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State *of* Somalia Report

HERITAGE
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SOS 2025
Year in Review

State of Somalia 2025

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Executive Summary

The State of Somalia (SoS) Report 2025 reviews the major political, security, economic, diplomatic, humanitarian, and regional developments that shaped Somalia throughout the year. The report found that 2025 was a year marked by significant contrasts. On the one hand, Somalia recorded notable gains in international diplomacy, institutional development, regional integration, and state visibility. On the other hand, persistent political polarization, federal-state tensions, humanitarian vulnerability, and unresolved questions surrounding constitutional and electoral processes continued to challenge state-building efforts.

Politically, Somalia experienced an increasingly contested environment as debates over constitutional amendments, electoral arrangements, federalism, and the distribution of power intensified. Relations between the Federal Government and several Federal Member States remained strained, while opposition groups in the capital raised concerns regarding constitutional governance, electoral management, and political inclusivity. The recognition of SSC-Khaatumo as a federal member state, the formation of new political alliances, and preparations for FGS-pushed direct elections further affected relations between the FGS and FMS but also Somaliland and the rest of Somalia. Although dialogue initiatives were periodically proposed, consensus among key stakeholders remained elusive.

In the security sector, Somalia continued its military campaign against al-Shabaab and ISIS with support from international partners. The transition from the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) to the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) represented an important milestone, although questions regarding long-term financing and sustainability remained unresolved. Security operations intensified throughout the year, supported by increased international military cooperation and expanded air campaigns. Despite these efforts, al-Shabaab retained the capacity to conduct attacks, while broader regional developments—including tensions involving Ethiopia, Egypt, as well as the secessionist Somaliland region—continued to influence Somalia's security environment.

Economically, in 2025 Somalia's performance reflected a cooling of real GDP growth to an estimated 3.0%, down from 4.0% in 2024, amid declining foreign assistance and climate-related challenges, including drought later in the year. Fiscal pressures emerged through a mid-year revenue shortfall and inflation, which reached 5.1% by December. At the same time, the government continued its reform agenda, securing debt relief agreements with the Arab Monetary Fund and the African Development Fund. Somalia also expanded its international economic engagement by formally joining the African Export-Import Bank and establishing partnerships with Egypt and Türkiye to support cooperation in sectors such as fisheries, energy, and transport infrastructure.

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Social indicators remained challenging, with poverty estimated at 67% and youth unemployment at 34.3%. Looking ahead, the government approved a \$1.39 billion budget for 2026 and launched the National Transformation Plan (2025–2029), which aims to strengthen institutions, support sustainable economic development, and enhance fiscal resilience.

In external relations, Somalia, pursued an active diplomatic agenda. The country deepened engagement with Türkiye; continued integration with the East African Community; was removed from the United Nations arrears list and elected to the UN Security Council; and pursued a seat on the African Union's Peace and Security Council. This all reflected Somalia moving from being a subject of these multilateral institutions' decisions to being at the table and a decision maker. However, disputes involving Ethiopia, Taiwan, and ultimately Israel's recognition of Somaliland demonstrated the continuing challenges facing Somalia's foreign policy and sovereignty agenda.

Humanitarian conditions remained severe. Climate-related shocks, funding shortfalls, displacement, food insecurity, and malnutrition affected millions of Somalis throughout the year. UN and international and national humanitarian organizations repeatedly warned of worsening conditions, particularly following reductions in international assistance. While efforts were made to strengthen climate resilience, improve adaptation measures, and mobilize humanitarian support, the scale of needs continued to exceed available resources. Drought, flooding, conflict, and displacement remained among the principal drivers of humanitarian vulnerability.

At the sub national level, developments within Somaliland, Puntland, Jubaland, Southwest, Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Banadir, and SSC-Khaatumo highlighted the continuing complexity of Somalia's federal project. Relations between Mogadishu and several regional administrations remained uneven, while local political developments increasingly intersected with national debates over elections, constitutional reform, and state legitimacy. The emergence of new political alignments and competing visions for Somalia's future underscored the importance of inclusive dialogue and political compromise.

Overall, the report concluded that 2025 was a consequential year for Somalia. The country demonstrated both growing international relevance and achieved several important diplomatic and institutional milestones. Yet progress remained constrained by external interference, including Israel's violation of Somalia's sovereignty through its recognition of the breakaway Somaliland region, alongside political fragmentation, unresolved constitutional questions, persistent insecurity, and recurring humanitarian crises. As Somalia approaches a critical electoral period, the ability of political leaders to forge consensus, strengthen institutions, and maintain public confidence will play a decisive role in determining whether recent gains can be consolidated into a more stable and sustainable state-building trajectory.

National Developments

Politics

The cabinet approved the appointment of Ahmed Hussein Elmi as the new Chairperson of the Somali Refugee and Displacement Agency on January 2, replacing Safiya Hassan Mohamed. The decision was based on a proposal submitted by the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs, and Reconciliation. The agency plays a critical role in addressing the complex challenges faced by refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) across the country.¹ In 2025, over four million Somalis were internally displaced and over 700,000 refugees are hosted in the neighboring countries.²

On January 18, the FGS began printing national identification cards under the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA). The ID system is intended to enhance access to essential services, strengthen legal rights, and improve national administrative infrastructure. NIRA officials urged Somali citizens to register to benefit from the program. The authority also announced plans to establish ID registration centres across the FMS to promote accessibility and inclusivity.³ ID cards are currently free but this is expected to change.

Somalia's opposition groups, on February 18, objected to the appointment of the election commission and accused President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of exceeding his constitutional authority, arguing that his actions risked pushing the country toward political disorder. The opposition further claimed that the appointment process ignored established constitutional guidelines, particularly regarding the legal framework governing the commission's formation. They argued that the process lacked both constitutional legitimacy and institutional safeguards.⁴

On March 1, Somalia's Senate Speaker Abdi Hashi Abdullahi rejected a motion demanding the release of Senator Ilyas Badal Gaboose, arguing that Gaboose forfeited his seat by declaring himself Jubaland's president in November 2024.⁵ While lawmakers claimed he has been unlawfully detained in Kismayo for over three months, Speaker Hashi maintained that Gaboose's proclamation renders him ineligible for federal parliamentary membership.⁶

President Hassan Sheikh invited all political actors, including rivals, to join a collective national effort and urged political unity so Somalia could confront al-Shabaab and strengthen the federal system.

1. Hiiraan Online, "Somali cabinet approves new refugee agency chair, central bank board member" January 2, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Jan/199646/somali_cabinet_approves_new_refugee_agency_chair_central_bank_board_member.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

2. European Commission, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/somalia_en

3. Somali Stream, "Somalia Launches National ID Card Printing in Historic Milestone toward Unified Identity System" January 18, 2025: <https://somalistream.com/ultimate-guide-to-viennas-coffee-rennaissance-packed-in-one-weekend/>

4. International Idea, "In Somalia, opposition claims president violated constitution in appointment of electoral commission" February 19, 2025: <https://constitutionnet.org/news/somalia-opposition-claims-president-violated-constitution-appointment-electoral-commission> and see Garowe Online, Opposition accuses Somalia's president of shredding constitution, warns of parallel elections, February 18, 2025: <https://garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/opposition-accuses-somali-president-of-shredding-constitution-warns-of-parallel-elections>

5. Warbaahinta Puntlandes, "Sen Ilyas Gaboose oo sheegay inuu yahay Madaxweynaha Jubaland oo kahadlay doorashadii Axmed Madobe:" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENXDWTf0wo4>

6. Hiiraan Online, "Somali Senate speaker rejects motion to free detained lawmaker Gaboose" March 1, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Mar/200466/somali_senate_speaker_rejects_motion_to_free_detained_lawmaker_gaboose.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

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The president's March 29 peace talks with the opposition generated mixed reactions.⁷ Jubaland expressed support⁸, while former leaders including Sharif Sheikh Ahmed offered conditional backing.⁹ The varied responses highlighted the persistent fragmentation of Somali politics. Puntland's administration said it would not participate, citing its focus on countering ISIS militants.¹⁰

On April 15, the FGS formally recognized SSC-Khaatumo as Northeast State, paving the way for its integration into the federal system. The decision followed Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre's visit to Las Anod on April 13.¹¹ Northeast State was invited to join the National Consultative Council meetings between the FMS and FGS. Analysts viewed the recognition as a strategic move aimed at weakening Somaliland's secessionist narrative while reinforcing Mogadishu's authority in the region,¹² though it also widened the rift between the FGS and Somaliland.¹³

More than 100 Somali lawmakers signed a letter on April 15 calling for President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud to resign, citing his failure to improve security, advance national reconciliation, and fulfill key governance commitments. The signatories threatened to initiate impeachment proceedings should he decline to step down. The petition met the threshold required to trigger an impeachment debate in parliament and underscored growing polarization among Somalia's political actors and possible public and political frustration over the government's unilateralism and its inability to foster unity or deliver substantive and inclusive national agendas.¹⁴

On April 30, Somalia's Speaker of Parliament, Sheikh Aden Madobe, suspended 20 MPs from attending parliamentary sessions following disruptions that occurred during Lower House proceedings. Legislators have called for the speaker to be ousted, accusing him of constitutional violations.¹⁵

On May 13, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was elected chairman of the newly-launched Justice and Solidarity Party (JSP) during a high-profile event in Mogadishu attended by senior government officials, political leaders, and their allies. The leadership of the party includes leaders of federal member states including Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen from Southwest State who serves as vice chairperson.

7. Somali National News Agency, "President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud Calls for National Unity Forum in Eid Message" March 29, 2025: <https://sonna.so/en/president-hassan-sheikh-mohamud-calls-for-national-unity-forum-in-eid-message/>.

8. Horseed Media, "Axmed Madoobe Oo Soo Dhoweeyey Gogoshii Uu Dhigay Madaxweyne Xasan Sheekh." March 30, 2025: <https://horseedmedia.net/axmed-madoobe-oo-soo-dhoweeyey-gogoshii-uu-dhigay-madaxweyne-xasan-sheekh/402814/>

9. Somali Cable TV, "Siyaasiyiinta Mucaaradka Oo Shuruudo Adag Ku Xiray Gogoshii Wadatashi Ee Uu Ku Baaqay Madaxweyne Xasan Sheekh Maxamuud. Wariye Cabdixafiid Nuur Barre Ayaa Ka Waramaya" March 30, 2025 : <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialSomaliCableTV/videos/siyaasiyiinta-mucaaradka-oo-shuruudo-adag-ku-xiray-gogoshii-wadatashi-ee-uu-ku-b/3107982949340490/>.

10. Hiiraan Online, "Puntland rejects President Mohamud's peace talks, citing ISIS fight" April 3, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Apr/200967/puntland_rejects_president_mohamud_s_peace_talks_citing_isis_fight.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, See also SONNA, "President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud Calls for National Unity Forum in Eid Message" March 29, 2025: <https://sonna.so/en/president-hassan-sheikh-mohamud-calls-for-national-unity-forum-in-eid-message/>

11. Anadolu Ajansı, "Somali Premier Pays Historic Visit to LasAnod." April 13, 2025: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somali-premier-pays-historic-visit-to-lasanod/3536707>

12. Somali Guardian, "Somalia recognizes SSC-Khatumo's statehood, declares territory undisputed" April 15, 2025: <https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/somalia-recognizes-ssc-khatumos-statehood-declares-territory-undisputed/>

13. Garowe Online, "Somaliland denounces creation of new Northeastern State Administration as illegal" August 2, 2025: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somaliland-denounces-creation-of-new-northeastern-state-administration-as-illegal>

14. Reuters, "Somali MPs demand president quit, threaten impeachment" May 8, 2025: <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/somali-mps-demand-president-quit-threaten-impeachment-idUSBREA470PQ/>

15. Shabelle Media Network, "Somalia Suspends 20 MPs from Parliament Sessions Over Security Concerns" May 1, 2025: <https://shabellemedia.com/somalia-suspends-20-mps-from-parliament-sessions-over-security-concerns/> See also, All Africa, "MPs Suspended After Fighting in Somali Parliament" May 1, 2025: <https://allafrica.com/view/group/main/main/id/00092656.html>

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The party's establishment comes as Somalia prepares for a transition towards a one-person, one-vote electoral system. Critics contend that the initiative reflects an effort by Mohamud and his associates to consolidate political influence and sideline dissenting voices.¹⁶

The Independent National Electoral Commission on June 14 rejected allegations that residents of Mogadishu are being coerced into registering for the upcoming local elections under threats of arrest. The chairman urged the public to rely exclusively on official commission communications and to report any instances of impersonation or misinformation, warning against individuals or groups falsely claiming affiliation with the commission or intimidating citizens under false pretenses.¹⁷

Media and opposition sources have documented that a significant number of Mogadishu's civilian population has been subjected to arbitrary and coercive registration. Journalists say that attempts to report on these possible human rights violations were suppressed by security agency personnel, who have targeted and detained journalists investigating state-sponsored coercion.¹⁸

Speaking at the third East Africa Development Forum in Mogadishu on July 9, Hamza Abdi Barre, the Prime Minister, emphasized that the country's recovery and long-term development depend on rigorous research, evidence-based policymaking, and stronger state institutions. Addressing Somali academics from both domestic institutions and abroad, he called for research focused on poverty alleviation, climate adaptation, improved education and healthcare systems, and sustainable peace. He also pledged that major government decisions would rely on empirical evidence rather than rhetoric.¹⁹

On July 11, Somalia's federal cabinet approved the establishment of a 15-member National Higher Education Committee tasked with reforming and strengthening the governance of the country's higher education sector. The committee will be responsible for leading, supervising, and coordinating reforms across post-secondary institutions and is made up of academics who worked in the higher education sector. It is led by a former minister of education Dr. Abdulnur Sheikh Mohamed.²⁰

According to the Ministry of Education, the selection of committee members followed a rigorous multi-stage vetting process based on legal criteria and academic qualifications. The initiative is intended to enhance institutional oversight, improve quality assurance mechanisms, and promote greater coherence in the management and development of higher education institutions nationwide.²¹

16. Shabelle Media Network, "Somali President launches new political party ahead of popular vote in 2026" May 14, 2025: <https://shabellemedia.com/somali-president-launches-new-political-party-ahead-of-popular-vote-in-2026/>

17. Top Africa News, "Somalia's Electoral Commission Rejects Allegations of Forced Voter Registration in Mogadishu" June 5, 2025: <https://www.topafricanews.com/2025/06/05/somalias-electoral-commission-rejects-allegations-of-forced-voter-registration-in-mogadishu/>

18. Horn Observer, "Somali intelligence agents raid media outlet after reports of forced voter registration" June 14, 2025: <https://hornobserver.com/articles/3369/Somali-intelligence-agents-raid-media-outlet-after-reports-of-forced-voter-registration>

www.al-monitor.com/originals/2024/02/turkey-confirms-somalia-maritime-security-deal-amid-somaliland-tensions

19. Hiiraan Online, "Somali PM urges research-led reform to guide nation's recovery" July 9, 2025: <https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202139/somali-pm-urges-research-led-reform-to-guide-nation-s-recovery.aspx>

20. SONNA, "Somalia's Cabinet Approves New National Higher Education Committee and Reviews Key Government Reforms" July 10, 2025: <https://sonna.so/en/somalias-cabinet-approves-new-national-higher-education-committee-and-reviews-key-government-reforms>

21. Somali National News Agency, "Somalia's Cabinet Approves New National Higher Education Committee and Reviews Key Government Reforms" July 10, 2025. <https://sonna.so/en/somalias-cabinet-approves-new-national-higher-education-committee-and-reviews-key-government-reforms/>

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On August 27, a faction of Somalia's principal opposition alliance reached an electoral agreement with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. The group included former Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, former parliamentary speakers Mohamed Mursal Sheikh Abdirahman and Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan, as well former minister Dahir Mohamud Gelle. According to reports, the faction that split from the Salvation Forum has wants to restore the system under which federal lawmakers are elected through popular vote and then elect the president. Meanwhile, state legislative assemblies will select their regional leaders and deputies. The president will nominate the prime minister, subject to approval by the House of the People, which also retains the authority to withdraw confidence.²² Somalia officially launched its electronic visa service on 5 September. The Immigration and Citizenship Agency (ICA) explained that the new system enhances immigration services, strengthens national security, protects sensitive data, and improves economic opportunities.²³

However, Somaliland and Puntland both rejected the e-visa. Puntland announced it had implemented its own visa system, charging travelers \$60. Somaliland told international airlines to disregard the federal government's electronic visa requirements and warned that airlines failing to comply would be banned from using its airports or airspace. As a result, major carriers such as Ethiopian Airlines and Flydubai abandoned the federal e-visa system to continue operating in Somaliland.²⁴ The Somali Civil Aviation Authority (SCAA) ordered Flydubai to fully comply with Somalia's visa requirements.²⁵

On October 2, leaders from Jubaland and Puntland alongside representatives of the Mogadishu-based opposition, the Somali Salvation Forum, convened a meeting in Nairobi to announce the formation of Forum for the Somali Future Council. They agreed to hold a follow-up conference in Somalia to finalize the council's structure and discuss the country's political transition. The Nairobi meeting took place just days before the expected visit of Somalia's President to Kismayo for talks with the Jubaland President aiming at solving the political dispute between the two.²⁶

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud arrived at Kismayo on October 5 to resolve a year-long political and constitutional disputes between the FGS and Jubaland which was partly triggered by Jubaland's indirect presidential election in November 2024. Other contentious issues between the two sides include the federal electoral processes for the 2026 electoral cycle and constitutional amendments.²⁷ The meetings concluded without any results but both sides agreed to continue talking.²⁸

22. Anadolu Ajansi, "Somali Opposition Salvation Forum's Breakaway Faction Strikes Electoral Deal with President" August 26, 2025: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somali-opposition-salvation-forums-breakaway-faction-strikes-electoral-deal-with-president/3669809>

23. TechAfrica News, "Somalia Officially Launches E-VISA System for Foreign Travelers" September 5, 2025: <https://techafricanews.com/2025/09/05/somalia-officially-launches-e-visa-system-for-foreign-travelers/>

24. Garowe Online, "Puntland Unveils Own Visa, Rejects FGS E-Visa" November 5, 2025: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-puntland-unveils-own-visa-rejects-fgs-e-visa>

25. Somali Guardian, "Somalia Warns Airlines Not to Fly Passengers to Somaliland without Federal E-Visas" November 2, 2025: <https://www.somaliguardsian.com/news/somalia-news/somalia-warns-airlines-not-to-fly-passengers-to-somaliland-without-federal-e-visas/>

26. Kaab TV, "Jubaland, Puntland and Somali Salvation Forum Announce New Political Front" October 2, 2025: <https://en.kaabtv.com/jubaland-puntland-and-somali-salvation-forum-announce-new-political-front/>

27. TRT Afrika, "Somali president arrives in Jubaland for talks to end year-long dispute" October 5, 2025: <https://www.trtafrika.com/article/f3311934b0b1>

28. Kaab TV, "Seven-Month Stalemate: Talks Between Somali President and Jubaland Leader End Without Agreement in Kismayo" October 7, 2025: <https://en.kaabtv.com/seven-month-stalemate-talks-between-somali-president-and-jubaland-leader-end-without-agreement-in-kismayo/>

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On October 8, during the East African Community (EAC) Conference in Mogadishu, the President announced that Somalia will introduce Swahili into its national curriculum. Mohamud said this would help Somalia integrate into the EAC. Swahili is already spoken in Somalia's southern coast cities. Following the collapse of the central government in 1991, hundreds of thousands of Somalis fled or migrated to Kenya and other East African countries and many know the language.²⁹

On November 3, Somalia's Upper House approved a bill to protect displaced citizens. The law establishes legal protection for the more than four million Somalis internally displaced by conflict, drought, and flooding. It guarantees displaced persons their right to shelter, humanitarian assistance, and inclusion in national development programs.³⁰

Parliament unanimously passed a revised anti-piracy and anti-kidnapping law on November 10 to strengthen maritime security following a series of pirate incidents. The new law aims to enhance the protection of Somalia's coastal communities and secure one of the world's most strategic maritime corridors — a vital route for global trade linking the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The details of the new law have not been disclosed publicly³¹ but it modernizes legislation originally enacted in 1975 to address contemporary security challenges and the increasing threats along Somalia's coastline.

