Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum

Staatendokumentation
Country Report

Somalia

from the COI-CMS

Country of Origin Information – Content Management System

Quality assurance of the machine translation by DeepL was carried out by: Helga Geyer

Version 9
Publication date: 2026-10-05
(See date of actualization at each section heading)
Update interval: Half yearly

This project was co-financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

Disclaimer

This product of Staatendokumentation, the Country of Origin Information (COI) unit of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (Bundesamt für Fremdenwesen und Asyl, BFA), was compiled in line with Staatendokumentation's methodology and in accordance with the standards of Staatendokumentation's advisory board (Staatendokumentationsbeirat).

The Country of Origin Information - Content Management System (COI-CMS) is a database for COI content that is compiled in accordance with Staatendokumentation's standards using information from existing, reliable and primarily public sources based on the requirements of asylum and immigration procedures (BFA, courts, etc.). The COI-CMS provides a case-independent overview of the situation regarding relevant facts in countries of origin and EU member states. Users can select countries and topics from the COI-CMS to compile country information relevant to their specific needs.

The COI-CMS serves the needs of asylum and immigration authorities. Section 5 of the BFA-G (Federal Act on the implementation and organisation of the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum) applies. This product has been designed as a working aid for Austrian authorities and courts. With this in mind, an emphasis was put on readability, flexible usability and ease of use in decision-making. All information is corroborated by at least one source; however, for the reasons mentioned above, original quotations are not highlighted – not least because this does not add any value to the decision-making process.

This product does not claim to be exhaustive with regard to the information provided. This product does not determine any conclusion for the legal assessment of a specific case. Products of the COI-CMS constitute neither a general nor individual binding guideline for legal decisions. In particular, this document cannot be interpreted as a political statement on the part of Staatendokumentation or the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum. Administrative boundaries on maps used in this publication do not imply official recognition.

This product may contain informal working translations of non-German-language sources that have been created by automatic translation programmes. A professional translation is recommended in order to ensure that possible regional nuances are fully reproduced. It should also be noted that transliterations or transcriptions of proper names may vary in some languages depending on the source.

Quality and update notice

The individual chapters are kept as up to date as possible in accordance with available resources. A complete update of the country information takes place every 12 months. For certain countries, a partial update is also carried out, usually six months after the complete update. If there is a short-term and significant change in the situation in a country, additional updates may be carried out. The Staatendokumentation checks that the sources used are up to date. Consequently, sources that are older may also be considered up to date in terms of content.

Quality and update notice

Individual chapters are kept as up to date as possible in accordance with available resources. A complete update of the country report is done every 12 months. For certain countries, a partial update is done after approximately six months. In case of short-term, significant changes in the situation of a country, additional updates may be carried out. Staatendokumentation checks the validity of sources when updating a report. Consequently, older sources referenced in this report may also be considered up to date in terms of content.

Automatic translations

'Automatic translations' of products within the COI-CMS are machine translations of COI created by translation software in a target language specified by the user. As this translation is generated directly by the user, it is not checked for grammar, spelling or meaning. It is intended only to give a first impression of the content of the original document or the sources cited. Staatendokumentation accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of the machine translation. If the product is to be used for further purposes, in particular for a legal decision, it is strongly recommended that the translation be checked or carried out by a professional translator.

Quality-assured automatic translations

The quality-assured machine translations of products (usually into English) provided by Staatendokumentation are informal working summaries. Unlike purely automatic translations (see above), these are subject to separate review.

Translations that are not identified as 'automatic translations' have been quality assured by a professional translator. Any discrepancies or differences arising in the translation are not binding and have no legal effect for compliance or enforcement purposes. If you have any questions about the accuracy of the quality-assured translation, please contact Staatendokumentation at BFA-Staatendokumentation@bmi.gv.at.

Publication notice

This product is made public in accordance with Section 4 IFG (Federal Act on Access to Information (Freedom of Information Act)) (proactive publication) on Staatendokumentation's homepage (https://www.staatendokumentation.at) – a cooperation with ACCORD of the Red Cross.

Date of update

The date of update corresponds to the date on which the chapter was approved. The duration of the revision process and the quality assurance cycle may vary depending on the workload, but are documented internally and can be accessed if required. The aim of the Staatendokumentation is to keep the period between the final revision and approval as short as possible.

Contents

1 Country-specific notes 1

2 Political situation 1

2.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 2

2.1.1 Jubaland (Gedo, Lower Juba, Middle Juba) . . . 10

2.1.2 South West State (SWS; Bay, Bakool, Lower Shabelle) . . . 12

2.1.3 Benadir Regional Administration (BRA; Mogadishu) . . . 14

2.1.4 HirShabelle (Hiiraan, Middle Shabelle) . . . 16

2.1.5 Galmudug (Galgaduud, parts of Mudug) . . . 17

2.1.6 Puntland (Bari, Nugaal, parts of Mudug) . . . 18

2.2 Somaliland . . . 21

2.3 Areas inhabited by the Dhulbahante and Warsangeli / Sanaag and Sool / North East State (NES) . . . 27

3 Security situation and conditions in the various regions 30

3.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 37

3.1.1 Jubaland (Gedo, Lower Juba, Middle Juba) . . . 52

3.1.2 South West State (SWS; Bay, Bakool, Lower Shabelle) . . . 59

3.1.3 Benadir Regional Administration (BRA; Mogadishu) . . . 65

3.1.4 HirShabelle (Hiiraan, Middle Shabelle) . . . 77

3.1.5 Galmudug (Galgaduud, parts of Mudug) . . . 82

3.1.6 Puntland (Bari, Nugaal, parts of Mudug) . . . 86

3.1.7 Al-Shabaab . . . 93

3.2 Somaliland . . . 104

3.2.1 Sool and Sanaag / SSC-Khatumo / North East State (NES) / Dhulbahante, Warsangeli . . . 113

4 Legal protection, judicial system 118

4.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 118

4.2 The al-Shabaab ‘tax’ system . . . 130

4.3 Somaliland (the section on Somalia regarding the xeer should also be taken into account) . . . 135

5 Security authorities 139

5.1 Southern/central Somalia, Puntland . . . 139

5.1.1 Foreign forces . . . 139

5.1.2 Somali forces . . . 142

5.2 Somaliland . . . 154

6 Torture and inhumane treatment 156

6.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 156

6.2 Somaliland . . . 158

7 Corruption 159

7.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 159

7.2 Somaliland . . . 161

8 NGOs and human rights activists 161

8.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 161
8.2 Somaliland . . . 163
9 Ombudsman 163
9.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 163
9.2 Somaliland . . . 164
10 Military service and recruitment 164
10.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland – state forces and militias . . . 164
10.2 Al-Shabaab – (Forced) Recruitment and Child Soldiers . . . 166
10.2.1 Examples of recruitment and careers within al-Shabaab, everyday life within the group . . . 175
10.3 Al-Shabaab – Deserters and former fighters . . . 178
10.4 Somaliland and the North Eastern State (NES) . . . 185
11 General human rights situation 186
11.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 186
11.2 Somaliland . . . 188
12 Freedom of opinion and freedom of the press 188
12.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 188
12.2 Somaliland . . . 192
13 Freedom of assembly and association, opposition 194
13.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 194
13.1.1 Opposition, political parties . . . 195
13.2 Somaliland . . . 197
14 Prison conditions 198
15 Death penalty 200
16 Religious freedom 201
16.1 Areas under government control . . . 204
16.2 Areas controlled by al-Shabaab . . . 205
16.3 Somaliland . . . 207
17 Minorities and clans 208
17.1 Demographic structure . . . 213
17.1.1 Somaliland . . . 215
17.2 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 216
17.2.1 Ethnic minorities, current situation . . . 218
17.3 Occupational groups (Gabooye, Madhiban, etc.) . . . 222
17.3.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 224
17.3.2 Somaliland . . . 226
17.3.3 Mixed marriages . . . 228
17.4 Members of other clans in a minority position, and those without a clan . . . 230
18 Relevant population groups 233
18.1 Women – in general . . . 233
18.1.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland . . . 235
18.1.2 Somaliland . . . 241

18.1.3 Family, marriage, forced marriage, divorce, honour killings 243
18.2 Girls / Women – Female Genital Mutilation and Circumcision (FGM/C) 248
18.2.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland 262
18.2.2 Somaliland 265
18.2.3 Reinfibulation, deinfibulation 268
18.3 Children 270
18.4 Sexual minorities 278
18.5 Targets of targeted assassinations by al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups . . 280
18.5.1 Risks associated with protection rackets (’taxes”) 285
19 Freedom of movement and relocation 287
19.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland 287
19.1.1 Registration and citizenship 294
19.2 Somaliland 297
19.2.1 Registration and citizenship 298
20 Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees 300
20.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland 300
20.2 Somaliland 304
21 Basic services/economy 308
21.1 Economy and employment 308
21.1.1 Southern/Central Somalia 308
21.1.2 Somaliland 312
21.2 Basic services and the humanitarian situation 315
21.3 Labour market 337
21.3.1 Job search [primarily information from the FFM Somalia 2023] 348
21.3.2 Income 352
21.4 Cost of living 363
21.4.1 Housing market 365
21.4.2 Examples of living costs 372
22 Medical care 378
22.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland 378
22.1.1 Specialist treatments (diabetes, dialysis, cancer, etc.) 389
22.2 Somaliland 392
22.3 Psychiatry, Psychology 397
23 Return 403
23.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland 410
23.2 Somaliland 412
23.3 Return assistance provided by the Austrian Government 415
24 Documents 419
24.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland 419
24.2 Somaliland 424
25 Imprint 429
25.1 Copyright 429

25.2 Privacy Notice 429
25.3 Published Versions 430

1 Country-specific notes

Last modification 2025-07-30 11:22

Under international law, the Republic of Somaliland (the regions of Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sanaag and Sool) forms part of Somalia. However, in this Country Report, Somaliland is treated almost throughout as an independent country (chapter headings 'Somaliland') due to its *de facto statehood*. Owing to this highly pronounced *de facto statehood*, from a country-specific perspective, it is only necessary to consult the country information on Somalia for those chapters marked 'see chapter on Somalia' or 'see also chapter on Somalia'.

In this Country Report, the term 'Somalia' therefore generally refers to South/Central Somalia and Puntland, whilst Somaliland is generally treated separately.

Where necessary and appropriate, Puntland is also treated separately, as this Somali federal state must be regarded as independent of the rest of Somalia in certain respects.

The AfricanUnion Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has been replaced by a newly named mission – the *African Union Transition Mission in Somalia* (ATMIS). Older sources naturally use the abbreviation AMISOM, whilst more recent sources use ATMIS. At the start of 2025, ATMIS was replaced by the *African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia* (AUSSOM). Here too, older sources continue to use ATMIS, whilst more recent ones refer to AUSSOM. Based on current information, ATMIS and AUSSOM differ only in name and not significantly in terms of their mandate or personnel. Therefore, both abbreviations continue to be used – synonymously – in this country information (as indicated in the respective original source).

Data from ACLED on security-related incidents has been verified against the datasets for the relevant years and may differ slightly in the current dataset due to subsequent changes.

2 Political situation

Last modification 2026-09-03 05:53

The country is highly fragmented and consists of South/Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland. Somaliland unilaterally declared its independence as early as 1991 (SFH 1/2026). Whilst South/Central Somalia has been repeatedly affected by violent conflicts since the collapse of the state in 1991, the north of the country has developed differently (BS 2026). The authorities in Mogadishu regard Somaliland as a Somali federal state (Landinfo 5/3/2026; cf. BS 2026), a view rejected by Somaliland (BS 2026). Puntland has decisively withdrawn from the federal system and, according to its own statements, will continue to act independently until the constitutional amendments made by the federal government have been put to a nationwide referendum (HO 12/3/2025). Jubaland, too, has severed ties with the federal government over these constitutional amendments and no longer recognises it as the national administration (HO 19/2/2025; cf. SMN 28/11/2024).

Whilst Puntland, which was established as a federal state in 1998, had already existed previously, the federal government established the remaining federal states between 2013 and 2016 – namely Galmudug, HirShabelle, the South West State (SWS) and Jubaland (ICG 25/9/2023).

Since 2025, the Federal Government has also administered the North East State (NES) [*Note: essentially SSC-Khatumo*] as a separate federal state (Landinfo 5/3/2026). The capital region of Banadir (Mogadishu) remains under the direct control of the Federal Government as the Banadir Regional Administration (BRA) (HIPS 8/2/2022).

Sources

- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (8/2/2022): State of Somalia Report 2021, Year in Review, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOS-REPORT-2021-English-version.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- HO - Hiiraan Online (12/3/2025): Puntland reaffirms opposition to Mogadishu's centralization push, demands reforms, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200659/puntland_reaffirms_opposition_to_mogadishu_s_centralization_push_demands_reforms.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 2/7/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (19/2/2025): Ahmed Madobe accuses Somalia's federal government of marginalizing Jubaland, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Feb/200324/ahmed_madobe_accuses_somalia_s_federal_government_of_marginalizing_jubaland.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 2/7/2026
- ICG - International Crisis Group (25/9/2023): Avoiding a New Cycle of Conflict in Somalia's Galmudug State, https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-09/b193-somalia-galmudug-state_0.pdf, accessed 30/1/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- SFH - Swiss Refugee Council (1/2026): Factsheet Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2137060/260119_SOM_factsheet_web_DE.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (28/11/2024): Jubaland Cuts Supends Cooperation with Somali Government Amid Tension, https://shabellemedia.com/jubaland-cuts-supends-cooperation-with-somali-government-amid-tension, accessed 5/12/2024

2.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:27

Nominally, Somalia is a federal parliamentary republic; the President is Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and holds full executive power (SFH 1/2026).

Statehood:*De facto*, Somalia has been a 'stateless country' since 1991 and has since been ranked among the world's most fragile states. Although a central government was re-established in 2012 and support for state-building has steadily increased, the government exercises little control over the country and its population. There is no state monopoly on the use of force. At local and regional levels, numerous institutions govern; some operate in parallel with the central government, others complement or cooperate with it, whilst still others compete with it. The structural constraints on the government therefore remain exceptionally high. The country's physical and social infrastructure has been destroyed over three decades of violent conflict and persistent insecurity, and the government must rebuild many institutions from scratch. At the same time, political power struggles are the order of the day in all institutions. Two federal states have severed ties with the central government. The ongoing conflict with al-Shabaab, other violent conflicts, recurring environmental disasters and humanitarian emergencies severely

restrict any form of political regulation and governance. The ruling elites themselves have been shaped by the war, and their capacity to govern is weak (BS 2026). Somalia therefore remains a highly fragile state. The existing state structures and institutions are very weak; there is no comprehensive, effective state authority (AA 9/3/2026).

In many places, the state either does not exist at all or is under severe challenge from al-Shabaab (Landinfo 5/3/2026). The group is regarded as *a de facto regime* (AA 23/8/2024). According to a report by the Turkish Intelligence Service Academy, the country's fragility has recently increased due to the rebellion, political fragmentation, institutional weakness and economic problems (NM 5/12/2025). The Federal Government is struggling to exercise control beyond Mogadishu or to assert itself outside Mogadishu (HO/Ainashe 9/6/2024; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; BMLV 9/7/2026), or to enforce or implement its policies and the laws it has enacted throughout the country (FH 2024b). Even when the federal government took military action against the President of the South West State (SWS), it had to leave other parts of the country defenceless in order to do so (BMLV 9/7/2026). Tax collection by the federal government is largely confined to Mogadishu (Sahan/SWT 17/1/2025).

In 2026, Somalia received a score of just 8 points from *Freedom House* in the *Freedom in the World Index*, which measures access to political freedoms and civil rights, placing it *on*a par with Afghanistan and one point behind the People's Republic of China (FH 3/2026). The institutional vacuum is filled by a range of actors, including al-Shabaab (Sahan/Awad 28/8/2023). Consequently, the political landscape is characterised by a complex interplay of clan dynamics, regional rivalries and power struggles at the highest levels. Various factions and regional governments are vying for power, which has led to political fragmentation and a lack of coherent governance (Sahan/SWT 7/7/2023).

Trust in state institutions is low.Politicians pursue personal and clan interests; they strive for power and economic resources – rather than working towards common goals. The inability or unwillingness to tackle endemic corruption hinders the state-building process and the development of institutions, and undermines the population's trust in existing state institutions (BS 2026). Corruption and nepotismare widespread (HO/Ainashe 9/6/2024; cf. Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023).At the same time, the government is heavily reliant on foreign donors (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023). The recruitment of unqualified staff, resulting from nepotism and cronyism, reduces the efficiency of the administration (C.Maslen/U4ACRC/TI/CMI 16/2/2026).

Government: The head of state was elected by members of parliament. The last presidential elections were held on 15 May 2022, 15 months behind schedule. In this election, the former head of government, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, emerged victorious with his party, the *Union for Peace and Development* (UPD) (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). In February 2026, Parliament extended the President's term of office by one year through a constitutional amendment, meaning he will remain in office until May 2027 (AQSOM 5 3/2026; cf. Sahan 8/6/2026).

Hamza Abdi Barre took office as Prime Minister in June 2022. In August 2022, a new cabinet comprising 75 ministers, deputy ministers and ministers of state was appointed (FH 2024b). In theory, the two chambers of parliament are supposed to oversee the executive. However, the

common practice whereby the Federal President bribes members of parliament to secure their votes has severely undermined the independence of the legislature (BS 2026). Furthermore, all governments in Somalia are, by their very nature, 'hybrid governments', as the actual government relies on cooperation with clans, elders and business leaders (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Parliament: Theprovisional constitution provides for a bicameral parliament comprising a 275-member lower house and an upper house of 54 senators (HIPS 1/11/2021). Members of the upper house are elected by the parliaments of the federal states. Elections to the Upper House began in July 2021 and were concluded in November 2021 following months of disputes (FH 2024b). They were rigged across the board; there was genuine competition for only 15 of the 54 seats. Most senators are now, *de facto*, allies, friends and sometimes even family members nominated by the state presidents (HIPS 8/2/2022). Overall, this was not a credible electoral contest; the process can hardly be described as an 'election' (HIPS 1/11/2021).

In the election to the Lower House, elders and civil society groups from a particular sub-clan elect electors, who in turn, as delegates, select a Member of Parliament. Senators and Members of Parliament ultimately elect the President (FP/Ainte/Mahmood 22/9/2021). Members of Parliament are therefore elected indirectly by delegates (AA 9/3/2026; cf. UNSC 13/5/2022) – specifically by 67 delegates per seat (HIPS 1/11/2021). Here, too, there was widespread electoral manipulation (HIPS 8/2/2022), and there were allegations of irregularities and a lack of transparency (UNSC 8/2/2022; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; Sahan/SWT 18/7/2022; FH 2024b). In April 2022, the electoral process for the parliamentary elections that began in July 2021 – and which were originally due to take place in 2020 – was completed (AA 9/3/2026).

Democracy: In southern and central Somalia, there are no democratic institutions nor is there a strict separation of powers (BS 2026). Since the overthrow of Siad Barre in 1991, political offices have either been fought for or allocated under the auspices of the international community, or alternatively with the involvement of traditional structures lacking democratic legitimacy (primarily clan structures) in selection processes (indirect elections) (AA 9/3/2026). The federal states, too, use clan-based power-sharing systems to form their legislative bodies (FH 2024b). Somalia has neither a history nor a tradition of multi-party democracy. However, democratic values can certainly be found in the system of joint negotiations and decision-making within and between clans. Generally speaking, transitions towards democracy are hampered by internal power struggles and the self-serving interests of political elites (BS 2026).

Overall, the composition of the lower house of parliament has so far been determined in accordance with the **4.5 formula** (USDOS 20/3/2023; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The 4.5 system is a power-sharing formula that distributes political representation and resources amongst Somalia's major clans and minority groups (HO/Ainashe 9/6/2024; cf. BS 2026). This system is not always fair, but it works and ensures that every clan has a seat and a vote somewhere within the structure. This contributes to peace (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Under the 4.5 system, each of the 275 parliamentary seats is allocated to a clan. The four 'major' clans – Darod, Hawiye, Dir and Digil-Mirifle – each receive 61 seats, whilst the '0.5' –

the minority clans – share the remaining 31 seats. Within each clan, negotiations subsequently take place until each seat is allocated to a specific sub-clan. The traditional elders of this sub-clan or lineage then nominate delegates who select from among the candidates competing for that particular seat (Sahan/SWT 11/8/2025). Although this system is blatantly corrupt, the fact that bribes flow from all sides means that, *in practice*, individual MPs are once again virtually independent in their decision-making (Sahan/SWT 11/8/2025). According to other sources, too, elections in Somalia have been and continue to be characterised by corruption, vote-buying and irregularities. Candidates frequently bribe voters and influential figures to secure their positions (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025).

The direct elections held in 2026 in the SWS and in Mogadishu are described by one source as ’pure window dressing” (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026).

Administrative structure and federalism: The principle of federalism enshrined in the Transitional Constitution provides for a vertical separation of powers in Somalia (AA 9/3/2026). Three levels of administration are envisaged: the federal level (Federal Government); federal member states; and districts (ICG 25/9/2023).

The formation of the federal member states took place with a view to maintaining a balance between clans: Galmudug and HirShabelle for the Hawiye; Puntland and Jubaland for the Darod; the SWS for the Rahanweyn; Somaliland for the Dir. However, in every federal state there are clans that are dissatisfied with the composition of their federal state because they have suddenly become a minority (STDOK 8/2017). At the same time,this ‘balance’ wasupsetby the establishment of the North East State (NES), meaning that the Darod now have three federal states (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

A third level of government consists of district administrations. Their establishment is progressing at different rates in the individual member states (ICG 25/9/2023). In any case, there has been a rapid increase in the number of districts, with many new ones being created – around 75 per cent of which are based on sub-clans (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). This fragmentation is a cause for concern; many of the newly formed districts have no budget whatsoever (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Overall, federalism is failing due to a lack of clearly defined responsibilities and the federal government’s frequent attempts to influence day-to-day political affairs in the federal states. The distribution of powers is not yet complete; both levels remain at odds over issues of elections, state-building and resource allocation (AA 9/3/2026).

Current political situation: Since 2023, the Somali government has been rocked by a deep political crisis. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud amended the first four chapters of the constitution without consulting the federal states (Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025). The domestic political situation is characterised by systemic conflicts between the federal government and the governments of the federal states, particularly Jubaland and Puntland (AA 9/3/2026). Only a limited group of people were involved in the aforementioned, controversial constitutional amendments; the vote in parliament was rushed (BMLV 7/8/2024), and there are allegations of

vote-buying (BMLV 4/7/2024; cf. Horn 2/4/2024). The validity of the amendments is disputed (BMLV 7/8/2024). The constitutional amendments concern, amongst other things, the extension of terms of office in the federal states; the introduction of a presidential system of government and the abolition of the office of Prime Minister; and a cap on the number of national political parties (HO/Wasuge 29/5/2024; cf. UNSC 2/2/2024).

In addition, a transition from indirect to direct elections based on universal suffrage is envisaged (BS 2026). On 11 November 2024, both houses of parliament finally voted in favour of a package of legislation on general elections. However, only 170 of the 310 members of parliament actually took part in the vote. Jubaland and parts of the opposition have criticised the new legislation as unconstitutional (ÖB Nairobi 19/11/2024), whilst Puntland does not recognise the changes at all (BS 2026). Opponents see this as an attempt to concentrate power in Mogadishu (BS 2026; cf. RD 1/9/2025), and according to various sources, there are signs of a shift towards an authoritarian regime (Horn/A.J. Mohamed 15/5/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 7/7/2025).

The leadership of Puntland regards the constitutional amendments as an attempt to dismantle the federal structure and undermine the autonomy of the federal states (HO 12/3/2025). Relations between the federal government and the federal states of Jubaland and Puntland are strained (UNSC 30/9/2025). At the same time, these federal states operate more independently of the federal government than HirShabelle, the SWS or Galmudug, as both federal states have important ports – and thus financial resources (Sahan/SWT 25/6/2025). The federal government is attempting to destabilise Puntland by supporting the *SSC-Khatumo* and Jubaland by taking Gedo away from it (Sahan/SWT 25/7/2025). In the SWS, the president there was forcibly removed from office in 2026 – a warning signal for the presidents of Galmudug and HirShabelle (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026).

Overall, the federal government can be described as ultra-nationalist. It is attempting to stifle the burgeoning federal system and transform it into a centralised state. Its model is Turkey. The President's party has entered into a partnership with the Turkish AKP and is regarded as its clone (BMLV/STDOK 2/6/2026). This party is no longer called the UPD; instead, it was re-established in 2025 as the JSP (*Justice and Solidarity Party*) (FTL 14/5/2025). Through this party, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has managed to recruit relevant and prominent representatives from every clan, if not every sub-clan. Most were recruited via Islamist networks (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). This is because the new party is fundamentally based on the Muslim Brotherhood, whilst at the same time blurring the boundaries between the 'moderate' Islamist factions *Damul Jadiid* , *al Islah* and *Aala Sheikh* (Sahan/SWT 7/5/2025). In addition to centralising the state, the federal government is also seeking to end the practice of filling leadership positions according to clan quotas (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Opposing the government are not only Puntland and Jubaland but also prominent politicians such as former President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, former Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khayre, former NISA chief Abdullahi Mohamed Ali 'Sanbalolshe' [*Note: NISA = National Intelligence and Security Agency*] and Mohamed Aden Jimale 'Koofi' (BMLV 9/7/2026). The regional presidents of the two federal states, along with influential opposition figures, have joined forces in a loose,

informal alliance known as the *Somali Future Council* (AA 9/3/2026; cf. BMLV 9/7/2026; Dawan 25/10/2025; Sahan/SWT 12/11/2025). Even the Hawiye are divided over the Federal President's plans – including his own sub-clan, the Hawiye/Abgaal (Sahan/SWT 12/3/2025; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). In 2026, violent clashes also broke out in Mogadishu (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. GN 7/6/2026). Among other things, the opposition is calling for the reinstatement of the 2012 constitution, the abolition of universal suffrage and the dissolution of the Electoral Commission. It does not propose any alternatives (AQSOM 5 3/2026).

In view of these circumstances, Somalia finds itself in a dangerous phase in which political fragmentation is fuelling the spread of jihadism. The key challenge at present is not a lack of military support, but a lack of political cohesion. This political division, coupled with the existing institutional weakness, is enabling al-Shabaab to expand (RLInst 7/7/2026).

Islamism: The President's political orientation *effectively* corresponds to that of the Muslim Brotherhood (BMLV 9/7/2026). The President relies not only on the political party he founded, but also on *Damul Jadiid* – a faction of the Muslim Brotherhood (BMLV 9/7/2026; cf. Sahan/SWT 13/8/2025). The latter strives for a centralised, authoritarian and Islamist-oriented government (Sahan/SWT 7/7/2025; cf. BMLV 9/7/2026).

Religious norms are gaining influence and significance (BS 2026). One example of the impact on politics is the ratification of the African Union Charter on the Rights of the Child. At the suggestion of the Federal Government, Parliament attached a reservation regarding the age of majority being set at 18. The justification given was that this standard would contradict Sharia law. According to one source, Islamist clerics, who exert a strong influence on the government, are responsible for this development (Kaab 23/10/2025).

Overall, Islamist groups are the best-organised political forces in the country. They can also draw on resources and connections in the Gulf states. Since 2009, power in the state has rotated between different factions of the Muslim Brotherhood. Prominent factions include *Damul Jadiid*, *al Islah*, *Aala Sheikh* and *Daljir* (Sahan/SWT 16/2/2024). *Aala Sheikh* is associated with the former president, SheikhSharif Sheikh Ahmed, and his Himilo-Qaran Party (Sahan/SWT 14/11/2025).

