as well as AMISOM (the African Union Mission in Somalia) police commander, and is supposed to oversee the establishment of a special police unit that will keep the security of election venues and locations.<sup>35</sup>

While the elections constitute a potential trigger for insecurity and conflict, endemic forms of insecurity remain the dominant concern. Of these, the continued threat posed by Al-Shabaab is paramount.<sup>36</sup> Al-Shabaab, Somalia's 'armed Islamist extremist and self-declared al-Qaeda affiliate organisation',<sup>37</sup> has threatened to attack electoral delegates and to disrupt the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections.<sup>38</sup> As indicated by the Council on Foreign Relations, in its May 2021 backgrounder, the group 'remains the principal security challenge in war-torn Somalia, and continues to mount lethal attacks against Western and AU forces and civilians in the region'.<sup>39</sup> Its broad overall goal remains the establishment of an Islamic State in Somalia, and its main unifying idea is the

<sup>25</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>26</sup> Africanews, Somalia to hold presidential vote in October, 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>27</sup> ECFR, Somalia's election impasse: A crisis of state building, 16 February 2021, [url](#)

<sup>28</sup> Washington Post (The), Clashes in Mogadishu throw Somalia's political crisis into dangerous new phase, 19 February 2021, [url](#)

<sup>29</sup> ICG, Why Somalia's Electoral Crisis Has Tipped into Violence, 27 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>30</sup> SPA, From Agreement to Implementation: The Operationalization of Somalia's Indirect Election Agreement, 10 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>31</sup> Africanews, Somalia to hold presidential vote in October, 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>32</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 22-25

<sup>33</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>34</sup> SPA, From Agreement to Implementation: The Operationalization of Somalia's Indirect Election Agreement, 10 June 2021, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>35</sup> SPA, From Agreement to Implementation: The Operationalization of Somalia's Indirect Election Agreement, 10 June 2021, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>36</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>37</sup> International Crisis Group, Somalia: Al-Shabaab – It Will Be a Long War, Africa Briefing no. 99, 26 June 2014, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>38</sup> VOA, Al-Shabab Threatens to Disrupt Upcoming Somali Elections, 21 July 2021, [url](#); see also International Crisis Group, Blunting Al-Shabaab's Impact on Somalia's Elections, 31 December 2020, [url](#)

<sup>39</sup> CFR, Al-Shabaab, 19 May 2021, [url](#)



“opposition to the Western-backed government.”<sup>40</sup> While the group controls large swathes of rural territory in central and southern Somalia, its level of penetration and influence has widely permeated Somali society.<sup>41</sup> For an overview of Al-Shabaab territorial control and contested areas please see the map [Approximate Territorial Control June 2021](#). For an overview of Al-Shabaab as a military and political organisation, including insights into the group’s outreach, see the EASO’s COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>42</sup> For additional details about conflict layers and dynamics at federal and regional level see the remainder of this report.

In the overall fight against Al-Shabaab, Operation Badbaado 1 is worth mentioning as one of the main military operations in the reference period.<sup>43</sup> Originally launched in April 2019 this operation involves AMISOM, international, and Somali forces ‘to recover the so-called Shabelle River bridge towns’ from Al-Shabaab, in the Lower Shabelle region south-west of Mogadishu.<sup>44</sup> In this area, which is believed to be the site of Al-Shabaab’s explosive-making factories, as of mid-2020 the SNA and AMISOM have successfully recaptured four main towns (Jannaale, Sabiid, Bariirre and Awdhiigle).<sup>45</sup> While operation Badbaado 1 is still on-going,<sup>46</sup> the planning of the second phase, Badbaado 2, which is meant to secure the roads from Mogadishu to Baidoa and Beledweyne, was not yet begun as of May 2020.<sup>47</sup> Another major development in the reference period was Al-Shabaab’s offensive in Galmudug state (June 2021).<sup>48</sup>

Al Shabab is the most visible and dangerous source of insecurity in Somalia, but it is by no means the only one. Chronic communal and political conflict remains a major destabilising force for Somali communities.<sup>49</sup> The Somali political and security arena is in fact highly influenced by a wider range of variables and actors affecting the control and the use of violence. Among these, the clan system, and the relative clan militias, remain a salient ‘explanatory factor in Somali politics, society and economy’.<sup>50</sup> In ACLED data, clan militias, together with unidentified armed groups, account as ACTOR 1<sup>51</sup> in almost 18 per cent of the security incidents registered in the reference period (January 2020 – June 2021) as shown in Figure 7 below. For further details see the sections below on [Armed actors](#) and on [Layers of conflict](#), as well as on clan conflict dynamics at regional level in the remainder of this report ([Section 2](#)). For additional details about clan dynamics at federal member state level see the EASO’s COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>52</sup>

External actors have contributed to Somali insecurity by playing out their rivalries through Somali proxies.<sup>53</sup> This is especially the case in the relationship between the FGS and the relatively newly formed FMS,<sup>54</sup> and how these interplay with the various external actors active in the Somali context

<sup>40</sup> CFR, Al-Shabaab, 19 May 2021, [url](#)

<sup>41</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, 28 September 2020, [url](#), p. 3; International Crisis Group, Somalia: Al-Shabaab – It Will Be a Long War, Africa Briefing no. 99, 26 June 2014, [url](#), pp. 1, 12-14

<sup>42</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 58-67

<sup>43</sup> HIPS, The State of Somalia Report, February 2021, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>44</sup> SIPRI, The European union Training Mission in Somalia: an Assessment, December 2020, [url](#), p. 12, and footnote no. 70

<sup>45</sup> HIPS, The State of Somalia Report, February 2021, [url](#), p. 14

<sup>46</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 66-67, 77; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 15; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 23; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 68, 86

<sup>47</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 66

<sup>48</sup> TRT World, At least 30 dead in Al Shabab siege in Somalia’s Galmudug, 28 June 2021, [url](#); Reuters, At least 30 killed in al Shabaab attack in Somalia - security official, 28 June 2021, [url](#); VOA, Somalia Executes Militants Amid Deadly Attack, 27 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>49</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>50</sup> LSE, Somalia’s Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 30

<sup>51</sup> As per ACLED codebook ACTOR 1 is the ‘named actor involved in the event’ and ‘[i]n most cases, an event requires two actors, noted in columns ‘ACTOR1’ and ‘ACTOR2’. However, event types ‘Explosions/Remote violence’, ‘Riots’, ‘Protests’, and ‘Strategic developments’ can include one-sided events’. ACLED, Acled Codebook, 2019, [url](#), pp. 5, 18

<sup>52</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 77-116

<sup>53</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>54</sup> HIPS, Dysfunctional federalism, July 2020, [url](#), p. 11; HIPS, The State of Somalia Report, February 2021, [url](#), pp. 6, 11

(notably AMISOM, United States Africa Command, Kenya, Ethiopia, Turley, and Gulf states).<sup>55</sup> See below and the remainder of this report for further details.

Another major source of insecurity and attrition in the Somali context is the competition, at times violent, between Somaliland and Puntland over contested territories - Sool and Sanaag regions – with ‘intersection of local, regional and national dynamics’.<sup>56</sup> During the reference period (February 2020), after the ceasefire brokered in 2018 by the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), ‘intermittent skirmishes resumed between forces loyal to the two sides’.<sup>57</sup> In his previous reporting period (5 November 2019 – 4 February 2020) the UNSG had indicated though that ‘[r]elations between Puntland and “Somaliland” [had] remained stable, notwithstanding their competing claims to the two regions’.<sup>58</sup> For further details about security trends in these regions see relevant sections in the remainder of this report ([Contested areas between Somaliland and Puntland](#)). For other details about political and clan dynamics at federal member state level see relevant sub-sections within the Sections 7.6 Puntland and 7.7 Somaliland of the EASO’s COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>59</sup>

Finally, the Islamic State in Somalia (ISIS-Somalia or ISS), with its base in Puntland,<sup>60</sup> remains over the reference period another source of insecurity in the Somali context. In the period February-May 2021 the targeting of Puntland forces was reported in Qandala district (Bari region, Puntland) at the hands of the group;<sup>61</sup> other attacks against government security forces were reported in Bosasso and in Mogadishu between May and August 2021;<sup>62</sup> other assassinations were reported again in Bosasso and in Mogadishu in the period February-May 2020,<sup>63</sup> as well as in Qandala and Afgoye at the beginning of the reference period (January 2020).<sup>64</sup> For further details about the group’s presence, strength, and area of activities see chapter 6 ISIS of the EASO’s COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>65</sup> For details on regional security trends and conflict dynamics see the remainder of this report.

## 1.2 Armed actors

Somalia is characterised by the presence of numerous state and non-state armed actors. As Somali security expert Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown<sup>66</sup> puts it ‘[m]ore than 60 warring parties are present in the country, ranging from clan and warlord militias to various other militant groups’, including the Islamic State in Somalia (ISIS-Somalia).<sup>67</sup>

Most of these military and security forces have been addressed in detail in the EASO’s COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>68</sup> For details on each armed actor (strength, territorial control/presence, dynamics) see referenced pages below:

<sup>55</sup> LSE, Somalia’s Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 33

<sup>56</sup> ISS, The various layers to the Somaliland-Puntland discord, 9 December 2019, [url](#); ISS, Overlapping claims by Somaliland and Puntland – The case of Sool and Sanaag, November 2019, [url](#), pp. 3-5; Hoehne M., Between Somaliland and Puntland, 2015, [url](#), pp. 19-21, 36

<sup>57</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 12

<sup>58</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 13

<sup>59</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 101-106, 108-113

<sup>60</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), p. 75

<sup>61</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 19

<sup>62</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 24

<sup>63</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 20

<sup>64</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 21

<sup>65</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 74-77

<sup>66</sup> Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute where she focuses on international and internal conflict, non-traditional security threats, and insurgency, among others. She has conducted fieldwork on a range of countries, including Somalia. Brookings, Vanda Felbab-Brown, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>67</sup> Felbab-Brown, V., The Problem with Militias in Somalia, 2020, [url](#), p. 118

<sup>68</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#)

- The FGS Security Forces, including the Somali National Army (SNA), the Special Forces, the national Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA), Police Forces, Prison Forces;<sup>69</sup>
- The FMS armed forces, darwish and police forces, for each FMS (Jubbaland, South West State, BRA-Mogadishu, Hirshabelle, Galmudug, Puntland, Somaliland);<sup>70</sup>
- The Clan Militias;<sup>71</sup> for an overview of main clan conflicts/militias in Somalia at regional level see the remainder of this report;
- African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM);<sup>72</sup>
- United States Africa Command (AFRICOM);<sup>73</sup>
- Al-Shabaab;<sup>74</sup>
- Islamic State in Somalia (ISIS-Somalia or ISS);<sup>75</sup>
- Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) and the Kenya Defence Force (KDF): both Ethiopia and Kenya provide extrabudgetary security assistance to Somalia.<sup>76</sup> Reportedly, besides the AU contingent (about 4 000 soldiers),<sup>77</sup> Ethiopia had around 15 000 ENDF additional soldiers in Somalia bilaterally as of November 2020;<sup>78</sup> Kenya instead, besides the AU contingent (almost 4 000 soldiers),<sup>79</sup> had around more than 8 000 soldiers deployed bilaterally in Somalia as of March 2020;<sup>80</sup> Ethiopia one of the most influential actors in Somalia, supports the Federal Government of President Farmajo and has also intervened militarily in support of FGS' agenda in regional elections (in 2018 in South-West state, in 2020 Galmudug);<sup>81</sup> Kenya has considerable interests in Jubbaland and Kismayo and has been accused of supporting the local president Madobe against the FGS.<sup>82</sup>

In a recent (June 2021) research paper on Somali political dynamics published by the London School of Economics (LSE) within the Conflict Research Programme, the various authors put forward the distinction between 'armed groups' and 'patrons', 'who rent or otherwise command [armed groups] loyalty'.<sup>83</sup> The paper groups together on the one hand 'patrons' (such as 'leaderships of FGS, the various FMSs, Al-Shabaab, business elites, [clans], and external state actors'), and on the other hand armed actors (such as the Somali National Army and Police, the various formal FMS forces, clan militias, and Al-Shabaab forces).<sup>84</sup> According to these authors, a crucial aspect of the Somali context is that 'the boundaries of membership' for all of these groups above constantly shift, and that 'many if not most individuals that could be described as patrons or as violence/security providers are members, to varying degrees, of multiple categories simultaneously'.<sup>85</sup> As potential corollaries of this the said authors indicate that:

- 'The interests of the FGS are largely synonymous with the interests of the whoever currently holds the presidency and the coalition of clan and business interests who support him'.

<sup>69</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 37-45

<sup>70</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 77-116

<sup>71</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 52-55; 77-116

<sup>72</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 67-72

<sup>73</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 72-74

<sup>74</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 58-67

<sup>75</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 74-77

<sup>76</sup> LSE, Somalia's Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 24

<sup>77</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), p. 69;

<sup>78</sup> Reuters, Exclusive: Ethiopia says disarms Tigrayan peacekeepers in Somalia over security, 18 November 2020, [url](#)

<sup>79</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), p. 69;

<sup>80</sup> DW, Could Kenya annex chunks of Somalia? 13 March 2020, [url](#)

<sup>81</sup> LSE, Somalia's Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 24, 41, 44

<sup>82</sup> LSE, Somalia's Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 24, 43-44; DW, Could Kenya annex chunks of Somalia? 13 March 2020, [url](#)

<sup>83</sup> LSE, Somalia's Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 29

<sup>84</sup> LSE, Somalia's Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 29

<sup>85</sup> LSE, Somalia's Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 29

- The SNA is ‘rather than an institution, more of a strategically deployed brand’. ‘When this brand is applied to clan militias and other ad hoc forces supporting whomever the current FGS President happens to be, the actions of those militias gain enhanced legitimacy, at least externally’.<sup>86</sup>
- ‘Generally speaking, a given member of the armed forces has three entities theoretically competing for his loyalty – the clan, the FMS, and the SNA/FGS’.<sup>87</sup> For this reason for instance soldiers of the SNA sided with the opposition during the violence in April 2021 as mentioned in the general description of the security situation.<sup>88</sup>

Within this context, Al-Shabaab increasingly resembles ‘a mafia-esque organized crime operation’.<sup>89</sup> Leading Somali expert and scholar, Professor Kenneth Menkhaus, noted in 2016 that ‘Politicians, soldiers, clans, some businesses, the FGS, and some national contingents in the African Union peacekeeping forces have all at one time or another actively colluded with Al-Shabaab for reasons that range from the tactical to the venal to the instinct to survive.’<sup>90</sup>

Based on ACLED data (Figure 7), these are the relative number of incidents in which the various armed actors active in Somalia were coded as ACTOR 1 (over a total of 3 663 reported security incidents) over the reference period (January 2020 – June 2021):

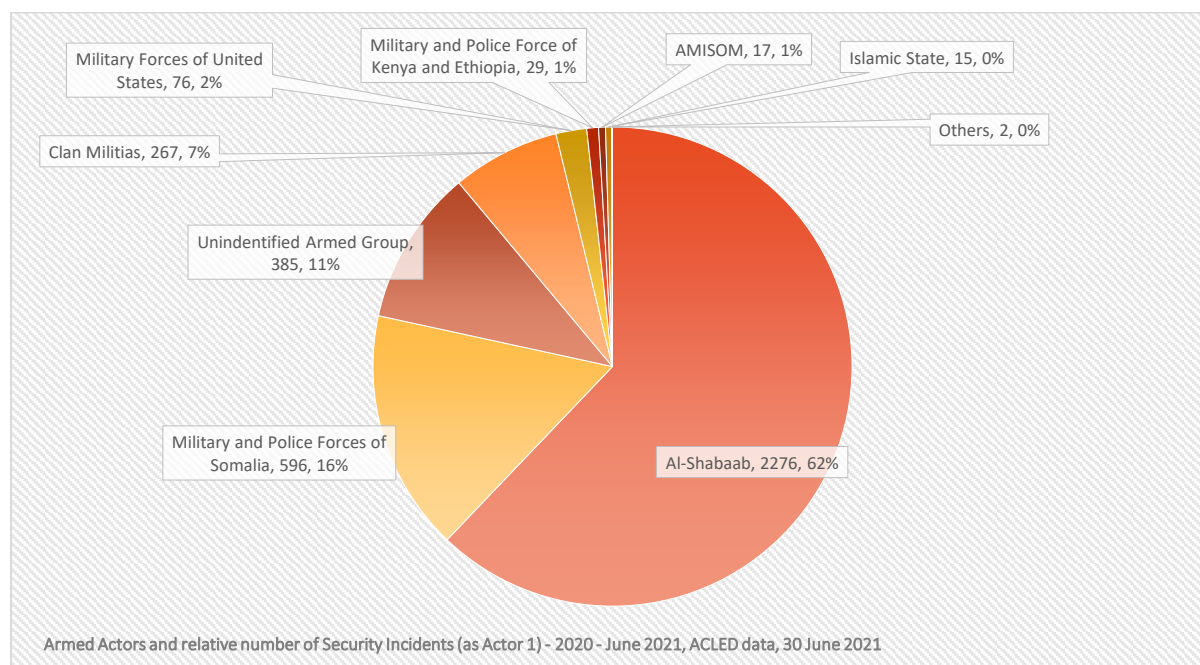


Figure 7. Actors 1 involved in security incidents in Somalia from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>91</sup>

### 1.3 Layers of conflict

Main conflict dynamics in Somalia can be presented for analytical purposes in different layers, which can be listed as follows:

- **The Al-Shabaab – anti-Al-Shabaab Conflict.** As mentioned in the introduction, during the reference period the main conflict driver in Somalia remains the Al-Shabaab anti-Al-Shabaab conflict, with most

<sup>86</sup> LSE, Somalia’s Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 30

<sup>87</sup> LSE, Somalia’s Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), pp. 30-31

<sup>88</sup> Al Jazeera, Rival Groups clash in Somali capital over president’s mandate, 26 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>89</sup> LSE, Somalia’s Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 32

<sup>90</sup> Menkhaus, K., Managing risk in ungoverned space: Local and international actors in Somalia, 2016, n.d., p. 117

<sup>91</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

of the security incidents perpetrated by Al-Shabaab, primarily as hit-and-run attacks targeting Somali security forces and AMISOM, and often involving improvised explosive devices.<sup>92</sup> According to the Rule of Law in Armed Conflicts project (RULAC),<sup>93</sup> Somalia is in fact a party to a non-international armed conflict with Al-Shabaab,<sup>94</sup> while the group controls ‘tracts of rural central, southern, and western Somalia’,<sup>95</sup> and permeates the Somali society beyond it.<sup>96</sup> Al-Shabaab is designated as a terrorist group by the UK<sup>97</sup> and the US.<sup>98</sup> The FGS, the FMS, some clans, as well as other international actors, such as Ethiopia, Kenya, the US, and AMISOM, are all engaged, although in various degrees and forms, in the long-standing conflict against the militant al-Qaeda affiliated organisation. As elaborated in the section above ([Armed actors](#)), for details about all these actors, and their military forces, see relevant chapters of the EASO’s COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>99</sup> For (anti) Al-Shabaab conflict dynamics and their reverberations at regional level, please see the remainder of this report ([Section 2](#)).

- **The Inter- and Intra-Clan Rivalries.** As mentioned in the introduction, another major factor of clashes that pervade Somali society is constituted by clan rivalries and competitions over political power and scarce resources.<sup>100</sup> Somalia’s political and cultural landscape is deeply entrenched in the clan system as well as in racial discriminations.<sup>101</sup> The Somali society is divided into various clan families - (Dir/Isaaq, Darood, Hawiye, Rahanweyn or Digil-Mirifle), each one of them comprising several clans, sub-clans, and sub-sub clans – as well as minority clans, casted communities, and ethnic minorities.<sup>102</sup> Somali clans are distributed across the Somali national territory – as well as beyond it - and represent ‘political-territorial-military’ and ‘identity’ units.<sup>103</sup> These units are to some extent unstable and transient though,<sup>104</sup> while clan belonging and genealogy works in the Somali context as ‘a “sophisticated construct” with many contested relationships’.<sup>105</sup> Within this context, clans often compete with each other, as well as against other actors (such as the FGS or the FMS), for political, resource and territorial control, while resorting to a system of ‘tactical’ clan support<sup>106</sup> and instrumental alliances.<sup>107</sup> For a general overview of the clan system in Somalia see chapter 3 Clans of

<sup>92</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 14; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 13; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 11; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 18; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 15; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 20

<sup>93</sup> RULAC is a project of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights that identifies and classifies situations of armed conflict, providing an independent and impartial analysis of conflicts and applicable international law. RULAC, About RULAC, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>94</sup> RULAC, Non-international armed conflict in Somalia, 30 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>95</sup> Felbab-Brown, V., The Problem with Militias in Somalia, 2020, [url](#), p. 120; see also International Crisis Group, Somalia’s Current Security and Stability Status, Testimony by Dr. EJ Hogendoorn, 14 March, 2018, [url](#)

<sup>96</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, 28 September 2020, [url](#), p. 3; International Crisis Group, Somalia: Al-Shabaab – It Will Be a Long War, Africa Briefing no. 99, 26 June 2014, [url](#), pp. 1, 12-14

<sup>97</sup> UK, Home Office, Proscribed terrorist groups or organisations, [Updated] 23 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>98</sup> USDOS, Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>99</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#)

<sup>100</sup> Baadiyow, A. A., Somali Elite Political Culture: Conceptions, Structures, and Historical Evolution, 28 January 2021, [url](#)

<sup>101</sup> Eno M.A and Kusow A. M., Racial and Cast Prejudice in Somalia, 2014, [url](#), pp. 91-93

<sup>102</sup> ACCORD, Clans in Somalia – Report on a lecture by Joakim Gundel, COI Workshop Vienna, 15 May 2009 (Revised Edition), 2009, [url](#), pp. 11-20; EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 45-48

<sup>103</sup> de Waal A., The Prairie Fire that Burned Mogadishu: The Logic of Clan Formation in Somalia, December 2018, [url](#), pp. 1-2, see also pp. 3, 5, 6, 15, 18, 25; See also: ACCORD, Clans in Somalia – Report on a lecture by Joakim Gundel, COI Workshop Vienna, 15 May 2009 (Revised Edition), 2009, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>104</sup> de Waal A., The Prairie Fire that Burned Mogadishu: The Logic of Clan Formation in Somalia, December 2018, [url](#), pp. 1-2, see also pp. 3, 5, 6, 15, 18, 25; See also: ACCORD, Clans in Somalia – Report on a lecture by Joakim Gundel, COI Workshop Vienna, 15 May 2009 (Revised Edition), 2009, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>105</sup> LSE, Somalia’s Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), p. 34

<sup>106</sup> LSE, Somalia’s Politics: The Usual Business? A Synthesis Paper of the Conflict Research Programme, June 2021, [url](#), pp. 32, 34

<sup>107</sup> de Waal A., The Prairie Fire that Burned Mogadishu: The Logic of Clan Formation in Somalia, December 2018, [url](#), pp. 6, 10, 13-19, 30



the EASO's COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>108</sup> For additional details about the treatment of clan minorities and clan revenge dynamics see chapter '4 Minorities' and Chapter '5 Individuals involved in blood feuds/clan disputes' of the EASO COI report on [Targeted profiles](#) (August 2021).<sup>109</sup> For clan conflict dynamics and their reverberations at regional level, please see the remainder of this report ([Section 2](#)).

- **The Anti-ISIS Conflict.** The Islamic State in Somalia (ISS or ISIS-Somalia) is a jihadist Islamist group with affiliation to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria/Levant (ISIS/ISIL/Daesh),<sup>110</sup> and with base in Puntland.<sup>111</sup> Various armed forces, including AFRICOM, the Federal Security Forces, and the Puntland armed forces are engaged in various degrees in a warfare against ISIS-Somalia, which is described 'largely [as] a Puntland group',<sup>112</sup> while it carries out attacks also in Mogadishu,<sup>113</sup> and elsewhere.<sup>114</sup> Intermittently Al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia also fight against each other,<sup>115</sup> causing rival clashes and assassinations between the groups.<sup>116</sup> For an overview about ISIS-Somalia see chapter 6 Islamic State in Somalia of the EASO's COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>117</sup> For (anti) ISIS conflict dynamics and their reverberation at regional level please see the remainder of this report ([Section 2](#)) and among others the section on [Bari](#) region.

- **Puntland versus Somaliland.** Among other territorial disputes across Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland contend over control of the Sool and Sanaag regions - that border the two state administrations - as well as the area of Ayn, part of Togdheer region.<sup>118</sup> Sool and Sanaag fall within Somaliland's boundaries, as per the old Anglo-Italian colonial border and protocol (1894), and as put forward by the Somaliland government. At the same time the two dominant clans in the area (Warsangeli and Dhulbahante) belong to the same Darood/Harti clan family for which Puntland constitutes the core and institutional 'home'.<sup>119</sup> For regional details about this conflict see the remainder of this report (sections on [Sool](#), [Sanaag](#), and [Togdheer](#)). For additional details at federal member state level about Puntland and Somaliland and the contested areas see sections 7.6 and 7.7 of the EASO's COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>120</sup>

- **Crime.** Another major source of insecurity in Somalia is criminality in general as 'criminality is pervasive throughout the country'.<sup>121</sup> As per the Africa Organised Crime Index, Somalia ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the Index, with one of the highest criminality scores on the continent, while the country scores 54<sup>th</sup> out of 54 African countries for 'state resilience'.<sup>122</sup> AS is not always responsible for the attacks, targeted

<sup>108</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 45-56

<sup>109</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>110</sup> Weiss, C., Reigniting the Rivalry: The Islamic State in Somalia vs. al-Shabaab, CTC Sentinel, April 2019, [url](#), pp. 29, 32

<sup>111</sup> EIP, The Islamic State in East Africa, September 2018, [url](#), p. 1, 14-17

<sup>112</sup> EIP, The Islamic State in East Africa, September 2018, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>113</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 24; EIP, The Islamic State in East Africa, September 2018, [url](#), pp. 25-29; see also: Weiss, C., Reigniting the Rivalry: The Islamic State in Somalia vs. al-Shabaab, CTC Sentinel, April 2019, [url](#), pp. 30-31

<sup>114</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 24; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 20; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 21; Weiss, C., Reigniting the Rivalry: The Islamic State in Somalia vs. al-Shabaab, CTC Sentinel, April 2019, [url](#), pp. 30-31

<sup>115</sup> CFR, Al-Shabaab, 19 May 2021, [url](#)

<sup>116</sup> Weiss, C., Reigniting the Rivalry: The Islamic State in Somalia vs. al-Shabaab, CTC Sentinel, April 2019, [url](#), pp. 29, 32

<sup>117</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 74-77

<sup>118</sup> ISS, The various layers to the Somaliland-Puntland discord, 9 December 2019, [url](#)

<sup>119</sup> ISS, Overlapping claims by Somaliland and Puntland – The case of Sool and Sanaag, November 2019, East Africa Report No. 27, [url](#), pp. 3-5; Hoehne M., Between Somaliland and Puntland, 2015, [url](#), pp. 19-21, 36

<sup>120</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 101-116

<sup>121</sup> OSAC, Country Security Report Somalia, 2 September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>122</sup> ENACT, Africa Organised Crime Index - Somalia, 2019, [url](#)

killings and executions in Somalia, which can be politically (or economically) motivated or related to other conflicts or crimes.<sup>123</sup>

- **Other layers.** The points above are the major layers of conflict and insecurity affecting Somalia. Other confrontations which are more of a political nature and which do not necessarily develop into armed confrontations include: the FGS versus the FMS, the Intra-FMS control and governance dynamics, the FGS versus Somaliland, regional dynamics and role of external actors (notably Ethiopia and Kenya). For the full overview about these see the report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021), section on Country Background and chapter 7 on Federal Member States and Somaliland.<sup>124</sup>

## 1.4 Recent security incidents and trends

In the period 5 November 2019 – 7 May 2021 (which corresponds almost to the present report's reference period, January 2020 – June 2021), various UNSG situation reports for Somalia describe the situation as 'volatile' throughout the entire period.<sup>125</sup>

As per the 5 November 2019 – 7 May 2021 UNSG situation reports, these were the number of incidents reported per month in the reference period in Somalia (as a whole). According to Ken Menkhaus, the data show that the level of security incidents has been remarkably steady, suggesting that Somalia is 'the site of endemic, not episodic, political, communal, and terrorist violence'.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA, SOMALIË Veiligheidssituatie in Mogadishu [Somalia Security Situation in Mogadishu], 29 June 2021, [url](#), p. 19

<sup>124</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 19-22, 77-116

<sup>125</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 14; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 13; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 11; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 18; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 15; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>126</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021



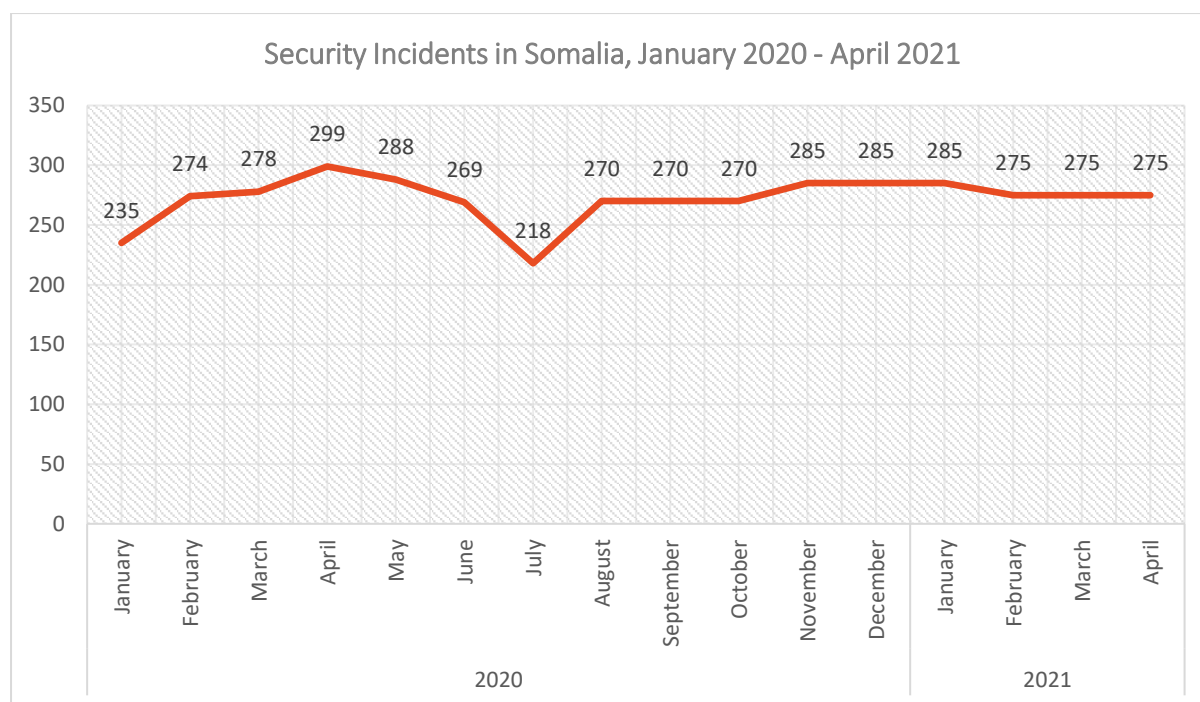


Figure 8. Security Incidents, January 2020 – April 2021, UNSG data.<sup>127</sup>

The security events showed in Figure 8 amount to 3 241 security incidents in 2020, and 1 110 during the first four months of 2021, as per UNSG data.<sup>128</sup> During the same period ACLED reported 2 407 security incidents in 2020 and 902 during the first four months of 2021.<sup>129</sup> No information on UNSG data collection methodology could be found within the time limits of the research.

As to the various conflict layers see the remainder of this section ([security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties](#)) and the remainder of this report for regional details ([Section 2](#)).

### 1.4.1 Security incidents, violence against civilians, estimated civilian fatalities

Civilians are both intended targets of violence and ‘collateral damage’ in some acts of political violence.<sup>130</sup> ‘Civilians in Somalia are exposed to indiscriminate attacks, including through improvised explosive devices (IEDs), other explosive hazards and aerial bombardments’, notes UN OCHA.<sup>131</sup>

In the period January 2020 – April 2021 the UNSG, in his situation reports on Somalia, reported a total of 4 351 security incidents.<sup>132</sup> No information on UNSG data collection methodology could be found within the time limits of the research. In the period January 2020 – 30 June 2021, ACLED registered a total of 3 663 violent events in Somalia.<sup>133</sup> ACLED data on these 3 663 reported incidents provide for

<sup>127</sup> EASO analysis based on UNSG Situation reports on Somalia: UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 13; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 13; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 11; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 18; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 15; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>128</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 14; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 13; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 11; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 18; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 15; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>129</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>130</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>131</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia, January 2021, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>132</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 14; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 13; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 11; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 18; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 15; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>133</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

the following breakdown: 2 212 battles causing 2 976 estimated fatalities, 812 explosions/remote violence causing 1 171 fatalities, and 639 instances of violence against civilians causing an estimated 673 fatalities.<sup>134</sup> ACLED data do not distinguish between civilian and non-civilian fatalities (see [Introduction](#), subsection on [Sources](#) for more details on ACLED's methodology).

There is no reliable comprehensive source specifically recording casualty and fatality figures in Somalia. ACLED data sources' focus on the number of estimated fatalities<sup>135</sup> (see section on [Introduction and Methodology](#), subsection on Sources for more details). Figure 9 shows the number of incidents and the estimated fatalities caused, by type of event between January 2020 and end of June 2021 per ACLED data:

Somalia	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	2 212	2 976
Explosions/Remote violence	812	1 171
Violence against civilians	639	673
<b>Total</b>	<b>3 663</b>	<b>4 820</b>

Figure 9. Somalia - number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>136</sup>

Still based on ACLED data the incidents above (3 663) took place in the various Somali regions, with following breakdown (Figure 10):

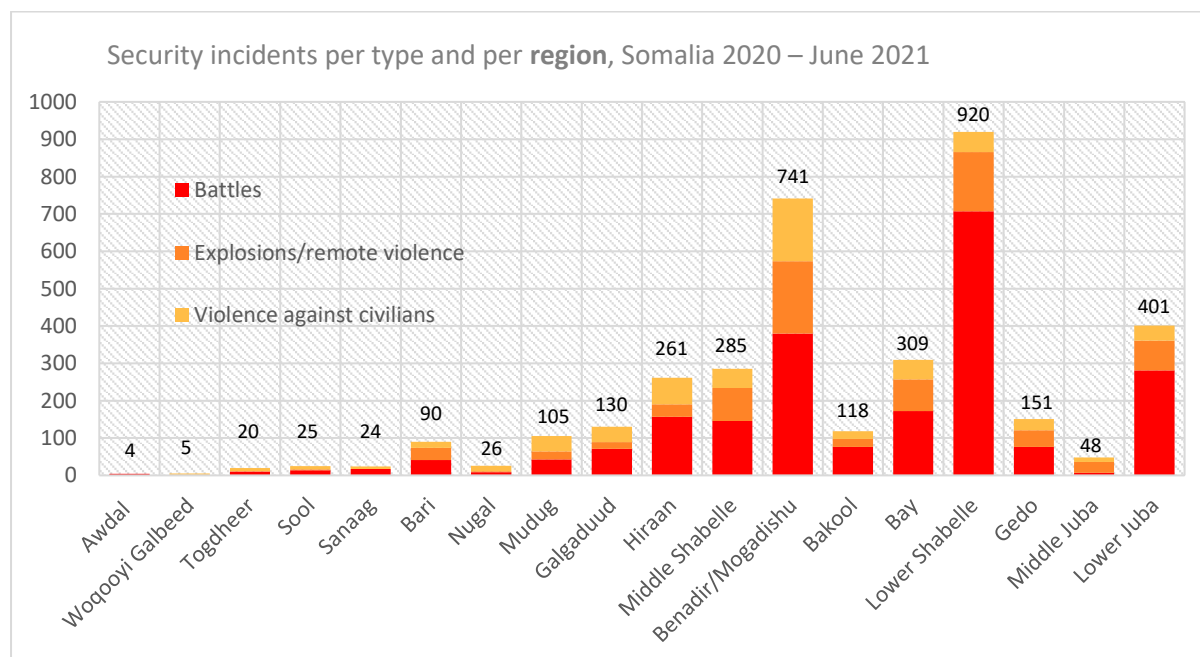


Figure 10. Security events (coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians) in the Somali regions, from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>137</sup>

Figure 11 shows the number of estimated fatalities per region caused by violent events (battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians):

<sup>134</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>135</sup> ACLED, FAQs: ACLED Fatality Methodology, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>136</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>137</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

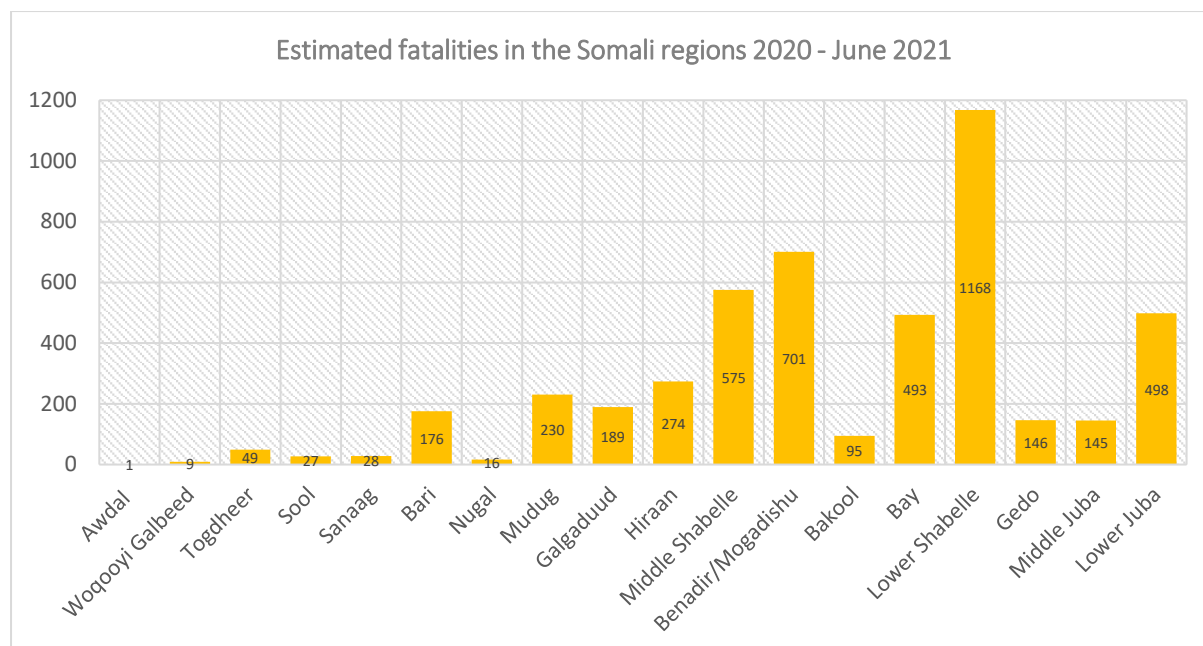


Figure 11. Fatalities in the Somali regions between 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>138</sup>

### Actors/Events Distribution

**Al-Shabaab.** As per the 5 November 2019 – 7 May 2021 UNSG situation reports, during part or the overall reporting period, Al-Shabaab ‘maintained the capability to infiltrate Mogadishu and carry out high-profile attacks’.<sup>139</sup> At the same time it ‘remained undeterred in attacking Somali National Army and AMISOM forces in Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Banaadir, Bay, Hiraan, Bakool, Lower Jubba, Gedo, Galguduud and Mudug, with a monthly average of 140 attacks’,<sup>140</sup> or to attack them ‘in recovered areas’,<sup>141</sup> or ‘to conduct larger attacks against security forces in southern Somalia’.<sup>142</sup>

As per ACLED data, during the reference period, Al-Shabaab is coded as ACTOR 1 in 2 276 events resulting in 2 278 fatalities. Figure 12 shows the breakdown per region:

<sup>138</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>139</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 15; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 14;

<sup>140</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 14

<sup>141</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>142</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 18; see also UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 20

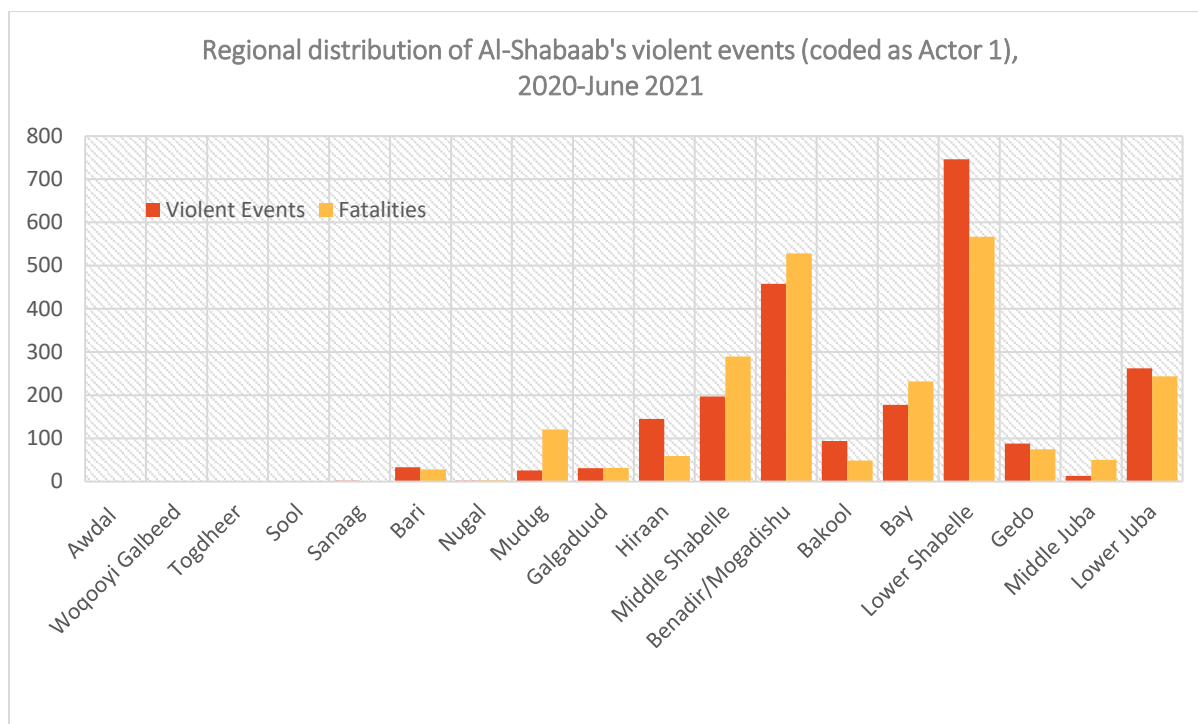


Figure 12. Regional distribution of Al-Shabaab's violent events (coded as ACTOR 1), 1 January 2020 - 30 June 2021, ACLED data.<sup>143</sup>

As per the Hiraal Institute Semi-annual Security Situation report, in the first half of 2020 Al-Shabaab is attributed overall 384 attacks.<sup>144</sup> No information on Hiraal Institute data collection methodology could be found within the time limits of the research. During the same period the militant group is coded as ACTOR 1 in 649 events as per ACLED data.<sup>145</sup>

Still based on ACLED data, Figure 13 shows breakdown per event- and sub-event type of Al-Shabaab's violent events (2 276 as ACTOR 1):

<sup>143</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>144</sup> Hiraal Institute, Semi-annual Somalia Security Report 2020, 16 July 2020, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>145</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

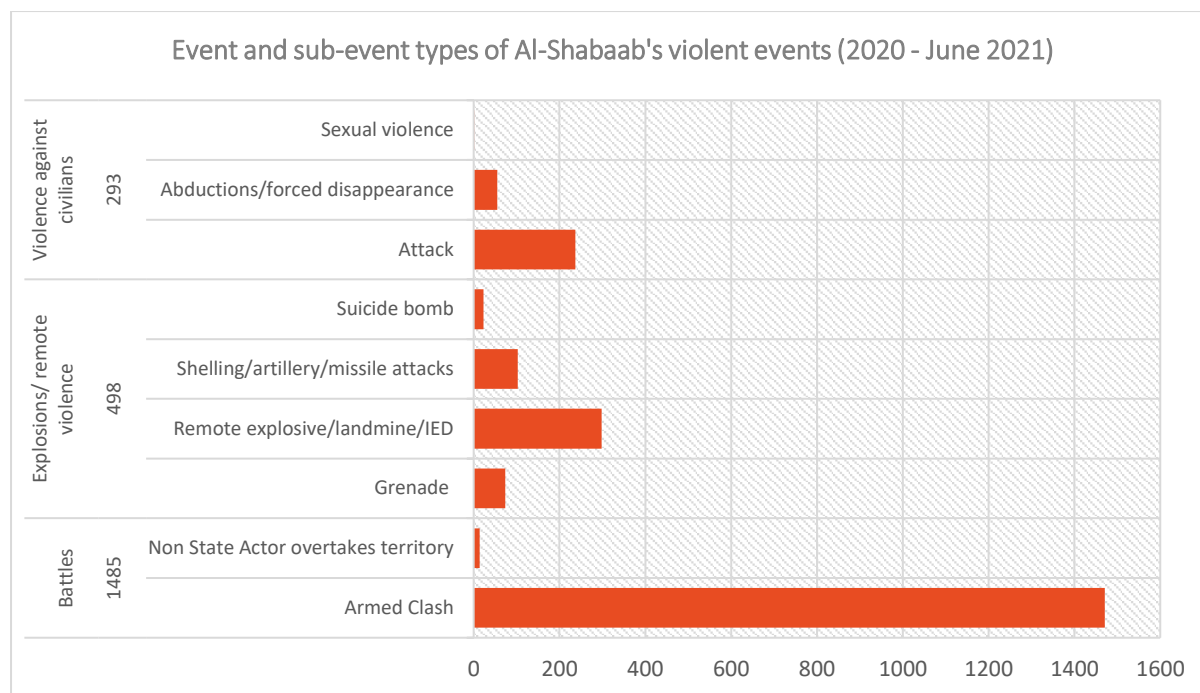


Figure 13 Events and sub-event types of Al-Shabaab's violent events (coded as ACTOR 1), 1 January 2020 - 30 June 2021, ACLED data.<sup>146</sup>

Based on UNSOM data, as reported in the various UNSG situation reports on Somalia, in the period 5 November 2019 – 7 May 2021 Al-Shabaab was attributed following overall number of grave violations against children (Figure 14):

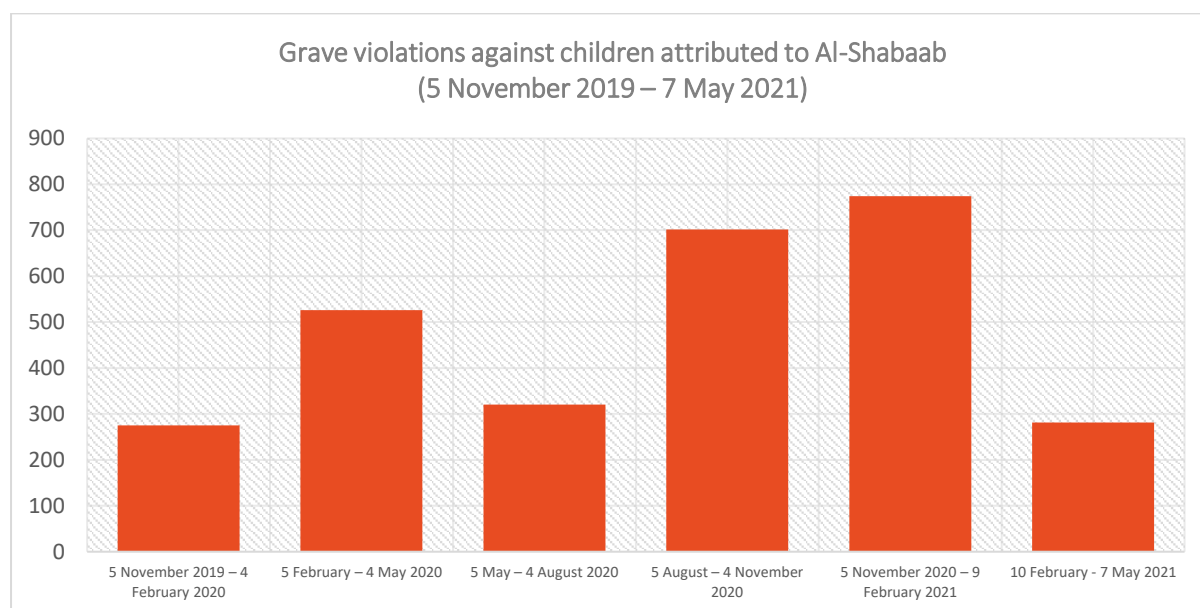


Figure 14 Grave violations against children attributed to Al-Shabaab in the period 5 November 2019 – 7 May 2021, UNSOM data as reported by the UNSG situation reports in Somalia.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>146</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>147</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 50; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 50; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 45; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 56; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 53; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 56

**Clan militias.** As per ACLED data, during the reference period, clan militias are coded as ACTOR 1 in 267 events resulting in 499 fatalities, with following breakdown per region:

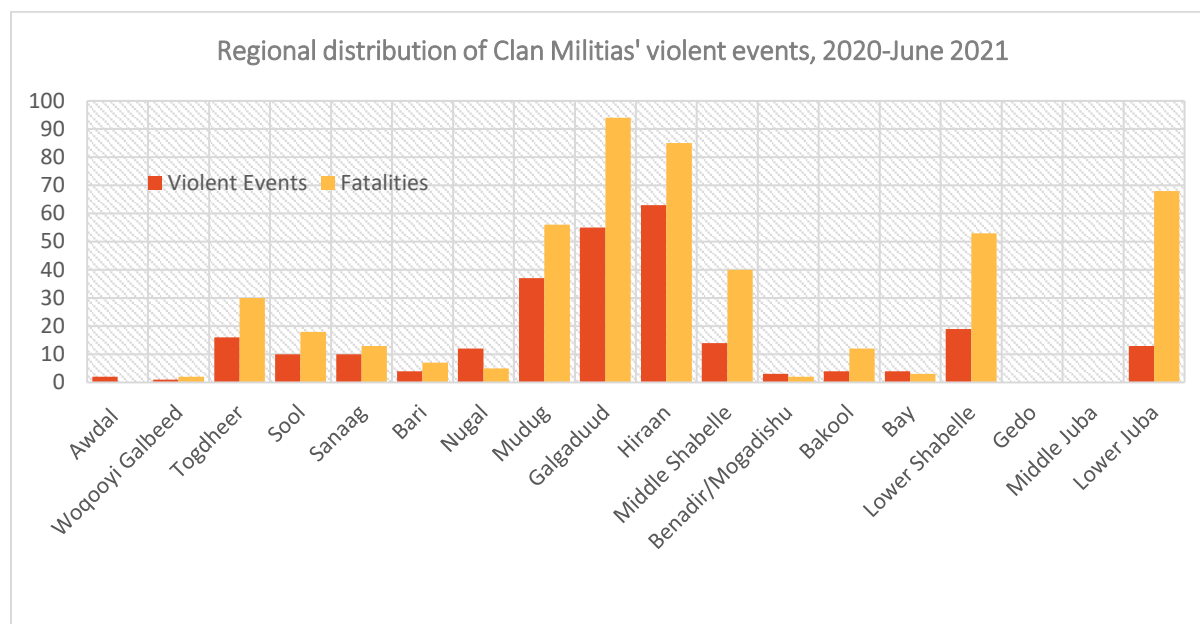


Figure 15. Regional distribution of clan militias' violent events, 1 January 2020 - 30 June 2021, ACLED data.<sup>148</sup>

**Unidentified Armed Groups.** As per ACLED data, during the reference period, Unidentified Armed Groups are coded as ACTOR 1 in 384 events resulting in 305 fatalities, with following breakdown per region:

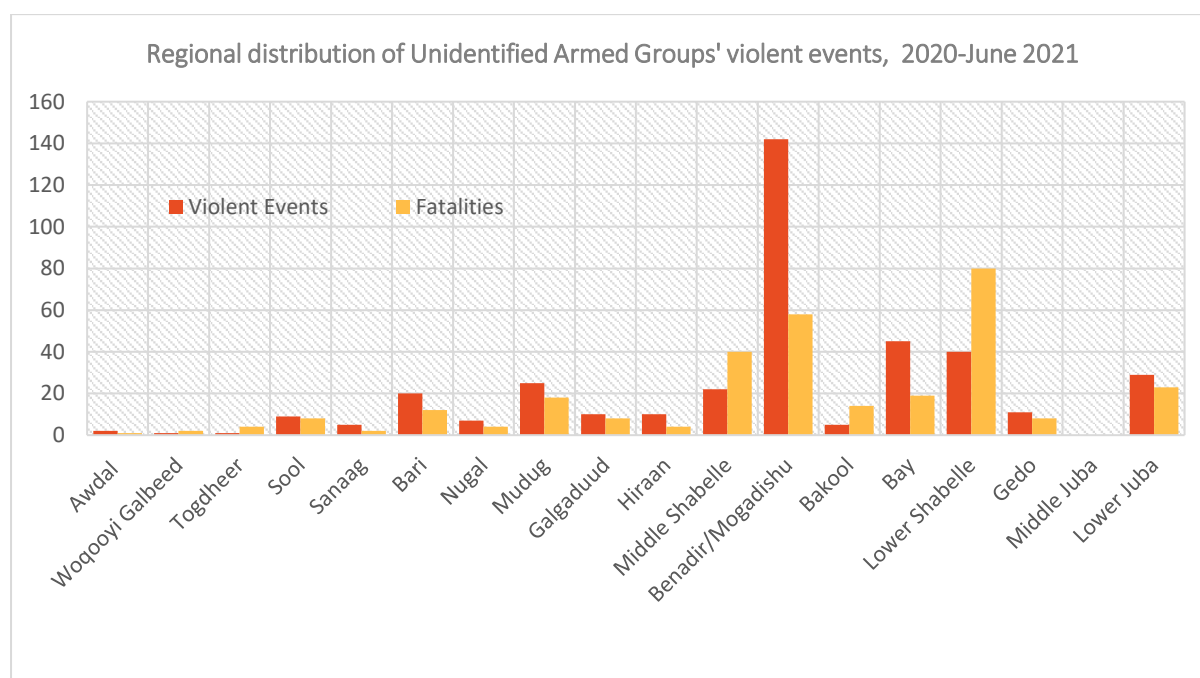


Figure 16. Regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events, 1 January 2020 - 30 June 2021, ACLED data.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>148</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>149</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

**Armed forces of Kenya and Ethiopia.** As per ACLED data, during the reference period, Military and Police Forces of Kenya and Ethiopia are coded as ACTOR 1 in 29 events resulting in 60 fatalities, with following breakdown per region:

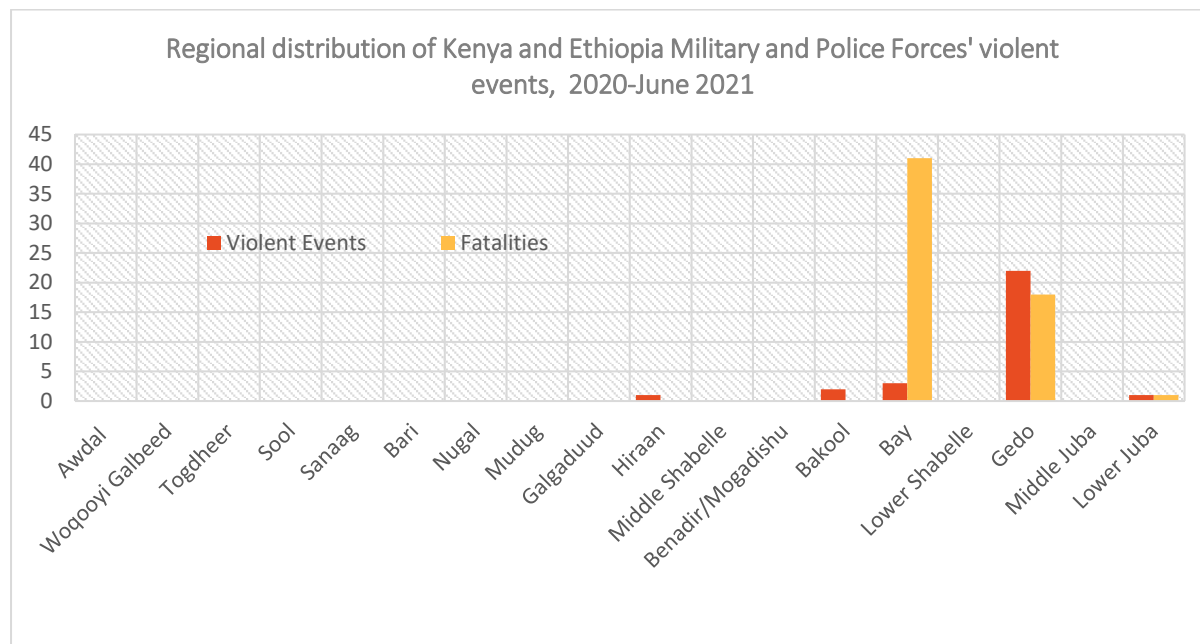


Figure 17. Regional distribution of Kenya and Ethiopia Military and Police Forces' violent events, 1 January 2020 - 30 June 2021, ACLED data.<sup>150</sup>

### Airstrikes

As per AIRWARS data, there were in the reference period a total of 87 air strikes in Somalia at the hands of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM): 65 declared, and 22 alleged (72 in 2020, 15 in 2021, until August 3). Among the civilian population these resulted in between 20-28 'alleged deaths' in 2020, and 1 in 2021, and between 103-207 militant deaths (declared and alleged) in 2020 and 28-61 (declared and alleged) in 2021.<sup>151</sup> As per ACLED data, in the reference period US AFRICOM, or the 'Military Force of the United States' as coded by ACLED, has been responsible for 76 air/drone strikes: 15 in 2021, and 61 in 2020, resulting in 193 fatalities across Somalia.<sup>152</sup> Figure 18 shows the breakdown per region:

<sup>150</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>151</sup> Airwars, US Forces in Somalia, 3 August 2021, [url](#)

<sup>152</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)



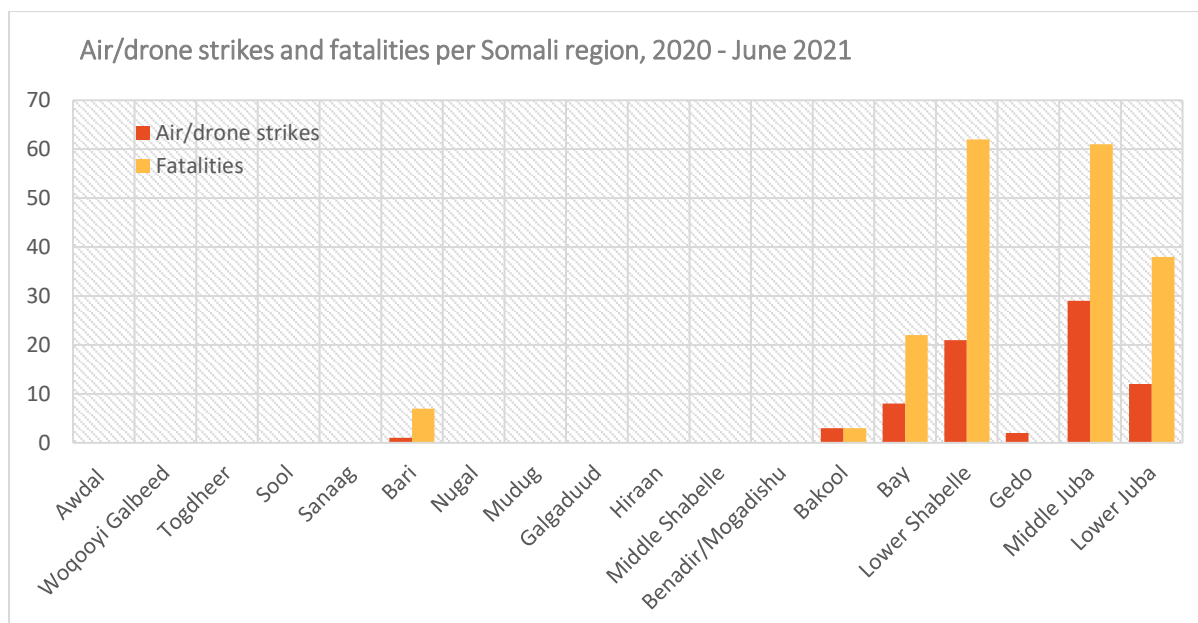


Figure 18. Air/drone strikes and Fatalities per region in Somalia, 1 January 2020 - 30 June 2021, ACLED data.<sup>153</sup>

Based on USAFRICOM data in the first, second, and third quarters of 2020, USAFRICOM conducted 33, 9, and 7 airstrikes, for a total of 49 strikes.<sup>154</sup> No information from the same source is available for later periods.