On November 13, the Electoral Commission announced that distribution of voter identification cards to residents of the Banadir region was to start soon. The government presented this as a significant milestone in the country's preparations for direct elections. The process was to officially start in Mogadishu, where eligible citizens were to receive voter cards at designated collection centres.³² The Electoral Commission urged international partners to increase their financial support, warning that insufficient resources could delay implementation of direct elections. The Commission emphasized that adequate funding is critical for advancing Somalia's transition toward a one-person, one-vote system.³³

On November 13, unidentified hackers infiltrated Somalia's e-visa system, potentially exposing the personal data of at least 35,000 individuals. The leaked information included applicants' names, photographs, dates and places of birth, email addresses, marital status, and residential addresses.^{34/35} Immigration authorities shut down the system to contain the damage.³⁶ Media reported that more than 60 foreign intelligence specialists had left Somalia within 24-hours as their personal information may have been compromised.³⁷

29. BBC, "Somalia to increase Swahili teaching to boost East African ties" October 8, 2025: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn82dv8lrdro>

30. Somali National News Agency, "Upper House Approves Bill on Internally Displaced Persons" November 3, 2025: <https://sonna.so/en/upper-house-approves-bill-on-internally-displaced-persons/>

31. Somali National News Agency, "Members of the Parliament Approve Revised Anti-Piracy Law" November 10, 2025: <https://sonna.so/en/members-of-the-parliament-approve-revised-anti-piracy-law/>

32. Eastleigh Voice, "Somali Electoral Commission to begin voter card distribution in Banadir ahead of elections" November 13, 2025: <https://eastleighvoice.co.ke/somalia/240327/somali-electoral-commission-to-begin-voter-card-distribution-in-banadir-ahead-of-elections>

33. Hiiraan Online, "Somalia risks delays in one-person, one-vote election plan without stronger backing, election officials say" November 18, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Nov/203651/somalia_risks_delays_in_one_person_one_vote_election_plan_without_stronger_backing_election_officials_say.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

34. U.S. Embassy in Somalia, "Alert: Federal Republic of Somalia (FGS) Electronic Visa (E-Visa) Data Breach" November 13, 2025: <https://so.usembassy.gov/alert-federal-republic-of-somalia-fgs-electronic-visa-e-visa-data-breach/>

35. Al Jazeera, "Somalia confirms major data breach in electronic visa system" November 16, 2025: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/11/16/somalia-confirms-major-data-breach-in-electronic-visa-system>

36. Goobjoog English, "Somalia Confirms Visa Data Breach, Announces Probe" November 16, 2025: <https://en.goobjoog.com/somalia-confirms-visa-data-breach-announces-probe/>

37. Daily Express U.S., "Foreign intelligence specialists flee Somalia after data breach exposes 35,000 people" November 14, 2025: <https://www.the-express.com/news/world-news/190620/foreign-intelligence-specialists-flee-somalia>

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The third conference of Somali religious scholars organized by the Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs concluded on November 29 in Mogadishu. The conference focused on social cohesion, national unity and stability, and the safeguarding of Islamic values. The scholars condemned religious extremists and violent practices—including harm against women and children, property destruction, trafficking, and narcotics misuse — and warned against the spread of harmful content on social media. They urged improvements in governance, strengthened state institutions, anti-corruption efforts, and economic development. Participants also called for increased employment opportunities, the addressing of poverty and irregular migration, countering extremism, and promoting the overall welfare of the Somali people.³⁸

On December 2, the Minister of Health appointed 15 members to the National Council of Medical Professionals following a Supreme Court ruling on the authority and independence of national regulatory bodies, completing a formal legal and administrative process. The council is mandated to enhance regulatory oversight of the medical workforce, strengthen licensing mechanisms, uphold professional ethical standards, and improve healthcare quality nationwide. The Supreme Court reaffirmed the council's institutional independence and instructed the ministry to implement the decision in accordance with the law.³⁹

On December 20, the Somali Future Council made up of Mogadishu based opposition and presidential candidates plus Puntland and Jubaland gave President Mohamud a one-month deadline — until 20 January 2026—to convene inclusive consultations with national political stakeholders to secure agreement on timely elections. In a communique issued following meetings in Kismayo (18–20 December 2025), the newly established opposition front warned that failure to act could prompt it to initiate alternative electoral arrangements to “avert a constitutional vacuum, and security deterioration. The Council further accused the President of undermining constitutional checks and balances, permitting federal member states to exceed their legal mandates, facilitating forced displacement, authorizing the sale of public land, and eroding public trust in government institutions.”⁴⁰

Security

President Mohamud issued an amnesty for al-Shabaab members on January 27, urging them not to be “deceived” as the government continued to fight the group particularly in central and southern regions of Somalia. The State Minister of Endowment and Islamic Affairs, Abukar Sheikh, said the amnesty is an important opportunity that allows a former militant to “reintegrate into society and live a peaceful life.”⁴¹

38. SONNA, “Communiqué of the 3rd Somali Scholars’ Conference” November 29, 2025: <https://sonna.so/en/communique-of-the-3rd-somali-scholars-conference/> See also, Mustaqbal Media, “Somali scholars issue communiqué emphasising unity, governance reforms, and fight against extremism” November 29, 2025: <https://mustaqbalmedia.net/en/somali-scholars-issue-communique-emphasising-unity-governance-reforms-and-fight-against-extremism/>
39. Hiiraan Online, “Somalia appoints 15 health council members after Supreme Court ruling” December 2, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Dec/203798/somalia_appoints_15_health_council_members_after_supreme_court_ruling.aspx

40. Hiiraan Online, “Somali Future Council gives President Mohamud one-month deadline to convene election talks” December 20, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Dec/203984/somali_future_council_gives_president_mohamud_onemonth_deadline_to_convene_election_talks.aspx

41. See “Somali Minister Calls on Youth to Accept Presidential Amnesty for Leaving Al-Shabaab | Shabelle Media Network.” Shabellemedia.com, January 27, 2025. <https://shabellemedia.com/somali-minister-calls-on-youth-to-accept-presidential-amnesty-for-leaving-al-shabaab/>.

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The African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) began its five-year mandate in early January but funding for the mission remained unclear.

Following a defense pact in August 2024 between Egypt and Somalia, the two countries agreed in January to have Cairo join the new mission to “partake in eliminating the Khawaarij [al-Shabaab] and looks forward to their contribution alongside other Troop Partner Nations”.⁴² The Somalia Egypt partnership, triggered by Ethiopia’s signing of a maritime deal with breakaway Somaliland, reportedly allows Egypt to deploy up to 10,000 troops to Somalia - half under AUSSOM, and the remaining half under a bilateral arrangement.⁴³

Ethiopia has expressed concern about the deployment of Egyptian forces in Somalia, labeling them as “foreign forces” and saying that their “strategic intent raises serious concerns for Ethiopia’s stability”.⁴⁴ Egypt and Ethiopia have long been at odds over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which Cairo views as threatening its vital water supply.

Since the reelection of Donald Trump in November 2024, the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) has intensified its aerial bombardment of al-Shabaab and ISIS targets, carrying out at least 111 strikes⁴⁵ targeting al-Shabaab in south-central regions and ISIS in Puntland.

Briefing the upper house of the parliament on November 5, Somalia’s defense minister announced that airstrikes have killed over 868 terrorists across Somalia since February, with at least 52 being senior figures in the groups.⁴⁶

On December 12, the UN Security Council voted to renew the mandate of the panel monitoring sanctions on al-Shabaab, which extends authorization for naval inspections to enforce an arms embargo on Somalia, as well as a ban on charcoal exports and controls on improvised explosive devices (IEDs) until November 30, 2026.⁴⁷

On December 26, Israel recognized Somaliland as an independent country, becoming the first country to do. The Somali government immediately rejected the move as an “act of aggression.” Swift condemnation worldwide⁴⁸ following amid concerns it risks worsening regional tensions in an already volatile region.

42. See “Somalia, Egypt Agree to Cooperate in Fight against Terrorism.” Anadolu Ajansı, January 27, 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/somalia-egypt-agree-to-cooperate-in-fight-against-terrorism/3463213>.

43. See “Ethiopia Warns of Egypt’s Military Presence in Somalia, Cites Growing Security Threats,” Horn Observer, June 15, 2025. <https://hornobserver.com/articles/3372/Ethiopia-Warns-of-Egypt-Military-Presence-in-Somalia-Cites-Growing-Security-Threats>.

44. See “Ethiopia Warns of Egypt’s Military Presence in Somalia, Cites Growing Security Threats,” Horn Observer, June 15, 2025. <https://hornobserver.com/articles/3372/Ethiopia-Warns-of-Egypt-Military-Presence-in-Somalia-Cites-Growing-Security-Threats>.

45. See “US Dramatically Escalates Air Strikes on Somalia under Trump This Year.” Al Jazeera, December 17, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/12/17/us-dramatically-escalates-air-strikes-on-somalia-under-trump-this-year>.

46. See “868 Terrorists Killed in Airstrikes in Somalia since February, Says Defense Minister.” Anadolu Ajansı, November 5, 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/868-terrorists-killed-in-airstrikes-in-somalia-since-february-says-defense-minister/3736073>.

47. See “UN Security Council Renews Sanctions Panel on Somalia’s Al-Shabaab.” Anadolu Ajansı, December 13, 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/un-security-council-renews-sanctions-panel-on-somalia-s-al-shabaab/3770079>.

48. See “Somalia Demands Israel Withdraw Somaliland Recognition.” Al Jazeera, December 27, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/12/27/state-aggression-somalia-demands-israel-withdraw-somaliland-recognition>.

Economy

January marked the first month of Somalia's 2025 federal budget, approved in late 2024, while the government continued operating under the IMF's Extended Credit Facility framework. Economic priorities remained focused on revenue mobilization, fiscal discipline, and strengthening public financial management.⁴⁹

Somalia's real GDP growth is estimated to have reached 4% in 2024, driven by a recovery in the agriculture sector, continued investment from a low base, and improved private consumption supported by sustained growth in remittances. Somalia's real GDP growth in 2025 is projected to reach 3%, representing a softening from the growth estimated for 2024. This dampened outlook is primarily driven by declining foreign aid and high levels of uncertainty regarding future external assistance, upon which the country is highly dependent. While agricultural production and exports are expected to continue their recovery through 2025, they will likely do so at a slower pace and remain vulnerable to potential climate-related shocks.⁵⁰ For example, a drought in late 2025, including below-average rain-fall during the October–December Deyr season, has reduced agricultural and livestock output.⁵¹ State fragility and limited institutional capacity have also contributed to the pace of economic growth.⁵²

Notwithstanding economic challenges such as decreased foreign aid and unfavorable weather, total demand in Somalia stayed relatively stable. This resilience was supported by strong remittance payments, which served as a vital safety net for both families and the national economy.⁵³

Additionally, although the fiscal deficit widened to 0.6% of GDP despite consolidation efforts, the current account deficit narrowed to 7.8% of GDP, and public debt declined to 8.9% following debt relief milestones. The financial sector stayed stable with high liquidity ratios and declining non-performing loans, but social outcomes remained a concern, with poverty rising to 67 % and youth unemployment reaching 34.3%.⁵⁴

According to Somalia National Bureau of Statistics, the country's annual inflation rose from a 2% low in June to 5.1% by December 2025. This upward trend was primarily driven by price spikes in personal care and social protection (which peaked at 16.7% in July) and restaurant and accommodation services (+14.1% in December).⁵⁵ According to the World Bank, while the general inflation rate remained manageable, the cost of food continued to be high due to supply disruptions and drought.

49. IMF, Somalia: 2024 Article IV Consultation and Second Review Under the Extended Credit Facility. Press Release, Staff Report, Statement by the Executive Director for Somalia: <https://www.imf.org/en/publications/cr/issues/2024/12/17/somalia-2024-article-iv-consultation-and-second-review-under-the-extended-credit-facility-559663>.

50. World Bank, Somalia Economic Update : Boosting Domestic Revenue Mobilization - To Enhance Service Delivery and Strengthen the Social Contract: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/099062625054023725>

51. World Bank, Somalia: Macro Poverty Outlook, April 2026: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f5c5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-som.pdf>

52. National Economic Council, State of the Economy Report 2025 - Volume III: <https://nec.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/NEC-STATE-OF-THE-ECONOMY-REPORT-.pdf>

53. World Bank, Somalia: Macro Poverty Outlook, April 2026: <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/bae48ff2f5c5a869546775b3f010735-0500062021/related/mpo-som.pdf>

54. AfDB. African Economic Outlook 2026: Mobilizing Africa's Development Financing at Scale in a Fragmented World: <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries-east-africa-somalia/somalia-economic-outlook>

55. Somalia National Bureau of Statistics (SNBS), Consumer Price Index — August & September 2025, November 2, 2025: <https://nbs.gov.so/2025/11/02/>

State of Somalia 2025

In mid-January, Somali leaders hosted a delegation from the Saudi Fund for Development in Mogadishu. SONNA reported that the talks focused on development cooperation, investment priorities, and support for Somalia's reconstruction agenda. No large public financing package was announced, but the visit showed continued Gulf interest in Somalia's economy following debt relief gains.⁵⁶

In January, the Petroleum Fiscal Regime Regulation (Regulation No. 008-2025), which provides a framework for taxation, revenue sharing, and investment incentives in Somalia's petroleum sector, was approved by the Ministry of Finance. However, the regulation's economic impact remained dependent on future exploration activity and implementation.⁵⁷

The National Transformation Plan (NTP 2025–2029), approved by the Federal Government in February and published in March, outlined development priorities for the medium term. It serves as the country's principal planning framework for economic growth, institutional development, productive investment, and employment generation while linking these priorities to longer-term national objectives.

The NTP succeeds the Ninth National Development Plan (NDP-9), marking a transition from traditional development planning following Somalia's completion of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative in December 2023. It is structured around five strategic pillars: transformational governance; sustainable economic transformation; social and human capital development; environment and climate resilience; and enabling factors, including legal frameworks and transport connectivity.

The plan identifies infrastructure, including roads, ports, and airports, as priority investment areas alongside the agriculture, fisheries, and livestock sectors. According to the government, the NTP is aligned with Somalia's National Vision 2060 and international development frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063.⁵⁸

On January 23, Presidents Mohamud and Abdel Fattah El-Sisi of Egypt signed a Joint Political Declaration in Cairo, elevating bilateral relations to a strategic partnership aimed at addressing common security threats in the Horn of Africa and pursuing sustainable development. This comprehensive framework established a structured political dialogue through annual presidential consultations and semi-annual meetings between foreign ministers to oversee the implementation of strategic goals.

The declaration significantly expanded security and defense collaboration, while also providing institutional and judicial support focused on rehabilitating the judicial system, drafting a new constitution, and offering technical expertise for election management.

56. SONNA, "A delegation from the Saudi Economic Development Fund arrives in Mogadishu" January 14, 2025: <https://sonna.so/en/a-delegation-from-saudi-economic-development-fund-arrives-in-mogadishu>.

57. Federal Government of Somalia, ISSUANCE AND APPROVAL OF THE PETROLEUM FISCAL REGIME REGULATION, January 18, 2025: <https://mof.gov.so/publications/issuance-and-approval-petroleum-fiscal-regime-regulation>

58. Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, National Transformation Plan (2025–2029) March 17, 2025: <https://mop.gov.so/national-transformation-plan-ntp-2025-2029-report>. See also, Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, Somalia's Cabinet Approves National Transformation Plan (NTP: 2025–2029), February 23, 2025: <https://mop.gov.so/somalias-cabinet-approves-national-transformation-plan-ntp-2025-2029-advancing-economic-growth-and-stability/>. See also, Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development (MoPIED), Somalia Kicks off National Transformation Plan for 2025–2029, May 22, 2024. <https://mop.gov.so/somalia-kicks-off-national-transformation-plan-for-2025-2029-2/>

State of Somalia 2025

A primary objective of the partnership is economic and trade expansion, intended to make economic ties commensurate with political relations through business forums, trade exhibitions, and bilateral agreements. To facilitate this growth, the two countries identified specific priority sectors for investment: agriculture and livestock, fishing and fish farming, construction, transportation, financial and banking services, and the development of oil, gas, and renewable energy.⁵⁹

In March, Somalia formally joined the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), becoming its 53rd member state and providing potential access to trade finance instruments. For the Somali government, the agreement reflected the country's commitment to playing a leading role in regional and continental development, particularly by advancing trade within the framework of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).⁶⁰

On April 10, Somalia signed a \$306.5 million debt relief and restructuring agreement with the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund (AMF). This agreement is a component of Somalia's ongoing economic reform program aimed at reviving the economy after decades of civil war and recent environmental crises including droughts and floods. According to the government, the deal is fundamental to the nation's re-engagement with the fund and its wider debt relief efforts, which recently included the 99% debt cancellation from Paris Club members. It also characterized the agreement as a reflection of growing international confidence in Somalia's current economic trajectory and reform initiatives.⁶¹

In June and December, Somalia was assessed at a moderate risk of external and overall public debt distress. According to the IMF, while the country maintains substantial space to absorb economic shocks, it remains highly vulnerable to security challenges, climate events, and sharp declines in foreign assistance. The reports also highlight that, while debt-to-GDP ratios are currently stable, long-term sustainability will depend on securing highly concessional financing as Somalia transitions from World Bank grants to loan-based support after June 2028. To preserve these gains, the IMF underscored the importance of accelerating domestic revenue mobilization and establishing a credible medium-term fiscal anchor.⁶²

Reports also noted that fiscal policy continued to prioritize expenditure discipline and the preservation of macroeconomic stability under the reform framework, emphasizing that maintaining budget credibility remained essential to protecting access to concessional support and sustaining reform momentum. However, policy attention remained concentrated on public financial management, tax administration, and economic oversight institutions.⁶³

59. <https://bit.ly/4fBeAKi>

60. Afreximbank, "Somalia joins Afreximbank as it seeks to boost Intra-African trade and economic growth" March 24, 2025 : <https://www.afreximbank.com/somalia-joins-afreximbank-as-it-seeks-to-boost-intra-african-trade-and-economic-growth/>

61. Reuters, "Somalia signs \$306.5 million debt relief deal with Arab Monetary Fund" April 10, 2025 : <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/somalia-signs-3065-million-debt-relief-deal-with-arab-monetary-fund-2025-04-10/>

62. IMF, "Somalia: Third Review Under the Extended Credit Facility and Request for a Modification of Quantitative Performance Criterion, July 16, 2025" : <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/002/2025/191/article-A001-en.xml>, See also, IMF, "Somalia: Fourth Review Under the Extended Credit Facility Arrangement and Request for Augmentation of Access-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for Somalia, December 16, 2025" : <https://www.imf.org/-/media/files/publications/cr/2025/english/1somea2025002-source-pdf.pdf>

63. Somalia: Third Review Under the Extended Credit Facility and Request for a Modification of Quantitative Performance Criterion-Debt Sustainability Analysis, July 16, 2025: <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/002/2025/191/article-A002-en.xml>. See also, IMF, "Somalia: Fourth Review Under the Extended Credit Facility Arrangement and Request for Augmentation of Access-Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for Somalia, December 16, 2025" : <https://www.imf.org/-/media/files/publications/cr/2025/english/1somea2025002-source-pdf.pdf>

State of Somalia 2025

In August, Somalia's 2025 Mid-Year Budget Performance Report indicated that the government mobilized only \$326.9 million, representing 24.5% of its annual revenue target. This outcome was primarily driven by a shortfall in donor grants, which reached only 16.4% of their goal, while domestic revenue achieved 41.7% of its target. Constrained by these revenue levels, total spending reached 27.9% of the budget, resulting in a mid-year fiscal deficit of \$52.27 million. Despite an eight-fold increase in capital expenditure, the report recommended a supplementary budget and improved project management to stabilize the fiscal trajectory.⁶⁴

On December 17, Somalia's Ministry of Fisheries and Blue Economy and Türkiye's OYAK group signed an agreement concerning fisheries activities in Somali territorial waters. This agreement established the SOMTURK Company, which has been granted exclusive authority to issue fishing permits and manage the licensing, monitoring, and regulation of all fishing activities within Somalia's exclusive economic zone. The partnership is intended to provide the Turkish fishing industry with access to Somali waters while facilitating the creation of local jobs in fish processing and expanding Somalia's participation in global trade. Additionally, the agreement provided a framework for the centralized and registered management of marine resources to supervise fishing activities and ensure resource protection.⁶⁵

On December 12, the African Development Bank (AfDB) approved \$76.37 million in additional financing for Somalia. The funding is specifically for the Road Infrastructure Program, which is part of a broader Horn of Africa corridor project intended to enhance trade and integration between Somalia, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. The program includes social infrastructure to maximize benefits for the local community, as well as trade facilitation measures for small-scale operators.⁶⁶ Somalia continued its engagement under the IMF Extended Credit Facility.