Under the last president, Farmaajo, the Salafist *al I'tisaam* was part of the ruling coalition (Sahan/SWT 16/2/2024). This group is described as neo-Salafist, a non-violent counterpart to al-Shabaab. *Al I'tisaam*'s aim is the Islamisation of the world and the enforcement of Sharia law (Sahan/SWT 13/8/2025; cf. Sahan/Bacon/Guiditta 7/8/2023). The group controls the largest number of Islamic primary schools in Somalia (Sahan/SWT 28/5/2025), regards democracy as a violation of Sharia law (Sahan/SWT 5/9/2022), opposes federalism and advocates an Islamist state. It has considerable resources at its disposal and operates a wide range of entities, including companies, madrasas, mosques and universities (Sahan/SWT 13/8/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (23/8/2024): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, https://milo.bamf.de/otcs/cs.exe/app/nodes/30275841, accessed 4/9/2024 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 5 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 5 (3/2026): Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um einen analytischen Newsletter
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (9/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (7/8/2024): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (4/7/2024): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (2/6/2026): Expertengespräch, Länderexperte des BMLV
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- C.Maslen/U4ACRC/TI/CMI - Transparency International (Publisher), U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (Publisher), Christian Michelsen Institute (Publisher), Caitlin Maslen (Author) (16/2/2026): Somalia: Corruption and anti-corruption.U4 HELPDESK ANSWER 2026:4, https://knowledgehub.transparencycdn.org/helpdesk/Somalia-Corruption-and-AC.pdf, accessed 28/4/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (25/10/2025): Deni: Puntland Will Not Accept a Constitutional Crisis in Somalia, https://www.dawan.africa/news/deni-puntland-will-not-accept-a-constitutional-crisis-in-somalia, accessed 21/11/2025
- FH - Freedom House (3/2026): Freedom in the World 2026, https://freedomhouse.org/country/scores, accessed 24/3/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- FP/Ainte/Mahmood - Foreign Policy (Publisher), Omar S. Mahmood (Author), Abdihakim Ainte (Author) (22/9/2021): Could Somalia Be the Next Afghanistan?, https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/09/22/could-somalia-alshabab-taliban-next-afghanistan/, accessed 6/10/2023
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (14/5/2025): Justice and Solidarity Party Officially Launched Ahead of 2026 Elections in Somalia, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/justice-and-solidarity-party-officially-launched-ahead-of-2026-elections-in-somalia, accessed 2/7/2026
- GN - Goobjoog News (7/6/2026): Somalia Government and UN Clash Over Mogadishu Violence Toll as Weapons Row Deepens, https://en.goobjoog.com/somalia-government-and-un-clash-over-mogadishu-violence-toll-as-weapons-row-deepens/, accessed 6/7/2026
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (8/2/2022): State of Somalia Report 2021, Year in Review, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOS-REPORT-2021-English-version.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (1/11/2021): The Dangers of rigged indirect Elections in Somalia, https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Election-Brief-English-Nov-24-2021.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- HO - Hiiraan Online (12/3/2025): Puntland reaffirms opposition to Mogadishu's centralization push, demands reforms, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200659/puntland_reaffirms_oppositio

n_to_mogadishu_s_centralization_push_demands_reforms.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 2/7/2026
- HO/Ainashe - Hiiraan Online (Publisher), Mukhtar Ainashe (Author) (9/6/2024): Is the Somali federal government losing legitimacy and political relevance?, https://www.hiiraan.com/op4/2024/jun/196626/is_the_somali_federal_government_losing_legitimacy_and_political_relevance.aspx, accessed 28/6/2024
- HO/Wasuge - Hiiraan Online (Publisher), Mahad Wasuge (Author) (29/5/2024): Somalia's (eternal) election conundrum: time for a realistic assessment, https://www.hiiraan.com/op4/2024/may/196479/somalia_s_eternal_election_conundrum_time_for_a_realistic_assessment.aspx, accessed 28/6/2024
- Horn - Horn Observer (2/4/2024): Root Out The Decay: Bribery and Corruption in Somali Parliament, https://hornobserver.com/articles/2692/Root-Out-The-Decay-Bribery-and-Corruption-in-Somali-Parliament, accessed 7/5/2024
- Horn/A.J. Mohamed - Horn Observer (Publisher), Abdirahman Jeylani Mohamed (Author) (15/5/2025): OP-ED: Three Years On – How Hassan Sheikh Betrayed Somalia's Fragile Federalism, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3320/OP-ED-Three-Years-On-How-Hassan-Sheikh-Betrayed-Somalias-Fragile-Federalism, accessed 27/6/2025
- ICG - International Crisis Group (25/9/2023): Avoiding a New Cycle of Conflict in Somalia's Galmudug State, https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-09/b193-somalia-galmudug-state_0.pdf, accessed 30/1/2024
- K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga - Khalif Farah, Marin Ouma, Samuel Nyanchoga (9/2025): Influence of Corruption on the Increased Prevalence of Terrorism in Somalia. In: African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies (AJPAS) 18(3) (September, 2025), 163-187, https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajpas/article/download/306463/288088, accessed 28/4/2026
- Kaab - Kaab TV (23/10/2025): Somali Lawmakers Exclude Ban on Child Marriage from Child Rights Treaty, https://en.kaabtv.com/somali-lawmakers-exclude-ban-on-child-marriage-from-child-rights-treaty/, accessed 2/12/2025
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- NM - Nordic Monitor (5/12/2025): Turkish intelligence report warns of Somalia's fragility as Ankara boosts military and economic role, https://nordicmonitor.com/2025/12/turkish-intelligence-report-warns-somalias-fragility-as-ankara-boosts-military-and-economic-role/, accessed 11/12/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (19/11/2024): Wochenbericht 11.11.-17.11.2024, per e-Mail an die Staatendokumentation
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Q. Müller/Afrique XXI - Afrique XXI (Publisher), Quentin Müller (Author) (4/5/2025): En Somalie, les Chabab profitent de la crise et s'approchent de Mogadiscio, https://afriquexxi.info/En-Somalie-les-Chabab-profitent-de-la-crise-et-s-approchent-de-Mogadiscio, accessed 10/7/2025
- RD - Radio Dalsan (1/9/2025): Puntland and Jubbaland Issue Joint Statements Criticizing President Hassan Sheikh Over Somalia's Political Crisis, https://www.radiodalsan.com/puntland-and-jubbaland-issue-joint-statements-criticizing-president-hassan-sheikh-over-somalias-political-crisis/, accessed 7/10/2025
- RLInst - Robert Lansing Institute (7/7/2026): Somalia's Political Fragmentation Fuels Al-Shabaab's Resurgence, https://lansinginstitute.org/2026/07/07/somalias-political-fragmentation-fuels-al-shabaabs-resurgence/, accessed 10/7/2026
- Rollins/HIR - Kay Rollins (Author), Harvard International Review (Publisher) (27/3/2023): No Justice, No Peace: Al-Shabaab's Court System, https://hir.harvard.edu/no-justice-no-peace-al-shabaabs-court-system/, accessed 29/6/2023
- Sahan - Sahan (8/6/2026): Editorial: Mogadishu on the Edge: The Danger Has Not Passed, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 959, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/Awad - Ahmed Awad (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (28/8/2023): What Somalia needs is Strong Institutions, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 584, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/Bacon/Guiditta - Tricia Bacon (Author), Maria Guiditta (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (7/8/2023): Estimating Al-Shabaab's Size, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 575, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]

- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (14/11/2025): A Short History of the Political Party in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 896, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/11/2025): Hassan Sheikh's Calculated Electoral Gamble in Mogadishu, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 895, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (13/8/2025): Al-I'tisaam: The Silent Twin of Al-Shabaab, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 859, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (11/8/2025): Something is Rotten in the State of Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 858, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (25/7/2025): After the embargo: The MV Sea World debacle, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 851, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (7/7/2025): Illiberal Drift, Electoral Poker Game, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 843, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (25/6/2025): 'Galkacyo and Kismaayo are free', in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 838, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (28/5/2025): Stolen Childhoods: Somalia's Enduring Crisis of Child Marriage, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 828, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (7/5/2025): From UPD to JSP: Villa Somalia Echoes Erdoğan's Playbook, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 819, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/3/2025): Al-Shabaab Advances and Villa Somalia's Dhusamareb Strategy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 798, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (17/1/2025): Abu Yasir, Livestock, and Monopolies in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 775, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/2/2024): Islam and State: The Elephant Not in the Room, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 649, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (7/7/2023): Somalia's political discord, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 562, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (5/9/2022): Somaliland's embattled democracy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 447, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (18/7/2022): The Somali government's culture of corruption – a clear and present danger, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 421, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SFH - Swiss Refugee Council (1/2026): Factsheet Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2137060/260119_SOM_factsheet_web_DE.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (8/2017): Fact Finding Mission Report Somalia; Sicherheitslage in Somalia; Bericht zur österreichisch-schweizerischen FFM, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1406268/5209_1502195321_ffm-report-somalia-sicherheitslage-onlineversion-2017-08-ke.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (2/2/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/758], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2106391/n2401965.pdf, accessed 4/6/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (13/5/2022): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2022/392], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2073538/N2233663.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (8/2/2022): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2022/101], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2068141/S_2022_101_E.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (20/3/2023): 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2089065.html, accessed 4/10/2023

2.1.1 Jubaland (Gedo, Lower Juba, Middle Juba)

Jubaland was formed in 2013, when Ahmed Mohamed Islam 'Madobe' was also elected president (HIPS 2021; cf. ÖB Nairobi 19/11/2024). At the end of November 2024, Madobe was re-elected for a second term in an indirect election, against the will of the federal government (AA 9/3/2026; cf. BS 2026). President Madobe is currently firmly in the saddle (BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026).

At the same time, complex regional and national politics, as well as clan relations, intersect in Jubaland. Jubaland is home to many clans, but the two dominant clans are the Marehan (mainly in Gedo) and the Ogadeni (mainly in Lower Juba) (Sahan/SWT 14/6/2023). Kenya has established close ties with Jubaland and cooperates with the security forces there (BS 2026). In fact, according to one source, the state is largely within Kenya's sphere of influence – economically, socially (in terms of clans) and also because there are several Ogadeni in the Kenyan government (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

The primary objective of the Jubaland government is to establish authority over the entire territory it claims – against all parties, whether al-Shabaab, the federal government or clans (BMLV 9/7/2026). In November 2024, Jubaland largely broke with the federal government. The dispute over issues relating to the federal constitution and general elections has escalated accordingly (GO 28/11/2024; cf. Sahan/SWT 25/11/2024; SMN 28/11/2024). Whilst the Federal Government issued an arrest warrant for Madobe, a court in Kismayo issued one against President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (GO 2/12/2024; cf. Weiss/FDD 12/12/2024). At the end of 2024, the Federal Government attempted to forcibly remove Madobe from office by military means. This led to armed clashes (Sahan/SWT 2/12/2024; cf. AA 9/3/2026).

In Gedo, not all Marehan are opposed to Madobe (Sahan/SWT 2/12/2024); some sections of the clan are even affiliated with him (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Overall, however, there is resentment towards Madobe's government and the Ogadeni elite ruling in Kismayo among both sections of the Marehan and smaller clans in Gedo (e.g. Garre, Degodia) (Sahan/SWT 3/9/2025). In December 2024, clashes broke out between government troops and Jubaland forces in Doolow as well as in February 2025 in Baardheere, when the federal government attempted to seize control of these key towns in Gedo by force (Sahan 21/5/2025). In August 2025, the Federal Government attempted to establish its own administration for Gedo in Garbahaarey, independent of Kismayo (SMN 10/8/2025). In reality, only Belet Xaawo and Garbahaarey fall within the Federal Government's sphere of influence (BMLV 9/7/2026). There are an increasing number of Marehan who are more loyal to the Jubaland government than to that in Mogadishu (BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026). They feel marginalised and excluded by the Federal Government (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

In Kismayo, the Jubaland administration is functioning effectively. This also applies to cooperation with other clans and their involvement in government tasks. The cooperation between Kenyan troops and local security forces is one of the reasons for the relative stability in Kismayo (BMLV 9/7/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (9/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (20/5/2026): Telefoninterview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- GO - Garowe Online (2/12/2024): Ahmed Madobe's Arrest Warrant Labeled as a Blunder, https://garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-ahmed-madobe-s-arrest-warrant-labeled-as-a-blunder, accessed 3/12/2024
- GO - Garowe Online (28/11/2024): Jubaland Cuts Ties with Somalia Government Over Election Standoff, https://garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/jubaland-cuts-ties-with-somalia-government-over-election-standoff, accessed 3/12/2024
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (2021): State of Somalia Report 2020, Year in Review, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOS-REPORT-2020-Final-2.pdf, accessed 9/10/2023
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (19/11/2024): Wochenbericht 11.11.-17.11.2024, per e-Mail an die Staatendokumentation
- Sahan - Sahan (21/5/2025): Villa Somalia turns to destabilising Gedo, again, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 825, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (3/9/2025): Turmoil in Jubaland spills into Kenyan politics, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 868, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (2/12/2024): Somalia's Jubaland crisis is about more than just Jubaland, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 762, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (25/11/2024): Madoobe Secures His Third Term In Jubaland, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 759, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (14/6/2023): Political Discontent in the Gedo Region of Jubland State, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 553, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (10/8/2025): Somali Govt Pushes Ahead With Plans to Establish Parallel Administration in Gedo Region, https://shabellemedia.com/somali-govt-pushes-ahead-with-plans-to-establish-parallel-administration-in-gedo-region/, accessed 10/10/2025
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (28/11/2024): Jubaland Cuts Supends Cooperation with Somali Government Amid Tension, https://shabellemedia.com/jubaland-cuts-supends-cooperation-with-somali-government-amid-tension, accessed 5/12/2024
- Weiss/FDD - Caleb Weiss (Author), Foundation for Defense of Democracies (Publisher) (12/12/2024): Analysis: Somali forces turn their weapons on each other, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2024/12/analysis-somali-forces-turn-their-weapons-on-each-other.php, accessed 17/6/2025

2.1.2 South West State (SWS; Bay, Bakool, Lower Shabelle)

Last modification 2026-09-03 06:01

The SWS was established in 2014–2015. Abdulaziz Hassan Mohamed 'Laftagareen' was elected president in 2018 (MBZ 4/4/2025). According to other sources, Laftagareen was more or less installed by the then Federal President Farmaajo (Sahan/SWT 20/8/2025). His term of office was due to expire in 2022, but he has had it extended on several occasions – without any legal basis (Sahan/SWT 20/8/2025; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025).

In March 2026, Laftagareen opposed the Federal Government's plans for elections in the SWS and entered into open conflict. Consequently, Baidoa [*Note: the de facto capital of the SWS*] was occupied by Federal Government forces at the end of March (AQSOM 9 5/2026). Consequently, the Federal Government installed a sympathetic administration in Baidoa (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. AQSOM 9 5/2026). Prior to this, 'general elections' had been held, but only 128,000 valid votes were cast (HO 14/5/2026; cf. BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026) – out of approximately 380,000 registered voters and a population of around 3.5 million (BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026). The Federal President's party secured a large parliamentary majority (51 out of 95 seats) (HO 14/5/2026), whilst the opposition had boycotted the elections (HO 14/5/2026; cf. SG 22/6/2026). One source describes the elections in the SWS as a 'farce" (BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026).

Subsequently, Adan Mohamed Nur 'Adan Madobe' – candidate of Federal President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's party, who had ordered several rival candidates to withdraw from the race – was elected by parliament President of the SWS (SG 22/6/2026; cf. Wardheer 13/6/2026). The Digil-Mirifle/Leysan are not included in the new government (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026), although they took part in the ousting of Laftagareen with a force of approximately 2,000 men (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026).

The government of former President Laftagareen has made progress in decentralising power and strengthening local administrations. District councils were established in Waajid, Diinsoor, Xudur, Berdale and Baraawe in 2022, and in Buur Hakaba in 2023 (HIPS 7/5/2024). In the areas of Bay controlled by the regional government, the administration is functioning reasonably well. However, no further progress has been made in building up the administration since 2021. Furthermore, the areas controlled by the SWS represent enclaves within al-Shabaab territory (BMLV 9/7/2026). The federal state is poor; many local administrations have no budget whatsoever (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Due to the lack of a major port, the SWS is financially dependent on Mogadishu (Sahan/SWT 5/3/2025).

Sources

- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (5/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (9/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten

- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (20/5/2026): Telefoninterview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (7/5/2024): State Of Somalia 2023 Report, https://8v90f1.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SOS-REPORT-2023-.pdf, accessed 27/5/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (14/5/2026): Southwest State election commission announces results, JSP wins majority, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2026/May/205159/southwest_state_election_commission_announces_results_jsp_wins_majority.aspx, accessed 7/7/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (20/8/2025): Leysan Reconciliation in South West, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 862, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (5/3/2025): Laftagareen Breaks From Villa Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 795, per e-Mail [fee required]
- SG - Somali Guardian (22/6/2026): Intense clashes in Baidoa as political tensions peak, https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/somalia-baidoa-clashes-political-tensions/, accessed 7/7/2026
- Wardheer - Wardheer News (13/6/2026): Military Buildup Around Baidoa Deepens as Lafta Gareen Loyalists Mobilize Amid South West Power Shift, https://wardheernews.com/military-buildup-around-baidoa-deepens-as-lafta-gareen-loyalists-mobilize-amid-south-west-power-shift/, accessed 7/7/2026

2.1.3 Benadir Regional Administration (BRA; Mogadishu)

Last modification 2026-09-03 06:02

The Benadir Regional Administration (BRA) has a functioning regional government and is led by the Mayor of Mogadishu (BMLV 9/7/2026). *De facto*, Mogadishu is administered by the federal government (SDP/SPA 14/9/2022). Benadir is the only region over which the federal government exercises full control (HIPS 8/2/2022). As the capital is directly subordinate to the federal government, the Somali President appoints the mayor (who is also the governor of Benadir) and his deputies (HIPS 8/2/2022; cf. SDP/SPA 14/9/2022). The mayor appoints the *District Commissioners* (DCs) (GN 12/6/2025). In May 2025, the Federal President appointed Hassan Mohamed Hussein 'Muungaab' as the new mayor, who had previously held this office once before (Sonna 29/5/2025). As the BRA administration is not accountable to anyone, the Federal President uses it for corrupt practices: the city sells land, and the President takes the money (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Around one million people registered to vote in the first elections in Mogadishu since 1969 (BMLV 9/7/2026; cf. HO 24/10/2025; Sahan/SWT 12/11/2025). On polling day, however, only around 210,000 valid votes were recorded. The Federal President's party (*Justice and Solidarity Party,* JSP) won 46.3 per cent of the vote and 177 of the 390 seats in the Regional Assembly (BMLV 9/7/2026). The events leading up to the elections gave the impression that only candidates pre-selected by the government were allowed to stand for election (Sahan/SWT 12/11/2025). According to one source, only candidates from three Hawiye clans were permitted to stand in the district council elections: Abgaal (7 districts), Habr Gedir (6) and Murusade (3) (Kaab 1/12/2025). Of the 61 political associations registered for the elections, only 20 actually took part in

the end. The elections were largely peaceful, but are not recognised by the opposition (AA 9/3/2026).

In all areas of Mogadishu, the Hawiye clans Abgaal, Habr Gedir and Murusade continue to play a dominant role (BMLV 9/7/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). This is also partly evident in the districts; for example, the Abgaal dominate Cabdicasiis, the Murusade dominate Dayniile and the Habr Gedir dominate Hawl Wadaag. The BRA's administration is based on a power-sharing arrangement between the Hawiye clans and the Benadiri. The mayor and his four deputies are drawn from the Abgaal, Murusade, Habr Gedir, Duduble and Benadiri (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Mogadishu is one of the fastest-growing cities; over the past decade, its population has grown by 4 per cent annually (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Since May 2024, the city has 20 districts, following the incorporation of Gubadley, Darussalam and Garasbaaley (RD 20/5/2024).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (9/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- GN - Goobjoog News (12/6/2025): Mogadishu Mayor Appoints New District Commissioners to Drive Urban Reform, https://en.goobjoog.com/mogadishu-mayor-appoints-new-district-commissioners-to-drive-urban-reform/, accessed 16/10/2025
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (8/2/2022): State of Somalia Report 2021, Year in Review, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOS-REPORT-2021-English-version.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- HO - Hiiraan Online (24/10/2025): Somalia to hold local elections in Mogadishu on November 30, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Oct/203394/somalia_to_hold_local_elections_in_mogadishu_on_november_30.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 21/11/2025
- Kaab - Kaab TV (1/12/2025): Mogadishu to Hold December Elections in 16 Districts, Limits Contestants to Three Clans, https://en.kaabtv.com/mogadishu-to-hold-december-elections-in-16-districts-limits-contestants-to-three-clans/, accessed 2/12/2025
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- RD - Radio Dalsan (20/5/2024): President Expands Mogadishu's Reach, Establishes Three New Districts in Banadir Region, https://www.radiodalsan.com/president-expands-mogadishus-reach-establishes-three-new-districts-in-banadir-region, accessed 16/6/2025
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/11/2025): Hassan Sheikh's Calculated Electoral Gamble in Mogadishu, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 895, per e-Mail [fee required]
- SDP/SPA - Somali Dialogue Platform, Somali Public Agenda (14/9/2022): Policy options for resolving th status of Mogadishu, Policy paper SDP.F20.05, https://somalipublicagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SPA_Policy_Paper_03_ENGLISH-in-partnership-with-Somali-Dialogue-Platform.pdf, accessed 9/10/2023
- Sonna - Somali National News Agency [Somalia] (29/5/2025): President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud Appoints Dr. Hassan Mohamed Hussein Muungaab as New Banadir Governor and Mogadishu Mayor, https://sonna.so/en/president-hassan-sheikh-mohamud-appoints-dr-hassan-mohamed-hussein-muungaab-as-new-banadir-governor-and-mogadishu-mayor/, accessed 16/10/2025

2.1.4 HirShabelle (Hiiraan, Middle Shabelle)

Last modification 2026-09-03 06:16

HirShabelle was hastily established as the last federal state in 2016 (HIPS 7/5/2024; cf. Sahan/SWT 30/10/2024). The federal government was responsible for the formation of the federal state, and carried out this process without any reconciliation talks (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Many clans in Hiiraan – such as the Hawiye / Hawadle and Hawiye / Galja'el – are dissatisfied with the dominance exercised over the federal state by the Hawiye / Abgaal and Hawiye / Mudulood (Sahan/SWT 6/11/2023). As a result, HirShabelle remains fragmented (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The state's total budget for 2025 amounted to 44.3 million US dollars (Sahan/SWT 7/11/2025).

In November 2020, Ali Hussein Gudlawe was elected president (HO 11/11/2020; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). His election was regarded as a breach of the informal power-sharing agreement between the two clans dominant in HirShabelle, the Hawiye/Abgaal and the Hawiye/Hawadle (HIPS 8/2/2022; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). This agreement stipulated that Jowhar (in the Abgaal area) would become the capital, whilst the Hawadle would provide the president (Sahan/SWT 30/10/2024). Gudlawe belongs to the Federal President's party (HO 28/6/2026). New elections were due to take place in early July 2026, but these were postponed (BMLV 9/7/2026).

In June 2023, the governor of the Hiiraan region, Ali Jeyte Osman (Hawiye / Hawadle), was removed from office by President Gudlawe. This triggered a political crisis. Jeyte refused to step down, and an interim government of the self-proclaimed Hiiraan State was established in Belet Weyne (HIPS 7/5/2024; cf. Halbeeg 25/6/2023). According to one source, the Hiiraan administration operates relatively independently and continues to demand recognition as a separate federal state (Sahan/SWT 16/7/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 10/2/2025). As of July 2026, an administration separate from HirShabelle is still in place in Belet Weyne (BMLV 9/7/2026). In summary, a source explains that President Gudlawe effectively controls only the Abgaal region (Sahan/SWT 30/10/2024).

Sources

- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (9/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- Halbeeg - Halbeeg (25/6/2023): Beledweyne is no flight zone, Ali Jeyte, https://en.halbeeg.com/2023/06/25/beledweyne-is-no-flight-zone-ali-jeyte/, accessed 26/6/2023
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (7/5/2024): State Of Somalia 2023 Report, https://8v90f1.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SOS-REPORT-2023-.pdf, accessed 27/5/2024
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (8/2/2022): State of Somalia Report 2021, Year in Review, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOS-REPORT-2021-English-version.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- HO - Hiiraan Online (28/6/2026): Hirshabelle regional state President Ali Guudlaawe announces re-election bid, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2026/Jun/205540/hirshabelle_regional_state_president_ali_guudlaawe_announces_reelection_bid.aspx, accessed 2/7/2026

- HO - Hiiraan Online (11/11/2020): HirShabelle parliament elects Ali Guudlaawe as new president, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2020/Nov/180667/hirshabelle_parliament_elects_ali_guudlaawe_as_new_president.aspx, accessed 9/10/2023
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (7/11/2025): A New Humanitarian Crisis Looms, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 893, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/7/2025): The Fall of Moqokori – Implications, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 847, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (10/2/2025): A return to 2022 in Hiiraan?, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 785, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (30/10/2024): The Return of the 'Hiiraan State', in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 749, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (6/11/2023): BA positive appointment: Jeyte as Ma'wiisley commander, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 613, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]

2.1.5 Galmudug (Galgaduud, parts of Mudug)

Last modification 2026-09-03 06:05

Galmudug was established in 2015 from Galgaduud and parts of the Mudug region (ICG 25/9/2023). This process was not initiated by local forces, but rather by the government in Mogadishu, which has significantly undermined its legitimacy (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

The federal state is highly heterogeneous in terms of its clan composition. The majority of the population there consists of eleven sub-clans from three of the major clan families (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. ICG 25/9/2023). Nine of the eleven are of Hawiye origin, namely Murusade, Sheikhal, Hawadle, Abgaal / Wayeclse, as well as five sub-clans of the Habr Gedir – Ayr, Sa'ad, Saleban, Sarur and Duduble. In addition, there are the Dir (Qubeys and Fiqi Mohamed) and the Darod / Marehan, as well as a smaller number of Yahar, Midgan and Tumal (ICG 25/9/2023). The dominant groups are primarily the Habr Gedir sub-clans Sa'ad, Saleban (Sahan/SWT 14/10/2024) and Ayr (Sahan/SWT 16/9/2024). Many people in Galmudug are followers of Sufism (ICG 25/9/2023).

The federal state's budget for 2026 is estimated at 49.7 million US dollars (FTL 7/10/2025). The government is struggling to assert its authority or restore stability. Key institutions – in the executive, parliament and the judiciary – are still in their infancy and have limited capacity or independence. The administration is struggling to provide basic services (e.g. the judiciary) across the whole state (BMLV 9/7/2026). Galmudug is attempting to decentralise public services by establishing district councils. In doing so, nine new districts have been added to the ten existing ones, such as Galinsoor for the Sacad / Reer Jalaf or Baxdo as a further district for the Saleban (ICG 25/9/2023).

In February 2020, Ahmed Abdi Kariye 'Qoorqoor' was elected president (ICG 25/9/2023). In 2026, Qoorqoor was 'persuaded' by the Federal President not to stand for re-election. Mahad Salad, the [*note: former*] head of NISA, who had long been regarded as the Federal President's favourite, is also out of the running. The official candidate of the JSP [*Note: President Hassan*

Sheikh Mohamud's party] is now the businessman Liban Ahmed Hassan 'Liban Shuluq'. Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) has become politically active again, particularly in the run-up to the forthcoming elections (BMLV 9/7/2026). The results of the 'general' election on 30 July 2026 are disputed; state institutions may have been misused to manipulate the outcome. The Electoral Commission reports an overwhelming victory for the JSP (63 out of 89 seats in parliament, 115 out of 243 in the local councils). This would secure Liban Shuluq's election as President of Galmudug. However, the second-placed Towfiiq Party, led by the influential Sufi scholar Sheikh Mohamed Shakir Ali Hassan, has rejected the result. Furthermore, Towfiiq has published its own results, which paint a completely different picture and award Towfiiq 47 of the 89 seats. The opposition also reports systematic electoral manipulation and direct intimidation of voters by federal security forces (Sahan 12/8/2026).

Sources

- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (9/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (7/10/2025): Galmudug Parliament Approves $49.7 Million Budget for 2026, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/galmudug-parliament-approves-49-7-million-budget-for-2026/, accessed 24/11/2025
- ICG - International Crisis Group (25/9/2023): Avoiding a New Cycle of Conflict in Somalia's Galmudug State, https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-09/b193-somalia-galmudug-state_0.pdf, accessed 30/1/2024
- Sahan - Sahan (12/8/2026): Somalia's Reform-Induced Malfunction, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 970, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (14/10/2024): Clans Covet 'Access to the Sea', in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 743, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/9/2024): Deni and QoorQoor meet in Galkayo, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 732, per e-Mail [fee required]

2.1.6 Puntland (Bari, Nugaal, parts of Mudug)

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:27

Puntland is the only federal state to have been established of its own accord, which lends it a certain degree of legitimacy (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Puntland was established in 1998 with international support. It does not seek independence from Somalia, but has left this option open (AA 9/3/2026; cf. PGN 19/6/2025). The federal state does not define its geographical boundaries along existing regional borders, but rather along the borders of the areas controlled by the Darod / Harti. However, as a new federal state, the North East State (NES), has now been formed – which can also be attributed to the Darod/Harti – this calls into question Puntland's self-perception (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Puntland has established reasonably stable state structures (AA 23/6/2025). According to one source, Puntland is largely equivalent to an independent state (PGN 19/6/2025); according to another source, the state possesses a certain degree of autonomy and financial independence from the federal government. Furthermore, Puntland has largely withdrawn from the Somali

state-building process (AA 9/3/2026): At the end of March 2024, following the constitutional amendments passed by the Federal Parliament, it was declared that Puntland no longer recognises the federal government and will act independently of Mogadishu until a nationwide referendum is held (RANE/Stratfor 16/4/2024; cf. EPC 24/5/2024; AA 9/3/2026; UNSC 3/6/2024; BS 2026). The President of Puntland continues to emphasise that a national consensus is necessary, without which the federal state will continue to act independently of the federal government (GO 16/6/2026).