### Explosions/remote violence (IED, shelling, grenade, suicide bombs)

Regarding IED activities, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported an overall decrease in IED activities in Somalia in 2020 compared to 2019, with 472 recorded IED incidents in 2020 and 529 in 2019, resulting respectively in 1 194 and 1 806 casualties.<sup>155</sup> Reportedly this decrease is explained by ‘a significant drop in incidents in Banadir’, which is correlated on the one hand with ‘operation Badbaado’ (‘focused on liberating and securing key strategic positions in the Lower Shabelle region’), and on the other hand with ‘the maintenance of the Mogadishu Security Plan (MSP)’, which has ‘significantly increased the city’s security profile’.<sup>156</sup> No information on UNMAS data collection methodology could be found within the time limits of the research.

Still as per the UNMAS report, ‘overall most IED incidents in 2020 took place on Main Supply Routes (MSRs) in South Central Somalia’, with Lower Shabelle, Bay, and Banadir the most affected regions. ‘Less than 6% of all incidents occurred north of Galgaduud region’.<sup>157</sup>

For the same period (2020) ACLED reported 288 IED/landmine/remote explosive incidents, resulting in 450 casualties. Still based on ACLED data there were 147 such events in the first six months of 2021, resulting in 269 fatalities.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>153</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>154</sup> US DoD, East Africa Counterterrorism Operation, Lead Inspector General Report to the United States Congress, 1 July – 30 September 2020, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>155</sup> UNMAS in Somalia, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report, 2020 Annual Report, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>156</sup> UNMAS in Somalia, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report, 2020 Annual Report, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>157</sup> UNMAS in Somalia, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report, 2020 Annual Report, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>158</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

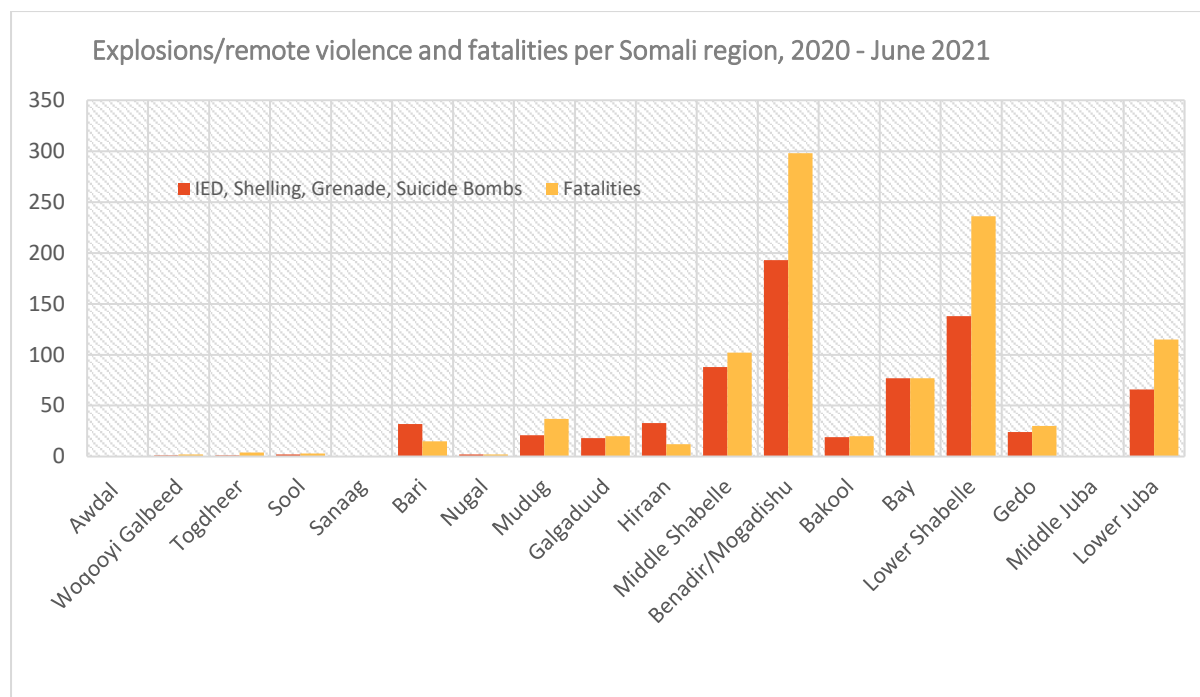


Figure 19. Explosions/remote violence and fatalities per Somali region, 1 January 2020 - 30 June 2021, ACLED data.<sup>159</sup>

### 1.4.2 Other impacts on civilian life

UNOCHA, on behalf of the Humanitarian Country Team, indicates in its Humanitarian Needs Overview for Somalia from January 2021 that '[c]ommunities living in conflict areas [are] severely impacted by armed violence'. In broad general terms '[t]he ongoing conflict continues to reduce the resilience of communities, trigger displacement and impede civilians' access to basic services and humanitarians' access'. Within this context, UNOCHA assessed that 'socially marginalized groups' are among the most vulnerable and are more affected by 'high levels of acute humanitarian need and lack of protection.' In general, civilians in reason of the on-going conflict experience 'death and injury, property destruction, taxation of communities (including through forced child recruitment), land grabbing, destruction of livelihoods, limited freedom of movement, and limited access to services and humanitarian assistance'.<sup>160</sup>

The same report goes on indicating that '[o]ver 1.1 million people are estimated to be living in conflict-affected, rural areas in southern and central Somalia'. See for an overview of main conflict areas see Figure 2 [Map Approximate Territorial Control as of June 2021](#). These crisis-affected communities are 'disproportionally affected by food insecurity, malnutrition, disease outbreaks and inadequate WASH services'. At the same time, also communities living in areas regained by government forces and their allies are often 'left without protection once those forces withdraw'. As a consequence, 'many are forced to leave their homes, with some moving pre-emptively'. Additionally, violence and extortion are arbitrarily perpetrated against civilians at checkpoints, whether manned by police, armed forces or militias (see section on [Checkpoints and road security](#) for further details).<sup>161</sup>

As per UNOCHA, the total number of people in need has increased in the last few years, from 4.2 million in 2019, to 5.2 million in 2020, to an estimated 5.9 million in 2021. Of these, 4.8 million are vulnerable non-IDPs. Reportedly, nearly seven out of 10 Somalis live in poverty.<sup>162</sup> Against this

<sup>159</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>160</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia, January 2021, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>161</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia, January 2021, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>162</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia, January 2021, [url](#), p. 6

backdrop, UNOCHA notes that ‘Somalia remains one of the most insecure countries in the world to operate in, particularly for aid workers’. In the period 1 January - 31 December 2020, 255 incidents impacting humanitarian operations (including active hostilities, delivery of assistance, and access challenges) were recorded, in which 15 humanitarian workers were killed, 12 injured, 24 abducted and 14 detained or temporarily arrested. In the course of 2019 151 incidents were recorded instead.<sup>163</sup> For further details about these profiles see section 6.4 ‘Treatment of other individuals opposing or perceived as opposing Al-Shabaab’ of the EASO’s COI Report on [Somalia: Targeted profiles](#) (September 2021).<sup>164</sup>

### 1.4.3 Internal Displacement

In total, at the end of 2020, more than 2.6 million people were internally displaced in Somalia, facing ‘serious risks of marginalization, forced eviction and exclusion’.<sup>165</sup> As of 1 January 2021 the number of IDPs in Somalia was estimated at more than 2.9 million.<sup>166</sup> Based on UNHCR - Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN), there were in Somalia between January 2020 and May 2021 a total of 1 786 000 newly displaced persons: 1 336 000 in 2020, and 450 000 in 2021. About 32 per cent of these, or 572 000 people, were displaced due to conflict/insecurity reasons.<sup>167</sup> Figure 20 provides the full breakdown per reason of displacement.

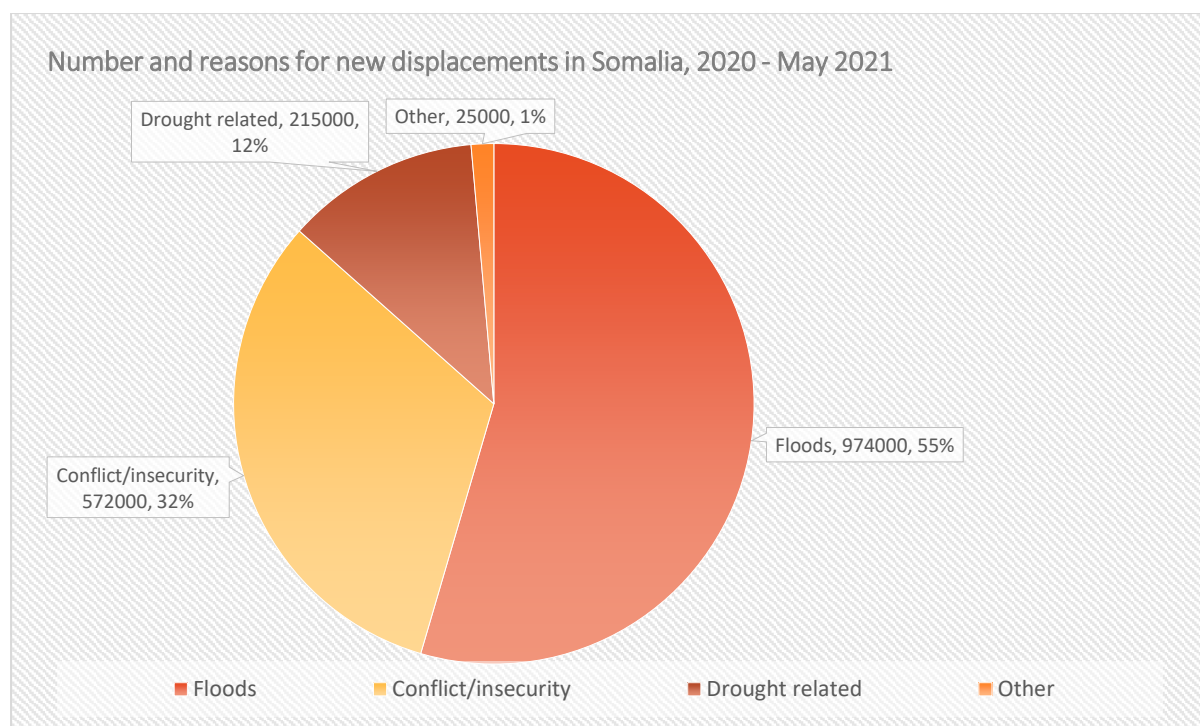


Figure 20. Number and reasons for new displacements in Somalia, 1 January 2020 – 31 May 2021, UNHCR – PRMN Dashboard – Somalia.<sup>168</sup>

For an overview of the conflict/insecurity driven displacements in the Somali regions (departures and arrivals) in the period January 2020 – May 2021 see Figure 21 below.

<sup>163</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia, January 2021, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>164</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>165</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia, January 2021, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>166</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Horn of Africa Somalia Situation, Refugee Situation, [url](#)

<sup>167</sup> EASO analysis based on UNHCR, Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN), Somalia Internal Displacement, [url](#), May 2021

<sup>168</sup> EASO analysis based on UNHCR, Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN), Somalia Internal Displacement, [url](#), May 2021

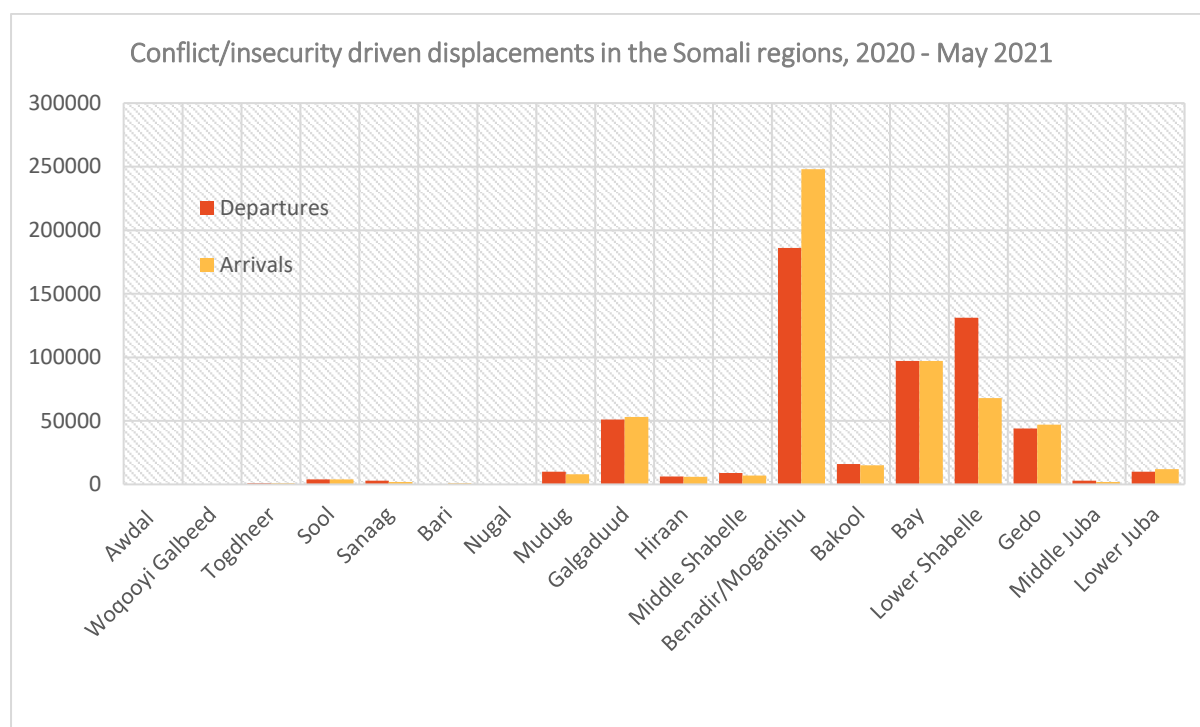


Figure 21. Conflict/insecurity driven displacements in the Somali regions, 1 January 2020 – 31 May 2021, UNHCR – PRMN Dashboard – Somalia.<sup>169</sup>

For further details about IDPs sites in three main Somali towns – Mogadishu, Garowe, and Hargeisa – please see the EASO COI report on [Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators](#).<sup>170</sup>

As per the UNOCHA report from 2021, displacement in Somalia ‘tends to be large-scale, protracted and concentrated in informal settlements around urban and peri-urban areas’.<sup>171</sup> Moreover:

‘IDP settlements are often ungoverned, or governed by gatekeepers, and overcrowded. Displaced people have limited access to protective shelter, safe water and sanitation facilities, as well as other basic needs. Approximately 85 per cent of the sites are informal settlements on private land and about 74 per cent are in urban areas, according to the Detailed Site Assessment (DSA).’<sup>172</sup>

In March 2021 REACH conducted another Detailed Site Assessment (DSA) together with the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) in order to produce up-to-date information on the location of IDP sites in Somalia, their conditions and capacity, and an estimate of the severity of humanitarian needs of their residents: in total 2 363 IDP sites, hosting 2 300 210 individuals grouped in 454 293 households, distributed in 60 districts across Somalia were assessed. Humanitarian needs in these sites were assessed on a severity scale that goes from 1 to 4+ corresponding to severity phases from ‘none/minimal’ to ‘stress’, ‘severe’, ‘extreme’ and ‘extreme+’.<sup>173</sup> Below in Figure 22 the country

<sup>169</sup> EASO analysis based on UNHCR, Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN), Somalia Internal Displacement, [url](#), May 2021

<sup>170</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>171</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia, January 2021, [url](#), p. 23

<sup>172</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia, January 2021, [url](#), p. 23

<sup>173</sup> For further details on the methodology and the categorisation see CCCM and REACH, Detailed Site Assessment (DSA) Key Findings Somalia (March 2021), June 2021, [url](#), p. 1

wide findings of this Detailed Site Assessment (DSA).<sup>174</sup> For a country overview of severity of needs and their regional distribution see referenced UNOCHA [map](#).<sup>175</sup>

Severity Phase/Scale	Food Security & Livelihoods	Nutrition	Health	Protection (*) <sup>176</sup>	Shelter & Non-Food Items	Education	Water, Sanitation & Hygiene
Extreme + (severity core 5)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Extreme (severity core 4)	20%	4%	70%	51%	0%	0%	37%
Severe (severity core 3)	32%	85%	20%	17%	4%	56%	35%
Stress (severity core 2)	19%	8%	9%	23%	50%	43%	16%
No or minimal (severity score 1)	29%	2%	1%	9%	46%	1%	12%

Figure 22 Percentage (%) of surveyed sites (2 636) with a given response, data based on CCCM and REACH assessment of IDP sites in Somalia.<sup>177</sup>

## Evictions

In 2019 the FGS adopted the National Eviction Guidelines, which provides for the responsibility of the FGS ‘to refrain from, and protect against, arbitrary and forced eviction of occupiers of public and private properties, from homes, encampments and lands’ and ‘to protect the human right to adequate housing and other related human rights’.<sup>178</sup> As per Art. 3.1 of these guidelines ‘[e]victions may be carried out only in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, and resorted to only where no other alternative or practical measures of intervention exist’.<sup>179</sup>

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in its July 2020 briefing note, reported that evictions in Somalia represent a ‘constant risk for vulnerable communities’, among which IDPs living in collective settlements and other urban poor in densely populated areas. In the same note the NRC noted that in 2019 only, more than 260,000 people were ‘forcibly evicted’ from their homes in Somalia, including over 150,000 in Mogadishu alone.<sup>180</sup> On this same point, the Somalia Protection Cluster (Global Shelter Cluster) in its advocacy note from April 2020 indicated more precisely that 268 800 people were ‘forcibly evicted’ in Somalia, including 156 000 in Mogadishu alone.<sup>181</sup>

UNOCHA, in its humanitarian needs overview from January 2021 indicated that ‘[d]isplaced people also continue to be the primary victims of evictions from Government buildings and by private landlords, particularly in Banadir’. Against this backdrop, despite the fact that the FGS had suspended evictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in the period January - October 2020, 148 786 people were

<sup>174</sup> CCCM and REACH, Detailed Site Assessment (DSA) Key Findings Somalia (March 2021), June 2021, [url](#), pp. 1-8

<sup>175</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia, January 2021, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>176</sup> For further details on how ‘Protection’ is defined in this context see CCCM and REACH, Detailed Site Assessment (DSA) Key Findings Somalia (March 2021), June 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>177</sup> CCCM and REACH, Detailed Site Assessment (DSA) Key Findings Somalia (March 2021), June 2021, [url](#), pp. 1-8

<sup>178</sup> Somalia, Federal Government of Somalia, National Eviction Guidelines, 2019, [url](#), 2.1

<sup>179</sup> Somalia, Federal Government of Somalia, National Eviction Guidelines, 2019, [url](#), 3.1

<sup>180</sup> NRC, An unnecessary burden, Briefing Note, July 2020, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>181</sup> Global Shelter Cluster, Somalia Protection Cluster, Constant risks, looming disaster: the urgent case for a moratorium on evictions, April 2020, [url](#), p. 1

evicted from their homes. Banadir and Bay regions registered the highest numbers of evicted people (99 622 in Benadir and 21 120 in Bay).<sup>182</sup>

For further details about IDPs sites and evictions in three main Somali towns – Mogadishu, Garowe, and Hargeisa – please see the EASO COI report on [Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators](#).<sup>183</sup>

## 1.5 Checkpoints and road security in Somalia

Road checkpoints controlled by armed groups – the Somali National Army, militia answering to a federal member state, police, clan militia, Al-Shabaab, and others – are a ‘flashpoint of insecurity and violence’.<sup>184</sup> The ‘taxes’ that are typically collected there are a form of extortion, and a lucrative source of income for whoever controls the checkpoints. For precisely this reason they are the site of clashes between rival armed groups.<sup>185</sup> According to international expert VIII, interviewed by EASO for this report,<sup>186</sup> ‘mobility in the country is essentially a business proposition revenue, which is why you have so much competition for control of checkpoints and the income’. ‘Within certain limits’, he goes on, ‘the people are willing to pay whoever they think is the dominant security provider in the area to get their stuff through’.<sup>187</sup>

Roadblocks are ubiquitous in Somalia.<sup>188</sup> As reported by the UN Security Council in 2019, ‘extortion and other forms of violations are common occurrences at the numerous illegal checkpoints manned by both State and non-State affiliated armed actors’. At that time there were an estimated 142 such security checkpoints in 42 districts in southern and central Somalia and in Bari (Puntland). The various armed actors involved in illegal and unauthorized checkpoints had created non-static checkpoints to avoid operations set up to remove them. At the same time there were ongoing reports of incidents across the authorized checkpoints in all major access roads in Southern and Central Somalia.<sup>189</sup> Within this context, an organisation working on Somalia’s security and stability, reported in August 2021 that persistent intimidation of the population and blockades mounted by Al-Shabaab continue to take place on key socio-economic corridors in order to exert pressure on district centres. This practice is prevalent in the districts in South-West and Hirshabelle (two of the Somali Federal Member States, see [Section 2](#) for details) and is a major source of concern in following districts: Dinsoor, Hudur, Berdale, Wanlaweyne, Mahadaay, Buulobarde and Jalalaqsi.<sup>190</sup>

Not surprisingly, commercial and passenger vehicles have attempted to evade extortion at roadblocks by using secondary track routes in places where that is possible. According to Ken Menkhaus, however, reports suggest that this is increasingly ineffective.<sup>191</sup> One expert interviewed (expert VIII) went so far as to say that it is now ‘pointless’, because secondary roads are now monitored as well, and because government-controlled towns have main entry and exit points that are unavoidable and taxed. An example is the road from Dhobley (at the Jubbaland-Kenya border) towards Afmadow, which is not marked as a primary road. This secondary road network is extensively monitored by all sides.<sup>192</sup>

<sup>182</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia, January 2021, [url](#), p. 23

<sup>183</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>184</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>185</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>186</sup> Expert VIII is an international expert based in Somalia with expertise on security and state-building issues. He works for an international organisation with headquarters in Mogadishu and has several years of relevant field experience in the country.

<sup>187</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>188</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>189</sup> UN Security Council, Letter dated 7 October 2019 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council, 7 October 2019, [url](#), para. 24

<sup>190</sup> Unpublished written information from a security organisation provided to EASO, August 2021

<sup>191</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>192</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021; see also



Checkpoints and road taxes vary depending on the armed group enforcing them.<sup>193</sup> Al-Shabaab has a ‘reasonably well-organized’ tax system (for further details see the EASO COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#), July 2021),<sup>194</sup> where, if the average Somali pays at the start of a road, the group issues its receipt and the person does not have to pay again. In the non-Al-Shabaab controlled areas, there is no such ‘unified system’ regarding payments. For instance, an individual might have to pay some sort of tax in Afgooye or Wanlaweyn, at one end of the route, and then be expected to pay again going through Buurhakaba, because a different group controls this area.<sup>195</sup> By contrast, roads controlled by clan militia or by local or national government do not offer receipts and demand multiple ‘taxes’ collected at each checkpoint.

Somali businesspeople and communities have learned to adapt to this environment. In general, the average Somali can move ‘around’ and travel by road, although this entails some risks, according to international expert VIII. Below an excerpt from a written communication with him, whereby he states:

‘Overall, the majority of the population can travel by road across the country. However, this movement is subject to checkpoints and of course various taxes at checkpoints by which ever armed actor controls the checkpoint. Virtually every local / district administration as well as al-Shabaab are reliant on revenue from checkpoints to fund their activities. However, the situation is very different if you are in the police, military and civil service – as then you are potentially likely to be targeted by IEDs or kidnapping. Likewise, AMISOM face a similar situation to Somali Government officials and security personnel.

Hence, it’s who you are and what you’re doing that is the issue with regard to security of travel. Although there is a risk of incidents involving civilians due to IEDs planted on routes that might be triggered by accident. So, for example, whilst the military would regard the route from Mogadishu to Baidoa as a high risk corridor due to al-Shabaab control over middle of area around Leego, most civilian traffic passes through without major issues because of the imperative to raise revenue. Similarly, a lot of produce from farms in Middle Juba, Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle in al-Shabaab controlled areas is found in markets in major towns and one could argue al-Shabaab benefit from this traffic or need this to happen as it allows them to raise revenue via taxes and stops communities rebelling against them for destroying their livelihoods. That said, they are also known to put pressure from time to time on supplies to district centres under government control to undermine the local authorities, the situation in Hudur in SW State is a good example of this. Another key issue for the communities and businesses is around the level of taxation on the routes. For example, recent incidents around Wanlaweyne and Jowhar where illegal checkpoints and threats to travellers by local armed groups resulted in conflict between the local armed groups and al-Shabaab who are essentially competing for control of the revenue on that route.’<sup>196</sup>

Security expert I confirms this overall analysis, and he also points out to mobility exceptions such as the situation in the Bakool region (see for further details the section on [Conflict dynamics for Bakool](#)).<sup>197</sup> Similarly, security expert II stated: ‘people who are not big names and who pay whatever they need to pay’ can travel provided that they do not ‘profess their political allegiance’ to one or another of the contenting parties. As a result, Somalis are ‘largely silent about whatever they believe’, and prefer to be ‘not known’ for any given political position. As soon as the militant AS groups finds

<sup>193</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>194</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), Section 4.3.2 Taxation

<sup>195</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>196</sup> International expert VIII, email 19 August 2021

<sup>197</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021





out that ‘you support the government’ ‘you cannot even think of going where they are’ or ‘they will definitely kill you’, says security expert II.<sup>198</sup>

In general travelling entails safety challenges, as indicated by international expert VIII.<sup>199</sup> Even if the civilian population is not a direct target, travellers and passers-by are ‘affected by the violence by being “in the wrong place at the wrong time”’, as indicated by a source interviewed by Landinfo on the topic.<sup>200</sup>

Against this backdrop, government officials, wherever possible, tend to travel by air. Civil servants, persons affiliated with the government or military personnel, tend to be wary when traveling by road, because, once outside the district centres, they might come across an AS roadblock, either more permanent or floating ones. This largely applies to government officials in Jubbaland, South-West, Hirshabelle, Benadir and Galmudug. AMISOM and SNA movements are limited and difficult. AMISOM is always targeted.<sup>201</sup>

IEDs are the main method of targeting AMISOM and the SNA using land transport.<sup>202</sup> More specifically, a significant number of explosions/remote violence take place in Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Benadir and Lower Juba (see also Figure 19 [Explosions/remote violence \(IED, shelling, grenade, suicide bombs\) in the Somali regions](#)). According to international expert VIII, in terms of overall violence and insecurity, the worst stretch of roads would be either Lower Shabelle or Middle Shabelle and Hiraan.<sup>203</sup> In February 2021 UNOCHA reported that access in many parts of South and Central Somalia was still affected by the threat of IEDs on key roads and in areas recently controlled by the Government. Aid delivery continued being delayed or even blocked at checkpoints due to reported harassment and extortion.<sup>204</sup> Similarly, an October 2019 UN Security Council Report noted that access to some rural districts mainly in Southern and Central Somalia was limited mainly due to insecurity along primary supply routes.<sup>205</sup> UNMAS reported that, in 2020, the three IED most affected regions were Lower Shabelle, Bay, and Banadir (same as in 2019).<sup>206</sup>

For additional details about targeted individuals see chapter 6 ‘Individuals Supporting or Perceived as Supporting the Government, the International Community, and/or as Opposing Al-Shabaab’ of the EASO COI report on [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#) (September 2021).<sup>207</sup>

## 2. Regional security situation and trends

Security conditions vary considerably from region to region in Somalia, as do drivers of insecurity. Likewise, some locales feature greater levels of community resilience in the face of conflict pressures.<sup>208</sup>

<sup>198</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>199</sup> International expert VIII, email 19 August 2021

<sup>200</sup> Norway, Landinfo, Somalia: Praktiske og sikkerhetsmessige forhold på reise i Sør-Somalia [Somalia: Practical and safety conditions when traveling in Southern Somalia], 28 June 2019, [url](#), para. 3.2.2

<sup>201</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>202</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>203</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>204</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan Somalia, February 2021, [url](#), p. 42

<sup>205</sup> UN Security Council, Letter dated 7 October 2019 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council, 7 October 2019, [url](#), para. 14

<sup>206</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report, 2020 Annual Report, 2021, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>207</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>208</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

As foreseen by the Somali provisional constitution, Somalia as a whole (including Somaliland) comprises 18 administrative regions.<sup>209</sup> These regions are organised in various FMS or are part of Somaliland. As per Article 1 of the Provisional Constitution, Somalia is a Federal State.<sup>210</sup> The security situation in each of these 18 regions is addressed below, while they are grouped per FMS of belonging. In terms of federal organisation and governance the situation in Somalia can be summarised as follows:

- Jubbaland, South-West, Hirshabelle, Galmudug, and Puntland are Somalia's FMS. Although in different degrees, they have substantially taken shape as of 2021. Each one of these FMS has its own president, parliamentary assembly, (special) police, and armed forces.<sup>211</sup>
- Benadir Regional Administration (BRA), which comprises the federal capital Mogadishu and hence the site of the FGS, has an unsettled status.<sup>212</sup>
- Somaliland, which comprises 5 of the 'national' 18 administrative regions to which the provisional constitution refers (art. 72),<sup>213</sup> is a break-away state that declared its independence from Somalia in 1991.<sup>214</sup>

For the full overview of Somalia's state organisation and governance see the EASO COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>215</sup>

The 18 administrative regions (*Gobol* in Somali) are grouped within the regional chapters as follows: Gedo, Middle Juba, and Lower Juba (in Jubbaland); Bakool, Bay and Lower Shabelle (in South-West); Benadir/Mogadishu (BRA); Hiraan and Middle Shabelle (in Hirshabelle); Galgaduud and Mudug (in Galmudug); Nugal and Bari (in Puntland); Sool and Sanaag (contested between Puntland and Somaliland); Togdheer, Awdal and Woogoyi Galbeed (in Somaliland).

## 2.1 Jubbaland

For an overview of the Jubbaland administration in terms of (1) relevant dynamics, territorial control, and governance, (2) presence of state level armed forces, and (3) presence of other actors/forces (federal, international, and local), see the EASO Country of Information report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>216</sup> For regional details about all the above see the remainder of this chapter.

### 2.1.1 Gedo

#### 2.1.1.1 Background

Gedo region is the second-largest region by territorial size in Somalia.<sup>217</sup> It is located in the south-west corner of the country and shares international borders with Kenya to the south-west and Ethiopia to the north-west. It also borders with the following regions: Bakool to the north, Bay to the east and Middle Jubba and Lower Jubba to the south, respectively.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>209</sup> Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 1 August 2012, [url](#), art. 49 (5), 72

<sup>210</sup> Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 1 August 2012, [url](#)

<sup>211</sup> HIPS, The State of Somalia Report, February 2021, [url](#), pp. 9-18; HIPS, Dysfunctional federalism, July 2020, [url](#), pp. 7-14

<sup>212</sup> Halbeeg, The Politics of Representation: 'Mogadishu Status Conundrum', Policy Brief no. 2, July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>213</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), p. 111

<sup>214</sup> Hersi M. F., State fragility in Somaliland and Somalia: A contrast in peace and state building, August 2018, [url](#), pp. 9-11

<sup>215</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 19-26

<sup>216</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 77-80

<sup>217</sup> Global Shelter Cluster, Gedo, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>218</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

The region consists of 6 districts: Garbahaarey, Luuq, Doolow, Belet Xaawo (also Bulo Hawa), Ceel Waaq (also El Waq) and Baardheere (also Bardhere). The region's capital is Garbahaarey.<sup>219</sup> The largest cities are Bardhere and Belet Xaawo.<sup>220</sup>

The clan composition of Gedo is diverse. The largest and most politically and militarily powerful clan is the Marehan (Darood). They constitute about half or more of the total population. West of the Jubba river, the Marehan clan occupies and dominates virtually all of the territory to the Kenyan border.<sup>221</sup> In El Waq district, the Marehan share the region with the Garre clan,<sup>222</sup> which speaks Oromo as well as Somali. In the southernmost border area of Gedo and Middle Jubba (at Fafaduun), and along the river around the town of Bardhere, another Darood clan, the Aulihan (Ogaden/Darod) clan-family) has historically resided and controlled pasture and wells. In pockets along the Jubba and Dawa river valleys, the Marehan coexist with Somali Bantu farming communities, the Gabaweyne and Gaaramaarey people. There are also small populations of other Somali clans, such as the Dir, found in parts of the region.<sup>223</sup>

On the east bank of Gedo, the Rahanweyn clan predominates in rural areas. The Rahanweyn share the east bank area with several other clans, including small communities of Ajuraan (proto-Hawiye), Sheekal (Hawiye), and Hirab (Hawiye). In recent years (since the 1980s), the Marehan have begun to push their herds into parts of east bank Gedo region, and have staked claims on farmland along parts of the east bank as well.<sup>224</sup>

Finally, the main riverine towns of Luuq and Bardhere, both on the east bank, are as of 1999, multi-clan settlements dominated by the Marehan, but inhabited by a mix of Rahanweyn, Marehan, and other smaller communities. Marehan presence in, and control of, these towns is a new phenomenon. Bardhere is today populated both by clans of long-standing residence there — such as numerous Rahanweyn subclans, Aulihan, Ajuraan, Hirab, Harti, and Asharaf — but also by recent arrivals from outside the region, including Haber-Gedir Barawan shoemakers. As such, it is one of the more multi-clan towns of contemporary southern Somalia.<sup>225</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey undertaken by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Somali authorities estimated that the population of Gedo region was 508 405, among which 109 142 people in urban areas, 177 742 in rural, and 144 793 nomads.<sup>226</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.1.1.2 Conflict dynamics

According to Somali security expert I,<sup>227</sup> Gedo, despite being a border region, is one of the least developed regions in Somalia. With the exception of the Jubba river valley, it is resource poor, and receives lower rainfall levels than any other part of southern Somalia.<sup>228</sup> It also has a poorly developed road infrastructure and limited social services.<sup>229</sup> The underdevelopment of the region contributes to endemic communal conflicts over pasture and waterholes, to rain grabbing along the river, to clan

<sup>219</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>220</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>221</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>222</sup> This claim is the subject of debate. While some argue the Garre are distant kin of the Hawiye clan family, others argue the clan is more closely associated with the Digil-Mirifle. This fits the wider ambiguity of Garre ethnic identity. Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>223</sup> Menkhaus, K., Gedo Region, 1999, n.d., p. 9

<sup>224</sup> Menkhaus, K., Gedo Region, 1999, n.d., p. 9

<sup>225</sup> Menkhaus, K., Gedo Region, 1999, n.d., p. 9

<sup>226</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>227</sup> Expert I is a leading Somali security and intelligence expert based in Somalia, with extensive national and international consulting experience. Expert I prefers to remain anonymous for safety reasons.

<sup>228</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>229</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

clashes over control of valued trade towns, and to ambitions of the Marehan elite to claim more valuable political and business opportunities in Kismayo (Lower Jubba) and Mogadishu. High unemployment and poverty also facilitate Al-Shabaab's ability to recruit young men as fighters in the region.<sup>230</sup>

**Actors and control areas/influence.** Clans are the main organizing principle for regional political actors in Gedo. As noted above, Gedo region is home to multiple clans, each of which pursues its interests with whatever means it can, including recourse to armed conflict. Of these clans, the Marehan are by far the most powerful clan, both in the region and on the national political scene. The Marehan exercise hegemonic control over Gedo region. This is a source of grievance, and fuels endemic clashes between the Garre and Marehan over El Waq, as well as chronic tensions between the Marehan and Rahanweyn (or Digil-Mirifle) clans in the riverine and east bank areas. The Marehan are themselves divided in complex ways: (1) by sub-clan, with different sub-clans frequently clashing over power, eldership, and resources;<sup>231</sup> (2) by original homeland, with indigenous Gedo region Marehan (the *rer-guri*) often in tension with Marehan who relocated to Gedo from central Somalia or Mogadishu during the civil war (the *rer-galti*);<sup>232</sup> and (3) by allegiance to or opposition to Al-Shabaab, which has a strong presence in Gedo and which recruits heavily from the Marehan, capitalizing on the grievances of Marehan sub-clans marginalized by stronger sub-clans.<sup>233</sup>

According to Menkhaus, of the other clans, the Garre are most vigorous in pursuing claims to territory, business, and political rights inside Gedo region, and draws on its political, demographic, and economic leverage in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia to advance those claims. Clashes with Marehan in El Waq are frequent. Other clans in Gedo region have more significant interests elsewhere and so have been less assertive in Gedo region than the Marehan and Garre. The Rahanweyn political leadership are primarily focused on political in Baidoa and South-West State, which they dominate. And the Aulihan have more important interests in Garissa county, Kenya (especially Dadaab refugee camp) and, to a lesser extent, Kismayo in the Lower Jubba region.<sup>234</sup>

Clan and clan militias are not the only type of actor. As security expert II notes<sup>235</sup> the main actors in the area can be grouped as follows: (1) the federal government of Somalia troops, (2) militia forces associated with Jubbaland regional state, and finally (3) Al-Shabaab armed forces. Clan and subclan militia frequently move between these forces, forging tactically and temporary alliances. AMISOM as well as Kenyan and Ethiopian troops, although present, are less active according to security expert II, except for periodic (usually retaliatory) attacks on Al-Shabaab bases. Groups (1), (2), (3) are those really 'resisting the accumulation of power' in the region, 'in one way or another', or 'contending for the accumulation of power in that region'.<sup>236</sup>

For additional details about, the presence of AMISOM, SNA, and other armed forces, including Ethiopian troops (ENDF) and Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF), see the report on [Somalia: Actors \(July 2021\)](#).<sup>237</sup>

According to security experts I and II, Al-Shabaab controls most of the rural areas in Gedo, while major towns are like islands under the control of the state and/or other forces (federal, foreign, AMISOM).<sup>238</sup>

<sup>230</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>231</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>232</sup> These tensions are enflamed by the fact the newcomers or *galti* Maerhan included top political and military figures from the Siyad Barre region came to dominate Gedo region politics despite being new to the area. Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021; see also Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>233</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>234</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>235</sup> Expert II is a leading Somali security expert, author, and scholar based in Somalia, with extensive academic and international consulting experience. Expert II prefers to remain anonymous for safety reasons.

<sup>236</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>237</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 77-80

<sup>238</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021; Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

As elsewhere in south-central Somalia, Al-Shabaab also maintains an active network of informants and operatives in Gedo region towns.<sup>239</sup> See below for further details.

**Conflict dynamics and control areas.** Gedo represents for Al-Shabaab a somewhat strategic area being at the border with foreign countries (Kenya and Ethiopia). In terms of cross-border movements and logistics, Gedo is of great importance for Al-Shabaab, however the lack of resources from which the region suffers prevent the group from putting ‘all the eggs there’.<sup>240</sup> The group frequently launches assassination and IED attacks in Gedo region towns, and uses Gedo region as a base from which to operate in and launch attacks against government and civilian targets in north-eastern Kenya. It has not been able to use Gedo region to launch attacks inside Ethiopia, however.<sup>241</sup>

Menkhaus stated that in recent years, political infighting within the Somali government has produced the most significant armed conflict in Gedo region. The rivalry between the FGS and Jubbaland state has been played out in Gedo region, where forces loyal to Jubbaland President Ahmed Madobe have clashed with Somali National Army forces inserted into Gedo region by FGS President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo. Farmaajo has allied with some Marehen clan militia and political leaders who reject Madobe’s authority.<sup>242</sup> Among the towns that are in the hands of federal forces, those at the border with Kenya and Ethiopia, or close to it, notably Luuq, Doloow and Belet Hawo (or Beled Xaawo) are the most contested within the Marehans’ *rer-guri/rer-galti* confrontation. Apparently, President Farmaajo has managed to consolidate his power base in these three towns, which are *rer-guri* dominated, after dispatching SNA and police units as well as custodial corps to the area.<sup>243</sup> However, at the time of this writing, forces loyal to strongman and former Madobe ally Janaan (see for more details the EASO COI report on [Somalia - Actors](#)),<sup>244</sup> have yet to integrate with the official security apparatus and are stationed separately.<sup>245</sup>

As for the other major towns in Gedo, Somali security expert I said that Garbahaarey is essentially not contested because dominated by *rer-galti* (*rer-Dini* sub-clan in particular), while Baardheere, although ‘very contested’ and heavily militarised, has remained in the hands of the *rer-guri*. Both towns host ENDF contingents. Ceel Waaq instead remains basically neutral in this on-going Marehan competition because dominated by the Garre clan and securitised by a strong KDF contingent that keeps the town in hands of the local Somali authorities (aligned with Kismayo and the Ogadeni dominated Jubbaland state administration). Allegedly, ever since Farmaajo’s intervention in the region, the overall security situation in the *rer-guri* dominated towns mentioned above (Luuq, Dolow, and Belet Hawo) has worsened. Before then, the Al-Shabaab presence was somewhat contained, and it was still possible (for government officials) to travel from Luuq to Belet Hawo without escort, but this is no longer possible (at June 2021), notes security expert I.<sup>246</sup>

Reportedly Gedo residents are ‘easily recruited’ by Al-Shabaab.<sup>247</sup>

In terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period following disputes (or conflicts) were reported or were relevant in the Gedo region (non-exhaustive list):

- Intra-Marehan, *rer-guri* vs *rer-galti* competition (see above for details);<sup>248</sup>
- Garre-Marehan tensions;<sup>249</sup>

<sup>239</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>240</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>241</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021.

<sup>242</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021.

<sup>243</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>244</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), p. 78

<sup>245</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>246</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>247</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>248</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>249</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

- Marehan-Rahanweyn tensions;<sup>250</sup>

### 2.1.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab's violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias' violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

ACLED data indicate that in terms of the number of security incidents, Gedo region ranked seventh among Somalia's regions in 2020 and ninth in the first half of 2021; regarding the total number of fatalities, the region ranked eleventh in 2020 and tenth in the first half of 2021 (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, 106 security incidents, including battles, explosions/remote violence and violent acts against civilians, were reported in Gedo, causing 77 fatalities. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted 45 incidents and 69 fatalities in this region see Figure 23 and Figure 25).<sup>251</sup>

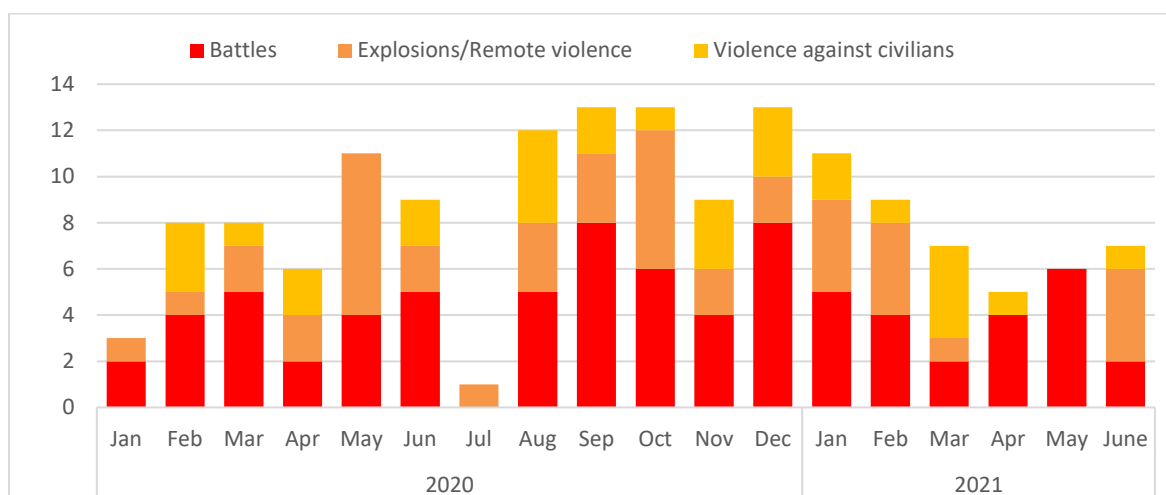


Figure 23. Gedo – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>252</sup>

At the district level, Beled Xaawo and Bardheere recorded the highest number of security incidents during the period from January 2020 to end of June 2021 (33 incidents each), followed by Garbaharrey (31 incidents) (Figure 24).<sup>253</sup>

<sup>250</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>251</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>252</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>253</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)



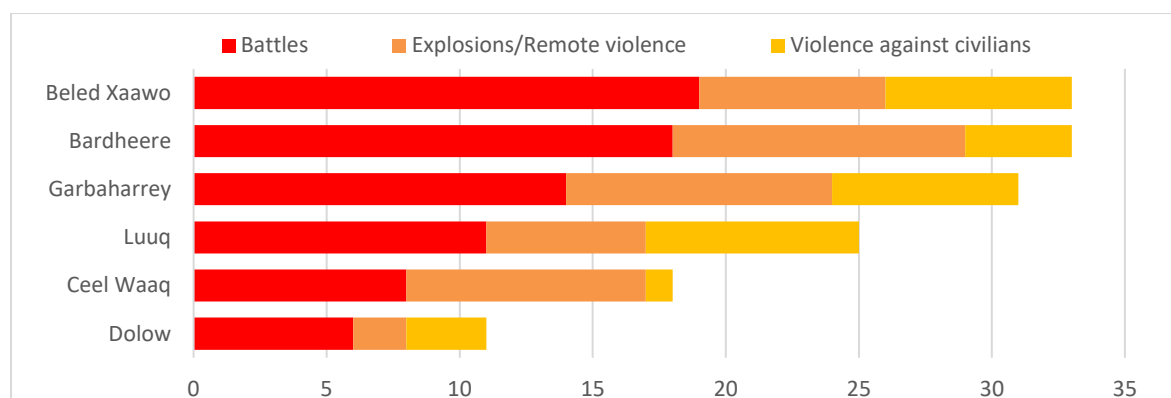


Figure 24. Gedo – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>254</sup>

ACLED coded Al-Shabaab as ACTOR 1 in 88 of the 151 security incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021, accounting for around 58 % of the total incidents. 41 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents involved the Somali Armed Forces, while 23 involved AMISOM forces. Another 20 Al-Shabaab-related incidents affected civilians. The main types of incidents were armed clashes (53 incidents, sub-category of battles), followed by use of remote-controlled explosives, landmines or IEDs (14 incidents) and attacks against civilians (14 incidents).<sup>255</sup>

The ACLED data covering January 2020 to June 2021 list two airstrikes by the US armed forces in Gedo, in May and July 2020, with no recorded fatalities. Both strikes targeted Al-Shabaab fighters in Garbaharrey district's Ceel Cadde village.<sup>256</sup> According to the United Nations, one or more airstrikes (by unspecified forces) targeting Al-Shabaab were documented in Gedo between August and October 2020.<sup>257</sup> In October 2020, it was reported that an unidentified airstrike in Weelshit killed 10 or 11 Al-Shabaab members.<sup>258</sup>

Regarding incidents involving IEDs, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported that the number of incidents recorded in Gedo was the same in 2020 as in 2019 (17 incidents).<sup>259</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 25 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Gedo region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Gedo	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	76	70
Explosions/Remote violence	45	35
Violence against civilians	30	41
<b>Total</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>146</b>

Figure 25. Gedo – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>260</sup>

Of the 146 fatalities recorded in Gedo, the largest number (53 deaths) was reported in Beled Xaawo, followed by Luuq (32 deaths), Garbaharrey (25 deaths), and Ceel Waaq (21 deaths). When focussing

<sup>254</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>255</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>256</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>257</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/1113, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 16

<sup>258</sup> SIN, KDF Special Forces Take out 7 Shabaab Terrorists in Fino, Night Airstrike Kill 11 in Weelshit, 7 October 2020, [url](#)

<sup>259</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report - 2020 Annual Report, 16 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>260</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, Luuq district, with 13 incidents and 8 fatalities, had the largest share of the total 30 incidents that caused 41 fatalities.<sup>261</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

On 22 March 2021 Ethiopian Liyu police killed at least ten pastoralists in Garayaale village in Luuq district; the motive of the killing is unknown.<sup>262</sup>

Incidents attributed to Al-Shabaab include a December 2020 attack on an Ethiopian (AMISOM<sup>263</sup>) base in Burdhubo (Garbaharrey district) that, according to Al-Shabaab, left six Ethiopian soldiers dead,<sup>264</sup> and an August 2020 IED attack on a teashop in Beled Xaawo where SNA members and civilians were present, killing eight people<sup>265</sup>.

As reported by the UN Secretary-General, in February, March and April 2020, fighting erupted in Belet Xaawo district (near the Kenyan border) between the SNA and militia members allied to the security minister of the Jubbaland FMS, Abdirashid Hassan Abdinur ‘Janan’<sup>266</sup>, who had reportedly escaped to Gedo from pre-trial detention in Mogadishu. Following the relocation of SNA troops from Bardheere to Beled Xaawo in February 2020 to reinforce Federal Government forces in their conflict with Janan and the Jubbaland forces, Al-Shabaab ‘entered the vacated town of Bardheere and executed three district officials’.<sup>267</sup> It was also reported that Al-Shabaab executed several individuals it accused of spying<sup>268</sup> or sorcery<sup>269</sup> in Garbaharrey district’s Ceel Cadde village, the group’s main base in Gedo.<sup>270</sup> Initial clashes between SNA and Jubbaland forces on 8 February 2020 left one soldier dead,<sup>271</sup> while another source states that ‘between two and four combatants’ were killed<sup>272</sup>. On 2 March 2020, heavier clashes reportedly claimed six civilian lives.<sup>273</sup> The UN reported that there was a ‘significant increase’ in displacement, with an estimated 56 000 people displaced in Gedo in February and March 2020.<sup>274</sup> The conflict continued into 2021, with renewed fighting reported in Beled Xaawo town in late January 2021<sup>275</sup>, leaving 21 people dead (most of them children)<sup>276</sup> and resulting in further displacement.<sup>277</sup>

In September 2020, several protests erupted in Beled Xaawo, Ceel Waaq and Garbaharrey towns against the presence of (non-AMISOM<sup>278</sup>) Kenyan forces in Gedo, over accusations that they attacked locals and abducted three individuals, killing one of them.<sup>279</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>280</sup>

<sup>261</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>262</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM33479 [source: Caasimada], as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>263</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM32676 [source: Shabelle Media Network], as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>264</sup> Calamada, ‘Six soldiers killed’ in Somalia al-Shabab attack, 11 December 2020

<sup>265</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31809 [source: Radio Kulmiye], as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>266</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/398, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 8

<sup>267</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, S/2020/949, 28 September 2020, [url](#), para. 74

<sup>268</sup> Somali Memo, Somali militants execute men for ‘spying for US’, 22 August 2020

<sup>269</sup> Calamada, Al-Shabab ‘executes’ sorcerer in southwest Somalia, 26 December 2020

<sup>270</sup> Garowe Online, Al-Shabaab militants kidnap 3 aid workers in troubled Somalia, 3 February 2020, [url](#)

<sup>271</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30458 [source: Twitter], as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>272</sup> International Crisis Group, Ending the Dangerous Standoff in Southern Somalia, 14 July 2020, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>273</sup> International Crisis Group, Ending the Dangerous Standoff in Southern Somalia, 14 July 2020, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>274</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/398, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 61

<sup>275</sup> Reuters, At least 11 killed after fighting erupts in Somalia’s Jubbaland – doctor, 25 January 2021, [url](#)

<sup>276</sup> VOA, Kenya Denies Role in Somalia’s Internal Conflict, 28 January 2021, [url](#)

<sup>277</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin January 2021, 14 February 2021, [url](#), p. 4; VOA, Kenya Denies Role in Somalia’s Internal Conflict, 28 January 2021, [url](#)

<sup>278</sup> USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>279</sup> Garowe Online, Protests against KDF intensify in troubled region in Somalia, 28 September 2020, [url](#)

<sup>280</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

## Other impacts on civilian life

Al-Shabaab and other armed non-state actors also ‘continued to hinder commercial activities in the areas they controlled’, including in Gedo, and disrupted the delivery of humanitarian aid.<sup>281</sup> In early 2020, Al-Shabaab abducted three local aid workers delivering medical supplies near Beled Xaawo town.<sup>282</sup> In autumn 2020, the group imposed restrictions on movement for civilians and humanitarian workers in the towns of Beled Xaawo and Garbaharrey, ‘hindering humanitarian health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene programming targeting approximately 100,000 persons’.<sup>283</sup> Over the year 2020, UNOCHA recorded a total of 28 incidents in Gedo that hampered humanitarian access to populations in need, the second highest figure among Somalia’s regions.<sup>284</sup>

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, the UNHCR Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN)<sup>285</sup> recorded an estimated 105 000 new displacements from Gedo (67 000 in 2020 and 38 000 in January–May 2021), with peaks of over 25 000 reported in April 2020 and February 2021. Most displacements occurred within Gedo, with a minority of around 3 000 people displaced to neighbouring Middle Juba. Similarly, most of the 106 000 arrivals of displaced persons in Gedo (69 000 in 2020 and 37 000 between January and May 2021) were from other areas within the same region.