In December, the IMF also approved an additional \$40 million following completion of the fourth program review, recognizing progress in fiscal reforms and financial governance.⁶⁷ Somalia also secured \$17.68 million in debt cancellation under the African Development Fund, expanding fiscal space for development spending.⁶⁸

Also in December, Somalia's Parliament approved a national budget of approximately \$1.39 billion for 2026.⁶⁹ The IMF completed the fourth review of Somalia's Extended Credit Facility program and approved continued support. The IMF said Somalia had maintained progress in public finance and revenue reforms despite a difficult environment. The review reinforced Somalia's macroeconomic reform track at year's end.⁷⁰

64. Budget Directorate, "2025 Mid Year Budget Performance Report," August 31, 2025 : <https://www.mof.gov.so/sites/default/files/Publications/2025%20MID-YEAR%20BUDGET%20PERFORMANCE%20REPORT.pdf>

65. TRT Africa, "Somalia and Türkiye to boost cooperation in fisheries sector with strategic agreement" December 17, 2025: <https://www.trtafrika.com/english/article/b36cd3ddbcca>

66. Xinhua News Agency, "AfDB Approves US\$76.37 Million Additional Financing for Somalia Road Infrastructure Programme" December 12, 2025: Accessed at: <https://english.news.cn/20251212/b77abd72f997465a83c45a0519a58844/c.html>

67. IMF, "IMF approves \$40 million boost to Somalia's credit program, clears fourth review" December 2025 : <https://www.imf.org/en/news/articles/2025/12/08/pr-25412-somalia-imf-concludes-4th-rev-of-ecf-arrangeme-and-approves-req-for-augmentation>

68. AfDB, "African Development Bank Group grants full debt relief to Somalia following HIPC completion" December 2025 : <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/press-releases/african-development-bank-group-grants-full-debt-relief-somalia-following-hipc-completion-89238>

69. Shabelle Media Network, "Somalia parliament approves \$1.38 billion budget for 2026" December 23, 2025 : https://shabellemedia.com/somalia-parliament-approves-1-38-billion-budget-for-2026/#google_vignette

70. IMF, "IMF Executive Board Concludes the Fourth Review of the Extended Credit Facility Arrangement for Somalia and Approves the Request for Augmentation" December 2025 : <https://www.imf.org/en/news/articles/2025/12/08/pr-25412-somalia-imf-concludes-4th-rev-of-ecf-arrangeme-and-approves-req-for-augmentation>

International Relations & External Actors

On January 9, Somalia announced its candidacy for a seat on the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) for 2025–2028. The ministry framed the bid as a matter of equity and inclusiveness, emphasizing the need for fair representation. Members of the AU PSC are selected from all five AU recognized regions (three from Central Africa; three from East Africa; two from North Africa; three from Southern Africa; and four from West Africa) and equitably within regions. Somalia presented its bid as an expression of its commitment to Pan-African principles.⁷¹

Three days later, Somalia announced that obstacles to Ethiopia's participation in the AUSSOM mission had been resolved, with the final composition and size of the Ethiopian force expected soon. Somalia had earlier threatened to expel Ethiopian troops unless Ethiopia withdrew its contentious MOU with Somaliland. The development followed President Mohamud's two-day visit to Addis Ababa, where he and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed agreed to improve strained diplomatic relations.⁷² A year earlier, Somalia and Ethiopia made an initial rapprochement in Ankara mediated by Turkey.⁷³

The Kenyan government announced on January 22 the removal of visa requirements for all African nationals, except for Somalia and Libya, citing security considerations. Under the new policy, African visitors will be permitted to stay in Kenya for up to two months, while nationals of the East African Community (EAC) will continue to enjoy a six-month stay in accordance with existing free-movement protocols.⁷⁴

On February 6, the Economist reported that Türkiye was developing a spaceport in Somalia as part of its broader investment in space research and development. The cost of Türkiye's space program increased to approximately \$140 million in 2025 and is projected to exceed \$350 million in the coming years. Media reports also said that Türkiye would use Somalia as a missile launch location, as it was geographically advantageous for eastward launches.⁷⁵

On February 24, Somalia, for the first time in 35 years, was removed from the United Nations' list of countries in arrears after settling its outstanding dues of \$1,446,163.⁷⁶ This restored its voting rights in the UN General Assembly and it was subsequently elected to the UN Security Council. The FGS said this was a notable advancement in its efforts to strengthen Somalia's international standing and institutional credibility.^{77/78}

71. Hiiraan Online, "Somalia launches campaign for African Union Peace and Security Council seat" January 9, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Jan/199743/somalia_launches_campaign_for_african_union_peace_and_security_council_seat.aspx

72. VOA, "Somalia, Ethiopia to restore diplomatic ties amid AU mission agreement" January 12, 2025: <https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-ethiopia-to-restore-diplomatic-ties-amid-au-mission-agreement-/7934520.html>

73. MFA Turkey, "Ankara Declaration by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Federal Republic of Somalia facilitated by the Republic of Türkiye" <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/etiopya-federal-demokratik-cumhuriyeti-ve-somali-federal-cumhuriyeti-nin-ankara-bildirisi.en.mfa>

74. BBC News, "Kenya Drops ETA Visa Pre-Authorisation for Nearly All African Visitors" January 22, 2025. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce8505g6n1lo>

75. The Economist, "Turkey is building a spaceport in Somalia" February 6, 2025: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/02/06/turkey-is-building-a-spaceport-in-somalia>

76. Hiiraan Online, "Somalia clears UN arrears, secures voting rights and security council seat" February 24, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Feb/200396/somalia_clears_un_arrears_secures_voting_rights_and_security_council_seat.aspx

77. SONNA, "Somalia Successfully Exits UN Security Council Arrears List After 35 Years" February 24, 2025: <https://sonna.so/en/somalia-successfully-exits-un-security-council-arrears-list-after-35-years/>

78. Hiiraan Online, "Somalia clears UN arrears, secures voting rights and security council seat" February 24, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Feb/200396/somalia_clears_un_arrears_secures_voting_rights_and_security_council_seat.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront
See also, BBC, "Giant step for Somalia with UN Security Council seat" June 6, 2024: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgee4j71ypqo>

State of Somalia 2025

On February 27, Ethiopian and Somali leaders issued a joint statement reaffirming their commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation for mutual benefit. They also welcomed the commencement of technical talks in Turkey aimed at resolving the standoff surrounding the Ethiopia–Somaliland deal. The Ankara framework envisions Somalia and Ethiopia restoring relations and having commercial port access.⁷⁹

Türkiye launched TRT Somalia on March 29, a new branch of the state-owned Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT), marking a further expansion of its media presence in Africa. The new channel is intended to shape regional narratives and support Türkiye's broader strategy to deepen diplomatic, economic, and security ties with Somalia. The initiative follows the 2023 launch of TRT Afrika, which provides multilingual digital content on African issues.⁸⁰

On March 25, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, concluded a two-day visit to Somalia, his first since assuming office. During the visit, he issued an urgent appeal to the international community regarding critical funding gaps facing AUSSOM, calling for a renewed international commitment to Somalia's peace and stabilization efforts. He also held consultative meetings with international partners, including representatives from the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and ambassadors from major donor and troop-partners countries. Acting UN Special Representative James Swan reaffirmed the UN's commitment to continued cooperation with the African Union.⁸¹

On March 28, a leaked letter from President Mohamud to Donald Trump offered the United States exclusive control of strategic air bases and ports in Somalia. That included air bases in Balidogle and Berbera as well as the ports of Berbera and Bosaso. Berbera is in the breakaway region of Somaliland and the leadership in Hargeisa has offered similar access to the Americans.⁸²

On April 3, the Somali government declared Anna Saleem Högberg, the Counsellor and Head of Swedish Development Cooperation, persona non grata. The authorities did not publicly provide a reason for this decision but media reports indicated a clash with government offices particularly the PMO. Sweden has long been a significant partner in supporting initiatives related to governance, education, and economic development in Somalia.⁸³

Ukraine and Somalia formally established diplomatic relations on April 11 during the Antalya Diplomatic Forum in Turkey, according to an announcement by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha.

79. VOA, "Ethiopia PM visits Somalia as neighbors try to improve relations" February 27, 2025: <https://www.voanews.com/a/ethiopia-pm-visits-somalia-as-neighbors-try-to-improve-relations/7990067.html>

80. Hiiraan Online, "Turkey expands media influence in Africa with TRT Somali launch" March 19, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200761/turkey_expands_media_influence_in_africa_with_trt_somali_launch.aspx

81. AUSSOM, "Chairperson of African Union Commission concludes visit to Somalia with urgent appeal for international support" March 25, 2025: <https://au-ssom.org/chairperson-of-african-union-commission-concludes-visit-to-somalia-with-urgent-appeal-for-international-support/>

82. Reuters, "Somalia offers US exclusive control of air bases, ports" March 28, 2025: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/somalia-offers-us-exclusive-control-air-bases-ports-2025-03-28/>

83. AllAfrica, "Somalia Expels Swedish Counsellor in Sudden Diplomatic Fallout" April 3, 2025: <https://allafrica.com/stories/202504040065.html>

State of Somalia 2025

In 2022, Somalia supported a UN General Assembly resolution condemning Russia's invasion.⁸⁴ In turn, Ukraine supported Somalia when Israel announced its recognition of Somaliland.⁸⁵

On April 23, Somalia has expelled Sivuyile Bam, the Deputy Special Representative of the African Union, accusing him of making remarks sympathetic to al-Shabaab during a closed session of the United Nations Security Council. Bam reportedly suggested that al-Shabaab was seeking political legitimacy and had reduced its attacks on civilians. Somalia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Moalim Fiqi, stated that Bam's comments undermined the government's efforts to defeat al-Shabaab and risked emboldening the militant group.⁸⁶ In 2019, Somalia expelled a UN envoy⁸⁷ and in 2022 the AU's country head, accusing them of meddling.⁸⁸

On April 26, the African Union Chairperson Mahmoud Ali Youssouf urged the FGS to intensify its political efforts toward strengthening state institutions, underscoring the importance of greater inclusivity within the National Consultative Council by ensuring the participation of all federal member states. He emphasized that broadening political engagement is essential for advancing Somalia's long-term stability.⁸⁹

China on April 30 commended Somalia for its recent decision to ban the entry of Taiwanese citizens, reaffirming its support for Mogadishu over Somaliland. Somalia underscored its firm commitment to the one-China principle, a stance that Beijing has publicly welcomed. Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a protest, criticizing Somalia's decision to deny entry and transit to holders of Taiwanese passports.⁹⁰ Some US lawmakers have cautioned Somalia about the potential repercussions of banning Taiwanese passport holders.⁹¹

On May 15, the cabinet approved a memorandum of understanding with Saudi Arabia on issues related to military and security cooperation. This agreement is expected to bolster military and security collaboration between the two nations.⁹² The two countries also agreed to cooperate in combating terrorism across the Horn of Africa and the Gulf region. Saudi Arabia also committed to supporting capacity-building initiatives for Somali forces.

The agreement forms part of Somalia's broader efforts to strengthen its relations with Gulf states and secure reliable partnerships in addressing persistent threats posed by al-Shabaab, ISIS, and the Houthis in the Red Sea region.

84. Garowe Online, "Somalia votes in favor of a UN resolution condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine" March 3, 2022: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-takes-key-vote-over-russia-s-invasion-in-ukraine>

85. Ukrinform, "Ukraine Supports Somalia Sovereignty and Warns Against Regional Destabilization" December 29, 2025: <https://mezha.net/eng/bukvy/ukraine-supports-somalia-sovereignty-and-warns-against-regional-destabilization/>

86. Caasimada, "Somalia Expels African Union Envoy Over Al-Shabaab Remarks" April 23, 2025: <https://www.caasimada.net/somalia-expels-african-union-envoy-over-al-shabaab-remarks/>

87. BBC, "Somalia expels UN envoy Nicholas Haysom" January 2, 2019: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-46734994>

88. VOA, "Somali Prime Minister Orders African Union Envoy to Leave Country" April 6, 2022: <https://www.voanews.com/a/somali-prime-minister-orders-african-union-envoy-to-leave-country/6518735.html>

89. African Union, "Statement of H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Chairperson of the African Union Commission at the Heads of State Session of the Extraordinary Summit of Troop Contributing Countries to AUSSOM and Somalia" April 25, 2025: <https://au.int/en/speeches/20250425/statement-hos-ext-summit-troop-contributing-countries-aussom-somalia>

90. Anadolu Ajansi (AA), "China lauds Somalia's move against Taiwan, backs Mogadishu over Somaliland" April 30, 2025: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/china-lauds-somalias-move-against-taiwan-backs-mogadishu-over-somaliland/3553496>

91. Hiiraan Online, "US Lawmakers Warn Somalia of Consequences Over Taiwan Passport Ban" May 2, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/May/201375/u_s_lawmakers_warn_somalia_of_consequences_over_taiwan_passport_ban.aspx

92. Sonna, "Somali Cabinet Approves Military and Security MoU with Saudi Arabia" May 15, 2025: Somali Cabinet Approves Military and Security MoU with Saudi Arabia

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Somalia views the agreement as a strategic milestone and a foundation for expanding future cooperation beyond security, including in trade and cultural exchange.⁹³

On June 10, Kenya reaffirmed its unwavering support for Somalia's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, in accordance with regional and international norms. It further reiterated its commitment to the principles of good neighborliness and regional stability. Both Somalia and Kenya also agreed to expedite the convening of the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) to finalize the pending Memorandum of Understanding and to advance cooperation across key sectors, including trade, education, infrastructure, and security.⁹⁴

This announcement was widely interpreted as an effort to reassure Somalia and ease tensions between the countries, while simultaneously signaling Kenya's continued engagement with Somaliland and collaboration with Jubaland on security and commerce.⁹⁵

Once known for its security challenges and fragility, Somalia is now slowly attracting local and international tourists, driven by a growing sense of stability. The US-based adventure tour company Untamed Borders told CNN on September 24 that it had organized 13 group tours to Mogadishu.⁹⁶

On October 1, media reports alleged that Sweden had reached a confidential agreement with Somalia in late 2023 to redirect 100 million Swedish kronor (approximately US\$9 million) from its aid budget in exchange for Somalia accepting the forced return of Somali nationals. The Office of the Somali President strongly denied that any such agreement existed. Swedish Radio reported that the alleged deportation deal had contributed to tensions between the two countries and noted that the number of deportations to Somalia had increased since it was reportedly concluded. Sweden's Minister for International Development Cooperation, Benjamin Dousa, stated that the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and Swedish embassies are responsible for implementing foreign aid projects. Sida, however, maintained that the decision to channel assistance through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had been taken by the Swedish government and that the project complied with established procedures.⁹⁷

On October 15, parliament elected nine members to the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), securing Somalia's legislative presence in the East African Community (EAC). The members are mostly technocrats and are allotted according to the 4.5 clan formula though some are from sub clans that are unrepresented in Somalia's parliament.⁹⁸

93. Sonna, "Somali Cabinet Approves Military and Security MoU with Saudi Arabia" May 15, 2025: <https://sonna.so/en/somali-cabinet-approves-military-and-security-mou-with-saudi-arabia/>.

94. Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, Federal Republic of Somalia, "Somalia and Kenya Reaffirm Commitment to Mutual Respect and Regional Cooperation" June 10, 2025: <https://web.mfa.gov.so/somalia-and-kenya-reaffirm-commitment-to-mutual-respect-and-regional-cooperation/>

95. Eastleigh Voice, "Kenya reaffirms Somalia's sovereignty as Somaliland leader heads to Nairobi" May 26, 2025: <https://eastleighvoice.co.ke/somalia/155447/kenya-reaffirms-somalias-sovereignty-as-somaliland-leader-heads-to-nairobi>

96. CNN Travel, "If Somalia is dangerous, why is it experiencing a surge in tourism?" November 17, 2025: <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/somalia-tourism-surge-evisa-somaliland>

97. Radio Sweden, "Sweden-Somalia deal sparked conflict — aid boss deported over delayed payments" October 1, 2025: <https://www.svkerigesradio.se/artikel/sweden-somalia-deal-sparked-conflict-aid-boss-deported-over-delayed-payments>

98. TRT Afrika, "Somalia elects representatives to East African Community parliament for first time" <https://www.trtafrika.com/english/article/a9de9f6cb385>

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On December 16, President Mohamud met a Swedish delegation led by Minister for International Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade Benjamin Dousa in Mogadishu. Discussions centered on strengthening bilateral relations, particularly in economic development, trade, and institutional capacity-building.

