



COI QUERY

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Question(s)	<p>Security situation in Mudug and Galgaduud Regions (January – 15 November 2019):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Short description of Mudug and Galgaduud regions<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.1. Description of Mudug and Galgaduud1.2. Security situation in Galmudug1.3. Pre-election developments2. Control of territory and activities of armed groups3. Recent security trends and impact on the civilian population<ol style="list-style-type: none">3.1. Population displacements3.2. Overview of documented incidents with civilians casualties
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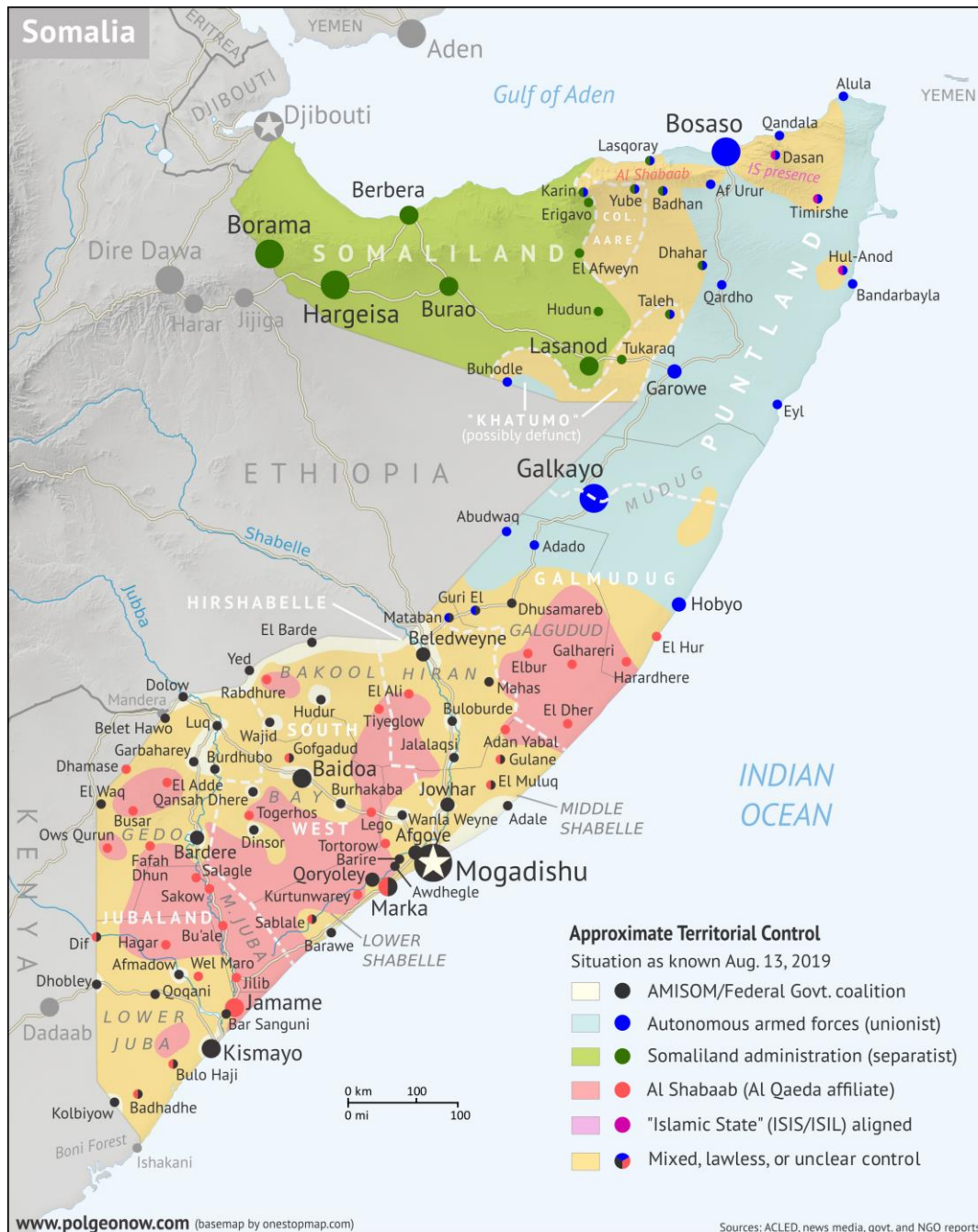
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The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision making authorities. The answer was finalised on the 17 December 2019. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.