The same source indicates that while flooding was the main reason for displacement in 2020 (43 000 cases), followed by conflict and insecurity (16 000 cases), conflict and insecurity rose to become the primary driver of displacement during the first five months of 2021 (accounting for 28 000 cases), followed by drought (9 000 cases). Of the region’s total 44 000 cases of displacement caused by conflict and insecurity over the period from January 2020 to May 2021, the overwhelming majority (about 39 000 cases, or 89 %) were reported in Beled Xaawo district, where this type of displacement was the predominant type across both years.<sup>286</sup> According to findings from REACH Initiative’s latest Joint Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment (carried out in summer 2020), 14 % of surveyed households in Gedo that reported being displaced indicated that actual conflict or fear of conflict in their previous area (inside or outside Gedo) caused their displacement, while 50 % of households cited lack of conflict as the reason for moving to their present location within Gedo.<sup>287</sup>

## 2.1.2 Middle Juba

### 2.1.2.1 Background

Middle Juba region is located in the southern part of Somalia and shares borders with the following regions: Gedo to the north and north-west, Bay to the north-east, Lower Shabelle to the east and Lower Jubba to the south. It has three districts: Bu’aale (also Bualle), Jilib and Saakow. The region’s capital is Bu’aale.<sup>288</sup> Jilib is the largest town and most important commercial and strategic urban area.<sup>289</sup>

Parts of the Middle Jubba, especially Bualle district, are among the most inaccessible zones of southern Somalia, cut off by riverine flooding for several months of the year. By contrast, the town of

<sup>281</sup> USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>282</sup> Garowe Online, Al-Shabaab militants kidnap 3 aid workers in troubled Somalia, 3 February 2020, [url](#)

<sup>283</sup> USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>284</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>285</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>286</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>287</sup> REACH and UNOCHA, Joint Multi-Cluster Needs Assessment – Gedo, Somalia, June–August 2020, February 2021, 1 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>288</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>289</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

Jilib in the southernmost portion of the region is a crossroad linked to Mogadishu and Kismayo by a paved road (now in serious disrepair) and linked to the west bank of the Jubba valley by a strategically important bridge.<sup>290</sup>

Most of the regional population is clustered in small farming villages and in the three main towns of Saakow, Bualle, and Jilib, all in the Jubba river valley. The main livelihood in Middle Jubba is subsistence farming in the fertile river valley, though a substantial portion of the population engages in pastoralism or agropastoralism as well.<sup>291</sup> The Middle Jubba region is one of the poorest areas of Somalia, and has been the site of two famines since 1991. Much of its pre-1991 population has been displaced.<sup>292</sup>

The region has a very diverse population in terms of clan representation. The most populous ethnic group in the region is the Somali Bantu, which populate riverine farming villages on both sides of the Jubba river. Many but not all of the Somali Bantu farming communities have been adopted into surrounding Somali clans as low-status members. Some Somali Bantu villages, mainly in Jilib district, are autonomous from any Somali clan, and refer to themselves as Somali Bantu, Shambara, Jareer, or rer-Gosha.<sup>293</sup>

The two politically and militarily strongest clans in Middle Jubba are the Aulihan (Darood) and the Mohamed Zubier/Ogaden (Darood) clans, both residing on the west bank. The Aulihan populate the vast pastoral zone from the west bank of the Jubba river to the Kenyan border and into northeast Kenya in Saakow and Buaale districts. During the early years of the Somali civil war the Aulihan came to control the town of Buaale on the east bank of the river, and maintain a presence there today. The Mohamed Zubier are the main clan on the west bank of Jilib district, including the town of Marereey. Their presence extends westward to Afmadow and Kismayo (Lower Jubba region) and into northeast Kenya. A pocket of the Bartire (Darood) clan also resides on the pastoral west bank of the river, in between the Aulihan and Mohamed Zubir, in the Hagar area.<sup>294</sup>

The east bank of the region is the most ethnically diverse and complex, owing in part to the fact that portions of the east bank, especially in the Jilib area, have been the site of major clan migration and settlers both in the pre-war and wartime era. Saakow district's east bank is home to numerous Digil-Mirifle or Rahanweyn clans. To the south, in Buaale district, east bank residents include the Digil-Mirifle, Ajuran (proto-Hawiye), and Dabarre (Digil-Mirifle) clans. Jilib district's east bank is populated by a dozen or more clans, the most significant of which are the Digil-Mirifle, Sheekal (Hawiye), Gaaljaal (proto Hawiye), and Haber Gedir (Hawiye) sub clans. The latter, along with some other groups, settled in Jilib district mainly as part of a victorious militia during the civil war.<sup>295</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey undertaken by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of Middle Juba was 362 921, among which 56 242 people in urban areas, 148 439 in rural, and 131 240 nomads.<sup>296</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

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<sup>290</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>291</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021.

<sup>292</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>293</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>294</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>295</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>296</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31



### 2.1.2.2 Conflict dynamics

The region is very underdeveloped and, with the exception of the ribbon of deteriorated highway passing through Jilib from Mogadishu to Kismayo,<sup>297</sup> lacks infrastructure.<sup>298</sup>

**Actors and control areas/influence.** For both security experts, I and II, Middle Juba is the sole Somali region, among the 18 administrative regions, that falls entirely and exclusively under Al-Shabaab's full control.<sup>299</sup> Apart from Al-Shabaab, in terms of clan composition, almost all 4.5 clans are represented in the area. However, reportedly, there is no other activity or actor, apart from Al-Shabaab, significantly relevant in the region. Clan dynamics are apparently particularly affected by Al-Shabaab presence, which plays in this context the role of 'stability provider'.<sup>300</sup> Inter-clan conflict has been effectively suppressed by Al-Shabaab.<sup>301</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** While fully controlling the entire territory of the region, Al-Shabaab reportedly congregates the most powerful Al-Shabaab men in the regional town of Jilib, which works as a sort of capital: it is here apparently where high-level Al-Shabaab activities take place.<sup>302</sup>

### 2.1.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends

The main source of security incidents in Middle Juba is counter-insurgency targeting Al-Shabaab.<sup>303</sup>

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab's violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias' violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

ACLED data indicate that in terms of the number of security incidents, Middle Juba region ranked twelfth among Somalia's regions, both in 2020 and the first half of 2021; regarding the total number of fatalities, the region ranked eighth in 2020 and eleventh in the first half of 2021 (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, 37 security incidents, including battles, explosions/remote violence and violent acts against civilians, were reported in Middle Juba, causing 107 fatalities. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted 11 incidents (explosions/remote violence, violent acts against civilians, no battles) with 38 fatalities (see Figure 26 and Figure 28).<sup>304</sup>

<sup>297</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>298</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>299</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021; Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>300</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>301</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>302</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>303</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>304</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

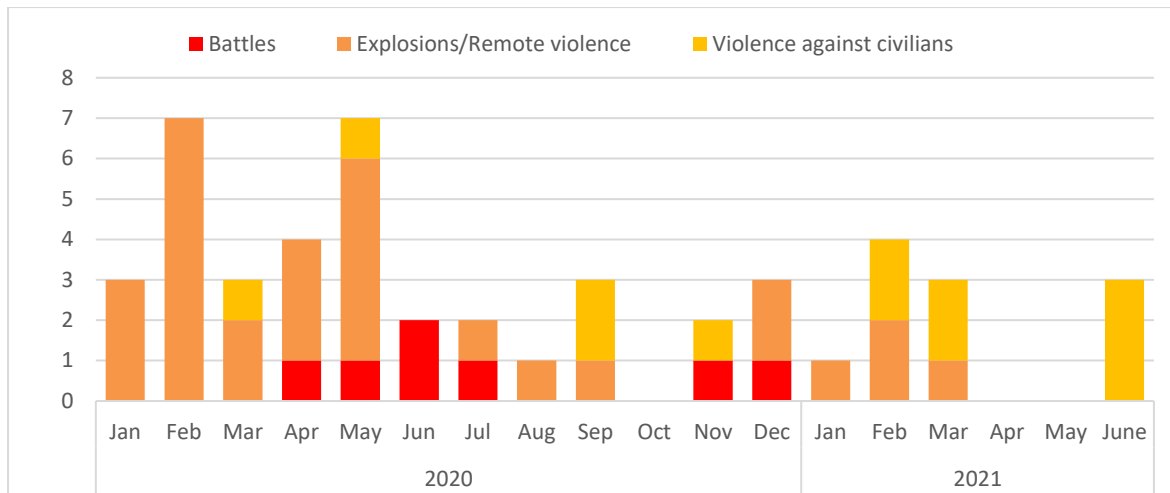


Figure 26. Middle Juba – Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>305</sup>

At the district level, Jilib, with 29 incidents, accounted for the largest share of the total 48 security incidents recorded in Middle Juba during the period from January 2020 to end of June 2021 (see Figure 27).<sup>306</sup>

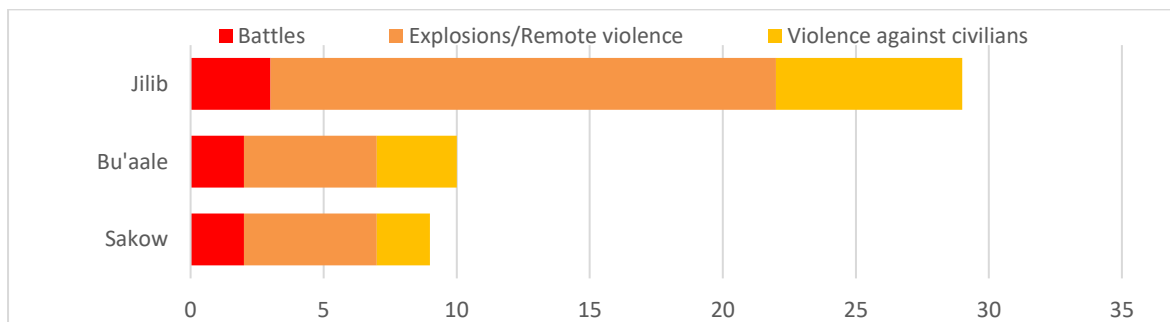


Figure 27. Middle Juba – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>307</sup>

ACLED coded Al-Shabaab as ACTOR 1 in 13 of the 48 security incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021, accounting for around 27 % of the total number of incidents. 12 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents affected civilians, while the remaining single incident exclusively involved Al-Shabaab members. The predominant type of Al-Shabaab violence against civilians was attacks against civilians (10 incidents), followed by abductions/disappearances (2 incidents).<sup>308</sup>

The majority of the security incidents recorded by ACLED during this 18-month period were airstrikes (or drone strikes<sup>309</sup>) by the US armed forces (29 incidents, resulting in a total of 61 fatalities), with peaks in incident numbers reported in February (7 strikes) and May 2020 (5 strikes).<sup>310</sup> During the same period, Airwars documented 12 declared or alleged US strikes with at least 24 to 25 fatalities.<sup>311</sup> The

<sup>305</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>306</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>307</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>308</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>309</sup> See, for example, Airwars, Airwars assessment (US strikes in Middle Jubba during the period from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021), n.d., [url](#)

<sup>310</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>311</sup> Airwars, Airwars assessment (US strikes in Middle Jubba during the period from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021), n.d., [url](#)



deadliest strike occurred in September 2020 in Jilib district (17 deaths)<sup>312</sup>, followed by a strike in the same district in December 2020 (8 deaths).<sup>313</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 28 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinguishing between civilian and non-civilian) in Middle Juba region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Middle Juba	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	7	44
Explosions/Remote violence	29	61
Violence against civilians	12	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>145</b>

Figure 28. Middle Juba – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>314</sup>

Of the 145 fatalities recorded in Middle Juba, by far the largest number (104 deaths) was reported in Jilib district. Likewise, when focussing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, it is Jilib district, with 19 fatalities, that has the largest share of the total 40 fatalities caused by this type of violence.<sup>315</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

In late June 2021, the pro-Al-Shabaab media outlet Radio Al-Furqaan<sup>316</sup> reported that the group had executed five men and a woman in Sakow town for allegedly spying for the CIA, adding that ‘most of them were accused of assisting US forces in air strikes that targeted Al-Shabaab militants and officials’.<sup>317</sup> Another eight men were executed in Kuunyo Barrow town (mapped as part of Middle Juba’s Jilib district by some sources including ACLED referring to a local media source<sup>318</sup>, while others locate it in Lower Shabelle<sup>319</sup>) after being accused of spying for the USA and held responsible for US drone strikes in the same area.<sup>320</sup>

In early March 2021, the group reportedly executed five people accused of working for US intelligence in Jilib town<sup>321</sup> and five other alleged spies (who were also accused of murder) in Bu’aale town<sup>322</sup>. Executions of alleged spies were also reported in spring<sup>323</sup> and autumn 2020<sup>324</sup>.

<sup>312</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); see also: Airwars, Airwars assessment (US strikes in Middle Jubba during the period from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021), n.d., [url](#)

<sup>313</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>314</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>315</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>316</sup> Among Radio Al Furqaan is described as affiliated to AS by Small Wars Journal, Al-Shabaab: Information Operations Strategy Overview, 29 August 2019, [url](#)

<sup>317</sup> Radio Al-Furqaan, Somali militants execute 'US spies' in southern town, 27 June 2021

<sup>318</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM34190 [source: Caasimada], as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); see also, for example, UNOCHA, Middle Juba Region - Jilib District, 24 February 2012, [url](#)

<sup>319</sup> See, for example, AllBanadir, Al-Shabaab oo mar kale goob fagaare ah ku toogatay dad badan oo lagu eedeeyey. [Al-Shabaab again executes many over accusations], 30 June 2021, [url](#); Halgan Media, Second US Drone Strike In Somalia Within Three Days, 6 March 2020, [url](#); Somali Dispatch, US bombs the Lower Shabelle region, 20 August 2019, [url](#)

<sup>320</sup> AllBanadir, Al-Shabaab oo mar kale goob fagaare ah ku toogatay dad badan oo lagu eedeeyey. [Al-Shabaab again executes many over accusations], 30 June 2021, [url](#); see also ACLED, Somalia, SOM34190, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>321</sup> Somali Memo, Somali militants execute five 'US spies' in southern town, 1 March 2021

<sup>322</sup> Radio Dalsan, Al-Shabab 'executes' five Somalis for murder and spying, 8 March 2021

<sup>323</sup> Somali Memo, Al-Shabab execute six for 'spying for US, Kenya and Somalia', 31 March 2020; see also Radio Kulmiye, Programme summary of Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 1700 gmt 31 Mar 20, 31 March 2020

<sup>324</sup> Somali Memo, Somali militants execute men for 'spying' for US, UN, Kenya, 5 September 2020

According to the sources ACLED refers to, four US strikes also resulted in civilian casualties.<sup>325</sup> On 7 April 2020, two civilians were killed and one injured when an US airstrike targeted Al-Shabaab fighters in Jilib.<sup>326</sup> Another four civilians were reportedly injured by an US airstrike on 17 May 2020 in Jilib's Kuunyo-Barrow village,<sup>327</sup> which was not confirmed by AFRICOM.<sup>328</sup> On 24 February 2020, a US strike hit a farm in Jilib district, killing a man.<sup>329</sup> While the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) states that the deceased man was identified as an Al-Shabaab commander (and was, therefore, a non-civilian)<sup>330</sup>, other sources emphasise that he had no links to Al-Shabaab,<sup>331</sup> with telecom officials quoted as saying that he was a local manager for Somalia's Hormuud Telecom company<sup>332</sup>. Meanwhile, AFRICOM confirmed that an airstrike carried out near Jilib town on 17 February 2020 left two civilians injured<sup>333</sup> and that an earlier airstrike on a house in Jilib, on 2 February 2020, killed a young woman and injured three of her family members.<sup>334</sup> These civilian casualties were later acknowledged by AFRICOM.<sup>335</sup> Earlier, Somali Memo, a pro-Al-Shabaab news outlet,<sup>336</sup> reported that a US drone strike on 27 January 2020 killed a civilian man near Jilib.<sup>337</sup> This claim was rejected by AFRICOM, which emphasised that the targeted person had been an Al-Shabaab member.<sup>338</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>339</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

A 2018 Hiraal Institute report quotes a former Al-Shabaab district governor in Middle Juba who mentioned that the group operated a secret prison in Kuunyo Barrow, with most inmates stemming from the Darood clan,<sup>340</sup> however, no further current reports on conflict-related imprisonments could be found.

Al-Shabaab reportedly abducted several businessmen, in Bu'aale town in May and Jilib town in November 2020, for unknown reasons, according to undisclosed local sources cited by ACLED.<sup>341</sup> These incidents could not be corroborated by other sources. However, UNOCHA notes that conflict and insecurity continue to disrupt economic activities of rural populations in Middle Juba.<sup>342</sup> At the same

<sup>325</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>326</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30889, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); Radio Risala, 'Two civilians killed' in fresh US Somalia air strike, 7 April 2020, available by subscription

<sup>327</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31170, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>328</sup> US, AFRICOM, CIVCAS Report: 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2020, 2020, [url](#)

<sup>329</sup> AI, Somalia: Zero accountability as civilian deaths mount from US air strikes, 1 April 2020, [url](#); VOA, US Airstrike Killed Telecom Employee in Somalia, Company Says, 25 February 2020, [url](#)

<sup>330</sup> US, AFRICOM, CIVCAS Report: 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2020, 2020, [url](#)

<sup>331</sup> AI, Somalia: Zero accountability as civilian deaths mount from US air strikes, 1 April 2020, [url](#); Garowe Online, Somalia: Hormuud Telecom says US raid kills one of its workers in Middle Juba, 25 February 2020, [url](#); Al Jazeera, A family mourns as US drone attacks in Somalia continue, 1 April 2020, [url](#)

<sup>332</sup> AI, Somalia: Zero accountability as civilian deaths mount from US air strikes, 1 April 2020, [url](#); VOA, US Airstrike Killed Telecom Employee in Somalia, Company Says, 25 February 2020, [url](#); Reuters, Somalia telecoms employee killed by U.S. air strike -company, 25 February 2020, [url](#); Garowe Online, Somalia: Hormuud Telecom says US raid kills one of its workers in Middle Juba, 25 February 2020, [url](#)

<sup>333</sup> US, AFRICOM, CIVCAS Report: 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2020, 2020, [url](#)

<sup>334</sup> US, AFRICOM, CIVCAS Report: 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2020, 2020, [url](#); see also AI, Somalia: Zero accountability as civilian deaths mount from US air strikes, 1 April 2020, [url](#)

<sup>335</sup> US, AFRICOM, CIVCAS Report: 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2020, 2020, [url](#)

<sup>336</sup> Among others, Somali Memo is described as affiliated to AS by Small Wars Journal, Al-Shabaab: Information Operations Strategy Overview, 29 August 2019, [url](#)

<sup>337</sup> Somali Memo, Sawirro+Codad: Mareykanka oo Duqeyn ku dilay Nin Shacab ah xilli uu beertiisa ku sugnaa [Photos + Testimonies: US bombing kills civilian on his farm], 29 January 2020, [url](#)

<sup>338</sup> US, AFRICOM, CIVCAS Report: 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, 2020, 2020, [url](#)

<sup>339</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>340</sup> Hiraal Institute, Taming the Clans: Al-Shabab's Clan Politics, 31 May 2018, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>341</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31142, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); ACLED, Somalia, SOM32521, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>342</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia: Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2021, 9 March 2021, [url](#), p. 72

time, reports highlight that humanitarian organisations face impediments preventing them from reaching populations in need in Middle Juba<sup>343</sup> (and other areas controlled by Al-Shabaab), including ‘concerns about the safety of humanitarian workers, opposition from other parties to the conflict and the reported unwillingness of Al-Shabaab officials to accept principled humanitarian operations in areas under their control.’<sup>344</sup>

UNOCHA indicates that areas of Middle Juba were among the worst-affected in Somalia in terms of protection of children.<sup>345</sup> Indeed, the United Nations verified 121 instances of (forced) recruitment of children in Middle Juba during the first six months of 2020, with Al-Shabaab responsible for over 75 % of all cases of child recruitment recorded nationwide during the same period.<sup>346</sup>

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, the PRMN<sup>347</sup> recorded an estimated 16 000 new displacements from Middle Juba (13 000 in 2020 and another 3 000 in January–May 2021), with a peak of about 5 000 reported in May 2020. According to this source, Middle Juba has the fifth lowest number of new displacements among the country’s 18 regions. Most people displaced from areas in Middle Juba relocated to other places within the same region, with only a minority of around 3 000 displaced to neighbouring regions like Lower Jubba and Gedo. Meanwhile, PRMN recorded 35 000 arrivals of displaced persons in Middle Juba (24 000 in 2020 and 11 000 in January–May 2021), of whom more than half (some 21 700) were from neighbouring regions, especially Bay and Gedo.

The same source indicates that flooding was the main reason for displacement in Middle Juba across both years (accounting for a total of about 10 000 cases), with only a minority of over 3 000 persons displaced by conflict and insecurity. While Sakow was the district that accounted for the largest number of such displacements in the region, in 2020 (but not in the first five months of 2021), conflict and insecurity were reported to be the predominant reason for displacement in Jilib district.<sup>348</sup>

A large population of IDPs residing in Kismayo are originally residents of Middle Jubba, but fear return to their home because of Al-Shabaab. This includes returning refugees from Kenya, who have opted to stay in Kismayo rather than risk arrest (and accusation of spying) or conscription if they returned to Al-Shabaab controlled areas of Middle Juba.<sup>349</sup>

## 2.1.3 Lower Juba

### 2.1.3.1 Background

Lower Jubba region is the southern-most region of Somalia. It shares an international border with Kenya to the west, with Gedo region to the north and with Middle Jubba region to the north-east. The region has four districts: Kismayo, Jamaame, Afmadow and Badhaadhe. The region’s capital, as well as the state’s capital is Kismayo, a port city, which is the largest city of Jubbaland and the third largest

<sup>343</sup> UNOCHA, COVID-19 Impact Update No. 14 (as of 25 October 2020), 25 November 2020, [url](#), p. 5; UNOCHA, COVID-19 Impact Update No. 13 (as of 25 October 2020), 25 October 2020, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>344</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, S/2020/1004, 15 October 2020, [url](#), para. 26

<sup>345</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan - Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 84

<sup>346</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, S/2020/949, 28 September 2020, [url](#), para. 137

<sup>347</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>348</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>349</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

in Somalia.<sup>350</sup> Though Buaale is, on paper, supposed to be the capital of Jubbaland, Kismayo has been the de facto seat of Jubbaland government and will likely remain so.<sup>351</sup>

Menkhaus explained that demographically, the population of Lower Juba is divided into five sections. First, along the Jubba river, Somali Bantu (also known as Jareer) are the main population, including a distinct sub-group of Bantu called the Mushunguli, who have retained their East African Bantu language as descendants of slaves from what is today Tanzania in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The largest river valley town in Lower Jubba region, Jamaame, is mainly inhabited by the Biyomaal (Dir) clan, which also controls much of the east bank pastoral land around Jamaame town. The second zone is the east bank, where, in addition to the Biyomaal, the Tunni (Digil-Mirifle) occupy grazing areas south of Jamaame town to the coast and up to Baraawe in Lower Shabelle region. Third, on the expansive rangelands of the west bank, which stretch from the Jubba river to the Kenyan border, the Mohamed Zubier/Ogaden (Darood) clan controls territory from the Jubba river to through Afmadow district and into Kenya. Two other Darood clans, the Makabul/Ogaden and Talamoge/Ogaden, control coastal territory south of Kismayo town across the Kenya border, mainly in Badaadhe district. The Aulihan/Ogaden/Darood have a presence in Doble, near the Kenya border. The Gaaljaal (proto-Hawiye) occupy a pastoral zone between Kismayo and Afmadow. The Harti (Darood) clan controls a pocket of rangeland to the immediate north and west of Kismayo city. The largest Harti clan in Kismayo is the Majerteen. Small pockets of other clans, are present in the pastoral west bank as well.<sup>352</sup>

A fourth zone is a thin strip of coastal land and islands south of Kismayo to the Kenyan border, which are lightly inhabited by the Somali Bajuni, an ethnic group associated with Swahili culture and with fishing as a livelihood. The Bajuni also reside on the Kenyan coast, where many have relocated since the civil war.<sup>353</sup>

The fifth zone is Kismayo town. The population makeup of the city of Kismayo is complex and is subject to major changes. Prior to the civil war, it was a cosmopolitan city that was home not only to various Somali clans but also to Arabs, Indians, and Somali Bajuni. Of the ethnic Somalis residing there, the two dominant clans were the Harti/Darood, who migrated there by sea in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the Mohamed Zubeir/Ogaden (Darood), who populated much of the interior rangeland and who gradually settled into neighbourhoods in Kismayo. Members of other clans also settled in Kismayo to pursue business or assume civil service jobs. Under Siyad Barre, the Marehan clan presence grew in Kismayo and the clan enjoyed lead positions in government and business.<sup>354</sup>

Over the course of the civil war, the city has frequently changed hands, and the clan demographics have shifted accordingly. Since 2012, Kismayo has been dominated politically, economically, and militarily by the Ogaden clan, especially the large Mohamed Zubier sub-clan. The Harti clan, which is mainly urban based and engaged in business, is allied with the Ogaden and resides in the city. Some Bajuni and a large number of Somali Bantu reside in the city as well, the latter displaced from the Jubba Valley by war or fear of Al Shabaab. Smaller communities of other clans, including Marehan, Biimaal, and Gaaljaal, are present as well. A very large and growing population of IDP and returning refugee from Kenya, consisting mostly of Digil-Mirifle and Somali Bantu, have chosen Kismayo as a safe location. As IDP and returnee numbers grow, the Digil Mirifle could become one of the largest clans in the city, a fact which has raised questions about citizenship rights there.<sup>355</sup>

<sup>350</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#); Global Shelter Cluster, Lower/Middle Juba, n.d., [url](#); Jubaland Ministry of Public Works, Reconstruction and Housing, UN Habitat and UN JPLG, Kismayo Urban Profile Working Paper and Spatial Analyses for Urban Planning, October 2020, [url](#), p. 7

<sup>351</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>352</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>353</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>354</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021.

<sup>355</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021.

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of the Lower Jubba region was 489 307, among which 172 861 people in urban areas, 161 512 in rural, and 124 334 nomads.<sup>356</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.1.3.2 Conflict dynamics

Comparatively speaking, Lower Juba is one of the best endowed regions of Somalia, and has considerable though mostly unmet potential. It is home to some of the richest irrigable farmland along the Jubba river; the best grasslands for cattle husbandry in the well-watered Afmadow area; and some of the best fisheries in Somalia along the coast. And, Kismayo seaport and the Kismayo international airport are strategic and lucrative infrastructure assets for whoever controls the city. Kismayo is also relatively close to the lucrative Kenyan market, and so the region serves as an important transit trade corridor. Since the declaration of the Jubbaland state, Kismayo has had the additional attraction of being the seat of the Jubbaland government attracting foreign aid and generating jobs in the government and in international aid agencies.<sup>357</sup> All of these resources have generated competition and conflict. Kismayo in particular has been one of the most contested cities in Somalia since 1991, and the scene of recurring armed clashes.<sup>358</sup> Reportedly Kismayo was ‘the prize that everybody was fighting for during the Civil War, after Mogadishu’.<sup>359</sup>

The relatively tight control over the city of Kismayo imposed by the Jubbaland security sector, and Al Shabaab’s tight control over most of the interior of Jubbaland, has reduced armed conflict in the region relative to some other parts of Somalia. Kismayo has since 2013 been more stable and peaceful than was the case during the previous two decades. Menkhaus characterised this as a ‘negative peace’ that is fragile and vulnerable to armed clashes on multiple fronts. The increase in security incidents across the region last year is a reminder of this fragility.<sup>360</sup>

**Actors and their control areas/influence.** The most important actors in the Lower Jubba are the Jubbaland state government, Al-Shabaab, and clan leaders and militias.<sup>361</sup>

Jubbaland state politics is dominated by its President Ahmed Madobe. Madobe came to power in 2012 as leader of the Ogaden clan militia that, with support from the Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF), captured Kismayo from Al-Shabaab.<sup>362</sup> He continues to have tight control over that militia, now expanded and reinvented as Jubbaland security forces.<sup>363</sup> Madobe has overseen the establishment of a modest Jubbaland state civil service and parliament, the latter with representation of all clans in Jubbaland (though often not at the level they feel they merit). But Jubbaland state authority is mostly in his hands.<sup>364</sup>

Menkhaus gave the view that Jubbaland state has had strong control over Kismayo town and its immediate vicinity, including the international airport. Its security forces have launched forays up the Jubba valley to drive Al-Shabaab out, but has been unable to hold that terrain.<sup>365</sup> Several towns in Lower Jubba, such as Afmadow and Doble, are also under Jubbaland state control.<sup>366</sup> The Jubbaland security forces are regularly paid and relatively well disciplined, but their effectiveness is limited and

<sup>356</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>357</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021.

<sup>358</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>359</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>360</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>361</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>362</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>363</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021; Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>364</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021; Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>365</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>366</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021



depends on support from the Kenyan-staffed AMISOM forces based in and around Kismayo, as well as support from US counter-insurgency personnel. Madobe also operates an informant/intelligence network in Kismayo that is effective and has made attacks on the city difficult, though not impossible, for Al-Shabaab. That informant network also has a chilling effect on political opposition. Despite this, security incidents in the Kismayo were elevated over the past year (discussed below).<sup>367</sup>

Most clans in the Lower Jubba maintain an ability to muster a clan militia. The Mohamed Zubeir clan (and to a lesser extent the other Ogaden clans) has the advantage of being the principal clan populating all Jubbaland state security actors, including police, military, darwish and JISA forces (see the report on [Somalia: Actors](#))<sup>368,369</sup> These security actors are considered to be Jubbaland President Madobe's (private) militia. Even the SNA units stationing in the area by the SFG fall within his exclusive control. Reportedly, 'there is nothing they can do without his consent, and most of the military operations are actually designed and planned from his own residence'.<sup>370</sup> The same pattern applies to Afmadow<sup>371</sup> and Dhobley, where Ogadeen and Madobe dominated security forces are supported by Kenya or AMISOM.<sup>372</sup> For more details about the presence of AMISOM, Jubbaland's forces, and other armed forces, including Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) in Jubbaland, see the EASO COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>373</sup>

Al-Shabaab either controls or influences over most of the hinterland in Lower Jubba, including most of the Lower Jubba valley. Al-Shabaab monitors and taxes the flow of goods and people on the roads linking Kismayo to Kenya.<sup>374</sup> (for more details see section Al-Shabaab's 'Taxation' in the EASO COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#)).<sup>375</sup> Al-Shabaab uses the border areas of Lower Jubba as a base from which to infiltrate and launch attacks inside Kenya.<sup>376</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** The main conflict dynamics affecting this region are the Al-Shabaab anti-Al-Shabaab confrontation.<sup>377</sup> Al Shabaab launches periodic attacks on the Kismayo periphery, and occasionally succeeds in IED or bombing attacks inside Kismayo. It is more effective at launching ambushes and IED attacks on Jubbaland security sector or AMISOM patrols in the countryside. US aerial attacks on Al-Shabaab targets also occur periodically in the region.<sup>378</sup>

In terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period following disputes (or conflicts) were reported or were relevant in the Lower Juba region (non-exhaustive list):

- Ogaden vs Marehan clan competition over control of Kismayo and Jubbaland state.<sup>379</sup> This has been the main source of tension and conflict since 2013, and remains unresolved, but has not produced major armed clashes in the Lower Jubba region in recent years (though it has in Gedo region).<sup>380</sup>
- Tensions within the Ogaden clan – Mohamed Zubeir vs Aulihan, and intra-clan tensions in the Mohamed Zubier – over allocation of jobs and power in the Jubbaland security sector. The FGS leadership has attempted to exploit these splits by supporting rivals of Ahmed Madobe for the Jubbaland Presidency.<sup>381</sup>

<sup>367</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>368</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), p. 79

<sup>369</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>370</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>371</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>372</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>373</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 79-80

<sup>374</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>375</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 63-64

<sup>376</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>377</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>378</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>379</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>380</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>381</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

- Majerteen (Harti/Darood) vs Awramale (Harti/Darood), clashed intermittently over disputed land south-west of Kismayo, at the beginning of 2020 (February – April), causing more than 50 fatalities. In April 2020 elders from the respective clans agreed to a ceasefire.<sup>382</sup> In May-June 2020 the two clans agreed to withdraw armed militia from the affected areas.<sup>383</sup>

### 2.1.3.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab’s violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias’ violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups’ violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

In 2020 and in the first half of 2021, ACLED data indicate that the Lower Juba administrative region ranked third in terms of the number of security incidents and fourth regarding the total number of fatalities (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, a number of 273 security incidents, including battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence and violent acts against civilians, were reported in Lower Juba, causing 372 fatalities. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted 128 incidents and 126 deaths in this region. The months with the highest number of incidents were August 2020 and January 2021 (see Figure 29 and Figure 31).<sup>384</sup>

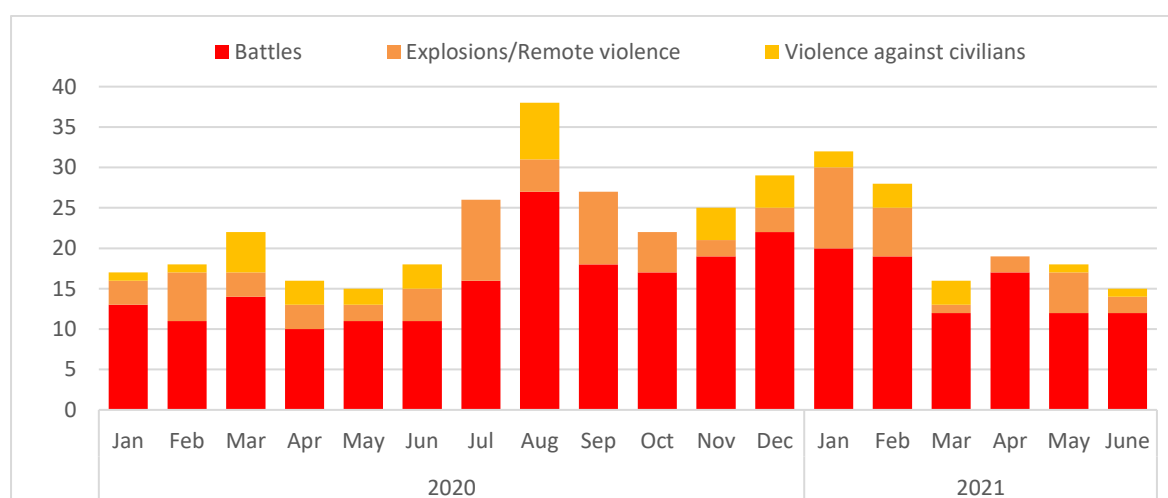


Figure 29. Lower Juba – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>385</sup>

At the district level, Lower Juba’s capital, Kismayo, recorded the most security incidents (179 events), followed by Afmadow District (120 events) for the period between January 2020 and end of June 2021 (see Figure 30).<sup>386</sup>

<sup>382</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 35

<sup>383</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 40

<sup>384</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>385</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>386</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

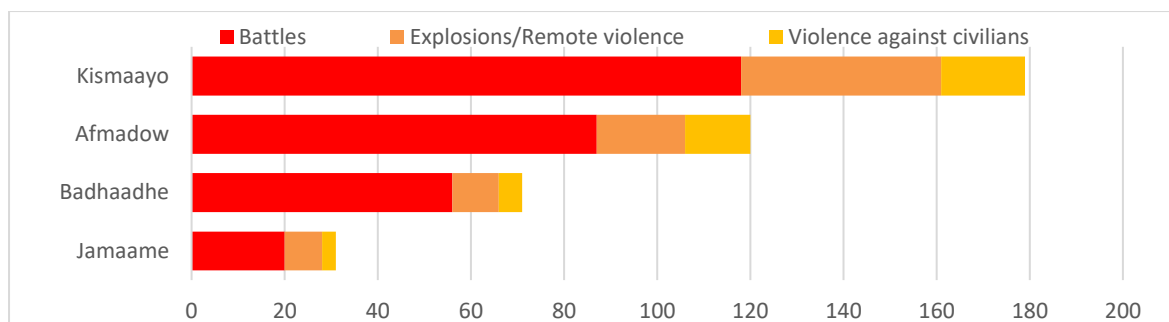


Figure 30. Lower Juba – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>387</sup>

Al-Shabaab was coded as ACTOR 1 in 262 of the 401 security incidents, accounting for around 65 % of incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021. 119 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents involved Somali Armed Forces or Somali Police Force, 110 involved AMISOM forces, and 28 incidents involved civilians. The main type of incidents were armed clashes (a sub-category of battles) (194 incidents), along with the use of remote-controlled explosives (26 incidents), and abductions and forced disappearances or attacks against civilians (20 incidents).<sup>388</sup>

Between January 2020 and June 2021, Airwars documented one alleged US strike on 7 January 2020 that killed 35 Al-Shabaab fighters in Lower Juba.<sup>389</sup> For the same time period, ACLED lists 12 airstrikes by the US military in Lower Juba, resulting in 38 fatalities. According to the sources ACLED refers to, four of these US airstrikes also resulted in civilian casualties.<sup>390</sup>

Regarding IED activities, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported an increase in IED activities in Lower Juba in 2020 compared to 2019. It was further noted that the increase was caused by the security forces' activities to build a new forward operating base and efforts to counter these activities using IEDs.<sup>391</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 31 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Lower Juba region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Lower Juba	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	281	306
Explosions/Remote violence	80	153
Violence against civilians	40	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>401</b>	<b>498</b>

Figure 31. Lower Juba – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>392</sup>

Of the 498 fatalities recorded in Lower Juba between January 2020 and end of June 2021, the vast majority (231 deaths) were reported in Kismayo, ahead of Afmadow (114 deaths), Jamaame (90 deaths), and Badhaadhe (63 deaths). When focusing on incidents coded by ACLED as 'violence against civilians', most of the 40 incidents that caused in total 39 fatalities were reported in Kismayo (19 incidents and 18 fatalities)<sup>393</sup>

<sup>387</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>388</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>389</sup> Airwars, Airwars assessment (US strikes in Lower Juba during the period from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021), n.d., [url](#)

<sup>390</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>391</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report - 2020 Annual Report, 16 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>392</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>393</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

## Illustrative security incidents

In Kismayo district, an Al-Shabaab attack killed between eight<sup>394</sup> and twelve soldiers and wounded several others on 28 March 2021.<sup>395</sup>

On 28 December 2020, eight<sup>396</sup> or nine<sup>397</sup> civilians were killed, and two others injured when an Al-Shabaab IED exploded in Afmadow district.<sup>398</sup>

On 11 September 2020, an Al-Shabaab suicide bomber killed between two<sup>399</sup> and six civilians and injured several others in Kismayo district.<sup>400</sup>

According to Al-Shabaab, 16 soldiers died in an attack by Al-Shabaab militias on 7 September 2020 in Afmadow district.<sup>401</sup> For the same incident, dpa international reported at least two soldiers killed and one injured.<sup>402</sup>

On 13 July 2020, an Al-Shabaab IED detonated near Buulo Gaduud village, killing ten Jubbaland (Jubbaland) soldiers and wounding ten others.<sup>403</sup>

In May 2020, the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UNSG) reported that clashes over disputed land between the Majeerteen and Awramleh clans, which had claimed over 50 lives between 2 February and 2 April 2020, had been settled.<sup>404</sup> ACLED data for this period also include several fatal clashes between the two clans, including a single incident that resulted in 18 deaths.<sup>405</sup>

In January 2020, an airstrike by suspected US<sup>406</sup> or Kenyan forces killed three<sup>407</sup> to four<sup>408</sup> locals at a wedding in Afmadow, another warplane alleged to belong to the US military reportedly injured a civilian woman in Jamaame.<sup>409</sup> In April 2020, it was reported that a prominent leader of the Jareer Weyne was killed in a US airstrike in Jamaame.<sup>410</sup> In January 2021, a man was killed by a US airstrike targeted at an Al-Shabaab base in Jamaame.<sup>411</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> Somali Memo, Somali militants 'kill eight soldier' near Kismayo, 28 March 2021

<sup>395</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM33510, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>396</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM32874, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>397</sup> Radio Shabelle, Nine killed in Somalia Explosion, 29. Dezember 2020, [url](#)

<sup>398</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM32874, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>399</sup> Xinhua News Agency, 2 killed in southern Somalia blast, 11 September 2020, [url](#)

<sup>400</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31946, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>401</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31970, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>402</sup> dpa international, Two somali soldiers killed after al-Shabaab suicide attack on base, 7 September 2020

<sup>403</sup> Radio Dalsan, 10 Soldiers Killed In Landmine Explosion In Lower Juba, 13 July 2020, [url](#); ACLED, Somalia, SOM31575, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>404</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/398, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 35

<sup>405</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM30423, [url](#)

<sup>406</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30235, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>407</sup> Dhaco, Air strikes kills three at wedding in southern Somalia, 6 January 2020

<sup>408</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30235, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>409</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30334, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>410</sup> Mogadishu Update, [Twitter], posted on 11 April 2020, [url](#); ACLED, Somalia, SOM30920, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>411</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM33008, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); BBC Monitoring Africa, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Risala News 1600 gmt 19 Jan 21, 19 January 2021

<sup>412</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

## Other impacts on civilian life

A household assessment conducted by AVSI Foundation in November 2020 in North East Kismayo district showed that decades of conflict have resulted in prolonged distress for households especially with regard to livelihoods and food security.<sup>413</sup>

In February 2020, UNOCHA reported that the estimate of children in need had increased by 14.7 % in 2020 compared to the previous year. The worst affected areas for cumulative severity of child protection are spread across 28 districts and seven regions, including Lower Juba with ‘emergency levels of severity of need’. Among other severe risks for children, UNOCHA mentioned threats of recruitment, abuse and abductions.<sup>414</sup> For the period between January 2020 and 6 May 2021, ACLED recorded two incidents of child abductions by Al-Shabaab in Afmadow district.<sup>415</sup>

Humanitarian actors face difficulties in providing assistance due to the volatile security situation, a situation that increases the complexity of seeking and receiving support for civilians.<sup>416</sup> In addition, harassment and abductions of aid workers in Lower Juba were reported.<sup>417</sup> For Lower Juba, 13 incidents of humanitarian workers being unable to access sites were reported in 2020.<sup>418</sup>

The head of a women’s NGO based in Kismayo that is focused on displaced women and peacebuilding, gave the view that in the Juba region it is especially women who have been most negatively affected by the “dire situation” situation created by years of conflict in the country.<sup>419</sup>

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN<sup>420</sup> reported 42 000 new displacements from Lower Juba, with 24 000 displacements in May 2020 alone. Of the 37 000 displacements in 2020, nearly all within Lower Juba, flooding was the main reason (25 000 cases), followed by conflict and insecurity (8 000 cases). In 2020, displacement for reasons related to conflict and insecurity reportedly affected Jamaame district most (7 000). In 2020, additional 1 000 new conflict- or insecurity-related displacements were registered from Middle Juba, 40 from Gedo and 10 from Lower Shabelle to Lower Juba. Between January and May 2021, 5 000 new displacements were registered in Lower Juba, of which 4 000 were within the region, 500 were to Middle Juba and another 100 to Gedo. Of the 2 000 displacements caused by conflict and insecurity, Jamaame District had again the highest number of IDPs’. For the same period, another 1 000 displacements newly arrived in Lower Juba were registered from Middle Juba, 300 from Bay, 100 from Gedo and 10 from Lower Shabelle.<sup>421</sup>

## Evictions

According to the NRC Evictions Information Portal, 14 cases of forced evictions were reported in Lower Juba in 2020, resulting in the forced expulsion of 2 802 individuals. Between January and 29 June 2021, 1 068 individuals were affected by three cases of forced eviction in Lower Juba. All 17 reported forced eviction cases in 2020 and 2021 occurred in Kismayo district. NRC listed ‘development – landlord’

<sup>413</sup> AVSI, Multi-sector Household Survey Report – North East Kismayo District, Lower Juba, Somalia, February 2021, [url](#), p. 23

<sup>414</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan - Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 84

<sup>415</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30626; SOM31601, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>416</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia: Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2021, 9 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 21-22

<sup>417</sup> USDOS, International Religious Freedom Report 2020 – Somalia, 12 May 2021, [url](#), p. 7; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia: Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2021, 9 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 21-22; ACLED, Somalia, SOM31062, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>418</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>419</sup> UNSOM, Halima Godane: An Activist for Solidarity and Progress among Somali Women, 20 December 2020, [url](#)

<sup>420</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>421</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)



(5 cases), ‘owner development’ (9 cases), ‘family dispute’ (2 cases), and ‘gov. development’ (1 case) as respective reasons for forced evictions.<sup>422</sup>

## 2.1.4 Jubbaland - Checkpoints and road security

There are several border-crossing points in Jubbaland. The most important land border is the border crossing into Kenya at Dhobley.<sup>423</sup> The Sector 2 Headquarters for AMISOM (under the leadership of Kenya) is also located at Dhobley, contributing to Dhobley being a large and significant crossing point.<sup>424</sup> Goods and people move in substantial amounts across this border, in both directions, though most trade passes through Kismayo port into Kenya.<sup>425</sup> Other key ones, in terms of mobility and of materials/merchandise coming into Somalia, are Belet Hawo and Dollow (Doolow). Dollow is at the border with Ethiopia, while Belet Hawo at the border with Kenya.<sup>426</sup>

The other main border crossings are by air – commercial flights from Kenya fly in and out of Kismayo airport<sup>427</sup> – and by sea, via the all-weather port in Kismayo,<sup>428</sup> and the country’s third busiest seaport after Mogadishu and Bosaso.<sup>429</sup>

There are several main road corridors in Lower Jubba.

- **Kismayo – Jilib – Mogadishu.** The Kismayo-Jilib-Mogadishu highway is the only one paved in Jubbaland, and it is in ‘serious disrepair’.<sup>430</sup> It is controlled by Al Shabaab 20-50 kilometres north of Kismayo.<sup>431</sup>
- **Dhobley – Afmadow - Kismayo.** This is a track road, impassable at times during the rainy season, but, as noted above, is the most important land-based transport corridor in the region.<sup>432</sup> AMISOM’s influence is limited to the Dhobley-Afmadow road. Along the route from Afmadow to Kismayo, there is an AS checkpoint at Jana Cabdalle. This checkpoint has been dismantled more than once but keeps reappearing.<sup>433</sup>
- **Kismayo – Badhaadhe.** Another track road, impassable during the rainy season,<sup>434</sup> is the coastal road linking Kismayo to Badhaadhe. Kismayo can be accessed starting from Abdale Birole, which is located approximately 20 km west of Kismayo on the coastal route. After this point everything is under AS control.<sup>435</sup>
- **Garbahaarrey - Luuq – Waajid.** Another key route out of Jubaland is from Garbahaarrey towards Luuq then across to Waajid in Bakool region and then down to Baidoa in Bay region.<sup>436</sup> For an overview of control areas along this route see map [Approximate Territorial Control June 2021](#).

<sup>422</sup> NRC, Forced Eviction Information Portal, Dataset, as of 29 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>423</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>424</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>425</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>426</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>427</sup> In 2019 the SFG sought to block direct flights to Kismayo and force all international flights to proceed first to Mogadishu. The status of commercial air traffic in and out of Kismayo remains a political issue, is fluid, and subject to change. Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>428</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>429</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>430</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>431</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>432</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>433</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>434</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>435</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>436</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

- **Kismayo – Baraawe – Mogadishu.** A lot of produce comes from Lower Shabelle to Kismayo along this road.<sup>437</sup> For an overview of control areas along this route see map [Approximate Territorial Control June 2021](#).

According to Professor Ken Menkhaus, security on these roads is ‘poor’.<sup>438</sup> Jubbaland is among the FMS more frequently affected by IED and remote explosions as shown in Figure 19. As per ACLED data, in the reference period (January 2020 – June 2021) there were a total of 90 explosions/remote violence events of the type IED, shelling, grenade and suicide bomb (among others remote violence events) in Jubbaland: 24 in Gedo, and 66 in Lower Juba, resulting respectively in 30, and 115 fatalities (Figure 19).<sup>439</sup> In the course of 2020, UNMAS reported 17 IED incidents in Gedo, and 46 IED incidents in Lower Juba in 2020.

## 2.2 South-West

For an overview of the South-West administration in terms of (1) relevant dynamics, territorial control, and governance, (2) presence of state level armed forces, and (3) presence of other actors/forces (federal, international, and local), see the EASO Country of Information report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>440</sup> For regional details about all the above see the remainder of this chapter.