Swedish officials expressed readiness to expand support for peacebuilding and post-conflict state reconstruction. The visit occurs amid heightened scrutiny of Sweden's deportation of Somali nationals whose asylum claims have been rejected. Sweden's Migration Minister, Johan Forssell, recently affirmed that deportations would continue in accordance with existing return agreements with Somalia.⁹⁹

Israel and Somaliland announced on December 28 they had established diplomatic relations. Somali lawmakers unanimously passed a resolution declaring Israel's recognition "null and void". International and regional organizations and many Muslim countries condemned Israel's action as a violation of Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.¹⁰⁰

Humanitarian Situation

In early January, the United Arab Emirates handed over approximately 700 tons of food aid to the Somali government to support drought-affected communities. The Somali Disaster Management Agency (SoDMA) planned to distribute it in Jubaland and Puntland.¹⁰¹ However, the Puntland state authorities, citing concerns about the transparency and management of the distribution process, warned against any attempt to deliver aid without prior notification and coordination. Despite the dispute, SoDMA argued that its humanitarian aid reached all drought-affected areas including Puntland's capital Garowe.¹⁰²

On January 24, more than 140 dead dolphins were seen along the Puntland coastline near Bosaso and the village of Mareero in the Bari region.¹⁰³ The Puntland Ministry of Environment and Climate Change announced that it would begin an immediate investigation.¹⁰⁴ However, by the end of the reporting period, the authorities had not publicly released the final findings of the investigation or confirmed the cause of the incident.

A senior Somali official confirmed on January 28 that the government cannot fill the gap in humanitarian aid following USAID's suspension of \$125.5 million in funding.¹⁰⁵ Somalia, heavily dependent on international assistance, lacks the capacity to address climate-related crises, ongoing conflicts, and food insecurity.

99. Somali National News Agency, "President Hassan, Swedish Minister Benjamin Explore Enhanced Cooperation in Development and Trade," December 16, 2025: <https://sonna.so/en/president-hassan-swedish-minister-benjamin-dousa-explore-enhanced-cooperation-in-development-and-trade/>

100. Al Jazeera, "Somalia condemns Israel's recognition of Somaliland as 'naked invasion'" December 28, 2025: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/12/28/somalia-condemns-israels-recognition-of-somaliland-as-naked-invasion/>; See also, BBC, "Why Israel's recognition of Somaliland as an independent state is controversial" December 30, 2025: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c14v4kmg275o>

101. See "UAE Donates Emergency Humanitarian Aid to Somalia – Puntland Post," January 9, 2025. <https://puntlandpost.net/2025/01/09/uae-donates-emergency-humanitarian-aid-to-somalia/>.

102. Hiiraan.com 'Puntland rejects federal food aid intended for drought and conflict-affected communities, Jan, 2025 https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jan/199887/puntland_rejects_federal_food_aid_intended_for_drought_and_conflict_affected_communities.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

103. Reuters, More than 100 dead dolphins found on Somali coast, cause a mystery' Jan 2025 <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/more-than-100-dead-dolphins-found-somali-coast-cause-mystery-2025-01-24/>

104. Hiiraan.com, Near 140 dolphins found on Somalia coast' Jan 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jan/199940/nearly_140_dolphins_wash_ashore_on_somalia_s_puntland_coast_investigation_underway.aspx

105. Sooha.org 'Somalia faces new challenges after USAID cuts 125.5 million USD in aid' Feb, 2025, <https://sooha.org/en/2025/02/09/somalia-faces-new-challenges-after-usaid-cuts125-5-million-usd-in-aid/>

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As a result, many international organizations have warned of the severe consequences of this humanitarian funding shortfall.¹⁰⁶

On February 6, Algeria's coast guard rescued 16 Somali migrants in the Mediterranean Sea. This is believed to be part of the irregular migration flows from Africa to Europe. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 21 migrants die daily on the high seas and hundreds lose their lives in the Mediterranean every year including many Somalis.¹⁰⁷

On February 25, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), SoDMA, UNICEF, the WFP and the FAO jointly warned that 3.4 million people in Somalia were experiencing hunger due to climate shocks, including droughts, conflicts, and high food prices. The humanitarian organizations said this number is expected to rise to 4.4 million as seasonal rainfall is forecast to be below expectations.¹⁰⁸ The agencies also reported that 1.7 million children under five would be affected by malnutrition by December 2025.¹⁰⁹

On March 14, Somalia, in collaboration with the FAO, launched a \$79.7 million project funded by the Green Climate Fund to support climate resilience and adaptation programs to reduce environmental pressures and strengthen the country's food security.^{110/111} The initiative will focus on farmland infrastructure, including the rehabilitation of irrigation channels and rural roads. The project will improve access to clean water and aim to increase the incomes of vulnerable communities to help them adapt to climate shocks.

On March 20, UNHCR and the NRC jointly released a report highlighting that forced evictions and clan-based conflicts in Bosaso, Luuq and south Galkacyo in crease vulnerability to exploitation including gender-based violence and child abuse.¹¹² The report identified the primary drivers of displacement as clan conflicts, competition over resources, and political instability. It recommended promoting community-led initiatives to improve access to essential services for vulnerable groups, and strengthening coordination among governments, international NGOs, and community leaders to ensure transparency and accountability.¹¹³

106. Hiiraan.com, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jan/199994/somalia_faces_humanitarian_setback_as_usaid_suspends_125_5_million_in_aid.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

107. See "Algerian Coast Guard Rescues 16 Somali Migrants from Drifting Vessel," Hiiraan Online, February 6, 2025, https://hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Feb/200140/algerian_coast_guard_rescues_16_somali_migrants_from_drifting_vessel.aspx.

108. See "Somalia: Drought, Conflict and High Food Prices Could Push 4.4 Million People into Hunger, the Federal Government of Somalia and UN Warn," UNICEF Somalia, February 25, 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/somalia/press-releases/somalia-drought-conflict-and-high-food-prices-could-push-44-million-people-hunger>.

109. See "Somalia: Drought, Conflict and High Food Prices Could Push 4.4 Million People into Hunger, the Federal Government of Somalia and UN Warn," UNICEF Somalia, February 25, 2025, <https://www.unicef.org/somalia/press-releases/somalia-drought-conflict-and-high-food-prices-could-push-44-million-people-hunger>.

110. See "Somalia Launches \$79.7M Climate Resilience Project to Combat Food Insecurity," Hiiraan Online, March 14, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200696/somalia_launches_79_7m_climate_resilience_project_to_combat_food_insecurity.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront.

111. See "Ugbaad Symbolizes Hope: Somalia Looks to Boost Climate Resilient Agriculture with New Project," ReliefWeb, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, March 13, 2025, <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/ugbaad-symbolizes-hope-somalia-looks-boost-climate-resilient-agriculture-new-project>.

112. See "Forced Evictions, Violence & Lack of Aid Worsen Somalia's Humanitarian Crisis: Report," Somali Observatory for Humanitarian Affairs, March 22, 2025, <https://sooha.org/en/2025/03/22/forced-evictions-violence-and-lack-of-aid-worsen-somalias-humanitarian-crisis-report-finds/>.

113. See "Forced Evictions, Violence, and Lack of Aid Worsen Somalia's Humanitarian Crisis, Report Finds," Hiiraan Online, March 21, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200799/forced_evictions_violence_and_lack_of_aid_worsen_somalia_s_humanitarian_crisis_report_finds.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront.

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On 24 March, Qatar Charity launched two humanitarian projects in Mogadishu under its “Compassionate Hearts” initiative, providing life-saving heart surgeries for 30 children with congenital heart defects at the Somali Sudanese Hospital and distributing 700 wheelchairs to people with disabilities. Implemented in partnership with the Somali government, the initiative aimed to improve access to specialized healthcare for vulnerable groups. At the launch, Minister of Health Dr. Ali Haji Adam welcomed the initiative and praised Qatar Charity’s humanitarian support.¹¹⁴

An NRC report published on April 24 identified three key challenges hindering humanitarian actors from reaching vulnerable internally displaced people: geographical barriers; some clans lacking the influence or bargaining power to secure their rights and access to assistance; and the humanitarian system itself, which can unintentionally create obstacles that slow down or restrict humanitarian operations, making it difficult for aid to reach the people who need it most.¹¹⁵

On May 12, a CARE report predicted that 4.6 million Somalis would face severe food insecurity during the first six months of 2025. The report also highlighted a worrying increase in child malnutrition, which rose from 1.7 to 1.8 million for the first six months of the year, signaling a serious risk of loss of life if humanitarian interventions are not implemented promptly. A local NGO, GREDO, stated that all lifesaving programs were paused after international funding stopped. It warned that this will have severe consequences for women and children from poor families who cannot access healthcare services and nutrition support.¹¹⁶

On May 14, 17 people were reported to have died in Jubaland, Southwest, Hirshabelle, Puntland, Galmudug and in the Banadir region due to heavy flooding. According to the UN OCHA, the floods damaged infrastructure and key roads. The UN agency called on the federal government provide immediate support to the affected families.¹¹⁷

In May, a report published by the Horn Observer highlighted the widespread impact of flooding on vulnerable communities across Somalia. Heavy rainfall affected nearly all member states. In the Banadir Region, the floods damaged approximately 200 houses. In Puntland, around 27,000 people were affected, especially in the Bari and Nugal regions. In Jubaland, nearly 4,000 households were affected while in Hirshabelle approximately 620 households were affected. These figures demonstrated how Somalia struggles with two opposing climate-related hazards: prolonged drought and severe flooding, both of which are becoming more frequent and intense due to climate change.¹¹⁸

114. See “QC Inaugurates Two Projects to Help Children, Persons with Special Needs in Somalia,” Qatar News Agency, March 24, 2025. <https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=qc-inaugurates-two-projects-to-help-children-persons-with-special-needs-in-somalia&date=24/03/2025>

115. See “Gatekeeping in Somalia,” NRC, April 24, 2025. <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/gatekeeping-in-somalia>

116. See “Somalia: Hunger Soars and Funding Falls,” CARE.org, May 12, 2025. <https://www.care.org/media-and-press/somalia-hunger-soars-and-funding-falls/>

117. See “Somalia: 2025 Gu (April to June) Seasonal Floods - Flash Update No.3 (As of 13 May 2025),” ReliefWeb, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, May 13, 2025. <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-2025-gu-april-june-seasonal-floods-flash-update-no3-13-may-2025>

118. See “Climate Impact Deepens in Somalia with Deadly Flooding and Displacement,” Horn Observer, May 25, 2025. <https://hornobserver.com/articles/3336/Climate-Impact-Deepens-in-Somalia-with-Deadly-Flooding-and-Displacement>

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Somalia submitted its Third National Determined Contribution (NDC) in June outlining the country's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 34% by 2035 and to enhance climate-adaptation measures.¹¹⁹ The updated NDC prioritizes climate-resilient agriculture, expanded access to clean, reliable water resources, and strengthened public health systems. Somalia estimates it will require \$11.5 billion to implement its mitigation and adaptation priorities.¹²⁰

In July, UN OCHA reported that severe drought had struck southern, central, and northern parts of the country including Zaila, Lughaya, and Bosaso; parts of the Nugal and Mudug regions; Bakool and Hirshabelle in Southwest; and Gedo in Jubaland. Approximately 2.5 million people have been affected.

The drought has significantly disrupted essential services in the Togdheer, Bakol and Gedo regions, decreasing access to healthcare, water and sanitation. The Somalia Humanitarian Fund (SHF) and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) have jointly allocated \$43 million to support emergency relief efforts.¹²¹

In August, OCHA, released a report stating that 5.98 million Somalis needed humanitarian assistance. The Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP), jointly published by the UN and humanitarian organizations, requested \$1.42 billion to support 4.6 million people affected by climate-related shocks and conflicts that have caused displacement and severely undermined livelihoods, leading to widespread food insecurity.¹²²

According to a report published by Horn Observer on September 22, nearly one quarter of the Somali population was expected to face high levels of food insecurity by the end of 2025. Child malnutrition was projected to rise to 1.85 million cases, with a further 9% increase anticipated during the first six months of 2026. In response, Save the Children urged international NGOs and other donors to rapidly scale up their humanitarian assistance or thousands of children could lose their lives.¹²³

On October 24, CARE reported that 3.4 million Somalis were already facing food insecurity, while 1.85 million children were suffering from malnutrition. Many children have dropped out of school because families can't afford fees. The drought followed three consecutive failed rainy seasons, which have severely disrupted livelihoods.

119. See "Federal Government of Somalia Ministry Of Environment and Climate Change Somalia's Third Generation Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0)," n.d. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/2025-06/Somalia%20NDC%203.0_Submitted_to_UNFCCC_Final.pdf.

120. See "Somalia | UNDP Climate Promise," UNDP Climate Promise, May 20, 2026. <https://climatepromise.undp.org/what-we-do/where-we-work/somalia>.

121. See "Somalia: Monthly Humanitarian Update, July 2025," UNOCHA, August 18, 2025. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/somalia/somalia-monthly-humanitarian-update-july-2025>.

122. See "Somalia: Humanitarian Dashboard, January - June 2025," UNOCHA, July 27, 2025. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/somalia/somalia-humanitarian-dashboard-january-june-2025>.

123. See "Nearly Half of Somalia's Youngest Children at Risk of Malnutrition amid Crises and Aid Shortfalls," Horn Observer, October 2, 2025. <https://hornobserver.com/articles/3503/Nearly-half-of-Somalias-youngest-children-at-risk-of-malnutrition-amid-crises-and-aid-shortfalls>.

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CARE warned that humanitarian operations would decline significantly after October if current funding gaps persisted, leading to even greater devastation for rural and agricultural communities across Somalia.¹²⁴

In November, the FGS declared a nationwide drought following the failure of the last two seasonal rains. OCHA said one-fifth of the population would face severe hunger in the last quarter of 2025. The UN allocated \$10 million for early interventions although only 23.7% had been received.¹²⁵

On December 8, China donated \$1 million in cash to Somalia through the SoDMA agency to support emergency aid for those displaced and affected by drought.¹²⁶ The Director of SoDMA, Mohamud Moalim, expressed his gratitude and said China would also assist in rebuilding SoDMA's regional offices and storage facilities. The Chinese ambassador to Somalia had previously met with Hamsa Abdi Barre, the Prime Minister, and reaffirmed the Chinese government's continued support for Somalia in tackling climate-related disasters.¹²⁷

124. See "Somalia Faces Escalating Hunger Crisis as Drought and Funding Shortfalls Threaten Millions." CARE.org, October 25, 2025. <https://www.care.org/media-and-press/somalia-faces-escalating-hunger-crisis-as-drought-and-funding-shortfalls-threaten-millions/>.

125. See "Somalia: 2025 Drought Emergency - Situation Report No. 1 (As of 27 November 2025)," UNOCHA, November 29, 2025. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/somalia/somalia-2025-drought-emergency-situation-report-no-1-27-november-2025>.

126. See "China Donates 1 Mln USD to Help Drought-Hit Somalis" Xinhua, December 9, 2025. <https://english.news.cn/africa/20251209/b85cbd18eb114c32b76ddb01f52c72f9/c.html>.

127. See "Guddoomiyaha Hay'adda Maareynta Musiibooyinka Qaranka, Mudane Maxamuud Macalin Cabdulle, Ayaa Maanta Safiirka Dowladda Shiinaha U Fadhiya Soomaaliya Kala Wareegay Lacag Dhan \$1,000,000 (Hal Milyan Oo Dollar) Oo Shiinuhu Uga Qeyb Qaadanayo Gurmadka Abaaraha Ka Jira Dalka." SODMA Somalia, facebookapp, <https://www.facebook.com/reel/1723575738601307/>. See also: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Dec/203853/china_donates_1_million_to_support_somalias_drought_response.aspx

Regional Developments

Somaliland

Following the election of President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi (Irro), Somaliland pursued an active program of diplomatic engagement during 2025 while continuing to seek greater international recognition. At the same time, relations with the FGS deteriorated further, and security remained dominated by tensions with SSC-Khaatumo (later recognised by the Federal Government as Northeastern state) and periodic clan violence.

External Relations & International Engagement

On March 29, Somaliland officials dismissed as desperate an FG offer to grant the United States exclusive control over the port and airbase in Berbera. The offer was made in a leaked letter between the Somali president and Donald Trump and came amid social media posts and rumors that the US President was being lobbied to recognize Somaliland.¹²⁸

On April 9, Ethiopia and Somaliland said that the two sides were intensifying efforts to advance the trade corridor linking the Port of Berbera to Addis Ababa, a project billed as reshaping regional commerce and enhancing economic integration in the Horn of Africa. The initiative aims to upgrade infrastructure and strengthen cross-border trade and the movement of people and goods. The Berbera–Addis Ababa corridor, formalized in 2021 through an agreement between DP World and Ethiopia’s Ministry of Transport, includes a modern highway connecting Ethiopia’s road network to the Somaliland coast.¹²⁹

On April 28, Somaliland denied rumors of US and Israeli plans to relocate Palestinians to its territory. The foreign minister, Abdirahman Dahir Adan (Bobe), said Hargeisa is open to international cooperation but rejected what he termed as “involvement in unresolved regional crises”.¹³⁰

The Somaliland President travelled to Nairobi on May 29 to meet with Kenyan president William Ruto. President Irro inaugurated the newly-constructed building housing Somaliland’s liaison office which Somaliland calls its embassy to Kenya.¹³¹

128. BBC, “Somaliland rejects Somalia offer of key port to US” March 29, 2025: <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c8d4dzq87rpo>

129. Hiiraan Online, “Ethiopia, Somaliland advance Berbera-to-Addis trade corridor project” April 9, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Apr/201052/ethiopia_somaliland_advance_berbera_to_addis_trade_corridor_project.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

130. Somali Dispatch, “Somaliland Rejects Involvement in Middle East Conflicts, Including Gaza War” April 28, 2025: <https://www.somalidispach.com/latest-news/somaliland-rejects-involvement-in-middle-east-conflicts-including-gaza-war/>

131. Somaliland Standard, “Somaliland President Travels to Kenya” May 26, 2025: <https://somalilandstandard.com/somaliland-president-travels-to-kenya/> See also, Hiiraan Online, “Somaliland President meets Kenyan President, opens diplomatic office in Nairobi” May 29, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/May/201676/somaliland_president_meets_kenyan_president_opens_diplomatic_office_in_nairobi.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

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On June 30, the Prime Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, met President Irro. The two leaders discussed developments in Somalia, emphasizing the need to support efforts that promote security, stability, and trust-building among Somali stakeholders. Qatar reaffirmed that Somalia's future depends on inclusive dialogue that upholds the country's sovereignty and national unity.¹³²

On July 29, Somaliland defended its recent agreement with Taiwan after China described the deal as a violation of its sovereignty and the one-China principle. Somaliland's foreign minister Abdirahman Dahir Adan (Bobe), stated that the agreement, signed in Taipei, is intended to enhance maritime security and improve cooperation in resource management between the two self-governing territories. The announcement came amid ongoing regional tensions following Somaliland's MoU with Ethiopia and highlighted the increasingly complex geopolitical dynamics surrounding maritime governance and diplomatic engagement in the region.¹³³

President Irro visited Ethiopia on October 15 for the first time since being elected earlier in the year. Somalia's President Mohamud was also in Ethiopia holding separate talks with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. There was no confirmation whether Presidents Irro and Mohamud met during their overlapping stays in Addis Ababa.¹³⁴

On November 3, President Irro met with the Consul General of Turkey in Hargeisa Ozan Pekin to discuss Turkish support. President Irro emphasized Somaliland's stability and commitment to peace, saying it merits Turkey's engagement and support. Mr. Ozan Pekin commended President Irro for his peace and reconciliation initiative in Erigavo.¹³⁵

President Irro announced on December 15 that onshore oil drilling would start by 2027, possibly earlier subject to the completion of technical and contractual arrangements. Preparation is reportedly already underway. London-listed Genel Energy remains the principal international company associated with Somaliland's onshore oil sector.