COI QUERY RESPONSE

Security situation in Mudug and Galgaduud Regions (January – 15 November 2019)



Map 1: Somalia – Approximate Territorial Control as of 13 August 2019.¹

¹ Political Geography Now, Somalia Control Map & Timeline, August 2019, [url](#)



1. Short description of Mudug and Galgaduud regions

1.1 Description of Mudug and Galgaduud regions

Mudug and Galgaduud (Galgadud, Galguduud) are administrative regions in Central Somalia, with the regional capitals of Gaalkacyo (Galkayo) and Dhusamareb (Dhuusamareeb, Dusmareb) respectively.² Galgaduud and the southern Mudug belong to the Galmudug Interim Administration (GIA); the northern part of Mudug is under the administration of Puntland.³ The capital of Galmudug state is Dhusamareb.⁴

The administrative border splits the city of Gaalkacyo in a north and south section, administered by the Puntland and the Galmudug government respectively.⁵ The division of the city into two parts goes back to Italian colonial administration, during which Gaalkacyo and its environs were divided via the “Tomaselli” line to solve inter-clan conflicts over land.⁶ The conflict in Gaalkacyo has escalated since the formation of Galmudug in 2015 and is largely related to clan struggle.⁷ The division of the city reflects territorial claims of the area’s dominant clans: the Hawiye clan (and particularly its Habr Gedir sub-clan) in Galmudug and the Darod clan (Majerteen sub-clan) in Puntland.⁸

Galmudug was established ‘out of the ashes of balkanized, city-states run by sub clans and various armed groups’ and its formation was supported by the elders of the 11 main sub-clans in the area.⁹ Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa (ASWJ)—‘an Ethiopian-backed militant Sufi group established in 1991’¹⁰—agreed to join only in December 2017/January 2018.¹¹ As pointed out in a joint report of UNSOM and OHCHR, the group ‘has no specific clan identity’.¹² ASWJ fights al-Shabaab and is aligned with AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) forces and with the army of the federal government of Somalia.¹³

According to FAO (UN Food and Agriculture Organization), the central Galgaduud and Mudug were the areas with the highest levels of food insecurity in the reporting period of July-September 2019.¹⁴ The crisis continued in the FAO reporting period of October-December 2019.¹⁵

1.2 Security situation in Galmudug

US Department of State reports that Galmudug has faced fighting among clans, particularly over land and water resources; clan-based political violence included revenge killings and attacks on civilian

² For the administrative division see UN, Somalia, Map No. 3690 Rev. 10, December 2011, [url](#)

³ Netherlands (the), DAF/CAB, Country of Origin Information Report on South and Central Somalia, March 2019, [url](#), p. 27

⁴ HIPS, The Galmudug Crisis: A Blueprint for Sustainable Settlement, September 2019, [url](#)

⁵ Global Shelter Cluster, Mudug, [url](#). The Puntland and Galmudug administrations ‘accuse one another of land grabbing and territorial expansion’, see HIPS, Gaalkacyo Conflict: Drivers, Contributors and Potential Solutions, December 2016, [url](#), p. 4

⁶ IGC, Galkayo and Somalia’s Dangerous Faultlines, 10 December 2015, [url](#)

⁷ HIPS, Gaalkacyo Conflict: Drivers, Contributors and Potential Solutions, December 2016, [url](#), p. 3

⁸ ICG, Galkayo and Somalia’s Dangerous Faultlines, 10 December 2015, [url](#)

⁹ HIPS, The Galmudug Crisis: A Blueprint for Sustainable Settlement, September 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰ CISAC, Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama, 2019, [url](#)

¹¹ CISAC, Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama, 2019, [url](#); Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, The Galmudug Crisis: A Blueprint for Sustainable Settlement, September 2019, [url](#)

¹² UNSOM HRP, OHCHR, Protection of Civilians: Building the Foundation for Peace, Security and Human Rights in Somalia, December 2017, [url](#)

¹³ Al Jazeera, Armed groups in Somalia, 6 June 2018, [url](#)

¹⁴ FAO, Early Warning Early Action report on food security and agriculture (July-September 2019), 2019, [url](#), p. 4