### 2.2.1 Bakool

#### 2.2.1.1 Background

Bakool region shares an international border with Ethiopia to the north, with Gedo region to the west, with Bay region to the south and with Hiiraan region to the east. It also shares a short border with Lower Shabelle. It consists of five districts: Xudur, Tayeeglow, Ceel Barde, Rab Dhuure and Waajid. The region’s capital is Xudur.<sup>441</sup>

The region is largely inhabited by various Rahanweyn groups: Hadama, Jiron, Lisan (Laysaan), Garwale, Luwai, Jelible, Gelidle, Reer Dumal, Ashraf. The Jajele (Hawiye) live in the north.<sup>442</sup> The Aulihan (Ogaden/Darood) clan inhabits both sides of the border area with Ethiopia; it is mainly situated in the Ethiopian side of the border.<sup>443</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of the Bakool region was 367 226, among which 61 928 people in urban areas, 134 050 in rural, and 147 248 nomads.<sup>444</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

#### 2.2.1.2 Conflict dynamics

According to Somali security expert I, the Bakool and the Bay region ([see below](#)) of the South West state are predominantly inhabited by the Rahanweyn clans: the Mirifle and the Digil, with the Mirifle

<sup>437</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>438</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>439</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>440</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 82-86

<sup>441</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>442</sup> EASO, COI report - South and Central Somalia Country overview [clan maps based on Lewis 1955, Abikar 1999], August 2014, [url](#), pp. 52-53

<sup>443</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>444</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

more prevalent in Bakool, and the Digil in Bay. These two clan groups, which are actually quite distinct, are bonded together by a political alliance that is almost a century old. The two groups share cultural and language traits (among others they both speak the Af-Maay-tiri language, also known as Mai-Mai or Mai Terreh), but above all, it is the shared marginalisation experience of the 40s-50s of the past century, that keeps them firmly together.<sup>445</sup> For further details see Chapter on Minorities and non-minority clans in the EASO COI report on [Targeted Profiles](#).<sup>446</sup>

The same source observed that the Digil are more settled, farming communities, whereas the Mirifle are mainly agro-pastoralists or pastoralists. Although poorer than their associates, the Mirifle are dominant over the Digil because larger in number and militarily better organised. Additionally, they seem to be able to negotiate better political outcomes and power sharing agreements in Mogadishu. For these reasons the Digil perceive themselves as ‘under that alliance’ and claim that they are not getting their fair share.<sup>447</sup>

The Mirifle are divided into two main clan groups, the “‘eight and the nine”” (*Sagaal iyo Sideed*). The Mirifle clan includes several empowered clans and many weaker ones.<sup>448</sup> Currently, FGS President Formajo’s political intervention in Baidoa that installed the South-West state president, ‘Lafta Gareen’, has shifted the power balance within the Mirifle group in favour of the Harin clan (‘Lafta Gareen’ power base), whereas previously the dominant clan was the Laysaan. Other super clans of the group are Hadama and Eelay.<sup>449</sup>

**Actors and control areas/influence.** Al-Shabaab is actively engaged in the Bakool region where it predominantly controls the rural areas.<sup>450</sup> According to security expert I, the Mirifle clan group constitutes the main source of foot soldiers for the group.<sup>451</sup> The State and federal state forces are in control of the main towns instead, which are like islands encircled by al-Shabaab’s or contested territory.<sup>452</sup> For additional details about the SNA units, the South West security forces, and the AMISOM ENDF contingents present in the region, see the EASO COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#).<sup>453</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** The main source of conflict in Bakool is the on-going armed confrontation between Al-Shabaab and anti-Al-Shabaab forces.<sup>454</sup> According to security expert II, in Bakool, differently from what happens in Jubbaland’s regions, federal and state forces are politically and militarily aligned.<sup>455</sup> Within this context, according to security expert I, Bakool has experienced, quite uniquely and interestingly, a form of local resistance to Al-Shabaab. A mixture of SNA units (although acting independently from Mogadishu) and other local armed units, have jointly fought against Al-Shabaab while engaging in a form of counterinsurgency and tactical warfare. They have launched attacks on al-Shabaab positions, when they are in general rarely attacked, and pushed back the group from their areas of control. However, this spontaneous form of military resistance, which was led by a military commander now returned to Mogadishu, was terminated in the course of 2020. This movement, widely supported at local level, had been sparked by Al-Shabaab’s attempt to control and prevent food supplies to reach the main towns in Bakool, such as Xudur (or Hudur) and Waajid. According to security expert I, even today, that the military movement has been disbanded, people in the region charge donkeys with food supplies and let them travel alone to towns, in the hope that Al-Shabaab

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<sup>445</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>446</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>447</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>448</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>449</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021; Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>450</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>451</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>452</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021; Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>453</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 84-86

<sup>454</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>455</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

will not intercept them.<sup>456</sup> Al-Shabaab is de facto imposing a complete embargo on the main towns in Bakool, notes security expert I.<sup>457</sup> However, while for security expert I this was still occurring as of June 2021, expert II maintained that this was no longer the case by then.<sup>458</sup>

In terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period following disputes (or conflicts) were reported or were relevant in the Bakool region (non-exhaustive list):

- Gaaljeel (Hawiye) vs Gelidle (Mirifle) clans around Burdho.<sup>459</sup> The Gaaljaal have a small presence in Bakool but a larger one in neighbouring Hiran region. These clashes are endemic, over pasture and wells.<sup>460</sup>

### 2.2.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab's violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias' violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

ACLED data indicate that in terms of the number of security incidents, Bakool region ranked eleventh among Somalia's regions in 2020 and seventh in the first half of 2021; regarding the total number of fatalities, the region ranked twelfth both in 2020 and the first six months of 2021 (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, 49 security incidents, including battles, explosions or remote violence and violent acts against civilians were reported in Bakool, causing 70 fatalities. In the first 6 months of 2021, ACLED counted 69 incidents with 25 deaths (see Figure 32 and Figure 34).<sup>461</sup>

<sup>456</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>457</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>458</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>459</sup> Somali Memo, Boqolaal Neef Geel ah oo diyo ahaan loogu kala wareejiyay Beelo ku dagaallamay Soomaaliya [Hundreds of camels have been handed over to warring clans in Somalia, internal transaltion], 6 October 2020, [url](#)

<sup>460</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>461</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

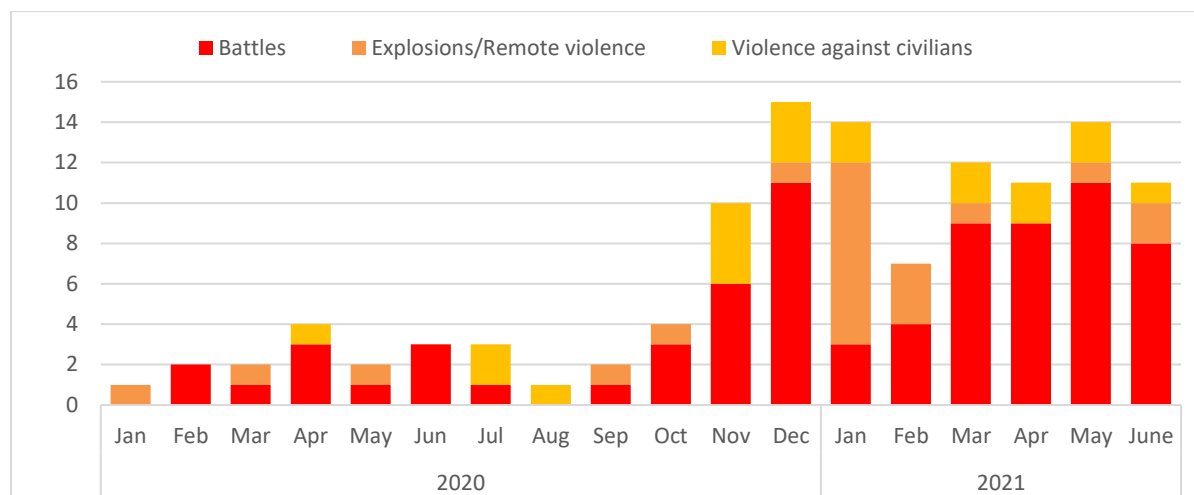


Figure 32. Bakool – Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>462</sup>

At district level, Hudur, with 74 incidents, accounted for the largest share (about 63 %) of the total 118 security incidents recorded in Bakool between January 2020 and the end of June 2021 (see Figure 33 below).<sup>463</sup>

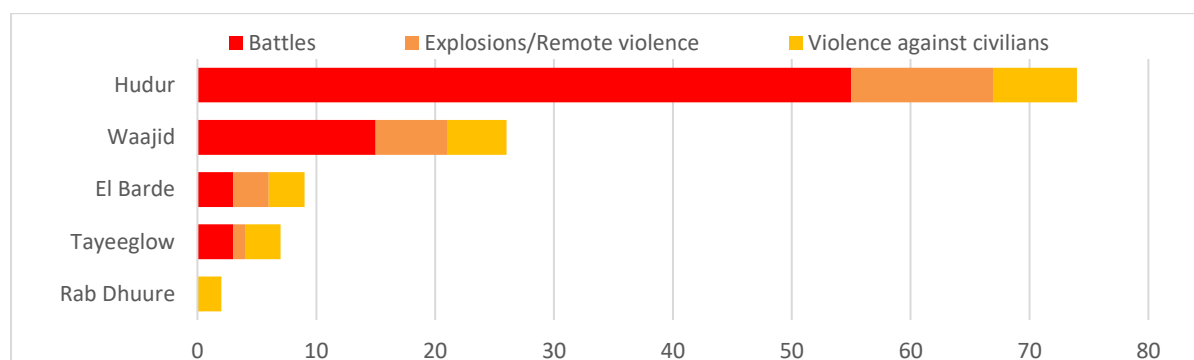


Figure 33. Bakool – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>464</sup>

Al-Shabaab was coded by ACLED as ACTOR 1 in 94 of the 118 security incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021, accounting for around 80 % of the total number of incidents. 74 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents involved either Somali military or police forces, Ethiopian forces or AMISOM, while 19 incidents affected civilians. The predominant type of incident was battles or armed clashes (62 incidents). Meanwhile, ACLED recorded 18 instances of Al-Shabaab violence against civilians, including 14 attacks and 4 cases of abduction or forced disappearance.<sup>465</sup>

Between January 2020 and June 2021, ACLED recorded three aerial strikes by the US armed forces (two strikes in Hudur and one in Tayeeglow), killing a total of three Al-Shabaab members. During the same 18-month period, Airwars, reported a single ‘contested’ US air or drone strike in Ma'moodow (Hudur district) on 29 January 2021 (also reported by ACLED<sup>466</sup>) that reportedly killed 2-4 combatants, noting that the AFRICOM denied involvement in the strike. Airwars thus concludes that it was more

<sup>462</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>463</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>464</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>465</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>466</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)



'likely an AMISOM or Ethiopian action'.<sup>467</sup> In addition, the United Nations documented one or more airstrikes (by unspecified forces) targeting Al-Shabaab in Bakool between February and April 2020.<sup>468</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 34 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Bakool region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Bakool	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	76	51
Explosions/Remote violence	22	23
Violence against civilians	20	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>95</b>

Figure 34. Bakool – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>469</sup>

Of the 95 fatalities recorded in Bakool, most were reported in Hudur (36 deaths) and El Barde (33 deaths). When focussing on incidents coded by ACLED as 'violence against civilians', the data suggest that Waajid (twelve fatalities), makes up the largest share of the total 21 fatalities caused by this type of violence.<sup>470</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

Al-Shabaab carried out several attacks and (attempted) assassinations targeting government officials. In June 2021, the district commissioner of Hudur town survived an IED attack on his convoy that killed one of his bodyguards and injured several other people.<sup>471</sup> On 5 March 2021, Al-Shabaab carried out a suicide attack near a police station in Waajid town, reportedly injuring four people.<sup>472</sup> In July 2020 Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for a targeted attack in Waajid town that killed an official of the regional administration who reportedly had close ties to Ethiopian forces.<sup>473</sup>

In late 2020 and the first half of 2021, the group reportedly also carried out several attacks on federal troops<sup>474</sup>, Ethiopian forces<sup>475</sup> and South West State regional forces<sup>476</sup> (sometimes referred to by Al-Shabaab as pro-Ethiopian Somali 'militias'<sup>477</sup>) on the road linking the towns of El Barde and Hudur, reportedly killing a number of soldiers.<sup>478</sup> In June 2020, clashes between Al-Shabaab and South West State forces near Hudur town reportedly left 'at least 15' members of the regional troops dead, according to a pro-Al-Shabaab media outlet.<sup>479</sup>

There have also been reports of unclaimed attacks on civilians. In late November 2020, unidentified gunmen killed a family of seven in a remote village in Waajid district. Local officials believed that Al-

<sup>467</sup> Airwars, Airwars assessment (US strikes in Bakool during the period from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021), n.d., [url](#)

<sup>468</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/398, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 20

<sup>469</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>470</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>471</sup> Radio Andalus, Programme Summary of Radio Andalus in Somali 0500gmt 3 June 21, 3 June 2021

<sup>472</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 18

<sup>473</sup> Somali Memo, Al-Shabab claims attacks on troops in south-west Somalia, 19 July 2020

<sup>474</sup> Radio Kulmiye, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 1700 gmt 2 Feb 21, 2 February 2021

<sup>475</sup> Radio Kulmiye, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 1700 gmt 2 Feb 21, 2 February 2021 Somali Memo, Al-Shabab claims deadly blasts in south-west Somalia, 21 January 2021

<sup>476</sup> Radio Al-Furqaan, Al-Shabab claims killing 10 soldiers in Somalia fighting, 12 December 2020

<sup>477</sup> Somali Memo, Al-Shabab claims deadly blasts in south-west Somalia, 21 January 2021 Somali Memo, Somali militants claim killing six soldiers in Bay, Bakool, 30 December 2020

<sup>478</sup> Somali Memo, Al-Shabab claims deadly blasts in south-west Somalia, 21 January 2021 Somali Memo, Somali militants claim killing six soldiers in Bay, Bakool, 30 December 2020; Radio Al-Furqaan, Al-Shabab claims killing 10 soldiers in Somalia fighting, 12 December 2020

<sup>479</sup> Calamada, Militants reportedly kill 15 soldiers in southwestern Somalia, 6 June 2020

Shabaab had ‘targeted the family because the father was a federal soldier’.<sup>480</sup> Earlier, in September 2020, a landmine explosion in Banjanay locality of Hudur district reportedly left six religious scholars dead and another two injured. This attack was also attributed by regional authorities to Al-Shabaab.<sup>481</sup>

In June and July 2020, at least three clashes occurred in Hudur, Baidoa and Berdaale when a local clan militia attacked Al-Shabaab fighters, killing dozens of them.<sup>482</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>483</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

Relief organisations noted that the humanitarian situation in Bakool, a region that has been affected by food insecurity for a long time, ‘has significantly worsened recently, largely due to insecurity, intimidation’<sup>484</sup> and blockades imposed by Al-Shabaab<sup>485</sup> ‘in many areas of the region’<sup>486</sup> that have caused shortages of food and basic items since early 2021<sup>487</sup> and ‘significantly reduced livelihood opportunities, forcing people to rely on humanitarian support and casual labour’.<sup>488</sup> Meanwhile, insecurity has restricted humanitarian access to populations in need.<sup>489</sup> In May 2021 it was reported that in Hudur district, Al-Shabaab had further ‘increased their presence along main supply routes.’<sup>490</sup> According to an UNOCHA report describing the situation in June 2021, Hudur town ‘is “militarily encircled” and all roads leading towards the main towns of Baidoa, Mogadishu and Beletweyne are blockaded, which has led to scarcity of goods and increased prices of food and water.’<sup>491</sup>

An assessment conducted by the United Nations in Hudur district found that most inhabitants could not afford more than one meal per day and that only around 5 % of the population had sufficient quantities of food to eat, with ‘acute malnutrition’ observed among children. UNOCHA noted that food prices have been rising rapidly in Hudur, with ‘local sources attribut[ing] the high prices of food items to increased costs of transporting goods from Beletweyne [Hiraan region] to Hudur as a result of potential security risks during transportation.’<sup>492</sup>

Against the backdrop of ongoing conflict with Al-Shabaab, judicial authorities have called on Bakool’s population to avoid any links with the group. In late February 2020, local media reported that a state court in Hudur district sentenced a woman to two years in prison for ‘allegedly visiting areas controlled by Al-Shabab’.<sup>493</sup> Meanwhile, in areas under the control of Al-Shabaab, there have been reports of Al-Shabaab meting out severe punishments based on the group’s interpretation of Sharia. In December 2020, a man in Tayeeglow district was sentenced by an Al-Shabaab judge for practising witchcraft and

<sup>480</sup> AA, Al-Shabaab blamed for killing family of 7 in Somalia, 26 November 2020, [url](#); see also Radio Dalsan, Al-Shabaab Militants Kill Seven Family Members in Night Raid, 27 November 2020

<sup>481</sup> Radio Risala, Programme Summary of Somalia’s Radio Risala News 1600 gmt 15 Sep 20, 15 September 2020, available by subscription

<sup>482</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, S/2020/949, 28 September 2020, [url](#), pp. 80-81

<sup>483</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>484</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin January 2021, 14 February 2021, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>485</sup> USAID, Somalia - Complex Emergency July 27, 2021, Fact Sheet #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, 28 July 2021, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>486</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin January 2021, 14 February 2021 [url](#), p. 4

<sup>487</sup> USAID, Somalia - Complex Emergency July 27, 2021, Fact Sheet #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, 28 July 2021, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>488</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin January 2021, 14 February 2021 [url](#), p. 4

<sup>489</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin January 2021, 14 February 2021 [url](#), pp. 3-4; see also USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>490</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin May 2021, 17 June 2021, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>491</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin June 2021, 14 July 2021, [url](#)

<sup>492</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin January 2021, 14 February 2021 [url](#), p. 4

<sup>493</sup> Radio Kulmiye, Programme summary of Somalia’s Radio Kulmiye News 1700 gmt 25 Feb 20, 25 February 2020

publicly executed.<sup>494</sup> In 2020, UNOCHA recorded 13 incidents in Bakool that hindered humanitarian organisations from accessing populations in need.<sup>495</sup>

In March 2020, in Hudur district, Al-Shabaab ordered community leaders and elders of 11 villages to provide children to the group (as well as financial means to sustain them), threatening to evict and expel people who refuse to comply with their demands. Citing lack of protection by the authorities, these ‘communities mobilised their clan militia, the Caaro-Caaro (Spider) militia’.<sup>496</sup> This militia carried out several deadly attacks on Al-Shabaab in June and July 2020 (see above). In response, Al-Shabaab abducted 60 local community members and held them until a truce was negotiated a few days later.<sup>497</sup>

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, the PRMN<sup>498</sup> recorded an estimated 31 000 new displacements from Bakool (24 000 in 2020 and another 7 000 in January-May 2021), with peaks of over 3 000 reported in March and November 2020. Most people displaced from their homes in Bakool relocated to other places within the same region, with only a minority of around 5 000 displaced to neighbouring Gedo, Bay and Hiraan. Meanwhile, PRMN recorded some 26 000 arrivals of displaced persons in the region (21 000 in 2020 and 5 000 in January–May 2021), virtually all from other areas within Bakool.<sup>499</sup>

The same source indicates that conflict and insecurity were one of the main reasons for displacement in Bakool across both years (accounting for a total of about 16 000 cases), along with drought. Conflict and insecurity were reported to be the predominant reason for displacement in Hudur and Tayeeglow district.<sup>500</sup> Most recently, in May 2021, the UNOCHA reported that ‘more than 4,950 households (29,700 people) have been displaced to Hudur town following a directive from non-state armed actors to vacate 42 villages surrounding the town’.<sup>501</sup>

## 2.2.2 Bay

### 2.2.2.1 Background

Bay region borders with the following regions: Bakool to the north, Lower Shabelle to the east and south-east, with Middle Jubba to the south-west and Gedo to the west. It consists of four districts: Baydhaba, Buur Hakaba, Qansax Dheere and Diinsoor. The region’s capital is Baidoa, also known as Baydhaba.<sup>502</sup> Baidoa also serves as the de facto capital of South West State, though officially the SW State capital is Baraawe in Lower Shabelle region. Baidoa is the largest city in the region, and houses a large AMISOM contingent in the protected airport zone.<sup>503</sup>

Bay region is one of the only zones in Somalia where rainfall is adequate to sustain rainfed agriculture, and the region’s economy is mainly based on subsistence farming and agro-pastoralism. Most of the population is thereafter sedentary, and identification with a village is often as important as sub-clan. Farming there is marginal, and susceptible to frequent drought, making this one of Somalia’s poorest regions.<sup>504</sup>

<sup>494</sup> Somali Memo, Al-Shabab kills Somali man accused of sorcery, 11 December 2020

<sup>495</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>496</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, S/2020/949, 28 September 2020, [url](#), p. 80

<sup>497</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, S/2020/949, 28 September 2020, [url](#), pp. 80-81

<sup>498</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>499</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>500</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>501</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin May 2021, 17 June 2021, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>502</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#); Global Shelter Cluster, Bay/Bakool, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>503</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>504</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

The region has considerable strategic and commercial importance. The paved road from Mogadishu through Baidoa to Gedo region and the Kenya border is one of the most important commercial arteries in the country.<sup>505</sup>

The region is mainly inhabited by Rahanweyn clans. Mirifle clans tend to populate the northern half of the region, while Digil predominate in the southern portion, toward the Lower Shabelle region. Small pockets of Hawiye groups are also found in the region: Doqondiide, Hawadle and Sheikhal in the south and Jajele, Sogow, and Dirisamo in the east.<sup>506</sup> As in Bakool region, the Mirifle are divided into two large groups, the Sagaal and Sideed. Typically, to keep the peace, political positions in Bay region have been carefully allocated to ensure power sharing between the Sagaal and Sideed.<sup>507</sup>

Baidoa town is mainly inhabited by the Rahanweyn, of which the Mirifle are the main inhabitants. The city is informally divided into neighbourhood by subclans, as is common in other Somalia cities. The Hariin (Mirifle/Sideed) are the majority in Adada and Mursal neighbourhoods; the Hadami (Mirifle/Sagaal) are the majority in Buulo Hadame; and the Leysan (Mirifle/Sideed) are the majority inhabitants of Berdale.<sup>508</sup> Large influxes of Digil-Mirifle refugee returnees from Kenya are now concentrating in fast growing IDP camps in Baidoa. Many are not from sub-clan indigenous to Baidoa town, and are changing the sub-clan demographics of the city.<sup>509</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of the Bay region was 792 182, among which 93 046 people in urban areas, 463 330 in rural, and 195 986 nomads.<sup>510</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.2.2.2 Conflict dynamics

In broad general terms, Bay's conflict dynamics are very similar to Bakool's: see section on [Bakool Conflict dynamics](#).<sup>511</sup>

**Actors and control areas/influence.** Al-Shabaab is actively engaged in the Bay region where it predominantly controls the rural areas. South-West state and federal state forces are in control of the main towns instead (such as Baidoa, Burhakaba, Dinsor), which are like islands encircled by al-Shabaab's or contested territory. Al-Shabaab policy in Bay is different than in Bakool: in Bay goods are free to reach Baidoa from Mogadishu for instance, once taxed by Al-Shabaab. The group instead does not allow goods to leave Baidoa to reach Xudur or Waajid however.<sup>512</sup> Reportedly Al-Shabaab also controls access to water, electricity, and education services in Baidoa,<sup>513</sup> besides offering access to justice via mobile courts.<sup>514</sup> For additional details about the SNA units, the South West security forces, and the AMISOM ENDF contingents present in the region, see report on [Somalia: Actors](#).<sup>515</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** The main source of conflict in Bay is the on-going armed confrontation between Al-Shabaab and anti-Al-Shabaab forces.<sup>516</sup> According to security expert II, in Bay, differently from what happens in Jubbaland's regions, federal and state forces are politically and militarily aligned.<sup>517</sup>

<sup>505</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>506</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>507</sup> Nordic International Support Foundation, Somalia Context Analysis: Baidoa, 2016, n.d., p. 17, non public source

<sup>508</sup> Nordic International Support Foundation, Somalia Context Analysis: Baidoa, 2016, n.d., p. 17, non public source

<sup>509</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>510</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>511</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>512</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>513</sup> Felbab-Brown, V., The Problem with Militias in Somalia, 2020, [url](#), p. 121

<sup>514</sup> Expanding Access to Justice Program, The Shari'ah in Somalia, March 2020, [url](#), p. 25

<sup>515</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 84-86

<sup>516</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021; Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>517</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

Inter-clan tensions over land, crimes, and other matters periodically flare up in the region, but in recent years have been managed and contained, producing a pattern of frequent security incidents but relatively low casualty levels. In terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period no major disputes (or long-running clan conflicts) were reported or were relevant in the Bay region.<sup>518</sup>

### 2.2.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab's violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias' violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

ACLED data indicate that in terms of the number of security incidents, Bay region ranked fourth among Somalia's regions, both in 2020 and the first half of 2021; regarding the total number of fatalities, the region ranked third in 2020 and fifth in the first six months of 2021 (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, 204 security incidents were reported in Bay, including battles, explosions/remote violence and violent acts against civilians, causing 378 fatalities. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted 105 incidents with 115 deaths (see Figure 35 and Figure 37).<sup>519</sup>

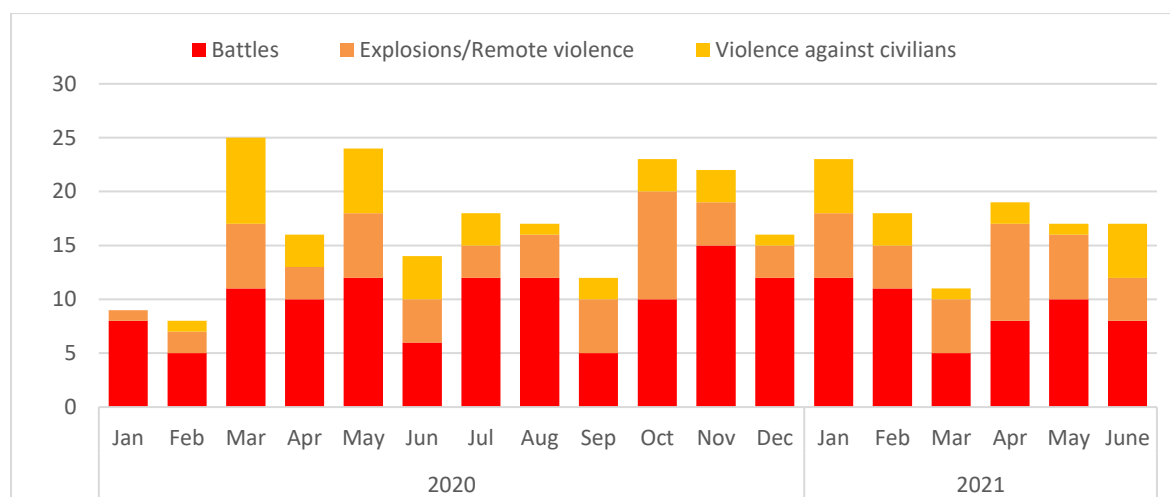


Figure 35. Bay – Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>520</sup>

At district level, Baidoa, with 193 incidents, accounted for the majority (about 62 %) of the total 309 security incidents recorded in Bay between January 2020 and the end of June 2021 (see Figure 36).<sup>521</sup>

<sup>518</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>519</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>520</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>521</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)



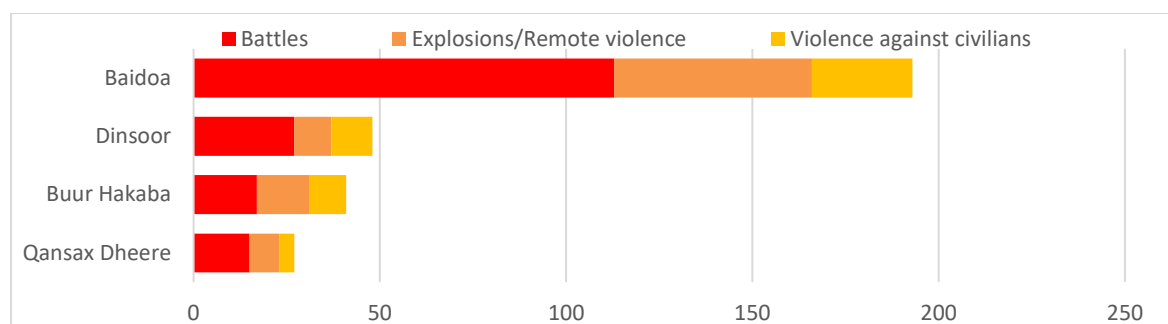


Figure 36. Bay – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>522</sup>

ACLED coded Al-Shabaab as ACTOR 1 in 178 of the 309 security incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021, accounting for around 58 % of the total number of incidents. 113 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents involved either Somali military or police forces, while 18 involved AMISOM. Another 42 incidents involved civilians. The predominant type of incident was armed clashes (101 incidents). Meanwhile, ACLED recorded 35 instances of Al-Shabaab violence targeting civilians, including 28 attacks and seven cases of abduction/forced disappearance.<sup>523</sup>

Between January 2020 and June 2021, ACLED recorded eight aerial strikes by the US armed forces (six strikes in Buur Hakaba and one each in Baidoa and Dinsoor), killing at least 22 Al-Shabaab members.<sup>524</sup> During the same 18-month period, Airwars reported a single US air or drone strike near Buulo Fuulay village (Buur Hakaba district),<sup>525</sup> an Al-Shabaab stronghold<sup>526</sup>.

Regarding IED activities, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported a significant increase in IED activities in Bay in 2020 compared to 2019. These incidents mainly occurred along one main supply route that leads through Bay region and into Gedo region and accounted for 11 % of all IED incidents documented in Somalia in 2020.<sup>527</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 37 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction as to civilian and non-civilian) that have been recorded by ACLED in Bay region between January 2020 and the end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Bay	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	172	350
Explosions/Remote violence	85	99
Violence against civilians	52	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>493</b>

Figure 37. Bay – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>528</sup>

Of the 493 fatalities recorded in Bay, most were reported in Baidoa district (322 deaths). When focussing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, the data indicates that Baidoa, with 22 fatalities, followed by Buur Hakaba (13 fatalities), accounts for the majority of the 44 fatalities caused by this type of violence.<sup>529</sup>

<sup>522</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>523</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>524</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>525</sup> Airwars, Airwars assessment (US strikes in Bay during the period from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021), n.d., [url](#)

<sup>526</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, S/2020/949, 28 September 2020, [url](#), p. 79

<sup>527</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report - 2020 Annual Report, 16 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>528</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>529</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

### Illustrative security incidents

On 10 April 2021, Al-Shabaab carried out a suicide attack in a restaurant in Baidoa, targeting the Governor of Bay region. While he survived the attack, five other people reportedly lost their lives and another eleven were injured.<sup>530</sup> On 27 January 2021, an explosion in a restaurant in Dinsoor killed a soldier and wounded at least five other people.<sup>531</sup> Earlier, on 4 July 2020, four people were killed by a landmine planted in a restaurant in the outskirts of Baidoa.<sup>532</sup>

On 31 October 2020, the District Commissioner of Qansax Dheere survived an IED attack which left three other people dead, including a local NGO worker. On 17 August 2020, Al-Shabaab conducted a 'complex attack on the Somali National Army base in Gofgadud Burey', maintaining control over the base for three days.<sup>533</sup>

On 23 and 24 May 2020, Al-Shabaab carried out two attacks in Baidoa and Dinsoor, targeting civilians during Eid celebrations. These attacks reportedly left seven people dead and more than 40 injured.<sup>534</sup> On 18 February 2020, the group assassinated an individual in Buur Hakaba town who had acted as a South-West State electoral delegate in 2016/17.<sup>535</sup>

According to Somali Memo, a pro-Al-Shabaab media outlet, an air strike carried out on 28 March 2020 killed two civilians.<sup>536</sup> This claim of civilian casualties was later rejected in a report by AFRICOM which stated that those killed were Al-Shabaab members.<sup>537</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>538</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

A United Nations report notes that in April 2020, Al-Shabaab enhanced its existing economic blockade on the (government-controlled) town of Dinsoor, conducting 'a series of attacks targeting the transport of commercial goods to the town'. Al-Shabaab also issued threatening messages to Dinsoor's inhabitants, ordering them to relocate to areas controlled by the group. Moreover, they prohibited the population of surrounding rural areas from transporting food and essential commodities into the town. During the same month, the United Nations panel of Somalia experts 'recorded 14 incidents where carts transporting food and other products from Baidoa to Dinsoor were burnt, while owners were arrested and interrogated by Al-Shabaab'. With food prices rising dramatically, a number of people left the town, moving to surrounding villages controlled by Al-Shabaab or to Baidoa and Bardheere (Gedo region).<sup>539</sup> Recently, UNOCHA noted that 'while humanitarian supplies continued to reach Baidoa, onwards access by road to Qansax Dheere and Berdale [...] has been intermittent due to insecurity'.<sup>540</sup>

The same source indicates that areas of Bay region were among the worst-affected in Somalia in terms of child protection.<sup>541</sup> Amongst others, children have been targeted by Al-Shabaab for recruitment. According to the United Nations panel of experts reports, Al-Shabaab carried out a recruitment

<sup>530</sup> UNSG, Situation Report Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 18

<sup>531</sup> AA, Somalia: 16 dead, several injured in 3 bomb blasts, 27. January 2021, [url](#)

<sup>532</sup> AP, Explosions rock 2 Somalia cities as 4 killed in Baidoa, 4 July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>533</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/1113, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 14

<sup>534</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/798, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 23

<sup>535</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/398, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 45

<sup>536</sup> Somali Memo, Dhageyso: Ehellada dadkii ku dhintay duqeyntii Mareykanka ee Buula Fullaay oo Warbaahinta lahadlay [Relatives of those killed in the US bombing of Bula Fullay speak to the media], 29 March 2020, [url](#)

<sup>537</sup> US, AFRICOM, CIVCAS Report: 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, 2020, 2020, [url](#)

<sup>538</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>539</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, S/2020/949, 28 September 2020, [url](#), p. 77

<sup>540</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin April 2021, 11 May 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>541</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan - Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 84

campaign from December 2019 onwards, repeatedly requesting rural communities in the Berdale area to provide young fighters and money to support them. By May 2020, the group had arrested five community leaders who had refused to comply with their demands.<sup>542</sup>

In 2020, UNOCHA recorded 31 incidents in Bay that hindered humanitarian organisations from accessing populations in need, the highest figure among Somalia's regions.<sup>543</sup>

### Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, the UNHCR Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN)<sup>544</sup> recorded an estimated 132 000 new displacements from Bay (66 000 in 2020 and another 66 000 from January to May 2021), with peaks reported in January (23 000) and July 2020 (15 000) and in April 2021 (51 000). According to this source, Bay had the fifth highest number of new displacements among Somalia's 18 regions in 2020, and the second highest number in the first five months of 2021 (after Benadir region). Most people displaced from their homes in Bay relocated to other places within the same region, with a minority of around 19 000 displaced to other regions, especially neighbouring Gedo and Middle Jubba. Meanwhile, PRMN recorded some 123 000 arrivals of displaced persons in Bay (63 000 in 2020 and 60 000 from January to May 2021), most of them from other areas within the same region.<sup>545</sup>

The same source indicates that conflict and insecurity were the main reason for displacement in Bay across both years (accounting for an estimated total of 97 000 cases), followed by drought. Conflict and insecurity were reported to be predominant reason for displacement in Baidoa district (where most of the region's displacement cases were reported).<sup>546</sup> Most recently, UNOCHA reported that 42 000 people were displaced from 19 villages in the Berdale area [Baidoa district] in April 2021.<sup>547</sup>

### Evictions

Among the IDPs living in Baidoa, who are mostly poor members of the locally dominant Rahanweyn clan groups<sup>548</sup>, many have been affected by evictions in recent years.<sup>549</sup> According to the NRC Eviction Information Portal, during the period from 1 January 2020 to 29 June 2021, 20 cases of forced eviction arrivals were reported in Bay region, resulting in the forced expulsion of 13 602 individuals. All of these forced eviction cases date from January to April 2020 and, with the exception of a single case reported in Dinsoor, all were recorded in Baidoa district. In each case, the NRC listed 'owner development' as the cause leading to the forced eviction. In late April 2020, these evictions reportedly came to a halt,<sup>550</sup> as the district administration of Baidoa, in view of the COVID-19 situation, put in place a moratorium on evictions. The moratorium was further extended into 2021. This led to 'zero evictions' being recorded in the district since summer 2020, according to a March 2021 NRC report.<sup>551</sup>

<sup>542</sup> UN Security Council, Report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia, S/2020/949, 28 September 2020, [url](#), p. 79

<sup>543</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>544</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>545</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>546</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>547</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin May 2021, 17 June 2021, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>548</sup> Bakonyi, J., The Political Economy of Displacement: Rent Seeking, Disposessions and Precarious Mobility in Somali Cities, April 2021, [url](#), pp. 14-15

<sup>549</sup> Bakonyi, J., The Political Economy of Displacement: Rent Seeking, Disposessions and Precarious Mobility in Somali Cities, April 2021, [url](#), pp. 15, 18

<sup>550</sup> NRC, Eviction Information Portal, Dataset, as of 29 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>551</sup> NRC, Consultative Evictions' Mitigation and Prevention Forum in Baidoa, 5 June 2021, [url](#), p. 1

## 2.2.3 Lower Shabelle

### 2.2.3.1 Background

Lower Shabelle region is located along the coast in south Somalia. It shares borders with the following regions: Middle Jubba to the south, Bay to the north-west, Middle Shabelle to the east and Banadir to the south-east. It also borders the Indian ocean to the east and shares a small border with Bakool and Hiiraan in the north. The region is divided into seven districts: Wanla Weyn, Afgooye, Qoryooley, Marka, Kurtunwaarey, Sablaale and Baraawe. The region's capital is Marka.<sup>552</sup>

The Lower Shabelle region is one of the most high-value and strategic zones of the country. The country's most productive irrigated agricultural zone, serving as the 'bread-basket' of the country. Its proximity to the large Mogadishu market ties it closely to the capital city and its economy. Two of the most important roads, linking Mogadishu to Baidoa and to Kismayo, pass through the region. It features the port towns of Merka and Baraawe. The airport at Bale Dogle (also Bali Doogle, Wanla Weyn district) has served for years as a base housing Somali special forces, US military advisors and trainers, and AMISOM peacekeepers. The Afgooye corridor, linking Mogadishu to Afgooye and the Lower Shabelle, is the site of rapidly growing peri-urban settlements on the outskirts of Mogadishu and the location of major new IDP camps.<sup>553</sup>

The population of the region is very diverse, complex, and contested. It is comprised of three groupings: the long-term indigenous populations (clans inhabiting the region in pre-colonial era), historic migrants (populations that gravitated into the region in the colonial era and few decades of independence for work or investment in farms) and civil war era armed settlers.<sup>554</sup>

The long-term indigenous communities include many sub-clans of the Digil-Mirifle clan-family, the largest of which include the Tunni, Tunni-Tore, Eelay, Garre, Bagadi, Geledi, and Jiddu; the Biyomaal (Dir) clan, which inhabits the area in and around Merka town; and, in the easternmost portions of the region, numerous Hawiye clans, including the Abgal, Gaaljaal, Murosade, and Sheikal. The ancient coastal trading towns of Merka and Baraawe have been the home of the Rer Baraawe and Rer Benedari people, a trading community with a distinct language, culture, and ethnicity, and deep ties to Indian Ocean littoral communities. Finally, populations of Somali Bantu, both aboriginal and the descendants of East African slaves sold to Somalis in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, populate villages in the Lower Shabelle.<sup>555</sup>

Historic migrants include Somalis of all clans who relocated to the region to take advantage of employment and livelihood opportunities from the 1920s to 1990. This made the Lower Shabelle an unusually cosmopolitan part of Somalia. Many in this group were forced to flee during the civil war, but some remain.<sup>556</sup>

Armed settlers arrived in the region in 1991-92, in the form of strong clan militias and their families. They settled in the Lower Shabelle, occupying abandoned farms, plantations, and state farms, and taking up residence in larger towns such as Afgooye, Merka, and Baraawe. Most of these settlers were from the Habir Gedir (Hawiye) clan, but other Hawiye clans have joined them as well.<sup>557</sup>

Security expert I states that the relative weight of these clans, in terms of population composition in the region, can be roughly approximated as follows: Digil 55-60 %, Hawiye 30%, Biyomaal 10%.<sup>558</sup>

<sup>552</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>553</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>554</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>555</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>556</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>557</sup> Menkhaus, K., Input received during peer review, August 27 2021.

<sup>558</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of the Lower Shabelle region was 1 202 219 persons, among which 215 752 people in urban areas, 723 682 in rural, and 159 815 nomads.<sup>559</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.2.3.2 Conflict dynamics

From a conflict dynamic perspective Lower Shabelle is the most complex region in the South West state, according to security expert I. Although major towns in the region fall under the control of the government, this does not tell the real picture. The region is a kind of ‘lawless land’ where no state actor is fully in control of the rule of law.<sup>560</sup>

**Actors and control areas/influence.** Al-Shabaab has maintained an active network throughout the region and despite offensives to push it out of main towns continues to launch attacks, control roadblocks, and tax local populations. It exploits local tensions and grievances to forge tactical alliances with clans against rivals.<sup>561</sup>

The region has a strong security sector presence. AMISOM units are active against Al-Shabaab, and US advisors and special forces are present at Bali Doogle. The SNA has a strong presence as well. However, the SNA units are dominated by the Hawiye clan,<sup>562</sup> and are sometimes used to advance the interests of the clan against their local rivals. It is difficult to differentiate when the forces are used as clan militia and when as the SNA.<sup>563</sup>

Other major players in the region are the clan political leadership and militias of the Digil and Biyomaal.<sup>564</sup> In addition, an armed group nicknamed the Macawiisley, a voluntary, unofficial, and Hawiye-led local protection force,<sup>565</sup> has been mobilized by the community to fight Al-Shabaab, mainly due to resentment over taxes.<sup>566</sup> However, according to security expert I their role is often exaggerated, because they ‘don’t really pose a real threat to Al-Shabaab,’ who always ‘takes care of them’.<sup>567</sup> For additional details about the presence of AMISOM, SNA, South-West armed forces, and clan militias, see the report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>568</sup>

The overall strength of the Hawiye surpasses by far that of any other group in the area: allegedly they control 90 % of the economy, and 70 % of the military.<sup>569</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** A first major conflict is the on-going confrontation between Al-Shabaab and anti-Al-Shabaab forces. According to security expert II, in Lower Shabelle, differently from what happens in Jubbaland’s regions, federal and state forces are politically and militarily aligned.<sup>570</sup> The on-going conflict deeply affects the area, making it one of the most if not the most affected area in the entire country.<sup>571</sup> According to security expert I, this is explained by the fact that Lower Shabelle is one of the most developed and resourceful regions in the entire country, where about 80% of the land is properly farmed. Additionally, apart from Mogadishu, this region has the highest population density in Somalia. Hence, Al-Shabaab presence and activities in the area are also meant to prove that they are ‘in

<sup>559</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>560</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>561</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>562</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>563</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>564</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>565</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>566</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>567</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>568</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 84-86

<sup>569</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>570</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>571</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021



business' in one of the most crucial areas of the country. Finally, Al-Shabaab uses Lower Shabelle as a stage to plan attacks in the heart of Mogadishu.<sup>572</sup> Adding to this, security expert II, points out to the fact AS has been 'controlling this area for quite a long time', they used to have 'their biggest court system in this region', and to have their 'central headquarters there'.<sup>573</sup> Against this backdrop, as to the joint SNA-AMISOM military operation Badbaado 1 see section on [Recent political and security developments](#) for details. To this regard, an organisation working on Somalia's security and stability, reported in August 2021 that in the Afgoye – Awdheegle – Marka triangle there were substantial improvements as a result of various stabilization investments and as part of consolidating progress under Operation Badbaado.<sup>574</sup>

A second and deeper source of conflict in Lower Shabelle is typically clannish and revolves around clashes over land and water resources or business competition. There is an on-going rivalry between Hawiye and non-Hawiye clans in the area, both the Biyomaal and Digil,<sup>575</sup> with the former controlling most of the rich farmland, and the latter claiming that they control and occupy it illegitimately.<sup>576</sup> Al-Shabaab tries to exploit this 'constant fighting between clans' to its own advantage,<sup>577</sup> by asking those illegitimately farming the land to pay taxes to the group, in order to be allowed to continue farming: 'we know that you know the owner, you have to pay taxes, extra taxes to us, so we allow you to farm' comments security expert I.<sup>578</sup>

In terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period following disputes (or conflicts) were reported or were relevant in the Lower Shabelle region (non-exhaustive list):

- Hawiye vs Biyomaal. An exemplification of the clan rivalry mentioned above is represented by the contest between Hawiye and Biyomaal clans in and around the town of Marka.<sup>579</sup> The Biyomaal, although belonging to the Dir clan family, can be considered a minority clan in the region (see for additional details the EASO's COI report [Somalia: Actors](#) and the EASO's COI report [Somalia: Targeted Profiles](#)).<sup>580</sup> They seek more power and influence, along with a fairer share of the control over the security apparatus, which they claim is instead disproportionately in the hands of the Hawiye.<sup>581</sup> According to security expert II, those fighting this conflict do so often from 'within the military forces or within the government forces', while 'wearing the uniform', 'at least some of them'.<sup>582</sup>
- Shanta-Alemod (Digil) vs Gaaljeel (Hawiye) hostilities in and round the town of Wenlaweyn and its district. In July 2020 the parties reached an agreement on the cessation of hostilities allowing displaced people to return.<sup>583</sup> In April 2020 the conflict had resulted in more than 25 fatalities.<sup>584</sup>

### 2.2.3.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities;

<sup>572</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>573</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>574</sup> Unpublished written information from a security organisation provided to EASO, August 2021

<sup>575</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>576</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021; Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>577</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021; Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>578</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>579</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021; Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>580</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), p. 47; EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), Chapter 4 Minorities and non-minority clans

<sup>581</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>582</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>583</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para 39; Universal TV, Two killed in southern Somalia clan feud, 29 September 2020

<sup>584</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 35

Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab’s violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias’ violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups’ violent events.

### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

Both in 2020 and in the first half of 2021, ACLED data indicate that the Lower Shabelle administrative region had the highest number of security incidents in all of Somalia; it also had the highest total number of fatalities in 2020 and the second highest total number of fatalities in the first half of 2021 in the whole country (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, a number of 588 security incidents, including battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence and violent acts against civilians were reported in Lower Shabelle, causing 871 fatalities. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted 332 incidents and 297 deaths in this region (see Figure 38 and Figure 40).<sup>585</sup>

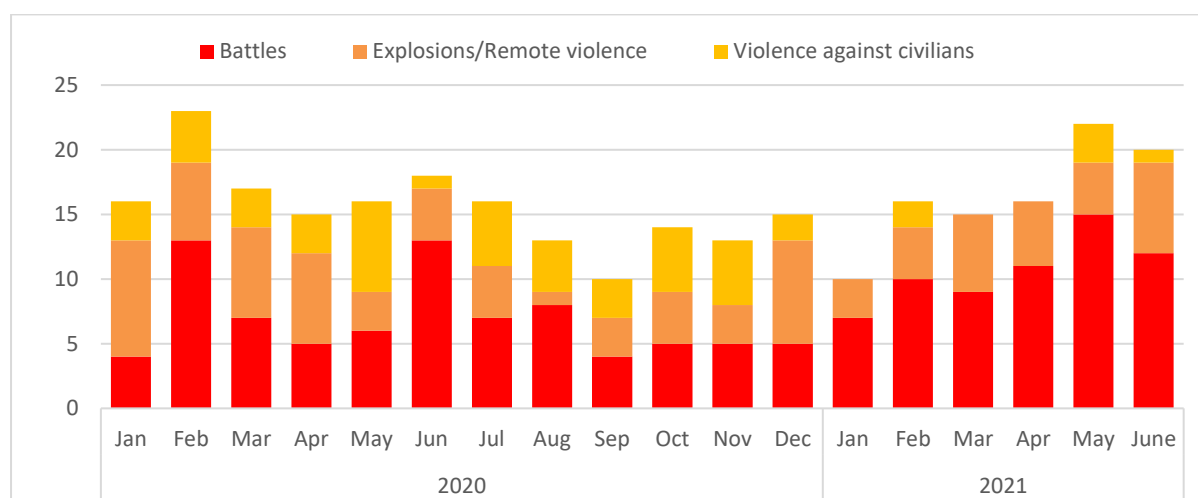


Figure 38. Lower Shabelle – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>586</sup>

At the district level, Afgoye recorded the most security incidents (448 events), followed by Lower Shabelle’s capital Marka (277 events), for the period between January 2020 and end of June 2021 (see Figure 39).<sup>587</sup>

<sup>585</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>586</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>587</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

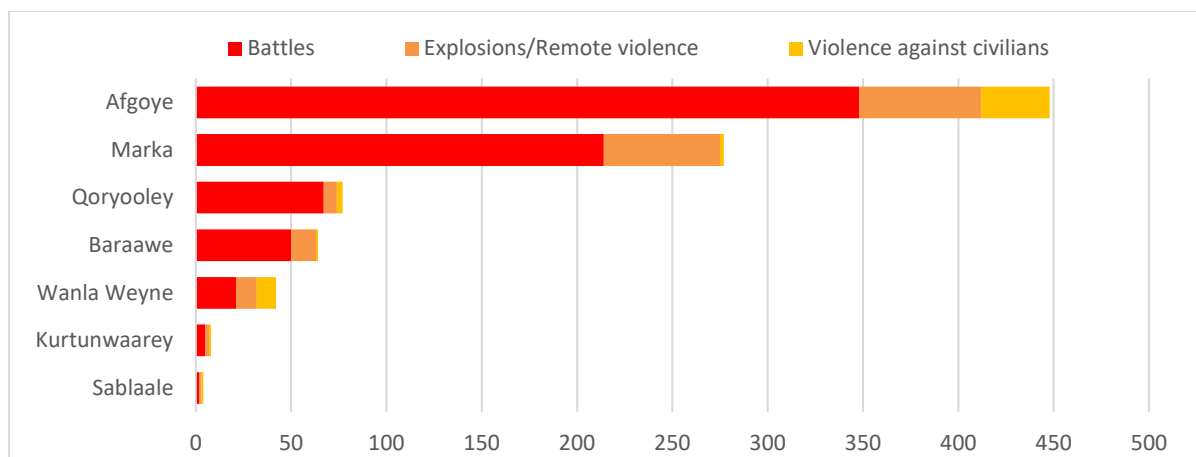


Figure 39. Lower Shabelle – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>588</sup>

Al-Shabaab was coded as ACTOR 1 in 746 of the 920 security incidents, accounting for around 81 % of incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021. 579 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents involved Somali Armed Forces or Somali Police Force, 132 involved AMISOM forces, and 30 incidents involved civilians. The main type of incidents were armed clashes (609 incidents), along with the use of remote-controlled explosives (90 incidents) and attacks against civilians (21 incidents).<sup>589</sup>

Between January 2020 and June 2021, Airwars documented 13 alleged US strikes that killed 12 Al-Shabaab fighters or militants and between 15 and 18 civilians in Lower Shabelle.<sup>590</sup> For the same time period, ACLED data list 21 airstrikes by the US military in Lower Shabelle, resulting in 62 fatalities.<sup>591</sup>

In 2020, Lower Shabelle was among the most affected regions regarding IED (improvised explosive device) activities, which mostly took place on main supply routes (MSRs).<sup>592</sup> Lower Shabelle recorded the highest number of stand-off weapons (SOW) incidents in 2020 countrywide as well as 20 mortar attacks. UNMAS argued that these attacks were likely related to operations aiming at pushing armed opposition groups north of river Shabelle in order to protect MSRs.<sup>593</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 40 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction as to civilian and non-civilian) that have been recorded by ACLED in Lower Shabelle region between January 2020 and the end of June 2021, by type of incident:

<sup>588</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>589</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>590</sup> Airwars, Airwars assessment (US strikes in Lower Shabelle during the period from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021), n.d., [url](#)

<sup>591</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>592</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report - 2020 Annual Report, 16 June 2021, [url](#), pp. 7-9

<sup>593</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report - 2020 Annual Report, 16 June 2021, [url](#), p. 27

Lower Shabelle	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	707	798
Explosions/Remote violence	159	298
Violence against civilians	54	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>1168</b>

Figure 40. Lower Shabelle – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>594</sup>

Of the 1 168 fatalities recorded in Lower Shabelle in 2020 and the first half of 2021, the vast majority (584 deaths) were reported in Afgoye, followed by Marka (298 deaths), Qoryooley (112 deaths), Wanla Weyne (99 deaths), Sablaale (35 deaths), Baraawe (22 deaths), and Kurtunwaarey (18 deaths). When focusing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, most of the 54 incidents that caused in total 72 fatalities were reported in Afgoye (34 incidents and 36 fatalities).<sup>595</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

In May 2021, the UN Secretary-General stated that Lower Shabelle was among the regions most affected by security incidents – mostly hit-and-run attacks perpetrated by Al-Shabaab targeting Somali Security Forces and AMISOM.<sup>596</sup>

On 3 April 2021, Al-Shabaab initiated attacks with vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs) on SNA bases in Barire and Awdheghe in Afgoye district, resulting in about 20 soldiers killed and 45 injured.<sup>597</sup> The United Nations Secretary-General reported an indefinite number of mortar attacks between 5 November 2020 and 9 February 2021 and a decreasing number of mortar attacks between February and November 2020. These attacks targeted mainly AMISOM and local security forces in Lower Shabelle.<sup>598</sup> In the same period, Al-Shabaab used grenades and IEDs to target high-level federal and state officials, among them the Governor of Lower Shabelle.<sup>599</sup> For more information on this topic, please see section 6.1 of EASO’s COI report [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#).