Democracy: President Said Abdullahi Deni was re-elected in January 2024 in indirect electionsby the 66 members of the Puntland Parliament, who had been selected by clan elders (AA 9/3/2026; cf. UNSC 2/2/2024). He received 45 votes, whilst his challenger, Salah Barre, received 21 (Sahan/SWT 8/1/2024; cf. GN 8/1/2024). This was the first time since the establishment of Puntland that a president had been re-elected (GN 8/1/2024). On 25 January 2024, Deni was sworn in for his second five-year term (UNSC 3/6/2024).

On 25 May 2023, Puntland successfully held its first direct local and municipal council elections in 53 years (HO 3/7/2023; cf. Sahan/SWT 26/5/2023; AA 9/3/2026). A total of 3,775 candidates contested 774 seats. However, some influential politicians and members of opposition groups in the Nugaal region boycotted the elections (HO 3/7/2023). Eight political parties stood for election (UNSC 27/9/2024).

Several political parties have established themselves (BS 2026). At the heart of the larger parties – Kaah, Mideeye, Sincad – lie the major sub-clans of the Majerten (Sahan/SWT 14/11/2025), as Puntland is, of course, also strongly structured along sub-clan lines. However, the clear advantage of this federal state is that the vast majority of the population belongs to a single overarching clan: the Darod / Harti / Majerteen (STDOK/BMLV 10/4/2025). Puntland is dominated by three sub-clans of the Majerteen/Mahmoud Saleban: Omar Mahmoud (Mudug), Osman Mahmoud (Bari) and Issa Mahmoud (Nugaal). However, groups such as the Dhulbahante and the Warsangeli have also always been included in prominent positions and in the Puntland Parliament (Sahan/SWT 19/5/2025). In June 2025, Barre (Majerteen / Isse Mahmud), who was defeated in the presidential election, founded a new opposition movement, the *Council for Justice and Democracy* (Sahan/SWT 11/6/2025).

The group currently making the strongest showing is Araan Jaan, which is associated with Issa Mahmoud. In addition, there are some voices that wish to cooperate with the federal government and are thus in opposition to President Deni. Against this backdrop, the former *Puntland Security Force* (PSF) now presents itself as part of the federal army (BMLV 9/7/2026).

Puntland has announced drastic budget cuts for 2026. The national budget will then amount to just 316 million US dollars (2025: 467 million). This reduction is attributed to a decline in international support and aid projects. The sectors most affected by this are healthcare, education and infrastructure (SMN 19/11/2025; cf. Kaab 20/11/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (23/6/2025): Somalia – Reise- und Sicherheitshinweise (Reisewarnung), unverändert gültig seit 4.11.2024, https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/laender/somalia-node/somaliasicherheit/203132#content_1, accessed 23/6/2025
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (9/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- EPC - Emirates Policy Center (24/5/2024): Expansion of the Islamic State in Puntland: A New Round of Jihadist Infighting in Somalia, https://epc.ae/en/details/featured/expansion-of-the-islamic-state-in-puntland-a-new-round-of-jihadist-infighting-in-somalia, accessed 28/5/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (8/1/2024): Said Deni Re-elected as President of Puntland State, https://en.goobjoog.com/said-deni-re-elected-as-president-of-puntland-state, accessed 25/1/2024
- GO - Garowe Online (16/6/2026): Puntland Acting Independently Until 'Consensus-Based Government" Is Formed, Says President Deni, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/puntland/somalia-puntland-acting-independently-until-consensus-based-government-is-formed-says-president-deni, accessed 3/7/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (3/7/2023): Delegation of former Prime Ministers arrives in Garowe to resolve election dispute, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2023/July/192087/delegation_of_former_prime_ministers_arrives_in_garowe_to_resolve_election_dispute.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 4/7/2023
- Kaab - Kaab TV (20/11/2025): Puntland Unveils 2026 Budget Amid Sharp Decline in International Project Funding, https://en.kaabtv.com/puntland-unveils-2026-budget-amid-sharp-decline-in-international-project-funding/, accessed 2/12/2025
- PGN - Political Geography Now (19/6/2025): June 2025 Somalia Control Map & Timeline: Al Shabaab Resurgence, ISIS Retreat, Jubaland Defiant (Subscription), https://controlmaps.polgeonow.com/2025/06/june-2025-somalia-control-map-timeline/, accessed 23/6/2025 [fee required]
- RANE/Stratfor - RANE Network (Author), Stratfor (Publisher) (16/4/2024): Somalia's Constitutional Changes Widen Rifts at Home and Abroad, https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/somalias-constitutional-changes-widen-rifts-home-and-abroad?id=743c2bc617&e=43cabd063c&uuid=d4f590da-2381-4c65-95b7-82eb04d7d040&mc_cid=14ee3f6272&mc_eid=43cabd063c, accessed 17/4/2024 [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (14/11/2025): A Short History of the Political Party in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 896, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (11/6/2025): Puntland's Pivot from Lightning to Thunder, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 832, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (19/5/2025): What might 'SSC-Khaatumo State' mean for Puntland? in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 824, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (8/1/2024): Deni re-elected as Puntland President, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 632, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (26/5/2023): Somalia's displaced population: Success despite division in Puntland elections, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 545 [fee required, Login required]
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (19/11/2025): Puntland Unveils 2026 Budget Amid Sharp Drop in International Funding, https://allafrica.com/stories/202511200036.html, accessed 21/11/2025
- STDOK/BMLV - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Ministry of Defence [Austria] (10/4/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten des BMLV
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (27/9/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2024/698], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116024/n2426310.pdf, accessed 14/11/2024

- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (3/6/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/426) [EN/AR/RU/ZH], https://reliefweb.int/attachments/2ee6cff6-d8b3-4bac-bf53-5c07f96b1a9f/n2414191.pdf, accessed 28/6/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (2/2/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/758], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2106391/n2401965.pdf, accessed 4/6/2024

2.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:27

In May 1991, Somaliland withdrew from the union it had voluntarily entered into with Somalia in 1960 and re-declared itself independent as the Republic of Somaliland (Schwartz/FPRI 8/11/2021; cf. FT/Wallis 12/3/2026). Somaliland was therefore already an independent state in 1960 and wishes to regain this status within the borders of the former colony of British Somaliland (Meservey/HF 19/10/2021; cf. FT/Wallis 12/3/2026). Nevertheless, to date the country has been recognised only by Taiwan and, in December 2025, by Israel. Neighbouring countries in the region, as well as an increasing number of other states, are seeking pragmatic cooperation in recognition of the progress made so far in stabilisation and development (AA 9/3/2026).

Statehood: Somaliland has a functioning government, institutions and a political system (VOA/O. Hassan 14/11/2024) that has already facilitated a democratic transfer of power on several occasions (VOA/O. Hassan 14/11/2024; cf. TBF 14/11/2024). Somaliland has developed many characteristics of a state, including a largely stable, functioning administration and diplomatic and economic relations with foreign powers (ICG 6/3/2024). It has its own civil administration, its own armed forces, its own currency (VOA/O. Hassan 14/11/2024; cf. AJ 19/11/2024; BBC 19/11/2024; Welt/Putsch 20/7/2025), its own police force, its own – more or less functioning – tax system (Spiegel 1/3/2021), its own passports and its own foreign and defence policies (NYT 12/4/2025). Somaliland has been able to ensure stability and peace (HRCSL 2025), or rather, it is a peaceful and stable democracy (ABC News 5/6/2022; cf. Cannon/Conversation 22/11/2024). In 2026, *Freedom House* awarded Somaliland 47 pointsin *the 'Freedom in the World* Index – almost or more than twice as many as its neighbours Ethiopia (18) and Djibouti (24), and almost six times as many as Somalia (8); further comparisons: Nigeria 44, Kenya 49, Tunisia 42, Morocco 37 (FH 3/2026).

Indeed, the country's stable and democratic structures stand in stark contrast to the instability in Somalia and the authoritarian regimes in other states in the Horn of Africa (Cannon/Conversation 22/11/2024; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The country is regarded as politically stable, democratic and peaceful (SIHA 3/2025; cf. BBC 19/11/2024; ABC News 5/6/2022). The government is committed to democracy and a market economy and has already made significant contributions towards this end (BS 2026). Furthermore, Somaliland's governments are committed to their own people rather than to foreign donors or interests (FT/Wallis 12/3/2026).

Somaliland has gradually re-established state structuresand embarked on a path towards democratisation. Administrative structures have been established across the entire territory, even if these do not function fully everywhere or are controversial in the eastern border regions. Political decisions can be implemented across a large part of the territory claimed – with the exception of

the eastern border regions bordering Puntland (*SSC-Khatumo*). However, the consent of influential clan elders must be obtained for implementation (BS 2026). According to other sources, whilst Somaliland is more functional than South/Central Somalia, state authority is not strong here either. Even government representatives admit that the state has only limited capacity and presence – particularly outside the major cities. As in other parts of Somalia, people can expect only a limited degree of protection or socio-economic support from the state. In practice, it is primarily the clan that can meet these needs (Landinfo 5/3/2026). Furthermore, the country is grappling with massive structural constraints. The state apparatus remains weak and underfunded, and the country is characterised by a high level of poverty. State institutions lack resources and equipment. The state is dependent on business leaders, whilst government structures are influenced by corruption and clan patronage. Furthermore, as mentioned, state institutions are bound by the consent of influential clan elders when it comes to implementing their decisions (BS 2026). Overall, according to one source, power and resources are concentrated in the hands of the Isaaq, who make up the majority of the population (Marchal/CERI 1/2026). At the same time, with the conflict over Laascaanood and the establishment of the North East State (NES), Somaliland has lost a large proportion of the Dhulbahante and part of the Warsangeli – and with them two of the five founding clans and, in the worst-case scenario, a third of the territory it claims (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Democracy: Somaliland has earned a reputation for democracy in a region often characterised by democratic regression and electoral crises. Elections have generally been praised by observers for their relatively orderly conduct and are regarded as one of the most important pieces of evidence for Somaliland's democratic legitimacy (Geeska 28/4/2026). Somaliland's democratic institutions (BS 2026) and democracy as such are stable (Economist 14/11/2024). There is a commitment to democracy and the rule of law (Cannon/Conversation 22/11/2024). Democratic and peaceful transfers of power are the norm (FT/Wallis 12/3/2026; cf. BS 2026; AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The most recent presidential elections also took place peacefully, and the transfer of power proceeded smoothly (BS 2026; cf. AA 9/3/2026). Somaliland has already held several district, parliamentary and presidential elections. Although there were regular delays (BS 2026; cf. Geeska 28/4/2026), when elections did take place, they have consistently been assessed by international observers as comparatively free and fair (BS 2026). In October 2025, the Electoral Commission was awarded the Excellence Prize at the *21st Annual International Electoral Awards and Symposium*. The award was justified on the grounds of the Electoral Commission's outstanding transparency, innovation and professionalism, which it has demonstrated for decades (HO 5/10/2025). On V-DEM's *Liberal Democracy Index*, Somaliland ranks 103rd out of 179 with 0.27 points – ahead of, for example, Tunisia (106), Morocco (109), Serbia (113) and South/Central Somalia (134) (UNIG-VDI 3/2025).

Overall, however, negotiations between clans play a major role in reaching consensus outside the democratic process (BS 2026). The current president meets regularly with former presidents to exchange views, even though they do not belong to his party (SLST 11/3/2025). Furthermore, on sensitive matters, he sits down with representatives of all three registered parties (HO 15/7/2025a). At present, however, the focus is less on political conflicts and more on the dissatisfaction

of certain clans with the government – including the president's clan (Isaaq / Habr Yunis / Muse Abdalla), as well as the Isaaq / Habr Yunis / Sa'ad Yunis clans based east of Burco, and the two clans in Awdal (Issa and Gadabursi). Furthermore, not all communities in Somaliland are happy about Israel's recognition (BMLV 9/7/2026).

Parliament: There is a bicameral parliament. The Upper House or House of Elders (*guurti*) consists of 82 appointed or indirectly elected members, whilst the Lower House or House of Representatives consists of 82 elected members.The last parliamentary elections were held in May 2021 (USDOS 20/3/2023; cf. FH 2024a). Several European countries have praised these successful elections (EEAS 8/6/2021). Although there were some irregularities (FH 2024a), and the elections were not flawless, they were free and fair (USDOS 20/3/2023), credible (FH 2024a) and peaceful and transparent (USDOS 20/3/2023). In the Lower House, the Waddani party won 31 seats, the then-ruling Kulmiye party 30, and the UCID (*Ururka Caddaalada iyo Daryeelka*) party the remaining 21 (ICG 12/8/2021; cf. HIPS 8/2/2022; FH 2024a). Although in February 2026 the Electoral Commission had only advocated postponing the elections by ten months due to security concerns, technical problems and the prevailing drought, the *Guurti* extended the terms of office of the House of Representatives and the local councils by 27 months in April. The elections had actually been scheduled for the end of May 2026 (Geeska 28/4/2026).

The Upper House consists exclusively of elders. The *guurti* was formed in 1993 and, due to an unclear legal situation, has not been reconstituted since (ICG 12/8/2021; cf. AQSOM 5 11/2024; BS 2026). Time and again, the *guurti* has extended its own term of office (BS 2026; cf. FH 2024a). Deceased elders have been replaced by close relatives – regardless of their merits (Shukri/TEL 3/5/2021). Most recently, *in* October 2022, the *guurti* extended its own term of office by five years (FH 2024a).

Through this institution – but also more generally – clan elders play an influential role in politics (FH 2024a). Furthermore, 2,700 *suldaans* [*Note: traditional elders or clan leaders*] are registered with the Ministry of the Interior. They also receive a salary for their involvement in local government (UNHRC 6/9/2017). In addition to the list of elders held by the Ministry of the Interior, the governors maintain their own lists of elders in their respective regions (LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Presidency: The last presidential election took place in November 2024. The opposition candidate Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi 'Irro' of the Waddani Party won with 64 per cent of the vote against the incumbent president, Muse Bihi Abdi of the Kulmiye Party (BAMF 25/11/2024; cf. Standard 20/11/2024; BS 2026). According to international election observers, the election was free, fair, transparent and peaceful (TBF 14/11/2024; cf. BAMF 25/11/2024; ÖB Nairobi 19/11/2024; Standard 20/11/2024), and there were no significant problems (Sahan/SWT 4/12/2024). The handover of office and power took place without incident, underlining the consolidation of democracy in Somaliland (BS 2026).

Only three parties permitted: The Somaliland Constitution limits the number of permitted parties to three (BS 2026). In the last party elections in November 2024, which took place at the same time as the presidential elections, six further political groups vied for recognition as

national parties alongside the three already authorised at the time (TBF 14/11/2024). Waddani (216,000 votes) and Kulmiye (108,000) were re-approved, whilst Kaah (132,000) was added as a new party. These three parties are now authorised to operate as nationally recognised political parties for the next ten years (HT 19/11/2024; cf. WARSOM 19/11/2024; AA 9/3/2026).

Kulmiye's political base consists primarily of an alliance between the Isaaq clans Habr Awal and Habr Jeclo (Sahan/SWT 31/7/2023). Waddani, on the other hand, was founded by the Isaaq / Gerhaji / Habr Yunis (Sahan/SWT 5/9/2022). The last four Somaliland presidents have been drawn from the Isaaq / Habr Awal, Isaaq / Habr Jeclo and Dir / Samaroon clans (ICG 10/11/2022). The new president, Irro, belongs to the Habr Yunis (AQSOM 5 11/2024; cf. Sahan/SWT 4/12/2024). He was elected primarily by his own clan, as well as by the Isaaq / Gerhaji / Idagalla, sections of the Habr Jeclo, dissidents from the Habr Awal and a third of the Gadabursi (AQSOM 5 11/2024).

Islamism: Thegrowing economic and political influence of the Salafist *al I'tisaam* is hard to overlook in Hargeysa, particularly in view of the numerous newly built schools and mosques (Sahan/SWT 4/7/2025). The group operates across clan boundaries and its members come from across the political spectrum. Having lost power following the ousting of President Farmaajo in Mogadishu, al *I'tisaam* is increasingly shifting its focus to Somaliland. The group regards democracy as a violation of Sharia law, denies any legitimacy to the Shafi'i school of Islam – to which most Somalilanders adhere – and considers practised *Sufism*to be heresy. Its aim is to overthrow democracy in Somaliland and replace it with a totalitarian regime within the framework of an Islamic emirate (Sahan/SWT 5/9/2022).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ABC News - Australian Broadcasting Corporation News (5/6/2022): The small African state of Somaliland legally doesn't exist. But Taiwan has spied an opportunity to make its mark, https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-06/why-taiwan-has-found-an-unlikely-friend-in-somaliland/101072682, accessed 13/10/2023
- AJ - Al Jazeera (19/11/2024): Opposition's Abdullahi wins presidential election in breakaway Somaliland, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/19/oppositions-abdullahi-wins-presidential-election-in-breakaway-somaliland, accessed 2/12/2024
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 5 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 5 (11/2024): Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um einen analytischen Newsletter
- BAMF - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [Germany] (25/11/2024): Briefing Notes, https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Behoerde/Informationszentrum/BriefingNotes/2024/briefingnotes-kw48-2024.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3, accessed 29/11/2024
- BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation (19/11/2024): Somaliland opposition leader Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi 'Irro' wins presidential vote, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cpvzxg3n3dmo, accessed 2/12/2024
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (9/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026

- Cannon/Conversation - Conversation, The (Publisher), Brandon J. Cannon (Author) (22/11/2024): Somaliland's new government is ready to drive change: these are its 3 big goals, https://theconversation.com/somalilands-new-government-is-ready-to-drive-change-these-are-its-3-big-goals-244189, accessed 2/12/2024
- Economist - Economist, The (14/11/2024): The world's next country?, https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2024/11/14/the-worlds-next-country, accessed 2/7/2026 [fee required]
- EEAS - European Union / European External Action Service (8/6/2021): Statement by International Partners on Somaliland Parliamentary and Local Council Elections, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/somalia/99709/statement-international-partners_en#inbox/_blank, accessed 16/11/2023
- FH - Freedom House (3/2026): Freedom in the World 2026, https://freedomhouse.org/country/scores, accessed 24/3/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- FT/Wallis - William Wallis (Author), Financial Times (Publisher) (12/3/2026): The breakaway African state building Coca-Cola plants and Emirati ports, https://www.ft.com/content/74d547fc-90b0-48bd-be5e-af6e4f317130?syn-25a6b1a6=1, accessed 18/3/2026 [fee required]
- Geeska - Geeska (28/4/2026): Another term extension: Somaliland extends Parliament and Council terms, https://www.geeska.com/en/another-term-extension-somaliland-extends-parliament-and-council-terms, accessed 2/7/2026
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (8/2/2022): State of Somalia Report 2021, Year in Review, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOS-REPORT-2021-English-version.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- HO - Hiiraan Online (5/10/2025): Somaliland electoral commission wins ICPS Excellence Award for transparent elections, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Oct/203196/somaliland_electoral_commission_wins_icps_excellence_award_for_transparent_elections.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 25/11/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (15/7/2025a): Somaliland president meets party leaders over Sool tensions, 2026 elections, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202214/somaliland_president_meets_party_leaders_over_sool_tensions_2026_elections.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 2/7/2026
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (2025): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2024, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Annual-Report-2025-1.pdf, accessed 24/4/2026
- HT - Horn Tribune (19/11/2024): Somaliland: NEC Announces Interim Results for the Presidential, National Party Elections, https://horntribune.com/2024/11/19/somaliland-nec-announces-interim-results-for-the-presidential-national-party-elections/, accessed 2/7/2026
- ICG - International Crisis Group (6/3/2024): The Stakes in the Ethiopia-Somaliland Deal, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/ethiopia-somaliland/stakes-ethiopia-somaliland-deal, accessed 19/4/2024
- ICG - International Crisis Group (10/11/2022): Overcoming Somaliland's Worsening Political Crisis, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/overcoming-somalilands-worsening-political-crisis, accessed 23/10/2023
- ICG - International Crisis Group (12/8/2021): Building on Somaliland's Successful Elections, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somaliland/b174-building-somalilands-successful-elections, accessed 13/10/2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- LAW-A/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Lawyer A (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Marchal/CERI - Roland Marchal (Author), Centre de Recherches Internationales SciencesPo (Publisher) (1/2026): The Recognition of Somaliland by Israel as An indicator of a Geopolitical Dynamic between the Horn and the Gulf, Les Analyses du CERI, https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/files/Somaliland_Janvier2026_AnalyseCERI.pdf, accessed 30/1/2026
- Meservey/HF - Heritage Foundation, The (Publisher), Joshua Meservey (Author) (19/10/2021): The U.S. Should Recognize Somaliland, https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2021-10/BG3660.pdf, accessed 13/10/2023

- NYT - New York Times, The (12/4/2025): African Breakaway State Offers U.S. a Chance to Stick It to China, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/12/world/africa/somaliland-trump-military-base.html?searchResultPosition=4, accessed 2/7/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (19/11/2024): Wochenbericht 11.11.-17.11.2024, per e-Mail an die Staatendokumentation
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (4/7/2025): A Qatari Cold Shoulder, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 842, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (4/12/2024): The Continued Strength of Somaliland's Democracy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 763, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (31/7/2023): Somaliland Lurches Towards Elections, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 572, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (5/9/2022): Somaliland's embattled democracy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 447, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Schwartz/FPRI - Stephen Schwartz (Author), Foreign Policy Research Institute (Publisher) (8/11/2021): The African Union Should Resolve Somaliland's Status, https://www.fpri.org/article/2021/11/the-african-union-should-resolve-somalilands-status/, accessed 13/10/2023
- Shukri/TEL - The Elephant (Publisher), Saeed Shukri (Author) (3/5/2021): Unrecognized Vote: Somaliland's Democratic Journey, https://www.theelephant.info/long-reads/2021/05/03/unrecognized-vote-somalilands-democratic-journey/, accessed 13/10/2023
- SIHA - Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (3/2025): Briefing Paper, Is the Democratic Dream Still Possible? Navigating the Growing Backlash Against Women's Rights in Somaliland, https://sihanet.org/briefing-paper-is-the-democratic-dream-still-possible-navigating-the-growing-backlash-against-womens-rights-in-somaliland/, accessed 24/9/2025
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (11/3/2025): President Holds Iftar Consultative Meeting with Former Presidents, https://somalilandstandard.com/president-holds-iftar-consultative-meeting-with-former-presidents/, accessed 2/7/2026
- Spiegel - Spiegel, Der (1/3/2021): A Miracle on the Horn of Africa, https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/boom-in-somaliland-a-miracle-on-the-horn-of-africa-a-c7fb91cc-4b0a-4561-977d-dd985cf48256, accessed 13/10/2023
- Standard - Standard, Der (20/11/2024): Somaliland distanziert sich weiter von China und wendet sich den USA zu, https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000245796/somaliland-distanziert-sich-weiter-von-china-und-wendet-sich-den-usa-zu, accessed 2/12/2024
- TBF - The Brenthurst Foundation (14/11/2024): Report of The Brenthurst Foundation Observer Mission, https://www.thebrenthurstfoundation.org/news/report-of-the-brenthurst-foundation-observer-mission, accessed 2/12/2024
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (6/9/2017): Report of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1422745/1930_1516796959_g1726077.pdf, accessed 16/11/2023
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (3/2025): Democracy Report 2025. 25 Years of Autocratization – Democracy Trumped?, https://www.v-dem.net/documents/61/v-dem-dr__2025_lowres_v2.pdf, accessed 10/12/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (20/3/2023): 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2089065.html, accessed 4/10/2023
- VOA/O. Hassan - Mohamed Olad Hassan (Author), Voice of America (Publisher) (14/11/2024): Vote counting underway in Somaliland after peaceful election, https://www.voanews.com/a/vote-counting-underway-in-somaliland-after-peaceful-election/7863396.html, accessed 2/12/2024
- WARSOM - Wararka Soomaaliya (19/11/2024): The results of the Somaliland election announced by the electoral commission and the number of parties that came out, https://warsom.com/wararka/2024/11/109864, accessed 2/12/2024
- Welt/Putsch - Christian Putsch (Author), Welt (Publisher) (20/7/2025): Ostkorridor: „Umkehren kommt nicht infrage' – warum diese gefährliche Migrationsroute boomt, https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article256293416/ostkorridor-umkehren-kommt-nicht-infrage-warum-diese-gefaehrliche-migrationsroute-boomt.html, accessed 24/3/2026

2.3 Areas inhabited by the Dhulbahante and Warsangeli / Sanaag and Sool / North East State (NES)

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

Only the Sool region is predominantly inhabited by Dhulbahante. At the same time, however, the *'SSC"* refers to three parts that are intended to constitute a federal state of Somalia: Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (Buuhoodle). Unlike in Sool, however, there are only a few Dhulbahante in Sanaag, whereas there are many Isaaq and Darod / Harti / Warsangeli (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). At the same time, many Dhulbahante are also dissatisfied with the NES or *SSC-Khatumo*, which by no means represents a cross-section of the clan (STDOK/BMLV 10/4/2025). For instance, there are only 'a handful'of Dhulbahante from the northern sub-clans of Sanaag. Overall, the NES therefore represents only part of Togdheer (Cayn) and part of the Sool region, namely the Dhulbahante sub-clans from Buuhoodle and the southern part of Sool; but not Sanaag and, in particular, not the Warsangeli (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025; cf. Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Even after the establishment of the NES, many Warsangeli and also some Dhulbahante tend to side with Puntland (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The NES Parliament carries some weight with regard to the Dhulbahante, but hardly any with regard to the Warsangeli (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Sool / Dhulbahante: The majority of Sool's population belongs to the Darod / Harti/ Dhulbahante (EUAA 5/2025b). Dhulbahante are represented in all governments: in Somaliland, in Puntland and also in the Somali Federal Government. For example, the current Vice-President of Puntland and the Speaker of the Somaliland House of Representatives are both Dhulbahante (BMLV 9/7/2026). The President of Somaliland, newly elected in November 2024, has a Dhulbahante (Horn 14/12/2024a) in his new cabinet.

In 1993, the clan leader (*garaad*) of the Dhulbahante co-signed the agreement on the internal unification of Somaliland. As early as 1998, differences of opinion arose with the government; *garaad* Jama turned to Puntland, in the establishment of which the Dhulbahante had played a part. From then on, the Dhulbahante changed sides on several occasions (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Some felt marginalised both politically and economically by Somaliland's Isaaq-dominated system of government (Sahan/SWT 19/6/2023; cf. Economist/L. Taylor 29/8/2024; AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

In December 2022, the Somaliland police in Laascaanood used excessive force, killing several demonstrators. These demonstrators had been protesting against the state's failure to respond to a series of assassinations targeting civil society figures and members of the opposition. Against this backdrop, elders of the Dhulbahante declared secession from Somaliland and established their own administration under the name *SSC-Khatumo*. They also announced their intention to rejoin Somalia. The conflict escalated in February 2023 (BS 2026).

As a result, the *SSC-Khatumo* was transformed into the 'federal state' of NES, which the federal government has recognised as such (Sahan/SWT 4/8/2025). In August 2025, an 83-member regional parliament was established (HO 1/9/2025). This parliament elected Abdiqadir Aw Ali Firdhiye as President of the NES for a five-year term (Dawan 30/8/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 1/9/2025). The Federal Government interfered in the electoral process (GO 21/7/2025); both

Firdhiye and his Vice-President are regarded as its candidates. From the Federal Government's perspective, the NES's state-formation process is thus complete (HO 1/9/2025). According to one source, the process of establishing the NES did not comply with the provisions of the Somali Constitution (Sahan/SWT 25/8/2025). Theconference on the formation of federal structures in mid-2025 was strongly criticised by, amongst others, g*araad* Jama, primarily due to external interference (Horseed 12/7/2025; cf. Wardheer 12/7/2025; Horn 13/7/2025). In fact, key politicians and elders did not take part in the conference (GO 21/7/2025). Furthermore, g*araad Jama* had already declared in May 2025 that no further attacks on Somaliland would be launched from 'his' territory (SG 12/5/2025).