¹⁵ FAO, Early Warning Early Action report on food security and agriculture (October-December 2019), 2019, [url](#), p. 23



settlements throughout the 2018.¹⁶ Similarly, Human Rights Watch names Galgaduud one of the regions, in which civilians ‘were targeted or faced indiscriminate attacks’ during clan violence.¹⁷

Moreover, Galmudug is one of the areas in Somalia, in which al-Shabaab has pursued ‘an aggressive child recruitment campaign with retaliation against communities refusing to hand over children’.¹⁸ Other militarily active actors in Galmudug—Galmudug forces, ASWJ as well as the Somali National Army and clan militias—are similarly reported to recruit children. The same actors are responsible for the detention, killing, and injuring of children as well as using sexual violence toward children.¹⁹

When compared to other areas in South and Central Somalia, Galmudug displays fewer incidents of violence, according to the COI report of the MFA of the Netherlands.²⁰ Still, the presence of non-state armed groups in the area limits the abilities of humanitarian organizations to assist civilians.²¹

1.3 Pre-election developments

Galmudug regional state Presidential elections will take place from 17 to 23 December 2019, whereas the election of the regional parliament are due to be held from 29 November to 9 December 2019.²² During 2019, tensions between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the federal government of Galmudug persisted over the organization of the electoral process.²³

- **Tensions between the Federal Government and Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa**

The sources of the Critical Threat Project report that Galmudug State police clashed with Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa (ASWJ) militia forces in Dhusamareb on 17 August ‘outside a compound that is set to host an SFG-brokered reconciliation conference for political fractions in Galmudug’.²⁴ Following the clash, FGS sent security forces to the capital.²⁵ In return, ‘Sheikh Shakir Ali Hassan, the leader of Ahlu Sunna, accused the federal government of withdrawing from the agreement and deployed more troops to Dhusamareb’.²⁶

On 5 – 16 September 2019, after negotiations between the Somalia’s Federal Government and ASWJ, a reconciliation conference, which brought together over 720 delegates from 11 sub-clans, took place in Dhusamareb. The conference reached consensus on the establishment of an inclusive administration and on 8 October, the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation announced the formation of a committee to implement the procedures of the selection of assembly members.²⁷ However, on 22 October, the Chief Minister of Galmudug, Mohamed Ali Hasan (Sheikh

¹⁶ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2018 – Somalia, [url](#)

¹⁷ HRW, Somalia: Events of 2018, [url](#)

¹⁸ HRW, Somalia: Events of 2018, [url](#)

¹⁹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict, S/2019/506, 26 July 2019, [url](#), p. 21-22

²⁰ Netherlands (the), DAF/CAB, Country of Origin Information Cluster, Country of Origin Information Report on South and Central Somalia, March 2019, [url](#), p. 27

²¹ UN Security Council, Report of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, S/2019/799, 7 October 2019, [url](#), p. 6

²² Shabelle Media Network, The timetable for Galmudug State elections has been announced, 25 November 2019, [url](#)

²³ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia S/2019/661, 15 August 2019, [url](#), p. 4; International Crisis Group, Global Overview: October 2019, Somalia, [url](#); for the details on the electoral process, see East African (the), Leaders in row over Somalia’s Galmudug, 21 September 2019, [url](#)

²⁴ Critical Threats Project, Gulf of Aden Security Review, 19 August 2019, [url](#)

²⁵ Mareeg Media, Somalia airlifts weapons, bullet proof vehicles into Dhusamareb, 27 August 2019, [url](#)

²⁶ Goobjoog News, ASWJ blames FGS of agreements revoke, threats to defend its territory, 28 August 2019, [url](#)

²⁷ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia, 15 November 2019, [url](#), p. 2



Mohammed Shakir)—the spiritual leader of ASWJ who holds the post following a power-sharing agreement between FGS and ASWJ reached in December 2018²⁸— appointed a separate committee, explaining the move by violation of previous agreements by FGS.²⁹

In the late October, ASWJ ‘reportedly deployed fighters in and around Galmudug capital Dhusamareb, but returned to bases following 28 October meeting between Galmudug chief minister and interior minister,’ as reported by International Crisis Group (ICG).³⁰ On 2 and 3 November, FGS forces seized Guriel (Guriceel) and Mataban towns from ASWJ and deployed additional security forces to Dhusamareb on 4 November.³¹ Somalia’s minister of Interior accused ASWJ of trying to paralyze the efforts of FGS to establish a new administration in Galmudug.³²

