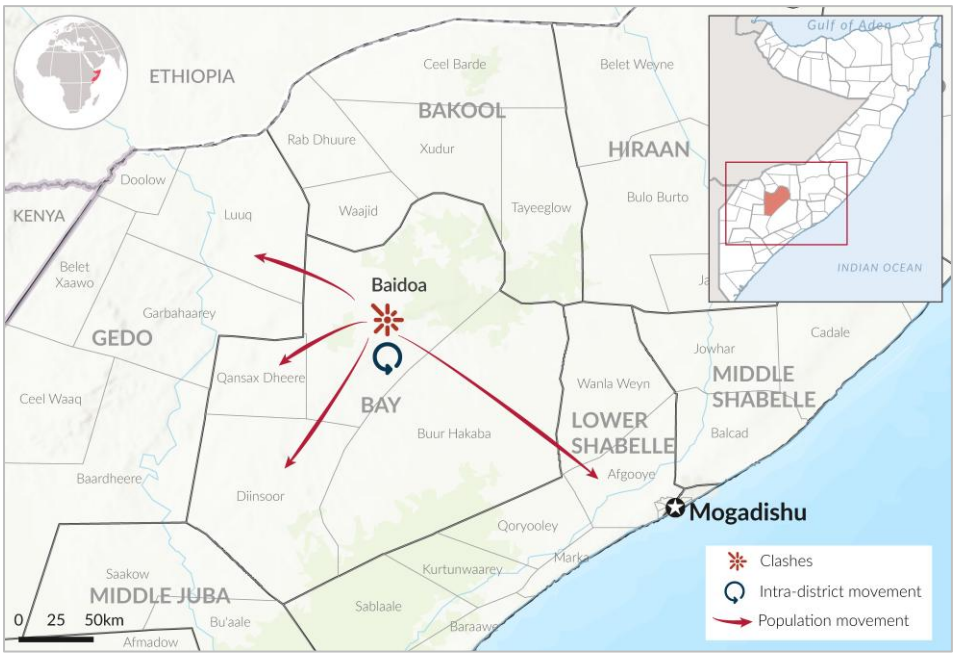
RENEWED CLASHES IN BAIDOA TRIGGER DISPLACEMENT OF OVER 14,000 INDIVIDUALS

Displaced Families	Displaced Individuals	Cross-border movement	Deaths	Injuries	Incident Date
2,472	14,832	0	9	109	3-5 September 2026

Background



Between 3 and 5 September 2026, armed clashes erupted in Baidoa following reported clashes involving forces aligned with the former Southwest State. The confrontation heightened insecurity and tensions across the city, affecting both host communities and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Exchanges of gunfire and artillery were reported in Al-Faras, Boonkaay, Al-Axmaar, Darasalam, Tawfiq, Bukriyey, the livestock market, central Baidoa and surrounding residential areas. Although Federal and Southwest State forces reportedly pushed back the attacking forces, the opposition elements subsequently called on civilians to evacuate Baidoa amid reports of preparations for a possible renewed attack.

The violence and fear of renewed clashes resulted in the displacement of 2,472 households (1,796 IDPs and 676 host community), 14,832 individuals, to flee Al-Faras, Boonkaay, Al-Axmaar, Darasalam, Tawfiq and Bukriyey. Displaced families sought refuge in Berdale, Isha and Wadajir villages within Baidoa town; Hegerow, Shinbirow, Bibeelow and Balow IDP camps in Burhakaba; Kurman, Hafat, Awaraabow and Bandhub IDP camps in Dinsoor; Keyniga, Doofeylahow and Afgoye IDP camps in Hudur; and Awdinle, while others are preparing to move to additional locations. This was the second major outbreak of violence in Baidoa in less than three weeks, following the clashes of 17 August, and has further exposed IDPs and host communities to injury, displacement, restricted movement and disrupted access to essential services amid continuing concerns about renewed violence.

Health facilities in Baidoa reported receiving a total of 109 conflict-related casualties, including one reported fatality. These figures reflected only those who accessed formal health services and may not reflect the overall number of casualties. As a result, new displacement movements are underway, with households relocating to the Banadir region, Lower Shabelle and several districts within the Bay region. Civilians report growing anxiety

and uncertainty, particularly amid concerns over renewed violence. Vulnerable groups, including women, children and the elderly, are at heightened risk during this displacement.

According to a PSMN partner on the ground, the majority of those displaced were women, children and older persons, who were assisted by their families to reach safer villages and other IDP sites. Of the 14,832 affected individuals (2,472 households), about 79% were women and children under 18. Community structures and residential shelters sustained serious damage, further increasing the vulnerability of affected households and limiting access to safe and adequate shelter. Eight persons with disabilities (2 males and 6 females) have also been identified among the affected population, underscoring the specific protection and assistance needs. The security incident has also disrupted access to education. Educational activities for nearly 600 school-age children have been affected, interrupting regular attendance and learning.

Protection Risks

Civilian Casualties and Exposure to Armed Violence

The primary protection concern remains direct harm to civilians from fighting in populated areas. Recent clashes involved exchanges of gunfire and artillery fire in residential neighborhoods, markets, and areas close to IDP settlements. Civilians faced risks of death, injury, and being caught in crossfire during both the fighting and subsequent displacement movements.