Overall, the Dhulbahante are not united with regard to the NES. After all, there are and have been political posts elsewhere too, and some businesspeople work closely with Puntland or Somaliland (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. BMLV 9/7/2026). At the same time, the NES is on shaky financial ground: due to the Warsangeli's neutrality, it has no port, meaning that both Puntland and Somaliland can impose a blockade at any time (Sahan/SWT 25/8/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 4/8/2025). The bulk of its meagre revenue is channelled into security (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). The NES is therefore economically heavily dependent on Puntland and Somaliland and is consequently vulnerable (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

According to one source, Laascaanood is regarded as the centre of the Islamist *group al-I'ttisam*, which reportedly controls, amongst other things, the electricity and water supply as well as money transfers there. President Firdhiye is a supporter of this group (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Sanaag, Warsangeli: The eastern part of the region is mainly inhabited by Darod / Harti / Warsangeli. In some areas in the south of the region, there are Darod / Harti / Dhulbahante, whilst in the western part, including Ceerigaabo, the population consists predominantly of Isaaq / Gerhaji / Habr Yunis; in Ceerigaabo, there are also Isaaq / Gerhaji / Habr Jeclo, as well as members of the Dhulbahante and Warsangeli (EUAA 5/2025b). Overall, the population of Sanaag is divided roughly into 37 per cent Isaaq / Habr Jeclo and 37per cent Warsangeli [*Note: The Dhulbahante therefore constitute only a minority*](BMLV 2/7/2025). The President of Somaliland, newly elected in November 2024, has appointed two Warsangeli to his new cabinet (Horn 14/12/2024a).

The Warsangeli living in Sanaag and some of the Dhulbahante residing there have little sympathy for the NES. They are, however, courted all the more by Puntland; local elections have also taken place there, and both clans are represented in the Puntland Parliament. Overall, however, it is not yet clear which direction the Warsangeli in Sanaag will take – Somaliland, Puntland, the NES or autonomy (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025). According to one source, many Warsangeli in the NES feel marginalised for a fourth time (after Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland), as they are not considered relevant stakeholders there either. At the same time, due to their proximity to the port city of Bossaso, they find themselves within Puntland's economic sphere of influence and are not tied to the Dhulbahante hinterland (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

In the wake of the clashes over Ceerigaabo (Sanaag) in December 2024, the *suldaan*of the Warsangeli refused to allowthe *SSC-Khatumo*to represent his clan (PP 19/12/2024). In July

2025, several elders declared that the Warsangeli see themselves as part of Puntland and do not wish to send representatives to the NES founding conference. Although the clan is not entirely united on this matter, this declaration is nonetheless significant (Sahan/SWT 11/7/2025; cf. Horseed 12/7/2025). A number of Warsangeli did attend, but they did not act on behalf of the elders and community leaders (GO 21/7/2025). Rather, they represent *the* so-called *'Maakhir State'*, a minority faction within the Warsangeli (Sahan/SWT 4/8/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 22/9/2025; AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). According to two sources, the majority of the Warsangeli elders now support Puntland, whilst another group continues to adopt a wait-and-see approach (Sahan/SWT 25/8/2025; cf. BMLV 9/7/2026).

Puntland: From Puntland's perspective, the NES is on the side of the federal government (BMLV 2/7/2025). At the same time, the NES lays claim to territory that is partly claimed by Puntlandand where the Puntland administration has, to some extent, established itself (HO 4/5/2025; cf. RD 19/7/2025). Indeed, Puntland wields significant influence in areas predominantly inhabited by the Warsangeli – for example, in Badhaan and Hadaftimo (BMLV 9/7/2026). However, Puntland also regards the Dhulbahante territories as part of its own territory (HO 17/7/2025). Puntland condemned the conferences held in mid-2025 to establish the NES and described them as unconstitutional (GO 21/7/2025; cf. HO 17/7/2025).

Sources

- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (9/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/7/2025): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (6/6/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (30/8/2025): Abdiqadir Ahmed Aw-Ali (Firdhiye) Elected President of Northeastern State, https://www.dawan.africa/news/abdiqadir-ahmed-aw-ali-firdhiye-elected-president-of-northeastern-state, accessed 7/10/2025
- Economist/L. Taylor - Economist, The (Publisher), Liam Taylor (Author) (29/8/2024): Inside Somaliland, the state eager to become the world's next country, https://www.economist.com/1843/2024/08/29/inside-somaliland-the-state-eager-to-become-the-worlds-next-country, accessed 20/12/2024
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025b): Somalia – Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-05/2025_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 3/6/2025
- GO - Garowe Online (21/7/2025): Villa Somalia Backs Firdhiye for Khaatumo Leadership as Laascaanood Conference Draws Criticism, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/villa-somalia-backs-firdhiye-for-khaatumo-leadership-as-laascaanood-conference-draws-criticism?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed 10/10/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (1/9/2025): Somalia announces official formation of Northeastern Federal State, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Sept/202750/somalia_announces_official_formation_of_northeastern_federal_state.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 7/10/2025

- HO - Hiiraan Online (17/7/2025): Puntland rejects SSC-Khaatumo administration, citing legal grounds, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202234/puntland_rejects_ssc_khaatumo_administration_citing_legal_grounds.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 23/6/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (4/5/2025): SSC-Khaatumo defends federal ties, says no need to consult Puntland, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/May/201393/ssc_khaatumo_defends_federal_ties_says_no_need_to_consult_puntland.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 18/6/2025
- Horn - Horn Observer (13/7/2025): Dhulbahante Top Elder Says FGS Laascaanood Conference Plan Was Not Consulted, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3409/Somalia-Dhulbahante-Top-Elder-Says-FGS-Laascaanood-Conference-Plan-Was-Not-Consulted, accessed 23/6/2026
- Horn - Horn Observer (14/12/2024a): Somaliland President Abdirahman Abdillahi Irro Unveils Inclusive Somaliland Cabinet, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3071/Somaliland-President-Abdirahman-Abdillahi-Irro-Unveils-Inclusive-Somaliland-Cabinet, accessed 20/12/2024
- Horseed - Horseed Media (12/7/2025): SSC-Khaatumo Conference in Laascaanood Postponed Amid Political Tensions, https://horseedmedia.net/somalia-ssc-khaatumo-conference-in-laascaanood-postponed-amid-political-tensions/408645/, accessed 9/10/2025
- Omer/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Ahmed Omer (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- PP - Puntland Post (19/12/2024): Suldaan Cabdisalaan disagrees with the SSCK administration over the situation in Ceerigaabo, https://puntlandpost.net/2024/12/19/suldaan-cabdisalaan-disagrees-with-the-ssck-administration-over-the-situation-in-ceerigaabo, accessed 20/12/2024
- RD - Radio Dalsan (19/7/2025): Fresh Push for SSC-Khaatumo Administration as Delegates Gather in Lasanod Amid Political Tensions with Puntland, https://radiodalsan.com/2025/07/19/fresh-push-for-ssc-khaatumo-administration-as-delegates-gather-in-lasanod-amid-political-tensions-with-puntland/, accessed 23/6/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (22/9/2025): Rumours and Fallout After Badhan AFIRCOM Strike, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 876, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (1/9/2025): No Deal Yet On Contested Polls, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 867, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (25/8/2025): North Eastern State: Caveat Emptor, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 864, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (4/8/2025): A New Fait Accompli In The Volatile North, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 855, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (11/7/2025): Federal Meddling Inflames Sanaag, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 845, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (19/6/2023): Stalemate in Sool: Only Al-Shabaab Benefits, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 555, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SG - Somali Guardian (12/5/2025): Somaliland, SSC clan leaders pledge to halt hostilities amid renewed push for peace, https://somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/somaliland-ssc-clan-leaders-pledge-to-halt-hostilities-amid-renewed-push-for-peace, accessed 18/6/2025
- STDOK/BMLV - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Ministry of Defence [Austria] (10/4/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten des BMLV
- Wardheer - Wardheer News (12/7/2025): Traditional Leader Garaad Jaamac Rejects SSC-Khaatumo Leader's Political Approach, https://wardheernews.com/traditional-leader-garaad-jaamac-rejects-ssc-khaatumo-leaders-political-approach/?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed 9/10/2025

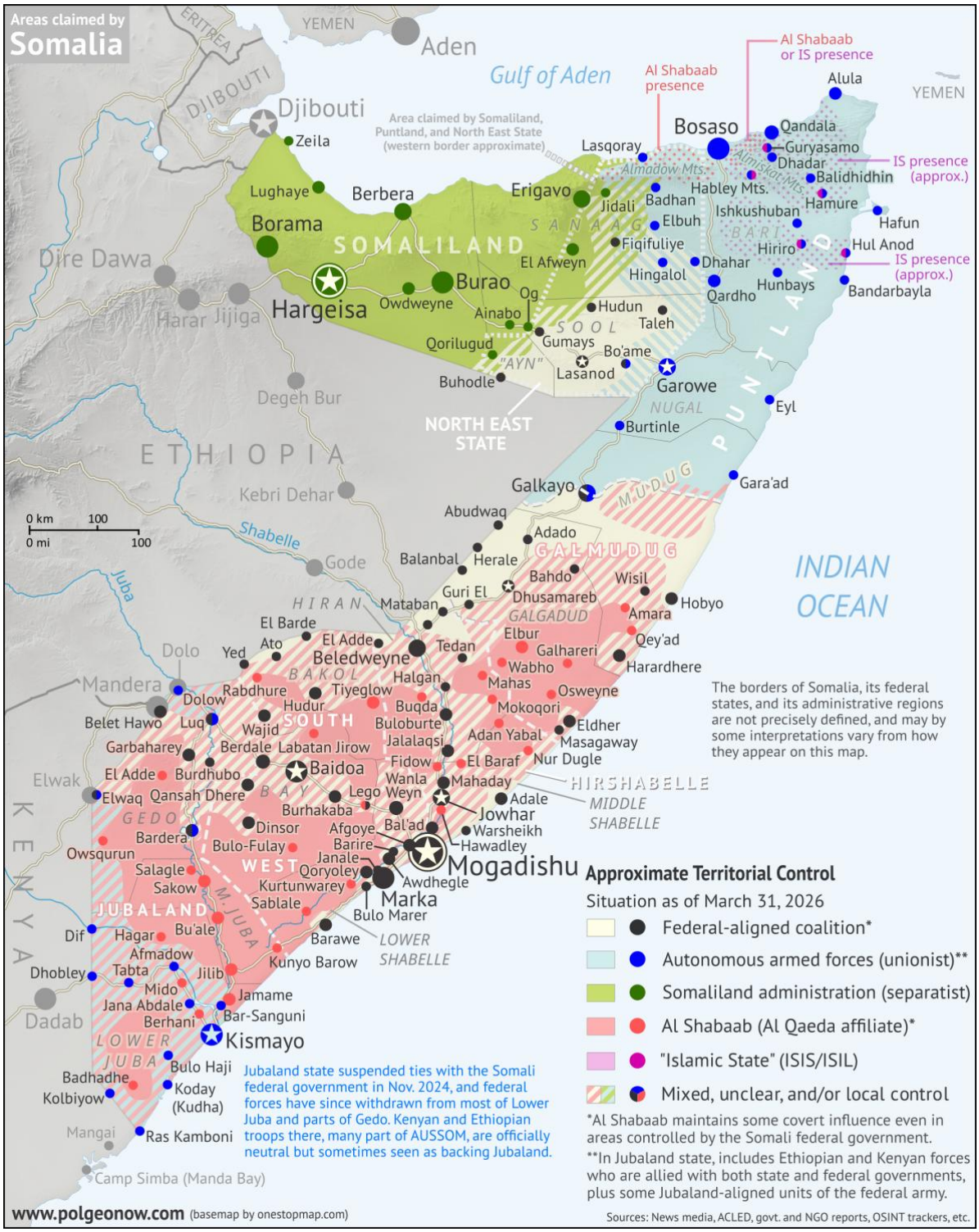
3 Security situation and conditions in the various regions

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

There are significant differences in the figures for acts of violence between northern and southern/central Somalia (ACLED 15/1/2026). The degree of control over, or influence on, individual areas also varies:

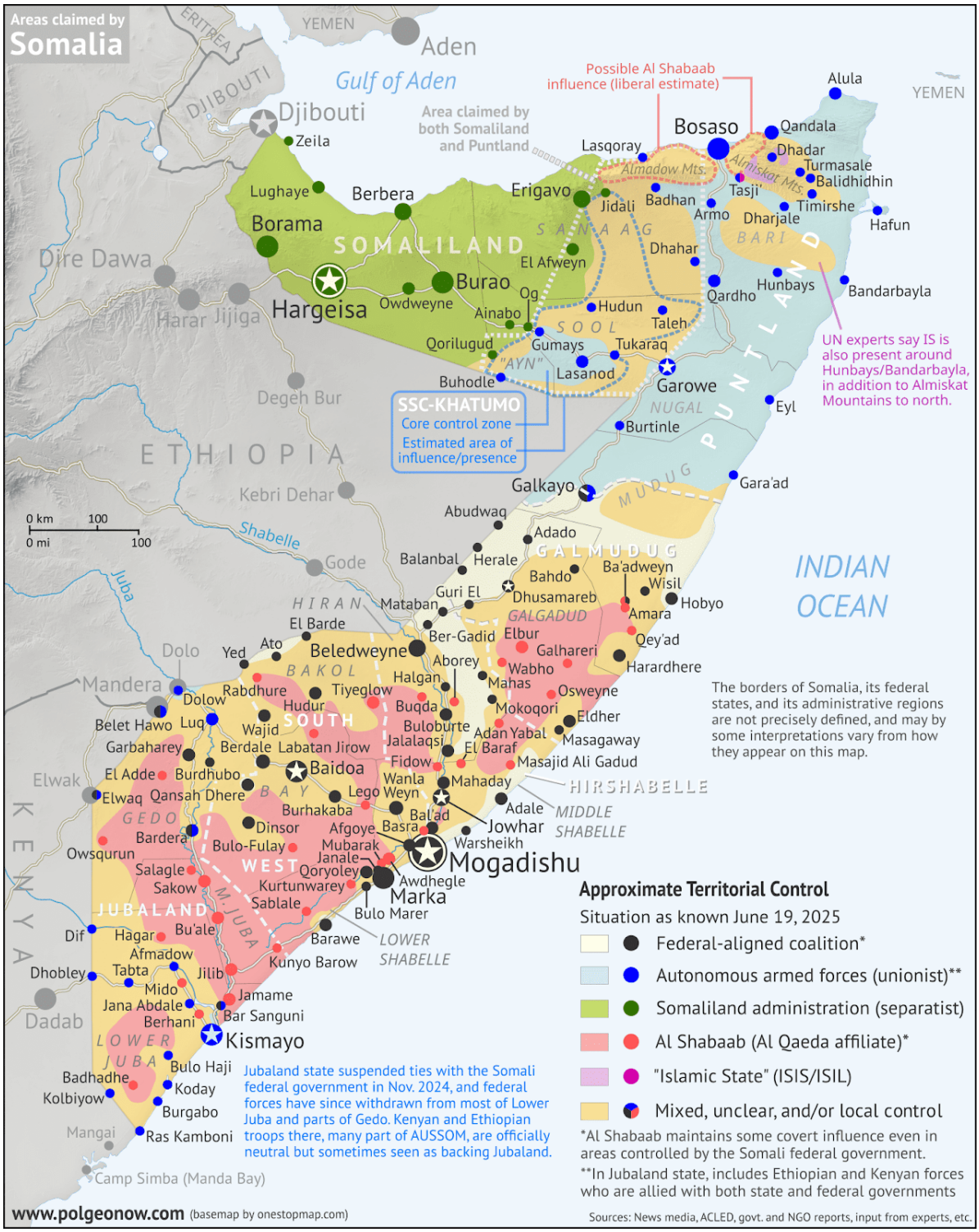
- Somaliland controls the core areas it claims, but not all the areas it officially claims (in Sool and Sanaag), which are partly controlled by clans, partly by the North East State (NES; formerly *SSC-Khatumo*) and, to a small extent, by Puntland;
- In Puntland, control over small, mountainous sub-regions is influenced by al-Shabaab and the so-called Islamic State in Somalia (ISS), whilst Puntland's lack of access to certain areas is primarily due to clan disputes;
- In South/Central Somalia, however, the situation is much more complex. In Mogadishu and most other major cities, al-Shabaab has no control, though it does maintain a presence. By contrast, al-Shabaab exercises control over large parts of the rural areas. In addition, there are large areas in South/Central Somalia where various parties exert influence; or which are not controlled by anyone; or where the situation is unclear (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Political Geography Now describes the situation as at 31 March 2026 as follows:



Sources 1: PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026

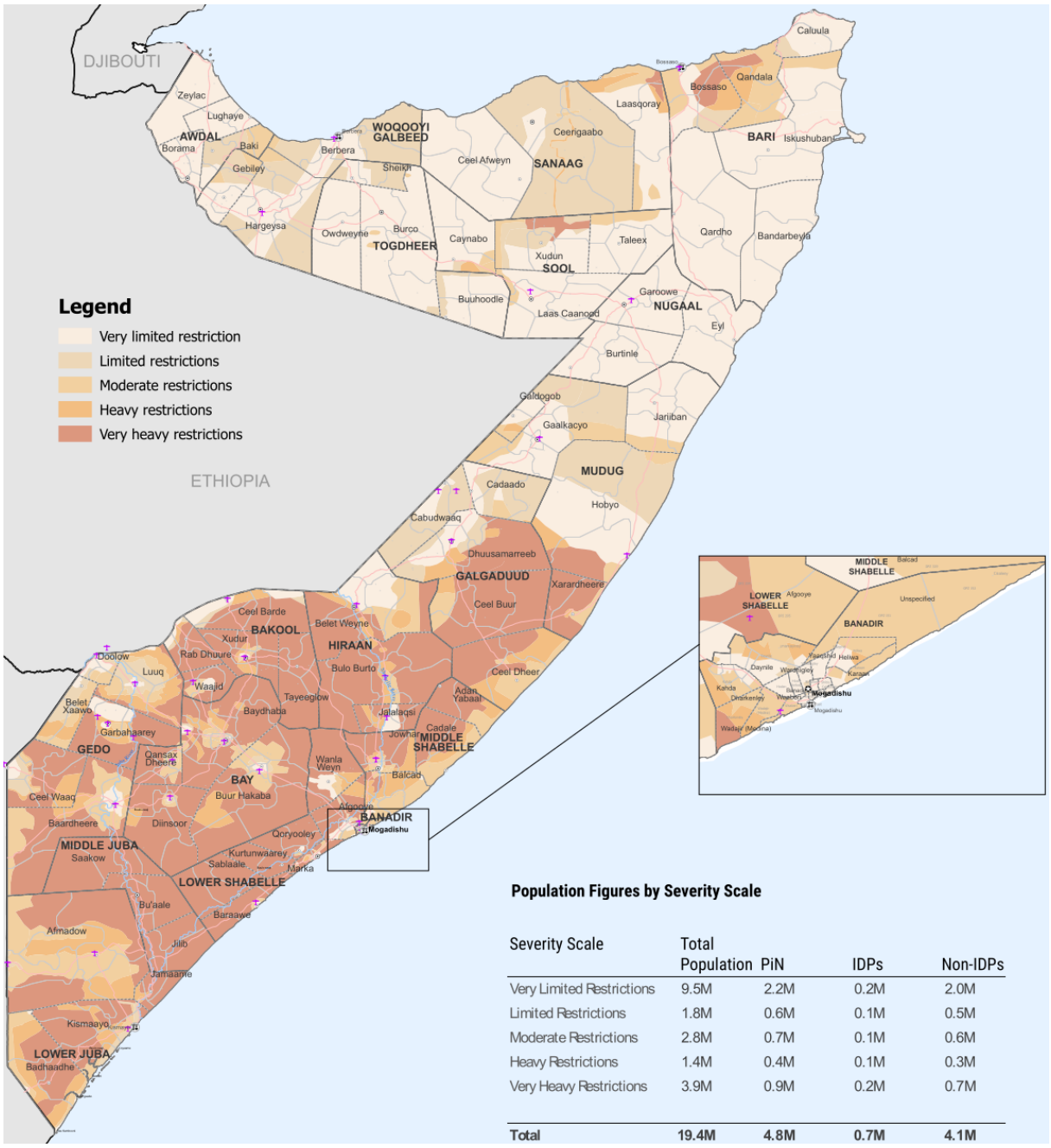
As at 19 June 2025, the situation, according to the same source, was as follows:



Sources 2: PGN 19/6/2025

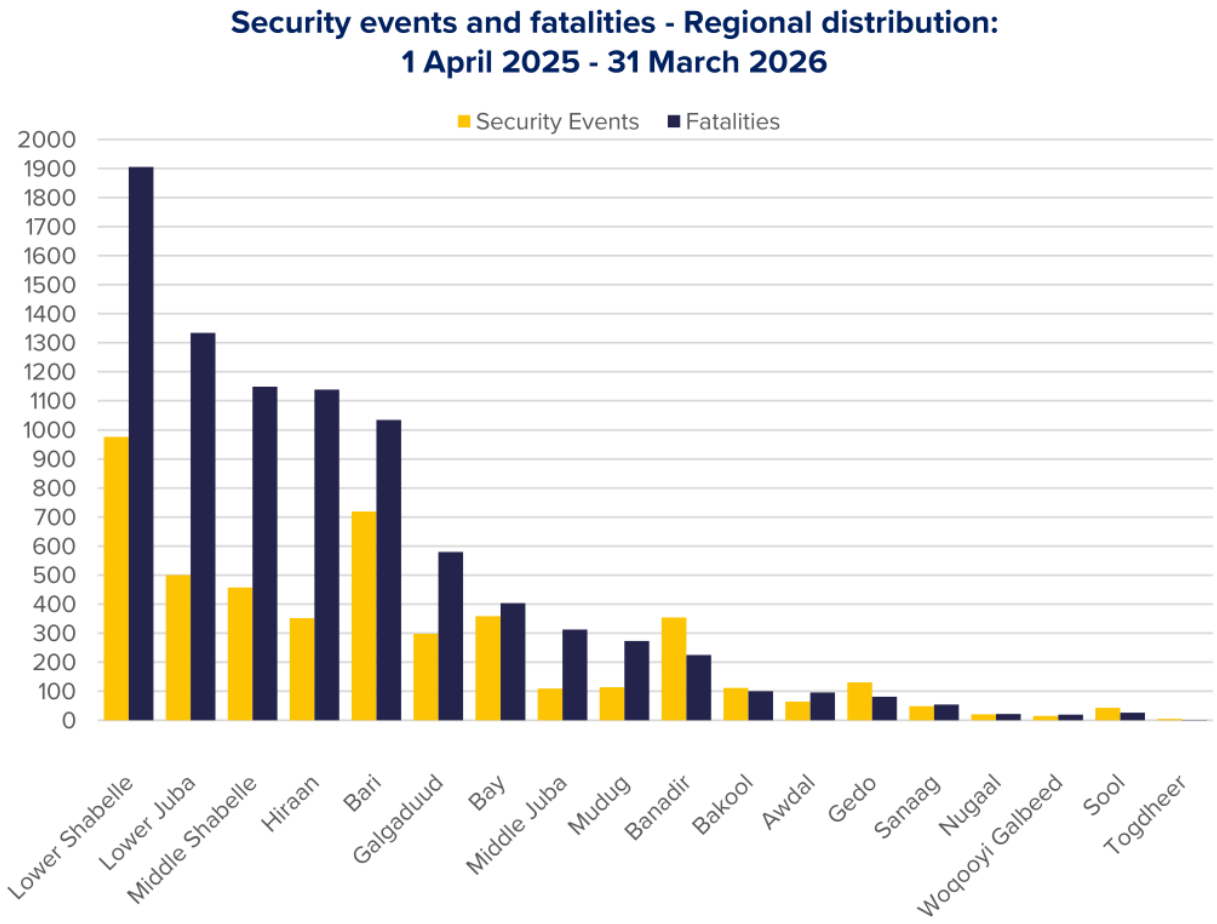
The EUAA has analysed data from ACLED and reports that 4,676 security-related incidents were documented across Somalia between April 2025 and March 2026. Of these, 2,969 were combat operations, 936 were explosions or remote violence, and 771 were targeted violence against civilians. In addition to the 771 incidents against civilians mentioned above, civilians were also affected by 70 incidents in the category *remote violence*. Based on these figures, the average number of security-related incidents across Somalia during the period in question was approximately 13 per day (EUAA 5/2026a). According to another source, the number of people killed (including combatants) in the various conflicts in Somalia in 2024 was 5,554; in the first three quarters of 2025, the figure was more than 7,700 according to this source (HC 24/2/2026).

[*Note: Although the following United Nations map relates to access for humanitarian organisations, it can certainly be used as a benchmark to illustrate the security situation:*]



Sources 3: UN OCHA 27/1/2026

This analysis of ACLED data, carried out by the EUAA, paints a similar picture, namely that there are comparatively few incidents and fatalities in the Somaliland regions and in Nugaal (Puntland):



Sources 4: EUAA 5/2026a

Consequently, Hargeysa, Berbera, Burco and Garoowe are safe cities. With minor exceptions, this also applies to Belet Weyne, Bossaso, Dhusamareb, Galkacyo, Jowhar and Kismayo (BMLV 11/9/2026). Generally speaking, in almost all regions of Somalia south of Puntland, there regularly are locally confined skirmishes between international peacekeeping forces or Somali security forces and al-Shabaab, particularly in southern and central Somalia, where large areas are under the control of this group (AA 9/3/2026).

Onthe *Institute for Economics & Peace's GlobalPeace Index,* which analyses various perspectives on peace, Somalia most recently ranked 151st out of 163 countries surveyed with 2,983 points – just behind Nigeria (2,869 points), Iraq (2,862) and Turkey (2,852), but ahead of, for example, BurkinaFaso (3,016), Israel (3,108), Afghanistan (3,229) and Ukraine (3,434) (IEP 6/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACLED - Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (15/1/2026): Curated Data - Africa (9 January 2026), https://acleddata.com/curated-data-files/, accessed 15/1/2026 [Login required]

- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (11/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2026a): Somalia: Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- HC - Health Cluster (24/2/2026): Health Cluster Bulletin - Somalia, January 2026, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/96fa3e1b-9f45-4b31-9b39-337386e3d0c8/Somalia - Health cluster bulletin January 2026.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- IEP - Institute for Economics and Peace (6/2025): Global Peace Index 2025: Identifying and Measuring the Factors that Drive Peace, https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/GPI-2025-web.pdf, accessed 1/10/2025
- PGN - Political Geography Now (19/6/2025): June 2025 Somalia Control Map & Timeline: Al Shabaab Resurgence, ISIS Retreat, Jubaland Defiant (Subscription), https://controlmaps.polgeonow.com/2025/06/june-2025-somalia-control-map-timeline/, accessed 23/6/2025 [fee required]
- PGN/EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (Publisher), Political Geography Now (Author) (31/3/2026): Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, in: EUAA (5.2026): Somalia: Security Situation, S.20, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (27/1/2026): Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026, https://www.unocha.org/attachments/edea4204-0921-4741-862f-203c6f75a631/Somalia_HNRP_2026.pdf, accessed 23/3/2026

3.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:32

The security situation remains fragile. Domestic political disputes threaten to open up further areas to al-Shabaab (AA 9/3/2026). The two days of heavy fighting between opposition forces and the federal government on 3–4 June 2026 in Mogadishu particularly demonstrated this fragility (Sahan 8/6/2026).

The predecessor mission, the *African Union Transition Mission in Somalia* (ATMIS), was largely absorbed into the newly named *African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia* (AUSSOM) at the start of 2025 (PGN 19/6/2025). AUSSOM is heavily involved in controlling the territory. Particularly in urban areas, the soldiers act as a stabilising force and bear primary responsibility for the security of the Somali leadership and the country's economic assets, including ports and airports (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Furthermore, the conflict with al-Shabaab continues to claim lives, with arbitrary killings, forced displacement and other war crimes being committed by all parties to the conflict (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). In the federal states of Galmudug, HirShabelle, South West State (SWS) and Jubaland, there are regular, locally confined skirmishes between Somali security forces/militias or AUSSOM and al-Shabaab (AA 31/8/2026; cf. SFH 1/2026; AA 9/3/2026). In this context, the Austrian Embassy refers to an armed conflict (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024), whilst the German Federal Foreign Office refers to violent clashes (AA 9/3/2026). The United Nations, for its part, reports that al-Shabaab is waging a non-international armed conflict against the forces of the Federal Government, the federal states, AUSSOM and other international partners (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026).