- **Al-Shabaab**

Local media reports that Somalia-based al-Shabaab has tried to influence presidential election by ordering ‘all the elders and delegates who choose the members of the federal legislature and the state councils to register with the group.’ The insurgency group announced that 159 clan leaders from Jubbaland, Hirshabelle, South West, and Galmudug states have registered with al-Shabaab.³³

According to the sources of the Critical Threats Project, 33 clan leaders from Galmudug State attended al-Shabaab-organised welcoming ceremony in Buq Aqable town in Hiraan region on 5 August 2019; the participating clan leaders have reportedly disavowed FGS.³⁴

2. Control of territory and activities of armed group

To see approximate territorial control over Mudug and Galgaduud regions, see map 1.

The military forces/actors active in Mudug and Galgaduud regions during the reporting period are as follows:

- **GIA and Puntland militaries**

The militaries of Galmudug and Puntland states operate in the regions almost entirely independently, particularly in the areas not controlled by AMISOM (the African Union Mission in Somalia) and FGS.³⁵

- **Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa (ASWJ)**

According to a report of UNSOM HRPG and OHCHR, ASWJ acts as ‘de facto administration’ in the town of Guriel and the district of Dhusamareb and ‘claims Hiraan, Galgaduud, and Mudug as its territory, and has been opposing security forces and state authorities in areas under its control.’³⁶

²⁸ Garowe Online, Somalia’s Govt more troops to Galmudug amid brewing tension, 4 November 2019, [url](#)

²⁹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia, 15 November 2019, [url](#), p. 2

³⁰ ICG, Crisis Watch, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Global Overview: October 2019, Somalia, [url](#)

³¹ ICG, Crisis Watch, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Global Overview, Somalia, 2019, [url](#)

³² Garowe Online, Somalia’s Govt more troops to Galmudug amid brewing tension, 4 November 2019, [url](#)

³³ East African (the), Al-Shabaab move to influence Somalia polls, 3 August 2019, [url](#)

³⁴ Critical Threats Project, Gulf of Aden Security Review, 8 August 2019, [url](#)

³⁵ Political Geography Now, Last Update 13 August 2019, [url](#); see the same source for a map of distribution of the military actors in the region.

³⁶ UNSOM HRPG, OHCHR, Protection of Civilians: Building the Foundation for Peace, Security and Human Rights in Somalia, December 2017, [url](#), p.19



In the last week of June 2019, FGS announced the integration of a major fraction of ASWJ into the federal security forces.³⁷ On 1 July, ASWJ handed over its soldiers to the SNA (Somali National Army) to fight against al-Shabaab.³⁸ The attempts for integration of ASWJ forces into the national army continued during the autumn 2019.³⁹

The final report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia (September 2019) states:

‘The integration of ASWJ into the federal structures represented an important step in Somali forces assuming security responsibilities from AMISOM. The successful integration of ASWJ forces will depend on the Federal Government accommodating the group’s demands for power and resources without affecting the ability of ASWJ to counter Al-Shabaab or alienating other political factions in Galmudug.’⁴⁰

- **AMISOM (The African Union Mission in Somalia)**

AMISOM is a military component of the African Union Mission in Somalia, comprised of troops drawn from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia.⁴¹ AMISOM supports ‘the FGS’ efforts to unify the parties of the Galmudug crises’ and the agreement of integration of ASWJ into SNA.⁴²

On 31 August 2019, African Union peacekeepers from Djibouti arrived to Dhusamareb to support security forces and to secure the venue of the reconciliation conference, which took place in the capital prior to the regional elections.⁴³ ‘Members of the Somali federal parliament, Galmudug officials, politicians and the public welcomed the troops to the city,’ a local media channel reported.⁴⁴

- **ENDF (Ethiopian National Defense Force)**

ENDF forces are reported to have deployed in Dhusamareb at the end of November 2019, prior to the parliamentary and presidential elections that will be held in December. Somalia opposition groups have evaluated the reported deployment as an attempt to ‘interfere with the upcoming elections and ensure a “victory” for a predetermined candidate.’⁴⁵