In response to the liberation of Janale by SNA and AMISOM, in March 2020 Al-Shabaab increased its attacks against AMISOM troops, killing five soldiers.<sup>600</sup> On 19 February 2020, Al-Shabaab attacked AMISOM and SNA bases in Qoryooley and Ceel Saliini, Marka district, with VBIEDs, resulting in over 20 SNA casualties.<sup>601</sup>

On 1 January 2021, US forces conducted an air strike on Kurtunwaarey town in the Kunya-Barrow area destroying the Andulus FM radio station that belonged to Al-Shabaab. No fatalities and/or injuries were confirmed.<sup>602</sup> Another media article reported the destruction of Al-Shabaab’s al-Furqaan Radio in the course of air strikes on Kunya-Barrow town in the same week. According to special forces officials, the attack killed three journalists working there.<sup>603</sup> Airwars reported that Somali and US military forces engaged in an air strike in the vicinity of Tortorow, killing eight civilians, on 21 September 2020. US AFRICOM concluded in their assessment of the incident that the claim was unsubstantiated, since ‘U.S. forces were not directly involved in this operation and no U.S. military

<sup>594</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>595</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>596</sup> UNSG, Situation Report Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 14

<sup>597</sup> UNSG, Situation Report Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 18, ACLED, Somalia, SOM33539, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33542, [url](#)

<sup>598</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/154, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 13; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/1113, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 12

<sup>599</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/154, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>600</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/398, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 18

<sup>601</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/398, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 18; ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM30533, [url](#)

<sup>602</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#);

Somali Dispatch, Al Shabab radio station bombed, casualties unknown, 2 January 2021, [url](#)

<sup>603</sup> Somali Dispatch, Somalia discloses names of pro-shabaab journalists killed in airstrikes, 7 January 2021, [url](#)

strike took place at the time and place reported.<sup>604</sup> Al Jazeera as well as Human Rights Watch reported five civilians, among them a 13-year old, respectively a child, were killed in that incident.<sup>605</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>606</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

In Lower Shabelle, clan conflicts continued. People's lives and livelihoods were affected by clan violence, also causing displacements. Clan conflicts were the reason that humanitarian programmes were suspended.<sup>607</sup> In Marka, the violent conflict between the two sub-clans Habar Gidir and Biyomaal was peacefully resolved after almost a decade of fighting. Elders from both sub-clans had signed a peace agreement in March 2018 backed by authorities from the Federal Government of Somalia and South-West State, the United Nations and the international community. Since then, people have been living in peace and the economy has recovered, an article from September 2020 explained.<sup>608</sup> In the first quarter of 2021, clashes between insurgents and clan militias in Wanla Weyne district resulted in the confiscation of livestock from pastoralists as well as the torching of their settlements and assets.<sup>609</sup>

Furthermore, among the reported incidents involving civilians in Lower Shabelle were an explosion of ordnance killing and injuring children,<sup>610</sup> attacks on trucks carrying charcoal to Mogadishu by Al-Shabaab,<sup>611</sup> the rescue of child soldiers from Al-Shabaab<sup>612</sup> as well as the rape of girls and women by security officials or militias<sup>613</sup>. USDOS reported that 'AMISOM forces were implicated in rapes and other unspecified grave abuses of human rights' in relation to military operations against Al-Shabaab in Lower Shabelle.<sup>614</sup>

UNOCHA reported that conflict impacted trade flows and livelihoods, e.g. by disrupting cropping activities. Cropping activities were most affected by conflict in Wanla Weyne, Marka and Qoryooley in the second quarter of 2020.<sup>615</sup> In February 2020, UNOCHA reported that Lower Shabelle was among the worst affected areas for cumulative severity of child protection.<sup>616</sup>

In 2020, SNA and AMISOM engaged in dislodging Al-Shabaab from Lower Shabelle, 'believed to be the headquarters of their explosive-making factories.' Eventually, they succeeded in recapturing Janale, Sabid, Barire and Awdhegle. Al-Shabaab had used bridges in these towns to transport vehicle-borne improvised explosives devices (VBIED) across the Shabelle river to Mogadishu.<sup>617</sup>

<sup>604</sup> US, AFRICOM, Civilian Casualty Assessment Report: 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, 2021, 2021, [url](#)

<sup>605</sup> Al Jazeera, US air strike in Somalia killed civilians: MP, 11 March 2020, [url](#); HRW, Somalia: Inadequate US Airstrike Investigations, 16 June 2020, [url](#)

<sup>606</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>607</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan – Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>608</sup> UNSOM, Reconciliation in Marka: Foes Turned Friends Recall Road to Peace, 21 September 2020, [url](#)

<sup>609</sup> FSNAU and FEWS NET, Food Security & Nutrition: Quarterly Brief with a Focus on the 2021 Jiaal Impact and Gu Season Early Warning, 17 May 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>610</sup> Somali Dispatch, Ordnance explodes killing 7 children in Lower Shabelle, 2 February 2021, [url](#)

<sup>611</sup> Halbeeg News, Al-Shabaab burns truck carrying charcoal in Lower Shabelle, 17 August 2020, [url](#); Radio Dalsan, Al-shabab burn two trucks transporting charcoal in Lower Shabelle region, 4 October 2020, [url](#)

<sup>612</sup> Somali Dispatch, Somali Army rescues abducted children from Al-Shabaab, 26 September 2020, [url](#); UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/1113, 13 November 2020, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>613</sup> Somali Dispatch, More Rape Cases in Lower Shabelle, 19 April 2020, [url](#); Somali Dispatch, Somali Soldiers Accused of Rape in Janale, 13 April 2020, [url](#); Somali Dispatch, Ministry of Defense "the assailants accused of Janale rape cases will face the law", 16 April 2020, [url](#)

<sup>614</sup> USDOS, 2020 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>615</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview – Somalia, January 2021, 9 March 2021, [url](#), p. 21

<sup>616</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan - Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 84

<sup>617</sup> HIPS, State of Somalia 2020 Report, 2021, [url](#), p. 14

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, the UNHCR Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN)<sup>618</sup> recorded an estimated 29 000 new displacements from Lower Shabelle between January and May 2021 and 381 000 in the year 2020. In the given period in 2021, conflict or insecurity was the main driver behind the displacements (25 000 people). In 2020 floods were the main reason for 266 000 people relocating. In 2021, most people departed from Wanla Weyne district (19 000), of who 9 000 relocated to Benadir and 7 000 people remained in the district. Of the 29 000 people displaced from Lower Shabelle, 14 000 departed to Benadir. In 2020, 123 000 people from Wanla Weyne were displaced, mostly within the district, followed by 106 000 from Afgoye who were displaced within the district and to Benadir. On a monthly basis, highest numbers of displacements in 2021 occurred in February. In 2020, September was the month with most cases of displacements.<sup>619</sup>

## Evictions

According to the NRC Evictions Information Portal, 834 households were forcibly evicted by the government in Lower Shabelle on 26 October 2020. The 5 004 affected individuals had lived on private property in an IDP camp in Imbagaato.<sup>620</sup>

## 2.2.4 South-West - Checkpoints and road security

There are two main roads in South-West: one is from Mogadishu up through Afgooye, Wanlaweyn, Buurhakaba, and Baidoa, which then runs up to the top of Waajid, Xuddur and Tayeeglow. The middle section of this route from Mogadishu to Baidoa around Leego is heavily contested by Al-Shabaab. The other big route in Southwest is the coastal highway, going from Afgooye down to Baraawe and eventually down into Jubaland.<sup>621</sup>

- **Mogadishu – Afgooye – Baraawe.** The top portion of this road, until Marka, has a very significant military footprint. After Marka, the only government-held town or district is Baraawe. Kurtunwaarey and Sablaale, both adjacent to Baraawe, are both under AS control. This route constitutes one of the major contested areas, also given its agricultural wealth and is very ‘problematic’, particularly for AMISOM and the SNA.<sup>622</sup>
- **Mogadishu – Afgooye – Wanlaweyn – Buurhakaba – Baidoa.** On the road between Mogadishu, Afgooye and then Buurhakaba and Baidoa, the location called Leego or Lego, situated between Buurhakaba and Wanlaweyn, is crucial for internal mobility.<sup>623</sup> According to international expert VIII, there has been no persistent security presence there from either SNA or AMISOM since 2017 while there is a dense AS presence. AS have checkpoints along this road and the revenue is collated in locations such as Tortoorow or Totoro (known as AS taxation hub and assembly point), Buur Heybe, Buula Fuulay, which are off the main route between Baidoa and Mogadishu.<sup>624</sup> As already mentioned, the paved road from Mogadishu through Baidoa to Gedo region and the Kenya border is one of the most important commercial arteries in the country.<sup>625</sup>
- **Waajid, Xuddur and Tayeeglow (in Bakool).** Rab Dhure and Tayeeglow districts are under AS control. In addition, the town of Xudur is to a large extent surrounded and subjected to blockade tactics by the AS. South-West authorities and the SNA were escorting trucks transporting supplies

<sup>618</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>619</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>620</sup> NRC, Eviction Information Portal, Dataset, as of 29 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>621</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>622</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>623</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>624</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>625</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021



or commodities in Xudur to reduce the pressure on the town and lower the price of commodities. The ENDF also maintain a corridor back up into Ethiopia via Xudur.<sup>626</sup>

Southwest constitutes one of the three FMS (along with Benadir and Hirshabelle) where IEDs are regularly encountered. As per ACLED data, in the reference period (January 2020 – June 2021) there were a total of 234 explosions/remote violence events of the type IED, shelling, grenade and suicide bomb (among others remote violence events) in South-West: 19 in Bakool, 77 in Bay, and 138 in Lower Shabelle, resulting respectively in 20, 77, and 236 fatalities (Figure 19).<sup>627</sup> In the course of 2020, UNMAS reported 4 IED incidents in Bakool, 86 IED incidents in Bay, and 147 IED incidents in Lower Shabelle in 2020. There was a significant increase in IED incidents in Bay, where they mostly took place along the road leading through Bay and into Gedo region.<sup>628</sup>

The USDOS noted that, in 2020 ‘torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment at the hands of clan militias, some of which are government-affiliated, remained frequent’ continued taking place in the road from Mogadishu to Afgooye.<sup>629</sup>

## 2.3 Benadir and Mogadishu

For an overview of the Benadir Regional Administration (BRA) and the Federal Government of Somalia (with site in Mogadishu) in terms of (1) relevant dynamics, territorial control, and governance, (2) presence of state level armed forces, and (3) presence of other actors/forces (federal, international, and local), see the EASO Country of Information report on [Somalia - Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>630</sup>

### 2.3.1 Background

Benadir (or Banadir, or Benaadir) region is located in the south-east of Somalia. It shares borders with Middle Shabelle and Lower Shabelle regions.<sup>631</sup> Mogadishu, which is the capital of the region, consists of 17 districts: Abdiiaziz, Bondhere, Daynile, Dharkenley, Hamar-Jajab, Hamar-Weyne, Hodan, Howl-Wadag, Huriwa (Heliwa), Kaxda, Karan, Shangani, Shibis, Waberi, Wadajir (Medina), Warta Nabada (previously Whardiigleey), and Yaqshid.<sup>632</sup>

Security expert I noted that the dominant clan family in Mogadishu is the Hawiye with several sub-clans. Among these, in terms of number and influence Abgaal, Habar Gidir and Murasade are the dominant ones. Other Hawiye clans with a sizeable presence in Mogadishu are the Hawadle, Gaaljeel, Gugundabe, and Sheekhaal, among others.<sup>633</sup> One indication of Hawiye dominance of the city is that 15 of the 17 district commissioners are Hawiye.<sup>634</sup> The Reer Hamar (also Benadiri) live in the central parts of Mogadishu, in Hamar-Weyne and Shangani and ‘can be regarded as minorities in terms of language and culture’.<sup>635</sup> The Yibr (sab) live along the coast of Mogadishu.<sup>636</sup>

Though the city is dominated demographically, politically, economically, and militarily by the Hawiye clan family, other Somali clans can and do reside in the city, although with ‘the status of guests and

<sup>626</sup> Interview with international expert based in Somalia, 3 August 2021

<sup>627</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>628</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report, 2020 Annual Report, 2021, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>629</sup> USDoS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>630</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 22-45, 88-91

<sup>631</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>632</sup> Somalia, Benadir Regional Administration and Mogadishu Municipality, n.d., [url](#); Global Shelter Cluster, Banadir, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>633</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>634</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021; Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>635</sup> ACCORD, Clans in Somalia, December 2009, [url](#), p. 17

<sup>636</sup> ACCORD, Clans in Somalia, December 2009, [url](#), p. 15

with limited rights'.<sup>637</sup> According to the Finnish Immigration Service's Country Information Service, 'Despite the strong position of the Abgaal and Habar Gidir clans, people from all clans in Somalia live in Mogadishu'.<sup>638</sup> Several mixed neighbourhoods exist, especially in areas near the international airport and the main government compound, Villa Somalia, and attract Somalis from Darood, Dir and Digil-Mirifle clans.<sup>639</sup> For additional details see EASO COI Report on [Somalia: Targeted profiles](#) (chapter 4 Minorities and non-minority clans),<sup>640</sup> and the EASO COI report on [Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators](#), chapter on Mogadishu.<sup>641</sup>

A major additional factor in the city and region is the explosion in number of IDPs and IDP camps (treated below). Most of the estimated 600,000 IDPs in Mogadishu and its peri-urban areas are from the Digil-Mirifle clan or are Somali Bantu, from rural areas of southern Somalia. They are unlikely to return, but it is not clear whether the dominant Hawiye clans are prepared to accept them as permanent residents of Mogadishu.<sup>642</sup> For further details see section below on [Internal Displacement](#) and the above-mentioned report on [Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators](#), chapter on Mogadishu.<sup>643</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of the Banadir region was 1 650 227 inhabitants.<sup>644</sup> According to the CIA Factbook, Mogadishu's population was estimated to be 2 388 000 in 2021, while the region/city's official website reported that Mogadishu's population is 2.5 million, without stating the date.<sup>645</sup> Benadir constitutes the most populated region of Somalia.<sup>646</sup> For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.3.2 Conflict dynamics

**Actors and control areas/influence.** Mogadishu is crowded with various federal, regional, and district security forces who often clash with one another and who generally answer to clan authorities rather than a government chain of command.<sup>647</sup>

According to security expert I, the Hawiye clan family is dominant in Mogadishu, and beyond it (including in Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle). Within the Hawiye clan family the three major clans in order of importance in Mogadishu are: Abgaal, Habar Gidir, and Murasade. Allegedly they dominate the city, besides constituting  $\frac{3}{4}$  of its entire population.<sup>648</sup>

Clan militia and protection forces, sometimes hatted as police or SNA units, are the main source of protection for residents, and one of the primary reasons clans tend to cluster together in neighbourhoods. With few exceptions, only the Hawiye clans have these clan militias in the city, a factor which reinforces their dominance of Mogadishu.<sup>649</sup> According to security expert I, Mogadishu's northern part, 'or what they call the north, but it's actually the eastern part of the city', comprising the districts of Karan, Abdiaziz, Shibis, Yaqshid, and even Bondhere, is completely dominated by the

<sup>637</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>638</sup> Finland, Finnish Immigration Service's Country Information Service, Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, Security situation and humanitarian conditions in Mogadishu [source: oral interview with UNHCR 3.3.2020.], 7 August 2020, [url](#), p. 39

<sup>639</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>640</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>641</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>642</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>643</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>644</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>645</sup> CIA, CIA World Factbook – Somalia, last updated 3 May 2021, [url](#); Somalia, Benadir Regional Administration and Mogadishu Municipality, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>646</sup> HIPS, State of Somalia 2020 Report, February 2021, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>647</sup> Menkhaus, K., Non-State Security Providers and State Formation in Somalia, Centre for Security Governance, 2016, [url](#), pp. 21-24

<sup>648</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>649</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

Abgaal. The old medieval nucleus of the town instead, which comprises the Shingani and Hamar-Weyne districts, is dominated by the Benadiri, with significant injections of Abgaal in Shingani and Habr Gidir in Hamar-Weyne. According to local expert V,<sup>650</sup> who resides in Mogadishu, the Hawiye in Shingani and in Hamar-Weyne control key buildings and premises in these two districts, thus exercising or showing a level of control of the area that surpasses their actual population residing there.<sup>651</sup> As to Hamar-Jajab and Waberi, they are among the most mixed districts of Mogadishu: although still Hawiye dominated, they comprise a significant portion of 0.5 clans, as well as of Digil-Mirifle. As to the remaining districts - Whardiigleey (now Warta Nabada), Howl-Wadag, Hodan, Daynile, Wadajir (Medina), Dharkenley, and Kaxda (or Kaxda Sheekhall, the newest district, still to be officially instituted), according to security expert I, they are dominated each time by a different combination of Murasade, Habr Gidir, and Abgaal clans, which add to other more mixed population groups, including: other Hawiye clans, Digil-Mirifle, Dir, and other minority clans.<sup>652</sup> According to a BFA/SEM source, the Abgaal were in 2017 the clan who primarily decided on land ownership in Mogadishu. The Rahanweyn, Bantu and sab rarely own land. The Benadiri are said to be in a better situation as they have long historic connections with Mogadishu.<sup>653</sup>

In terms of security forces, Mogadishu is 'generally controlled' by the government and government aligned forces, as security expert II puts it.<sup>654</sup> These include the federal security forces, AMISOM's contingents and headquarters, the Presidential Guard, the police, security sector forces answering to the Benadir regional authorities, and numerous private security firms and clan protection forces.<sup>655</sup> However, as shown on occasion of recent political tensions, the opposition forces (Hawiye) can easily mobilise their own militias (see below for further details),<sup>656</sup> often drawn from the formal security sector.<sup>657</sup> For an overview and details about security forces, national and international, private and public, present in Mogadishu see the report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>658</sup> Loyalty of these security forces is an issue though, as pointed out by security expert II: 'there is a crack in the way the security forces have been trained and put together', 'it is easy for them to align with the political leaders of their own clan'.<sup>659</sup>

The other major actor in town is constituted by Al-Shabaab. According to Professor Ken Menkhaus, Al-Shabaab does not directly control any locations in the city but acts as a network.<sup>660</sup> Security expert I- maintains that 'they are hiding among the population', and that the Mogadishu's districts that lie at the corners of the city are 'less guarded', such as Daynile and Huriwa (Heliwa), or the area known as Jazeera (beach), south of Mogadishu.<sup>661</sup> Still according to security expert I, Al-Shabaab's presence is located in the periphery of the city, while their influence is pervasive: 'everybody should believe that Al-Shabaab has infiltrated everywhere'. Allegedly, this would include the Halane international campus area, which lies next to Mogadishu airport.<sup>662</sup> Security expert I comments on this: 'I would not rule out that even some foreigners deal with [Al-Shabaab] and pay them, I have some evidence that at least some international NGOs pay them indirectly', through a contractor: 'it is a kind of survival

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<sup>650</sup> Expert V is a Somali culture expert and long-time resident of Mogadishu, with several years of experience as a local and international consultant. Expert V prefers to remain anonymous for safety reasons.

<sup>651</sup> Interview with Somali local expert V, 7 July 2021

<sup>652</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>653</sup> BFA/SEM, Sicherheitslage in Somalia [source: Representative of an international NGO, Nairobi], August 2017, [url](#), p. 73

<sup>654</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>655</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>656</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>657</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>658</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 22-45, 88-91

<sup>659</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>660</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>661</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>662</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

instinct, it exists everywhere'.<sup>663</sup> For security expert II 'Halane is another part of the world, it is not part of Somalia, it's controlled by AMISOM and other security forces, and it is generally safe'.<sup>664</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** Mogadishu is the site of two major conflicts: on the one hand the Al-Shabaab/anti-Al-Shabaab conflict. On the other hand, and at more political level, the political confrontation between incumbent's government allied support and forces, and opposition groups, especially from the Hawiye clan family. This more political confrontation, which is tied to the on-going electoral process (indirect elections in Somalia are due in July-September 2021) has at times escalated into military clashes, and has the potential to mobilise armed groups and militias.<sup>665</sup> Political leaders are adept at mobilizing clan to incite political violence, but the clan dimension of some clashes in Mogadishu disguises the fact that these are mainly intra-elite power struggles.<sup>666</sup>

The heavily militarised AS presence or incursions in town is manifested in assassinations, explosions, and tax collection.<sup>667</sup> To contrast all these activities, in the course of 2019 the FGS, AMISOM, UNSOM (United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia), as well as other international bodies and donors, discussed the Mogadishu Security Plan (MSP), which included, among others: the construction of six checkpoints in the Somali capital, and the establishment of an assets management system, including for donor-provided vehicles, under the responsibility of the Somali Police Force.<sup>668</sup>

Adding to the overview above, in terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period following disputes (or conflicts) were reported or were relevant in the Benadir region (non-exhaustive list):

- A major source of political tension that included limited armed clashes occurred during a stand-off between the government leadership and opposition over delayed elections. Most of the militia mobilized in support of opposition figures were drawn from local Hawiye members of the security sector.<sup>669</sup>
- Haber Gedir clan conflict with government forces that attempted to move into a district controlled by the clan. The clan was rallying behind a chief of police, Sadiq « John » Omar. Who had been fired by the FGS.<sup>670</sup>

### 2.3.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab's violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias' violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

Both in 2020 and in the first half of 2021, ACLED data indicate that the Benadir administrative region with the capital Mogadishu ranked second in terms of the highest number of security incidents; regarding the total number of fatalities, in 2020 Benadir ranked second and in the first half of 2021 it ranked third (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, a number of 489 security incidents causing 429 fatalities were reported in Benadir. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted 252 incidents and 272 deaths in this region. In sum, about 51 % of the reported

<sup>663</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>664</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>665</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>666</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>667</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>668</sup> UNSOM, NPM Newsletter, Edition 29, August 2019, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>669</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>670</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

incidents were battles (380 incidents), about 26 % (193 incidents) explosions or incidents of remote violence and about 23 % (168 incidents) of the reported incidents involved violence against civilians (see Figure 41 and Figure 43).<sup>671</sup>

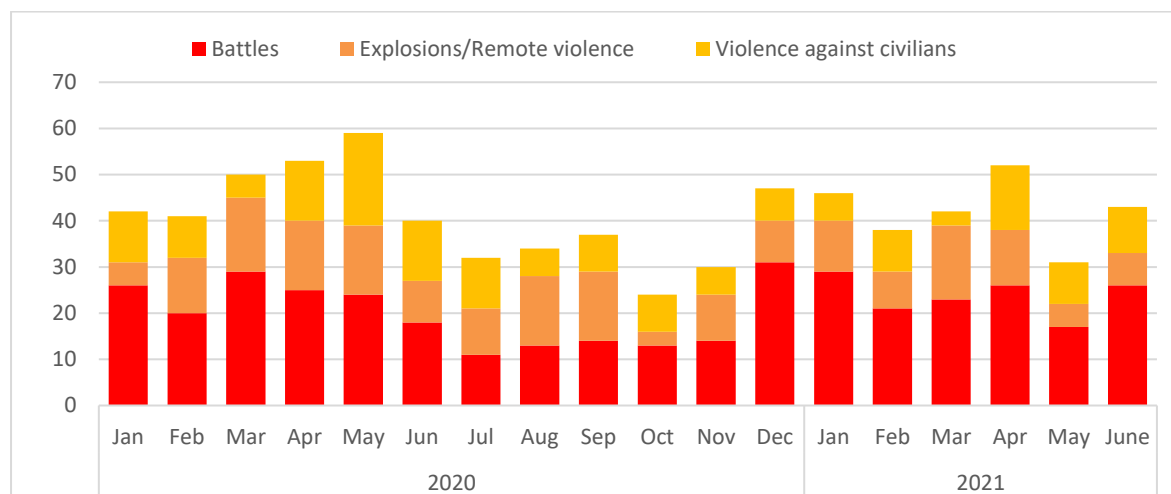


Figure 41. Benadir – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>672</sup>

At the district level, Hodan, recorded the most security incidents (110 events), followed by Daynile district (106 events) for the period between January 2020 and end of June 2021 (see figure below). Five incidents coded by ACLED as ‘battles’, eight incidents of explosions or remote violence and 5 incidents of violence against civilians were not attributed to any of the city’s districts but to entire Mogadishu.<sup>673</sup>

<sup>671</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated D3ata Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>672</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>673</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

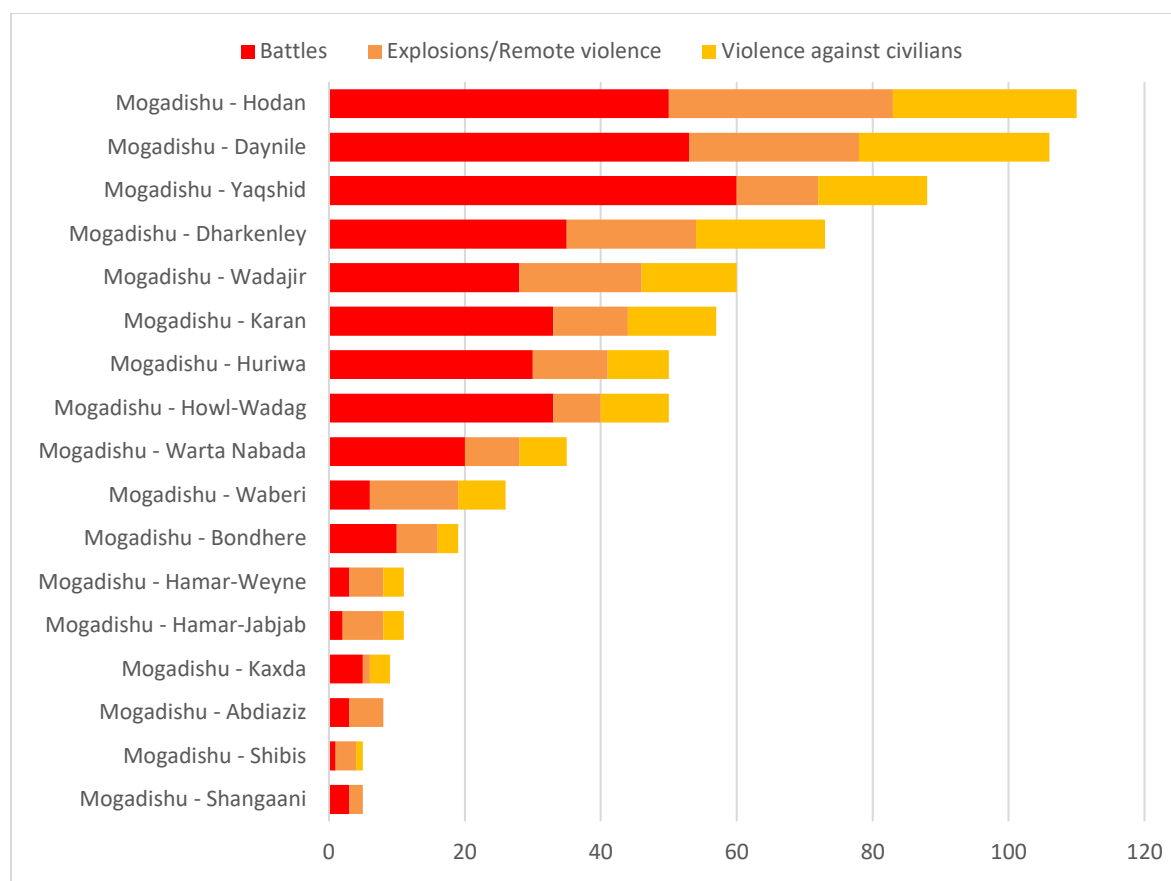


Figure 42. Benadir – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>674</sup>

Al-Shabaab was coded as ACTOR 1 in 458 of the 741 security incidents, accounting for around 62 % of incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021. 334 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents involved Somali Armed Forces or Somali Police Force and 110 incidents involved civilians. The main type of incidents were armed clashes (a sub-category of battles, 249 incidents), along with attacks against civilians (a sub-category of violence against civilians, 76 incidents) and the use of remote-controlled explosives (69 incidents).<sup>675</sup>

Regarding IED activities, UNMAS reported a decrease in Benadir in 2020 compared to 2019.<sup>676</sup> It was further noted that the decrease correlated with the success of operation Badbaado, commenced in April 2019, which aims at liberating and securing key strategic positions in the Lower Shabelle region.<sup>677</sup> The decrease was furthermore caused by the maintenance of the Mogadishu Security Plan (MSP) implemented in May 2019, which significantly increased the city's security profile.<sup>678</sup> Nevertheless, Benadir recorded a distinctly high number of explosions compared to other regions in the reporting period.<sup>679</sup>

In May 2021, the UN Secretary-General stated that Benadir was among the regions most affected by security incidents – mostly hit-and-run attacks perpetrated by Al-Shabaab targeting Somali Security Forces and AMISOM.<sup>680</sup>

<sup>674</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>675</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>676</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report - 2020 Annual Report, 16 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>677</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report - 2020 Annual Report, 16 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9; UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/154, 17 February, 2021, [url](#), para. 13

<sup>678</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report - 2020 Annual Report, 16 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>679</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>680</sup> UNSG, Situation Report Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 14



While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 43 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Benadir region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Benadir	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	380	254
Explosions/Remote violence	193	298
Violence against civilians	168	149
<b>Total</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>701</b>

Figure 43. Benadir – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>681</sup>

In the reporting period, most fatalities from battles were recorded in Daynile and Karan districts (31 each), followed by Hodan (28) and Howl-Wadag (26). The highest number of people killed in explosions or by remote violence were recorded in Wadajir with 60 fatalities and in Hamar-Jabjab with 43. Of the 149 fatalities from violence against civilians, the highest number of 26 was recorded in Daynile, followed by 23 in Hodan and 20 in Dharkenley.<sup>682</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

On 15 June 2021, an Al-Shabaab suicide bomber blew himself up outside the Dhagabadan general military base in Wadajir district, where a crowd of recruits was lined up for enrolment.<sup>683</sup> According to ACLED, at least 40 people were killed, and more than 35 others were injured,<sup>684</sup> news reports mentioned at least 20<sup>685</sup>, 15<sup>686</sup> or 10 dead<sup>687</sup> and 20 injured<sup>688</sup>.

On 21 May 2021, an IED allegedly by Al-Shabaab militants targeting the district commissioner of Garasbaley village neighbourhood in Daynile district killed four people including the Garasbaley chairman Abdirahman Ahmed Garyare.<sup>689</sup>

On 3 April 2021, the detonation of a person-borne improvised explosive device (PBIED) inside a restaurant in the Sadexda Geed village neighbourhood in Shangani district killed between five and seven civilians, among them an infant. At least four or five other civilians were injured.<sup>690</sup>

On 29 March 2021, the detonation of an IED targeting a convoy with the general secretary of Daynile district, Mahad Sharawe, killed at least four or five people.<sup>691</sup> According to different reports, three

<sup>681</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>682</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>683</sup> New York Times (The), Suicide Blast at Military Training Camp in Somalia Targets New Recruits, 15 June 2021, [url](#); Africa

News, At least 15 killed in suicide bombing at Somalia army camp, 15 June 2021, [url](#); Daily Sabah, 20 killed as suicide

bomber targets army camp in Somalia, 15 June 2021, [url](#); ACLED, Somalia, SOM34072, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>684</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM34072, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>685</sup> Daily Sabah, 20 killed as suicide bomber targets army camp in Somalia, 15 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>686</sup> Africa News, At least 15 killed in suicide bombing at Somalia army camp, 15 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>687</sup> New York Times (The), Suicide Blast at Military Training Camp in Somalia Targets New Recruits, 15 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>688</sup> New York Times (The), Suicide Blast at Military Training Camp in Somalia Targets New Recruits, 15 June 2021, [url](#); Daily

Sabah, 20 killed as suicide bomber targets army camp in Somalia, 15 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>689</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM33874, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); AA, Bomb blast in Somali capital kills local official, bodyguards, 21 May 2021, [url](#)

<sup>690</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 15; ACLED, Somalia, SOM33551, as of 30 June 2021,

[url](#); AA, Turkey condemns terror attacks in Somalia, 3 April 2021, [url](#); Xinhua News Agency, 6 killed, 4 injured in suicide bombing in Somalia, 4 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>691</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM33521, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); CE Noticias Financieras English, Somalia – Five people die in a car

bombing in Somalia's capital, 29 March 2021; AA, Roadside blast kills at least 5 in Somali capital, 29 March 2021, [url](#);

SONNA, Roadside bomb kills 4 people, injuries 3 others in the capital, 29 March 2021, [url](#)

bodyguards and a civilian bystander<sup>692</sup> or one<sup>693</sup> or more women and children were among the fatalities<sup>694</sup>. ACLED ascribed the attack to Al-Shabaab militants.<sup>695</sup>

On 5 March 2021, the explosion of a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) targeting a hotel restaurant popular among government officials and security forces in the Hamar-Jajab district caused the collapse of a nearby building. In the incident, at least 20 or 10 people were killed and 30 injured.<sup>696</sup>

On 31 January 2021, Al-Shabaab conducted a complex attack on the Afrik Hotel in Waberi district. Up to 10 people were reportedly killed, including retired army general and former Minister of Defence Mohamed Nur Galal.<sup>697</sup>

On 23 January 2021, four or five soldiers and a former member of parliament were killed near Beehani junction in Shibis district by a remote controlled IED. Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for the attack.<sup>698</sup>

On 27 November 2020, a suicide bomber detonated his device in an ice-cream parlour in Wadajir district killing 6 to 8 people and wounding about 10 others.<sup>699</sup>

In September 2020, a rickshaw driver was allegedly shot and killed by a soldier over an argument in Mogadishu.<sup>700</sup>

On 9 September 2020, an Al-Shabaab suicide bomb attack at the Blue Sky restaurant near Mogadishu National Theatre killed three people and injured seven others.<sup>701</sup> The restaurant in Hamar-Weyne was filled by civilians and government officials.<sup>702</sup>

On 16 August 2020, Al-Shabaab attacked the Elite Hotel in the Lido beach area of Mogadishu with guns and a car bomb.<sup>703</sup> 20 people were killed.<sup>704</sup>

On 25 March 2020, two to four people were killed and three to six injured in a suicide bomb attack in a small restaurant near Sayidka junction in Howl-Wadag.<sup>705</sup>

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<sup>692</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM33521, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>693</sup> SONNA, Roadside bomb kills 4 people, injuries 3 others in the capital, 29 March 2021, [url](#)

<sup>694</sup> AA, Roadside blast kills at least 5 in Somali capital, 29 March 2021, [url](#)

<sup>695</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM33521, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>696</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 15; ACLED, Somalia, SOM33377, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Dalsan news 1700 gmt 5 Mar 21, 7 March 2021; News Ghana, 10 killed and 30 injured in suicide bombing in Mogadishu, 6 March 2021, [url](#)

<sup>697</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/154, 17 February, 2021, [url](#), para. 14; New York Times (The), Militants Storm Hotel in Somali Capital and Blasts Rock Area, 31 January 2021, [url](#)

<sup>698</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM33045, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); BBC Monitoring, Four soldiers killed in explosion in Somali capital, 23 January 2021

<sup>699</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/154, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 14; ACLED, Somalia, SOM32536, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); Reuters, Suicide bomber kills six in Mogadishu ice-cream parlour, 27 November 2020, [url](#)

<sup>700</sup> Mareeg.com, Somali soldier kills civilian driver in Mogadishu, 21 September 2020, [url](#)

<sup>701</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31947, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Several killed in suicide bombing outside mosque in Somalia, 11 September 2020, [url](#)

<sup>702</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31947, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>703</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/1113, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 14; France 24, Deadly gun and bomb attack at hotel in Somalia's capital Mogadishu, 16 August 2020, [url](#)

<sup>704</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/1113, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 14; France 24, Deadly gun and bomb attack at hotel in Somalia's capital Mogadishu, 16 August 2020, [url](#)

<sup>705</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30768, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); UNSG, Situation in Somalia, Report of the Secretary-General, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 19; BBC Monitoring Africa, Programme summary of Somalia's Radio Daljir news 1700 gmt 25 March 20, 27 March 2021

On 8 January 2020, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for a suicide car bomb attack near the presidential palace, which killed 4 people and injured 15 others. Bile Ismail, director of Somalia's Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development was confirmed dead.<sup>706</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>707</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

Different sources consider Mogadishu to be 'unstable', with the situation in the city described variably as 'tense, unpredictable and fluctuating', 'unsafe', not 'a safe place', and 'the most insecure area in Somalia'. The volatile security situation impacts people's mobility.<sup>708</sup> Moving around the city and frequenting busy hotspots like marketplaces is described as a 'considerable risk'.<sup>709</sup> Furthermore, Islamists targeted aviation operating from Aden Adde International Airport in Mogadishu.<sup>710</sup> For more information on Mogadishu's internal mobility and accessibility, please see section 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 of EASO's COI report [Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators](#), published in September 2021.<sup>711</sup>

In July 2021, Crisis24 provided an assessment of the security risk level in Somalia, corroborated by Hiraal Institute, stating that Islamist militants engaged in the extortion of businesses and development projects in Mogadishu. Assassinating businesspersons and damaging property were used as means of enforcement.<sup>712</sup>

In February 2021, UNOCHA reported that with 'emergency levels of severity of need', Benadir was among the worst affected areas for cumulative severity of child protection in 2020, in a context of increased estimated numbers of children in need. Other risks for children included threats of recruitment, abuse and abductions.<sup>713</sup> USDOS reported that between April 2020 and March 2021, security forces had recruited and armed children (two boys and one girl) as guards of public buildings and government officials in Mogadishu.<sup>714</sup>

In 2020, more than 100 cases of sexual violence were documented in Mogadishu. Many cases concerned girls out of school due to the pandemic.<sup>715</sup>

In the USDOS 2020 annual human rights report, unlawful or arbitrary killings, including extrajudicial killings, were among the government forces' human rights violations.<sup>716</sup>

The Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition (SHCC) recorded four attacks on health care personnel or infrastructure in Benadir in 2020. In one of these incidents in October 2020 two people were killed by explosives, in another attack in April 2020, one person was killed in gunfire.<sup>717</sup>

Against this backdrop, the UNHCR told the Finnish fact-finding mission to Mogadishu in March 2020 that Somali 'public structures' were unable to provide 'protection against crime' and an international

<sup>706</sup> UNSG Situation in Somalia, S/2020/121, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 17; ACLED, Somalia, SOM30268, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>707</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>708</sup> Finland, Finnish Immigration Service, Somalia: Fact-finding mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, Security situation and humanitarian conditions in Mogadishu, 7 August 2020, [url](#), p. 4; World Bank (The), Somalia Urbanization Review: Fostering Cities as Anchors of Development, 2021, [url](#), p. 85

<sup>709</sup> World Bank (The), Somalia Urbanization Review: Fostering Cities as Anchors of Development, 2021, [url](#), p. 85

<sup>710</sup> Crisis24, Somalia Country Report, July 2021, [url](#)

<sup>711</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>712</sup> Crisis24, Somalia Country Report, July 2021, [url](#); Hiraal Institute, A Loosing Game: Countering Al-Shabab's Financial System, October 2020, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>713</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan - Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 84

<sup>714</sup> USDOS, 2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Somalia, 1 July 2021, [url](#)

<sup>715</sup> UN-Habitat, UN-Habitat, local government and the EU join forces to combat Gender-Based Violence in Mogadishu through COVID-19 awareness forums, 14 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>716</sup> USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 1-2

<sup>717</sup> SHCC, 2020 SHCC Health Care Somalia Data, 14 April 2021, [url](#)

NGO told FIS that people generally distrusted the police.<sup>718</sup> Residents of Mogadishu but also politicians rather relied on (clan-based) militias regarding protection and, for this reason, preferred to settle within their clan network in the city.<sup>719</sup>

For further general information on Benadir and Mogadishu, on relevant dynamics and the governance structure, please see sections 7.3.1-7.3.3 of EASO's COI report [Somalia - Actors](#), published in July 2021.<sup>720</sup>

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN<sup>721</sup> reported 214 000 new displacements from Benadir, with 185 000 displacements in April 2021 alone. Between January and May 2021, 193 000 new displacements were registered in Benadir, of which 189 000 were within the region and 3 000 were to Lower Shabelle. In 2021, 185 000 of the displacements were caused by conflict and insecurity. For the same period, 16 300 additional displaced persons newly arrived in Benadir from Lower Shabelle (14 000 cases), Middle Shabelle (2 000 cases) and from Hiraan (300 cases). Of the 21 000 displacements in 2020, nearly all within Benadir, flooding was the main reason (19 000 cases), followed by conflict and insecurity (1 000 cases). In 2020, 52 000 conflict- or insecurity-related newly displaced people arrived in Benadir, mainly from Lower Shabelle (50 000 cases), Middle Shabelle, Hiraan, Mudug and Galgadud.<sup>722</sup>

## Evictions

According to the NRC Evictions Information Portal, between January and 29 June 2021, 66 897 individuals were affected by 149 cases of forced evictions in Benadir. 287 cases of forced evictions were reported in Benadir in 2020, resulting in the forced expulsion of 119 240 individuals. Of the 436 reported forced eviction cases in 2020 and 2021, 272 occurred in Kaxda district and 144 in Daynile district. NRC listed 'owner development' (186 cases) and 'development – landlord' (51 cases) as the two main reasons for forced evictions in the region.<sup>723</sup>

In May 2021, 11 622 people were evicted from 18 IDP settlements in Garasbaley to nearby Igadawage village in Benadir. A report by NRC and the Protection Cluster identified the evicted households as IDP households (for further information on who is considered IDP in Mogadishu, please see the discussion of the concept outlined in section 1.2.3 of EASO's COI report [Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators](#), published in September 2021.<sup>724</sup> According to Somali expert Jutta Bakonyi, land on which displaced people settled came in the focus of Mogadishu's elites, who, with expectations of future rents, initiated mass-scale evictions. Evictions motivated by spiking land and real estate prices pushed displaced people to the cities' outskirts.<sup>725</sup> A report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) from November 2018 stated that 99 % of evictees in Mogadishu were IDPs. Forced evictions were triggers of displacement and multiple evictions created cycles of displacement.<sup>726</sup> For more information, please also refer to the section on evictions in section 1.2.3 of EASO's COI report [Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators](#), published in September 2021.<sup>727</sup>

<sup>718</sup> Finland, Finnish Immigration Service, Somalia: Fact-finding mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, Security situation and humanitarian conditions in Mogadishu, 7 August 2020, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>719</sup> Belgium, CGRS-CEDOCA, COI unit: Somalië; Veiligheidssituatie in Mogadishu, 29 June 2021, [url](#), pp. 39-40

<sup>720</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 88-91

<sup>721</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>722</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>723</sup> NRC, Eviction Information Portal, Dataset, as of 29 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>724</sup> NRC and Protection Cluster, Rapid Assessment Report – Garasbaley Eviction, 30 May 2021, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>725</sup> Bakonyi, J., The Political Economy of Displacement: Rent Seeking, Disposessions and Precarious Mobility in Somali Cities, 15 October 2020, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>726</sup> IDMC, Thematic series – Unsettlement: Urban displacement in the 21st century, November 2018, [url](#), pp. 2, 6

<sup>727</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#)

In February 2021, UNOCHA stated that, in contrast to a reduction of forced evictions across all locations in Somalia, Mogadishu remained the most affected city with constant spikes in evictions.<sup>728</sup> In Mogadishu, where no adequate legal framework to regulate land disputes exists, increased potential for land conflict related to rapid urbanisation, population growth and claims by people from the Somali diaspora occurred. Moreover, illegal acquisition of public land by private individuals was an issue.<sup>729</sup>

### 2.3.4 Mogadishu - Checkpoints and road security

Finnish Immigration Service's fact-finding mission to Mogadishu (March 2020), reported that there are several hundred checkpoints in town manned by security forces. Most of these are in the city centre, where political institutions are situated, and in the northern section around the military headquarters.<sup>730</sup> Still based on the same report, regarding the amount charged by security forces at checkpoints experts and NGO members stated a range between 0.25 and 5 US Dollars.<sup>731</sup> For further details about checkpoint, road security, and internal mobility in Benadir/Mogadishu see section about Mogadishu on 'Internal mobility, including checkpoints' of the EASO COI report on [Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators](#).<sup>732</sup>

As per ACLED data, in the reference period (January 2020 – June 2021) there were a total of 193 explosions/remote violence events of the type IED, shelling, grenade and suicide bomb (among others remote violence events) in Benadir, resulting in 298 fatalities (Figure 19).<sup>733</sup> UNMAS reported that 83 IED incidents took place in Benadir in 2020.<sup>734</sup>

## 2.4 Hirshabelle

For an overview of the Hirshabelle administration in terms of (1) relevant dynamics, territorial control, and governance, (2) presence of state level armed forces, and (3) presence of other actors/forces (federal, international, and local), see the EASO Country of Information report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>735</sup>

### 2.4.1 Hiraan

#### 2.4.1.1 Background

Hiraan region shares borders with the following regions: Galgaduud to the north-east, with Middle Shabelle to the south, with Lower Shabelle to the south-west and with Bakool to the east. It also shares

<sup>728</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan - Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 91

<sup>729</sup> Federal Republic of Somalia, Federal Government of Somalia, MoPIED, Somalia National Development Plan 2020 to 2024: The Path to a Just, Stable and Prosperous Somalia, [2019], [url](#), p. 237; Finland, Finnish Immigration Service, Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi, January 2018, 5 October 2018, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>730</sup> Finland, Finnish Immigration Service, Somalia: Fact-finding mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, Security situation and humanitarian conditions in Mogadishu, 7 August 2020, [url](#), p. 22

<sup>731</sup> Finland, Finnish Immigration Service, Somalia: Fact-finding mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, Security situation and humanitarian conditions in Mogadishu, 7 August 2020, [url](#), pp. 22-23

<sup>732</sup>

<sup>733</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>734</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report, 2020 Annual Report, 2021, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>735</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 92-95



an international border with Ethiopia to the north. Hiiraan consists of three districts: Belet Weyne (which borders Ethiopia to the north), Bulo Burto and Jalalaqsi. The region's capital is Belet Weyne.<sup>736</sup>

Hiiraan is mainly inhabited by Hawiye clans. The territory north of the Shabelle River is dominated by the Hawadle sub-clan, while the Jajele, Galja'el (or Gaaljeel) and Baadi Adde sub-clans mainly inhabit the territory south of the river. The minority group Makane (Bantu/Jareer) lives along the northern part of the Shabelle river.<sup>737</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of the Hiiraan region was 520 685, among which 81 379 people in urban areas, 135 537 in rural, and 252 609 nomads.<sup>738</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.4.1.2 Conflict dynamics

According to security expert I, Hiraan, which borders with Ethiopia, represents a major crossroads between Ethiopia and South-Central Somalia, a sort of access-gate towards the Somali regions. Between the two countries/regions there is also a certain level of border uncertainty. Various Hawiye clans that inhabit the Hiraan region do not perceive that they are treated as major stakeholders by the local Somali administration, and hence, they prefer to deal with the Ethiopian side.<sup>739</sup>

**Actors and control areas/influence.** Hiraan is dominated by the Hawadle clan, which is the most populous and probably the most powerful clan in the region. In order of importance they are followed by the Gaaljeel (they also reside in Middle Shabelle, but allegedly do not control any major town in either regions) and the Gugundabe (clan Baadi Adde),<sup>740</sup> who are present in all major towns.<sup>741</sup> These clans are followed by other minority groups, such as the Dir, the Sheekhaal, the Reer Hassan (Ashraf), Jareer Weyne (Bantu) and the Reer Shabelle (or Makane, Makanne, still Bantu), according to security expert I (for additional details see the [EASO COI Report on Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#), chapter 4 Minorities).<sup>742</sup>

The other major actor in the region is al-Shabaab, which controls the rural areas, while all major cities 'are not connected', according to security expert I.<sup>743</sup> Of the same opinion is security expert II, who details that Bula Burto and Beletweyne, along with the major towns in Hiraan, are controlled by state and federal forces, with the help of AMISOM's Djibouti contingent, while the 'area outside of the cities' is instead controlled by Al-Shabaab.<sup>744</sup>

As to the AMISOM's Djibouti contingent, security expert I maintains that, due to cultural and language proximity, these troops are very well embedded in the society, while they try to adopt a very neutral approach towards local politics (differently from what Ethiopian and Kenyan contingents reportedly

<sup>736</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>737</sup> EASO, COI report - South and Central Somalia Country overview [clan maps based on Lewis 1955, Abikar 1999], August 2014, [url](#), pp. 52-53

<sup>738</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>739</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>740</sup> IRB, Somalie : information sur le clan Badi-Ade [Badi Ado; Baadicade; Badi Ade; Badi'ade; Badi Adde; Baadi-cadde; Baada-Adde], y compris sur ses caractéristiques particulières, sa répartition géographique, ses activités et sa position dans la hiérarchie des clans; information sur le traitement qui lui est réservé par les autorités et les autres clans (2012- avril 2018), 12 April 2018, [url](#)

<sup>741</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>742</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>743</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>744</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021



usually do).<sup>745</sup> The ENDF contingent is also present in the region. For additional details about federal, state, and other armed actors in the region see report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>746</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** A first source of conflict in Hiraan is the demand, which is put forward in particular by the Hawadle clan, that Hiraan should constitute a regional state per-se, and it should not be part of Hirshabelle. The main argument supporting this claim is the fact that Hiraan is the only region that remained undivided out of the eight original regions (pre-1969 Somalia, before Siad Barre’s reform) that constituted the first Republic of Somalia.<sup>747</sup> The issue that ‘any Hawadle would put on the table’ is why Hiraan was not divided into two or more regions, so to allow them to group together again, as per the new Somali Constitution (see report on [Somalia: Actors](#)),<sup>748</sup> in order to form a stand-alone federal member state within Somalia.<sup>749</sup> Security expert II frames this conflict in slightly different terms, as an Hawadle/Abgal competition, with Abgal dominant in Middle Shabelle and in the state administration. Within this context, General Abukar Haji Warsame (General Xuud/Hut or Hud), who belongs to the Hawadle clan, and enjoys to a large degree the backing of his clan base, has opposed also militarily the new Hirshabelle state administration led by the recently elected (November 2020) president Ali Gudlawe (Abgal). His so called Hiraan Salvation Council has the support as well, exceptionally, of the Hawiye-Galjacel (Gaaljeel) clan militia.<sup>750</sup> However, security expert II maintains that ‘this is a clan grievance that can be addressed politically’, and it would be unlikely to break out again in an open armed confrontation.<sup>751</sup> For additional details about all this and the Hiraan Salvation Council, the armed separatist movement which has its base on the outskirts of Beletweyne, see report on [Somalia: Actors](#).<sup>752</sup>

Complementing this picture, security expert II notes that another potential source of conflicts/confrontations in the region is the perceived domination of the Abgal and Hawadle at the expenses of other (minority) clans.<sup>753</sup> Another layer of conflict, according to clan expert Joakim Gundel, is represented by the pastoral clans (Hawadle/Galjeel/Jajele/Baadi Adde) versus Bantu agriculturalist groups (such as Makane in Hiran).<sup>754</sup> Against this backdrop, during the reference period following disputes (or conflicts) were reported or were relevant in the Hiraan region (non-exhaustive list):

- Gaaljeel/Jajele/Baadi Adde vs Hawadle. This the historical East versus West bank conflict/competition in Hiran region between Hawadle in the East, and Galjeel/Jajele/Baadi Adde on the West Bank;<sup>755</sup> Al-Shabaab exploits grievances against perceived Hawadle dominance by recruiting successfully from some of these clans.<sup>756</sup>
- Habar-aji (Ayr, Habar Gidir) vs Ali Madaxweyne (Hawadle);<sup>757</sup>
- Hawadle (Hawiye) vs Reer Aw Hassan (Ashraf) over access to land;<sup>758</sup> in June 2020 the conflict resulted in the killing of 16 persons;<sup>759</sup>
- Jejele (Hawiye) vs Makane (a Bantu minority group, for more details see the [EASO COI Report on Targeted Profiles](#), chapter 4.3 Ethnic Minorities) over agricultural farmland;<sup>760</sup>

<sup>745</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>746</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 92- 95

<sup>747</sup> Hiiraan online, Hiiraan region a state of its own, 9 February 2014, [url](#)

<sup>748</sup> Two or more regions are needed to form a FMS. See Somalia, Provisional Constitution, 1 August 2012, [url](#), art. 49 (6)

<sup>749</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>750</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>751</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>752</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 93, 95

<sup>753</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>754</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>755</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>756</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>757</sup> Interpeace, Galmudug Reconciliation: Processes, Challenges, and Opportunities Ahead, February 2021, [url](#), pp. 26-27

<sup>758</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 32

<sup>759</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 40

<sup>760</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 32

- Hawadle vs Habar Gedir sub-clans concerning a land dispute in Matabaan district;<sup>761</sup>

The other major source of conflict in the region is the on-going military confrontation between Al-Shabaab and anti-Al-Shabaab forces, be they state forces, federal forces, AMISOM (Djibouti Forces, as well as ENDF) or other local militias. For additional details see report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>762</sup>

### 2.4.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab's violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias' violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

ACLED data indicate that both in terms of the number of security incidents and the number of fatalities, Hiraan region ranked sixth among Somalia's regions in 2020 and the first half of 2021 (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, 179 security incidents were reported in Hiraan, including battles, explosions/remote violence and violent acts against civilians, causing 169 fatalities. During the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted 82 incidents with 105 deaths (see Figure 44 and Figure 46).<sup>763</sup>

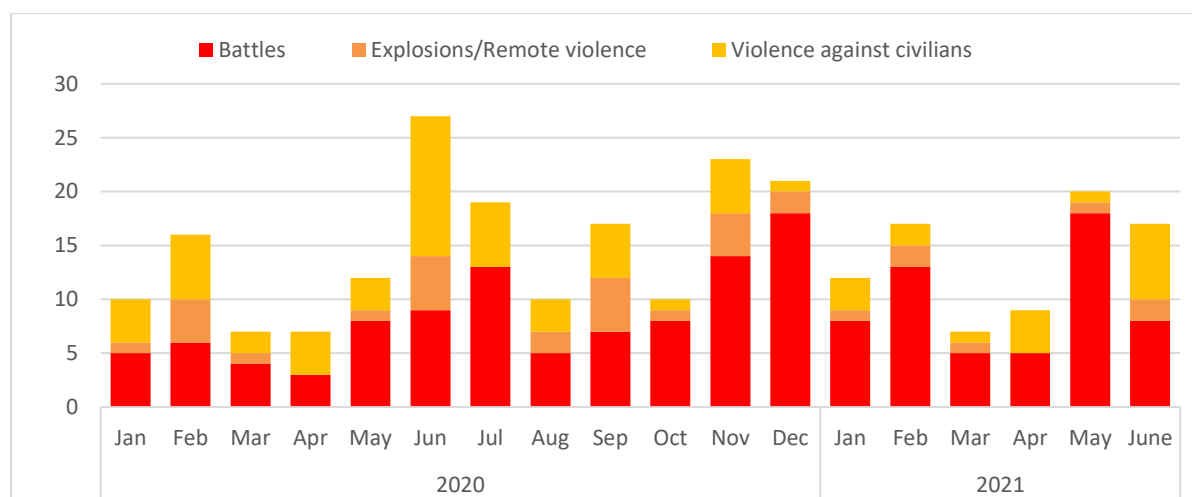


Figure 44: Hiraan – Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>764</sup>

At district level, Beletweyne, with 145 incidents, accounted for the majority (about 56 %) of the total 261 security incidents recorded in Hiraan between January 2020 and the end of June 2021 (see Figure 45).<sup>765</sup>

<sup>761</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 40

<sup>762</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 92-95

<sup>763</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>764</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>765</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

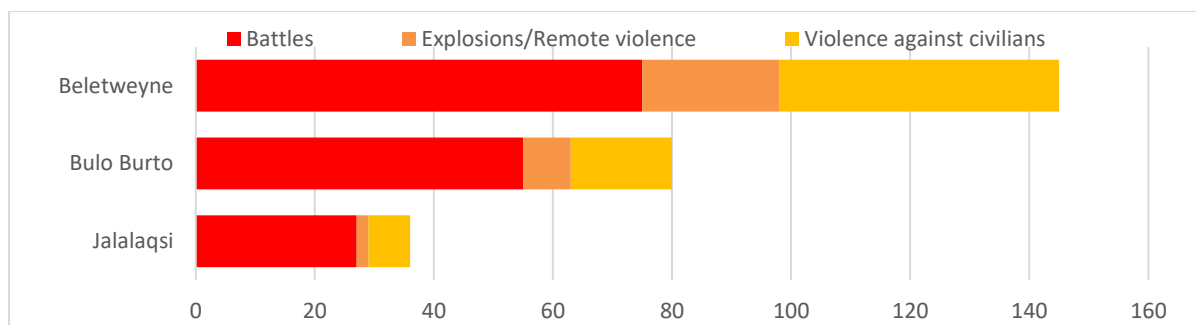


Figure 45. Hiraan – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>766</sup>

Al-Shabaab was coded by ACLED as ACTOR 1 in 145 of the 261 security incidents recorded between January 2020 and June 2021, i.e. around 56 % of the total number of incidents. 95 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents involved either Somali military, police forces or AMISOM, while 8 involved clan militias. Another 37 incidents involved civilians. The predominant type of incident was armed clashes (83 incidents). Meanwhile, ACLED recorded 33 instances of Al-Shabaab violence targeting civilians, including 27 attacks and 5 cases of abduction or forced disappearance. Besides incidents attributed to Al-Shabaab, ACLED documented a number of armed clashes between various clan militias (examples see below).<sup>767</sup>

Regarding IED activities, UNMAS reported an apparently significant decrease in IED-related incidents in Hiraan in 2020 compared to 2019, from 50 to 15 incidents. However, this drop has been attributed to the fact that IED clearance operations carried out by security forces between population centres in 2019 did not take place in 2020. The source, therefore, cautions that ‘the drop recorded in Hiraan in 2020 should be considered a result of the lack of opportunity for armed opposition groups to use IEDs against security forces, rather than any overarching change to the threat picture’.<sup>768</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 46 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction as to civilian and non-civilian) that were recorded by ACLED in Hiraan region between January 2020 and the end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Hiraan	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	157	205
Explosions/Remote violence	33	12
Violence against civilians	71	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>274</b>

Figure 46. Hiraan – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>769</sup>

Of the 274 fatalities recorded in Hiraan, the vast majority were reported in Bulo Burto (133 deaths) and Beletweyne districts (127 deaths). When focussing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, the data indicates that Beletweyne, with 39 fatalities, accounts for the majority of the 57 fatalities caused by this type of violence.<sup>770</sup>

<sup>766</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>767</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>768</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report - 2020 Annual Report, 16 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>769</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>770</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

## Illustrative security incidents

Hiraan is among the regions most affected by clan conflicts (see also Figure 15).<sup>771</sup> On 5 May 2021, clashes over agricultural land were reported between members of the Jejele (a Hawiye subclan<sup>772</sup>) and the Makane (Bantu/Jareer<sup>773</sup>) on the outskirts of Beletweyne.<sup>774</sup> Local Radio Kulmiye reported ‘that at least four people were injured’,<sup>775</sup> while another media source indicated that ‘at least two people were killed and seven others injured’<sup>776</sup>. On 17 May 2021, renewed fighting in the Baladu Nur locality reportedly left at least ten people dead and many more injured. Police in Beletweyne district detained several traditional elders suspected of inciting the fighting.<sup>777</sup>

Further reported instances of clan violence include clashes between members of the Hawadle-Agoon and Habar Gidir-Ayr (both subclans of Hawiye) near Beletweyne district’s Matabaan town on 24 November 2020 (5 people killed and 10 others injured),<sup>778</sup> and fighting over land between members of the Reer Hassan (a group associating themselves with the Ashraf<sup>779</sup>) and the Hawadle (a Hawiye sub-clan<sup>780</sup>) near Beletweyne town on 16 June 2020,<sup>781</sup> resulting in 9 deaths.<sup>782</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>783</sup>

Besides, Al-Shabaab, in late January 2021, attacked Somali and Djiboutian forces at a military base in Bulo Burto town, reportedly killing a Somali soldier and injuring the commander of the government troops.<sup>784</sup>

On 18 August 2020, an unclaimed explosive attack in front of a stadium in Beletweyne reportedly killed four people, including two police officers.<sup>785</sup>

On 13 February 2020, in Beletweyne<sup>786</sup>, Ethiopian troops accidentally clashed with (anti-Al-Shabaab) Ma'awisley militia, reportedly killing at least 10 of their members and wounding 8 others.<sup>787</sup> Meanwhile, a local radio source reported that at least 20 militiamen were killed.<sup>788</sup>

<sup>771</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian needs Overview – Somalia, Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2021, 9 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 18-19; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan – Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>772</sup> UNHCR Somalia, Genealogical Table of Somali Clans, n.d., [url](#), p. 2

<sup>773</sup> ACCORD, Clans in Somalia - Report on a Lecture by Joakim Gundel, COI Workshop Vienna, 15 May 2009 (Revised Edition), 15 December 2009, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>774</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 32

<sup>775</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 1700 gmt 5 May 21, 5 May 2021

<sup>776</sup> News Ghana, At least two people killed, seven more injured in clashes in central Somalia, 6 May 2021, [url](#)

<sup>777</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 1700 gmt 17 May 21, 17 May 2021

<sup>778</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM32522, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Banadir news 1700 gmt 24 Nov 20, 24 November 2020

<sup>779</sup> UK, UKBA, Country of Origin Information (COI) Report – Somalia, 17 January 2012, [url](#), p. 185

<sup>780</sup> UNHCR Somalia, Genealogical Table of Somali Clans, n.d., available at: [url](#), p. 1

<sup>781</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31390, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>782</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/798, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 40; ACLED does not list any fatalities for this incident. ACLED, Somalia, SOM31390, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>783</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>784</sup> Radio Kulmiye, Somali soldier and three militants reportedly killed in clash, 24 January 2021; see also: ACLED, Somalia, SOM33050, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>785</sup> Dalsan Radio, Three Killed By Landmine Attack in Beledweyne, 20 August 2020; ACLED indicates that three police officers were killed. ACLED, Somalia, SOM31820, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>786</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30490 [source: Radio Risala], as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>787</sup> Radio Kulmiye, Report says deadly clash in Somalia was 'accidental', 13 February 2020

<sup>788</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30490 [source: Radio Risala], as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

## Other impacts on civilian life

Insecurity has disrupted trade flows in parts of Hiraan (Bulo Burto and Jalalaqsi),<sup>789</sup> and clan violence has cost livelihoods and resulted in the displacement of families.<sup>790</sup> In 2020, UNOCHA recorded 21 incidents in Hiraan that hindered humanitarian organisations from accessing populations in need, the fourth highest figure among Somalia's regions.<sup>791</sup> Moreover, UNOCHA indicated that areas of Hiraan region were among the worst-affected in Somalia in terms of child protection.<sup>792</sup>