The Federal Government has still not managed to extend the reach of state institutions beyond Mogadishu in terms of providing services to citizens and protecting their lives and property (BMLV 11/9/2026). In general, the government is unable to ensure public security (Sahan 8/6/2026). In order to ensure even a fragile level of security, it is reliant on AUSSOM (AA 9/3/2026; cf. BMLV 11/9/2026), on local Somali actors (regional administrations, federal states, clans) and also on support from other states (BMLV 11/9/2026). On the other hand, according to one source, more than 60,000 migrant workers from Kenya and Uganda live and work in Somalia (TEA/Barigaba 28/4/2024).

A security analysis organisation cites the following incident figures for the whole of Somalia for the years 2024 and 2025, broken down by main actors:

	Al Shabaab	Clanmilizen	Regierungskräfte	Andere	GESAMT
2024	1205	409	1009	542	3165
2025	759	351	1142	1031	3283

Sources 5: AQSOM 9 1/2026

Territorial control: Authorities or administrations exist only in the larger cities, and the operational radius of local administrations often extends only a few kilometres. Even in cities such as Kismayo or Baidoa, this radius is not particularly large (BMLV 11/9/2026).The federal states of South and Central Somalia are therefore only partially under state control. A distinction must be made between the federal government's control, which is essentially limited to Mogadishu, and the control of urban areas by the individual federal states, which are *de facto* only formally subordinate tothe federal government (AA 9/3/2026). At least in Baidoa and Jowhar, the federal government wields greater influence (BMLV 11/9/2026). Rural areas are under the control of al-Shabaab or other militias, which are generally organised along clan lines (AA 9/3/2026).

Al-Shabaab has in the past been successfully driven out of the major cities, but exercises control over large parts of the hinterland or is at least able to exert influence there(ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. BS 2026; UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026; USDOS 26/6/2024b; PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). According to two sources, al-Shabaab controls 30 per cent of the country's territory (SFH 1/2026; cf. Sahan/SWT 10/4/2025). The '*urban island scenario'* therefore persists. This means that many towns under the control of the Somali Army and AUSSOM are surrounded by al-Shabaab territory (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). Examplesof such 'islands' include Xudur, Waajid, Diinsoor, Wanla Weyne and Baraawe. In areas where al-Shabaab does not exercise direct control – whether due to the presence of Somali or international security forces, or due to the presence of clan militias – the group attempts to punish the local population and the elders, or to coerce their support, through disruptive operations along the main supply routes (BMLV 11/9/2026).

However,al-Shabaab also exerts considerable influence over towns and areas that are not directly under its control (BS 2026). Consequently, no area in southern or central Somalia can truly be described as free from al-Shabaab. Especially through infiltration by covert operatives,

the group is able to operate almost anywhere (BMLV 11/9/2026). As shown on the map from *Political Geography Now* in the chapter on the security situation, the main areas administered and controlled by al-Shabaab are:

1. the Juba Valley, including the towns of Buale, Saakow and Jilib; *de facto* the entire Middle Juba region;
2. Jamaame and a large area around Badhaade in Lower Juba;
3. large areas around Ceel Cadde and from Qws Qurun to the southern border of the Gedo region;
4. areas to the north of and along the Shabelle River in Lower Shabelle, including Sablaale and Kurtunwaarey;
5. the southern part of Bay, with the exception of the town of Diinsoor;
6. Areas on both sides of the borders between Bay and Bakool, and between Bakool and Hiiraan, including the town of Tayeeglow and extending as far as the Shabelle;
7. Rab Dhuure and the area to the east of it in Bakool;
8. the northern third of Middle Shabelle, including the town of Adan Yabaal;
9. the southern half of Galgaduud, including the town of Ceel Buur;
10. and a small part of southern Mudug (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026);

Al-Shabaab [*Note: see also* Al-Shabaab] **– recent history:** In recent years, offensives have been carried out against Al-Shabaab, which initially proved successful from a military perspective (Sahan/SWT 4/8/2023). At that time, the group lost control of several strategically important towns, such as the port town of Xaradheere, as well as Ceel Dheere and Adan Yabaal (BBC 15/6/2023; cf. ICG 21/3/2023). By mid-2024 at the latest, some towns and areas had been lost to al-Shabaab once again (UNSC 28/10/2024; cf. AA 25/4/2025), partly because the federal government was unable to carry out even basic state functions in the liberated areas (AA 25/4/2025;cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024), due to a lack of troops (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. BMLV 7/8/2024), logistical problems and the resurgence of clan conflicts (HIPS 7/5/2024). In addition, in 2023 and 2024, ATMIS handed over 21 bases to Somali forces and closed a further three; however, at the time of the handover to AUSSOM, ATMIS still had around 50 bases in Somalia. [*Note: see also* Foreign Forces] However, as ATMIS troop numbers were reduced, al-Shabaab began to gain strength. By June 2025, several of the 21 handed-over bases were already under the group's control (PGN 19/6/2025).

At the same time, according to the Chief of the General Staff, the Federal Army's own casualties (excluding units from the federal states or allied militias) amounted to between 10,000 and 15,000 men in the period 2023–2025 (SG 5/11/2025; Sahan/SWT 17/11/2025). Furthermore, thousands of soldiers deserted in the first six months of 2025 alone (Sahan/SWT 17/11/2025). According to one source, the *Ma'awiisley* [*Note: militias*] were de facto abandoned by the federal government. They were cut off from supplies and communications, and no relief was planned.

This was one of the reasons why, for example, Moqokori and Tardo were lost to al-Shabaab (Sahan/SWT 16/7/2025). In Middle Shabelle, *the Ma'awiisley* threatened to lay down their arms in November 2025, as the salary payments promised to them had remained outstanding for months (GO 11/11/2025).

Overall, al-Shabaab has undone many of the gains made by the Federal Government since August 2022 (VOA/Babb 18/6/2024; cf. PGN 19/6/2025). As part of an offensive launched from HirShabelle from the end of February 2025, the group was able to make further significant territorial gains and capture strategically important locations in Hiiraan as well as in Middle and Lower Shabelle – including Adan Yabaal (AA 9/3/2026; cf. BAMF 3/3/2025; SG/WP 28/5/2025; Weiss/FDD 3/3/2025). In the area surrounding Mogadishu, in Lower Shabelle, al-Shabaab managed, amongst other things, to capture the towns of Aw Dheegle, Bariire, Sabiid and Anoole (Horn/A.J. Mohamed 15/5/2025). This meant the group controlled three of the four most important Shabelle bridges in the region (Sahan/SWT 26/3/2025). In July 2025, al-Shabaab finally managed to capture the key towns of Moqokori (CT/Karr/Tesfaye/AEI 10/7/2025) and Maxaas (BAMF 28/7/2025). By July 2025,the group had thus recaptured approximately 90 per cent of the territory gained by the federal government during the 2022/23 government offensive (GO 23/7/2025). Other areas were infiltrated and once again equipped with parallel administrative structures by al-Shabaab (UN OCHA 27/1/2026).

However, from mid-June 2025, AUSSOM, the Federal Army and bilateral Ugandan troops also began launching offensive operations and recapturing territory (AA 9/3/2026). The crossings over the Shabelle River in Lower Shabelle have largely been cleared of al-Shabaab (BMLV 11/9/2026). Consequently, the security situation stabilised in the second half of 2025 (AA 9/3/2026).

Al-Shabaab – Present[*Note: see also*Security Situation / Al-Shabaab]: Despite military setbacks, al-Shabaab has repeatedly proven itself to be resilient (BS 2026). Despite the nominally high losses inflicted on it by air strikes and combat, al-Shabaab has no shortage of fighters (BMLV 11/9/2026). An agreement between Ethiopia and Somaliland has brought it many new recruits (VOA/Babb 18/6/2024). The group continues to wage an insurgency against the internationally recognised Somali Federal Government and controls large parts of southern and central Somalia, where it exercises governmental authority and collects taxes (CT/Tyson/AEI 10/6/2025; cf. UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). Al-Shabaab employs violent, extremist tactics (BMLV 2/7/2025). The activities of this Islamist terrorist organisation shape the country; it continues to pose the greatest threat to security in Somalia (AA 9/3/2026; cf. BMLV 11/9/2026).

Al-Shabaab continues to attack state institutions, the armed forces and civilians (SFH 1/2026). Terrorist attacks are primarily directed at government officials, security forces, AUSSOM and foreign representatives (AA 9/3/2026); major attacks are generally directed against hotels, government and international institutions (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). The airport area in Mogadishu is also affected (AA 31/8/2026). [*Note: For explicit enemy stereotypes of al-Shabaab, see*Targets of targeted assassinations]

In addition to political and criminal means of controlling the population (such as intimidation, extortion, etc.), the group employs military tactics to achieve the full spectrum of asymmetric

warfare objectives. Using a variety of methods, al-Shabaab succeeds in controlling the population, influencing politics and creating a climate of fear in southern and central Somalia: control of large areas; so-called *hit-and-run attacks* against towns and military positions; exploiting clan disputes through a 'divide-and-rule' tactic; disrupting main supply routes and blockading towns; and, in key towns (e.g. Mogadishu, Baidoa, Galkacyo, Jowhar) targeted assassinations, attacks using improvised explosive devices and mortar attacks. In addition, the group remains capable of carrying out larger – so-called 'complex' attacks (BMLV 11/9/2026) and launch major offensives (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). In doing so, al-Shabaab generally follows a classic guerrilla doctrine: encircling towns from the countryside (BMLV 11/9/2026).

There are political attacks (on officials, elders and candidates) designed to disrupt and prevent consolidation; attacks on security structures (the Federal Army, police, militias, AUSSOM) to weaken the enemy and gain ground; attacks on the economy (infrastructure, roads, markets) to deprive the state of resources; and symbolic violence to spread fear and attract media attention (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). According to one source, the group as a whole attaches greater importance to being able to extort money ('taxes") in areas than to exercising complete control over them (MBZ 4/4/2025).

Incursions by larger al-Shabaab combat units into government-controlled towns occur only in rare cases (BMLV 11/9/2026). Militarily, al-Shabaab is currently described as static (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. BMLV 11/9/2026) or as adopting a delaying and wait-and-see approach – with regard to the areas in Lower Shabelle, Lower and Middle Juba, as well as Bay and Bakool. In Central Somalia – in Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle – al-Shabaab, by contrast, is currently waging a war of attrition against government forces and their *Ma'awiisley* allies. The group continues to operate there in the open countryside between the settlements and repeatedly attacks the settlements themselves or movements between them. This makes it impossible for its opponents to move freely between 'fortified locations' (towns and bases with sufficiently strong garrisons) (BMLV 11/9/2026). At the same time, the group no longer automatically retreats when government forces or AUSSOM attack; rather, al-Shabaab has repeatedly put up fierce resistance, for example in mid-2025 during the government offensive against Bariire (Sahan/SWT 8/8/2025). Furthermore, al-Shabaab now also carriesout targeted attacks on towns with the aim of capturing them. There are two objectives here: the territory itself; and the attrition of the enemy (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Those major cities (district and state capitals) that are not in the immediate centre of the fighting are not under threat of capture by al-Shabaab. On the other hand, due to the lack of clarity regarding the funding of AUSSOM, it is hardly possible to make clear statements, for example, regarding the security of important cities such as Jowhar and Balcad (BMLV 11/9/2026). Government-controlled areas – including Mogadishu – are frequently hit by terrorist attacks (AA 9/3/2026). In towns and cities, as well as along main supply routes and side roads, the group uses improvised explosive devices in its fight against government forces and their allies (Sahan/SWT 19/6/2024). Al-Shabaab occasionally carries out artillery attacks in Mogadishu, and sometimes also in places such as Baidoa and Kismayo. In the past, targets have included airports and other facilities secured by AUSSOM (UNSC 30/9/2025).

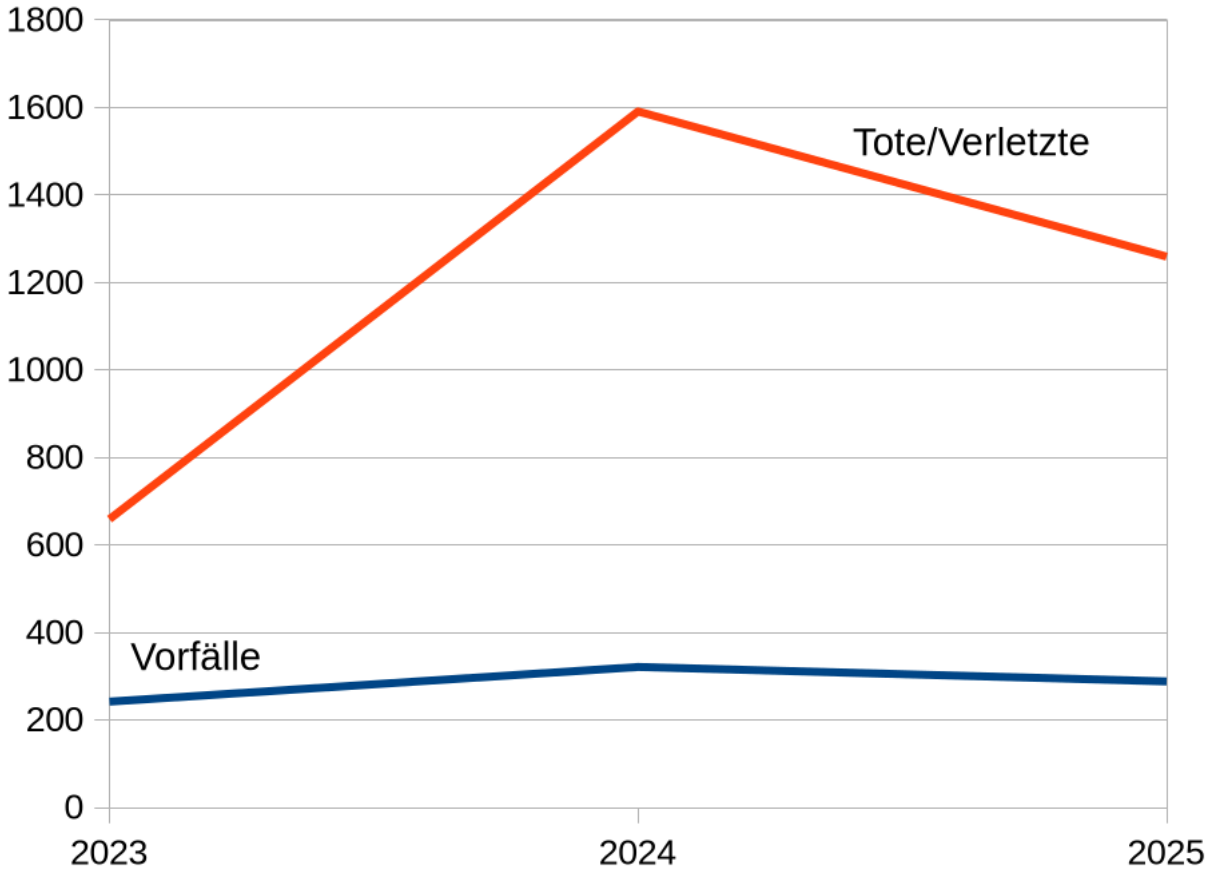
There has recently been a significant decline in attacks by al-Shabaab. This decline is part of a longer-term trend; since 2023, the number of fatalities resulting from terrorist attacks has fallen by around 24 per cent annually. According to this source, however, this decline should not be interpreted as a weakening of al-Shabaab or as a significant improvement in the security situation. Rather, it is attributable to a change in strategy: Al-Shabaab is moving away from high-casualty terrorism and is instead focusing on territorial warfare, technological development and troop mobilisation. The group already pursued a similar tactic during the 2021–2022 electoral crisis (Sahan 17/6/2026). Another source explains the decline in the number of incidents – for example, in Mogadishu – by the fact that the group is staying out of the conflict between the federal government and the opposition and is using the dispute to set priorities elsewhere or to rest its own forces (BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026).

Infiltration of towns and cities by undercover al-Shabaab operatives is occurring in some areas (BMLV 11/9/2026). In certain regions, sleeper cells are embedded in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and in informal settlements, as well as in hospitals and universities. They gather intelligence and provide logistical support (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). The infiltration of state institutions enables al-Shabaab not only to gather intelligence, but also to manipulate appointments and undermine the government's control over strategic infrastructure. Members of the group have been infiltrated into key institutions at ports, airports and in public bodies (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). Al-Shabaab is highly adaptable and mobile, and is able to exert its influence even in areas outside its own control (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Clan conflicts, politics and crime: There is a lack of strategies for resolving political conflicts, which regularly escalate into violence (BS 2026). Based on data from ACLED, the EUAA estimates the number of clan and sub-clan militias across the country to be several dozen (EUAA 5/2026a). Clashes repeatedly occur between such militias (AA 31/8/2026; cf. BS 2026), as well as between clan militias and security forces (BMLV 2/7/2025; cf. BS 2026). Clans conflicts are often triggered by disputes over land and other resources (UNSC 28/3/2025; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; Sahan/SWT 11/7/2024; BS 2026). As climate change increases the pressure on livestock herders and farmers throughout Somalia, areas that were once relatively fertile are increasingly becoming the scene of clashes between neighbouring clans (Sahan/SWT 11/7/2024). Revenge killings and power struggles can also fuel clan conflicts (UNSC 28/3/2025), whilst economic or political disputes can quickly escalate into violent clashes (Sahan/SWT 11/7/2024).

Experts agree that the scale of clan conflicts, rivalries and hostilities has increased significantly nationwide (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. EUAA 5/2025b). Among others, al-Shabaab is fuelling the violence between the clans (Sahan/SWT 10/2/2025; cf. BMLV 4/7/2024). Following a decline in clan conflicts at the start of 2025, the number rose significantly again in the final quarter of the year, although this did not have the same impact on the number of casualties. A striking feature of the period in question was that, on the one hand, there were fewer large-scale attacks and, on the other hand, 62 per cent of incidents were directed against unarmed civilians or civilian infrastructure. At the same time, 35 per cent of the victims (fatalities and injuries) were civilians. In some incidents, members of groups that are normally protected on cultural grounds (children, women, the elderly) were killed and abducted. At the same time, the violence perpetrated was

publicly displayed on so-called social media. This points to a further erosion of traditional control mechanisms (AQSOM 9 1/2026). Figures on clan conflicts 2023–2025:



Sources 6: AQSOM 9 1/2026

Often, clans seeking to settle scores face no resistance from the state – neither from the Federal Army nor from the Darawish (state forces), who are either tied up on the front lines or non-existent. In addition to the distraction caused by the fight against al-Shabaab, the Federal President's efforts to consolidate his political power, as well as the weakness of regional forces, are paralysing the administrations' capacities and scope for action with regard to clan conflicts. Another reason for the rise in clan conflicts is that the political elite surrounding the Federal President pays scant attention to clan conflicts. This fosters a climate of 'every man for himself' (BMLV 11/9/2026).

With regard to clan conflicts in 2025, Human Rights Watch specifically mentions the Luuq district (Gedo) and the Hiiraan region (HRW 4/2/2026). In the recent past, clan conflicts have occurred, for example, in Qoryooley between the Digil clans Jidde and Garre; in the Dhusamareb area between the Hawiye clans Habr Gedir and Duduble; in Mudug between the Hawiye / Sa'ad and Darod / Leelkase clans; in Middle Shabelle between the Hawiye clans Abgaal and Hawadle; and in Galgaduud between the Hawiye / Sa'ad and Hawiye / Ayr clans (BMLV 11/9/2026). The United Nations is attempting to mediate in inter- and intra-clan conflicts and has done so successfully in some cases between March and September 2025, for example, in Puntland between the Dir and

Sheikhal clans and between the Warsangeli clans; in HirShabelle between the Mataan Abdulle and Eli Omar clans and between the Abgaal and Kabale clans; and in Galmudug between the Leelkase and Sa'ad clans (UNSC 30/9/2025).

Since 1991, there has been virtually no effective protection in large parts of the country against attacks by clan and other militias, as well as armed criminal gangs (AA 9/3/2026). Acts of violence by armed groups and gangs, as well as crime driven by poverty, are widespread throughout the country. Armed robberies, *carjacking*, sexual violence and homicides occur frequently. The Somali government and AUSSOM cannot guarantee protection against general or terrorist crime in the country (AA 31/8/2026). Almost every Somali household is armed (Sahan/Petrovski 24/5/2024; cf. STDOK/BMLV 2/6/2026). According to a 2017 estimate, there are more than 1.1 million handguns in private ownership. Only a fraction of these are registered (Sahan/SWT 4/12/2023). Society is heavily militarised (Sahan 8/6/2026).

Islamic State in Somalia (ISS): The ISS's activities are confined to Puntland; its presence in southern and central Somalia has not been evident in recent months – not even in Mogadishu (BMLV 11/9/2026). [*Note: For ISS activities in Puntland, see Security Situation / Puntland*].

People displaced by conflict: According to UNHCR data, a total of 664,000 people were displaced across Somalia in2025, of whom 230,000 (35 per cent) were displaced due to conflict and insecurity. In 2024, the figures were 547,000 and 290,000 (53 per cent) respectively. A comparison of the figures for people displaced by conflict in 2024 and 2025 by region also highlights the shifting of the front line and the hotspots (comparative figures in brackets: full year 2024): Bari 41,000 (zero), Middle Shabelle 37,000 (10,000), Hiiraan 36,000 (6,000), Gedo 32,000 (87,000), Lower Juba 32,000 (34,000), Lower Shabelle 18,000 (24,000), Middle Juba 7,000 (24,000), Bakool 5,000 (13,000), Bay 4,000 (22,000), Galgaduud 1,000 (4,000), Mudug 500 (29,000); in the Benadir and Nugaal regions, there were no conflict-displaced persons in 2025 (UNHCR 2026b).

Civilians: The *United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia* (UNSOM) states that of the slightly more than 12,000 civilians killed or injured between 2017 and 2024, 60.7 per cent were attributable to al-Shabaab (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). The United Nations reported for the period January–September 2024 that al-Shabaab was responsible for 560 out of 854 (66 per cent) civilians killed or injured (AI 29/4/2025). In the period March–September 2026, the figure was 40 per cent (159 out of 395) (UNSC 30/9/2025; cf. AI 21/4/2026). In second place were state security forces (25 per cent), clan militias (19 per cent) and unknown perpetrators (16 per cent) (UNSC 30/9/2025). Civilians are particularly at risk of reprisals by al-Shabaab or government forces in frontline areas where territorial changes are taking place (BMLV 11/9/2026). Al-Shabaab frequently resorts to violence in these areas; the group is more restrictive there and distrusts the local population (MBZ 4/4/2025).

The greatest risk for civilians is being in the wrong place at the wrong time (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. Landinfo 5/3/2026) and thus becoming collateral damage from bomb attacks and other acts of violence (BMLV 11/9/2026).Although al-Shabaab's attacks are usually directed against groups of people whom the group regards as enemies, civilians who happen to be at or near the target

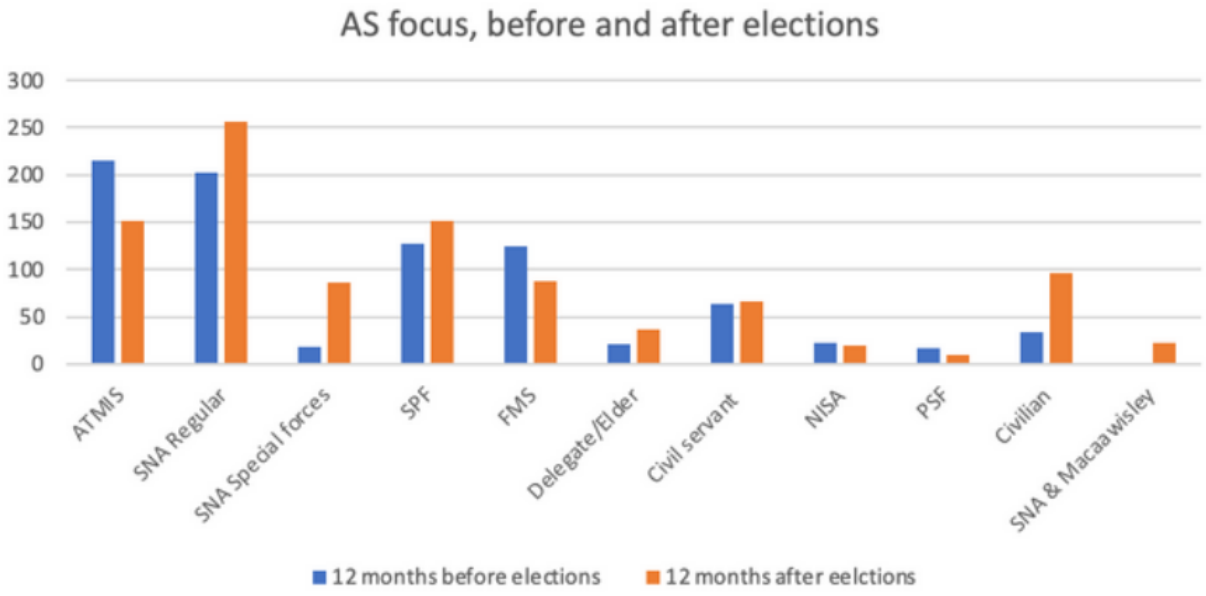
are also harmed in the process (BMLV 7/8/2024; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; EUAA 5/2025a). As a rule, al-Shabaab does not specifically target civilians who do not expose themselves in one way or another (BMLV 2/7/2025; cf. Landinfo 5/3/2026; AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). Even in the case of bomb attacks, the group does not usually target civilians indiscriminately and employs this tactic in a more targeted manner – compared to other terrorist groups – (FDD/Roggio 11/10/2023). However, al-Shabaab accepts collateral damage without hesitation (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025) and occasionally selects public facilities as targets (SFH 1/2026) where the group is aware that many civilians will suffer collateral damage – for example, in attacks on hotels, coffee or tea houses, restaurants or busy road junctions (FDD/Roggio 11/10/2023; cf. Sahan/SWT 7/8/2024; USDOS 12/8/2025). Al-Shabaab occasionally employs *takfir*, that is, the belief that certain individuals and groups have apostatised from the Muslim faith, which, in the group's view, can justify the unnecessary deaths of Muslim civilians (Sahan/SWT 5/8/2024). However,one of al-Shabaab'saims is also to spread fear (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Civilians are subjected to a kind of endemic, everyday insecurity in all areas of life, even though the likelihood of being caught up in an attack is relatively low (ACCORD 31/5/2021).

In a survey conducted in early 2026 in Hargeysa, Kismayo and Mogadishu on behalf of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees' (BFA) Staatendokumentation Programme, the 600 respondents rated their sense of security as follows:

Ich fühle mich in meiner Wohngegend...	**Männer**	**Frauen**	**gesamt**
sehr sicher	73	80	76
einigermaßen sicher	18	9	15
eher unsicher	6	7	6
unsicher	3	4	3

Sources 7: STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Sense of security]

A [*Note: older, but still relevant*] chart from the *Hiraal Institute* confirms that al-Shabaab's primary focus is on the security forces [*Note: Explanation of the chart: SNA – Federal Army; SPF – Police; FMS – Federal Government; PSF – Puntland Security Forces; blue – approx. May 2021–April 2022; orange – approx. May 2022–April 2023*]:



Sources 8: HI 5/2023

The EUAA has analysed data from ACLED and reports that there has been an increase in incidents and fatalities. Specifically, the number of security-related incidents across Somalia between April 2024 and March 2025 stood at 3,041. This figure rose to 4,676 between April 2025 and March 2026. At the same time, the number of fatalities rose from 7,237 to 8,753. These figures include combat operations (*battles*), explosions or *remote violence*, and targeted *violence against civilians*. Based on this data, the average number of security-related incidents across Somalia has risen from 8.3 to approximately 12.8 per day (EUAA 5/2026a). According to a source whose database is also based on ACLED, there were 5,838 security-related incidents across Somalia in 2025 (16 per day). At the same time, 421 civilian casualties were recorded that year (SFH 1/2026). According to another source, however, 886 civilian casualties were recorded in 2025 – 345 fatalities and 541 injuries (AA 9/3/2026).