- **Clans**

The clans that are present in South and Central Somalia are Darod, Hawiye, and Dir; they all have the highest position in the Somali clan hierarchy and ‘subsumed under the term Samaale’.⁴⁶ Several sub-clans of Habr Gedir (Hawiye)—Suleiman, Ayr, and Duduble—and the Murusade (Hawiye) clan inhabit Galgaduud region. Mudug is inhabited by the Sa’ad, a sub-clan of Habr Gedir (Hawiye), in the south and the Omar Mohamoud, a sub-clan of Majerteen (Darod), in the north.⁴⁷

³⁷ UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), p. 25

³⁸ Mareeg Media, Somali Military Takes Over Ahlu Sunna Troops, 2 July 2019, [url](#)

³⁹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia S/2019/661, 15 August 2019, [url](#), p. 12

⁴⁰ UNSC Panel of Experts on Somalia, Report pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia (S/2019/858), 27 September 2019, [url](#), p. 25

⁴¹ AMISOM, AMISOM Military Component, [url](#)

⁴² African Union, Progress Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia/AMISOM, 7 August 2019, [url](#), p.1

⁴³ Shabelle Media Network, African Union Forces Arrived in Galmudug State Capital, 31 August 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Somaliland, AMISOM deploys Djiboutian contingent to Galmudug State of Somalia, 1 September 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁵ Goobjoog News, Somalia’s opposition scolds Ethiopian PM for ‘violent involvement’ in Somalia, 30 November 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁶ EASO, Country of Origin Information report, South and Central Somalia, Country Overview, August 2014, [url](#), p. 20

⁴⁷ EASO, Country of Origin Information report, South and Central Somalia, Country Overview, August 2014, [url](#), p. 103, 105-106



The joint report of UNSOM HRPG and OHCHR states that ‘[t]he clan dynamic is complex and most clans have their own militias, which have no basis in Somali law and do not operate within formal structures. Conflicts between clans are widespread and relate to the broader non-international armed conflict.’⁴⁸ UN Security Council reports that clan conflicts remain frequent in Galmudug.⁴⁹

Following a local reconciliation meeting between the Saad sub-clan of the Habr Gidir and the Dir clan—both of whom reside in remote areas of Mudug—organized by the Galmudug Minister of Reconciliation and Federalism from 30 June to 3 July 2019, the clans reached a ceasefire agreement and pledged to end hostilities.⁵⁰ Following the reconciliation conference in Dhusamareb, clans of Galmudug have agreed to support the formation of a new government.⁵¹

- **Al-Shabaab**

LIFOS reports that the presence of Al-Shabaab in Galmudug is less apparent, when compared with the south of Somalia.⁵² The districts’ capitals under Al-Shabaab control in Galgaduud region are El Bur and El Der; in Mudug, the group controls Harardhere.⁵³

According to the sources of Critical Threats Project, al-Shabaab hosted Eid al Fitr celebration (4 June 2019) in towns under its control in Galgaduud as well as in Middle Juba.⁵⁴

In the middle of January, the local media reported on the start of security operations against al-Shabaab in several locations in Galgaduud.⁵⁵ According to local media, in November 2019, al-Shabaab fighters left several settlements in Harardhere district of Mudug, after the start of the operation by FGS.⁵⁶

On 11 May, al-Shabaab claimed a killing of a commander of the joint Puntland-Galmudug security forces in Gaalkacyo,⁵⁷ and, on 23 May, an al-Shabaab militant attempted to detonate a suicide vest during a meeting of the leadership of ASWJ—where Galmudug state president was present along with senior Sufi leaders—in Guriel town, Galgaduud.⁵⁸ The insurgency group claimed responsibility for the 31 May assassination of a UN staff member in south Gaalkacyo.⁵⁹ The group attacked the Gaalkacyo police chief on July 1.⁶⁰ In August, the Federal forces and the forces of Galmudug organised operations against al-Shabaab in Dhusamareb and Guriel.⁶¹

⁴⁸ UNSOM HRPG, OHCHR, Protection of Civilians: Building the Foundation for Peace, Security and Human Rights in Somalia, December 2017, [url](#), p.19

⁴⁹ UN Security Council, Report of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, S/2019/799, [url](#)

⁵⁰ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia S/2019/661, 15 August 2019, [url](#), p. 6