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, the PRMN<sup>793</sup> recorded an estimated 319 000 new displacements from Hiraan (293 000 in 2020 and another 26 000 from January to May 2021), with a peak of 180 000 reported in April 2020 (due to large-scale flooding). According to this source, Hiraan had the second highest number of new displacements among Somalia's 18 regions in 2020, and the sixth highest number in the first five months of 2021. Throughout this 17-month period, virtually all people displaced from their homes in Hiraan relocated to other places within the same region. Meanwhile, PRMN recorded some 317 000 arrivals of displaced persons in Hiraan (292 000 in 2020 and 25 000 between January and May 2021), nearly all of them from the same region.<sup>794</sup>

The same source indicates that flooding was the main reason for displacement in Hiraan across both years (and almost the sole reason in 2020), accounting for an estimated 306 000 cases. Conflict and insecurity were reported to be the second most prevalent reason for displacement during the first five months of 2021, resulting in an estimated 6 000 displacements, almost all reported in Beletweyne district.<sup>795</sup>

## 2.4.2 Middle Shabelle

### 2.4.2.1 Background

Middle Shabelle region shares borders with the following regions: Galgaduud to the north, Hiraan to the west, Lower Shabelle and Banadir region to the south, the Indian Ocean to the east.<sup>796</sup> Middle Shabelle consists of four districts: Balcad, Jowhar, Cadale and Adan Yabaal. The region's capital is Jowhar.<sup>797</sup>

Middle Shabelle is mainly inhabited by the Hawiye sub-clans: Abgal, Hawadle, Murusade, Galja'el (Galjeel) and Baadi Adde (Gugungdabe). On the west bank of the Shabelle River around Jowhar the Bantu minority group Shiidle live.<sup>798</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of the Middle Shebelle region was 516 036 inhabitants, among which 114 348 people

<sup>789</sup> FEWS NET, Food Security & Nutrition Quarterly Brief with a Focus on 2020 Jiaal Impact and Gu Season Early Warning, 17 May 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>790</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian needs Overview – Somalia, Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2021, 9 March 2021, [url](#), p. 18; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan – Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 12

<sup>791</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>792</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan - Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 84

<sup>793</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>794</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>795</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>796</sup> Global Shelter Cluster, Middle Shabelle, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>797</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>798</sup> EASO, COI report - South and Central Somalia Country overview [clan maps based on Lewis 1955, Abikar 1999], August 2014, [url](#), pp. 52-53

in urban areas, 249 326 in rural, and 100 402 nomads.<sup>799</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.4.2.2 Conflict dynamics

**Actors and control areas/influence.** The Middle Shabelle region is dominated by the Abgaal Mudulood clan group. Other clans/groups present in the area are the Bantu Shiidle, the Gaaljeel, and other minority clans.<sup>800</sup> Another important actor in the region, besides Al-Shabaab, is the SNA. Allegedly its presence and conduct in the area is very much linked to national politics, and for this reason there are a number of checkpoints and extortion activities going on in the region.<sup>801</sup> For additional details about federal, state, and other armed actors in the region see report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>802</sup>

In general, like in many other regions in Somalia, Al-Shabaab are in control of the rural areas, whereas the major towns are like islands more or less disconnected from each other. For instance, the area between Mogadishu and Jowhar is not entirely disconnected, but the territory between Balcad and Jowhar is firmly under the control of Al-Shabaab. Direction eastwards instead, from Mogadishu to Adale for instance, the territory is more or less uncontested and the towns are not disconnected.<sup>803</sup> Broadly speaking security expert II is of the same opinion: Jowhar, along with the major towns in Middle Shabelle, is controlled by state and federal forces, with the help of AMISOM, while the ‘area outside of the cities’ is instead controlled by Al-Shabaab.<sup>804</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** The proximity to Mogadishu makes Middle Shabelle (similar to Lower Shabelle) a satellite of Mogadishu’s local administration and of the Hawiye dominant position there. In particular, the Abgaal clan group, which is dominant in Middle Shabelle, and is also dominant in Mogadishu, makes no distinction between the two administrations: ‘they own all of it, so it’s not separate for them... for them, Mogadishu and Middle Shabelle is the same and one’.<sup>805</sup> However, according to security expert I, there are a number of intra-clan conflicts/tensions within the Abgaal Mudulood clan group.<sup>806</sup> Against this backdrop, in terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period following disputes (or conflicts) were reported or were relevant in the Middle Shabelle region (non-exhaustive list):

- Abdalla Aroni (Hawiye) vs Eli Oumar (Hawiye) in the village of Burdhere. After clashing over a land dispute, the two sub-clans reconciled in January 2021 by agreeing, among other things, to the payment of compensation and the release of persons detained;<sup>807</sup>
- Shiidle vs Abgal (Hawiye). The Shiidle, a farming minority group (for more details see the [EASO COI Report on Targeted Profiles](#), chapter 4.3 Ethnic Minorities) are mainly found along the Shabelle river north and south of Jowhar and in and around Jowhar. Historically they would control the banks of the river and the Abgal nomads would have an access agreement to the river for their livestock.<sup>808</sup> Endemic conflicts/clashes between the two groups, typical of the pastoral clans competition versus “Bantu” agriculturalist,<sup>809</sup> have been reported over the years.<sup>810</sup>

<sup>799</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>800</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>801</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>802</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 92- 95

<sup>803</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>804</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>805</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>806</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>807</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 33; see also Berghof Foundation, Conflict Assessment, Galmudug State, 2019, [url](#), pp. 8-9

<sup>808</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>809</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>810</sup> Sheikh Abass K., Conflict Assessment Report – Hirshabelle State, 2017, [url](#), pp. 9-10, 13-14



- Galjeel vs Abgal.<sup>811</sup>

The other major source of conflict in the region is obviously the presence and the activities carried out by Al-Shabaab.<sup>812</sup>

### 2.4.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab's violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias' violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

Both in 2020 and in the first half of 2021, ACLED data indicate that the Middle Shabelle administrative region ranked fifth in terms of the highest number of security incidents; regarding the total number of fatalities, it ranked fifth in 2020 and first in the first half of 2021 (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, 186 security incidents, including battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence and violence against civilians, causing 216 fatalities were reported in Middle Shabelle. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted 99 incidents and 359 deaths in this region (see Figure 47 and Figure 49).<sup>813</sup>

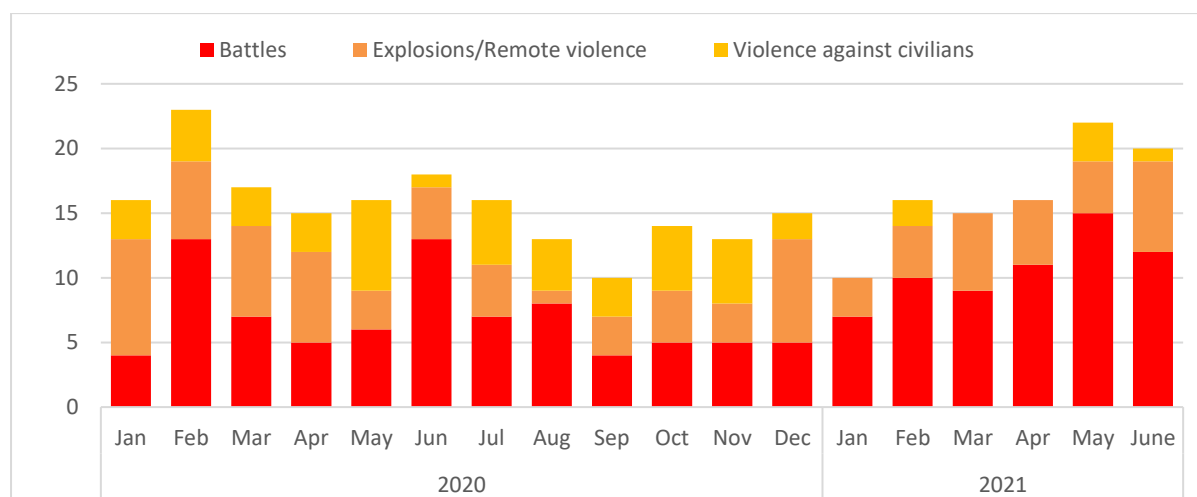


Figure 47. Middle Shabelle – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>814</sup>

At the district level, Middle Shabelle's capital district Jowhar recorded the most security incidents (148 events), followed by Balcad District (108 events) for the period between January 2020 and end of June 2021 (see Figure 48).<sup>815</sup>

<sup>811</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>812</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021; Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>813</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>814</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>815</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

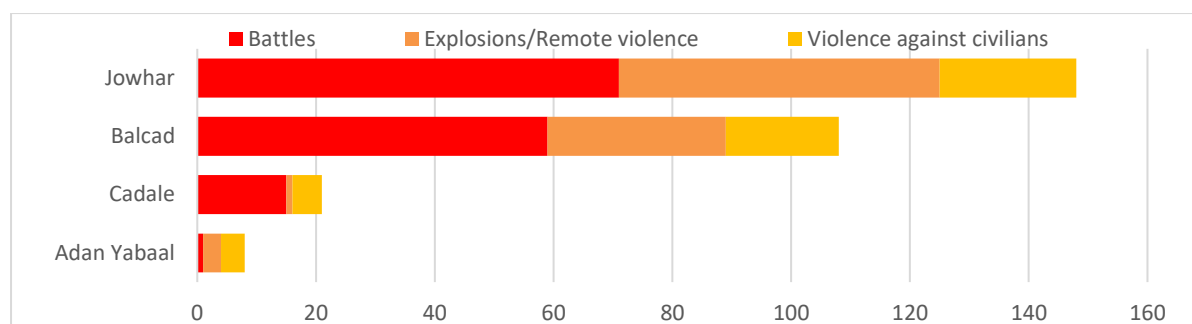


Figure 48. Middle Shabelle – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>816</sup>

Al-Shabaab was coded as ACTOR 1 in 197 of the 285 security incidents, accounting for around 69 % of incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021. 81 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents involved Somali Armed Forces or Somali Police Forces, 63 involved AMISOM forces, and 46 incidents involved civilians. The main type of Al-Shabaab-related incidents were armed clashes (a sub-category of battles, 85 incidents), along with the use of remote-controlled explosives (39 incidents) and attacks against civilians (26 incidents).<sup>817</sup>

Regarding IED activities, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported a decrease in Middle Shabelle in 2020 compared to 2019.<sup>818</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 49 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Middle Shabelle region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Middle Shabelle	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	146	401
Explosions/Remote violence	88	102
Violence against civilians	51	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>575</b>

Figure 49. Middle Shabelle – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>819</sup>

Of the 575 fatalities recorded in Middle Shabelle between January 2020 and end of June 2021, the vast majority (374 deaths) were reported in Jowhar, ahead of Balcad (166 deaths) and Cadale (27 deaths). When focusing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, most of the 51 incidents that caused in total 72 fatalities were reported in Jowhar (23 incidents and 24 fatalities).<sup>820</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

The UN Secretary-General stated that between 10 February and 7 May 2021 Middle Shabelle was among the regions most affected by security incidents – mostly hit-and-run attacks perpetrated by Al-Shabaab targeting Somali Security Forces and AMISOM.<sup>821</sup>

<sup>816</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>817</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>818</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report - 2020 Annual Report, 16 June 2021, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>819</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>820</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>821</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 14

On 3 June 2021, armed clashes started after an IED attack by Al-Shabaab on a military base of government security forces in Jalable village in Jowhar district. Al-Shabaab claimed having killed 18 soldiers including the commander in the battle, SNA claimed killing more than 70 militants.<sup>822</sup>

On 29 May 2021, SNA forces clashed with Al-Shabaab militants in Xaararay village near Jowhar town killing 37 militants and injuring 40 others.<sup>823</sup>

On 14 April 2021, a minibus travelling from Mogadishu to Jowhar struck an IED near Balcad town. Reportedly, up to 17 people were killed.<sup>824</sup>

Between August and 4 September 2020, a downward trend regarding the number of mortar attacks in Middle Shabelle as in a few other regions was reported by the UN Secretary-General.<sup>825</sup> AMISOM, Al-Shabaab's main target of mortar attacks, was targeted by six mortar rounds at their and SNA's base in Balcad town on 14 September 2020.<sup>826</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>827</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

The Protection Cluster reported incidents of child recruitment in Balcad district in May 2021. Boys were most affected. 6 % of the people interviewed mentioned adolescent girls (12-17) that were affected by child recruitment.<sup>828</sup> For more information on child recruitment, please see section 1.1 of EASO's COI report [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#), published in August 2021.

On 27 May 2020, seven Somali health workers were kidnapped from a mother and child clinic in Middle Shabelle region and killed.<sup>829</sup> Amnesty International reported the kidnapping of an eighth health worker on the same day in Middle Shabelle.<sup>830</sup> For more information on health workers, please see section 6.4 of EASO's COI report [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#), published in August 2021.

Clan violence affected people's lives and livelihoods as well as causing displacements in Middle Shabelle. Clan conflicts were also the reason that humanitarian programmes were suspended.<sup>831</sup> Violent incidents against civilians related to clan conflicts included the killing of five teachers by Al-Shabaab at a Quranic school in Cadale district in September 2020. A sixth teacher succumbed to his

<sup>822</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33986, [url](#); Xinhua News Agency, Somali army says kills 70 Shabab militants, 4 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>823</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33942, [url](#); ANI, Somali Army kills 37 al-Shabab militants in southern region, 29 May 2021, [url](#)

<sup>824</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33626, [url](#); GardaWorld, Somalia: Explosion near Balcad kills up to 17 people April 14, 14 April 2021, [url](#); AA, Somalia: Landmine explosion kills 15 minibus passengers, 14 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>825</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/1113, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 12

<sup>826</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM32019, [url](#)

<sup>827</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>828</sup> Protection Cluster, Somalia Protection Monitoring System: South Central and Puntland - Summary of Findings, May 2021, 30 May 2021, [url](#), p. 4

<sup>829</sup> Insecurity Insight, Violence Against or Obstruction of Health Care in Somalia in 2020, June 2021, 22 June 2021, [url](#), p. 3;

AI, Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2020, 7 April 2021, [url](#), p. 323

<sup>830</sup> AI, Amnesty International Report 2020/21: The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2020, 7 April 2021, [url](#), p. 323

<sup>831</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan – Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), p. 12

injuries. The incident was allegedly related to an underlying clan conflict over land.<sup>832</sup> Moreover, clan conflict-motivated killings affected women, children and an elderly man in Warsheikh town.<sup>833</sup>

A statement by the Hirshabelle administration from 7 March 2020 declared that the land dispute between the Abadalla Aroni and Eli Omar sub-clans, which had first emerged in 1992 and re-emerged in 2017,<sup>834</sup> was resolved and that the parties' agreement included paid compensation to some of the victims.<sup>835</sup> The conflict had caused the death and displacement of people and destroyed properties.<sup>836</sup>

USDOS reported that according to an advocacy organisation, 'AMISOM forces were implicated in rapes and other unspecified grave abuses of human rights' in relation to military operations against Al-Shabaab in Middle Shabelle.<sup>837</sup>

In July 2021, Al-Shabab fighters set residential areas on fire in War-Dhagah, Gallef locality and abducted people with suspected links with government security forces.<sup>838</sup>

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN reported 297 000 new displacements from Middle Shabelle, with 75 000 displacements in July 2020 alone. Between January and May 2021, 40 000 new displacements in Middle Shabelle were registered, of which 38 000 were within the region and 2 000 to Benadir. In 2021, flooding was the main reason of displacement for 30 000 people, conflict and insecurity for 8 000, and the remaining 2 000 displacements were drought-related. Of the 8 000 displacements caused by conflict and insecurity, Balcad district was most affected (5 000 cases) followed by Jowhar (3 000 cases). In 2020, nearly all 257 000 displacements happened within Middle Shabelle. In 213 000 cases flooding was the main reason, followed by drought-related displacements (43 000 cases). Displacements for reasons related to conflict and insecurity affected Jowhar (500 cases) and Balcad districts most (400 cases) in 2020.<sup>839</sup>

## Evictions

No statistical data on evictions could be found.

In May 2021, the Protection Cluster reported the destruction of property affecting mostly IDPs, older women and groups, which were identified as 'marginalized' by the Protection Cluster. In interviews with key informants (KIs), 12 % mentioned that persons living with disabilities (PLWDs) were also affected. 36 % of the KIs related the destruction of property to forced evictions. The evictions might have been linked to land grabbing incidents, which were reported by 17 % of the KIs.<sup>840</sup>

<sup>832</sup> Horn Observer, Gunmen brutally kill six Quran teachers in Somalia's Middle Shabelle region, 17 September 2021, [url](#); Halbeeg News, Five Quranic teachers killed in a suspected clan clashes attack near Mogadishu, 17 September 2020, [url](#); AA, Gunmen kill 5 Quran teachers in Somalia, 17 September 2020, [url](#)

<sup>833</sup> Garowe Online, Al-Shabaab retakes key town after brief capture by Somali troops, 22 October 2020, [url](#); Mareeg.com, AU soldiers kill woman after bomb attack in Somalia, 21 October 2020, [url](#); Mareeg.com, At least three family members killed in Somalia, 9 November 2020, [url](#); Radio Dalsan, Gunmen kill mother and her two children in Middle Shabelle, 9 November 2020, [url](#); Halbeeg News, Hirshabelle leader embarks on reconciliation following clan clashes, 26 August 2020, [url](#)

<sup>834</sup> Berghof Foundation, Conflict Assessment Report: Hirshabelle State, Somalia, 2017, 16 January 2018, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>835</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/398, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 33

<sup>836</sup> Berghof Foundation, Conflict Assessment Report: Hirshabelle State, Somalia, 2017, 16 January 2018, [url](#), p. 8

<sup>837</sup> USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 5

<sup>838</sup> BBC Monitoring Africa, Programme Summary of Somali's Radio Mogadishu News 1130 gmt 13 Jul 21, 18 July 2021

<sup>839</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>840</sup> Protection Cluster, Somalia Protection Monitoring System: South Central and Puntland - Summary of Findings, May 2021, 30 May 2021, [url](#), p. 3

### 2.4.3 Hirshabelle - Checkpoints and road security

Based on expert interviews this is the situation along the main corridors in Hirshabelle:

- **Mogadishu – Jowhar – Buulo Barde – Beletweyne.** The road connecting Mogadishu, Jowhar and then Buulo Barde up towards Beletweyne is on par with the road from Afgooye down to Marka and Baraawe in Lower Shabelle, making it one of the worst stretch of road in the country after Lower Shabelle. According to international expert VIII, the main reason lies in the fact that there is very sizable military presence, particularly from AMISOM up and down this corridor. This stretch is a significant corridor in terms of AMISOM's movement of troops and forces. As a result, it constitutes one of the most contested areas along Lower Shabelle, making it also a prominent spot for IEDs and insecurity in general.<sup>841</sup> AS has also disrupted major supply routes in areas not directly under its control. For instance, FGS and Hirshabelle officials can no longer travel by road between Mogadishu and Jowar, having to fly instead.<sup>842</sup> Already in 2019 the UN Security Council reported that trucks using the main supply routes in Hiraan were still attacked by AS and that this was an ongoing and long-standing situation because of AS implementing economic blockades in government-controlled towns.<sup>843</sup> Overall, in recent years the situation from Balcad to Jawhar and then the rest of the road (Balcad – Jawhar – Jalalaqsi – Buulo Barde - Beletweyne) has deteriorated. This also affects aid programs in Jalalaqsi and Buulo Barde, where the pressure from AS in the local area limits the ability of these programs to invest in building new district administration offices, court houses, police stations and so on.<sup>844</sup>
- **Mogadishu – Adale.** According to security expert I, from Mogadishu to Adale (Cadale), the territory is more or less uncontested and the towns are not disconnected.<sup>845</sup>

As per ACLED data, in the reference period (January 2020 – June 2021) there were a total of 121 explosions/remote violence events of the type IED, shelling, grenade and suicide bomb (among others remote violence events) in Hirshabelle, 33 in Hiraan and 88 in Middle Shabelle, resulting respectively in 12 and 102 fatalities (Figure 19).<sup>846</sup> UNMAS reported that 44 IED incidents took place in Middle Shabelle and 15 in Hiraan in 2020.<sup>847</sup>

## 2.5 Galmudug

For an overview of the Galmudug administration in terms of (1) relevant dynamics, territorial control, and governance, (2) presence of state level armed forces, and (3) presence of other actors/forces (federal, international, and local), see the EASO Country of Information report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>848</sup>

<sup>841</sup> Interview with international expert based in Somalia, 3 August 2021

<sup>842</sup> HIPS, State of Somalia 2020 Report, February 2021, [url](#), p. 17

<sup>843</sup> UN Security Council, Letter dated 7 October 2019 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council, 7 October 2019, [url](#), para. 27, p. 9

<sup>844</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>845</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>846</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>847</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report, 2020 Annual Report, 2021, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>848</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 96-100

## 2.5.1 Galgaduud

### 2.5.1.1 Background

Galgaduud (or Galguduud) region shares borders with the regions of Mudug, Hiraan and Middle Shabelle. It also shares an international border with Ethiopia and it borders the Indian ocean. Galgaduud consists of five districts: Cabudwaaq, Cadaado, Dhuusamarreeb, Ceel Bur and Ceel Dheer.<sup>849</sup>

Galgaduud is mainly inhabited by the Habr Gedir (Hawiye) sub-clans, Suleiman (also Suliman or Saleban), Ayr and Duduble, and the Murusade (Hawiye) clan. The Marehan (Darod) sub-clan is also present in the border area of Ethiopia.<sup>850</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of Galgaduud was 569 434, among which 183 553 people in urban areas, 52 089 in rural, and 214 024 nomads.<sup>851</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.5.1.2 Conflict dynamics

**Actors and control areas/influence.** The five major clans in the north Galgaduud region are: Saad (Sa'ad), Suleiman (Suliman or Saleban), and Ayr (Cayr) - these three from the Hawiye-Habr Gidir clan group - the Marehan (Darood), and the Dir clan groups.<sup>852</sup> These clans control the west or the north-western part of Galgaduud, which is completely free from Al-Shabaab.<sup>853</sup>

Security expert II notes that most major clans in Galgaduud have their own militias, with soldiers/combatants at times serving as government forces, and at times fighting for the clan militia of belonging: 'it is very difficult to pinpoint'.<sup>854</sup> Security expert I suggests the same when indicating that the line between state armed forces and local militias 'are much more blurred' in this region: be it SNA units, Danaab brigades, NISA forces, or police forces, they are 'somewhat a mixed militia' that can change by the day based on political dynamics.<sup>855</sup> For additional details about federal, state, and other armed forces active in this region, see report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>856</sup>

As to Al-Shabaab, the group is fully in control of the south-eastern part of Galgaduud, up to the coast. The major urban centres in this area are El-Dheer and El-Buur. The group also contest most of the rural areas south-east of Dhusamareb, and has recently 'taken up key positions some 18 kms outside the provincial town, Dhusamareb'.<sup>857</sup> The area fully controlled or highly contested by Al-Shabaab is mainly inhabited by Hawiye clans, such as: Duduble, Murasade, and Wa'aysle, which are other Hawiye sub-clans 'jockeying for political influence in Galmudug'.<sup>858</sup> These Hawiye clan groups perceive the Habr Gidir from the north as dominant in the state administration. Reportedly they do not feel to be part of it, and according to security expert I, they 'live happily under al-Shabaab for their own good reasons... al-Shabaab is not an occupier in that sense but a convenient partner'.<sup>859</sup> Along similar lines

<sup>849</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>850</sup> EASO, COI report - South and Central Somalia Country overview [clan maps based on Lewis 1955, Abikar 1999], August 2014, [url](#), pp. 52-53

<sup>851</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>852</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>853</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>854</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>855</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>856</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 96-100

<sup>857</sup> Sahan, The Somali Wire, Issue no. 182, 12 July 2021, n.d., source requiring registration, p. 1

<sup>858</sup> Sahan, The Somali Wire, Issue no. 182, 12 July 2021, n.d., source requiring registration, p. 1

<sup>859</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021



security expert II notes that currently ‘al-Shabaab is literally taking over most of the rural areas of the region’, they are encroaching and spreading their power to the rural areas, while the state and federal forces control only some of the towns of the region (in the northern part).<sup>860</sup> But even in these towns, AS’s presence is ‘visible’, the group ‘can tax and extort whatever money it wants’, says security expert II, while he adds that the area fully controlled by the group in the region represents basically its ‘headquarter’ in central Somalia.<sup>861</sup>

Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama’ah (ASWJ) is an armed actor that was previously relevant in the region, however two sources indicated that is currently defeated both militarily and politically, according to both security experts I and II.<sup>862</sup> Apparently they have no capacity to mobilise again easily, according to security expert I,<sup>863</sup> while security expert II cannot really tell whether they are completely ‘out of the picture or just hibernating’.<sup>864</sup> Some of the old ASWJ commanders have been integrated into the state security forces, but there are a number of clan grievances that are put forward by those clan groups that used to support this multi-clan armed Sufi group (see for further details report on [Somalia: Actors](#), July 2021),<sup>865</sup> in particular Ayr and Marehan.<sup>866</sup>

For additional details in terms of territorial control see report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>867</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** A first conflict dynamic taking place in Galgaduud is the on-going confrontation between Al-Shabaab and anti Al-Shabaab forces.<sup>868</sup>

As to clan rivalries, Galgaduud is one of the main theatres of clan confrontation in Somalia, and it is also true that in terms of governance the state administration based in Dhusamareb (Galmudug) is maybe one of the least developed compared to other federal Member States, exception made for Hirshabelle. However, in this part of Galmudug (and especially in the north-western regions), clan rivalries are more vivid and free to surface as violently as they can be, also in reason of the fact that there is no Al-Shabaab presence, according to security expert I.<sup>869</sup> Within this context security expert II speaks about ‘heavily armed clan clashes’, which mostly revolve around access to pasture land (see also Figure 15 [Regional distribution of clan militias’ violent events](#), 1 January 2020 - 30 June 2021).

In terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period following disputes (or conflicts) were reported or were relevant in the Galgaduud region (non-exhaustive list):

- Ayanle (Ayr, Habar Gidir) vs Reer Kooshin (Marehan) at Balanballe;<sup>870</sup>
- Saleeban (Habar Gidir) vs Yabar-Dhowra kec (Ayr) at Qalanqale;<sup>871</sup> Ayr and Saleeban sub-clans agreed on a preliminary ceasefire agreement in Hananbure in February 2021. In March 2021, talks between the two sub-clans were held in Dhusamarreeb, in Gaalgudud region, to address the root causes of the conflict.<sup>872</sup>
- Marehan vs Dir over Balanballe, Gurieel and Heraale (Abuwaaq and Adaado districts): conflicts in these areas over land, pasture and water resources date back decades.<sup>873</sup> Moreover, as a by-

<sup>860</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>861</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>862</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021; Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>863</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021; see also Sahan, The Somali Wire, Issue no. 182, 12 July 2021, n.d., source requiring registration, p. 1

<sup>864</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>865</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), p. 99

<sup>866</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>867</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 97-98

<sup>868</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>869</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>870</sup> Interpeace, Galmudug Reconciliation: Processes, Challenges, and Opportunities Ahead, February 2021, [url](#), pp. 26-27

<sup>871</sup> Interpeace, Galmudug Reconciliation: Processes, Challenges, and Opportunities Ahead, February 2021, [url](#), pp. 26-27

<sup>872</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 31

<sup>873</sup> Saferworld, Clans, contention and consensus - Federalism and inclusion in Galmudug, June 2020, [url](#), p. 33

product of federalism, confrontation over the establishment of political constituencies, district and political office add a layer to the traditional dimension of the clashes.<sup>874</sup>

- Wagardhac (Marehan) vs Saleban (Habar Gidir) clashed in April 2020 in the villages of Balli-Cad and Foronta-Fora.<sup>875</sup>

For a additional details about clan rivalries taking place at state level in Galmudug - often revolving around access to land, infrastructures, water and resources - see report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>876</sup>

### 2.5.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab's violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias' violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

In 2020, ACLED data indicate that the Galgadud administrative region ranked eighth in terms of the number of security incidents and ninth regarding the total number of fatalities; in the first half of 2021, it ranked eighth in terms of security incidents as well as fatalities (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, 82 security incidents, including battles, explosions, or other forms of remote violence and violent acts against civilians, causing 103 fatalities, were reported in Galgadud. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted 48 incidents and 86 deaths in this region (see Figure 50 and Figure 52).<sup>877</sup>

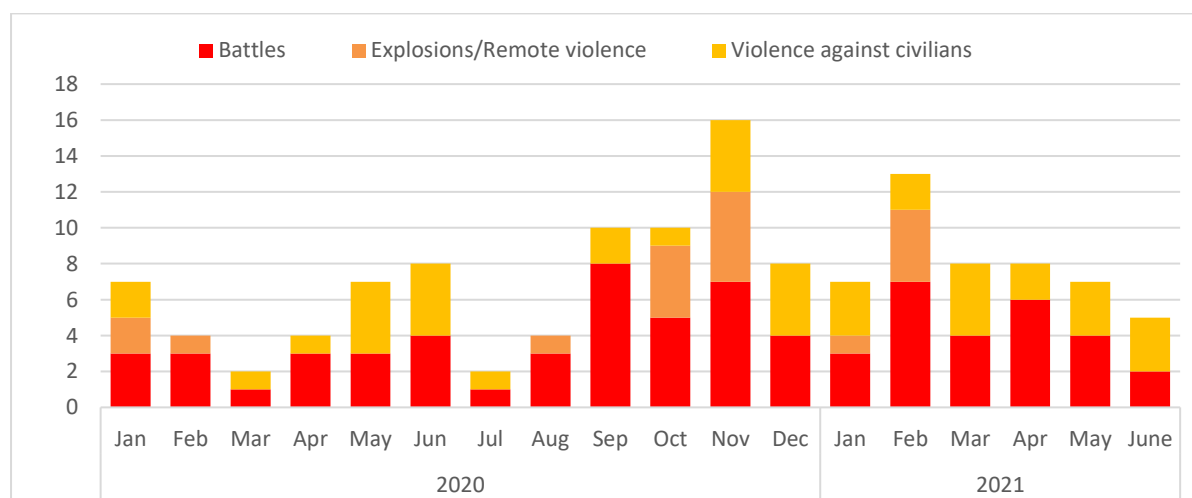


Figure 50. Galgadud – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>878</sup>

At the district level, Galgadud's capital, Dhusamareb, recorded the most security incidents (78 events), followed by Caabudwaaq (Abudwaaq) district (24 events) for the period between January 2020 and end of June 2021 (Figure 51).<sup>879</sup>

<sup>874</sup> Saferworld, Clans, contention and consensus - Federalism and inclusion in Galmudug, June 2020, [url](#), pp. 33-34

<sup>875</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 35

<sup>876</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 99-100

<sup>877</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>878</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>879</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

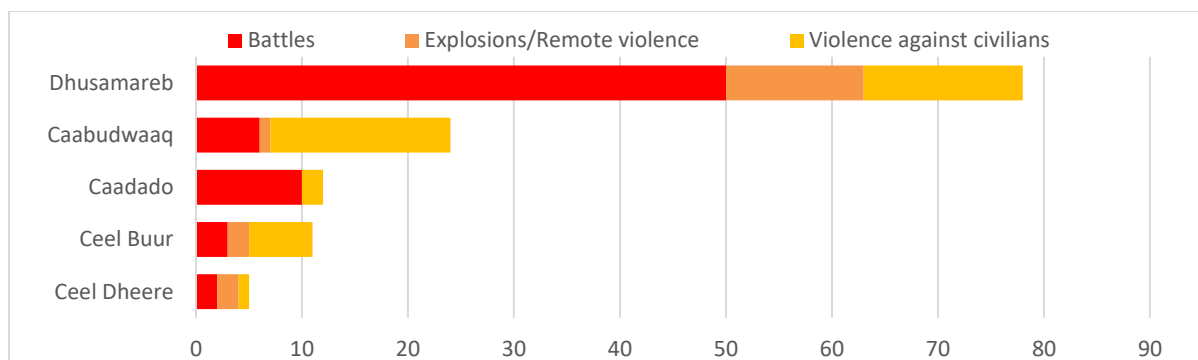


Figure 51. Galgadud – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>880</sup>

Habar Gidir clan militias or sub-clan militias were coded as main actors in 37 of the reported security incidents, accounting for around 28 %. 12 of these incidents were coded as attacks against civilians resulting in 19 fatalities, and further 20 incidents were coded as armed clashes between different Habar Gidir sub-clan militias resulting in 36 fatalities. Al-Shabaab was coded as ACTOR 1 in 32 of the 130 security incidents, accounting for around 25 % of the incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021. 12 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents involved Somali Armed Forces or Somali Police Force, nine incidents AMISOM forces, and ten incidents civilians. The main type of these incidents were armed clashes (12 incidents), along with the use of remote-controlled explosives and shelling (11 incidents) and abductions and forced disappearances or attacks against civilians (nine incidents).<sup>881</sup>

Regarding IED activities, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) reported an increase in IED activities in Galgadud in 2020 (12 incidents) compared to 2019 (5 incidents).<sup>882</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 52 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Galgadud region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Galgadud	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	71	115
Explosions/Remote violence	18	20
Violence against civilians	41	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>189</b>

Figure 52. Galgadud – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>883</sup>

Of the 189 fatalities recorded in Galgadud between January 2020 and end of June 2021, the vast majority (109 deaths) were reported in Dhusamareb, ahead of Caabudwaaq (45 deaths), Caadado (16 deaths), Ceel Dheere (12 deaths), and Ceel Buur (7 deaths). When focusing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, most of the 41 incidents that caused in total 54 fatalities were reported in Caabudwaaq (17 incidents and 27 fatalities), followed by Dhusamareb (15 incidents and 19 fatalities).<sup>884</sup>

<sup>880</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>881</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>882</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report - 2020 Annual Report, 16 June 2021, [url](#), p.9

<sup>883</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>884</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

### Illustrative security incidents

On 13 February 2021, a preliminary ceasefire agreement between the Ayr and Saleeban sub-clans of the Habar Gidir clan in Hananbure, Galgadud Region, was facilitated by the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation.<sup>885</sup> An undisclosed source reported by ACLED, however, indicates a clash between Ayr and Saleeban clan militias on 26 February 2021 in Gaaragoyle village near Dhusamareb town, leaving one person dead and another one injured.<sup>886</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>887</sup>

On 1 February 2021, Al-Shabaab launched a mortar attack on Dhusamareb while federal and state leaders were meeting, reportedly injuring between zero and four<sup>888</sup> people.<sup>889</sup> On 7 February 2021, twelve agents of the National Intelligence and Security Agency were killed in an Al-Shabaab roadside bomb attack near Dhusamareb.<sup>890</sup>

In November 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) reported that ‘improvised explosive device attacks, armed clashes with security forces and AMISOM and four indirect fire attacks were reported in the Dhusamareb area, which has historically seen a low level of Al-Shabaab activity.’ One of the attacks targeted but missed the aeroplane of the President of Galmudug on 2 November 2020 as it was taking off.<sup>891</sup> Between 1 January and 2 November 2020, ACLED recorded nine Al-Shabaab attacks in Dhusamareb, leaving two soldiers and three civilians dead.<sup>892</sup>

In the reporting period, ACLED recorded three incidents of kidnapping and abduction of civilians by Al-Shabaab on 1 May 2020 (2 civilians), 11 June 2020 (21 civilians), and 30 December 2020 (1 civilian). In April and June 2020 Al-Shabaab militants killed civilians accused of spying for government forces, in June 2020 and March 2021 Al-Shabaab militants amputated the right arm of civilians who the group accused of theft.<sup>893</sup>

Four people were reportedly killed and 26 wounded in an inter-clan conflict between the Wagardhac of Marehan and the Saleeban of Habar Gidir in Balli-Cad village in Caadado district on April 6, 2020.<sup>894</sup>

On 27 and 28 February 2020, heavy fighting broke out between the Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama’a (ASWJ), the Somali National Army, and the Special Police ‘Haramcad’ in Dhusamareb district<sup>895</sup>, reportedly killing between 12 and 22 people.<sup>896</sup> For more information on this topic, please see sections 7.5.1 of EASO’s COI report [Somalia - Actors](#), published in July 2021.

<sup>885</sup> UNSG, Situation Report Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 31

<sup>886</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM33327 [Undisclosed Source], as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>887</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>888</sup> Garowe Online, Dhusamareeb talks set to kick off after arrival of stakeholders, 3. February 2021, [url](#)

<sup>889</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/154, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 13; ACLED, Somalia, SOM33112, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>890</sup> Al Jazeera, Security agents killed in central Somalia roadside bomb attack, 7 February 2021, [url](#); see also ACLED, Somalia, SOM33184, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>891</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/1113, 13 November 2020, [url](#), para. 15

<sup>892</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>893</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31001/ SOM31351/ SOM32895/SOM33349/SOM31457/ SOM31040/ SOM31418, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>894</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30881, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#), see also UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/398, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 35

<sup>895</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/398, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 9

<sup>896</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30585, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); VOA, Somalia’s Sufi Muslim Leaders Surrender to Government, 29 February 2020, [url](#)

## Other impacts on civilian life

Humanitarian actors reported difficulties in providing assistance due to the volatile security situation, which increased the complexity of seeking and receiving support for civilians.<sup>897</sup> For Galgaduud region, 20 incidents of humanitarian workers being unable to access sites were reported in 2020, placing the region fifth behind Bay, Gedo, Benadir and Hiraaan.<sup>898</sup>

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN<sup>899</sup> reported 58 000 new displacements from Galgaduud, with 17 000 displacements in February 2020 alone. Of the 48 000 displacements in 2020, nearly all within Galgaduud, conflict and insecurity were the main reasons (41 000 cases), followed by flooding (4 000 cases) and drought (3 000 cases). In 2020, displacement related to conflict and insecurity reportedly affected Dhusamareb district the most (36 000). Between January and May 2021, 10 000 new displacements were registered in Galgaduud, of which nearly all were within the region, and around 100 were to Benadir. Nearly all of the 10 000 displacements were caused by conflict and insecurity. Dhusamareb district was again clearly most affected. For the same period, another 2 000 displacements arriving in Galgaduud were registered from Mudug.<sup>900</sup>

## Evictions

No statistical data regarding evictions in Galgaduud could be found.

## 2.5.2 Mudug

### 2.5.2.1 Background

Mudug region is divided between Galmudug and Puntland; the latter controls the northern half of Mudug.<sup>901</sup> The town of Galkacyo, located in the western part of Mudug is split up between Galmudug and Puntland respectively; Puntland controls the north section of it and Galmudug the south.<sup>902</sup> A green line separates the two.<sup>903</sup>

Mudug shares borders with Nugal and Galgaduud regions, an international border with Ethiopia and borders the Indian ocean. It consists of five districts: Xarardheere, Hobyo, Gaalkacyo, which is the regional capital, Galdogob and Jariiban. Gaalkacyo is the region's capital.<sup>904</sup>

In the south, Mudug is mainly inhabited by the Saad, a Habr Gedir (Hawiye) sub-clan, which is also the dominant clan in the area. A small enclave of Qubeys, of the Dir clan family, is also to be found in this part of the region.<sup>905</sup>

The north Mudug is mainly inhabited by the Omar Mohamoud (or Omar Mahmud), a Majerteen (Darod) sub-clan, which is the dominant clan in the area. However, along with the Omar Mahmud, there are large numbers of Beidyahan. This clan is found mainly inside the Ethiopian region, but historically speaking its members used to reside in the Galkacyo area, according to expert III on Somali

<sup>897</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia: Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2021, 9 March 2021, [url](#), pp. 21-22

<sup>898</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>899</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>900</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>901</sup> HIPS, State of Somalia 2020 Report, February 2021, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>902</sup> Global Shelter Cluster, Mudug, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>903</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>904</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>905</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

clans, Joakim Gundel.<sup>906</sup> Another cross-border clan group, between Ethiopia and North Mudug, centring around the village of Goldogob, is the Laylkase, of the so called Ogadeen-Harti group. On the opposite side, along Mudug's coast facing the ocean, there is also a small community of Agoon, of the Dir clan family.<sup>907</sup> Dir minority clans groups are also to be found in Galkcayo.<sup>908</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of Mudug was 717 863, among which 381 493 people in urban areas, 79 752 in rural, and 185 736 nomads.<sup>909</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.5.2.2 Conflict dynamics

As mentioned above, the Mudug's region is split between Galmudug and Puntland state administrations.

**Southern Mudug, actors and control areas/influence.** The main actors in the area are Al-Shabaab and the Saad clan, along with Galmudug's and the FGS security forces. As of June 2021, Al-Shabaab presence and control areas are on the rise in Mudug.<sup>910</sup>

The portion of the region falling under Galmudug's administration is to a large extent contested by al-Shabaab, when not fully controlled by the group, according to security expert I (see also see also map [Approximate Territorial Control June 2021](#)).<sup>911</sup> The various clans inhabiting the area (Saad, is the main one) are resisting Al-Shabaab's expansion, but apparently 'they are overwhelmed, one by one'.<sup>912</sup> Reportedly the militant group is now reaching for the first time the Saad area, after having 'neutralised the Suleiman territory, at the border between Mudug and Galgaduud', along with the Dir clans.<sup>913</sup> This way the Al-Shabaab are 'kind of encircling the state administration in Galmudug.' After expanding beyond Baadweyne, Al-Shabaab managed to temporarily overrun the town of Wisil in south Mudug, along the road connecting Hobyo to Galkayo: 'if ever they reach Hobyo there won't be Hobyo-Galkacyo anymore', maintains security expert I.<sup>914</sup>

As to Galkacyo, the south section is controlled by Galmudug. According to security expert I, the local administration is very loose, resulting in a sort of 'semi-anarchic' environment, 'nowhere close to a functional place'. However, the two sides of the town administration (Galmudug's and Puntland's) have spent energy and efforts to reconcile with each other, while they are trying to improve together the overall level of security and cooperation in town.<sup>915</sup> This, according to local clan expert VII, has guaranteed a certain level of stability and security in town, which has not experienced any major clash between the two sides since 2016.<sup>916</sup> This cooperation has also led to the dismantling of the various Al-Shabaab cells in town. Still, in recent years, the city has been the site of a number of assassinations allegedly backed or orchestrated by Al-Shabaab (see below for further details).<sup>917</sup>

<sup>906</sup> Expert III, Joakim Gundel is a scholar, author, and Somali clans expert with over 30 years of academic and field experience (Somalia and the wider Horn of Africa). He now works as independent consultant.

<sup>907</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>908</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>909</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31.

<sup>910</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>911</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>912</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>913</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>914</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>915</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>916</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>917</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021



For additional details at Galmudug's state level about actor's territorial control and federal, state, and other armed forces active in this area, see report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>918</sup>

**Southern Mudug, conflict dynamics.** Besides the Al-Shabaab/anti-Al-Shabaab conflict, in terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period following disputes were reported (non exhaustive list) in Mudug's southern part:

- Wagardhac (Marehan) vs Saad at Gelinsoor;<sup>919</sup>
- Wagardhac (Marehan) vs Saleban at Gelinsoor;<sup>920</sup>

**Northern Mudug, actors and control areas/influence.** Mudug's northern part, including north Galkcayo, falls under the control and the administration of Puntland. Quite a new development according to access to justice expert VII,<sup>921</sup> this region is experiencing an increasing presence of Al-Shabaab and Al-Shabaab related activities, along and across the border with southern Mudug (see also map [Approximate Territorial Control June 2021](#)).<sup>922</sup> Within this context, Mudug's regional governor was killed in May 2020,<sup>923</sup> along with a few other targeted assassinations.<sup>924</sup> For further details see EASO COI Report on [Targeted Profiles](#), under 'Individuals supporting or perceived as supporting the FGS, the International Community, and/or as opposing Al-Shabaab.'

**Northern Mudug, conflict dynamics.** Besides the Al-Shabaab/anti-Al-Shabaab conflict (see above), in terms of clan conflicts, Mudug's northern part is affected by the long-standing Hawiye/Habr Gidir versus Darood/Majeerteen and Darood/Laylkase contentions.<sup>925</sup> According to local conflict expert VI,<sup>926</sup> these competitions from the rural areas often spill over to Galkcayo.<sup>927</sup> Within this context clan and access to justice expert VII, mentions following rivalries (non exhaustive list):

- Saad (Habar Gedir) vs Omar Mahamud (Majeerteen) in Galkcayo;<sup>928</sup>
- Saad (Habar Gedir) vs Leelkase (or Leylkase) in Mudug,<sup>929</sup> and in Galkcayo: in May 2020, members of Darood/Leelkase and Hawiye/Habar Gedir/Saad clans clashed in northwest of Gaalkayo, to then reconcile afterwards, 'with the exchange of compensation and the signing of a cooperation agreement for peaceful coexistence between the clans.'<sup>930</sup>
- Saad (Habar Gedir) vs Wagardhac (Marehan) at Saaxo: Saaxo, 76 KM west of Galkcayo, is a village whose residents come from the Wagardhac, a Marehan sub clan. Although the village has become part of Puntland, at times Saad militias try to take over it, while the Wadardhac receive the support of the Majeerteen and the Puntland administration;<sup>931</sup>
- Saad (Habar Gedir) vs Dir - allied with Majerteen and the Puntland administration - at Tawfiiq. Tawfiiq is a village district that works as a buffer zone between Puntland and Galmudug (it lies at the border between Jariiban district and Hobyo district some 160 km northeast of the provincial

<sup>918</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 96-100

<sup>919</sup> Interpeace, Galmudug Reconciliation: Processes, Challenges, and Opportunities Ahead, February 2021, [url](#), pp. 26-27

<sup>920</sup> Interpeace, Galmudug Reconciliation: Processes, Challenges, and Opportunities Ahead, February 2021, [url](#), pp. 26-27

<sup>921</sup> Expert VII is a Somali expert on clan and access to justice. Based in Somalia he is a scholar and a community development practitioner. Expert VII prefers to remain anonymous for safety reasons.

<sup>922</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>923</sup> ACLED, Mid-Year Update: 10 Conflicts to Worry About in 2020 – Somalia, July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>924</sup> Garowe Online, Somalia: Puntland crushes 'terrorist networks' behind assassination, 22 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>925</sup> Interview with local conflict expert VI, 22 July 2021

<sup>926</sup> Expert VI is a Somali expert on local clan conflicts with long-standing experience in conflict prevention and analysis. Based in Garowe he works as a consultant for national and international organisations. Expert VI prefers to remain anonymous for safety reasons.

<sup>927</sup> Interview with local conflict expert VI, 22 July 2021; Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>928</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021; Interpeace, Galmudug Reconciliation: Processes, Challenges, and Opportunities Ahead, February 2021, [url](#), pp. 26-27

<sup>929</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021; Interpeace, Galmudug Reconciliation: Processes, Challenges, and Opportunities Ahead, February 2021, [url](#), pp. 26-27

<sup>930</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/798, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 38

<sup>931</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

capital Galkayo). The district, established by the local Dir clan, ‘was recognised by Puntland instead of by Somalia’.<sup>932</sup>

In general, as local clan and access to justice expert VII puts it, conflict dynamics and actors involvement depend on the level of the conflict/confrontation among clans: ‘if the conflict is wide’, this or that clan ‘will involve other clans’, while their rival ‘will do the same’, at times even involving the respective state administrations (such as it happened in 2016 between Puntland and Galmudug in Galkayo).<sup>933</sup> Still according to clan and access to justice expert VII, following clan groups at times clash or engage in minor skirmishes, which are typically resource driven and reportedly easily solved:

- Within Majeerteen/Omar Mahmud sub-clans, which compete for access to resources, including pasture and water;<sup>934</sup>
- Dhulbahante vs Omar Mahmud (Majeerteen) sub-clans in the area at the border between Mudug and Nugal;<sup>935</sup>

### 2.5.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab’s violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias’ violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups’ violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

Within the reporting period, ACLED data indicate that Mudug administrative region compared to the rest of Somalia ranked in the middle range (seventh rank) concerning the total number of fatalities, and the number of security-related events (tenth rank) (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, 69 security incidents, including battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence and violent acts against civilians causing 142 fatalities were reported in Mudug. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted 36 incidents and 88 deaths in this region (Figure 53 and Figure 55).<sup>936</sup>

<sup>932</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>933</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>934</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>935</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>936</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

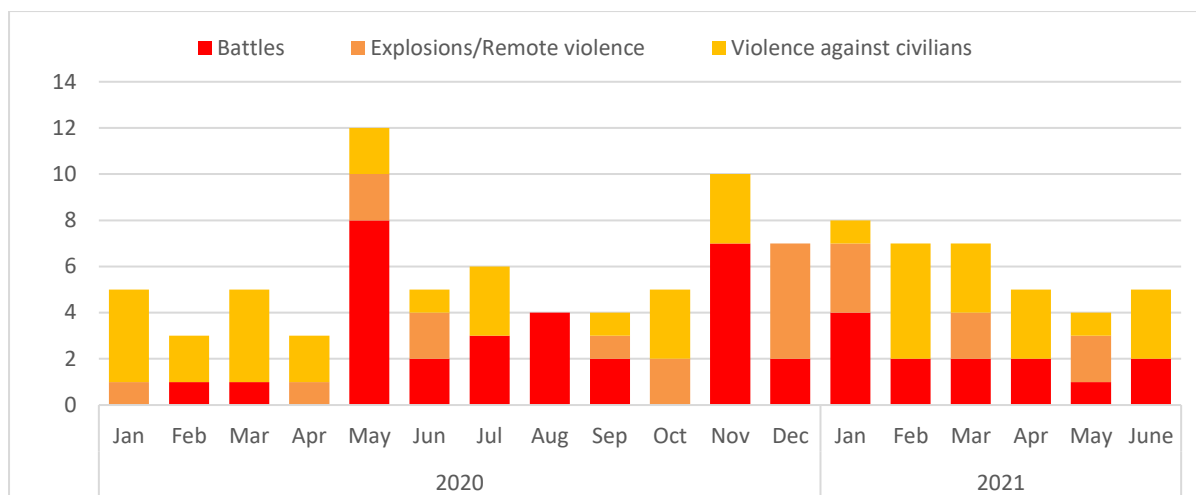


Figure 53. Mudug – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>937</sup>

At the district level, Mudug's regional capital, Galkacyo, recorded the most security incidents (78 events), followed by Hobyo District (13 events) for the period between January 2020 and end of June 2021 (see Figure 54).<sup>938</sup>

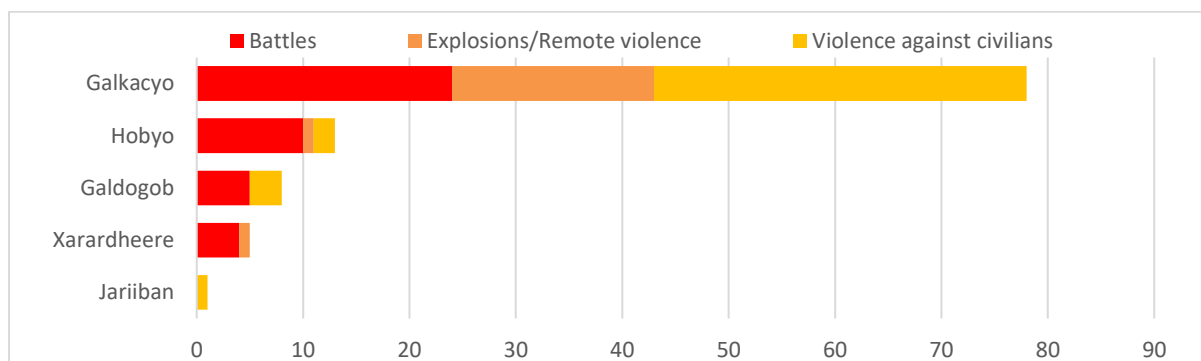


Figure 54. Mudug – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>939</sup>

Al-Shabaab was coded as ACTOR 1 in 26 of the 105 security incidents, accounting for around 24 % of incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021. 12 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents involved the Military Forces of Somalia, 8 civilians and the rest different clan militia as well as police forces. Al-Shabaab-related incidents were closely followed by incidents related to unidentified armed groups, which amounted to 25 and therefore accounted for 23 % of incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021. 16 of these incidents related to unidentified armed groups involved civilians, and further 7 incidents involved the military forces of Somalia. The main types of incidents involving Al-Shabaab were armed clashes (10 incidents) and remote-controlled explosives (6 incidents) while the main type of incidents involving unidentified armed groups were attacks on civilians (10 incidents) and remote-controlled explosives (8 incidents).<sup>940</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 55 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Mudug region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

<sup>937</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>938</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>939</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>940</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

Mudug	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	43	155
Explosions/Remote violence	21	37
Violence against civilians	41	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>230</b>

Figure 55. Mudug – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>941</sup>

Of the 230 fatalities recorded in Mudug between January 2020 and end of June 2021, the vast majority (132 deaths) were reported in Galkacyo, ahead of Hobyo (54 deaths), Xarardheere (Haradheere) (26 deaths) and Galdogob (17 deaths). When focusing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, most of these 38 incidents that caused in total 41 fatalities were reported in Galkacyo (33 incidents and 35 fatalities).<sup>942</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

On 27 June 2021, Al-Shabaab militants attacked a military base in the town of Wisil 200 kilometres southeast of Galkacyo,<sup>943</sup> killing 17 soldiers and 13 civilians, according to a military officer.<sup>944</sup> On 18 December 2020, an IED borne by an Al-Shabaab militant exploded near a stadium in Galkacyo where the Somali Prime Minister was scheduled to appear, killing between 10 and 14 people and further injuring about the same number of people.<sup>945</sup> On 30 November 2020, an unspecified number of civilians was killed in an Al-Shabaab attack on an army base in Bacadweyne.<sup>946</sup> On 12 August 2020, at least ten villagers were killed in an Al-Shabaab attack on a local militia’s military base near Bacadweyne village.<sup>947</sup> On 17 May 2020, the Governor of Mudug and four of his bodyguards were killed by a VBIED employed by Al-Shabaab militants in Galkacyo.<sup>948</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>949</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

The emergence of Galmudug as a federal state (see for further details section 7.5 of the EASO COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#)),<sup>950</sup> has led to local boundary clashes in and around Galkacyo with neighbouring Puntland. The boundary dispute between the two states has intensified old conflicts over land, infrastructure and resources and fighting mostly occurred along tribal lines.<sup>951</sup> Fighting of rival clans in the border town of Galkacyo was reported to be common.<sup>952</sup> Among the threats affecting civilians in Galkacyo city were domestic and sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>953</sup> Focus group

<sup>941</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>942</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>943</sup> VOA, Somalia Executes Militants Amid Deadly Attack, 27 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>944</sup> Reuters, At least 30 killed in al Shabaab attack in Somalia - security official, 28 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>945</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/154, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 14; Reuters, At least 10 killed in central Somalia bombing claimed by al Shabaab, 19 December 2020, [url](#); VOA, Suicide Bomber Kills 10 in Somalia Just Before Scheduled Address by PM, 18 December 2020, [url](#)

<sup>946</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2021/154, 17 February 2021, [url](#), para. 15; Somali Affairs, At least 20 killed in intense battle between Al-Shabab, army in Ba’adweyne, 30 November 2020, [url](#)

<sup>947</sup> Garowe Online, Al-Shabaab raids village, kills several civilians in Somalia, 13 August 2020, [url](#)

<sup>948</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/798, 13 August 2020, [url](#), para. 22; VOA, Suicide Bomb Kills Somali Governor, 17 May 2020, [url](#)

<sup>949</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>950</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 96-101

<sup>951</sup> Saferworld, Clans, consensus and contention: federalism and inclusion in Galmudug, June 2020, [url](#), p. 33

<sup>952</sup> Garowe Online, Somalia: SNA troops’ clash with clan militia leaves several people dead, 24 May 2020, [url](#); see also:

Sentinel Project (The), Fostering misinformation literacy: Runtu Waa Nabad in Somalia, 16 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>953</sup> Sentinel Project (The), Fostering misinformation literacy: Runtu Waa Nabad in Somalia, 16 April 2021, [url](#)

discussions carried out by the organisation Saferworld with women in different locations in Galmudug state, among them Galkacyo, in November 2019 revealed that clan conflicts were sometimes resolved by a woman or a girl from the perpetrator's clan given in marriage to the member of the injured clan. It was also mentioned that women are often seen as the cause of tribal conflict.<sup>954</sup>

Infrastructure such as roads, waste management and water supply were described as poor and their state exacerbated by years of conflict.<sup>955</sup>

The work of humanitarian aid organisations was burdened by access incidents and violent acts against staff members: For Mudug region, 14 incidents of humanitarian workers being unable to access sites were reported in 2020.<sup>956</sup>

### Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN<sup>957</sup> reported 38 000 new displacements from Mudug, with over 3 000 displacements in April and May 2021 respectively. Of the 28 000 displacements in 2020, nearly all within Mudug, flooding was the main reason (20 000 cases), followed by drought (5 000 cases) and conflict and insecurity (2 000 cases). In 2020, displacement for reasons related to conflict and insecurity reportedly affected Hobyo district most (1 000), followed by Galkacyo district with 800 registered cases. Between January and May 2021, 10 000 new displacements were registered in Mudug, of which 8 000 were within the region and 2 000 to Galgaduud. Of the 8 000 displacements caused by conflict and insecurity, almost all were registered in Hobyo district. For the same period 6 000 displaced people newly arrived in Galkacyo.<sup>958</sup>

In April 2021, sustained armed conflict between government forces and Al-Shabaab militia led to displacement of over 7 600 people from the town of Bacadweyne northeast of Galkacyo who fled to IDP sites in Galkacyo and Galgaduud.<sup>959</sup>

### Evictions

A joint IDP site verification exercise conducted by CCCM Cluster in North and South Galkacyo town in March 2021 surveyed 90 IDP sites hosting 125 600 individuals. The exercise revealed that 17 % of the sites were classified as either at extreme (7 %) or high (10 %) risk of eviction. 41 % of sites were reported to have been issued an eviction notice within three months prior to the survey.<sup>960</sup>

## 2.5.3 Galmudug - Checkpoints and road security

Based on expert interviews the following information was provided about the main corridors in Galmudug:

- **Balanbal – Dhusamareb – Adaado – Galkacyo.** International expert VIII stated that apart from districts fully controlled by al-Shabaab (see also map on [Approximate Territorial Control as of June 2021](#)), the situation on the roads in the north of Galmudug, from Balanbal (or Balanballe) to Galkacyo is 'relatively good.' There is some difficulty of access, less due to AS and more due to complex political tensions between several clans along these routes (see sections on Conflict's background in [Mudug](#) and in [Galgaduud](#) above). This situation is related to the demobilization of

<sup>954</sup> Saferworld, Clans, consensus and contention: federalism and inclusion in Galmudug, June 2020, [url](#), p. 34

<sup>955</sup> Saferworld, Clans, consensus and contention: federalism and inclusion in Galmudug, June 2020, [url](#), p. 35

<sup>956</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>957</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>958</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>959</sup> UNOCHA, Rapid Inter-agency joint assessment report on Baadweyne displacement crisis, Galmudug 22-27 April 2021, 27 April 2021, [url](#), p.2

<sup>960</sup> CCCM Cluster Somalia, Verified IDP sites in Gaalkayo as of March 2021, March 2021, [url](#)

Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'ah (ASWJ) and the subsequent power vacuum it created. With regards to AMISOM presence, there is a small AMISOM footprint in Galmudug in Dhusamareb.<sup>961</sup>

- **Guri Cell – Mataban.** According to security expert I, people can travel freely from South-Galkacyo all the way to Guri Ceel, 'probably not using security forces'. However, the stretch Guri Cell – Mataban 'gets a bit tricky'.<sup>962</sup>
- **Galkacyo – Hobyo.** According to international expert VIII, the situation on the road from Galkacyo direction south to Hobyo is 'relatively good.' At the same time, at the time of the interview, operations were taking place along from Hobyo to reclaim control of certain areas from AS.<sup>963</sup>

As per ACLED data, in the reference period (January 2020 – June 2021) there were a total of 39 explosions/remote violence events of the type IED, shelling, grenade and suicide bomb (among others remote violence events) in Galmudug, 21 in Mudug and 18 in Galgaduud, resulting in 57 fatalities (Figure 19).<sup>964</sup> UNMAS reported that 12 IED incidents took place in Galgaduud in 2020.<sup>965</sup>

## 2.6 Puntland

For an overview of the Puntland administration in terms of (1) relevant dynamics, territorial control, and governance, (2) presence of state level armed forces, and (3) presence of other actors/forces (federal, international, and local), see the EASO Country of Information report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>966</sup>

For an overview of conflict dynamics and security trends in the Mudug region, which is split between Galmudug and Puntland, see section on [Mudug](#) within the chapter on [Galmudug](#).