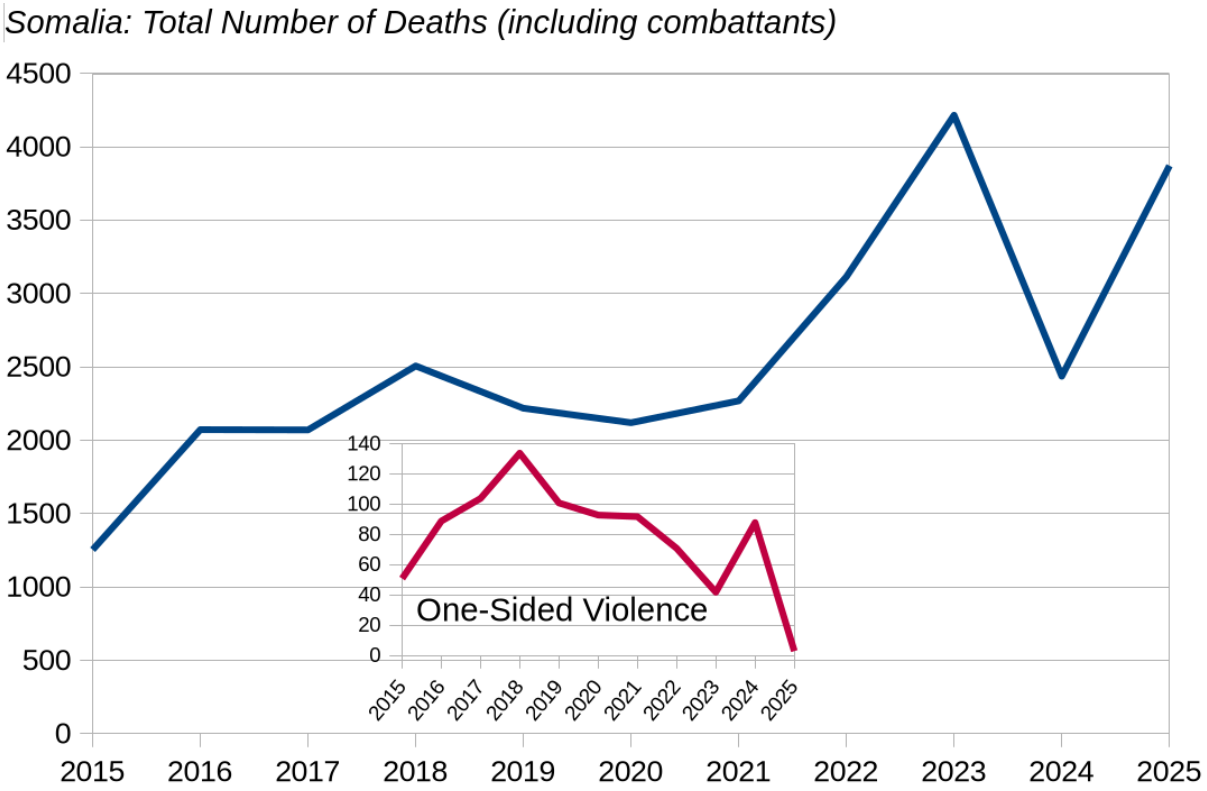
The United Nations reports the figures for civilian casualties (fatalities and injuries) over recent years as follows:

Verletzte und Tote	24.3.2025-25.9.2025	23.9.2024-23.3.2025	24.5.-20.9.2024	25.1.-23.5.2024	6.10.2023-24.1.2024	8.6.-5.10.2023	8.2.-7.6.2023	23.8.2022-7.2.2023	7.5.2022-23.8.2022	1.2.2022-6.5.2022	6.11.2021-31.1.2022	1.8.2021-4.11.2021	8.5.-31.7.2021	10.2.-7.5.2021
Tage	185	181	119	119	110	120	120	168	109	95	87	96	85	87
Opfer gesamt	395	402	514	340	167	399	546	1059	419	428	183	194	276	260
davon durch al Shabaab	159	199	378	182	51	208	104	841	88	325	78	109	188	177
Opfer/Tag	2,1	2,2	4,3	2,9	1,5	3,3	4,6	6,3	3,8	4,5	2,1	2,0	3,3	3,0
Quelle	UNSC 30.9.2025 Abs. 36	UNSC 28.3.2025 Abs. 38	UNSC 27.9.2024 Abs. 54	UNSC 3.6.2024 Abs. 55	UNSC 2.2.2024 Abs. 52	UNSC 13.10.2023 Abs. 52	UNSC 15.6.2023 Abs. 69	UNSC 16.2.2023 Abs. 70	UNSC 1.9.2022 Abs. 52	UNSC 13.5.2022 Abs. 51	UNSC 8.2.2022 Abs. 53	UNSC 11.11.2021 Abs. 41	UNSC 10.8.2021 Abs. 41	UNSC 19.5.2021 Abs. 45
Jahres-Hochrechnung	779	811	1577	1043	554	1214	1661	2238	1403	1644	768	738	1185	1095
In Relation zur Gesamtbevölkerung	1:24005	1:20962	1:10780	1:16299	1:30686	1:14003	1:10235	1:7596	1:12117	1:10341	1:22135	1:23035	1:14346	1:15525

Sources 9: UNSC 30/9/2025; UNSC 28/3/2025; UNSC 27/9/2024; UNSC 3/6/2024; UNSC 2/2/2024; UNSC 13/10/2023; UNSC 15/6/2023; UNSC 16/2/2023; UNSC 1/9/2022; UNSC 13/5/2022; UNSC 8/2/2022; UNSC 11/11/2021; UNSC 10/8/2021; UNSC 19/5/2021

The last reasonably reliable census was carried out in 1975 – though even this had significant limitations (Sahan/SWT 10/5/2023). The latest estimates put the total population at 18.7 million people (FSNAU/IPC 23/9/2024). This sounds plausible insofar as the WHO estimated the population at 18.3 million in 2023 (WHO 2024). Other sources cite population figures for 2025 of 19.4 (WHO 4/3/2026) or even 19.7 million (SFH 1/2026). Assuming a population of 18.7 million, the ratio of civilians killed or injured to the total population for Somalia as a whole was most recently 1:24,005 [*Note: Calculation based on the sources listed in the table above*] (UNSC 30/9/2025). [*Note: The ratios for previous periods cited above were calculated on the basis of older population figures*.]

The *Uppsala Conflict Data Programme* (UCDP), for its part, cites a figure of 4,216 people killed in the conflict in 2023 and 2,514 in 2024. However, these figures also include all combatants killed in the conflict. In the *'One-Sided Violence'* category, the UCDP reports 42 deaths for 2023, 88 for 2024 and 3 for 2025. This category records only violence directed against civilians, but does not include all civilian casualties (UCDP n.d).



Sources 10: UCDP n.d

Air strikes: The number of air strikes increased massively in 2025 (PGN 19/6/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 19/3/2025). Whilst 121 air strikes were recorded in 2023 and 79 in 2024, there were already 200 in the first five months of 2025 alone. Of these, the US – according to its own figures – carried out 25. At least 40 are attributed to the UAE, which is supporting Puntland in the fight against the ISS. According to one source, the vast majority of the air strikes in 2025 were presumably carried out by Turkish drones stationed in Somalia (PGN 19/6/2025). According to

other figures, there were 95 air strikes in 2023, 58 in 2024 and 227 in 2025. In 2025, the district of Bossaso (in an offensive against the ISS) as well as HirShabelle, Lower Shabelle, Middle and Lower Juba (AQSOM 9 1/2026) were particularly affected by air strikes. According to one source, the political strategy underlying the attacks is unclear; the aim is reportedly to reduce al-Shabaab's administrative capabilities and/or to force the group into negotiations. In fact, the air strikes are primarily directed against al-Shabaab's senior and middle ranks; according to one source, they thereby impair the group's ability to govern (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Kenya and Ethiopia also carry out sporadic air strikes (PGN 19/6/2025; cf.GN 6/3/2025; EUAA 5/2025b), and AUSSOM also has the relevant capabilities (EUAA 5/2025b).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (31/8/2026): Somalia – Reise- und Sicherheitshinweise (Reisewarnung), unverändert gültig seit 26.8.2026, https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/laender/somalia-node/somaliasicherheit/203132#content_1, accessed 31/8/2026
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (25/4/2025): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 2025), April 202, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2125924/Deutschland. Auswärtiges Amt, Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AI - Amnesty International (21/4/2026): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia, accessed 21/4/2026
- AI - Amnesty International (29/4/2025): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2024, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2124628.html, accessed 26/6/2025
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BAMF - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [Germany] (28/7/2025): Briefing Notes KW 31/2025, https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Behoerde/Informationszentrum/BriefingNotes/2025/briefingnotes-kw31-2025.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4, accessed 13/8/2025
- BAMF - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [Germany] (3/3/2025): Briefing Notes, https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Behoerde/Informationszentrum/BriefingNotes/2025/briefingnotes-kw10-2025.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4, accessed 26/6/2025
- BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation (15/6/2023): Analysis: Al-Shabab fights back as army offensive threatens its grip on Somalia, https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/product/c204cuml?utm_campaign=1. June newsletter 2023 - SU&utm_content=bbc-monitoring.co.uk&utm_content=bbc-monitoring.co.uk&utm_medium=email&utm_source=BBC Monitoring&wp-linkindex=23, accessed 19/10/2023
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (11/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/7/2025): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail

- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (7/8/2024): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (4/7/2024): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (2/6/2026): Expertengespräch, Länderexperte des BMLV
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (20/5/2026): Telefoninterview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- CT/Karr/Tesfaye/AEI - Liam Karr (Author), American Enterprise Institute (Publisher), Critical Threats (Publisher), Edie Tesfaye (Author) (10/7/2025): First Trump Africa Summit; DRC Tensions; Shabaab Momentum: Africa File, July 10, 2025; Central Somalia, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/first-trump-africa-summit-drc-tensions-shabaab-momentum-uganda-shujaa-south-sudan-africa-file-july-10-2025, accessed 11/7/2025
- CT/Tyson/AEI - American Enterprise Institute (Publisher), Cathryn Tyson (Author), Critical Threats (Publisher) (10/6/2025): Al Shabaab's Area of Operations, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/al-shabaabs-area-of-operations, accessed 24/6/2025
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2026a): Somalia: Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025b): Somalia – Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-05/2025_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 3/6/2025
- FDD/Roggio - Bill Roggio (Author), Foundation for Defense of Democracies (Publisher) (11/10/2023): Shabaab responds to FDD's Long War Journal study on its suicide bombings, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2023/10/shabaab-responds-to-fdds-long-war-journal-study-on-its-suicide-bombings.php, accessed 13/11/2023
- FSNAU/IPC - Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (23/9/2024): Somalia Acute Food Insecurity Situation Overview, Rural, Urban and IDP: Food Security Outcomes: Current: July-September 2024, https://fsnau.org/downloads/FSNAU-IPC-Combined-Current-Gu-2024.pdf, accessed 7/10/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (6/3/2025): Ethiopian Air Force Strike Al-Shabaab Targets in Middle Shabelle, the First in a Long Time, https://en.goobjoog.com/ethiopian-air-force-strike-al-shabaab-targets-in-middle-shabelle-the-first-in-a-long-time, accessed 23/6/2025
- GO - Garowe Online (11/11/2025): Abandoned on the Frontlines: Macawislay Fighters in Central Somalia Decry Months Without Pay, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/abandoned-on-the-frontlines-macawislay-fighters-in-central-somalia-decry-months-without-pay, accessed 19/11/2025
- GO - Garowe Online (23/7/2025): Despite Billions in Aid, Somalia's Army Crumbles as Al-Shabaab Resurgence Gains Ground, Donors Losing Faith, https://garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/despite-billions-in-aid-somalia-s-army-crumbles-as-al-shabaab-resurgence-gains-ground-donors-losing-faith, accessed 21/10/2025
- HI - Hiraal Institute (5/2023): Somalia's Shifting Sands: Unpacking The Tumultuous Times Of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's First Year, https://hiraalinstitute.org/somalias-shifting-sands-unpacking-the-tumultuous-times-of-president-hassan-sheikh-mohamuds-first-year, accessed 30/1/2024
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (7/5/2024): State Of Somalia 2023 Report, https://8v90f1.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SOS-REPORT-2023-.pdf, accessed 27/5/2024
- Horn/A.J. Mohamed - Horn Observer (Publisher), Abdirahman Jeylani Mohamed (Author) (15/5/2025): OP-ED: Three Years On – How Hassan Sheikh Betrayed Somalia's Fragile Federalism, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3320/OP-ED-Three-Years-On-How-Hassan-Sheikh-Betrayed-Somalias-Fragile-Federalism, accessed 27/6/2025

- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- ICG - International Crisis Group (21/3/2023): Sustaining Gains in Somalia's Offensive against Al-Shabaab, https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-03/b187-somalias-offensive-against-al-shabaab_0.pdf, accessed 9/11/2023
- INGO-C/STDOK/SEM - Internationale NGO C (Author), Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga - Khalif Farah, Marin Ouma, Samuel Nyanchoga (9/2025): Influence of Corruption on the Increased Prevalence of Terrorism in Somalia. In: African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies (AJPAS) 18(3) (September, 2025), 163-187, https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajpas/article/download/306463/288088, accessed 28/4/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- PGN - Political Geography Now (19/6/2025): June 2025 Somalia Control Map & Timeline: Al Shabaab Resurgence, ISIS Retreat, Jubaland Defiant (Subscription), https://controlmaps.polgeonow.com/2025/06/june-2025-somalia-control-map-timeline/, accessed 23/6/2025 [fee required]
- PGN/EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (Publisher), Political Geography Now (Author) (31/3/2026): Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, in: EUAA (5.2026): Somalia: Security Situation, S.20, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- Sahan - Sahan (17/6/2026): Editorial: Deciphering Al-Shabaab's Radio Silence, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 961, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan - Sahan (8/6/2026): Editorial: Mogadishu on the Edge: The Danger Has Not Passed, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 959, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/Petrovski - Sara Petrovski (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (24/5/2024): Demystifying the Ma'awiisley: Part III, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 685, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (17/11/2025): Fiqi's 100,000-Troop Fantasy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 897, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (8/8/2025): Operation Silent Storm: The Threequel, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 857, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/7/2025): The Fall of Moqokori – Implications, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 847, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (10/4/2025): Al-Shabaab at the Nexus of Terrorism and Crime, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 810, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (26/3/2025): Drones Won't Save Mogadishu in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 804, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (19/3/2025): Al-Shabaab's Offensive Steps Up Further, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 801, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (10/2/2025): A return to 2022 in Hiiraan?, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 785, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (7/8/2024): Unpacking Al-Shabaab's PBIED Strategy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 715, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (5/8/2024): Friday's Attack at Lido Beach, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 714, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (11/7/2024): Historical Grievances Fuel Somalia's Clan Wars, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 703, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (19/6/2024): The SNA and their Armoured Vehicles, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 694, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (4/12/2023): Lifting the embargo, not the silver bullet, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 623, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]

- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (4/8/2023): Sequencing for Success: Liberation, Stabilisation and Reconciliation, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 574, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (10/5/2023): Somali Census: A daunting challenge, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 538, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SFH - Swiss Refugee Council (1/2026): Factsheet Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2137060/260119_SOM_factsheet_web_DE.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- SG - Somali Guardian (5/11/2025): Somalia's army chief reveals up to 15,000 soldiers lost in three-year war against Al-Shabaab, https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/somalias-army-chief-reveals-up-to-15000-soldiers-lost-in-three-year-war-against-al-shabaab/, accessed 19/11/2025
- SG/WP - Somali Guardian, Washington Post, The (28/5/2025): How U.S. cuts in Somalia could imperil the fight against al-Shabab, https://somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/how-u-s-cuts-in-somalia-could-imperil-the-fight-against-al-shabab, accessed 17/6/2025
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (19/6/2026): Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - 1, https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at/at.gv.bfa.coicms-p/services/collection/237-1.pdf, accessed 19/6/2026 [Login required]
- TEA/Barigaba - Julius Barigaba (Author), The East African (Publisher) (28/4/2024): Somalia rising as source of remittances for Kenya and Uganda, https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/somalia-rising-as-source-of-remittances-for-kenya-and-uganda--4604930, accessed 7/5/2024
- UCDP - Uppsala Conflict Data Program (n.d): Somalia, https://ucdp.uu.se/country/520, accessed 26/8/2026
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2026b): Somalia: Internal Displacement, https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/1, accessed 23/3/2026
- UNHRC/UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (Publisher), United Nations Human Rights Council (Author) (30/1/2026): Visit to Somalia. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/52/Add.2, accessed 23/4/2026
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (27/1/2026): Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026, https://www.unocha.org/attachments/edea4204-0921-4741-862f-203c6f75a631/Somalia_HNRP_2026.pdf, accessed 23/3/2026
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (28/3/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/194], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2124148/n2506871.pdf, accessed 24/6/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (28/10/2024): Letter dated 15 October 2024 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4066421/files/S_2024_748-EN.pdf?ln=en, accessed 3/12/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (27/9/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2024/698], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116024/n2426310.pdf, accessed 14/11/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (3/6/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/426) [EN/AR/RU/ZH], https://reliefweb.int/attachments/2ee6cff6-d8b3-4bac-bf53-5c07f96b1a9f/n2414191.pdf, accessed 28/6/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (2/2/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/758], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2106391/n2401965.pdf, accessed 4/6/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (13/10/2023): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/758], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2101912/N2328915.pdf, accessed 4/6/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (15/6/2023): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/443], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2094041/N2316278.pdf, accessed 2/10/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (16/2/2023): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/109], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2087441/N2303721.pdf, accessed 16/10/2023

- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (1/9/2022): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2022/665], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2078696/N2257941.pdf, accessed 9/10/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (13/5/2022): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2022/392], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2073538/N2233663.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (8/2/2022): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2022/101], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2068141/S_2022_101_E.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (11/11/2021): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2021/944], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2068141/S_2022_101_E.pdf, accessed 16/10/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (10/8/2021): Situation in Somalia; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2021/723], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2058501/S_2021_723_E.pdf, accessed 16/10/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (19/5/2021): Situation in Somalia; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2021/485], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052226/S_2021_485_E.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (26/6/2024b): 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2111587.html, accessed 26/6/2025
- VOA/Babb - Voice of America (Publisher), Carla Babb (Author) (18/6/2024): Al-Shabab reverses Somali force gains, now working with Houthis in Somalia, https://www.voanews.com/a/al-shabab-reverses-somali-force-gains-is-working-with-houthis-in-somalia-/7659656.html, accessed 28/6/2024
- Weiss/FDD - Caleb Weiss (Author), Foundation for Defense of Democracies (Publisher) (3/3/2025): Shabaab mounts coordinated assault north of Mogadishu, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2025/03/shabaab-mounts-coordinated-assault-north-of-mogadishu.php, accessed 27/6/2025
- WHO - World Health Organization (4/3/2026): Somalia - Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA), https://reliefweb.int/attachments/07986a16-85f6-48ab-842a-8751a528cf3c/PHSA Somalia 040326.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- WHO - World Health Organization (2024): Health data overview for the Federal Republic of Somalia, https://data.who.int/countries/706, accessed 14/11/2025

3.1.1 Jubaland (Gedo, Lower Juba, Middle Juba)

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

Jubaland controls only parts of its own territory. Middle Juba remains dominated by al-Shabaab. Parts of the Gedo region are not aligned with Jubaland, and in Lower Juba too, it is primarily the towns, rather than the hinterland, that are under the control of the government in Kismayo. In many cases, al-Shabaab controls rural areas, or is able to exert influence over them. This also applies to the areas between Afmadow and Kismayo, as well as between the Kenyan border and Kismayo (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). The buffer zone in the area surrounding Kismayo is held by government forces. Most recently, government forces have launched several attacks on places controlled by al-Shabaab, particularly in Lower Juba. Presumably, the focus here is less on holding these towns and more on wearing down al-Shabaab's forces. The aim is to force the group to scale back its sporadic presence in the affected areas and localities. This is intended to create buffer zones and limit

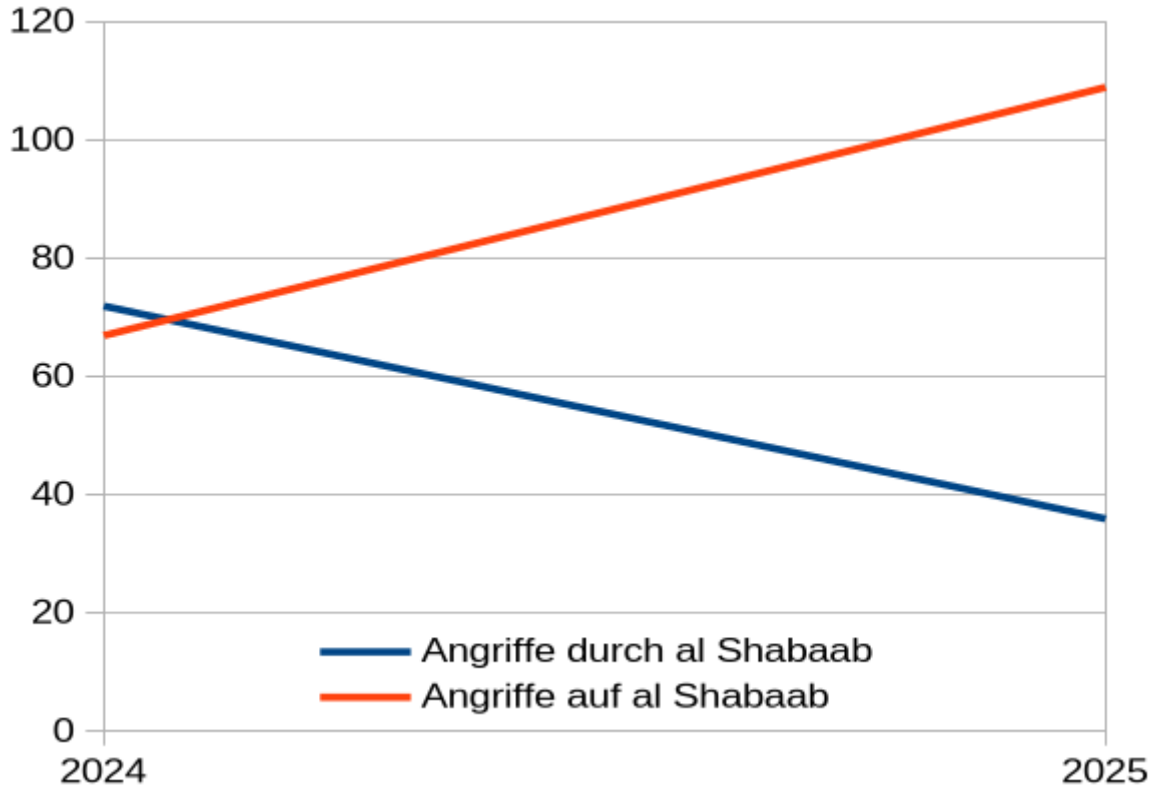
al-Shabaab's ability to gather intelligence. In those areas controlled by Jubaland, the local government also has security under control (BMLV 11/9/2026).

In total, the *Jubaland Defence Forces* (JDF; Darawish) have a strength of approximately 20,000 men (BMLV 11/9/2026). They are loyal to President Madobe (Sahan/SWT 22/5/2024), but are deployed in large numbers to secure towns. For example, there are 900

troops in Afmadow alone, whilst in the greater Kismayo area – including the front line – there are 4,500. The JDF consists mainly of Ogadeni, but there are also Rahanweyn and Darod /Marehan, as well as 5–8 per cent Hawiye (BMLV 11/9/2026). The Kenyan forces operating as part of AUSSOM are of particular importance to Jubaland. They maintain a strong presence along the coast and in Kismayo, for example. Furthermore, Kenya provides financial and military support to the JDF (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. Sahan/SWT 22/5/2024).

Between 2024 and 2025, the situation in Jubaland changed significantly:

Sources 11:



Sources 12: AQSOM 9 1/2026

In Lower Juba and Middle Juba, there are ongoing operations against al-Shabaab carried out by the Federal Army, Jubaland forces, Danaab and international partners (AQSOM 9 1/2026).

Lower Juba: The region is inhabited by the Bantu / Jareer, Dir / Biyomaal, Digil-Mirifle / Tunni, Darod / Ogaden / Mohamed Zubeer and other Darod clans (including the Harti). Kismayo is dominated by the Ogadeni (EUAA 5/2025b).

Parts of the region are under the control of AUSSOM, the Kenyan army, Jubaland forces and al-Shabaab. The towns of Kismayo, Afmadow and Dhobley, as well as the villages of Tabta, Dif, Koday, Buulo Haji and Kolbiyow, are controlled by government forces and AUSSOM. Jamaame

is under the control of al-Shabaab; this also applies to a wide strip along the border with Middle Juba. Badhaade and the surrounding area to the north are also controlled by al-Shabaab (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). The front line with al-Shabaab runs along the road towards Jamaame near Bar Sanguni (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026; cf. BMLV 11/9/2026). In November 2025, troops from Jubaland and the Federal Government advanced further along the road towards Jamaame. They are now just a few kilometres from the bridge over the Juba River near Jamaame and Araare (Kaab 27/11/2025; cf. BMLV 11/9/2026). In June 2026, government troops launched an operation against al-Shabaab in the area between Afmadow and Kismayo (SLST 20/6/2026).

Afmadow and Dhobley are strongholds of Jubaland, with heavily manned checkpoints and a significant military presence. Both towns can be considered fairly safe (BMLV 11/9/2026). The area between these towns and Kismayo is inhabited by clans affiliated with the Jubaland government (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The Kenyan command centre and a training camp are located in Dhobley, whilst there are bases in Afmadow, Tabta and Bilis Qooqaani. This corridor – including Hosingow – can be regarded as relatively safe and, in terms of the presence of (state) security personnel and an established administration, as consolidated. Jubaland controls an area of approximately 30 km around Kismayo. Here, Jubaland has succeeded in creating a secure environment (BMLV 11/9/2026).

According to one source, as of March 2026, there are at least two al-Shabaab-controlled locations along the road from Kismayo to Afmadow (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026).

Kismayo: The security situation in the city is good, with effective control exercised by government forces (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The city is considered peaceful and has reached the same level of security as Garoowe (Puntland). However, the front line is considerably closer here. The most notable recent incident affecting the security situation in Kismayo was the unrest surrounding the re-election of President Madobe in 2019. Efforts are being made in the city to resolve clan disputes peacefully. The population has realised that it is benefiting from the peace dividend (BMLV 11/9/2026). There is a functioning judicial system (Majid/Abdirahman/LSE 26/3/2021); the government is regarded as relatively stable (BMLV 2/7/2025); one source reports that it is a police state (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). It has also succeeded in establishing an administration which is well-established and functioning (BMLV 2/7/2025).

There are Kenyan forces in Kismayo. The Jubaland security forces have a good reputation and a strong presence in the city; their numbers are sufficient. The development of the police and the judiciary has been and continues to be supported internationally. In recent years, the police have been trained by AMISOM and ATMIS, Kenya and the United Nations, and have achieved a relatively high standard of training. There is a clear distinction between the police and other armed forces. The security forces in Kismayo also rely on information provided by the local population. The threat posed by al-Shabaab in the city has been reduced. Thanks to the capable intelligence and security structures, crime has also been curbed (BMLV 11/9/2026). The ban on carrying weapons in the city is being enforced; crime remains at a low level, and there are hardly any reports of murders. Consequently, it can be said that the police in Kismayo are functioning effectively. Civilians can move about freely and relatively safely in Kismayo (BMLV 2/7/2025).

In a survey carried out in early 2026 on behalf of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees' (BFA) Staatendokumentation programme, 77 per cent of the 200 respondents living in Kismayo stated that they felt very safe in their neighbourhood. 10 per cent feel reasonably safe, 8 per cent feel somewhat unsafe and only 5 per cent feel unsafe (STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Sense of security]).

Al-Shabaab is active only to a very limited extent in and around Kismayo. The group has little influence in the city. This also demonstrates that cooperation between the police and the population is working. Attacks by al-Shabaab in Kismayo have become a rarity. There is no such 'taxation' of the economy in the city as al-Shabaab practises, for example, in Mogadishu. There is no direct taxation of goods in the city or at the port. Nevertheless, the group benefits significantly from the port and is able to generate income by taxing goods at checkpoints outside the city (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Returnees from Kenya come primarily to Kismayo. Coexistence between the local population and IDPs, and between the local population and returnees, is working relatively well. Returnees are not a target for al-Shabaab (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). The Jubaland government has succeeded in making the city accessible to all former residents – including those from numerous clans that were previously at odds with one another. At the same time, the risk of clan fighting has been reduced (Majid/Abdirahman/LSE 26/3/2021).