In December 2022, the FGS petroleum ministry said in a statement that "any authorization granted in violation of Somalia's laws and regulations is unlawful and would be considered null and void." Somaliland is attempting to attract foreign direct investment and advance the exploration and commercialization of its natural resource potential.¹³⁶

132. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, State of Qatar, "Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Meets President of Somaliland" June 30, 2025: <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/qatar/latest-articles/latest-news/details/2025/06/30/prime-minister-and-minister-of-foreign-affairs-meets-president-of-somaliland>

133. Hiraan Online, "Somaliland defends Taiwan maritime deal after China calls it violation of sovereignty" July 29, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202374/somaliland_defends_taiwan_maritime_deal_after_china_calls_it_violation_of_sovereignty.aspx

134. Hiiraan Online, "Somaliland President Abdirahman Cirro arrives in Ethiopia for official visit" October 15, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Oct/203308/somaliland_president_abdirahman_cirro_arrives_in_ethiopia_for_official_visit.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

135. Caasimada, "Cirro oo si lama filaan ah uga hadlay taateerada Turkiga ee DF iyo dalab culus" November 3, 2025: <https://www.caasimada.net/cirro-oo-si-lama-filaan-ah-uga-hadlay-taageerada-turkiga-ee-df-iyo-dalab-cusub/>

136. See "Somaliland president says oil drilling expected to begin by 2027" Hiiraan Online, December 15, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Dec/203940/somaliland_president_says_oil_drilling_expected_to_begin_by_2027.aspx

Security

In 2025, Somaliland's security was largely shaped by tensions with SSC-Khaatumo along with clan-related clashes in the eastern city of Erigavo and public unrest in Borama, which is in the west bordering Djibouti and Ethiopia.

On January 11, Somaliland bolstered its presence in Jidali, west of Erigavo, to prevent Northeastern forces capturing the town.¹³⁷ The media reported over 40,000 families were displaced from the city.¹³⁸ In an attempt to prevent escalation, Somaliland authorities on February 24 dispatched a high-level delegation to Erigavo for peace talks with Warsengeli clan representatives, proposing to integrate their clan militias into the regular forces.

After a period of relative calm, clashes between Somaliland and Northeastern state erupted again on January 30 in the Shangeed area between Qorilugud and Buuhoodle. The fighting was linked to the broader dispute over territories in Sanaag, Sool, and Buuhoodle, where Northeastern seeks to expand its authority over areas claimed by Somaliland. Casualties were reported on both sides, but no territory changed hands.¹³⁹

On February 6, President Irro welcomed a peace proposal from Puntland President Said Abdullahi Deni aimed at resolving the ongoing conflicts in the Sanaag region and Northeastern state. During a meeting with Somaliland's traditional leaders in Hargeisa, President Irro also commended earlier mediation efforts led by traditional elders from Ethiopia's Somali Regional State, describing their contribution as vital to promoting peace and stability. He urged traditional leaders to continue fostering dialogue-based approaches to resolve disputes. President Irro emphasized that the conflict in the Sanaag region should be addressed through peaceful and inclusive means.¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile, prospects for Somaliland–Somalia dialogue deteriorated after Somalia's Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre visited LasAnood in April, the capital of Northeastern state. Somaliland withdrew from talks with Mogadishu, describing the visit as a provocation and a violation of its territorial integrity.¹⁴¹

137. See "Somaliland Seizes Jidali Town After Control of Erigaabo" Goobjoog English, January 11, 2025. <https://en.goobjoog.com/somaliland-seizes-jiidali-town-after-control-of-erigaabo/>.

138. See "Somaliland Oo Gogol Nabadeed Dhigtay Ceerigaabo Iyo Ciidamada Madaniga Ah Oo La Qaramaynayo." Hiiraan Online, February 24, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/Feb/wararka_maanta24-189441.htm.

139. See "Dagaal Deegaanka Shangeed Ku Dhex Maray Ciidamada Somaliland Iyo Kuwa SSC Khaatumo" Hiiraan Online, January 30, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/Jan/wararka_maanta30-189182.htm.

140. See "Somaliland President welcomes Puntland's peace proposal for conflicts in Sanaag region" Hiiraan Online, February 6, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Feb/200137/somaliland-president_welcomes_puntland_s_peace_proposal_for_sanaag_region.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

141. See "Somaliland Pulls Out of Somalia's Govt Talks, Calls PM's Las Anod Visit a 'Deliberate Provocation,'" Garowe Online, April 19, 2025, <https://garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somaliland-pulls-out-of-somalia-s-govt-talks-calls-pm-s-las-anod-visit-a-deliberate-provocation>.

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On August 18, Somaliland protested a meeting between Turkey's Ambassador to Somalia and Suldán Abubakar Wabar, a traditional elder from Borama linked to the Awdal state movement, which advocates for reunification with Somalia. Viewing the engagement as a violation of its sovereignty, Somaliland summoned Turkey's Consul General in Hargeisa Ozan Pekin to demand "a formal and urgent explanation".¹⁴²

December saw insecurity concentrated in Borama after a planned "Xeer Ciise" cultural event triggered days of violent clashes between the Samaron clan and Somaliland security forces. At least 19 people died and 214 were injured. The clash was triggered when the Somaliland authorities approved the Ciise community's organization of the event in Zaylac, a city shared by the Ciise and Samaron communities. In recent years, activists from both communities have jockeyed to present their respective clans as the sole or predominant resident (owner) clan. Because of the mass casualties, the event was subsequently suspended indefinitely.¹⁴³

As the year closed, tensions escalated when Israel recognized Somaliland as an independent state on December 26, the first UN member state to do so. The move, condemned by Somalia, triggered widespread condemnation from the African Union, the Arab League, IGAD, the Organization of Islamic Countries and the Houthis of Yemen who declared it a hostile act.¹⁴⁴ Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Türkiye also expressed concern.

Media reports and analysts suggested that the UAE, a strong ally of Israel and one of the signatories of the Abraham Accords, played a key role in Israel's recognition of Somaliland. Berbera Port is one of the UAE's prominent investments in Somaliland.¹⁴⁵

Puntland

Internal Developments & External Relations

On April 9, the Puntland administration opposed the Federal Government's national citizen registration program, which was launched in the Galmudug side of Gaalkacyo by the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA). The Governor of North Mudug, Faisal Sheikh Ali, representing the Puntland administration, accused the NIRA of operating outside the country's legal and constitutional frameworks. He warned that any Puntland resident who registers with NIRA to obtain a national identity card would lose their fundamental rights and Puntland citizenship status and face legal consequences.

142. See "Somaliland Summons Turkish Envoy over Mogadishu Meeting," Caasimada Online, August 18, 2025. <https://www.caasimada.net/somaliland-summons-turkish-envoy-over-mogadishu-meeting/>.

143. See "At Least 19 Killed in Borama Protests, Somaliland Authorities Say," Shabelle Media Network, December 19, 2025. <https://shabellemedia.com/at-least-19-killed-in-borama-protests-somaliland-authorities-say/>

144. See "Israel's Recognition of Somaliland Slammed across World Capitals," Al Jazeera, December 27, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/12/27/israels-recognition-of-somaliland-slammed-across-world-capitals>.

145. See "Somaliland President concludes UAE visit focused on oil, minerals, and economic investment" Hiiraan Online, January 30, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Jan/200030/somaliland_president_concludes_uae_visit_focused_on_oil_minerals_and_economic_investment.aspx.

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Puntland has consistently resisted federal government initiatives that it perceives as encroachments on its political autonomy and constitutional jurisdiction¹⁴⁶ and has established its own civilian identification authority.¹⁴⁷

On April 26, the Puntland President Said Abdullahi Deni urged President Mohamud to fulfill his commitment to initiating political dialogue with key stakeholders. President Deni called for a genuine and inclusive dialogue process and emphasized that both Houses of Parliament bear a responsibility to safeguard national unity.¹⁴⁸

On April 30, Puntland and Somaliland exchanged 26 prisoners, with each side releasing 13 individuals, according to a statement from Puntland authorities. Officials noted that the agreement may serve as a basis for future cooperation between the two administrations, whose relations have long been strained. Earlier this month, the Northeastern state administration transferred 25 detainees to the FGS during Prime Minister Barre's visit to LasAnod.¹⁴⁹

Puntland and Somaliland ministers met in Nairobi on October 4 where they agreed to strengthen their cooperation in security—particularly maritime security; combat illegal migration; enhance cross-border trade and movements; and promote social development.¹⁵⁰

The Middle East Eye reported on November 5 that Somalia's Minister of Defence, Ahmed Moalim Fiqi, had acknowledged that transport aircraft carrying undisclosed cargo were flying between Bosaso airport and western Sudan. The publication alleged that the aircraft were being used by the United Arab Emirates to support Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). According to a senior Puntland commander stationed at Bosaso airport, the cargo was reportedly destined for the RSF in Sudan, transiting through neighboring countries.¹⁵¹

On November 23, Hiiraan Online reported that Puntland authorities had arrested a senior official from the Immigration and Nationality Authority in Garowe accusing him of facilitating youth-smuggling networks. The official has been accused of unlawfully issuing Somali passports to large numbers of young people who were subsequently intercepted at Puntland airports while attempting to leave the country.¹⁵²

Security

Much of Puntland's security landscape in 2025 was dominated by the expansion of Operation Hillaac, a large-scale counter-ISIS campaign in and around the Cal Miskaad Mountains.

146. Wardheer News, "Puntland Rejects Federal Citizen Registration Program, Warns Gaalkacyo residents against participating" March 16, 2025: <https://wardheernews.com/puntland-rejects-federal-citizen-registration-program-warns-gaalkacyo-residents-against-participating/>

147. Hiiraan Online, "Puntland establishes own ID agency, rejects federal program" April 9, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Apr/201051/puntland_establishes_own_id_agency_rejects_federal_program.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

148. Hiiraan Online, "Puntland President urges Somali leader to fulfill promise of political dialogue" April 27, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Apr/201302/puntland_president_urges_somali_leader_to_fulfill_promise_of_political_dialogue.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

149. Hiiraan Online, "Puntland: Somaliland prisoner swap took place without mediation" April 30, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Apr/201353/puntland_somaliland_prisoner_swap_took_place_without_mediation.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

150. Caasimada, "Puntland iyo Somaliland oo ku dhawaaqay heshiis cusub" October 5, 2025: <https://www.caasimada.net/deg-deg-puntland-iyoo-somaliland-oo-ku-dhawaaqay-heshiis/>

151. Middle East Eye, "Somali defence minister confirms MEE report of flights from Bosaso to Sudan" November 5, 2025: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/somali-defence-minister-confirms-mee-report-planes-flying-bosaso-sudan>

152. Hiiraan Online, "Puntland arrests senior immigration official accused of aiding youth smuggling networks" November 23, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Nov/203706/puntland_arrests_senior_immigration_official_accused_of_aiding_youth_smuggling_networks.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

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On January 24, Puntland forces captured the Tuurmasaale area on the outskirts of Toga Jaceel in Cal-Miskaad after intense clashes. Security officers in Puntland said the area housed ammunition depots, training camps and food storage facilities.¹⁵³

January also saw the first drone strikes by ISIS on Puntland forces, as reported by Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) which monitors global armed conflicts.¹⁵⁴

Puntland's information minister said the fight against ISIS is a fight against foreign fighters using advanced technology to attack Puntland forces.¹⁵⁵ A Telegram account run by Puntland forces often posts pictures of foreigners killed in the anti-ISIS operation. President Deni said in late September most of those killed were foreigners who visit the regional state under the guise of tourism or trade.¹⁵⁶

In February, the head of ISIS's assassination squad, Abdirahman Shirwac Aw-Saciid, surrendered to Puntland security forces amid increased US airstrikes targeting the group's leadership.¹⁵⁷

The Puntland government banned the illegal entry of foreign nationals and directed telecommunications companies to deactivate SIM cards registered to undocumented individuals and suspected ISIS operatives as part of broader efforts to disrupt the group's logistical and financial networks.¹⁵⁸ In March, the Puntland Ministry of Interior also warned businesses against paying extortion demands to ISIS, stressing that such payments directly financed the group's operations.¹⁵⁹

However, Puntland's Minister of Interior, Abdirahman Mohamed Hussein (Dhabancad), warned that ISIS had increasingly shifted to using illicit cryptocurrency transactions to finance its activities. He noted that cryptocurrencies enable the group to move funds across borders, evade conventional financial oversight and sanctions, and sustain its operations despite intensified military and financial pressure, posing a growing challenge to both regional and international security.¹⁶⁰

Puntland captured the rugged terrain of Togga Miiraale in the Cal-Miskaad Mountains in mid-April after coordinated military operations, killing more than 40 ISIS operatives.¹⁶¹

153. See "Puntland Forces Capture Key ISIS Stronghold in Cal-Miskaad Mountains," Garowe Online, January 25, 2025, <https://www.garoweonline.com/index.php/en/news/puntland/puntland-forces-capture-key-isis-stronghold-in-cal-miskaad-mountains>.

154. See "Somalia: January Saw the First Use of Drone Strikes by IS Somalia — Expert Comment," ACLED, July 20, 2026, <https://acleddata.com/expert-comment/somalia-january-saw-first-use-drone-strikes-somalia-expert-comment>.

155. See "Wasiir Dirir: Waxay Puntland Dagaal Kula Jirtaa Ajaaniib Halis Ku Ah Nabada Geeska Afrika," Shabelle Media Network, January 27, 2025, <https://shabellemedia.com/wasiir-dirir-waxay-puntland-dagaal-kula-jirtaa-ajaniib-halis-ku-ah-nabada-geeska-afrika/>.

156. See "Puntland Leader Says Foreign Fighters Killed in Battles against ISIS in Bari Region," Mustaqbal Media - (English), September 28, 2025, <https://mustaqbalmedia.net/en/puntland-leader-says-foreign-fighters-killed-in-battles-against-isis-in-bari-region/#:~:text=According%20to%20our%20intelligence%2C%20we,The%20Puntland%20leader%20explained%20that>.

157. See "Senior ISIL Somalia Commander Captured in Puntland," Al Jazeera, February 3, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/2/3/senior-isil-somalia-commander-captured-in-puntland>.

158. See "Puntland Blocks Illegal Entry of Foreigners in IS Crackdown," Voice of America (VOA News), January 28, 2025, <https://www.voanews.com/a/puntland-blocks-illegal-entry-of-foreigners-in-is-crackdown/7953395.html>.

159. See "Puntland President Vows to End Business Payments to ISIS, Warns of Crackdown," Hiiraan Online, March 12, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Mar/200656/puntland_president_vows_to_end_business_payments_to_isis_warns_of_crackdown.aspx.

160. See "ISIS Using Cryptocurrency to Fund Global Terror, Puntland Officials Warn," FTL Somalia, August 20, 2025, <https://www.ftlsomalia.com/isis-using-cryptocurrency-to-fund-global-terror-puntland-officials-warn/>.

161. See "Over 40 ISIS Militants Killed in Latest Puntland Offensive in Togga Miiraale," SONNA, April 19, 2025, <https://sonna.so/en/over-40-isis-militants-killed-in-latest-puntland-offensive-in-togga-miiraale>.

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In early June, Puntland security forces advanced into the Sadow Cave in the Baalade Valley to further consolidate gains against ISIS and prevent them from regrouping.¹⁶²

On July 18, as political tensions between Puntland and the federal government rose, the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF) seized a cargo ship carrying Turkish-marked military equipment reportedly destined for Mogadishu.

Federal officials condemned the seizure as an “act of piracy” and said the cargo was intended for TURKSOM where Turkish troops were training Somali officers. In early August, following a visit by a Turkish delegation to Puntland, Garowe handed over the cargo to Türkiye, saying it has seized the ship to ensure “that the military equipment does not fall into hands that might threaten Somalia’s security and stability.”¹⁶³

On September 6, an official in Puntland warned security forces against posting on social media during the anti-ISIS offensive as this could provide key intelligence to the extremist group.¹⁶⁴ The statement came after increased sharing of footage taken in combat zones by Puntland forces fighting ISIS.

On September 20, a US delegation consisting of the Ambassador to Somalia, Richard Riley, accompanied by the Commander of US Special Operations Command Africa (USSOCAF), U.S. Air Force Major General Claude K. Tudor Jr. travelled to Bosaso and met President Deni. They commended Puntland’s success against ISIS and discussed other counterterrorism and maritime security.¹⁶⁵ US military support to Puntland includes training, intelligence sharing, air support, and limited operational assistance.

Humanitarian Situation

On April 22, sand dunes buried houses in the villages of Kulub and Dhinowda in Mudug. Residents were forced to leave their settlements and community leaders called for immediate intervention from the authorities and humanitarian partners.¹⁶⁶

Puntland appealed to humanitarian agencies to scale up rapid-response efforts for nearly one million people affected by the drought. Many schools have closed, and more than 26,000 children have dropped out due to the displacement of their families.¹⁶⁷

162. See “Somalia: Puntland Forces Launch Major Operation against ISIS Remnants in Calmiskaad,” Garowe Online, June 8, 2025, <https://garoweonline.com/en/news/puntland/somalia-puntland-forces-launch-major-operation-against-isis-remnants-in-calmiskaad>.

163. See “Somalia’s Puntland Releases Arms Cargo Ship to Turkey,” Turkish Minute, August 5, 2025, <https://turkishminute.com/2025/08/05/somalias-puntland-releases-arms-cargo-ship-to-turkey/>.

164. See “Ciidamada Dagaalka Kula Jira Daacish Oo Looga Digey Isticmaalka Baraha Bulshada,” Horseed Media, September 6, 2025, <https://horseedmedia.net/ciidamada-dagaalka-kula-jira-daacish-oo-looga-digey-isticmaalka-baraha-bulshada/413023/>.

165. See “United States Lauds Puntland Forces for ‘Protecting Somalia and the Region,’” Arlaadi Media, September 20, 2025, <https://arladimedia.com/2025/09/20/united-states-lauds-puntland-forces-for-protecting-somalia-and-the-region/>.

166. See “Sand Dunes Destroys Livelihoods, Drives Dwellers out of Their Villages in Somalia’s Mudug Region,” Somali Stream, April 22, 2025, <https://somalistream.com/sand-dunes-destroys-livelihoods-drives-dwellers-out-of-their-villages-in-somalias-mudug-region/>.