⁵¹ Halqaran News, Galmudug clans agree to form inclusive government- communique, 17 September 2019, [url](#)

⁵² Sweden, LIFOS, Lifosrapport: Säkerhetssituationen i Somalia [Somalia – The Security Situation], version 1.0, 3 July 2019, [url](#), p. 6. For the distribution of the Al-Shabaab in the region, see Political Geography Now, Last Update 13 August 2019, [url](#)

⁵³ Norway, Landinfo, Somalia: Al-Shabaab areas in Southern Somalia (query response), 21 May 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁴ Critical Threats Project, Gulf of Aden Security Review, 5 June 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁵ Shabelle Media Network, Galmudug Oo dhaq dhaqaaqyo ka bilowday G/ Galgaduud [Galmudug: Operations started in Galgaduud region], 14 January 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁶ Shabelle Media Network, Al-Shabaab Deserts Areas in Central Somalia, 11 November 2019, [url](#).

⁵⁷ VOA, Al-Shabab Claims Responsibility for Targeted Blast, 12 May 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁸ Mustaqbal Radio, Galdmudug forces thwarted man with a suicide vest at Ceremony, 23 May 2019, [url](#); Critical Threats Project, Gulf of Aden Security Review, 23 May 2019, [url](#)

⁵⁹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia S/2019/661, 15 August 2019, [url](#), p. 4

⁶⁰ Critical Threats Project, Gulf of Aden Security Review, 2 July 2019, [url](#)

⁶¹ Shabelle Media Network, Dhaq dhaqaaqyo ciidan oo laga dareemayo Galmudug [Military operations reported in Galmudug], 21 August 2019, [url](#)



3. Recent security trends and impact on the civilian population

3.1 Population displacements

According to Displacements Monitored by UNHCR Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN), 10,000 new departures caused by conflict/insecurity were registered in Galgaduud in 2019, which makes it one of the regions with the biggest numbers of departures (following Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Bakool with 96,000, 18,000, and 14,000 departures respectively). Galgaduud is also a region of arrival: with 14,000 arrivals caused by conflict/insecurity, it takes the third position, following Banadir (88,000 arrivals) and Middle Shabelle (14,000 arrivals). For Mudug, the number of departures and arrivals—both caused by conflict/insecurity—were reported as 5,000 and 2,000 respectively.⁶²

3.2 Overview of documented incidents with civilians casualties

According to the numbers from ACLED, in the period January – 15 November 2019 there have been a total of 63 security incidents in Mudug region, including battles, violence against civilians, and explosions and/or remote violence, which resulted in 92 fatalities. The biggest number of the security incidents (38) took place in Gaalkacyo. For the same period for Galgaduud, ACLED has registered 27 security incidents, resulting in 31 fatalities. 12 of the incidents took place in Dhusamareeb.⁶³

According to ACLED, al-Shabaab has reportedly abducted 100 students (aged 12-16) from two villages near Dhusamareeb in a forced conscription campaign.⁶⁴

Due to time and language constraints, only a very limited number of incidents reported by local media could be retrieved and are listed as follows:

- 14 June: 9 civilians were killed in southern Gaalkacyo by a local militia. The local press named the incident 'revenge attack' as it was connected to a killing of a local security official by al-Shabaab, which took place prior to the incident.⁶⁵
- 11 July: in the northern part of Gaalkacyo, Puntland, unidentified gunmen opened fire on vehicle, killing at least 5 civilians.⁶⁶
- 14 July: In an explosion in a cafe situated in a proximity to Galmudug administration's headquarters in Dhusamareeb one soldier died and five other persons, including Galmudug MP and the owner of the cafe, were injured. The attack is believed to be committed by al-Shabaab.⁶⁷

⁶² UNHCR, Displacements Monitored by UNHCR Protection and Return Monitoring Network (PRMN), [url](#). Only departures/arrivals that were caused by conflict and insecurity were studied for this query.

⁶³ ACLED Dashboard, November 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁴ ACLED, ACLED Regional Overview – Africa (28 May 2019), 28 May 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁵ East African (the), Nine civilians killed in Somalia revenge attack: police, 15 June 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁶ ICG, Tracking Conflict Worldwide, Somalia 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁷ Garowe Online, Bomb blast hits central Somalia town, 14 July 2019, [url](#)



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