In the event of a complete withdrawal of AUSSOM without any replacement, Madobe's forces would likely be able to hold Kismayo and its surrounding area (BMLV 11/9/2026). Another source also states that it is extremely unlikely that Kismayo could be taken by any external force – be it al-Shabaab or the Federal Government (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Middle Juba: The Bantu are the most populous ethnic group in the region. However, the two politically and militarily strongest clans are the Darod / Aulihan and the Darod / Ogaden / Mohamed Zubeer (EUAA 5/2025b). The entire region and all district capitals (Buale, Jilib, Saakow) are under al-Shabaab's control (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). Jilib is the *de facto* capital of the group (SG/WP 28/5/2025; cf.C4/Jamal 15/6/2022). The region and the additional areas controlled by al-Shabaab in Gedo are strictly controlled by the group; there are no clan conflicts there (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Jamaame and the surrounding countryside are particularly affected by the operations against al-Shabaab mentioned above (AQSOM 9 1/2026).

Gedo: Gedo is Somalia's most complex region (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The Darod /Marehan are the most powerful clan in the region, both politically and militarily. They effectively control the entire area west of the Juba River (EUAA 5/2025b). However, they are divided, as part of the Marehan are affiliated with the Jubaland government (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). On the eastern bank, the Rahanweyn dominate the rural areas (EUAA 5/2025b).

The towns of Luuq, Garbahaarey, Doolow and Baardheere can be regarded as stable in terms of the presence of (state) security personnel and an established administration. The border town of Doolow and Luuq are considered safe. These towns and the area directly bordering Ethiopia

are relatively free of al-Shabaab and stable. Garbahaarey is also considered stable (BMLV 11/9/2026). However,armed clashes between federal and Jubaland forces occur repeatedly in Gedo (GO 14/8/2025), such as on 5 February 2025 in Baardheere (six dead) or on 10 January 2025 in Ceel Waaq (two dead), as well as in December 2024 in Doolow (four dead) (EUAA 5/2025b; cf. ICG 5/2025; PGN 19/6/2025) and, in mid-2025, also in Belet Xaawo ('dozens' killed) (Sahan/SWT 29/8/2025; cf. GO 14/8/2025). The fighting for the town continued from 22 July to 11 August 2025; it was eventually captured by federal troops (UNSC 30/9/2025; cf. Dawan 13/8/2025). In the course of the fighting, 40,000 people were displaced (UN OCHA 27/1/2026); they subsequently returned (BMLV 11/9/2026).

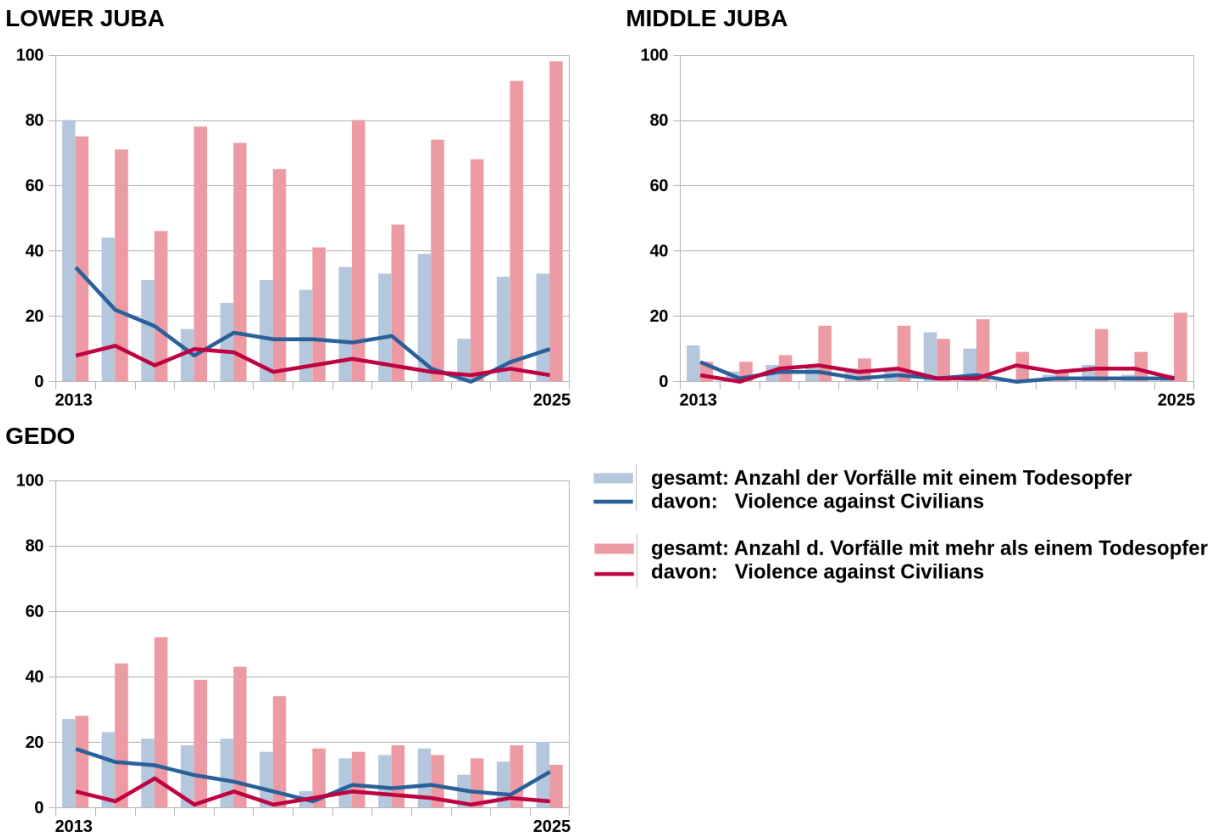
The towns of Baardheere, Belet Xaawo, Doolow, Luuq and Garbahaarey, as well as the villages of Ceel Waaq and Buurdhuubo, are controlled by government forces, the Ethiopian army and AUSSOM. The villages and surrounding areas of Ceel Cadde and Qws Qurun are under the control of al-Shabaab. This also largely applies to the rest of the region's buffer zone (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). More specifically, the Federal Government controls several towns, including Garbahaarey (Sahan/SWT 15/8/2025; cf. GO 31/7/2025; PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026), Buurdhuubo and Baardheere (GO 31/7/2025; cf. PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). It also supports local forces with weapons (Sahan/SWT 25/7/2025). Jubaland, on the other hand, continues to control Doolow and Ceel Waaq (GO 31/7/2025). According to other reports, Jubaland forces are present only in Doolow, whilst both federal and Jubaland forces are present in Ceel Waaq, Luuq and Baardheere (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). According to yet other reports, Ethiopian forces – deployed on a bilateral basis – actually control all towns with airfields in Gedo (Doolow, Luuq, Garbahaarey, Baardheere) (BMLV 22/7/2026). There are Ethiopian bases in the following towns: Doolow, Luuq, Yurkud, Garbahaarey, Buurdhuubo, Baardheere (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. AQSOM 9 5/2026). All other forces – including the Federal Army – are, in principle, regarded merely as 'guests' in these towns (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Along the border with Ethiopia, there are units of the Ethiopian Army as well as police forces from the Ethiopian Somali Region (BMLV 11/9/2026). The Ethiopian forces play a crucial role in securing peace there (UNGA 23/8/2024). Consequently, the local population largely supports the Ethiopian military presence, which largely keeps al-Shabaab at bay. Even in Garbahaarey, where support may be somewhat lower, people are aware that no other forces can take on Ethiopia's role and that a withdrawal would mean the area falling to al-Shabaab (Sahan/SWT 6/1/2025).

As regards al-Shabaab, there have been no significant changes since 2021. The group uses the areas it controls in Gedo primarily as a base from which to launch attacks in Kenya. Furthermore, al-Shabaab is attempting to consolidate its power in Gedo. According to one source, there are generally no reports of al-Shabaab activities coming from the region (BMLV 11/9/2026). According to another source, the group is focusing there on intimidating the civilian population, influencing local administrations and controlling key transport routes. The Luuq–Doolow route is a particular focus. The group specifically abducts civilians on the grounds of alleged links to the government. The security situation in the region is unstable (AQSOM 9 1/2026).

Incidents: According to one source, the regions of Lower Juba (1,038,602), Middle Juba (366,851) and Gedo (938,249) have a combined population of 2,343,702 (IPC 13/12/2022). By comparison, the ACLED database recorded a total of 22 incidents in 2024 in which civilians were deliberately killed (category: *violence against civilians*). In 11 of these 22 incidents, one civilian was killed in each. In 2025, there were 27 such incidents (22 of which resulted in one fatality each) (ACLED 15/1/2026). When population figures are considered alongside the figures for violence against civilians, the following figures emerge for 2025 (**incidents per 100,000 inhabitants**): Lower Juba 1.15; Middle Juba 0.54; Gedo 1.39.

Below is an overview for the years 2013–2025 of the total number of incidents resulting in fatalities, as well as the subcategory '*violence against civilians'*, which, according to a review of the dataset, also includes 'ordinary' murders. The figures are broken down into two subcategories: one fatality; multiple fatalities. Incidents resulting in fatalities that do not fall under *'violence against civilians'* but are tagged with the attribute *'civilian targeting'* have also been included. It should be borne in mind that, depending on the control situation and the information available, *over-* or *under-reporting* may occur; the number of fatalities is not taken into account due to the margin of error in ACLED.



Sources 13: ACLED 15/1/2026 (and previous versions)

Sources

- ACLED - Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (15/1/2026): Curated Data - Africa (9 January 2026), https://acleddata.com/curated-data-files/, accessed 15/1/2026 [Login required]

- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (5/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (11/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (22/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/7/2025): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- C4/Jamal - Channel 4 (Publisher), Osman Jamal (Author) (15/6/2022): Inside Al Shabaab: The extremist group trying to seize Somalia (Video), https://www.channel4.com/news/inside-al-shabaab-the-extremist-group-trying-to-seize-somalia, accessed 10/10/2023
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (13/8/2025): Somali President Orders Return of Troops Who Crossed into Kenya, https://www.dawan.africa/news/somali-president-orders-return-of-troops-who-crossed-into-kenya, accessed 9/10/2025
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025b): Somalia – Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-05/2025_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 3/6/2025
- GO - Garowe Online (14/8/2025): Jubaland accuses Somali federal government of fomenting conflict in Gedo following deadly clashes, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/jubaland-accuses-somali-federal-government-of-fomenting-conflict-in-gedo-following-deadly-clashes, accessed 9/10/2025
- GO - Garowe Online (31/7/2025): Federal Forces Seize Beled-Hawo From Jubaland, Escalating Somalia's Internal Power Struggle, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/federal-forces-seize-beled-hawo-from-jubaland-escalating-somalia-s-internal-power-struggle, accessed 26/11/2025
- ICG - International Crisis Group (5/2025): CrisisWatch – Somalia, https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location[]=12&created=, accessed 4/6/2025
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (13/12/2022): Nearly 8.3 million people across Somalia face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity outcomes, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/fc2d405c-ca29-4526-ad96-6618c2756192/Multi-Partner-Technical-Release-on-Updated-IPC-Analysis-for-Somalia-fo-October-2022-to-June-2023-Final-(English)-13-Dec-2022.pdf, accessed 10/10/2023
- Kaab - Kaab TV (27/11/2025): Government and Jubbaland Forces Advance Toward Jamaame District, https://en.kaabtv.com/government-and-jubbaland-forces-advance-toward-jamaame-district/, accessed 2/12/2025
- MAEZA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Organisation für bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Majid/Abdirahman/LSE - London School of Econonomics and Political Science (Publisher), Nisar Majid (Author), Khalif Abdirahman (Author) (26/3/2021): The Kismayo Bubble - Justice and Security in Jubbaland, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/109317/2/The_kismayo_bubble_updated.pdf, accessed 10/10/2023
- PGN - Political Geography Now (19/6/2025): June 2025 Somalia Control Map & Timeline: Al Shabaab Resurgence, ISIS Retreat, Jubaland Defiant (Subscription), https://controlmaps.polgeonow.com/2025/06/june-2025-somalia-control-map-timeline/, accessed 23/6/2025 [fee required]
- PGN/EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (Publisher), Political Geography Now (Author) (31/3/2026): Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, in: EUAA (5.2026): Somalia: Security Situation, S.20, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Sahan, Somali Wire Team (29/8/2025): Water on an oil fire: Egyptians in Gedo, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 866, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (15/8/2025): Clashes from Mogadishu to Gedo as talks collapse, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 860, per e-Mail [fee required]

- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (25/7/2025): After the embargo: The MV Sea World debacle, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 851, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (6/1/2025): The Ethiopians are set to stay, but the battle for Gedo continues, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 770, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (22/5/2024): From jihadi to statesman - Jubaland President Ahmed 'Madoobe', in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 684, per e-Mail [fee required]
- SG/WP - Somali Guardian, Washington Post, The (28/5/2025): How U.S. cuts in Somalia could imperil the fight against al-Shabab, https://somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/how-u-s-cuts-in-somalia-could-imperil-the-fight-against-al-shabab, accessed 17/6/2025
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (20/6/2026): Jubbaland has deployed new troops to the front line of Lower Jubba Region, https://somalilandstandard.com/jubbaland-has-deployed-new-troops-to-the-front-line-of-lower-jubba-region/, accessed 3/7/2026
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (19/6/2026): Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - 1, https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at/at.gv.bfa.coicms-p/services/collection/237-1.pdf, accessed 19/6/2026 [Login required]
- UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (23/8/2024): Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan (A/HRC/57/80) [EN/AR/RU/ZH] - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/de0a5efb-ba80-4c3f-9692-054f1a04f1cc/g2414208.pdf, accessed 13/11/2024
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (27/1/2026): Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026, https://www.unocha.org/attachments/edea4204-0921-4741-862f-203c6f75a631/Somalia_HNRP_2026.pdf, accessed 23/3/2026
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025

3.1.2 South West State (SWS; Bay, Bakool, Lower Shabelle)

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

A large part of the SWS remains directly or indirectly under the control of al-Shabaab (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). The group controls four entire districts (approximately one third of the territory) and also exerts influence over rural areas and along the main transport routes between Mogadishu–Baidoa–Luuq and Mogadishu–Afgooye–Baraawe. The government, on the other hand, controls several urban centres, though often not the intervening territory. This hinders access and freedom of movement between them and limits the government's influence. In the larger government-controlled towns, basic administrative services are in place (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Thousands of Ethiopian troops, deployed under a bilateral agreement, are stationed in the SWS, notably in Bakool and Bay. Ethiopia is the most important security actor in the SWS (AQSOM 9 5/2026); in some locations in Bakool, Ethiopia provides the only security forces present (BMLV 2/7/2025).

Officials travel safely by air; 'ordinary' citizens, on the other hand, primarily use land routes, e.g. between Baidoa and Mogadishu (BMLV 2/7/2025). As the SWS is heavily dependent on the ports of Kismayo and Mogadishu, some goods have to be transported through territory controlled by al-Shabaab (HIPS 8/2/2022).

Al-Shabaab is currently active in the SWS, particularly in the area around Baidoa and in Lower Shabelle (BMLV 11/9/2026). In April 2025, al-Shabaab lifted the blockade on several towns in the SWS – namely Xudur, Qansax Dheere, Waajid and Diinsoor (PGN 19/6/2025; cf. ICG 5/

2025; UNSC 30/9/2025). The blockades have not been reimposed, but al-Shabaab still controls large parts of the territory between the towns (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Lower Shabelle: The demographic composition is extremely diverse and complex, comprising a large number of sub-clans of the Digil-Mirifle, Dir/Biyomaal in and around Merka as well as numerous Hawiye clans in the east of the region (EUAA 5/2025b).

Wanla Weyne, Afgooye, Qoryooley, Merka and Baraawe are under the control of government forces and AUSSOM, whilst Kurtunwaarey and Sablaale are controlled by al-Shabaab. This also applies to large parts of the hinterland north of the Shabelle and the rural areas (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). For a time, al-Shabaab had re-established a presence on the coast south-west of Mogadishu, between Jilib, Marka and Gendershe (Kaab 24/11/2025b). This area was liberated by government forces in cooperation with Turkey during the first quarter of 2026 (AQSOM 9 5/2026). According to other reports, government forces and Ugandan troops are continuing to take action against cells of the group south of the Shabelle; the area between the river and the coast cannot therefore be described as having been completely cleared (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Nevertheless, Lower Shabelle remains one of the main theatres of the conflict with al-Shabaab (AQSOM 9 5/2026). In March 2025,al-Shabaabhad captured several strategically important towns in Lower Shabelle, namely the river crossings at Aw Dheegle, Bariire and Sabiid (CT/Karr/AEI 17/4/2025). Subsequently, the crossings over the Shabelle in Lower Shabelle were largely cleared of al-Shabaab once again (BMLV 11/9/2026). Whilst the Federal Government takes credit for the successes in Lower Shabelle, these are largely attributable to Ugandan troops from AUSSOM (BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026; cf. BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). One of the destroyed bridges has been repaired, whilst others are still under construction. Overall, the conflict over the river crossings continues (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026).

As early as June 2025, the Afgooye district was still affected by fighting, with around 8,300 people displaced as a result (UN OCHA 6/7/2025). Even after that, the districts of Afgooye and Merka remained a particular focus of asymmetric attacks (AQSOM 9 1/2026). Between Afgooye and Merka, al-Shabaab is still able to utilise the terrain between the larger towns, most of which are under government control. Supplies to Federal Army and AUSSOM troops in Merka, Baraawe and Qoryooley are delivered only via protected convoys (BMLV 11/9/2026).

In November 2025, six members of a family (including children) were killed during clan clashes in Lower Shabelle (FTL 11/11/2025). The confrontation between the Hawiye / Galja'el and Rahanweyn / Shanta Alemood clans has compromised security in the Wanla Weyne district and along the route to Buur Hakaba. Following an intervention by federal forces and SWS forces, the situation improved again in December 2025. However, the measures (including arrests, convictions and increased patrols) also provoked resistance from militiamen whose economic interests – in particular, extortion at checkpoints – were under threat (AQSOM 9 1/2026). In general, there are numerous, long-standing disputes over land in this region, and clan rivalries often result in deadly clashes (FTL 11/11/2025).

Due to its strategic importance, **Afgooye** is constantly in the sights of all parties to the conflict – the town is regarded as the key to Mogadishu. Nevertheless, Afgooye can be considered stabilised in terms of the presence of (state) security personnel and an established administration. The town continues to be the target of repeated attacks by al-Shabaab (BMLV 11/9/2026). In an attempt to destabilise the area, the group launched a campaign of attacks in and around Afgooye in early June 2025. This led to an increase in targeted killings, attacks and bombings against Ugandan and Somali troops. On 16 June 2025, 20 soldiers were killed in a suicide attack on an AUSSOM convoy (TRAC 18/6/2025). Afgooye continues to be a major focus for al-Shabaab. In the fourth quarter of 2025 alone, ten attacks involving hand grenades were carried out; according to one source, these resulted in 50 deaths and injuries – including 36 civilians (AQSOM 9 1/2026).

Merka was actually considered a safe town (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). On 23 August 2026, however, militias from the so-called *South East State* marched into the town and occupied the administrative buildings. This is a Biyomaal faction that regards the federal government as a threat. So far, there have been no major skirmishes or similar incidents. The group claims the entire coastal strip from Mogadishu to Merka. The Biyomaal are supported by Digil / Jiido and the Sheikhal (BMLV 11/9/2026).

There continue to be few security-related reports from **Baraawe** (BMLV 11/9/2026). The Darawish [*Note: paramilitary police*] in the city consist mainly of Rahanweyn, whilst the army is predominantly made up of Hawiye (Horn 14/6/2023).

Bay: The region is mainly inhabited by Rahanweyn clans – in the northern half, primarily Mirifle, and in the south, Digil. There are also smaller groups of Hawiye. The town of Baidoa is mainly inhabited by Digil and Mirifle, with the Mirifle constituting the more powerful group (EUAA 5/2025b).

Baidoa, Diinsoor, Qansax Dheere and Berdale are controlled by government forces and AUSSOM or Ethiopian forces (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). Bases for Ethiopian troops deployed under a bilateral agreement are located in Berdale, Baidoa, Qansax-Dheere, Diinsoor and Buur Hakaba (AQSOM 9 5/2026).There is a Federal Army base in Buur Hakaba. Baidoa and Diinsoor can be regarded as consolidated in terms of the presence of (state) security personnel and an established administration. Al-Shabaab is active in the vicinity of the town **of Diinsoor**, which can be described as a frontline town (BMLV 11/9/2026). In general, the group controls large parts of Bay and, according to a source, is disrupting traffic on the Mogadishu–Baidoa route in the vicinity of the village of Leego (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). Another source states that Leego is occupied by government forces, but that al-Shabaab can be found not far from the road (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026).

Baidoa: In March 2026, President Laftagareen was forcibly removed from office by federal forces. This was followed by a surge in militias loyal to him (Wardheer 13/6/2026; cf. CT/M. DeAngelo/A. Shah/AEI 16/7/2026) and, as a result, repeated clashes between these forces and federal security forces(BAMF 6/7/2026; cf. BAMF 29/6/2026; SG 22/6/2026; CT/M. DeAngelo/A. Shah/AEI 16/7/2026). The recurring fighting has transformed this once relatively safe city

into a hotspot (SG 22/6/2026; cf. BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026), in which three parties are now involved: Al-Shabaab maintains bases near the town (SG 22/6/2026) – within a radius of around six kilometres (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026); Laftagareen just outside the town; and the Federal Government within the town (SG 22/6/2026). Baidoa is effectively under siege. The forces of former SWS President Laftagareen had (as of September 2026) been able to maintain the pressure for several weeks and repeatedly penetrate the town (BMLV 11/9/2026), for example on 15 and 16 July (CT/M. DeAngelo/A. Shah/AEI 16/7/2026; cf.BMLV 11/9/2026) and again on 17 August and 3 September 2026 (BMLV 11/9/2026). Overall, however,there are relatively few incidents within the city itself, though these are becoming more frequent on the outskirts. This conflict remains unresolved, and al-Shabaab is attempting to stoke the violence, for example by firing on checkpoints from cover and then blaming Laftagareen's militias for the attacks (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026).

The IDP camps on the outskirts of Baidoa are [*quote*] 'literally infested with al-Shabaab". The group is also recruiting in the IDP camps, which have grown significantly due to the drought (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. BMLV 11/9/2026).

A so-called *Formed Police Unit* and individual police officers from AUSSOM are also stationed in Baidoa. These police officers not only train the local police but also support them in the field. The town issecured by substantial Ethiopian forces (BMLV 11/9/2026). These forces are also the key factor making the difference. Without their presence, the town would fall to al-Shabaab (BMLV 2/7/2025).

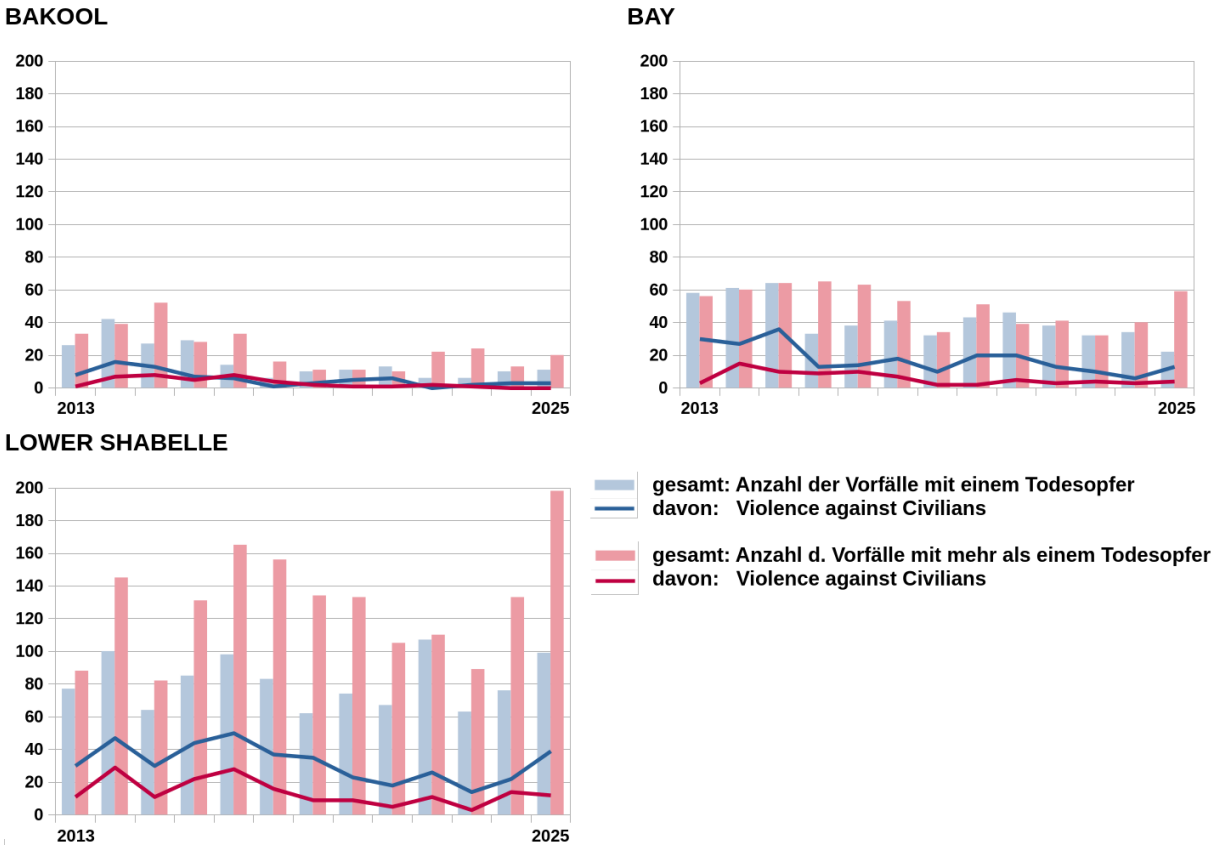
Bakool: The region is mainly inhabited by various Rahanweyn clans, with Hawiye / Jajele also present in a small area in the north, and Darod / Ogaden / Aulihan on both sides of the border with Ethiopia (EUAA 5/2025b). Ceel Barde, Yeed, Xudur and Waajid are controlled by government forces and AUSSOM (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). At least Xudur and Waajid can be regarded as consolidated in terms of the presence of (state) security personnel and an established administration (BMLV 11/9/2026).