167. Ibid.

Banadir

Politics

On May 29, Hassan Mohamed Hussein (Muungaab) was appointed as the new governor of the Banadir Region and mayor of Mogadishu, replacing Mohamed Ahmed Amir who held the position for only six months. Muungaab served as the mayor from 2014 -2015 during President Mohamud's previous term.¹⁶⁸

On November 20, Somalia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Omar Balad, said that the capital is not associated with any specific clan and serves as the capital for all Somalis. He cautioned against efforts to manipulate the federal system to sow division, undermine national cohesion and distort the intended purpose of federalism. The minister's remarks were in response to a growing online debate over Mogadishu's role within the federal framework.¹⁶⁹

Climate Change

On 10 May, heavy rainfall lasting more than eight hours caused the deaths of at least seven people in Mogadishu, damaging the airport road and homes. Climate shocks in Somalia continues to generate devastating floods and prolonged droughts.¹⁷⁰

Security

On January 29, police officers killed two al-Shabaab militants attempting to attack a security checkpoint in Mogadishu's Dayniile District.¹⁷¹

On February 2, security officials at Villa Somalia, the presidential compound, shot down two drones that flew close to the complex, which houses the President, the cabinet offices and the prime minister and speaker's residences and offices.¹⁷² The incident raised concerns that the drones were being used for surveillance of the presidential compound.

On March 8, the federal government banned the entry of weapons/military vehicles into the heavily guarded Aden Adde International Airport.¹⁷³ The decision came a few days after the US Embassy warning its citizens of "potential imminent attacks" that include "kidnappings [and] bombings".¹⁷⁴ Less than two weeks later, on March 18, a roadside bomb attack targeted the Somali president's convoy in Mogadishu's Hamar Jajab district on the way to the airport.¹⁷⁵

168. See "President Mohamud appoints Hassan Muungaab as Mogadishu Mayor amid political tensions" Hiiraan Online, May 28, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/May/201668/president_mohamud_appoints_hassan_muungaab_as_mogadishu_mayor_amid_political_tensions.aspx

169. Hiiraan Online, "Somali minister condemns claims over Mogadishu ownership, says capital serves all regions" November 20, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/Nov/203678/somali_minister_condemns_claims_over_mogadishu_ownership_says_capital_serves_all_regions.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

170. See "Heavy Rains Cause Flooding in Somalia's Mogadishu, Killing Seven." Al Jazeera, May 11, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2025/5/11/heavy-rains-cause-flooding-in-somali-capital-killing-seven>.

171. See "Police Forces Kill Two Al-Shabaab Militants." SONNA, January 29, 2025. <https://sonna.so/en/article/police-forces-kill-two-al-shabaab-militants>.

172. See "Drone Incident Over Somalia's Presidential Palace Raises Security Concerns." Kaab TV, February 3, 2025. <https://en.kaabtv.com/drone-incident-over-somalias-presidential-palace-raises-security-concerns/?utm>.

173. See "Somali Government Bans Weapons at Aden Adde International Airport," – Goobjoog English, March 8, 2025, <https://en.goobjoog.com/somali-government-bans-weapons-at-aden-adde-international-airport/>.

174. See "Security Alert for U.S. Citizens March 4, 2025." U.S. Embassy in Somalia, March 4, 2025. <https://so.usembassy.gov/security-alert-for-u-s-citizens-march-4-2025/>.

175. See "Somali President Survives Al-Shabaab Assassination Attempt, Officials Say." Anadolu Ajansı, March 18, 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somali-president-survives-al-shabaab-assassination-attempt-officials-say/3513634>.

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Mortar attacks hit Mogadishu airport on March 27 while President Mohamud and the Ethiopian Prime Minister were in the vicinity.¹⁷⁶

Al-Shabaab was also on the offensive in Lower Shabelle region in March, raising fears the militants were advancing on Mogadishu. On March 22, the federal government deployed security forces to the highway connecting Mogadishu and Afgoye following reports that al-Shabaab fighters have been spotted in the area.¹⁷⁷

On April 5, at least six mortars fired by al-Shabaab targeted Mogadishu airport and its vicinity with at least six injured,¹⁷⁸ while similar attacks on April 19 killed a child in the Hamar Jajab district.¹⁷⁹

On April 8, NISA seized control of two houses allegedly used as launch sites for mortar attacks.¹⁸⁰ The Banadir regional police commissioner Mahdi Omar announced a \$30,000 reward for any credible information leading to the identification of those behind the attacks.¹⁸¹

On May 18, an al-Shabaab suicide bomber targeted the Damaanyo barracks in the Hodan district killing at least 11 army recruits and injuring 20 others.¹⁸²

On July 9, an al-Shabaab suicide bomber infiltrated the Jaalle Siyad military camp in Mogadishu, killing four soldiers.¹⁸³

Police publicly burned 250 cartons of drugs in Mogadishu which were seized at the Mogadishu Port and Aden Adde International Airport. They were destroyed on September 2 under an order from the Banadir Regional Court. The police force has increased its monitoring at all entry points.¹⁸⁴

On September 24, clashes broke out at the Warta Nabadda police station in Mogadishu between federal government security forces and opposition leaders, including former President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, former Prime Ministers Hassan Ali Khaire and Abdi Farah Shirdon, and senior opposition figure Abdirahman Abdishakur Warsame.

The opposition leaders, accompanied by their guards, had gone to the station to secure the release of an elder who had reportedly been beaten and detained after protesting forced evictions linked to the sale of public land. Barre described the incident as a “failed coup attempt,” blaming the opposition for fanning insecurity.

176. See “Mortars Fired toward Airport in Somali Capital amid Ethiopian Premier’s Visit: Report,” Anadolu Ajansı, February 27, 2025, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/mortars-fired-toward-airport-in-somali-capital-amid-ethiopian-premier-s-visit-report/3494950>.

177. See “Somali Forces Deployed to Secure Mogadishu-Afgoye Highway Amid Al-Shabaab Activity,” March 23, 2025, <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somali-forces-deployed-to-secure-mogadishu-afgooye-highway-amid-al-shabaab-activity>.

178. See “Mortar Attack in Somali Capital Wounds at Least 6,” Anadolu Ajansı, April 5, 2025, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/mortar-attack-in-somali-capital-wounds-at-least-6/3528988>.

179. See “Al-Shabaab Mortar Attack Kills a Child, Injures Another in Mogadishu,” SONNA, April 19, 2025, <https://sonna.so/en/al-shabaab-mortar-attack-kills-a-child-injures-another-in-mogadishu>.

180. See “Somali Intelligence Takes Control of Al-Shabaab’s Mortar Sites in Mogadishu,” Kaab TV, April 8, 2025, https://en.kaabtv.com/somali-intelligence-takes-control-of-al-shabaabs-mortar-sites-in-mogadishu/?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

181. See “\$30,000 Reward Offered for Information on Mogadishu Mortar Attacks,” Hiiraan Online, June 7, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jun/201780/_30_000_reward_offered_for_information_on_mogadishu_mortar_attacks.aspx.

182. See “Suicide Bomber Kills 11 People in Somali Capital Mogadishu,” TRT Afrika, May 18, 2025, <https://www.trtafrika.com/english/article/871224153cf0>.

183. See “Four Somali Soldiers Killed in Al-Shabaab Attack near Military Training Academy,” Garowe Online, July 10, 2025, <https://garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/four-sna-soldiers-killed-in-al-shabaab-attack-near-military-training-academy>.

184. See “Somali Police Burn 250 Cartons of Seized Drugs in Mogadishu” Hiiraan Online, September 2, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Sept/202760/somali_police_burn_250_cartons_of_seized_drugs_in_mogadishu.aspx.

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The confrontation occurred amid heightened political tensions over controversial constitutional changes and a deadlock on the electoral model as the government's mandate approached expiry. Two days later, three individuals, including a former minister, were briefly detained and subsequently released following intervention by lawmakers and traditional elders.¹⁸⁵

On October 25, al-Shabaab targeted Godka Jilacow, a prison for al-Shabaab detainees which also serves as the headquarters for NISA's Banadir region intelligence office. The attack consisted of a suicide car bombing and a direct assault, killing at least a dozen people.¹⁸⁶ The attack took place just hours after the prime minister announced the lifting of several long-standing road closures in the capital.

A female al-Shabaab operative, Maryan Mohamed Nur, was sentenced on November 29 to six years in prison for money laundering for al-Shabaab. A court in Mogadishu found that she operated five bank accounts and five telephone numbers through which \$2,170,889 was transferred to support al-Shabaab's activities.¹⁸⁷

In December, the government deployed nearly 10,000 police officers to secure 523 polling stations ahead of the Banadir local council elections on December 25, the first direct elections in Mogadishu in over 50 years.¹⁸⁸

Jubaland Politics

On January 10, the Jubaland cabinet accused the Federal Government of misappropriating international humanitarian aid intended for vulnerable communities, alleging that the funds were diverted to support armed conflicts and incite violence within the region.¹⁸⁹

On the same day, it also suspended cooperation with the Federal Government following a contentious dispute over regional elections. Jubaland re-elected Ahmed Mohamed Islam Madobe for a third term as president, a result the FGS has refused to recognize.¹⁹⁰

On March 1, President Madobe said he withdrew from the National Consultative Council (NCC) meeting in Mogadishu due to concerns over a potential extension of the federal government's term which he strongly opposed.

185. See "Somali Politicians and Businessmen Released After Brief Detention Amid Mounting Tensions Over Mogadishu Evictions." Kaab TV, September 26, 2025. <https://en.kaabtv.com/somali-politicians-and-businessmen-released-after-brief-detention-amid-mounting-tensions-over-mogadishu-evictions/>

186. See "Gunfire, Explosions Erupt in Mogadishu as Militants Target Major Prison." AP News, October 4, 2025. <https://apnews.com/article/somalia-attack-godka-jilacow-prison-f7f18ebae4ae9cc1de33d259c337198f>

187. See "Banaadir Court Sentences Woman to Six Years for Financing Al-Shabaab Operations" Hiiraan Online, November 26, 2025, <https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Nov/203744/banaadir-court-sentences-woman-to-six-years-for-financing-al-shabaab-operations.aspx>

188. See "Nearly 10,000 Somali Police Deployed to Secure Mogadishu Elections." Kaab TV, December 22, 2025. <https://en.kaabtv.com/nearly-10000-somali-police-deployed-to-secure-mogadishu-elections/>

189. Hiiraan Online, "Jubaland Cabinet accuses federal government of politicizing humanitarian aid and flights" January 10, 2025: <https://hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Jan/199750/jubaland-cabinet-accuses-federal-government-of-politicizing-humanitarian-aid-and-flights.aspx>

190. Hiiraan Online, "Jubaland Cabinet accuses federal government of politicizing humanitarian aid and flights" January, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2025/Jan/199750/jubaland-cabinet-accuses-federal-government-of-politicizing-humanitarian-aid-and-flights.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

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He noted that he was the only Daarood political representative present, as Puntland's leader had boycotted the meeting and SSC-Khaatumo was not invited. He went on to accuse the federal government of undermining previously established agreements among Somali political stakeholders.¹⁹¹

On May 8, Jubaland firmly rejected the outcomes of the NCC meeting, arguing that it provided neither meaningful solutions nor reflected the political realities on the ground in Jubaland. The NCC has instructed the Federal Ministry of Interior to draft a legal framework to address what it termed the “situation in Jubaland”. Some analysts and political actors have interpreted this as an attempt by the federal government to pave the way for replacing the current administration.¹⁹²

Security

2025 was largely shaped by sustained clashes between the Somali National Army and Jubaland forces, including the Danab and Darawiish units, against al-Shabaab, particularly in Lower and Middle Juba. Operations were frequently supported by international airstrikes, while al-Shabaab relied heavily on IEDs and asymmetric attacks targeting military and civilian movement.

On January 5, a joint SNA and US operation killed 10 al-Shabaab militants in Beerxaani, roughly 35 kilometres northwest of Kismayo.¹⁹³

In early February, Jubaland forces killed two al-Shabaab fighters in Kismayo who part of a “kill squad” believed to be preparing to assassinate influential figures in Kismayo.¹⁹⁴

In mid-February, Jubaland security forces captured a senior al-Shabaab operative, Moalim Mohamed, and killed four militants in Lafo-Geri near Dhoobley town in Lower Juba. Mohamed served as a deputy judge in one of al-Shabaab's courts.¹⁹⁵ Also in mid-February, a senior al-Shabaab commander Abuukar Adan Buulle surrendered to NISA officials in the Luuq, Gedo region. His surrender came amid intensified anti-terror operations.¹⁹⁶

In March, the SNA and international partners resumed coordinated airstrikes in Jubaland targeting al-Shabaab bases in Jilib town, their de facto capital. The attack targeted training camps, a guerilla command center, and residences of senior al-Shabaab leaders.¹⁹⁷

191. Hiiraan Online, “Jubaland leader criticizes federal government over power struggles and military failures” March 1, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200465/jubaland_president_ahmed_madobe_criticizes_federal_government_over_power_struggles_and_military_failures.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

192. Hiiraan Online, “Jubaland rejects outcome of national consultative meeting, accuses federal government of political interference” May 8, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/May/201444/jubaland_rejects_outcome_of_national_consultative_meeting_accuses_federal_government_of_political_interference.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

193. See “10 Al-Shabaab Militants Killed in Joint Operation in Lower Jubba” SONNA, January 5, 2025. <https://sonna.so/en/10-al-shabaab-militants-killed-in-joint-operation-in-lower-jubba>.

194. See “Jubaland Forces Eliminate Al-Shabaab Kill Squad In Kismayo Raid” Shabelle Media Network, February 3, 2025. <https://shabellemedia.com/jubaland-forces-eliminate-al-shabaab-kill-squad-in-kismayo-raid/>.

195. See “Jubaland Forces Capture Senior Al-Shabaab Judge, Kill Four Militants in Dhoobley Raid,” Hiiraan Online, February 15, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Feb/200262/jubaland_forces_capture_senior_al_shabaab_judge_kill_four_militants_in_dhoobley_raid.aspx.

196. See “Senior Al-Shabaab Commander Surrenders to Somali Forces in Gedo,” Hiiraan Online, February 15, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Feb/200267/senior_al_shabaab_commander_surrenders_to_somali_forces_in_gedo.aspx.

197. See “Somali Army with Foreign Forces Strike Al-Shabaab Headquarters, Destroys Bases,” Garowe online, March 16, 2025. <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somali-army-with-foreign-forces-strike-al-shabaab-headquarters-destroys-bases>.

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A coordinated offensive by the SNA and Jubaland's Darwiish forces in April and May targeted al-Shabaab hideouts in Qabri Sharif,¹⁹⁸ as well as in the Barjaale and Afmadow areas of Lower Juba.¹⁹⁹ The authorities stated that the operations were aimed at degrading the group's capabilities, although no casualty figures were provided.

In June, the US trained Danab forces targeted al-Shabaab in an operation near Buulo Xaaji in Lower Juba, claiming to have killed 37 militants.²⁰⁰ During the same period, the SNA and international partners conducted airstrikes targeting al-Shabaab positions in Maqooqaha in Lower Juba, reportedly killing at least 25 militants.²⁰¹

Al-Shabaab landmines struck a civilian vehicle near Buulo Xaaji, killing four people, including two sisters. In July, Jubaland forces launched security operations aimed at disrupting the group's mine-laying activities, which officials said resulted in the killing of several al-Shabaab members and the dismantling of their checkpoints.²⁰²

Clashes were also reported in July in Beled Hawo in the Gedo region between Somali federal forces and Jubaland-aligned fighters led by the former security minister Abdirashid Janan. The fighting occurred as tensions between the federal government and Jubaland escalated following the Jubaland elections.²⁰³

An operation in October in the Jamaame district of Lower Juba killed 32 militants and destroyed their hideouts and logistical bases.²⁰⁴ Jamaame witnessed another wave of airstrikes in mid-November with local sources reporting that at least 10 civilians were killed.²⁰⁵

Humanitarian Situation

Persistent drought led to widespread displacement across the state. The cost of water has sharply increased, affecting the livelihoods of many communities.²⁰⁶

In May, heavy rainfall caused flooding in the Bardheere and Buurdhuubo districts, resulting in significant damage to shelters and displacing vulnerable communities. In Bardheere, the floods damaged the shelters of 54 internally displaced person (IDP) households. In Buurdhuubo, the flooding had a much larger impact, affecting approximately 3,740 households and damaging around 2,000 shelters, according to the Horn Observer.²⁰⁷

198. See "Somali Forces Eliminate Khawarij Militants in Major Lower Juba Operation." SONNA, April 4, 2025. <https://sonna.so/en/somali-forces-eliminate-khawarij-militants-in-major-lower-juba-operation>.

199. See "Somali Forces Conduct Joint Operation Against Al-Shabaab in Lower Juba Region." Shabelle Media Network, May 5, 2025. <https://shabellemedia.com/somali-forces-conduct-joint-operation-against-al-shabaab-in-lower-juba-region/>.

200. See "Somali Army Kills over 37 Al-Shabaab Terrorists in Southern Region." Anadolu Ajansı, June 29, 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somali-army-kills-over-37-al-shabaab-terrorists-in-southern-region/3616946>.

201. See "At Least 25 Al-Shabaab Terrorists Killed in Somalia Airstrike." Anadolu Ajansı, June 18, 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/at-least-25-al-shabaab-terrorists-killed-in-somalia-airstrike/3603602>.

202. See "Jubaland Forces Launch Operations in Lower Juba to Counter Al-Shabaab Land Mines." Shabelle Media Network, July 18, 2025. <https://shabellemedia.com/jubaland-forces-launch-operations-in-lower-juba-to-counter-al-shabaab-land-mines/>.

203. See "Dagaal Ka Dhacay Balad-Xaawo Oo U Dhaxeeya DFS Iyo Jubaland." WardheerNews, July 22, 2025. <https://wardheernews.com/dagaal-ka-dhacay-balad-xaawo-oo-u-dhaxeeya-dfs-iyoo-jubaland/>.

204. "Somali Elite Forces Kill 18 Al-Shabaab Militants in Major Operation in Lower Juba." Shabelle Media Network, October 30, 2025. <https://shabellemedia.com/somali-elite-forces-kill-18-al-shabaab-militants-in-major-operation-in-lower-juba/>.

205. See "Airstrikes Hit Al-Shabaab-Held Somali Town Amid Military Advance." Garowe Online, November 17, 2025. <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/airstrikes-hit-al-shabaab-held-somali-town-amid-military-advance>.

206. Ibid.

207. See "Climate Impact Deepens in Somalia with Deadly Flooding and Displacement," Horn Observer, May 25, 2025. <https://hornobserver.com/articles/3336/Climate-Impact-Deepens-in-Somalia-with-Deadly-Flooding-and-Displacement>.

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According to CCCM Cluster Management, a joint UNHCR and IOM unit, as of July there were 206 IDP sites hosting 35,153 households or 209,153 individuals in Kismayo.²⁰⁸

In November, the Saudi humanitarian agency KS Relief began constructing 200 houses for families recently displaced by the flooding.

Southwest Politics

On April 1, a coalition of opposition politicians from Southwest accepted President Mohamud's call for national peace consultations, which he framed as a critical opportunity to confront the country's escalating political instability and mounting security challenges. The group led by former speakers and senior politicians from the state described the initiative as a platform to forge a unified national direction at a pivotal moment for Somalia.²⁰⁹

On March 31, President Abdiasis Mohamed (Laftagareen) held a successful reconciliation meeting with the former Speaker of the Somali Parliament, Mohamed Mursal Abdirahman, to end the political dispute between the two. Their reconciliation came at a critical time as Somalia and Southwest face challenging and disputed electoral processes.²¹⁰

On August 2, Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nur Madobe, Speaker of the Somali parliament, arrived in Baidoa to meet with local elders and community leaders about the forthcoming elections. The meetings were intended to discuss leadership differences, electoral issues and coordination and cooperation between the federal and regional leadership.²¹¹

Security

The security environment in Southwest in 2025 was characterized by persistent al-Shabaab pressure on the regions of Bay and Bakool. Government and allied forces conducted counter-insurgency operations in Lower Shabelle, capturing the key town of Bariire and later Awdheegle with AUSSOM support.