Protection Risks Linked to Reduced Monitoring and Presence

A broader concern, particularly relevant for humanitarian advocacy, is the reduction in protection monitoring capacity across Somalia, as a result of reduced funding. Diminished field presence risks creating protection blind spots precisely when conflict-related displacement is increasing in areas such as Baidoa.

Forced Displacement

Recently displaced households are experiencing repeated displacement, which is eroding their coping capacity and increasing their exposure to protection risks. Describing the impact on his family, one displaced father said, *"Our children are no longer safe. Every time we flee, I fear that my daughter will be subjected to sexual violence. They should be in school, but instead they live under the constant threat of violence."* These risks are particularly severe for women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and female-headed households, who face greater barriers to safe movement, protection and access to humanitarian assistance.

Heightened Risks for Women, Children, Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities

Women and children constitute the majority of the displaced population. Older persons and persons with disabilities face additional mobility and access constraints during flight and displacement.

In addition, recent and earlier Baidoa displacement crises have resulted in interruptions to schooling, psychosocial distress, and family separation risks. Previous displacement movements in March 2026 temporarily separated approximately 150 children from their caregivers.

Gender-based violence

Continued insecurity and displacement in Baidoa increase GBV risks, particularly for women and girls. Overcrowded shelters, inadequate lighting, limited privacy, and unsafe movement to water points and essential services heighten exposure to sexual violence, harassment, and exploitation. Disrupted services and restricted movement may also prevent survivors from safely accessing confidential, survivor-centred assistance and referrals.

Psychological distress

Repeated displacement, inadequate shelter, limited access to protection services and uncertainty about renewed violence are contributing to heightened stress and emotional distress among affected populations. Describing the psychological impact, an older father stated, *"We are living with constant fear and uncertainty. Every sound of gunfire or explosion brings back the trauma, and we are struggling to feel safe even inside our homes."* Sudden displacement movements also increase the risk of family separation and further distress, particularly among children, older persons, and persons with disabilities who may require additional assistance to reach safety.

Urgent Humanitarian Needs

Protection Services

Women, children, older persons, marginalized groups, and persons with disabilities face heightened protection risks following displacement, including GBV, family separation, and exploitation. Protection monitoring and services are expected to resume soon in some affected areas to identify risks, document protection concerns, and facilitate referrals. Protection partners are already providing support in some IDP sites through protection desks, case management, and referral pathways. Continued support to community-based protection structures remains essential to strengthen early warning, identify at-risk individuals, and ensure safe referrals in line with informed consent, confidentiality, and do-no-harm principles.

Protection Monitoring

Given the rapidly evolving conflict dynamics in and around Baidoa, maintaining and expanding protection monitoring capacity remains essential to identify emerging protection risks, document civilian harm and displacement impacts, support timely referrals, and inform humanitarian response and advocacy efforts aimed at protecting affected populations.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Reportedly, displaced households urgently require safe drinking water, adequate and gender-segregated toilets, handwashing facilities, hygiene kits and accessible sanitation services. Immediate water-quality monitoring, hygiene promotion and disease-prevention measures are essential to reduce the risk of cholera, acute watery diarrhoea and other communicable diseases in Baidoa's overcrowded displacement sites.

Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

PSMN has identified that more than 200 newly displaced households require immediate emergency shelter and essential household items after arriving without their belongings. Priority assistance includes tarpaulins or plastic sheeting, poles, blankets, sleeping mats, cooking materials, and other emergency supplies needed to construct safe temporary shelters and provide protection from weather, overcrowding, and associated protection risks.

Psychosocial Support Services

Affected children and caregivers urgently require psychological first aid and age-appropriate psychosocial support. Caregivers have reported signs of distress among children, including bed-wetting and restlessness. Protection agencies operating in the area should provide immediate community-based support, identify individuals requiring specialized care, and facilitate safe referrals to appropriate mental health and psychosocial support services.

Dignity Kits

Women and adolescent girls have an urgent need for culturally appropriate dignity and menstrual-hygiene kits containing essential sanitary and personal-care items. Their distribution should be accompanied by safe, accessible, and gender-segregated sanitation facilities, adequate lighting, confidential information on available GBV services, and safe referral pathways.

Education Support

Nearly 200 displaced children require urgent access to safe and inclusive education to prevent prolonged disruption to their learning and increased exposure to child protection risks. Priority interventions include temporary learning spaces if displacement continues, accelerated or community-based education, learning materials, school supplies and psychosocial support, alongside assistance to facilitate enrolment in nearby schools.



Families fleeing to safer places within Baidoa town.©PSMN 2026

NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP
GROUPE DE LA BANQUE AFRICAINE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT
Internal Displacement Solutions Fund

The PSMN (Protection & Solutions Monitoring Network) is a UNHCR-led project that identifies and reports on displacements, as well as the protection risks and incidents driving such population movements. On behalf of UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 10 local partners across Somalia conduct data gathering—primarily through interviews with affected communities and key informants—and monitor displacement trends at strategic locations.

To request further details on displacement, please contact **SOMMOPMN@UNHCR.ORG**