[Sool](#) and [Sanaag](#) contested regions are addressed in the chapter on [Contested areas between Somaliland and Puntland](#). For the remaining regions ([Nugal](#) and [Bari](#)) see sections below within the chapter on [Puntland](#).

### 2.6.1 Nugal

#### 2.6.1.1 Background

Nugal region shares borders with the regions of Bari, Sool and Mudug, an international border with Ethiopia and borders the Indian ocean.<sup>967</sup> It consists of three districts: Garoowe, Burtinle and Eyl.<sup>968</sup> The region's capital is Garowe.<sup>969</sup>

Along with the Omar Mahmud clan, which is dominant in north Mudug and in the southern part of Nugal, the other major clan in the region, still from the Darood-Harti group, is the Issa Mahmud. Issa Mahmud is to be found in the central area of Nugal, in and around Garowe, as well as north of it and Eyl on the coast. Close to the Eyl port town there is another smaller clan, the Awrtable. The border between the Omar Mahmud and the Issa Mahmud, which lies within Nugal administrative boundaries

<sup>961</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>962</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>963</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>964</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>965</sup> UNMAS, Explosive Hazard Analysis Report, 2020 Annual Report, 2021, [url](#), p. 9

<sup>966</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 101-106

<sup>967</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>968</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#); FSNAU – Somalia, Administrative Maps, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>969</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)



is a bit fluid.<sup>970</sup> For additional details on Garowe see EASO COI report on [Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators](#), chapter on Garowe.<sup>971</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of Nugal was 392 698, among which 138 929 people in urban areas, 31 047 in rural, and 213 227 nomads.<sup>972</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.6.1.2 Conflict dynamics

**Actors and control areas/influence.** Puntland's state administration and security apparatus are reportedly fully in control of the region,<sup>973</sup> although Al-Shabaab presence and activities have been widely reported during the reference period, such as on occasion of the assassination, in Garowe, of Nugal's regional governor in March 2020.<sup>974</sup> For further details see EASO COI Report on [Targeted Profiles](#) under the chapter on 'Individuals supporting or perceived as supporting the FGS, the International Community, and/or as opposing Al-Shabaab.' For an overview of the main state armed forces in Puntland see relevant section in the report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>975</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** Nugal's region does not present particularly severe conflict dynamic apart from Al-Shabaab episodic presence and incursions/assassinations (see also map [Approximate Territorial Control June 2021](#)).<sup>976</sup>

From a clan perspective, Nugal is quite homogenous,<sup>977</sup> the region being almost completely dominated by the Issa Mahmud.<sup>978</sup> There are no major clan conflicts on-going,<sup>979</sup> and, according to expert VII the region is 'characterized by stability and security'.<sup>980</sup>

At times, small scale clan frictions take place in the area close to Garowe between camel herders of the Dhulbahante and the Issa Mahmud/Majeerteen sub-clans; however, these tensions are usually solved through customary law, with the intervention of elders, 'they never turn into full-fledged or large scale conflicts'.<sup>981</sup>

### 2.6.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab's violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias' violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

In 2020 and in the first half of 2021, ACLED data indicate that the Nugaal administrative region ranked among the lowest in terms of security incidents and fatalities (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between

<sup>970</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>971</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, September 2021, [url](#)

<sup>972</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>973</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>974</sup> ACLED, Mid-Year Update: 10 Conflicts to Worry About in 2020 – Somalia, July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>975</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 97-98

<sup>976</sup> Interview with local conflict expert VI, 22 July 2021

<sup>977</sup> Interview with local conflict expert VI, 22 July 2021; Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>978</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>979</sup> Interview with local conflict expert VI, 22 July 2021

<sup>980</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>981</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

January and December 2020, a total of 20 security incidents, including events coded as battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence and violent acts against civilians, causing 11 fatalities were reported in Nugaal. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted six incidents and five deaths in this region (see Figure 56 and Figure 58).<sup>982</sup>

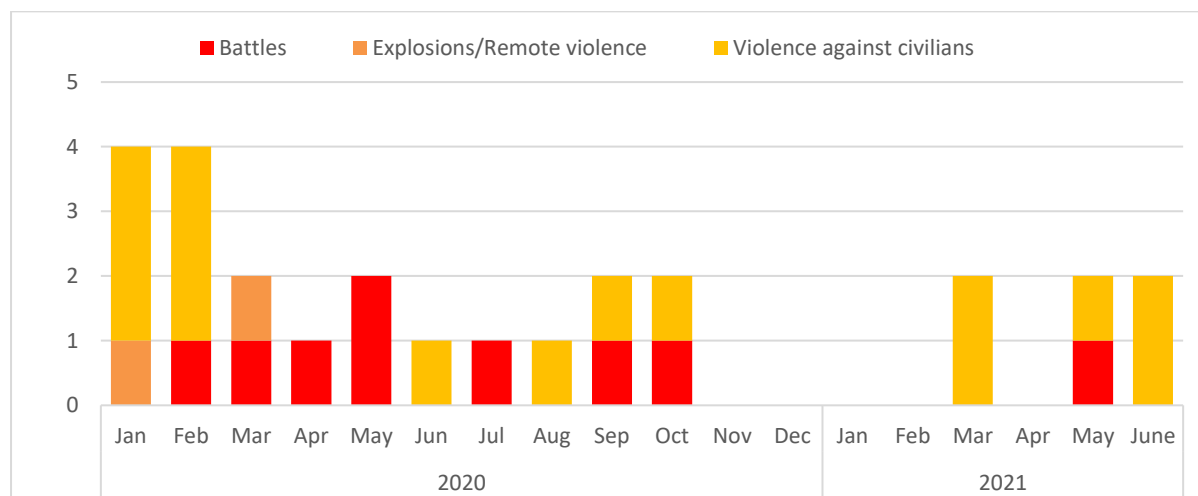


Figure 56. Nugaal – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>983</sup>

At the district level, Garowe district containing the city Garowe, capital of Puntland, recorded the most security incidents (24 events), followed by Burtinle district (2 events) for the period between January 2020 and end of June 2021 (see Figure 57).<sup>984</sup>

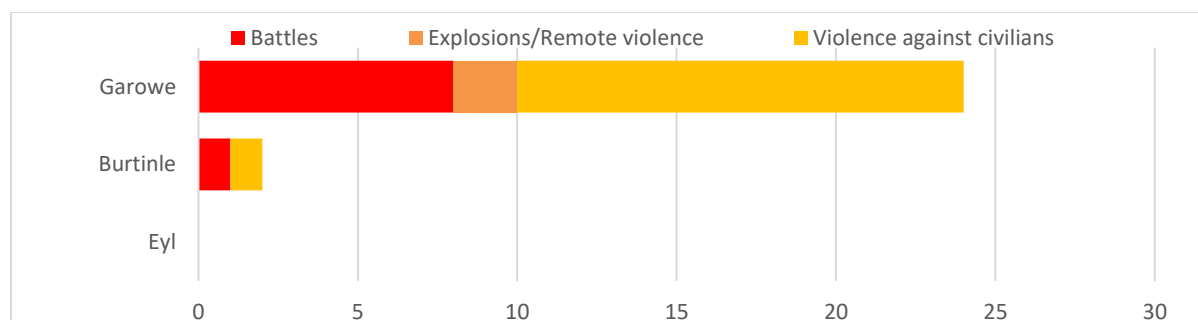


Figure 57. Nugaal – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>985</sup>

ACTOR 1 involved in the 26 security-related incidents during the reporting period were various clan militia as well as unidentified armed groups. Al-Shabaab was reportedly only involved in two security-related incidents, the shooting of a civilian in Garowe in February 2020 and a suicide bombing in March 2020 targeting the Governor of Nugaal and leading to two deaths. The main type of security-related incidents was violence against civilians (15 incidents), along with armed clashes (9 incidents) and one grenade explosion and one suicide bombing respectively.<sup>986</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 58 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Nugaal region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

<sup>982</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>983</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>984</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>985</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>986</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

Nugaal	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	9	3
Explosions/Remote violence	2	2
Violence against civilians	15	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>

Figure 58. Nugaal – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>987</sup>

Of the 16 fatalities recorded in Nugaal between January 2020 and end of June 2021, the vast majority (14 deaths) were reported in Garowe district, the remaining two fatalities were reported in Burtinle district. When focusing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, most of the 15 incidents that caused 11 fatalities in total were reported in Garowe district (14 incidents and 10 fatalities)<sup>988</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

In March 2020, the Governor of Nugaal region was killed by a suicide bomb blast in Garowe, the attack was claimed by Al-Shabaab.<sup>989</sup> Within the reporting period, ACLED based on information from local partners noted further attacks on state officials, such as a Puntland MP shot at and a military court official killed in Garowe.<sup>990</sup> About one third of incidents recorded by ACLED were clan confrontations and clashes between different tribal militia or tribal militia and security forces, in many cases related to disputes over land.<sup>991</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

On 23 March 2021, a female officer heading the Sexual and Gender-based Violence and Child Protection Unit in Garowe was physically assaulted by four police officers for reviewing sexual violence cases registered at the police station. She was also hindered in her investigation by the police commissioner of Nugaal region. A female journalist was briefly detained in Garowe for trying to report on this assault case and after publicly criticising the Puntland police for its handling of rape cases.<sup>992</sup>

### Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN<sup>993</sup> reported 13 000 new displacements from Nugal, with 2 000 displacements in October 2020 alone. Of the 10 000 displacements in 2020, 6 000 were within Nugaal, 2 000 to Bari, 1 000 to Mudug and the rest to several other regions. Drought was the main reason behind displacement (6 000 cases), 5 000 displaced people gave ‘other’ reasons. Only about 100 individuals named conflict/insecurity as the reason for displacement. Between January and May 2021, 3 000 new displacements were registered in Nugaal, of which 2 000 were within the region, 400 were to Middle Shabelle, 300 to Bari, 300 to Bay and the rest to several other regions. 2 000 of the 3 000 new displacements in the first five months of 2021 were caused by drought, 1 000 displaced people gave ‘other’ reasons. No displacement for conflict/insecurity reasons was registered.<sup>994</sup>

<sup>987</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>988</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>989</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/398, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 19; Al Jazeera, Somali governor killed in al-Shabab suicide bomb attack, 30 March 2020, [url](#)

<sup>990</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30312/SOM32251, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#); Somali Dispatch, Puntland official shot dead in Garowe, 21 October 2020, [url](#)

<sup>991</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30446/SOM31652/SOM32056/SOM33518/SOM33879, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>992</sup> UNSG, Situation Report Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 53-54

<sup>993</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>994</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

## Evictions

According to the NRC Evictions Information Portal, 34 cases of forced evictions were reported in Nugaal in 2020, resulting in the forced expulsion of 3 574 individuals. Between January and 29 June 2021, 1 121 individuals were affected by 11 cases of forced eviction in Nugaal. All 44 reported forced eviction cases in 2020 and 2021 occurred in Garowe district. NRC listed ‘rent default’ (28 cases), ‘development-landlord’ (6 cases), and several other grounds as respective reasons for forced evictions.<sup>995</sup> A joint IDP site verification exercise conducted by the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster (CCCM) in Garowe town in June 2021 surveyed 25 IDP sites hosting 51 670 individuals and revealed that 56 % of the sites were classified either as at extreme (12 %) or high (44 %) risk of eviction, with 44 % of sites having been issued an eviction notice within three months prior to the survey.<sup>996</sup>

## 2.6.2 Bari

### 2.6.2.1 Background

Bari region, the largest in Somalia,<sup>997</sup> shares borders with the regions of Sanaag, Sool and Nugal. It also borders the Indian ocean and the Gulf of Aden.<sup>998</sup> It consists of six districts: Caluula, Qandala, Bossaso, Qardho, Bandarbeyla and Iskushuban. The region’s capital is Bossaso.<sup>999</sup>

The dominant clan in the Bari region is the Osman Mahmud, still of the Majeerteen macro clan, of the Darood-Harti clan group. The Ali Suleman clan, in the north-eastern part of the Bari region, is also politically extremely relevant in the region. A number of smaller sub-clans, such as Ali Jibrail, Dashishe, Kaptanle, and others, inhabit the area south and south-east of Bosasso.<sup>1000</sup>

As to Bosasso, it has become a major migration port. It attracts as well large numbers of internally displaced people, among which the Digil Mirifle are particularly numerous.<sup>1001</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of Bari was 719 512, among which 471 785 people in urban areas, 65 483 in rural, and 133 234 nomads.<sup>1002</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.6.2.2 Conflict dynamics

**Actors and control areas/influence.** The main actors in the area are Majerteen sub-clans (with Osman Mahmud being the dominant one locally),<sup>1003</sup> Al-Shabaab, and Puntland’s security forces.<sup>1004</sup> According to security expert I, anything north-west of Bosasso, along that strip of land that borders the Gulf of Aden, is ‘Al-Shabaab territory’. It is under the group’s control or it is contested by it, at least up to a certain level – ‘50, 60, or even 90%’ roughly estimates security expert I. Reportedly the group penetrates very deeply into Sanaag’s territory, ‘all the way to Isaaq territory’, reaching almost

<sup>995</sup> NRC, Eviction Information Portal, Dataset, as of 29 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>996</sup> CCCM Cluster Somalia, Verified IDP sites in Garoowe as of June 2021, 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>997</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>998</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>999</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>1000</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>1001</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>1002</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31.

<sup>1003</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1004</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

Erigabo.<sup>1005</sup> Security expert II mentions instead Galgala and the Golis mountains west of it as a strategic base from where AS stages attacks in Bosasso, or other remote towns. However, he adds, ‘other than that, Puntland is generally operating’ with its military forces as well.<sup>1006</sup> For additional details about territorial control, as well as state and other armed forces active in this region, see report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>1007</sup>

According to security expert I, the other main and used to be important actor in the Bari region, ISIS-Somalia, is basically ‘not-existent, they are not a big deal’. Nominally they are still there, but in practice they have been ‘disabled, they have no capability whatsoever to stage as a serious contender there’.<sup>1008</sup> Security expert II maintains instead that the main issue at play with regards to ISIS-Somalia is that at times they fight against Al-Shabaab, while at times the two groups are allies against the Puntland forces.<sup>1009</sup> According to expert VII, most of the threats posed by ISIS-Somalia were addressed by the current Deni’s government, and his new security minister. Within this context the association between Ali Saleban and ISIS-Somalia, and the claim that Ali Saleben would harbour ISIS elements in the Qandala area, besides being the main source of ISIS commanders, has lost traction recently.<sup>1010</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** Al-Shabaab considers the military base and presence in the Bari region, in the Golis mountains west of Bosasso, very strategic. Already in 2018 the Hiraal Institute noted that the area works as a ‘strategic reserve’ for Al-Shabaab leadership, and that ‘half of all heavy ammunition taken from AMISOM and SNA bases was sent to the Golis Mountains in 2017 for storage in secret arms caches’.<sup>1011</sup> According to security expert I, Al-Shabaab has relocated to this region a lot of armaments, in a long-term strategy, ‘maybe as a safe’, he suggests.<sup>1012</sup> As to the way the Puntland administration and forces are reacting to this situation, ‘it is very fluid’, comments security expert I, ‘things can change by the day’<sup>1013</sup>, while according to him ‘they have disabled ISIS’.<sup>1014</sup>

In terms of clan rivalries, expert VII maintains that clan conflicts in the Bari region are typically driven by the competition over resources and land. The region is particularly varied in terms of clan composition, and each one of these clans has clan demarcations, ‘fictitious demarcations’, within which they claim exclusive access to the local resources. The problem raises as soon as another clan claim access to the same piece of land or resource.<sup>1015</sup> During the reference period following disputes (or conflicts) were reported or were relevant in the Bari region (non exhaustive list):

- Ali Jibrail (Majeerteen) vs Ali Saleban (also Ali Suleman) (Majeerteen). These Majeerteen sub-clans have been fighting each other on various occasions in the last 10 years or so. Ali Saleban wished to construct berkeds - a traditional way of harvesting rainwater by digging a sort of underground water containers - while Ali Jibrail opposed it because they considered it a kind of expansion at the expenses of their own land. There were several clashes between the two with bloodshed, which then prompted the local elders and the Puntland government to intervene. This led in the course of 2020 to an appeasement, although the situation remains tense and precarious.<sup>1016</sup>

<sup>1005</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>1006</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>1007</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 101-106

<sup>1008</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>1009</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>1010</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1011</sup> Hiraal Institute, Al-Shabaab’s Military Machine, December 2018, [url](#), p. 6

<sup>1012</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>1013</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>1014</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>1015</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1016</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

- Ugaadh Saleban (Majeerteen) vs Ali Saleban (Majeerteen). The feud between these two clans erupted over land issues: each clan accused the other to expand its borders and hence its access to pastoral land at the expenses of the other.<sup>1017</sup>
- The Osman Mohamud (Majeerteen) vs Ugaadh Saleban (Majeerteen). They clashed in the Karkaar region (Bari), in early 2020.<sup>1018</sup>
- The Osman Mohamud (Majeerteen) vs Ali Saleban (Majeerteen) in the Iskushuban district. These two clans dispute historically over land issues and access to pastoral land in the Iskushuban district. The Puntland government in the last few years failed to establish a District Council in that area because of this on-going dispute.<sup>1019</sup>
- Dashishe vs Ismail Saleban (Majeerteen) near Bosasso. Ismail Saleban wanted to establish new villages along the tarmac road between Arma (or Carma) and Bosasso, while Dashishe opposed it claiming the area as their own land. This led to clashes between the two groups and to casualties.<sup>1020</sup> Traditional elders from the Majeerteen, the Dashishe, and the Warsengeli clans then gathered together in Arma, which is predominantly inhabited by Ali Saleban. After the mediation it was decided that Ismail Saleban have the right to establish and build their own villages in the area, while Dishishe were required to stop their provocations.<sup>1021</sup>

In general, as to the small clans located in the region, ‘as always, those with grievances, they tend to side or sympathise with Al-Shabaab’, states security expert I, who adds: ‘the enemy of your enemy is your friend, or at least your today’s partner’. Reportedly these smaller clans make perfectly use of this approach to their own advantage.<sup>1022</sup> Security expert II shares the same view when he states that ‘clan grievances fuel’ Al-Shabaab and Islamic State militancy, and that the clans that perceive themselves as the most marginalized ‘feel that the best way to go about is just to support either Al-Shabaab or the federal government or this or that’.<sup>1023</sup> Along similar lines, expert VII maintains that ‘terrorist groups’ exploit to their own advantage clan grievances and the marginalisation experienced by smaller clans in the Bari region, those placed in remote and peripheral areas, away from Garowe.<sup>1024</sup>

Finally, according to expert VII, another factor of conflict in the Bari region are the smuggling networks: arms smuggling from Yemen, and migrants trafficking/smuggling in and around Bosasso and the Qandala area. While the Puntland security forces try at times to dismantle these networks and confiscate arms and equipment, local clans often offer protection to smugglers and human traffickers originating from their own clans.<sup>1025</sup>

### 2.6.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab’s violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias’ violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups’ violent events.

<sup>1017</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1018</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), p. 81

<sup>1019</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1020</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1021</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1022</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>1023</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>1024</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1025</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021



## Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

Within the reporting period, ACLED data indicate that Bari administrative region compared to the rest of Somalia ranked in the middle range concerning the total number of fatalities (tenth rank in 2020 and ninth in the first half of 2021) and the number of security related events (ninth rank in 2020 and eleventh in the first half of 2021) (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, a number of 71 security incidents, including battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence and violent acts against civilians, causing 99 fatalities were reported in Bari. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED counted 19 incidents and 77 deaths in this region (see Figure 59 and Figure 61).<sup>1026</sup>

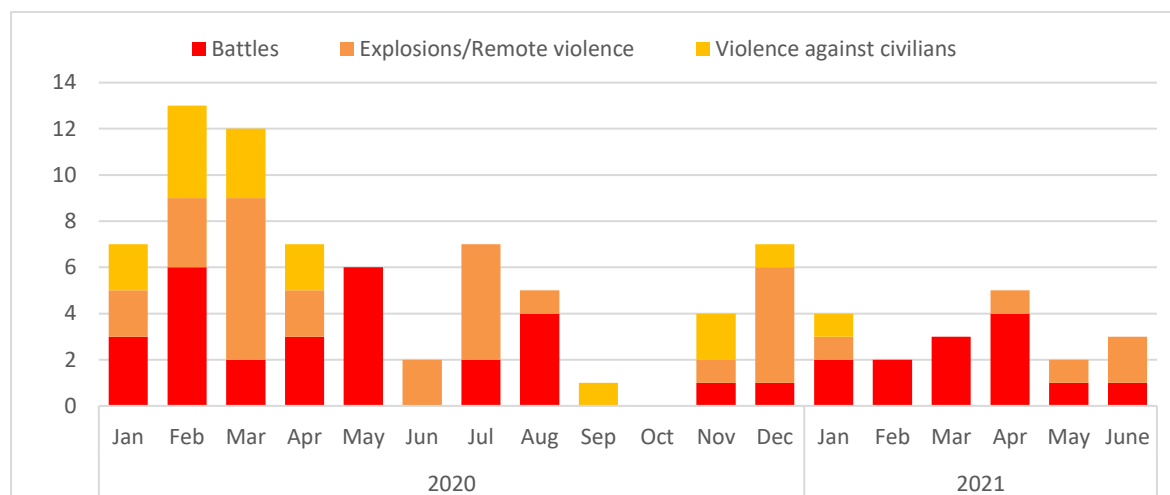


Figure 59. Bari – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1027</sup>

At the district level, Bari's capital district, Bosasso, recorded the most security incidents (66 events), followed by Iskushuban district (15 events) and Qandala district (7 events) for the period between January 2020 and end of June 2021 (Figure 60).<sup>1028</sup>

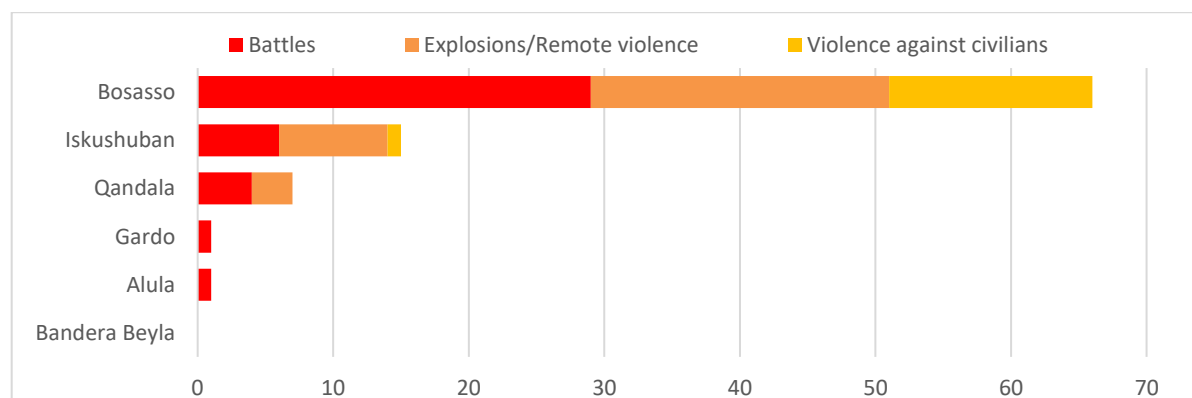


Figure 60. Bari – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1029</sup>

There were several major actors involved in security-related incidents during the reporting period. Al-Shabaab was coded as ACTOR 1 in 33 of the 90 security-related incidents, accounting for around 37 % of incidents reported between January 2020 and June 2021. 29 of these Al-Shabaab-related incidents involved Puntland Military Forces, 2 civilians and another 2 unidentified actors. The main type of incidents involving Al-Shabaab were armed clashes (11 incidents), along with shelling/artillery/missile

<sup>1026</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1027</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1028</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1029</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

attacks (10 incidents) and the use of remote-controlled explosives (8 incidents). A further 20 events involved unidentified armed groups as ACTOR 1, among them 8 attacks on civilians, 8 incidents involving explosions/remote violence and 4 battles. The military forces of Puntland accounted for another 20 security-related incidents, among them 18 battles and two attacks on civilians. The Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) was coded as ACTOR 1 in 11 incidents during the reporting period, 4 of these were armed clashes, another four explosions/remote violence and 3 attacks on civilians.<sup>1030</sup>

ACLED data for the reporting period January 2020 to June 2021 lists one U.S. airstrike in Bari in July 2020, targeting the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) near Timirshe village in Iskushuban district.<sup>1031</sup> According to U.S. military, the strike resulted in the killing of seven ISS fighters and no civilian casualties.<sup>1032</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 61 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Bari region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Bari	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	41	140
Explosions/Remote violence	33	22
Violence against civilians	16	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>176</b>

Figure 61. Bari – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1033</sup>

Of the 176 fatalities recorded in Bari between January 2020 and end of June 2021, the majority (96 deaths) were reported in Bosasso district, ahead of Qandala (43 deaths), Iskushuban (26 deaths), Alula (10 deaths) and Gardo (Qardho) (1 death). No fatalities were registered in Bandera Beila district. When focusing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, almost all of the 16 incidents that caused in total 14 fatalities were reported in Bosasso (15 incidents and 14 fatalities)<sup>1034</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

There were increased attempts by Al-Shabaab and other armed actors to infiltrate Puntland and activities by Al-Shabaab and ISS splinter factions increased. A splinter faction of Al-Shabaab was active in a mountainous region near Bosasso city and responsible for attacks in the city. The presence of such groups led to targeted assassinations of businessmen, politicians and influential people with ties to the government.<sup>1035</sup> ACLED during the reporting period recorded several targeted killings of government officials and police officers in Bari region, the perpetrators were unidentified armed groups, Al-Shabaab and ISS.<sup>1036</sup>

On 26 June 2021, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for a roadside blast that targeted a convoy of the security minister of Puntland near Bosasso city, killing one soldier and wounding three others.<sup>1037</sup> In

<sup>1030</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1031</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1032</sup> US, AFRICOM, Somali, U.S. forces engage insurgents in support of the Federal Government of Somalia, 22 July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1033</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1034</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1035</sup> ACCORD, Somalia: Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer:innen; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure [Seminar with experts Markus Hoehne and Jutta Bakonyi], 31 May 2021, [url](#), pp. 26, 30, see also USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>1036</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM30275/SOM30485/SOM30682/SOM30715/SOM30985/SOM31029/SOM31981, [url](#)

<sup>1037</sup> Xinhua News Agency, Roadside blast kills 1 soldier in northeast Somalia, 26 June 2021, [url](#)

April 2021, clashes between Puntland forces and Al-Shabaab as well as clashes with ISS elements were reported, leading to several casualties.<sup>1038</sup> On 4 March 2021, the central prison of Bossaso was attacked by Al-Shabaab and more than 300 prisoners were freed, several security officers were killed in the attack.<sup>1039</sup> In August 2020, Puntland Defence Forces clashed with Al-Shabaab militants in the Galgala mountains in Bari, leading to ten fatalities among the Al-Shabaab.<sup>1040</sup> In July 2020, fighting broke out between Puntland Defence Forces and ISS fighters in the remote mountainous region of Bari which according to Puntland military led to eight ISS casualties.<sup>1041</sup> ISS claimed an assassination in Qandala on 23 January 2020.<sup>1042</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>1043</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

A 2020 report on militias and paramilitary groups in Somalia mentioned that the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF), a force responsible for anti-piracy measures and acting outside the official security services, has taken over some policing functions in Bosasso, carrying out raids into people's homes that have at times lead to the death of civilians as well as keeping people in detention for days without charges.<sup>1044</sup> For further details see the EASO COI report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>1045</sup>

In February 2020, two men sentenced for the rape of a girl on 2019 in Galkacyo were executed in Bosasso.<sup>1046</sup> A third man sentenced to death in the same gang rape case was released at the end of February 2020 after having paid 75 camels in compensation.<sup>1047</sup> In November 2020, police in Bari arrested two men accused of raping and killing a 14-year old girl in Bosasso.<sup>1048</sup>

In October 2020, Puntland authorities reported to have rescued 324 trafficked children in different towns and cities across the region, 150 of them in Bosasso, some of these children were said to have been abducted from their families.<sup>1049</sup>

### Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN<sup>1050</sup> reported 45 000 new displacements from Bari, with 24 000 displacements in April 2020 alone. Of the 40 000 displacements in 2020, nearly all within Bari, flooding was the main cause (24 000 cases), followed by drought-related causes (14 000 cases). In 2020, only over 100 displacements for reasons related to conflict and insecurity were recorded, affecting mostly Qandala district (80 cases) and Bosasso district (40 cases). In 2020, additional 800 new conflict or insecurity related displacements to Bari were registered from Banadir, Hiraan, Bay, Lower Shabelle and other regions. Between January and May 2021, 5 000 new displacements were

<sup>1038</sup> UNSG, Situation Report Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 19

<sup>1039</sup> UNSG, Situation Report Somalia, S/2021/485, 19 May 2021, [url](#), para. 16

<sup>1040</sup> Somali Dispatch: Al Shabab and Puntland forces clash in Bari region, 21 August 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1041</sup> Somali Dispatch: Puntland and ISIS forces clash in Bari Region Puntland and ISIS forces clash in Bari Region, 22 July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1042</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, S/2020/121, 13 February 2020, [url](#), para. 21

<sup>1043</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>1044</sup> Felbab-Brown, V., The Problem with Militias in Somalia: Almost Everyone Wants Them Despite Their Dangers, 2020, [url](#), p. 135

<sup>1045</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 105-106

<sup>1046</sup> VOA, Two Men Executed in Somalia for Rape, Murder of 12-Year-Old, 12 February 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1047</sup> Reuters, Anger as Somali rapist and murderer pays 75 camels to escape death, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1048</sup> Universal TV, Suspects admit raping and killing minor in north-east Somalia, 4 November 2020

<sup>1049</sup> Radio Ergo, Trafficked Somali children ending up in Puntland, 24 October 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1050</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

registered in Bari, of which the majority happened within the region, 500 were to Mudug and 200 Gedo. Most of these 5 000 new displacements in 2021 were drought-related.<sup>1051</sup>

### Evictions

According to the NRC Evictions Information Portal, 21 cases of forced evictions were reported in Bari in 2020, resulting in the forced expulsion of 1 273 individuals. Between January and 29 June 2021, 803 individuals were affected by 12 cases of forced eviction in Bari. 32 of the 34 reported forced eviction cases in 2020 and 2021 occurred in Bosasso district. NRC listed ‘development – landlord’ (19 cases), ‘owner development’ (8 cases), ‘rent default’ (3 cases), and ‘gov. development’ (2 cases) as respective reasons for forced evictions.<sup>1052</sup>

## Contested areas between Somaliland and Puntland

For an overview of political dynamics and territorial control between Somaliland and Puntland in the contested areas (Sool and Sanaag) see the report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>1053</sup> For regional details on conflict dynamics and security trends at regional level see the sections below.

### 2.6.3 Sool

#### 2.6.3.1 Background

Sool region shares borders with the regions of Bari, Sanaag, Togdheer and Nugal, and an international border with Ethiopia. The region’s capital is Laas Caanood. It consists of four districts: Taleex (also Taleh), Xudun (also Hudun), Caynabo (also Aynabo or Ainado) and Laas Caanood (also Laas Anood).<sup>1054</sup>

Sool is inhabited primarily by Dhulbahante, a Darod sub-clan, which is part of the Harti confederation together with the Majerteen clans of Puntland.<sup>1055</sup> The Dhulbahante clan is very dominant in the Sool region, while they border the Habar Yunis (or Yonis) and the Habar Jeelo (or Jeelo) to the west.<sup>1056</sup>

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of Sool was 327 428, among which 120 993 people in urban areas, 13 983 in rural, and 187 632 nomads.<sup>1057</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

#### 2.6.3.2 Conflict dynamics

**Actors and control areas/influence.** According to security expert I, Sool is not exclusively an Harti territory, as claimed by Puntland. The majority of the population is Dhulbahante but in terms of major towns the situation can be summarised as follows: Las Anod, Taleh, and Xudun are Dhulbahante towns, while Aynabo is predominantly an Isaaq town. The nearby towns of Burao (or Burco) in Togdheer, is also Dhulbahante, same as for Buhodle (or Buuhoodle, still in Togdheer), at the border with Ethiopia, in the so called Cayn (or Ayn) contested area of that region.

<sup>1051</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1052</sup> NRC, Eviction Information Portal, Dataset, as of 29 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1053</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 101-106, 108-113

<sup>1054</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>1055</sup> ISS, Mahmood O., Overlapping claims by Somaliland and Puntland – The case of Sool and Sanaag, November 2019, East Africa Report No. 27, [url](#), p. 3; EASO, COI report - South and Central Somalia Country overview [clan maps based on Lewis 1955, Abikar 1999], August 2014, [url](#), pp. 52-53

<sup>1056</sup> ISS, Mahmood O., Overlapping claims by Somaliland and Puntland – The case of Sool and Sanaag, November 2019, East Africa Report No. 27, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1057</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31.

Apart from the main clans in Sool, which are the Isaaq clan family on the one hand and the Dhulbahante (Harti) group on the other hand, for an overview of the state armed forces of Puntland and of Somaliland see report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>1058</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** Allegedly, according to security expert I, the Dhulbahante majority is now siding with the Somaliland administration, while, as security expert II puts it, ‘Dhulbahante towns are to a large extent controlled by Somaliland’ or ‘administered by Dhulbahante politicians aligned with Somaliland’.<sup>1059</sup> Local authorities have repeatedly switched sides between Puntland and Somaliland in the past, so this alliance may not be durable.<sup>1060</sup> Somaliland has not managed to expand its areas of control all the way to the boundary between Sool and Nugal regions, which would correspond basically to the ex-British Somaliland border. As security expert II notes, this would be ‘less than 10 km away from Garowe’, the capital town of Puntland.<sup>1061</sup> However, to the best of security expert I’s own knowledge, currently there are currently no clashes between the two state administrations over the contested areas.<sup>1062</sup>

In terms of clan rivalries, according to expert VII Sool region is a highly disputed area presenting numerous conflict dynamics.<sup>1063</sup> During the reference period following disputes (or conflicts) were reported or were relevant in the region (non exhaustive list):

- Isaaq vs Dhulbahante. According to clan expert Joakim Gundel, in the area between Buhodle (which is predominantly inhabited by Dhulbahante, and lies in the Togdheer region) and Aynabo (predominantly inhabited by Isaaq/Habar Yunis and Isaaq/Habar Jeelo clans), and to a lesser extent between these two and Laas Anood (purely Dhulbahante), there are frequent disputes revolving around water wells (boreholes). However, he maintains that the real issue is actually linked to clan growth and expansion dynamics. Reportedly, as long as these disputes are intra-Isaaq disputes they remain easier to resolve, whereas they have a higher tendency to escalate whenever they see Isaaq-Darood clan families confront each other.<sup>1064</sup> According to expert VII this is a highly disputed area, from where, historically, the ‘fiercest fighters’ in the region come from.<sup>1065</sup>
- Habar Jeelo vs Dhulbahante.<sup>1066</sup> Linked to the above, near Qorulugud, southeast of Burao on the way to Buuhoodle, members of several Dhulbahante and Habar Jeelo lineages clashed in early April 2021.<sup>1067</sup>
- Jama Siyaad (Dhulbahante) vs Ugaadhyahan/Naaleeye Ahmed (Dhulbahante). In April 2021, these two Dhulbahante sub-clans clashed in Dhabar-Dalol area in the district of Hudun over a water well. Bloodshed and revenge killings caused more than 20 fatalities.<sup>1068</sup> Reportedly this conflict has also a more political side, with the two subclans historically opposing each other over Somaliland/Puntland political project: Jama Siyaad supports Somaliland’s expansion in the Sool region, while the Ugaadhyahan resist it.<sup>1069</sup>
- Baharsame (Dhulbahante) vs Qayad (Dhulbahante) in the Laas Anood district of Sool.<sup>1070</sup> These two Dhulbahante subclans have been clashing with each other since 2004. ‘Intermittent

<sup>1058</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 101-106, 108-113

<sup>1059</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>1060</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>1061</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>1062</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>1063</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1064</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>1065</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1066</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1067</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), p. 80

<sup>1068</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021; see also Somali Affairs, Somalia: Casualties in clan clashes in Sool, 16 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1069</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1070</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

skirmishes mainly triggered by revenge killings in some key rural settlements cohabited by the two sub – clans in southern Laascaanood district of Sool region’ have often developed into armed clashes, causing fatalities, casualties and extensive displacement.<sup>1071</sup>

- Jama Siyaad (Dhulbahante) vs Fiki Shini (Hawiye) in Ari-Adeye village in Sool. In the area between Oog and Laas Anood, there are repeated confrontations between Fiki Shini and Jama Siyaad subclans.<sup>1072</sup>

For more details about recent examples of these disputes see also section on [Togdheer – Conflict dynamics](#).

### 2.6.3.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab’s violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias’ violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups’ violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

In 2020 and in the first half of 2021, ACLED data indicate that Sool administrative region ranked in the lower third with regard to the number of security incidents as well as fatalities (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, 17 security-related incidents, including battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence and violent acts against civilians, causing 14 fatalities were reported in Sool. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED registered eight security-related incidents with 13 fatalities in Sool region (see Figure 62 and Figure 64).<sup>1073</sup>

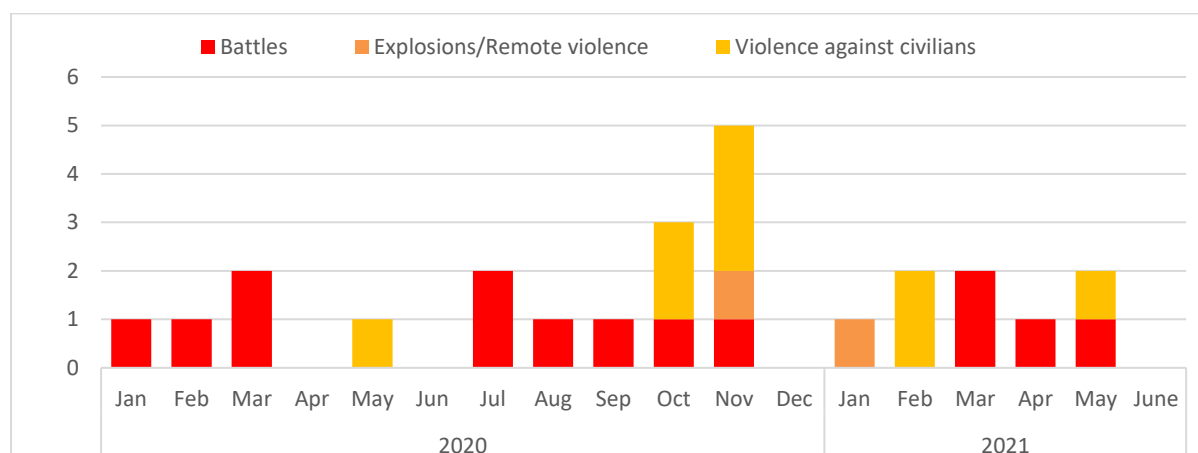


Figure 62. Sool – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1074</sup>

At the district level, 23 incidents were reported in Las Anod involving unidentified armed groups in eight cases. Of these eight incidents, three were coded as armed clashes, two as explosions or remote violence, two incidents as attacks and one incident as a case of abduction and targeted either civilians (four cases) or Somaliland police or military forces (four cases). In another eight security-related incidents in Las Anod, Dhulbahante (seven cases) or Habar Jecllo (one case) sub-clan militias were reported as ACTOR 1 involving either other sub-clans (five cases, see also Chapter 5 of the EASO COI

<sup>1071</sup> HADMA, Final Report on the Joint Rapid Needs Assessment on Inter - clan Conflict Displaced People in Sool Region, 1-4 November 2018, [url](#), pp. 2-3

<sup>1072</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1073</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1074</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)



report on [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#)), civilians (two cases) or Somaliland police forces (one case). Three additional acts of violence against civilians conducted by Somaliland police forces were recorded for Las Anod. There were also reports of an armed clash between Dhulbahante sub-clan militias in Hudun district and an attack by an unidentified armed group against a civilian in Ainabo district.<sup>1075</sup>

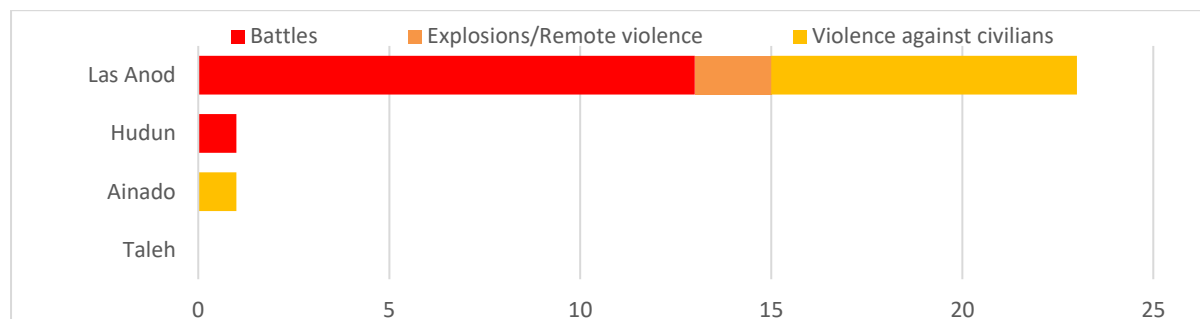


Figure 63. Sool – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1076</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 64 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Sool region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Sool	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	14	18
Explosions/Remote violence	2	3
Violence against civilians	9	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27</b>

Figure 64. Sool – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1077</sup>

Of the 27 fatalities recorded in Sool, 16 were reported in Las Anod district, ahead of Hudun (10 deaths) and Ainabo (1 death). When focusing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, eight of the nine incidents that caused in total six fatalities were reported in Las Anod.<sup>1078</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

On 27 May 2021, a police officer was shot and killed by unidentified gunmen for unknown reasons in Las Anod town.<sup>1079</sup>

At least three people were injured in an attack by unidentified gunmen on a polling station in Las Anod Town on 24 May 2021.<sup>1080</sup>

<sup>1075</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1076</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1077</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1078</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1079</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33936, [url](#)

<sup>1080</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33907, [url](#); see also Radio Kulmiye, Gunmen attack election campaign in northern Somalia, 24 May 2021

Due to a conflict over a drinking water well, a deadly clash between two Dhulbahante sub-clan militias occurred near the town of Hudun on 16 April 2021, killing ten<sup>1081</sup> to twelve<sup>1082</sup> clan members (see also Chapter 5 of the EASO COI report on [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#)).<sup>1083</sup>

On 13 November 2020 three civilians were killed in Dharkingee village in Las Anod district, when an IED by an unknown group exploded.<sup>1084</sup>

On 26 October 2020, Dhulbahante clan militias attacked the Las Anod prison and freed three prisoners. The attack caused clashes with the police and two civilian fatalities.<sup>1085</sup>

Clashes between Somaliland and Puntland forces were reported for 29 February 2020, with no fatalities recorded.<sup>1086</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>1087</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

In Sool administrative region, conflicts between Somaliland and Puntland forces and clan clashes remain a major concern causing violence and affecting lives and livelihoods of civilians, as well as access to humanitarian aid.<sup>1088</sup> For Sool region, seven incidents of humanitarian workers being unable to access sites were reported in 2020.<sup>1089</sup>

In the run-up to the local elections in Somaliland on 31 May 2021, at least one to three<sup>1090</sup> civilians were injured in attacks on party offices in Las Anod. In general, tensions between Puntland and Somaliland in disputed areas reportedly heightened as a result of elections.<sup>1091</sup> This included reports of Puntland's administrative security forces seizing Somaliland election cards in contested areas.<sup>1092</sup>

According to the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission, the number of rape cases increased in Somaliland in 2020, mostly in Sool as well as two other regions<sup>1093</sup>, where the surge in regional violence against women and girls typically manifested itself in two forms: domestic violence against women who have become family breadwinners, and sexual violence against women and girls relocated to camps close to overcrowded urban hubs. In the area near Oog town in Ainabo district, conditions in IDP camps were reportedly disastrous for women's safety.<sup>1094</sup> For an overview of women's situation see also Chapter 2 of the EASO COI report on [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#).

<sup>1081</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33633, [url](#)

<sup>1082</sup> Somali Affairs, Somalia: Casualties in clan clashes in Sool, 16 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1083</sup> Somali Affairs, Somalia: Casualties in clan clashes in Sool, 16 April 2021, [url](#); ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33633, [url](#)

<sup>1084</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM32442, [url](#)

<sup>1085</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM32281; SOM32282, [url](#); see also Halbeeg, Gunmen storm Las-Anod police station, 26 October 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1086</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, Report of the Secretary-General, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 12; ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM30597, [url](#)

<sup>1087</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>1088</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan - Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 12-13; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia: Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2021, 9 March 2021, [url](#), p. 18; see also BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 1700 gmt 20 May 20, 24 May 2020

<sup>1089</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1090</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33907, [url](#); see also Radio Kulmiye, Gunmen attack election campaign in northern Somalia, 24 May 2021

<sup>1091</sup> IHS Global Insight Daily Analysis, Watch for: Party offices and polling stations attacked in disputed Sool and Sanaag regions during Somaliland elections, 27 May 2021

<sup>1092</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 1700 gmt 31 May 21, 1 June 2021

<sup>1093</sup> Somali Dispatch, Violence against women and number of rape cases increased according to Somaliland's Human rights Commission Report, 7 February 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1094</sup> Guardian (The), 'Most of the men are your enemies': one woman's crusade in Somalia, 9 April 2020, [url](#)

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN<sup>1095</sup> reported 19 000 new displacements from Sool. Of the 15 000 displacements in 2020, most of which occurred within Sool, drought was the main reason. In 2020, displacement for reasons related to conflict and insecurity was recorded in 3 000 cases, mainly from Las Anod district (2 000 cases) followed by Hudun district (900 cases). In 2020, additional 800 displacements to Sool were registered from Togdheer and Sanaag. Between January and May 2021, 4 000 new displacements were registered from Sool, of which most occurred within the region. 1 000 of these displacements reported in 2021 were registered as being caused by conflict and insecurity, with most of them from Hudun district. Additional 200 newly displaced from Togdheer arrived in Sool between January and May 2021.<sup>1096</sup>

## Evictions

According to the NRC Evictions Information Portal, 151 cases of forced evictions were reported in Sool in 2020, resulting in the forced expulsion of 1 717 individuals. Between January and 29 June 2021, 2 579 individuals were affected by 83 cases of forced eviction in the region. The majority of eviction cases happened in Las Anod district (232 cases) and only two cases were reported elsewhere, namely in Taleh district. NRC listed 'rent default' as reasons for 101 of the 234 forced evictions, followed by 'rent without notice' in 38 cases.<sup>1097</sup>

## 2.6.4 Sanaag

### 2.6.4.1 Background

Sanaag region shares borders with the regions of Bari, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer and Sool, and borders the Gulf of Aden. It consists of three regions: Laasqoray, Ceerigaabo (also Erigabo) and Ceel Afweyn (also El Afweyne). The region's capital is Ceerigabo (or Erigabo).<sup>1098</sup>

Eastern Sanaag is inhabited primarily by Warsangeli,<sup>1099</sup> a Darod sub-clan, which is part of the Harti confederation together with the Majerteen clans of Puntland.<sup>1100</sup> The Institute for Security Studies noted that there are also Dhulbahante present in parts of southern Sanaag.<sup>1101</sup> The western part of Sanaag is inhabited instead by the Isaaq Habar Yunis (or Yonis).<sup>1102</sup>

Erigabo, according to clan expert Gundel, besides being predominantly inhabited by the Habar Yunis, also hosts Warsangeli population, as well as of Gabooye (also derogatorily known as Midgaan), along with other small minorities.<sup>1103</sup> For more details about Gabooye and other minority groups and their treatment see the EASO COI report on [Targeted Profiles](#).

The 2014 Population Estimation Survey conducted by UNFPA and Somali authorities estimated that the population of Sanaag was 544 123, among which 159 717 people in urban areas, 30 804 in rural, and 352 692 nomads.<sup>1104</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

<sup>1095</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>1096</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1097</sup> NRC, Eviction Information Portal, Dataset, as of 29 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1098</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>1099</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>1100</sup> EASO, COI report - South and Central Somalia Country overview [clan maps based on Lewis 1955, Abikar 1999], August 2014, [url](#), pp. 52-53

<sup>1101</sup> ISS, Mahmood O., Overlapping claims by Somaliland and Puntland – The case of Sool and Sanaag, November 2019, East Africa Report No. 27, [url](#), p. 3

<sup>1102</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>1103</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>1104</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31.

## 2.6.4.2 Conflict dynamics

**Actors and control areas/influence.** According to security expert I, Sanaag is not exclusively an Harti territory, as claimed by Puntland. The population is divided between Warsengeli and Isaaq clan groups.<sup>1105</sup>

Apart from the main clans in Sanaag - the Isaaq clan family on the one hand and the Warsengeli (Harti) group on the other hand – for an overview of the state armed forces of Puntland and of Somaliland see report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>1106</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** According to security expert I, the majority of Warsengeli is now siding with either FGS or Puntland. Also for security expert II ‘most Warsengeli towns side with Puntland’, allegedly because they are closer to Bosasso than to Erigabo (also Ceerigaabo).<sup>1107</sup> Despite Somaliland’s claim over Sanaag and the ex-British Somaliland border, Somaliland’s troops have not made inroads in the area close to Bosasso, states security expert II.<sup>1108</sup> To the best of security expert I’s own knowledge, currently there are no clashes between the two state administrations over the contested areas.<sup>1109</sup> Expert VII maintains that Warsengeli clan elders tend to defuse potential conflict spirals and resort to conflict management in the disputed between Somaliland and Puntland over the contested areas.<sup>1110</sup>

In terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period following disputes (or conflicts) were reported in the region (non exhaustive list):

- Warsengeli vs Isaaq in and around the town of Erigabo about mining rights. Reportedly Isaaq clans claimed an area that Warsengeli clans consider instead their own land and where they practice mining. This led to clashes which in turn caused various casualties.<sup>1111</sup>
- Dubays (a Warsangeli sub-clan) vs Reer Xaaji (a Warsangeli sub-clan). This intra Warsengeli competition over land issues never developed into a large scale conflict thanks to the mediation of Warsengeli clan elders.<sup>1112</sup>
- Habar Yunis/Saad Yunis lineage vs Habar Jeelo/Biide lineage in El Afweyne.<sup>1113</sup> The two clan lineages have clashed over grazing land, water resources, and political power,<sup>1114</sup> until very recently (March 2020), when they found an agreement negotiated by traditional and religious leaders under the auspices of the Somaliland government.<sup>1115</sup> For additional details see EASO’s COI report on [Somalia - Actors](#) (July 2021) and the EASO’s COI report on [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#).<sup>1116</sup>

## 2.6.4.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab’s violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of

<sup>1105</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>1106</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 101-106, 108-113

<sup>1107</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021; Mahmood, O. S., Overlapping claims by Somaliland and Puntland: The case of Sool and Sanaag, 2019, [url](#), p. 13

<sup>1108</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>1109</sup> Interview with Somali security expert I, 20 and 27 June 2021

<sup>1110</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1111</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1112</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1113</sup> Mahmood, O. S., Overlapping claims by Somaliland and Puntland: The case of Sool and Sanaag, 2019, [url](#), pp. 10, 26 (note 54); Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1114</sup> Finland, Finnish Immigration Service, Security Situation in Somalia, 4 May 2016, [url](#), p. 43

<sup>1115</sup> UNSG, Situation in Somalia, 13 May 2020, [url](#), para. 33

<sup>1116</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 109-110; EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), pp. 79-80

clan militias' violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events.

### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

In 2020 and in the first half of 2021, ACLED data indicate that Sanaag administrative region ranked in the lower third with regard to the number of security incidents as well as fatalities (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, 19 security-related incidents, including battles and violent acts against civilians, causing 22 fatalities were reported in Sanaag. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED registered five security-related incidents with six fatalities in Sool region (see Figure 65 and Figure 67).<sup>1117</sup>

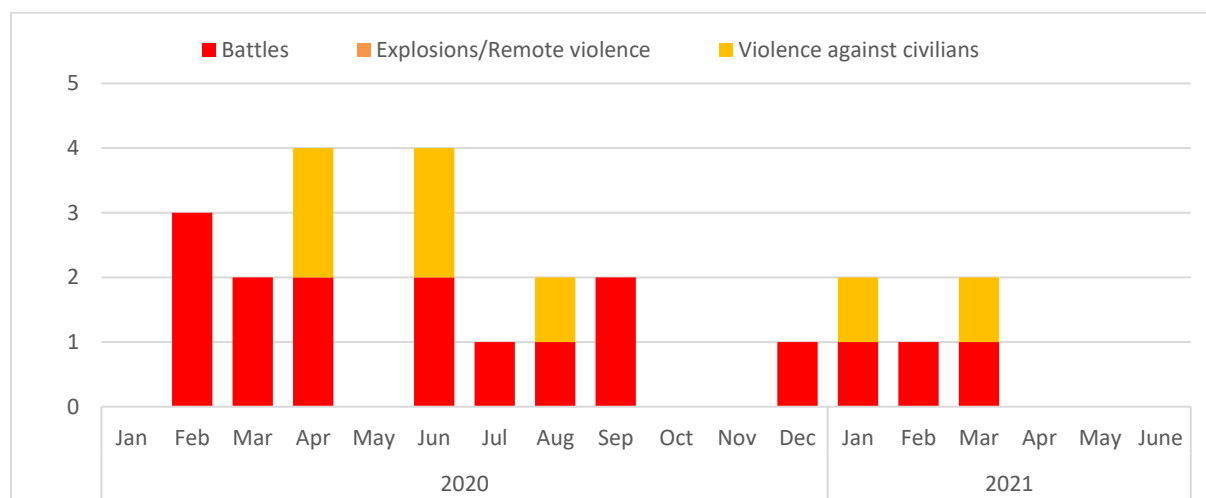


Figure 65. Sanaag – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1118</sup>

At the district level, 14 incidents were reported in Erigabo involving unidentified armed groups as main actor in five cases, clan militias in four cases and military forces of Somalia in three cases. In six cases of the overall security-related incidents in Erigabo civilians were targeted, including five attacks and one abduction. In Lasqoray district, all reported incidents were coded as battles and involved Al-Shabaab (two cases), sub-clan militias (two cases) and the military forces of Somalia (one case) as ACTOR 1. In four of the five reported incidents in El Afweyne sub-clan militias were reported to be ACTOR 1, including three armed clashes and one attack on civilians. Another armed clash in El Afweyne occurred between Somaliland police forces and a Habar Jeclo sub-clan militia.<sup>1119</sup>

<sup>1117</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1118</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1119</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

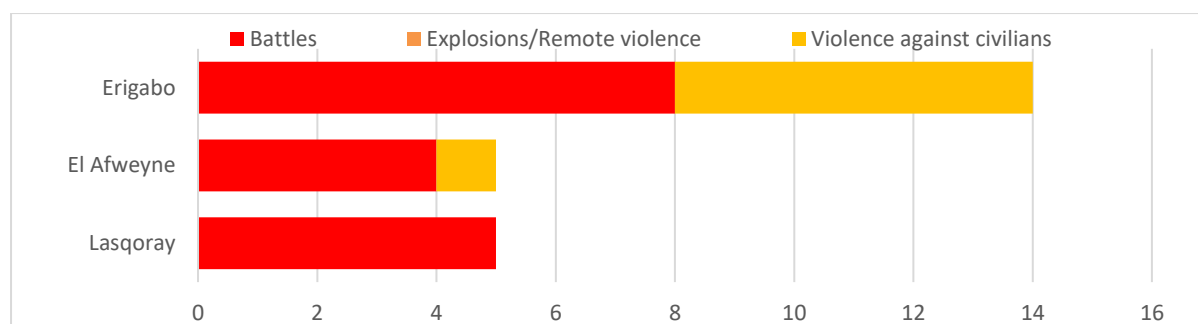


Figure 66. Sanaag – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1120</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 67 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Sanaag region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Sanaag	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	17	25
Explosions/Remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	7	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>28</b>

Figure 67. Sanaag - number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1121</sup>

Of the 28 fatalities recorded in Sanaag, most (14 deaths) were reported in Erigabo district, ahead of El Afweyne and Lasqoray (seven deaths each). When focusing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, six of the seven incidents were reported in Erigabo causing three fatalities.<sup>1122</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

Unidentified gunmen shot and killed a civilian in Erigabo town on 22 March 2021.<sup>1123</sup>

On 20 March 2021, a fatal clash between Habar Yunis Muse Ismail subclan militia and Warsangeli Nuux Cumar sub-clan militia in Shindan village, Lasqoray district, left five people dead and eleven injured.<sup>1124</sup> Earlier, an altercation between the same sub-clan militias near Fadhi Gaab town, El Afweyne district, left two people dead on 18 April 2020.<sup>1125</sup> For an overview of clan conflicts see also Chapter 5 of the EASO’s COI report on [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#).<sup>1126</sup>

On 13 August 2020, clan revenge and a dispute over land between Dhulbahante Hagar and Hayag sub clan militias caused three fatalities.<sup>1127</sup>

<sup>1120</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1121</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1122</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1123</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33476, [url](#)

<sup>1124</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33464, [url](#)

<sup>1125</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM30973, [url](#)

<sup>1126</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Targeted profiles, September 2021, [url](#), Chapter 5 Individuals involved in blood feuds/clan disputes and other clan issues

<sup>1127</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM31774, [url](#)



In October and December 2020, Al-Shabaab takeovers of villages in Lasqoray district were reported.<sup>1128</sup> Puntland security forces reportedly tried to regain control of the captured areas.<sup>1129</sup>

Clashes between Puntland and Somaliland forces were recorded in Erigabo district in late February 2020, resulting in an unknown number of casualties on both sides.<sup>1130</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>1131</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

In Sanaag administrative region, conflicts between Somaliland and Puntland forces continued,<sup>1132</sup> thereby affecting among others the distribution of medical supplies<sup>1133</sup>. The work of humanitarian aid organisations was burdened by access incidents and violent acts against staff members. For Sanaag region, ten incidents of humanitarian workers being unable to access sites were reported in 2020.<sup>1134</sup> In June 2020, two incidents of violence against aid workers were reported in Erigabo and El Afweyne district.<sup>1135</sup>

### Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN<sup>1136</sup> reported 22 000 new displacements from Sanaag. Of the 16 000 displacements in 2020, most of which occurred within the region, drought was the main reason. In 2020, displacement for reasons related to conflict and insecurity was recorded in 3 000 cases, mainly from El Afweyne district. In 2020, additional 40 displacements to Sanaag were registered from Bari. Between January and May 2021, 6 000 new displacements were registered from Sanaag, of which most were within the region, 100 to Bari and 100 to Woqooyi Galbeed. Of all displacements recorded in 2021, 200 were registered as being caused by conflict and insecurity, with 100 of them from Lasqoray district, 70 from Erigabo district and 40 from El Afweyne district. In 2021, no additional displacements have been registered from other regions to Sanaag district so far.<sup>1137</sup>

### Evictions

According to the NRC Evictions Information Portal, six cases of forced evictions were reported in Sanaag in 2020, resulting in the forced expulsion of 231 individuals. Between January and 29 June 2021, no cases of forced eviction in the region were reported. Five of the reported forced eviction cases in 2020 occurred in Erigabo district and one in El Afweyne. NRC listed 'rent default' as reasons

<sup>1128</sup> Strategic Intelligence, Weekly East Africa Counterterrorism Intelligence Brief in Period of December 4th – December 11th: Tracking and Monitoring Al-Shabaab's Activity in East Africa (Kenya and Somalia), 12 December 2020, [url](#); Somali Dispatch, Al-Shabaab seizes a region in Sanaag, abducts officials, 10 December 2020, [url](#); Somali Guardian, Al-Shabaab Captures Villages along Disputed Somaliland-Puntland Border, 25 October 2020, [url](#); Somali Dispatch, Al Shabab takes control of a village in Sanaag, 25 October 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1129</sup> Somali Dispatch, Puntland forces heading to Lasqoray, 26 October 2020, [url](#); BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Risala News 1600 gmt 2 Nov 20, 5 November 2020, available by subscription

<sup>1130</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM30581, [url](#), BBC Monitoring, Programme summary of Somalia's Radio Gaalkayo news 1015 gmt 25 Feb 20, 26 February 2020; BBC Monitoring, Programme summary of Somalia's Radio Banadir news 1700 gmt 26 Feb 20, 1 March 2020

<sup>1131</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>1132</sup> UNOCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan - Somalia, 15 February 2021, [url](#), pp. 12-13; UNOCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview Somalia: Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2021, 9 March 2021, [url](#), p. 18

<sup>1133</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 1700 gmt 20 May 20, 24 May 2020

<sup>1134</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1135</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM31379; SOM31424, [url](#)

<sup>1136</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>1137</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

for three of the six forced evictions, followed by ‘collective punishment’, ‘aid rent disagreement’ and ‘owner development’ with one case each.<sup>1138</sup>

## 2.6.5 Puntland - Checkpoints and road security

International expert VII commented that due to Al-Shabaab more limited presence, Puntland is more secure in comparison to the rest of the FMS. In terms of internal mobility and security, both the average Somali and government officials can in general freely move around without ‘too many security concerns’. Exceptions are the contested area in Sool and Sanaag or areas where AS has presence such as around the Galgala Hills. Goods and supplies travel back and forth in Puntland.<sup>1139</sup>

As per ACLED data, in the reference period (January 2020 – June 2021) there were a total of 34 explosions/remote violence events of the type IED, shelling, grenade and suicide bomb (among others remote violence events) in Bari and Nugal regions, resulting in 17 fatalities (Figure 19).<sup>1140</sup>

## 2.7 Somaliland

For an overview of the Somaliland administration in terms of (1) relevant dynamics, territorial control, and governance, (2) presence of state level armed forces, and (3) presence of other actors/forces (federal, international, and local), see the EASO Country of Information report on [Somalia: Actors](#) (July 2021).<sup>1141</sup>

[Sool](#) and [Sanaag](#) contested regions are addressed in the chapter on [Contested areas between Somaliland and Puntland](#) (above).

### 2.7.1 Awdal

#### 2.7.1.1 Background

Awdal region shares international borders with Djibouti and Ethiopia, borders the Gulf of Aden and the region of Woqooyi Galbeed. It consists of four districts: Zeylac, Lukhaye, Baki and Borama. The region’s capital is Borama.<sup>1142</sup>

Awdal is inhabited by the Dir clans Gadabursi (also known as Samaroon Gadabursi)<sup>1143</sup> and Issa (or Ciise), with the regional capital Borama at the centre of the Gadabursi territory.<sup>1144</sup>

According to the 2014 Population Survey Estimate by UNFPA and Somali authorities, Awdal had 673 263 inhabitants in total, with 287 821 people living in urban areas, 143 743 in rural, and 233 709 nomads.<sup>1145</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

<sup>1138</sup> NRC, Eviction Information Portal, Dataset, as of 29 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1139</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>1140</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1141</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Actors, July 2021, [url](#), pp. 108-113

<sup>1142</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>1143</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>1144</sup> EASO, COI report - South and Central Somalia Country overview [clan maps based on Lewis 1955, Abikar 1999], August 2014, [url](#), pp. 52-53

<sup>1145</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

### 2.7.1.2 Conflict dynamics

**Actors and control areas/influence.** According to security expert II, ‘in most of Somaliland there is no al-Shabaab presence’ while ‘Somaliland controls the means of violence’ in most of its territory (middle and western part).<sup>1146</sup> Other observers, however, maintain that Al-Shabaab has a quiet network in Somaliland, mainly for purposes of finances and recruitment.<sup>1147</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** After consulting a range of sources and conducting expert interviews, very scarce information could be found on major current conflict dynamics in Awdal.

In terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period following disputes (conflicts) were reported by ACLED (non exhaustive list) in the region:

- Farah Nur (Noor) Gadabursi Sub-Clan vs Jibril-Yonis Gadabursi Sub-Clan. On 13 April 2020, armed militia members from the Farah-Nur militia attacked military officers manning a piece of land disputed by Jibril-Yonis in Borama town.<sup>1148</sup>
- Reer Nur (Noor) Gadabursi Sub-Clan Militia vs security forces of Somaliland. On 16 September 2020, an armed clash took place between militia men from the Reer Noor (Samroon Gadabursi) and the Somaliland police in Borama town.<sup>1149</sup>

### 2.7.1.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab’s violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias’ violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups’ violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

In 2020 and in the first half of 2021, ACLED data indicate that Awdal administrative region recorded the lowest number of security incidents as well as the fewest fatalities (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, four security-related incidents were reported in Awdal and resulted in a total of one fatality. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED registered no security-related incidents in Awdal region (see Figure 68 and Figure 70).<sup>1150</sup>

<sup>1146</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>1147</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>1148</sup> ACLED, Somalia as of 30 June 2021, SOM30940 [source: Caasimada], [url](#)

<sup>1149</sup> ACLED, Somalia as of 30 June 2021, SOM32030 [source: undisclosed source], [url](#)

<sup>1150</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

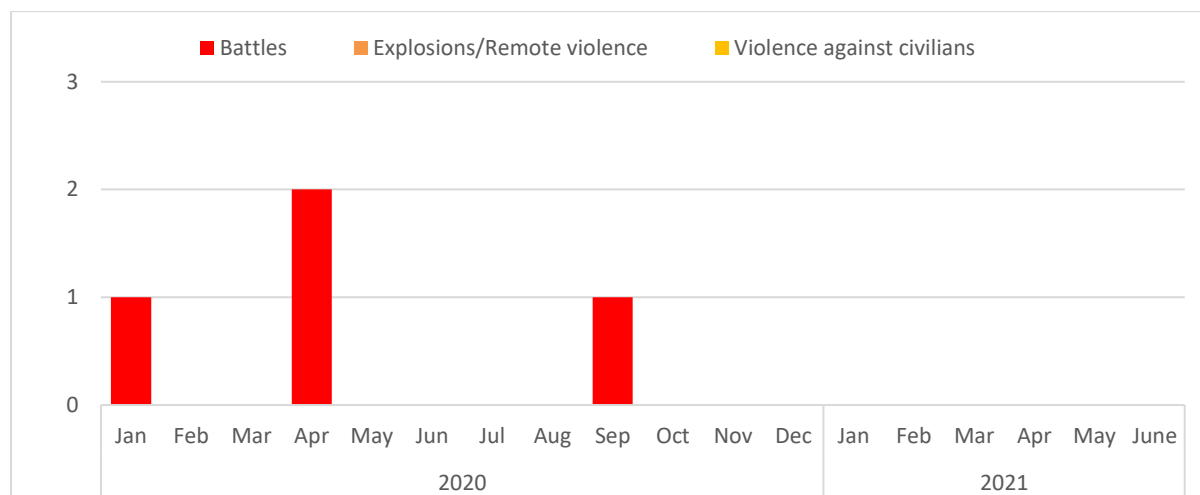


Figure 68. Awdal – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1151</sup>

Single security incidents took place in January and September 2020, respectively, and two incidents were recorded in April 2020 (see Figure 68). All incidents were coded as armed clashes and occurred in Boroma district (see Figure 69). In each of the four cases, either a clan militia (two cases) or an unidentified armed group (two cases) was ACTOR 1 involved in the incident, targeting either the Somali police forces (one case), the police forces of Somaliland (two cases), or the military forces of Somaliland (one case).<sup>1152</sup>

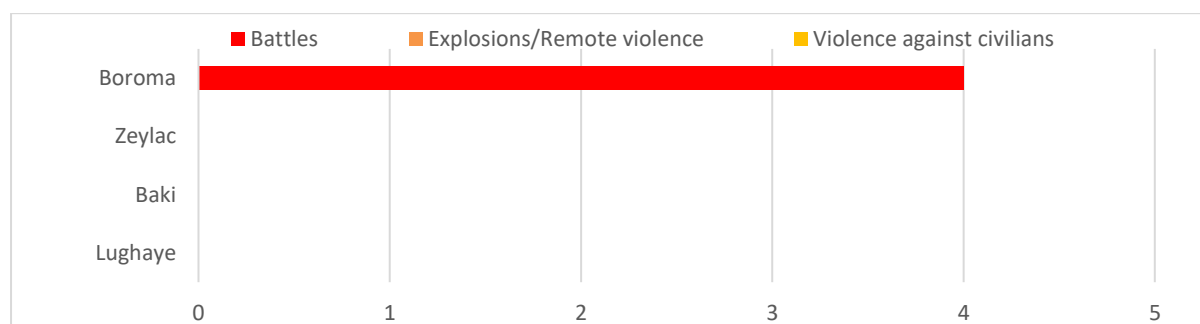


Figure 69. Awdal – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1153</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 70 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Awdal region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

<sup>1151</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1152</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1153</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

Awdal	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	4	1
Explosions/Remote violence	0	0
Violence against civilians	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>

Figure 70. Awdal - number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1154</sup>

### Reported security incidents

On 16 September 2020, an armed clash between the Reer Noor sub-clan of the Samaroon clan and the Somaliland police was reported in Boroma town. While ACLED did not record any fatalities,<sup>1155</sup> two news sources reported that at least one soldier was killed and two others were injured in the incident, which was related to a case of disputed land ownership.<sup>1156</sup>

On 3 September 2020, a Somali news website reported a bomb attack at the Somaliland Ministry of Finance compound in Boroma that injured one employee.<sup>1157</sup> This incident, not recorded by ACLED, could not be corroborated by other sources either.

Unidentified gunmen attacked the mayor of Boroma on 20 April 2020, leaving the mayor and his family unharmed.<sup>1158</sup>

On 13 April 2020, there was exchange of gunfire in Boroma town, when armed men from Farah-Nuur sub-clan of Gadabuursi clan targeted military officers guarding land disputed by Jibril-Yonis sub-clan.<sup>1159</sup>

On 21 January 2020, a police officer was shot and killed by unknown gunmen on the outskirts of Boroma town.<sup>1160</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>1161</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

Gang rape and other forms of gender-based violence were reported to remain a problem in urban areas of Somaliland, often occurring in impoverished neighbourhoods and among immigrants, returnees and IDPs.<sup>1162</sup> In July 2020, it was reported that the man who raped and murdered an underage girl in Lughaye district in February 2020<sup>1163</sup> was sentenced to death.<sup>1164</sup> For an overview on women's situation see Chapter 2 of the EASO's COI report on [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#).

<sup>1154</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1155</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM32030, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1156</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 1700 gmt 16 Sep 20, 18 September 2020; Somali Dispatch, Somaliland: Troops attacked at check point near Borama, 18. September 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1157</sup> Somali Affairs, Bomb attack hits Somaliland's Ministry of Finance compound in Borama, 3 September 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1158</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31158, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1159</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM30940, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1160</sup> Radio Mustaqbal, Gunmen kill police officer in Somaliland, 21 January 2021; ACLED, Somalia, SOM30345, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1161</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>1162</sup> USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>1163</sup> Somali Dispatch, A Rapist killer arrested in Awdal, 18 February 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1164</sup> Somali Chronicle, Rape and murder suspect sentenced to death by firing squad, 3 July 2020, [url](#)

In 2020, Somaliland authorities issued directives imposing conditions on humanitarian aid organizations, thereby potentially hampering humanitarian operations.<sup>1165</sup> For Awdal region, three incidents of humanitarian workers being unable to access sites were reported in 2020.<sup>1166</sup>

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN<sup>1167</sup> reported 11 000 new displacements from Awdal, with over 1 400 displacements in February 2020 alone. Of the 8 000 displacements in 2020, nearly all within Awdal, drought was the main reason. In 2020, displacement for reasons related to conflict was only recorded in 10 cases within Boroma district. Between January and May 2021, 3 000 new displacements were registered in Awdal, of which again almost all were within the region. Of the 10 displacements caused by conflict and insecurity, all departed from Boroma district to Lughaye district. In 2020, ten displacements to Awdal were registered from Sanaag and four from Nugal. No newly displaced people from other regions arrived in Awdal in the first five months of 2021.<sup>1168</sup>

## Evictions

According to the NRC Eviction Information Portal, 18 cases of forced evictions were reported in Awdal in 2020, resulting in the forced expulsion of 182 individuals. Between January and 29 June 2021, 95 individuals were affected by nine cases of forced eviction in Awdal. All 27 reported forced eviction cases in 2020 and 2021 occurred in Boroma district. NRC listed ‘rent default’ (12 cases) ‘development – landlord’ (nine cases), ‘owner development’ (five cases), and ‘gov. development’ (one case) as respective reasons for forced evictions.<sup>1169</sup>

## 2.7.2 Wogooyi Galbeed

### 2.7.2.1 Background

Wogooyi Galbeed region borders the regions of Awdal, Sanaag and Togdheer, the Gulf of Aden and shares an international border with Ethiopia. It consists of three districts: Gebiley, Hargeysa and Berbera. The region’s capital is Hargeisa (also spelled Hargeysa). Hargeisa is also the capital of Somaliland.<sup>1170</sup>

Wogooy Galbeed is predominantly inhabited by the Habar Awal clan, in the area that stretches from the coast on the Gulf of Aden up to the Ethiopian border. The other two main clans in the region are Habar Yunis and Idagalle. As to the state capital, Hargeisa, its neighbourhoods are strongly clan related, with the town territory partitioned among the various clans and sub-clans present in town: mainly Habar Awal, Habar Yonis, Habar Jeelo, Idagalle, but also minority groups.<sup>1171</sup> For additional details see EASO’s COI report on [Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators](#), chapter on Hargeisa.<sup>1172</sup>

According to the 2014 Population Survey Estimate by UNFPA and Somali authorities, Wogooyi Galbeed had 1 242 003 inhabitants in total, among which 802 740 people living in urban areas, 138 912 in rural, and 255 761 nomads.<sup>1173</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

<sup>1165</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 2; USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), Section 5

<sup>1166</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1167</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>1168</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1169</sup> NRC, Eviction Information Portal, Dataset, as of 29 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1170</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#); Encyclopaedia Britannica, Hargeysa Somalia, n.d., [url](#)

<sup>1171</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>1172</sup> EASO, Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia: Key socio-economic indicators, 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1173</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31



### 2.7.2.2 Conflict dynamics

**Actors and control areas/influence.** According to security expert II, ‘in most of Somaliland there is no al-Shabaab presence’ while ‘Somaliland controls the means of violence’ in most of its territory (middle and western part).<sup>1174</sup> Other observers, however, maintain that Al-Shabaab has a quiet network in Somaliland, mainly for purposes of finances and recruitment.<sup>1175</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** After consulting a range of sources and conducting expert interviews, very scarce information could be found on major current conflict dynamics in Wogooy Galbeed.

In terms of clan rivalries, during the reference period following disputes (conflicts) were reported by ACLED (non exhaustive list) in the region:

- Reer Yoonis (Habar-Jeelo) vs Ahmed Farah (Habar-Jeelo). On 3 July 2020, the two Habar-Jeelo sub clan clashed militarily in Beeyo Macan village near Berbera town. Reportedly the clash was related to a land dispute and ongoing clan revenge.<sup>1176</sup>

### 2.7.2.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab’s violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias’ violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups’ violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

While the Woqooyi Galbeed administrative region ranked second to last in terms of both the number of security incidents and fatalities in 2020 according to ACLED data, the region counted no security incidents as well as no fatalities in the first half of 2021 (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, five security incidents, coded as battles, explosions or other forms of remote violence and violent act against civilians, were reported in Woqooyi Galbeed, resulting in a total of nine fatalities (see Figure 71 and Figure 73).<sup>1177</sup>

<sup>1174</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>1175</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>1176</sup> ACLED, Somalia as of 30 June 2021, SOM31518 [source: undisclosed source], [url](#)

<sup>1177</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

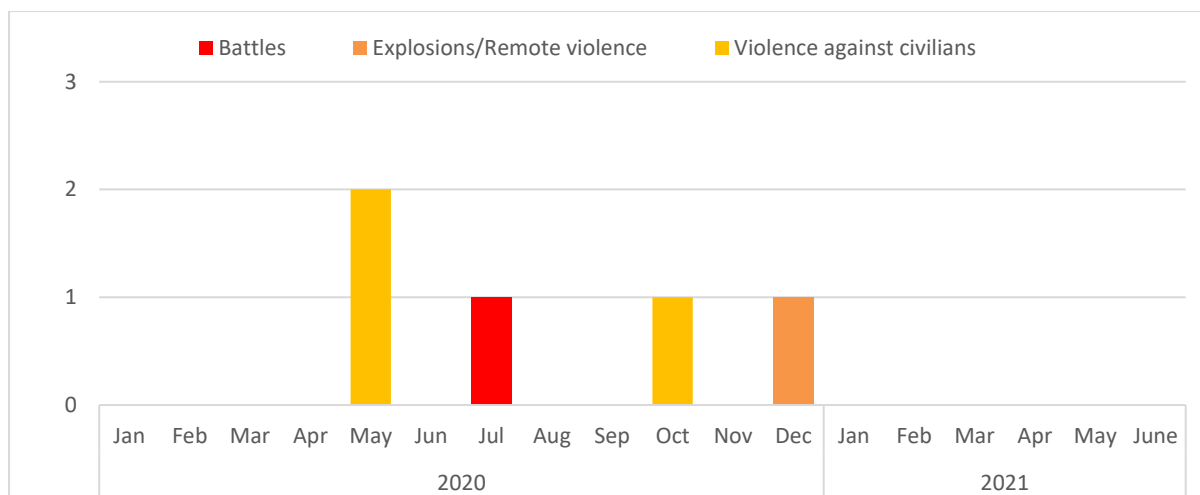


Figure 71. Woqooyi Galbeed – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1178</sup>

At the district level, the three recorded incidents of violence against civilians were reported in Woqooyi Galbeed’s capital, Hargeisa, involving the Somaliland police or military forces as main actor. However, one of these incidents, reported in October 2020, was described by ACLED as a killing of a senior military official, which suggests that it has been wrongly coded as ‘violence against civilians’. The two other incidents were recorded in Berbera and concerned clan militias and an unidentified armed group as main actor (see Figure 72).<sup>1179</sup>

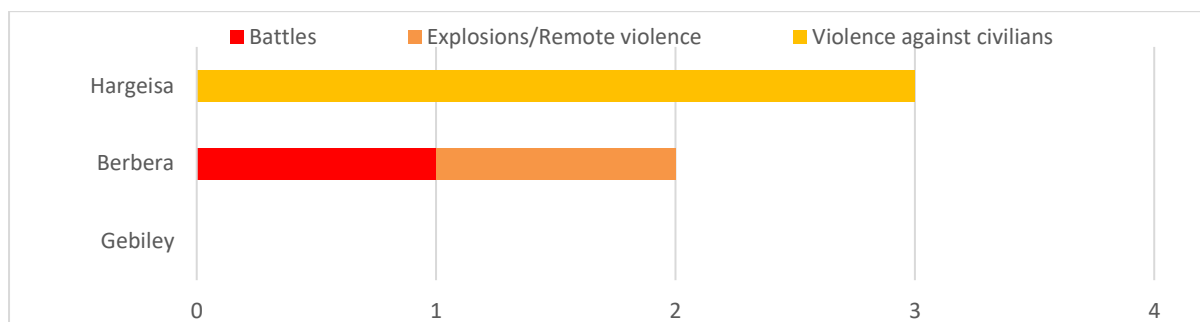


Figure 72. Woqooyi Galbeed – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1180</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 73 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Woqooyi Galbeed region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and end of June 2021, by type of incident:

<sup>1178</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1179</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1180</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

Woqooyi Galbeed	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	1	2
Explosions/Remote violence	1	2
Violence against civilians	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>

Figure 73. Woqooyi Galbeed – number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1181</sup>

### Reported security incidents

On 30 December 2020, two boys were killed after an unexploded ordnance detonated on the outskirts of Berbera town.<sup>1182</sup>

On 13 October 2020, a senior military officer was shot dead by another military officer in Hargeisa town for unknown reasons.<sup>1183</sup>

An armed clash between the Reer Yoonis and Ahmad Farah sub-clans of Harbar Jeclo clan caused two fatalities and six injuries in a village near Berbera town on 3 July 2020, in connection with a land dispute and ongoing clan revenge.<sup>1184</sup>

On 2 May and 3 May 2020, police authorities shot and killed a total of four Khat smugglers in Baligubadle town and Hargeisa town. The incidents took place in the wake of the government's ban on khat trade in Somaliland to stop the spread of coronavirus.<sup>1185</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>1186</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

Gang rape and other forms of gender-based violence were reported to remain a problem in urban areas of Somaliland, often occurring in impoverished neighbourhoods and among immigrants, returnees and IDPs.<sup>1187</sup> According to the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission, the number of rape cases increased in Somaliland in 2020, with Maroodi Jeeh of Woqooyi Galbeed region mentioned as one of the areas with the most occurrences.<sup>1188</sup> Following the rape of an 18-year-old girl by her teacher in a village near Hargeisa, it was reported that the associated stigma, as well as the prohibitive legal costs for some, result in some rape cases, including rapes of minors, not being brought to justice.<sup>1189</sup> In June 2020, the case of a 13-year-old girl who was raped by several men at an orphanage in Hargeisa town became public.<sup>1190</sup> The convicted rapists reportedly received light sentences.<sup>1191</sup> For an overview of women's situation see also Chapter 2 of the EASO's COI report on [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#).

<sup>1181</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1182</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM32898, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1183</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM32202, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1184</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31518, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1185</sup> ACLED, Somalia, SOM31072, SOM31160, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1186</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>1187</sup> USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>1188</sup> Somali Dispatch, Violence against women and number of rape cases increased according to Somaliland's Human rights Commission Report, 7 February 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1189</sup> Somaliland Sun, Somaliland: Getting Justice for Child Rape Victims, 15 February 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1190</sup> Somaliland Sun, Somaliland: Father of gang raped 13 years old girl cries out for justice, 21 June 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1191</sup> Somali Dispatch, Hargeisa police arrest journalist for covering Anti-Rape demonstration, 22 October 2020, [url](#)

In February 2021, it was reported that the chairman of Maroodi Jeeh regional court had issued an arrest warrant against one lawyer and suspended the licence of another. Both orders reportedly violated lawyers' constitutional and legal rights.<sup>1192</sup>

In 2020, Somaliland authorities issued directives imposing conditions on humanitarian aid organizations, thereby potentially hampering humanitarian operations.<sup>1193</sup> For the Woqooyi Galbeed region, 14 incidents of humanitarian workers being unable to access sites were reported in 2020.<sup>1194</sup>

## Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN<sup>1195</sup> reported 2 700 new displacements from Woqooyi Galbeed. Of the 2 000 displacements in 2020, most of which arrived in Mudug, drought was the main reason. In 2020, displacement for reasons related to conflict was only recorded in four cases within Hargeisa district. Between January and May 2021, 700 new displacements were registered in Woqooyi Galbeed, of which most were to Mudug (500 cases), to Hiraan (100) or within the Woqooyi Galbeed region (70). None of these 2021 displacements was registered as being caused by conflict and insecurity. In 2020, 1 800 displacements to Woqooyi Galbeed were registered mostly from other Somaliland or neighbouring regions. 430 newly displaced from other Somaliland or neighbouring regions arrived in Woqooyi Galbeed between January and May 2021.<sup>1196</sup>

## Evictions

According to the NRC Evictions Information Portal, 53 cases of forced evictions were reported in Woqooyi Galbeed in 2020, resulting in the forced expulsion of 5 693 individuals. Between January and 29 June 2021, 379 individuals were affected by 35 cases of forced eviction in the region. Five reported forced eviction cases in 2020 and 2021 occurred in Berbera district and 83 in Hargeisa. NRC listed 'rent default' as reasons for 59 of the total 88 forced evictions.<sup>1197</sup>

## 2.7.3 Togdheer

### 2.7.3.1 Background

Togdheer region (or Togdhere) shares borders with Wogooyi Galbeed, with Sool, a small border with Sanaag and an international border with Ethiopia. It consists of four districts: Sheikh, Owdweyne, Burco (or Burao) and Buuhoodle (or Buhodle). The region's capital is Burco (or Burao).<sup>1198</sup>

Togdheer region is predominantly inhabited by Habar Yunis (or Yonis) and Habar Jeelo (or Jeelo) clans. The area west of Burao (also Burco) is inhabited by Idagalle, along with other minority sub-clans that are considered part of the Habar Yunis major clan.<sup>1199</sup>

According to the 2014 Population Survey Estimate by UNFPA and Somali authorities, Togdhere had 721 363 inhabitants in total, among which 483 724 people living in urban areas, 57 356 in urban, and

<sup>1192</sup> Horizon Institute, Judicial Intimidation of Lawyers in Somaliland Undermining the Rule of Law, 25 February 2021, [url](#); see also Somaliland Chronicle, Horizon Institute criticizes and calls for investigation of marodojeh regional court chairman for judicial intimidation, 28 February 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1193</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 2; USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>1194</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1195</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

<sup>1196</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1197</sup> NRC, Eviction Information Portal, Dataset, as of 29 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1198</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia Administrative Map, 31 July 2017, [url](#)

<sup>1199</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

154 523 nomads.<sup>1200</sup> More recent population figures or estimates could not be found. For IDPs figures see section below on [Internal displacement](#).

### 2.7.3.2 Conflict dynamics

**Actors and control areas/influence.** According to security expert II, ‘in most of Somaliland there is no al-Shabaab presence’ while ‘Somaliland controls the means of violence’ in most of its territory (middle and western part).<sup>1201</sup> Other observers, however, maintain that Al-Shabaab has a quiet network in Somaliland, mainly for purposes of finances and recruitment.<sup>1202</sup>

**Conflict dynamics.** According to clan expert Joakim Gundel, in the Buhodle area there are frequent disputes revolving around water wells (boreholes). However, he maintains that the real issue is actually linked to clan growth and expansion dynamics.<sup>1203</sup> See below for further details.

In the context of clan expansion/growth dynamics and land/resources/water wells control, which often lead to disputes and clan confrontations (and feuds),<sup>1204</sup> Togdheer is the site, among others, of following disputes:

- Isaaq vs Dhulbahante in Buhodle. As local expert VII puts it, Buhodle, which falls within Somaliland’s administrative power, refuses to be part of Somaliland, and at times it allies with the FGS at times with the Puntland administration.<sup>1205</sup>
- Reer Hagar (Dhulbahante) vs Hayaag (Dhulbahante). The dominant group in and around Buhodle, Reer Hagar (of the Dhulbahante), and the smaller group Hayaag (still Dhulbahante), whose stronghold is Widhwidh, a village northeast of Buhodle,<sup>1206</sup> clashed in the course of 2020 (June-July) over land disputes and clan revenge in and around Buhodle (resulting in about 20 fatalities and 2 casualties).<sup>1207</sup>
- Reer Hagar (Dhulbahante) vs Soolamadow (Habar Jeelo) and Barkad (Dhulbahante). The sub-clans militia clashed over clan revenge grounds in Buhodle in November 2020.<sup>1208</sup>
- Wacays Adan (Dhulbahante) vs Aligari or Ali-Geri (Dhulbahante). Their respective Dhulbahante sub-clan militias engaged in military confrontations on clan revenge grounds in and around Buhodle at the beginning of 2021 (January-February). The clashes resulted in various casualties and fatalities.<sup>1209</sup>
- Wacays Adan (Dhulbahante) vs Reer Hagar (Dhulbahante). The two sub-clan militias clashed in Buhodle over charcoal burning issues in April 2021. Two fatalities were reported.<sup>1210</sup>
- Soolomadow (Habar Jeelo) vs Cigaale Cali (Dhulbahante). The two sub-clan militias clashed in Buhodle in April 2021 on clan revenge grounds (one fatality, one casualty).<sup>1211</sup>

<sup>1200</sup> UNFPA, Population Estimation Survey 2014, Somalia, October 2014, [url](#), p. 31

<sup>1201</sup> Interview with Somali security expert II, 21 June 2021

<sup>1202</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>1203</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>1204</sup> Interview with Somalia clan expert Joakim Gundel, 7 July 2021

<sup>1205</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

<sup>1206</sup> Interview with clan and access to justice expert VII, 26 July 2021

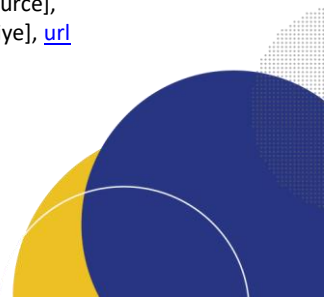
<sup>1207</sup> ACLED, Somalia as of 30 June 2021, SOM31269, SOM31280, SOM31525, SOM31539, [url](#)

<sup>1208</sup> ACLED, Somalia as of 30 June 2021, SOM32345 [source: undisclosed source], [url](#)

<sup>1209</sup> ACLED, Somalia as of 30 June 2021, SOM32953 [source: Radio Dalsan], SOM32978 [source: undisclosed source], SOM32997 [source: undisclosed source], SOM33155 [source: Radio Kulmiye], SOM33156 [source: Radio Kulmiye], [url](#)

<sup>1210</sup> ACLED, Somalia as of 30 June 2021, SOM33588 [source: undisclosed source], [url](#)

<sup>1211</sup> ACLED, Somalia as of 30 June 2021, SOM33571 [source: undisclosed source], [url](#)



- Other intra-clan clashes/killings were reported in the reference period (in and around Buhodle): Dhulbahante/Hayag sub-clan militias (Faara-aadan and Jaamac aadan),<sup>1212</sup> Habar Jeelo clan militias,<sup>1213</sup> Dhulbahante/Reer Hagar sub-clan militia.<sup>1214</sup>

In terms of clan conflicts, see also as background information the section on [Sool Conflict dynamics](#).

### 2.7.3.3 Recent security incidents and trends

For regional comparisons of recent security incidents and trends see, among others, following figures: Figure 10 on regional distribution of security events; Figure 11 on regional distribution of fatalities; Figure 12 on regional distribution of Al-Shabaab's violent events; Figure 15 on regional distribution of clan militias' violent events; Figure 16 on regional distribution of unidentified armed groups' violent events.

#### Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties

In 2020 and in the first half of 2021, ACLED data indicate that Togdheer administrative region ranked in the lower third with regard to the number of security incidents as well as fatalities (see Figure 10 and Figure 11). Between January and December 2020, nine security-related incidents, including battles, an explosion or other form of remote violence, and violent acts against civilians, causing 27 fatalities, were reported in Togdheer. In the first six months of 2021, ACLED registered 11 security-related incidents with 22 fatalities in Togdheer region (see Figure 74 and Figure 76).<sup>1215</sup>

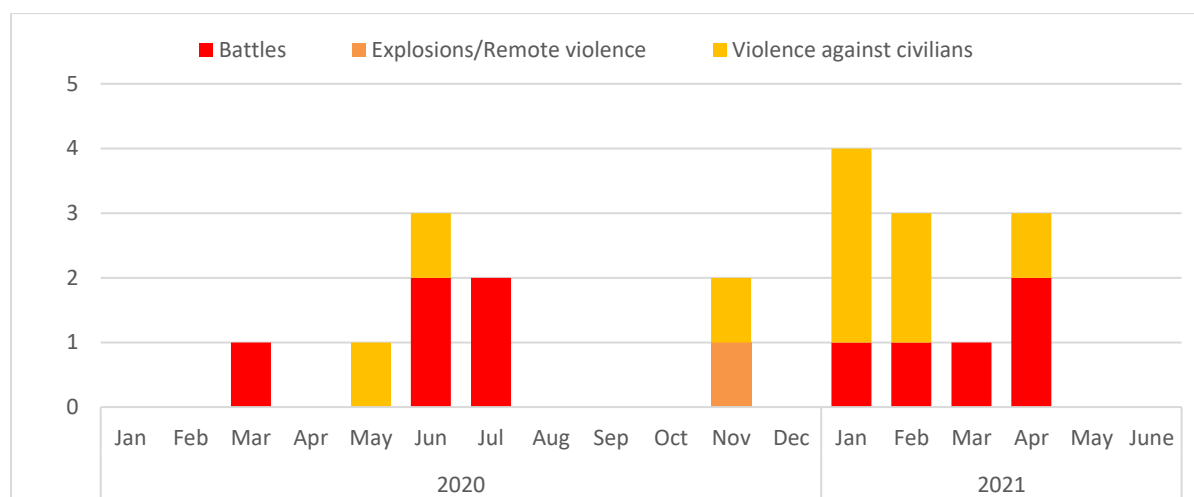


Figure 74. Togdheer – Evolution of security events coded battles, explosion/remote violence and violence against civilians from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1216</sup>

At the district level, 16 incidents were reported in Buhodle district involving Dhulbahante (14 cases) or Habar Jeelo (2 cases) sub-clan militias as ACTOR 1. These incidents were coded as either armed clashes or attacks and involved either other sub-clans (8 cases) or civilians (8 cases). For an overview of clan conflicts see also Chapter 5 of the EASO's COI report on [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#). In Burao district, two incidents involved Somaliland police (1 case) and an unidentified armed group as ACTOR 1. In the two incidents reported for Odweine district, Somalia's military forces were coded as main actor. No security incidents were reported for Sheikh district during the reporting period.<sup>1217</sup>

<sup>1212</sup> ACLED, Somalia as of 30 June 2021, SOM30820 [source: undisclosed source], [url](#)

<sup>1213</sup> ACLED, Somalia as of 30 June 2021, SOM31348 [source: undisclosed source], [url](#)

<sup>1214</sup> ACLED, Somalia as of 30 June 2021, SOM33295 [source: undisclosed source], [url](#)

<sup>1215</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1216</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1217</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)



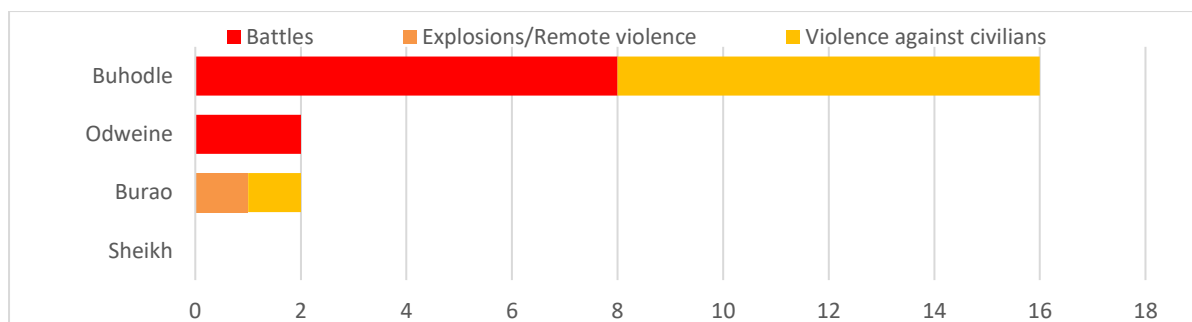


Figure 75. Togdheer – breakdown of security events per district from 1 January 2020 to June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1218</sup>

While no overall dataset could be found on the number of conflict-related civilian casualties (deaths and injuries) in the region, Figure 75 shows the numbers of incidents and estimated fatalities (without distinction between civilian and non-civilian) in Togdheer region that have been recorded by ACLED between January 2020 and the end of June 2021, by type of incident:

Togdheer	Number of incidents	Number of estimated fatalities
Battles	10	38
Explosions/Remote violence	1	4
Violence against civilians	9	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>49</b>

Figure 76. Togdheer - number of security incidents and fatalities by type of incident for the period between January 2020 and June 2021, based on ACLED data.<sup>1219</sup>

Of the 49 fatalities recorded in Togdheer, the vast majority (30 deaths) were reported in Buhodle district, ahead of Odweine (15 deaths) and Burao (4 deaths). When focusing on incidents coded by ACLED as ‘violence against civilians’, eight of the nine incidents that caused in total seven fatalities were reported in Buhodle.<sup>1220</sup>

### Illustrative security incidents

On 8 April 2021, a clash between the militias of the Dhulbahante-Wacays Aden sub-clan and the Dhulbahante-Reer Hagar sub-clan was reported for Buhodle town, leaving two people dead.<sup>1221</sup>

On 6 April 2021, a Habar Jeclo-Soolomadaw sub-clan militia killed a man from Dhulbahante-Cigaale Cali clan and injured another one in Buhodle town, reportedly due to clan revenge.<sup>1222</sup>

In March and April 2021, two operations of the Puntland security forces against respectively Al-Shabaab and Islamic State affiliated groups were reported in Odweine, killing a number of militants.<sup>1223</sup>

On 14 November 2020, an IED by an unknown group exploded when a school bus was passing by in Burao district<sup>1224</sup>, killing one<sup>1225</sup> to four<sup>1226</sup> civilians and injuring two<sup>1227</sup> to three<sup>1228</sup>.

<sup>1218</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1219</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1220</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1221</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33588, [url](#)

<sup>1222</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33571, [url](#)

<sup>1223</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM33568; SOM33451, [url](#)

<sup>1224</sup> Somali Dispatch, School bus hits A landmine in Togdher, 15 November 2020, [url](#); ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM32445, [url](#)

<sup>1225</sup> Somali Dispatch, School bus hits A landmine in Togdher, 15 November 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1226</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM32445, [url](#)

<sup>1227</sup> Somali Dispatch, School bus hits A landmine in Togdher, 15 November 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1228</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM32445, [url](#)

In July 2020, the Somaliland parliament called for a settlement of the fatal dispute between Hagar and Hayan sub-clans in Buhodle district.<sup>1229</sup> ACLED data for this period also include four clashes between Dhulbahante sub-clans in June and July 2020, including a single incident that resulted in 16 deaths in Buhodle's Horufadhi village on 5 July 2020.<sup>1230</sup>

Among others, security incidents related to clan conflicts do not always receive local media attention and hence might go under-reported in Somalia.<sup>1231</sup>

### Other impacts on civilian life

Gang rape and other forms of gender-based violence were reported to remain a problem, especially in urban areas of Somaliland, often occurring in impoverished neighbourhoods and among immigrants, returnees and IDPs.<sup>1232</sup> According to the Somaliland National Human Rights Commission, the number of rape cases increased in Somaliland in 2020, with Togdheer region mentioned as one of the areas with the most occurrences.<sup>1233</sup> In February 2021, the mutilated body of a young shepherdess with indications of rape was found near the town of Burao.<sup>1234</sup> Another woman, aged 18, was reported raped and killed outside Burao town on 23 November 2020. For the rape and killing of another woman, a mother of three, on 11 October 2020 in Burao town<sup>1235</sup>, a man was sentenced to death in November 2020.<sup>1236</sup> In March 2020, it was reported that Togdheer regional appeal court sentenced a man, who had allegedly raped and killed a nine-year old girl in Burao town, to four years in prison.<sup>1237</sup> For an overview about women's situation see Chapter 2 of the EASO's COI report on [Somalia - Targeted Profiles](#).

In September 2020, it was reported that Somaliland security forces arrested several terror suspects and seized weapons and explosive devices in Burao town.<sup>1238</sup>

In 2020, Somaliland authorities issued directives imposing conditions on humanitarian aid organizations, thereby potentially hampering humanitarian operations.<sup>1239</sup> For the Togdheer region, seven incidents of humanitarian workers being unable to access sites were reported in 2020.<sup>1240</sup>

### Internal displacement

Between January 2020 and May 2021, PRMN<sup>1241</sup> reported 11 000 new displacements from Togdheer. Of the 9 000 displacements in 2020, most of which occurred within Togdheer, drought was the main reason. In 2020, displacement for reasons related to conflict and insecurity was recorded in 1 000 cases from Buhodle district. Between January and May 2021, 2 000 new displacements were registered in Togdheer, of which half were within the region (1 000 cases), 200 to Sool, 200 to Woqooyi Galbeed and 20 to Mudug. Ten of these 2021 displacements were registered as being caused by

<sup>1229</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Gaalkayo news 1015 gmt 7 July 2020, 8 July 2020; Somali Dispatch, Somaliland Lawmakers called for cease-fire in Buhodle and Sahil, 6 July 2020, [url](#); see also Höhne, M., Expert response on Somalia: Conflicts between the Reer Hagar and the Hayaag tribe in Buhodle, 9 April 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1230</sup> ACLED, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, SOM31525, [url](#)

<sup>1231</sup> Menkhaus, K., input from external review, 27 August 2021

<sup>1232</sup> USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), Section 6

<sup>1233</sup> Somali Dispatch, Violence against women and number of rape cases increased according to Somaliland's Human rights Commission Report, 7 February 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1234</sup> Haybad Online (The), Body Of A Young Woman Found Under A Tree In Northern City Of Burco, 8 February 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1235</sup> Radio Risala, Protest in Somaliland over rape and murder of mother, 12 October 2020, available by subscription

<sup>1236</sup> Radio Risala, Another woman raped and murdered in Somaliland town, 23 November 2020, available by subscription

<sup>1237</sup> BBC Monitoring, Programme summary of Somaliland's Horn Cable TV news 1900 gmt 2 Jan 20, 15 March 2020

<sup>1238</sup> Radio Dalsan, Somaliland arrests 13 suspected of planning terror attacks, 13 September 2020

<sup>1239</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 2; USDOS, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, 30 March 2021, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>1240</sup> UNOCHA, Somalia – 2020 Humanitarian Access Overview, 8 April 2021, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>1241</sup> Please note that the PRMN Dashboard displays rounded figures only

conflict and insecurity. In 2020, 800 displacements to Togdheer were registered from Sool. An additional 70 newly displaced from Sool region arrived in Togdheer between January and May 2021.<sup>1242</sup>

### Evictions

According to the NRC Eviction Information Portal, 29 cases of forced evictions were reported in Togdheer in 2020, resulting in the forced expulsion of 4 882 individuals. Between January and 29 June 2021, 366 individuals were affected by 14 cases of forced eviction in the region. Seven reported forced eviction cases in 2020 and 2021 occurred in Buhodle district and 36 in Burao. NRC listed 'rent default' as the reason for 24 of the 43 forced evictions, followed by 'owner development' in seven cases.<sup>1243</sup>

## 2.7.4 Sool

For an overview of conflict dynamics and security trends in this region see the section on [Sool](#) within the [Contested areas between Somaliland and Puntland](#) chapter.

## 2.7.5 Sanaag

For an overview of conflict dynamics and security trends in this region see the section on [Sanaag](#) within the [Contested areas between Somaliland and Puntland](#) chapter.

## 2.7.6 Somaliland - Checkpoints and road security

International expert VIII stated that Somaliland, same as Puntland, is more secure in comparison to Somalia's FMS. In terms of internal mobility and security, both the average Somali and government officials can in general freely move around without 'too many security concerns'. The route from Berbera to Hargeysa is, in general, safe. There can be security issues when traveling across the contested areas of Sool and Sanaag between Puntland and Somaliland. Goods and supplies travel back and forth in Somaliland since there is very limited AS presence.<sup>1244</sup>

As per ACLED data, in the reference period (January 2020 – June 2021) there were a total of 4 explosions/remote violence events of the type IED, shelling, grenade and suicide bomb (among others remote violence events) in Somaliland, resulting in 9 fatalities (Figure 19).<sup>1245</sup>

<sup>1242</sup> UNHCR, PRMN Dashboard – Somalia, as of July 2020, [url](#)

<sup>1243</sup> NRC, Eviction Information Portal, Dataset, as of 29 June 2021, [url](#)

<sup>1244</sup> Interview with international expert VIII, 3 August 2021

<sup>1245</sup> EASO analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Curated Data Files, Somalia, as of 30 June 2021, [url](#)

# Annex 1: Bibliography

## Oral sources, including anonymous sources

Expert I is a leading Somali security and intelligence expert based in Somalia, with extensive national and international consulting experience. Expert I prefers to remain anonymous for safety reasons. EASO interviewed Somali security expert I on 20 and 27 June 2021.

Expert II is a leading Somali security expert, author, and scholar based in Somalia, with extensive academic and international consulting experience. Expert II prefers to remain anonymous for safety reasons. EASO interviewed Somali security expert II on 21 June 2021.

Expert IV is a Somali affairs expert, based in Somalia, and with a long academic and development practitioner experience. Expert IV prefers to remain anonymous for safety reasons. EASO interviewed Somali affairs expert IV on 9 July 2021.

Expert V is a Somali culture expert and long-time resident of Mogadishu, with several years of experience as a local and international consultant. Expert V prefers to remain anonymous for safety reasons. EASO interviewed Somali local expert V on 7 July 2021.

Expert VI is a Somali expert on local clan conflicts with long-standing experience in conflict prevention and analysis. Based in Garowe he works as a consultant for national and international organisations. Expert VI prefers to remain anonymous for safety reasons. EASO interviewed the local conflict expert VI on 22 July 2021.

Expert VII is a Somali expert on clan and access to justice. Based in Somalia he is a scholar and a community development practitioner. Expert VII prefers to remain anonymous for safety reasons. EASO interviewed clan and access to justice expert VII on 26 July 2021.

Expert VIII is an international expert based in Somalia with expertise on security and state-building issues. He works for an international organisation with headquarters in Mogadishu and has several years of relevant field experience in the country. EASO interviewed expert VIII on 3 August 2021.

Gundel, J., (also referred to as expert III), is a scholar, author, and Somali clans expert with over 30 years of academic and field experience (in Somalia and the wider Horn of Africa). He now works as independent consultant. EASO interviewed Joakim Gundel on 7 July 2021.

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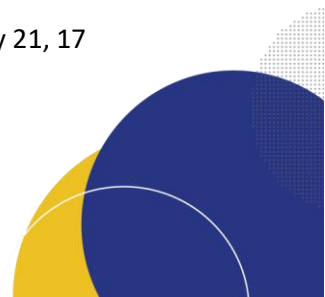
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## Annex 2: Terms of Reference

**Maps** [Control map of Somalia; Clan distribution map]

### Section 1

#### General description of the security situation in Somalia

- Recent political and security developments
- Layers of conflict
- Armed actors
- Recent security trends
- Impact of violence on the civilian population
- Checkpoints and road security

### Section 2

#### Federal Member States

#### Administrative Regions (Gobol) level description of the security situation

##### 2.1 JUBBALAND

Overview of Federal Member State (see report on Actors)

###### 2.1.1 Gedo

###### Region's background

###### Conflict's background

###### Security trends

- Security incidents, violence against civilians, civilian casualties
- Other impacts on civilian life
- Internal Displacement

###### 2.1... Checkpoints and road security

[the same structure applies to all regions: Gedo, Middle Juba, Lower Juba, Bakool, Bay, Lower Shabelle, Hiraan, Middle Shabelle, Benadir/Mogadishu, Galgaduud, Mudug, Nugal, Bari, Sool, Sanaag, Togdheer, Woqooyi Galbeed, Awdal]







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