The SNA began the year with operations in the Bakool region in areas north of Hudur in preparation for a broader offensive to secure the region from al-Shabaab.²¹² However, al-Shabaab made gains in Lower Shabelle, culminating in a March attack on the government-controlled agricultural town of Awdheegle.

208. See "Somalia: Verified IDP Sites in Kismayo as of May 2025," ReliefWeb, July 8, 2025. <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-verified-idp-sites-kismayo-may-2025>.

209. Hiiraan Online, "Southwest opposition supports national peace dialogue, urges leaders to deliver on promises" April 1, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/Apr/200944/southwest_opposition_supports_national_peace_dialogue_urges_leaders_to_deliver_on_promises.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

210. Hiiraan Online, "Southwest State President Laftagareen and former Speaker Mursal reconcile after years of political rift" November 11, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/Nov/203581/southwest_state_president_laftagareen_and_former_speaker_mursal_reconcile_after_years_of_political_rift.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

211. Hiiraan Online, "Somali Parliamentary Speaker arrives in Baidoa for consultations on elections" August 3, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/Aug/202435/somali_parliamentary_speaker_arrives_in_baidoa_for_consultations_on_elections.aspx

212. See "Ciidanka Dowladda Oo Maanta Howlgalo Ka Dhan Ah Al-Shabaab Ka Fuliyay Gobolka Bakool," Hiiraan Online, January 29, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/Jan/wararka_maanta29-189176.htm.

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The group released images showing its fighters in control of the town, following weeks of territorial advances in some parts of Middle Shabelle.²¹³

2025 also saw a series of al-Shabaab defections. In March, 10 defectors surrendered to government forces in Baidoa including Osman Abdullahi Mursal who was in charge of collecting money around the Buurhakaba district.²¹⁴

In April, four other ex-combatants surrendered to Southwest police. The defectors reportedly fought in a l-S habaab battles in Buulo Xaaji in Jubaland.²¹⁵

In April, joint Somali-US strikes targeted al-Shabaab near Baidoa as the militants attempted an attack on a military base there. At least 35 militants were killed, according to reports.²¹⁶

In the same month, SNA and Southwest forces recaptured Daynuunaay from al-Shabaab, an area 18 kilometres from Baidoa which was used by the militants to stage attacks across the Bay region and is a critical buffer zone for Baidoa.²¹⁷ Al-Shabaab have been seen on the city's outskirts in villages including Gasarta, Dambalka, and near Baay-Burjeed, warning farmers to stay away from their fields.²¹⁸ In April and June, the group attacked Baay-Burjeed but were repelled by government forces.²¹⁹

In June, the SNA and AUSSOM launched "Operation Silent Storm" aimed at recapturing areas of Sabiid and Caanoole, Awdheegle, and Bariire, which were lost to al-Shabaab in March.²²⁰ These areas are strategically significant due to their proximity to Mogadishu and key river crossings and road networks. Sabiid in particular is critical because its river crossing facilitates the movement of explosives and weapons towards the capital.

By June 22, Sabiid and Caanoole had been recaptured,²²¹ but in July AUSSOM and the SNA withdrew from these towns due to stretched supply routes.

In July, the SNA conducted an operation in the Baqdaad area in Lower Shabelle, destroying four boats used by al-Shabaab to cross riverine areas, as well as other hideouts and weapons storage points.²²²

213. See "Al-Shabaab Attacks Military Camps in South Somalia's Awdhegle Town," Somali Guardian, March 15, 2025. <https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/al-shabaab-attacks-military-camps-in-south-somalias-awdhegle-town/>.

214. See "Ten Al-Shabaab Defectors Surrender to Somali Authorities in Baidoa," Hiiraan Online, March 24, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200836/ten_al_shabaab_defectors_surrender_to_somali_authorities_in_baidoa.aspx.

215. See "Al-Shabaab Fighters Surrender in Somalia's Southwest State," Hiiraan Online, April 2, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Apr/200956/al_shabaab_fighters_surrender_in_somalia_s_southwest_state.aspx.

216. See "US-Somali Airstrikes Kill al Shabaab Militants, Hit Weapons Ship, Government Says," Reuters, April 17, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/airstrike-army-attack-kill-dozens-al-shabaab-fighters-somalia-government-says-2025-04-17/>.

217. See "Somali Forces Seize Strategic Town from Al-Shabaab in Fresh Bay Region Offensive," Goobjoog English, April 14, 2025. <https://en.goobjoog.com/somali-forces-seize-strategic-town-from-al-shabaab-in-fresh-bay-region-offensive/>.

218. See "Al-Shabaab Launches Attack near Baidoa, Warns Farmers to Stay Away from Fields," Hiiraan Online, April 20, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Apr/201203/al_shabaab_launches_attack_near_baidoa_warns_farmers_to_stay_away_from_fields.aspx.

219. See "Soomaaliya: Al-Shabaab Oo Weerartay Saldhig Laga Ilaaliyo Amniga Baydhabo," Garowe Online, June 23, 2025. <https://garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/soomaaliya-al-shabaab-oo-weerartay-saldhig-laga-ilaaliyo-amniga-baydhabo>.

220. See "1.2.2. Al-Shabaab Control Areas, Presence, and Influence," European Union Agency for Asylum, 2025. <https://www.euaa.europa.eu/coi/somalia/2025/security-situation/12-armed-actors-and-relevant-developments/122-al-shabaab-control-areas-presence-and-influence>

221. See "AUSSOM, SNA Troops Recapture Strategic Villages in Lower Shabelle," African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), June 22, 2025. <https://au-ssom.org/aussom-sna-troops-recapture-strategic-villages-in-lower-shabelle/>.

222. See "SNA's Danab Commandos Conduct Planned Operation in the Lower Shabelle Region," SONNA, July 8, 2025. <https://sonna.so/en/snas-danab-commandos-conduct-planned-operation-in-the-lower-shabelle-region>.

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The SNA, supported by local fighters, also conducted operations in the Ceel-Saliini and Buushka areas in Lower Shabelle after intelligence indicated al-Shabaab was attempting to regroup in the area.²²³

In the same month, Lower House Speaker Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nur Madobe visited Hudur town in Bakool to support the campaign against al-Shabaab, as the government increased its effort to wrestle al-Shabaab out of the Southwest.²²⁴

In August, the SNA and AUSSOM recaptured Bariire town in an operation that involved a significant ground offensive, with reports putting al-Shabaab fatalities at more than 100.²²⁵ The operation achieved its biggest military gain when it recaptured Awdheegle on October 4 after intensive clashes. The victory was key in government's consolidation of control over the Lower Shabelle region, which borders the Banadir region and the Mogadishu.²²⁶

In November, the SNA and international partners conducted airstrikes in the Bullo-Madina area of Lower Shabelle, with reports that at least 49 al-Shabaab militants were killed.²²⁷

Humanitarian Situation

On July 9, Reuters reported that Save the Children visited displacement camps in Baidoa and witnessed thousands of newly-displaced families with no access to adequate shelter, food, and basic health services following recent global funding cuts. Reuter clip released highlighted that climate change continued to drive internal displacement, adding fuel to local conflicts, and contributing to severe food shortages affecting thousands of people.²²⁸

Droughts caused acute water shortages, rising food insecurity, and increased livestock disease in the Bakool and Bay regions. Local authorities have issued urgent calls for an emergency water supply.²²⁹ In the 2011 famine and 2021 drought, the Bay and Bakool regions were the hardest hit in terms of fatalities.

Galmudug Security

The security dynamics of Galmudug 2025 mostly revolved around recurrent fighting over territory between government forces and allied militias on one side, and al-Shabaab on the other but also included inter-communal fighting.

223. See "SNA Conducts Security Operation in the Lower Shabelle Region." SONNA, July 13, 2025. <https://sonna.so/en/sna-conducts-security-operation-in-the-lower-shabelle-region>.

224. See "Somali Parliamentary Speaker Visits Hudur to Boost Anti-Al-Shabaab Operations and Local Governance - Hiiraan Online," July 30, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202390/somali_parliamentary_speaker_visits_hudur_to_boost_anti_al_shabaab_operations_and_local_governance.aspx.

225. See "Joint AUSSOM and Somali Security Forces Recapture Bariire Town." African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), August 8, 2025. <https://au-ssom.org/joint-aussom-and-somali-security-forces-recapture-bariire-town/>.

226. See "Somali Army Recaptures Strategic Town in Southern Region," Qatar News Agency, October 5, 2025, <https://qna.org.qa/en/news/news-details?id=somali-army-recaptures-strategic-town-in-southern-region&date=4/10/2025>.

227. See "Somali Army Kills at Least 49 Al-Shabab Fighters in Lower Shabelle Operation." Shabelle Media Network, November 7, 2025. <https://shabellemedia.com/somali-army-kills-at-least-49-al-shabab-fighters-in-lower-shabelle-operation/#:~:text=Shabelle%20Media%20Network-,Somali%20army%20kills%20at%20least%2049%20al,fighters%20in%20Lower%20Shabelle%20operation&text=Mogadishu%20%E2%80%93%20Somalia%27s%20government%20said%20that,country%27s%20southern%20Lower%20Shabelle%20region>

228. See "In Somalia's Baidoa, Thousands of Families Displaced by Conflict Are Struggling to Survive, While Funding Has Been Shrinking." Reuters-facebookapp, July 9, 2025. <https://www.facebook.com/Reuters/videos/aid-cuts-limit-access-to-food-and-shelter-for-thousands-in-somalia/1510810599900707/?mibextid=wwXlfr&rdid=XexImpdZPvyPUlgD>.

229. Ibid.

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On January 12, the Somali army, supported by the Macawiisley clan militia, conducted an operation in the town of Camaara in Mudug, killing four al-Shabaab militants. The operation targeted a senior al-Shabaab operative in charge of court affairs in Galgaduud, Ismaaciil Beerdile. It is unknown if he was among those killed.²³⁰

On their side, al-Shabaab started the year with a coordinated assault on the defenses of Masagaway town in Galgaduud on January 26. Somalia's defense ministry said the army anticipated the attack and was able to thwart it.²³¹

In February, the army killed 11 militants in Jowle between Mudug and Galgaduud, including the area's chief Abdullahi Said Bulxiye.²³² The operation aimed at restoring security between the two regions.

The fighting continued March 12, when army operations targeted al-Shabaab in the Geerile area of Galgaduud, killing seven militants and seizing weapons.²³³

On March 13, the army with the support of Macawiisley overran al-Shabaab- controlled Biyo Cadle near the Ceelbuur district, with an disclosed number of casualties on both sides.²³⁴

On March 18, the government reported "a series of coordinated operations" targeting al-Shabaab militants in areas surrounding Sinadhaqo, Labi-dule, and Dhabanna Dhulkuheys in the Galgaduud region. Numbers of casualties were not reported.²³⁵

Government security forces continued their operations against al-Shabaab in Galmudug killing nine militants in the village of Adalay in Caad town south of Mudug on July 23.²³⁶ The government forces were supported by Macawiisley militias from Bahdo and Wisil districts.

Somalia's intelligence agency (NISA) reported conducting airstrikes on September 6 in coordination with international partners which targeted an al-Shabaab recruitment center in the Ceel-dhiiqo Wayne area, located between Ceel-lahelay and Ceel-garas in the Galgaduud region, killing at least 12.²³⁷

Meanwhile, al-Shabaab continued to ambush government forces and allied militias, targeting military outposts in Ceel-Dheer and briefly overrunning the town, but the government managed to push them back after receiving air support from international partners.²³⁸

230. See "SNA, Local Forces Eliminate 4 Al-Shabaab Militants in an Operation in Mudug," SONNA, January 12, 2025. <https://sonna.so/en/sna-local-forces-eliminate-4-al-shabaab-militants-in-an-operation-in-mudug>.

231. See "Somali Forces Repel Al-Shabaab Attack, Secure Masagawaa," Hiiraan Online, January 26, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jan/199959/somali_forces_repel_al-shabaab_attack_secure_masagawaa.aspx.

232. See "Somali Army and Local Forces Conduct Operation, 11 Al-Shabaab Members Killed," Shabelle Media Network, February 13, 2025. <https://shabellemedia.com/somali-army-and-local-forces-conduct-operation-11-al-shabaab-members-killed/>.

233. See "Somali Army Kills at Least Seven Al-Shabaab Militants in Galgaduud Region," Hiiraan Online, March 7, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200565/somali_army_kills_at_least_seven_al-shabaab_militants_in_galgaduud_region.aspx.

234. See "Somali Forces Overrun Al-Shabaab Stronghold in El Buur Offensive," Hiiraan Online, March 13, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200668/somali_forces_overrun_al-shabaab_stronghold_in_el_buur_offensive.aspx.

235. See "Security Forces in Galmudug Carry out Coordinated Operations against Al-Shabaab Militants," SONNA, March 18, 2025. <https://sonna.so/en/article/security-forces-in-galmudug-carry-out-coordinated-operations-against-al-shabaab-militants>.

236. See "Galmudug Forces Kill Al-Shabaab Commanders in Coordinated Mudug Raid," Hiiraan Online, July 24, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202315/galmudug_forces_kill_al-shabaab_commanders_in_coordinated_mudug_raid.aspx.

237. See "Al-Shabaab Recruitment Center Targeted in Successful NISA Operation in Ceel-Dhiiqo Weyne, Galgaduud Region," Mustaqbal Media - (English), September 6, 2025. <https://mustaqbalmedia.net/en/al-shabaab-recruitment-center-targeted-in-successful-nisa-operation-in-ceel-dhiiqo-weyne-galgaduud-region/>.

238. See "Somalia's Govt Says Army Recaptured Eldher Town after Brief Al-Shabaab Takeover," Somali Guardian, September 12, 2025. <https://www.somaliguards.com/news/somalia-news/somalias-govt-says-army-recaptured-eldher-town-after-brief-al-shabaab-takeover/>.

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The government said at least 75 militants were killed including senior leaders named as Cabduqani Amiir Saariyow, Saciid Ibrahim Cali Tifoow, Sabir, and Dadullah.²³⁹

On September 21, the Somali army conducted a coordinated operation targeting al-Shabaab positions in Nooleye village in Galgaduud with the support of international partners, killing four.²⁴⁰

In mid-November, Macawiisley fighters in Harardhere in the Mudug region reportedly killed six al-Shabaab fighters in the village of Dumaye, while the Somali army thwarted an al-Shabaab suicide attack in Dabagalo near Harardhere.²⁴¹

Interclan Violence

The first incidents of inter-clan clashes in 2025 were reported in January between the neighboring Lelkase clan, primarily located in Puntland, and the Sacad clan from Galmudug. The clashes took place in Gaalkacyo's Garsoor neighborhood. Security forces from both Puntland and Galmudug intervened to separate the militias and contain the violence.²⁴²

In April, more intense inter-clan clashes re-erupted in the Jiicboor and Saax Qurun areas in the Mudug region, involving the same clans from both sides of the Galmudug–Puntland divide. The fighting resulted in at least 10 deaths, including civilians and militia fighters.²⁴³ The clashes were over a land dispute and have been a common trend in the area.

In June, heavy clashes took place in the town of Abudwak in the Galgaduud region between Galmudug police and armed militias after the latter opposed plans by police to expand their base, with at least 10 people reportedly killed.²⁴⁴

In July, renewed inter-clan clashes were reported in the Meersiis area in the Galgaduud region between Ayr and Murusade clans based in Guriceel and Ceelbuur districts.²⁴⁵ The clashes, which claimed the lives of at least six people, were sparked by a series of retaliatory killings.

Galgaduud remained a hotspot of violence with reports of intra-clan clashes near the villages of UMaraayo and Baalal Dheer in October. Mediation efforts by elders were not successful.²⁴⁶ Tensions related to clan revenge attacks continued in Labi Kooraale village in the Balanbale district when armed men from rival clans killed a father and his son.²⁴⁷

239. See "75 Al-Shabaab Militants Including 5 Senior Leaders Killed, 85 Others Wounded in an Operation." SONNA, September 13, 2025. <https://sonna.so/en/75-al-shabaab-militants-including-5-senior-leaders-killed-85-others-wounded-in-an-operation>.

240. See "Somali Army Kills 4 Al-Shabaab Terrorists in Coordinated Operation." Anadolu Ajansı, September 21, 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somali-army-kills-4-al-shabaab-terrorists-in-coordinated-operation/3694236>.

241. See "Six Al-Shabaab Militants Killed in an Operation in Harardhere District." SONNA, November 18, 2025. <https://sonna.so/en/article/six-al-shabaab-militants-killed-in-an-operation-in-harardhere-district>.

242. See "Puntland and Galmudug Forces Intervene to Separate Clashing Militias in Galkayo Town," Hiiraan Online, January 19, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/jan/199885/puntland_and_galmudug_forces_intervene_to_separate_clashing_militias_in_galkayo_town.aspx.

243. See "Khasaaraha DAGAALKA Ka Socda MUDUG Oo Sii Kordhay." Caasimada Online, April 3, 2025. <https://www.caasimada.net/khasaaraha-ka-dhashay-dagaalka-mudug-oo-sii-kordhay/>.

244. See "Clashes Persist in Somali Town After Deadly Fight." Shabelle Media Network, June 29, 2025. <https://shabellemedia.com/clashes-persist-in-somali-town-after-deadly-fight/>.

245. See "Clan Clashes Kill Six, Injure Dozens in Galgaduud," Hiiraan Online, July 17, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202237/clan_clashes_kill_six_injure_dozens_in_galgaduud.aspx.

246. See "Clashes Kill Several in Galgadud as Authorities Urged to Intervene," Hiiraan Online, October 19, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Oct/203343/clashes_kill_several_in_galgadud_as_authorities_urged_to_intervene.aspx.

247. See "Clan Revenge Attack Kills Father and Son in Somalia's Galgaduud Region," Hiiraan Online, October 28, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Oct/203448/clan_revenge_attack_kills_father_and_son_in_somalia_s_galgaduud_region.aspx.

Humanitarian Situation

According to OCHA, 13 villages in Galmudug including Hobyo were displaced due to severe water scarcity and food shortages. The situation worsened after international funding cuts halted cash assistance programs, and access to health services became increasingly complex.²⁴⁸

Hirshabelle

Politics

On March 26, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud joined frontline forces in Hirshabelle to oversee renewed military operations against al-Shabaab. His presence on the frontlines was widely perceived as a significant morale boost for government troops and allied local militias, as the FGS intensified its campaign against al-Shabaab's rural strongholds to restore national security.²⁴⁹

On May 7, the Hirshabelle parliament voted to revoke the parliamentary immunity of three lawmakers: Ahmed Saney Mohamed, Saadaq Mukhtaar Cabdille, and Ahmed Ali Abuukar, citing alleged violations of the regional constitution and parliamentary bylaws. The decision follows a protracted dispute between the legislators and Hirshabelle President Ali Guudlawe. All three had previously clashed with the president and were dismissed from cabinet positions during earlier political reshuffles.²⁵⁰

Security

Hirshabelle has been at the heart of confrontation between the government and al-Shabaab. While the government successfully reclaimed territories in the region in 2022 and 2023, they have been several setbacks since.

On January 19, 2025, the Somali army carried out an operation in parts of Hiiraan region alongside local forces to which killed 16 al-Shabaab militants. Several strategic locations, including Beera Yabaal, Buur Abooto, Eega Galmaay, Jidcilaan, and Caddow Gureey were recaptured.²⁵¹ Senior FGS security officials, such as Abdullahi Mohamed Sanbaloolshe, the chief of NISA, and SNA Land Forces Commander Sahal Abdullahi Omar were at the front to mobilize support for the war.²⁵² President Mohamud also travelled there in March and held meetings in the town of Adale with elders and military officials to mobilize the intensified offensive against the group.²⁵³

248. Ibid.

249. See "President Mohamud returns to frontlines to lead anti-Al-Shabaab operations" Hiiraan Online, March 26, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200860/president_mohamud_returns_to_frontlines_in_middle_shabelle_to_lead_anti_al_shabaab_operations.aspx

250. See "Hirshabelle parliament strips three MPs of immunity over constitutional violations" Hiiraan Online, May 7, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/May/201427/hirshabelle_parliament_strips_three_mps_of_immunity_over_constitutional_violations.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

251. See "Somali Army Kills 16 Al-Shabaab Terrorists." Anadolu Ajansı, January 29, 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somali-army-kills-16-al-shabaab-terrorists/3465096>.

252. See "Somali Government Launches Largest Offensive against Al-Shabaab in Hiiraan," Hiiraan Online, January 26, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jan/199972/somali_government_launches_largest_offensive_against_al_shabaab_in_hiiraan.aspx.

253. See "Somalia President Holds Series of Meetings with Local Elders in Adale, Middle Shabelle Region, to Intensify Shabab Offensive," Horn Observer, March 22, 2025. <https://hornobserver.com/articles/3248/Somalia-President-holds-series-of-meetings-with-local-elders-in-Adale-Middle-Shabelle-region-to-intensify-Shabab-offensive>

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Al-Shabaab continued their attacks in Hirshabelle. On March 11, gunmen stormed and besieged the Cairo Hotel in Beledweyne where government officials and tribal elders were meeting to discuss offensive operations against the group.

There were varying claims about the death toll, with the mayor of Beledweyne, Omar Alasow, stating that six al-Shabaab militants died. Estimates put the number of civilians killed at around 11.²⁵⁴

Hours after ending the 24-hour hotel siege, NISA reported that coordinated airstrikes by the Somali army and international partners in the Damasha and Shabeelow areas of Middle Shabelle killed at least 50 militants, including Mansoor Tima-Weeyne, an al-Shabaab senior operative in charge of coordinating combat vehicles for terrorist attacks.²⁵⁵

On February 27, al-Shabaab fighters briefly captured Bal'ad town in Middle Shabelle, just 30 kilometers from Mogadishu, following clashes with the Somali army supported by AUSSOM forces.²⁵⁶ In March and April, al-Shabaab launched attacks on Somali army bases in the towns of Masajid Ali Gadud²⁵⁷ and Wargaadhi²⁵⁸ respectively, both located in Middle Shabelle, but they were repelled by government forces and allied local militias.

On April 16, al-Shabaab seized control of the strategic town Adan Yabaal in Middle Shabelle after fierce battles with the Somali army. Located 245 kilometers from the capital, the town serves as a critical logistical hub connecting Hirshabelle to Galmudug.²⁵⁹ The government captured the town in 2022 at the peak of its anti-al-Shabaab offensive.

On the same day, AFRICOM in coordination with the Somali government, conducted an air strike in the town's vicinity, but did not provide details on casualties.²⁶⁰

The government faced further setbacks when al-Shabaab, after intense clashes with government forces, captured the town of Moqokori in Hiiraan on July 7, three years after the government recaptured it.²⁶¹ On July 28, al-Shabaab also seized the town of Mahas which has been under the control of Somali and Ethiopian forces since 2014.²⁶²

On May 17, the commander of the 26th Battalion of the Somali army, Colonel Abdirahman Hujaale, was killed by one of his own soldiers.

254. See "Somali Forces End a 24-hour Siege by Al-Shabab Militants on a Hotel, Leaving All Fighters Dead," AP News, March 12, 2025. <https://apnews.com/article/somalia-attack-cairo-hotel-beledweyne-shabab-siege-54575e8873eae84990b61f75b4fa2811>.

255. See "Somali Forces Kill 50 Militants in Airstrikes after Ending Hotel Siege," Voice of America (VOA News), March 12, 2025. <https://www.voanews.com/a/somali-forces-kill-50-militants-in-airstrikes-after-ending-hotel-siege/8008152.html>.

256. See "Al-Shabaab Militants Briefly Capture Bal'ad Town near Somalia's Capital," Somali Guardian, February 27, 2025. <https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/al-shabaab-militants-briefly-capture-balad-town-near-somalias-capital/>.

257. See "Al-Shabaab Launches Assault on Somali Army Base in Masajid Ali Guduud," Hiiraan Online, March 26, 2025. <https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200861/al-shabaab-launches-assault-on-somali-army-base-in-masajid-ali-guduud.aspx>.

258. See "Somali Forces Repel Al-Shabaab Attack on Danab Base in Wargaadhi," Horn Observer, April 24, 2025. <https://hornobserver.com/articles/3296/Somali-Forces-Repel-Al-Shabaab-Attack-on-Danab-Base-in-Wargaadhi>.

259. See "Al-Shabaab Terrorist Group Seizes Strategic Town in Somalia," Anadolu Ajansı, April 16, 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/al-shabaab-terrorist-group-seizes-strategic-town-in-somalia/3540060>.

260. See "U.S. Forces Conduct Strike against al-Shabaab," U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), April 16, 2025. <https://www.africom.mil/pressrelease/35791/us-forces-conduct-strike-against-al-Shabaab-Shabaab>.

261. See "Al-Shabaab Captures Strategic Town of Moqokori after Clashes with Somali Forces," Somali Guardian, July 7, 2025. <https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/al-shabaab-captures-strategic-town-of-moqokori-after-clashes-with-somali-forces/>.

262. See "Al-Shabaab Seizes Mahas in First Takeover of Somali Town in over a Decade," Hiiraan Online, July 28, 2025. <https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202362/al-shabaab-seizes-mahas-in-first-takeover-of-somali-town-in-over-a-decade.aspx>.

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At the time of the killing, Hujaale was mobilizing reinforcements near Moqokori in the Hiiraan region, raising questions over possible links to al-Shabaab infiltration into the army.²⁶³

Local clan militias killed al-Shabaab commander Nur Abdi Roble following clashes between the two sides in the Garas Magan area of the Hiiraan region.²⁶⁴ Another al-Shabaab figure, Abdullahi Ganeey, was killed by NISA in the Daarunimca area of Middle Shabelle, alongside a dozen other militants after they attacked Macawiisley fighters.²⁶⁵

NISA continued to target key al-Shabaab figures and killed Mohamed Abdi Dhiblaawe, alias Khalid Dheere, who was identified as the mastermind of Ceel-gaabta junction attack in Mogadishu on March 18 that targeted the President's convoy.²⁶⁶ Other senior al-Shabaab figures killed by NISA include Abdi Hiray in Tugarey village in Lower Shabelle²⁶⁷, and Muhudin Hassan killed on the outskirts of Mahaday town in Middle Shabelle.²⁶⁸

On December 21, the Somali army killed 15 members of al-Shabaab including three senior commanders: Jaafar Adan, Abdirisak Ali, and Daud.²⁶⁹

Interclan Violence

Meanwhile, violent interclan clashes continued, particularly between the Hawadle and Abgaal clans in Calaag village along the border of Hiiran and Middle Shabelle regions. The confrontations in late January were triggered over grazing land. Casualties were reported but exact figures were not available.²⁷⁰

In a statement on November 9, the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation called for an end to clan-related violence and revenge killings in Galgaduud and Lower Shabelle, describing the violence as deeply contrary to Islamic values and Somali cultural traditions.²⁷¹

Humanitarian Situation

On May 25, the Hirshabelle Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs suspended cooperation with SoDMA, citing persistent misunderstandings, a lack of transparency in the management of humanitarian assistance, and the mishandling of aid intended for the people of Hirshabelle.

263. See "Top Somali Army Commander Killed Leading Fight against Militants," Somali Guardian, May 18, 2025. <https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/top-somali-army-commander-killed-leading-fight-against-militants/>.

264. See "Hawadle Clan Militia Kills Senior Al-Shabaab Commander in Central Somalia," Horn Observer, June 7, 2025. <https://hornobserver.com/articles/3364/Hawadle-Clan-Militia-Kills-Senior-al-Shabaab-Commander-in-Central-Somalia>.

265. See "NISA Kills 11 Al-Shabaab Fighters in Joint Operations across Central Somalia," Hiiraan Online, August 16, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Aug/202580/nisa_kills_11_al_shabaab_fighters_in_joint_operations_across_central_somalia.aspx.

266. See "Somali Security Forces Eliminate Senior Al-Shabaab Leader in Lower Shabelle," SONNA, September 9, 2025. <https://sonna.so/en/somali-security-forces-eliminate-senior-al-shabaab-leader-in-lower-shabelle>.

267. See "Al-Shabaab Leader among 24 Terrorists Killed in Somalia," Anadolu Ajansı, September 25, 2025. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/al-shabaab-leader-among-24-terrorists-killed-in-somalia/3699177>.

268. See "Ciidamada DFS Oo Howlgal Ku Dilay Horjooge Sare Oo Al Shabaab Ah," Horseed Media - Somalia News, November 2025. <https://horseedmedia.net/ciidamada-dfs-oo-howlgal-ku-dilay-horjooge-sare-oo-al-shabaab-ah/415584/>.

269. <https://sonna.so/en/police-forces-kill-two-al-shabaab-shabaab-militants/>

270. See "Inter-Clan Conflict Erupts on Hiiran-Middle Shabelle Border," Hiiraan Online, January 18, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jan/199877/inter_clan_conflict_erupts_on_hiiran_middle_shabelle_border.aspx.

271. See "Somali Interior Ministry Condemns Clan Killings, Urges Immediate End to Revenge Attacks," Hiiraan Online, November 10, 2025. https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Nov/203579/somali_interior_ministry_condemns_clan_killings_urges_immediate_end_to_revenge_attacks.aspx.

The decision followed criticism from Hiiraan governor Muse Salad Wehliye, who described the humanitarian assistance delivered to the SNA and Macawisley in Moqokori as “inadequate and disgraceful.”²⁷²

Around 1,500 households were displaced from rural villages to Warsheikh town after experiencing three consecutive failed rainy seasons which devastated their livelihoods.²⁷³

Northeastern Politics

On February 16, the SSC-Khaatumo parliament initiated the drafting of a regional constitution, marking a significant step toward establishing a formal governance framework. This process was key for shaping the region’s administrative future and creating a clear legal foundation for its institutions. Once completed, the draft constitution will be submitted to a community general assembly—an inclusive political forum comprising key political leaders, traditional elders, and civil society representatives — whose deliberations and approval will determine the region’s constitutional and political trajectory.²⁷⁴

The region was officially recognized by the federal government on April 14 as the sixth federal member state and adopted the name Northeastern State of Somalia, comprising Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (part of the Togdheer) regions. This came after a visit by Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre to Las Anod when he said that the region is “a legitimate part of the Federal Republic of Somalia” and “not a contested area.”²⁷⁵

Abdikadir Ahmed Ali Firdhiye was elected as the leader on August 30 following a contested election held in Las Anod. His victory had been widely anticipated due to the political alliances he cultivated during the campaign. Abdirashid Yusuf Jibril, the former Speaker of the Puntland Parliament, was elected as Vice President gaining 65 out of 83 votes. Both leaders were widely perceived as the preferred candidates of the Federal Government, a perception that has generated controversy among opposition figures.²⁷⁶

On October 12, just one week after the agreement between Somaliland and Puntland to strengthen cross-border trade and security cooperation, Northeastern announced an agreement with the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia. The key areas covered in the agreement included cross-border security cooperation and joint efforts to combat illegal migration and organized crime. To ensure the effective implementation of these commitments, both parties agreed to hold regular meetings on security-related matters.²⁷⁷

272. See “Hirshabelle Suspends Cooperation with SODMA over Mismanagement of Humanitarian Aid,” Hiiraan Online, May 25, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/May/201631/hirshabelle_suspends_cooperation_with_sodma_over_mismanagement_of_humanitarian_aid.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront.

273. Ibid.

274. See “SSC-Khaatumo Parliament Moves to Draft Constitution, Paving the Way for Governance Framework,” Somali Magazine, February 16, 2025. <https://somalimagazine.so/ssc-khaatumo-parliament-moves-to-draft-constitution-paving-the-way-for-governance-framework/>.

275. See “Somalia Recognizes SSC-Khaatumo, Invites Leader to National Consultative Council,” Hiiraan Online, April 14, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/Apr/201124/somalia_recognizes_ssc_khaatumo_invites_leader_to_national_consultative_council.aspx.

276. Hiiraan Online, “Abdikadir Ahmed Ali Firdhiye elected President of Somalia’s new Northeastern State” August 30, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/aug/202728/abdikadir_ahmed_ali_firdhiye_elected_president_of_somalia_s_new_northeastern_state.aspx See also, Horn Observer, “Money and manipulation: The battle for power in Northeast, Somalia’s election” September 2, 2025: <https://hornobserver.com/articles/3474/Money-and-Manipulation-The-Battle-for-Power-in-Northeast-Somalia-Election>

277. See “Kadib Heshiiskii Nairobi, Waqooyi Bari oo shaacisay heshiis iskaashi oo ay la gashay” Caasimadda October 12, 2025: <https://www.caasimada.net/kadib-heshiiskii-nairobi-waqooyi-bari-oo-shaacisay-heshiis-iskaashi-oo-ay-la-gashay/>

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On November 16, the Northeastern parliament approved the cabinet appointed by President Firdhiye in October,²⁷⁸ comprising 21 ministers but including only one woman.²⁷⁹

Security

The year was characterized by tensions with Somaliland and Puntland which both consider Northeastern as part of their jurisdiction.

Tensions from 2024 war between Northeastern and Somaliland continued into 2025 when the two sides clashed in the Shangeed area between Qorilugud and Buuhoodle over a territorial dispute. The number of casualties was unknown.²⁸⁰

In February, Northeastern state forces reinforced their positions along the Oog front lines near Somaliland's border amid fears of a potential offensive by Somaliland.²⁸¹ On March 7, the two sides clashed over the town of Buqdharkayn in Sool. The escalation came as Somaliland Vice President Abdirahman Abdillahi Ismail was visiting Sanaag for what Somaliland described as a peace dialogue.²⁸²

In April, the Northeastern administration released 25 detained Somaliland soldiers as a goodwill gesture.²⁸³ However, both sides continued to hold dozens of detainees, with broader negotiations over a prisoner exchange remaining unresolved. On May 26, Somaliland also released soldiers it captured during the 2023 Sool conflict.²⁸⁴

On April 20, Farah Aydiid Jama, an official linked to the Ethiopian Consulate in Garowe, was reportedly abducted and killed by suspected al-Shabaab militants in Las Anod, with his body later found dumped outside the city. Abdullahi Hersi, the Attorney General of the Sool administration, confirmed the killing. A letter attributed to the Ethiopian Consulate described Farah as a community coordinator responsible for supporting Ethiopian nationals in the region.²⁸⁵

In May, tensions escalated after Northeastern forces seized Shaxda in the Karkaar region, which is claimed by Puntland.²⁸⁶ Puntland strongly opposed the recognition of Northeastern as a Federal Member State.

278. See "MADAXWEYNE FIRDHIYE OO MAGACAABAY GOLIIHISA WASIIRADA" Puntland Post October 20, 2025: <https://puntlandpost.net/2025/10/20/madaxweyne-firdhiye-oo-magacaabay-goliihisa-wasiirada/>

279. See "Northeastern parliament approves President Firdhiye's new government and ambitious five-year program" Hiiraan Online, November 16, 2025: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/Nov/203633/northeastern-parliament_approves_president_firdhiye_s_new_government_and_ambitious_five_year_program.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

280. See "Dagaal Deegaanka Shangeed Ku Dhex Maray Ciidamada Somaliland Iyo Kuwa SSC Khaatumo," Hiiraan Online, January 30, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/Jan/wararka_maanta30-189182.htm.

281. See "SSC Oo Qaaday Tallaabo Uga Sii Dareysa Xiisadda Kala Dhexeysa Somaliland," Caasimada Online, February 2, 2025, <https://www.caasimada.net/ssc-oo-qaaday-tallaabo-uga-sii-dareysa-xiisadda-kala-dhexeysa-somaliland/>.

282. See "Somaliland and SSC Khaatumo Forces Clash in Buqdharkayn as Territorial Dispute Escalates," Hiiraan Online, March 7, 2025, https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2025/Mar/200573/somaliland_and_ssc_khaatumo_forces_clash_in_buqdharkayn_as_territorial_dispute_escalates.aspx.

283. See "SSC-Khatumo Releases 25 Somaliland Prisoners in Goodwill Gesture amid Somali PM's Visit," Somali Guardian, April 15, 2025, <https://www.somaliguadian.com/news/somalia-news/ssc-khatumo-releases-25-somaliland-prisoners-in-goodwill-gesture-amid-somali-pms-visit/>.

284. See "Saraakiil Laga Soo Daayey Xabsiyada Somaliland Oo Lagu Soo Dhaweeeyey Laascaanood," Horseed Media - Somalia News, May 26, 2025, <https://horseedmedia.net/saraakiil-laga-soo-daayey-xabsiyada-somaliland-oo-lagu-soo-dhaweeeyey-laascaanood/405652/>.

285. See "Ethiopian Consular Officer Killed in Lasanood Under Mysterious Circumstances," Kaab TV, April 21, 2025, <https://en.kaabtv.com/ethiopian-consular-officer-killed-in-lasanood-under-mysterious-circumstances/>.

286. See "Tensions Rise Between Puntland and SSC-Khatumo Amid Military Standoff," Shabelle Media Network, May 24, 2025, <https://shabellemedia.com/tensions-rise-between-puntland-and-ssc-khatumo-amid-military-standoff/>.

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On June 20, human traffickers involved in smuggling youth to Libya were detained by Northeastern forces in Las Anod.²⁸⁷ The arrests highlighted ongoing efforts to combat trafficking networks, as many Somali youth continue to undertake dangerous migration routes through Libya in attempts to reach Europe.

Tensions were particularly pronounced in Sanaag in July, when Puntland authorities banned unauthorized gatherings and restricted vehicles with Somaliland or Northeastern license plates, citing security concerns. The measures were widely seen as an attempt to curb political activity linked to Northeastern which also claims jurisdiction over parts of Sanaag.

In November, tensions between Puntland and Northeastern continued after clashes in Boocame in Sool. Northeastern authorities accused Puntland of launching an attack aimed at destabilizing the town.

287. See “Ciidanka Ammaanka SSC KHATUMO Oo Qabtay Shabakad Ka Shaqaysa Tahriibka..” Horseed Media, June 20, 2025. <https://horseedmedia.net/ciidanka-ammaanka-ssc-khatumo-oo-qabtay-shabakad-ka-shaqaysa-tahriibka/406951/>.

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