There are Ethiopian army bases in Yeed, Ato, Ceel Barde, Xudur and Waajid (AQSOM 9 5/2026). A 30–50 km-wide strip along the border with Ethiopia has been free of al-Shabaab for some time now, where forces include police from the neighbouring Ethiopian *Somali Regional State* as well as local clan militias sponsored by Ethiopia (including those of the Darod / Ogaden /Aulihan). Other parts of Bakool are controlled by independent clan militias (BMLV 11/9/2026). However, large parts of Bakool are controlled by al-Shabaab, including the towns of Rab Dhuure and Tayeeglow (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). Overall, there is only limited fighting in Bakool. Furthermore, al-Shabaab has recently lifted the blockades of Xudur and Waajid (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Incidents: According to one source, the regions of Bakool (492,487), Bay (1,287,587) and Lower Shabelle (1,425,393) have a combined population of 3,205,467 (IPC 13/12/2022). By comparison, the ACLED database recorded a total of 48 incidents in 2024 in which civilians were deliberately killed (category: *'violence against civilians'*). In 31 of these 48 incidents, one civilian was killed in each. In 2025, there were 71 such incidents (55 of which resulted in one fatality each) (ACLED 15/1/2026). When population figures are combined with data on *'violence*

against civilians', the following figures emerge for 2025 (**incidents per 100,000 inhabitants**): Bakool 0.61; Bay 1.32; Lower Shabelle 3.58;

Below is an overview for the years 2013–2025 of the total number of incidents resulting in fatalities, as well as the subcategory *'violence against civilians'*, which, according to a review of the dataset, also includes 'ordinary' murders. The figures are broken down into two subcategories: one fatality; multiple fatalities. Incidents resulting in fatalities that do not fall under *'violence against civilians'* but are tagged with the attribute *'civilian targeting'* have also been included. It should be borne in mind that, depending on the control situation and the information available, *over-* or *under-reporting* may occur; the number of fatalities is not taken into account due to the margin of error in ACLED:



Sources 14: ACLED 15/1/2026 (and previous versions)

Sources

- ACLED - Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (15/1/2026): Curated Data - Africa (9 January 2026), https://acleddata.com/curated-data-files/, accessed 15/1/2026 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (5/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation

- BAMF - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [Germany] (6/7/2026): Briefing Notes KW 28/2026, https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Behoerde/Informationszentrum/BriefingNotes/2026/briefingnotes-kw28-2026.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3, accessed 7/7/2026
- BAMF - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [Germany] (29/6/2026): Briefing Notes, https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Behoerde/Informationszentrum/BriefingNotes/2026/briefingnotes-kw27-2026.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3, accessed 3/7/2026
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (11/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/7/2025): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (20/5/2026): Telefoninterview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- CT/Karr/AEI - Liam Karr (Author), American Enterprise Institute (Publisher), Critical Threats (Author) (17/4/2025): Africa File, April 17, 2025: RSF War Crimes and Possible Genocide; al Shabaab Retaking Central Somalia; M23 Challenges; Algeria-Mali Spat, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/africa-file-april-17-2025-rsf-war-crimes-and-possible-genocide-al-shabaab-retaking-central-somalia-m23-challenges-algeria-mali-spat, accessed 28/5/2025
- CT/M. DeAngelo/A. Shah/AEI - Aaryaman Shah (Author), Michael DeAngelo (Author), American Enterprise Institute (Publisher), Critical Threats (Author) (16/7/2026): Puntland Standoff with the Federal Government of Somalia: Africa File, July 16, 2026, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/somalia-fgs-puntland-africa-file-july-16-2026, accessed 28/8/2026
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025b): Somalia – Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-05/2025_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 3/6/2025
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (11/11/2025): Sunday Clan Clash in Lower Shabelle Kills Six Family Members, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/sunday-clan-clash-in-lower-shabelle-kills-six-family-members/, accessed 19/11/2025
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (8/2/2022): State of Somalia Report 2021, Year in Review, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOS-REPORT-2021-English-version.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- Horn - Horn Observer (14/6/2023): At least 10 killed as rival armed groups clash in Elbarde town of Somalia, https://hornobserver.com/articles/2261/At-least-10-killed-as-rival-armed-groups-clash-in-Elbarde-town-of-Somalia, accessed 11/10/2023
- ICG - International Crisis Group (5/2025): CrisisWatch – Somalia, https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location[]=12&created=, accessed 4/6/2025
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (13/12/2022): Nearly 8.3 million people across Somalia face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity outcomes, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/fc2d405c-ca29-4526-ad96-6618c2756192/Multi-Partner-Technical-Release-on-Updated-IPC-Analysis-for-Somalia-fo-October-2022-to-June-2023-Final-(English)-13-Dec-2022.pdf, accessed 10/10/2023
- Kaab - Kaab TV (24/11/2025b): Al-Shabaab oo maleeshiyaad iyo gaadiid dagaal ku kala jartay Muqdisho iyo Marka, https://kaabtv.com/al-shabaab-oo-maleeshiyaad-iyo-gaadiid-dagaal-ku-kala-jartay-muqdisho-iyo-marka/, accessed 2/12/2025
- MAEZA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Organisation für bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- PGN - Political Geography Now (19/6/2025): June 2025 Somalia Control Map & Timeline: Al Shabaab Resurgence, ISIS Retreat, Jubaland Defiant (Subscription), https://controlmaps.polgeonow.com/2025/06/june-2025-somalia-control-map-timeline/, accessed 23/6/2025 [fee required]
- PGN/EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (Publisher), Political Geography Now (Author) (31/3/2026): Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, in: EUAA (5.2026): Somalia: Security Situation, S.20, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026

- SG - Somali Guardian (22/6/2026): Intense clashes in Baidoa as political tensions peak, https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/somalia-baidoa-clashes-political-tensions/, accessed 7/7/2026
- TRAC - Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium (18/6/2025): TRACWatch, Weekly Analyst Review, per e-Mail
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (6/7/2025): Somalia: Monthly Humanitarian Update, June 2025 - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/81d65809-4360-430a-99c9-49765869e71d/Monthly Humanitarian Update - June 2025.._corr.pdf, accessed 10/7/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025
- Wardheer - Wardheer News (13/6/2026): Military Buildup Around Baidoa Deepens as Lafta Gareen Loyalists Mobilize Amid South West Power Shift, https://wardheernews.com/military-buildup-around-baidoa-deepens-as-lafta-gareen-loyalists-mobilize-amid-south-west-power-shift/, accessed 7/7/2026

3.1.3 Benadir Regional Administration (BRA; Mogadishu)

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:32

As recently as 2011, al-Shabaab controlled half the city, which was also the scene of fierce fighting (BBC 18/1/2021). At that time, Mogadishu was a half-empty city in ruins; bullet holes, destroyed houses and militias in armoured vehicles characterised the scene. There were no public services whatsoever (Sahan/SWT 18/1/2022). Since 2014, life has returned to Mogadishu (SRF 27/12/2021). In general, the situation for the civilian population and the capabilities of the security forces have improved since 2014 (BMLV 11/9/2026). Several sources state that the security situation has improved over the past decade (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. UN-OFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; RD 26/10/2023; Landinfo 8/9/2022; Sahan/SWT 6/9/2023). When comparing the number of incidents or fatalities, it must in any case be borne in mind that the population has risen significantly (Landinfo 8/9/2022). For instance, the UNFPA (*United Nations Population Fund*) put the population at 1.65 million in 2014 (UNFPA 10/2014), whilst the figure for 2026 is estimated at almost 3.3 million (IPC 14/5/2026).

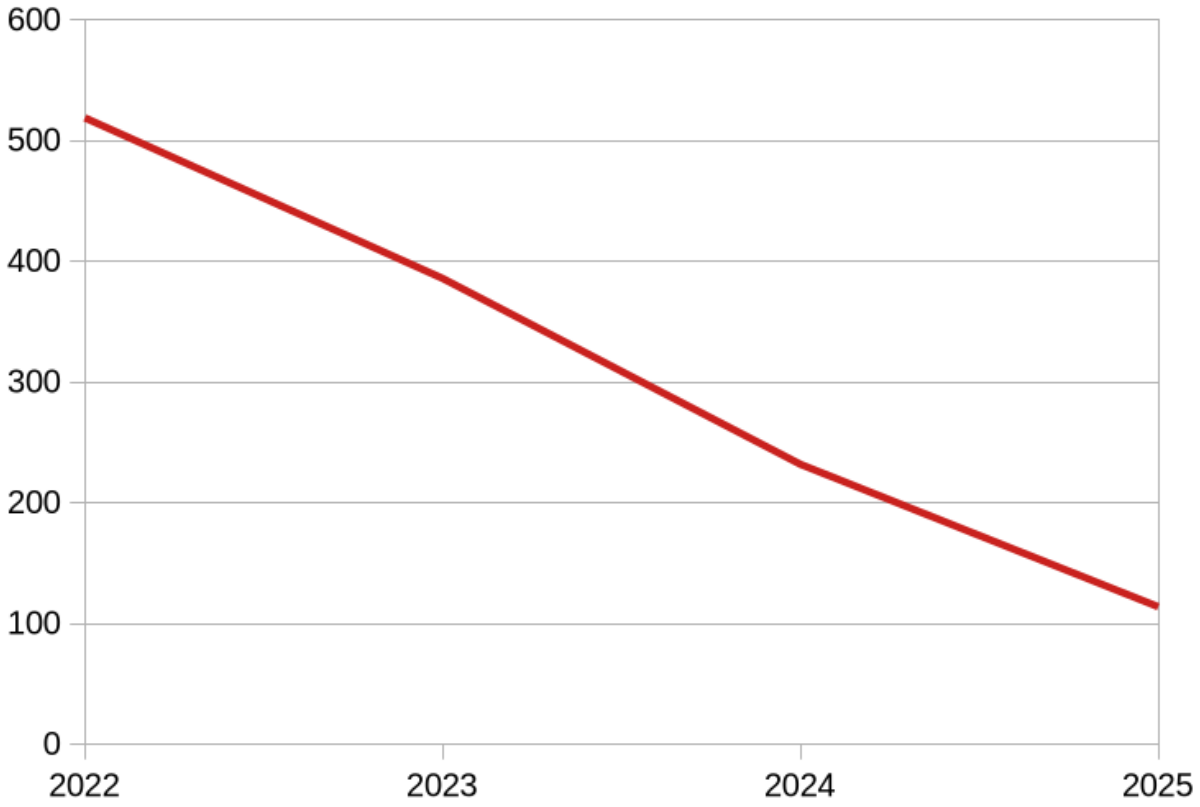
Current situation: Today, Mogadishu is no longer a chaotic city (Marchal/CERI 1/2026). The government has invested heavily in security to reduce the risk of complex attacks by al-Shabaab in the city (UNSC 28/10/2024; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). According to two sources, the situation in Mogadishu with regard to security-related incidents is calmer than it has been for a very long time (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). At the same time, as of June 2026, political tensions mean the city is in a situation that is at least as dangerous as it was in 2021 (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). In this regard, the Federal Government has deployed hundreds of militiamen as well as forces from the *Gorgor* and *Haram'ad* special units to Mogadishu to counter emerging opposition (Sahan/SWT 9/3/2026).

The city is under the control of the government and AUSSOM (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). More and more parts of Mogadishu are being rebuilt. There is a great deal of activity, and a lot of money is being invested (IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023) – including in entirely new districts on the outskirts (AQSOM 4 6/2024). Mogadishu has recovered significantly over the past decade and has been rebuilt (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The construction industry is booming; old ruins are being replaced by tall office complexes and flats, and the skyline is dotted with cranes and scaffolding

(BBC/Hanshi/Irungu 15/6/2025). Mogadishu has become a vibrant city with tall blocks of flats and shopping centres. The famous Lido Beach is packed with families at the weekend. Historic buildings and monuments have been renovated and are open to the public. Countless coffee houses have opened. Both the private and public sectors have grown significantly thanks to the city's relative stability. Six banks and dozens of international companies have opened branches in Mogadishu. There are investment opportunities, and new jobs have been created (Sahan/SWT 18/1/2022; cf. TEV/Odour 24/6/2024). Traders can bring their goods to market, and people are generally able to move about relatively freely (ÖB Nairobi 11/1/2024).

Current situation – al-Shabaab: The extent of the group's presence within the city varies considerably. This presence is covert rather than overtly military. Al-Shabaab has greater influence in the outskirts, where support from the local population is also stronger; Kaxda (a new district on the northern edge of the city) is regarded as a hotbed of militant activity (BMLV 11/9/2026).

The city offers al-Shabaab many attractive targets simply due to the high concentration of government agencies and international organisations. The group carries out attacks on government agencies and their supporters (BMLV 2/7/2025). However, 2025 was characterised by one of the lowest numbers of al-Shabaab-related security incidents since 2010 (AQSOM 9 1/2026). The group has scaled back its attacks as long as the political factions are preoccupied with each other (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). Another source explains the decline as follows: firstly, through the tightening of security measures directed against the group, in particular the increased presence of plainclothes NISA officers and the deployment of the so-called military police; and secondly, a strategic reorientation by al-Shabaab, which now prioritises operations outside Mogadishu and, in the capital, relies on sporadic, high-profile attacks mainly targeting security installations (AQSOM 9 1/2026). Further sources explain that the group has moved away from large-scale attacks resulting in mass civilian casualties and is now focusing on military installations, officials and checkpoints (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. STDOK/BMLV 2/6/2026). In 2025, there were relatively few (major) attacks by al-Shabaab in the city; as of June 2026, there had been none at all (STDOK/BMLV 2/6/2026). Overall, the frequency and number of incidents caused by al-Shabaab have fallen sharply (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). An anonymous source provides the following figures:



Sources 15: AQSOM 9 1/2026

However, al-Shabaab is still capable of carrying out attacks – including major ones – and covert operations, extorting taxes or protection money, and intimidating the population (BMLV 11/9/2026). If, for example, al-Shabaab wishes to attack a hotel, the government is unable to prevent this (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Furthermore, the group deliberately uses hand grenades and firearms during demonstrations against forced evictions in order to provoke government forces into opening fire and thus escalate the violence (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). Occasionally, attacks involving mortar shells and rockets also occur in Mogadishu – for example, on the international Halane compound, which also includes the airport (HO 28/4/2025; cf. USDOS 12/8/2025).

There is no evidence to suggest that the group is actively seeking out and eliminating deserters in Mogadishu. There is no risk of being forcibly recruited by the group in Mogadishu. In fact, young men from some areas are even fleeing to Mogadishu to escape possible (forced) recruitment. Due to the massive population increase and the large number of young people without a means of support, al-Shabaab has a significant recruitment pool in any case, which it is exploiting (BMLV 11/9/2026). [*Note: See also*Al-Shabaab – (Forced) Recruitment]

Al-Shabaab is not strong enough to attack Mogadishu; indeed, the defensive forces in the city (including the 2,500-strong Ugandan AU contingent) cannot be overcome. Should all foreign contingents withdraw, Mogadishu would be impossible to hold (BMLV 11/9/2026).

All institutions in Mogadishu have been infiltrated by Al-Shabaab (STDOK/BMLV 2/6/2026). [*Note: For information on Al-Shabaab's* tax*system, see*The al-Shabaab 'tax' system*and*Risks associated with protection rackets.]

Security forces: The forces present in the city include federal security forces, the Presidential Guard, police forces, the *National Intelligence and Security Agency* (NISA), BRA security forces, numerous private security firms and clan militias (EUAA 5/2025b; cf. BMLV 2/7/2025). Recently, the *Gorgor* special unit has been deployed increasingly in Mogadishu – not least as a measure against the opposition (STDOK/BMLV 2/6/2026). As of September 2023, the city had sufficient security forces, numbering approximately 18,000 – of whom 5,000–6,000 were police officers. There is a police station in every district (Sahan/SWT 6/9/2023). Since mid-2025, the federal government and the opposition have called on clan militias to come to Mogadishu in order to exert pressure on one another. Non-state security forces, including clan militias, exert considerable influence in the city. The various components of this patchwork security architecture regularly compete for control of checkpoints and access to resources. However, thanks to the improved situation, a number of checkpoints within the city have been dismantled (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Previously, the federal government did not have sufficient state institutions across the board to provide services to citizens and protect their lives and property. The situation in this regard has improved. Overall, however, the current strength of the various security forces remains insufficient to completely prevent al-Shabaab's activities. Public trust in the police varies greatly. Particularly in areas where there are many forced evictions or displacements, people mistrust the police (BMLV 11/9/2026). One source explains that witnesses are generally not too intimidated to report al-Shabaab to the police. Many do so, and there is a great deal of cooperation in Mogadishu between local communities and the police. In addition, NISA officers in plain clothes gather information (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Civilians: Attacks by al-Shabaab are generally directed at security facilities (AQSOM 9 1/2026; cf. BMLV 2/7/2025). According to one source, there is no real security problem for 'ordinary' residents (ÖB Nairobi 11/1/2024). Other sources explain that 'ordinary' civilians are generally not a target for al-Shabaab attacks (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). There must always be a specific interest in a person (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Those with links to the government or who are perceived by al-Shabaab as government supporters are at increased risk (BMLV 2/7/2025; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Journalists are also at greater risk, particularly those who have spoken out critically against al-Shabaab. Attacks are usually directed specifically at an individual, but not at their family members (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

The greatest risk for civilians who have no connection to the government is being in the wrong place at the wrong time during attacks and thus becoming collateral damage from bombings and other acts of violence (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. AQSOM 9 1/2026; UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Al-Shabaab pays little attention to random victims; the group regards civilians killed in attacks as martyrs (Landinfo 8/9/2022). The group accepts civilian casualties and repeatedly attacks heavily frequented locations (MBZ 4/4/2025). These

are generally places frequented by government officials, businesspeople and security forces, such as restaurants, hotels or shopping centres (Landinfo 8/9/2022; cf. BBC/Hanshi/Irungu 15/6/2025). A location frequented exclusively by the general public is not a target for al-Shabaab. The group's main targets are located in the inner districts: military targets, government facilities and the airport area. The outlying districts, on the other hand, are regarded by some as the safest parts of the city, as major attacks there are virtually unheard of. However, targeted killings do occur there more frequently (BMLV 11/9/2026). According to other sources, it is entirely possible that al-Shabaab carries out an attack solely for the purpose of spreading fear amongst the civilian population (MBZ 4/4/2025).

Generally speaking, the civilian population of Mogadishu does not support al-Shabaab's ideology. Support is greater on the outskirts of the city, but most residents have a negative attitude towards al-Shabaab. They only follow the group's instructions because they fear reprisals. Al-Shabaab operates like a mafia: it threatens those who oppose the group's wishes with serious consequences (BMLV 11/9/2026). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, extortion by al-Shabaab is a very real danger for civilians in Mogadishu. The group is always trying to get hold of money. Consequently, there is always a risk of receiving a threatening phone call or text message from them (UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

In a survey carried out in early 2026 on behalf of the BFA's Staatendokumentation Unit, 73 per cent of the 200 respondents living in Mogadishu stated that they felt very safe in their neighbourhood. 18 per cent feel reasonably safe, 7 per cent feel somewhat unsafe and 2 per cent feel unsafe (STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Sense of security]).

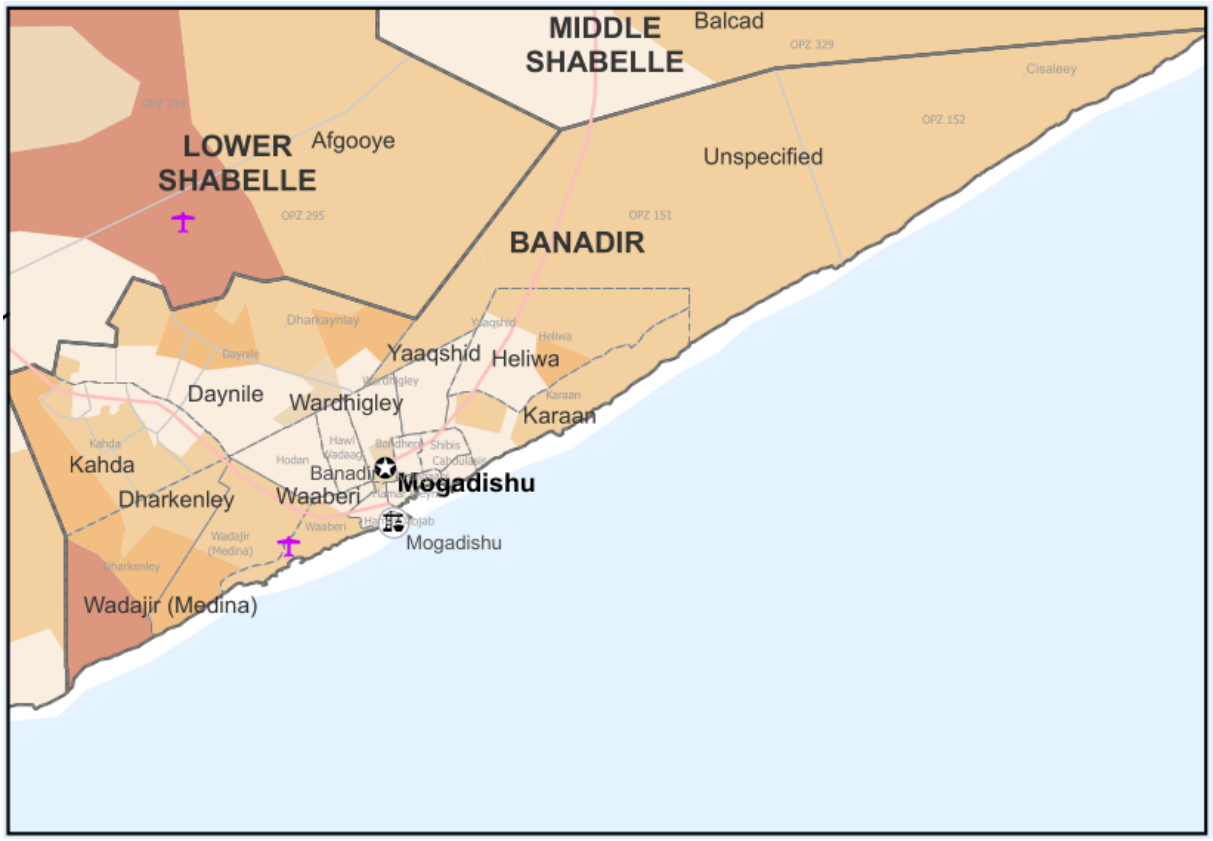
Freedom of movement: Numerous checkpoints within the city have been dismantled (EUAA 5/2026a). In early October 2025, the government reopened fifty roads to the public that had previously been closed for years for security reasons (HO 4/10/2025). The remaining checkpoints are located at key points in the city, such as around important infrastructure including *Villa Somalia*, the Parliament building and the airport. Every vehicle is checked on the approach roads. Overall, the behaviour at these roadblocks is more professional than it was a few years ago. There are greater restrictions on special occasions. Due to the fighting in Central Somalia, targeted operations by the armed forces and security forces are taking place more frequently than before. As part of these operations, streets or entire residential neighbourhoods are cordoned off. Whilst this occasionally involves house searches, the main purpose is to exercise greater control over movements within a clearly defined area of the city. Checkpoints and patrols are deployed for this purpose. In addition, mention should be made of 'targeted operations' which take place in the context of demonstrations announced by the opposition. For example, on 3 June 2026, the residences of two politicians were surrounded and cordoned off by security forces to prevent them from taking part in a demonstration (BMLV 11/9/2026). Massive restrictions on freedom of movement can also occur, for example, on public holidays (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023), or when important delegations are in the city (UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Most checkpoints are operated jointly by NISA, the police and the army (STDOK/BMLV 2/6/2026).

For ordinary citizens, there are generally no problems regarding freedom of movement in Mogadishu (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Clan or gender play no role here (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Women can also move about alone without any problems; only late at night might there be security issues (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

In principle, both genders and all clans enjoy freedom of movement (UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). However, belonging to a strong clan or having connections to powerful figures in the city can be advantageous at checkpoints or when encountering government forces. In Mogadishu, the Hawiye clans Abgaal and Habr Gedir are regarded as particularly strong (Landinfo 8/9/2022; cf. AQSOM 4 6/2024). A source from the FFM Somalia 2023 explains that, in terms of clan affiliation, Mogadishu can generally be regarded as cosmopolitan. However, the clan does play a role in social matters, marriages, power struggles and politics (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Overall, however, people in Mogadishu can move about freely, settle down and engage in trade regardless of their clan affiliation (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. FIS 7/8/2020a; INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). People are aware of the dangers in certain areas and therefore try to avoid them (at certain times of day) (AQSOM 4 6/2024).

When travelling, the middle class frequently uses *tuk-tuk* services, whilst the poorer sections of the population walk or take buses (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, police officers at checkpoints frequently ask for tips, money to pay for their meals, or cigarettes. In reality, however, only cars – and in most cases the drivers – are checked; pedestrians and *tuk-tuks* are allowed to pass (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Another source also explains that passengers in *tuk-tuks* can pass through checkpoints without any problems and that – if at all – only the driver is questioned (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

The United Nations – with regard to humanitarian workers – describes the accessibility of different parts of Mogadishu as follows (light beige – *very limited restrictions*; dark red – *very heavy restrictions*):



Sources 16: UN OCHA 27/1/2026

Violent crime: Civilians remain concerned about muggings and violence (GN 2/10/2025), particularly at night. For example, residents of Dharkenley report that armed gangs patrol the streets at night in some areas, stealing mobile phones and other valuables (Kaab 29/11/2025d). Similar reports are coming from Wadajir, where the perpetrators includeboth armed men in plain clothes and those in uniform. The victims are often knocked to the ground (Kaab 2/12/2025a). It is not uncommon for robbery victims to be murdered. This is linked in particular to the rise of youth gangs (known as *'ciyaal weero*', i.e. 'aggressive children') (Sahan/SWT 6/9/2023; cf. INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). One source locates the *ciyaal weero* primarily in the districts of Yaqshiid, Karaan and Heliwaa (BMLV 11/9/2026). These gangs originally targeted passengers on *tuk-tuks* [*Note: These are also known as bajaj*]. They would steal whatever people happened to have on them (Sahan/SWT 27/7/2022). Many gang members also take drugs or drink alcohol (Sahan/SWT 27/7/2022; cf. Sahan/SWT 30/4/2025). In general, the *ciyaal weero* are associated with drug dealing and drug use (Sahan/SWT 30/4/2025). They also commit robbery, extortion and (sexual) violence (HIPS 7/5/2024; cf. Sahan/SWT 6/9/2023), muggings and murders (Sahan/SWT 27/7/2022). At the same time, youth gangs are organised by territory and stake a claim to various parts of the city (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. Sahan/SWT 29/8/2022), which leads to further violence (Sahan/SWT 29/8/2022). As they have expanded, they have begun to fight amongst themselves (Sahan/SWT 27/7/2022). The government has introduced night-time patrols to counter this (HIPS 7/5/2024). However, members of the security forces are also involved in such violent crime (GN 2/10/2025).

Political tensions and militias: Tensions between the federal government and the opposition have increased. This is also reflected in the growing mobilisation of clan militias in and around Mogadishu (Sahan/SWT 29/9/2025). In the city itself, there are militias or 'bodyguards' associated with a wide variety of actors. For example, virtually every well-known opposition figure has their own militia, each comprising up to 300 men; across Mogadishu as a whole, there are 2,000–3,000 (STDOK/BMLV 2/6/2026). Tensions between the opposition and the government escalated into open violence on 3–4 June 2026 (GN 5/6/2026). According to the United Nations, fighting between opposition and government forces has left at least 13 people dead, 189 injured and 12,500 households temporarily displaced. Clashes took place in Hawl Wadaag, Cabdicasiis, Hodan, Wardhiigley and Karaan (GN 7/6/2026). Although the fighting has ceased since the clashes in June, most of the militias are still present in the area (BMLV 11/9/2026).

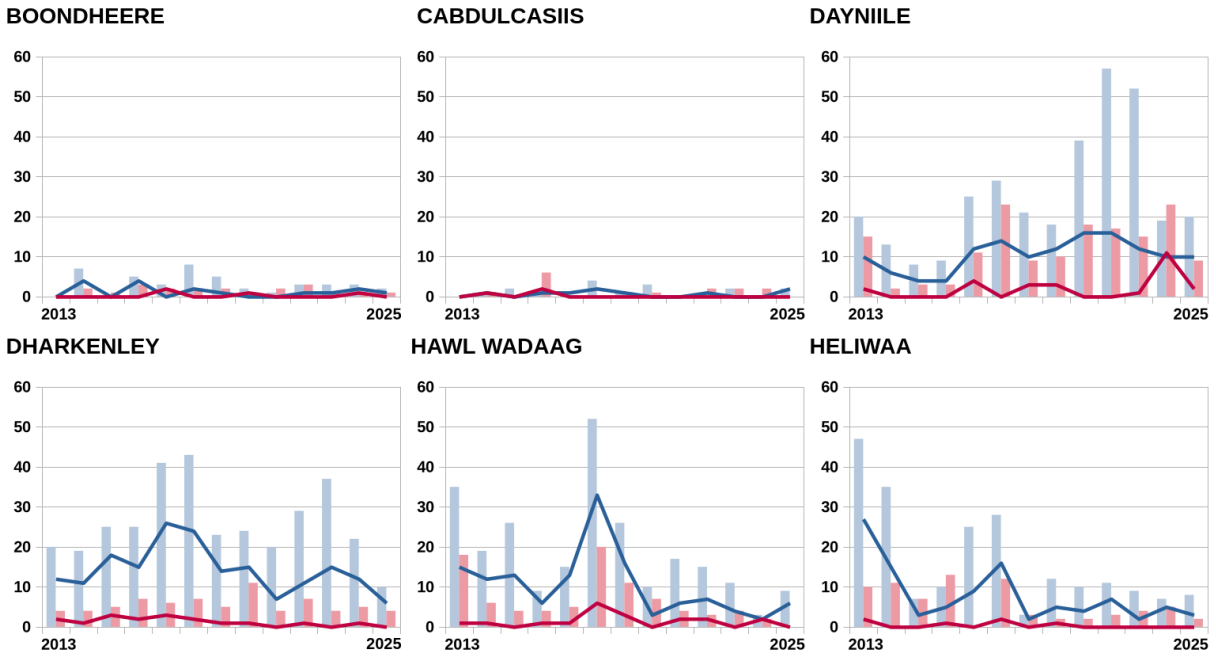
Forced evictions are also having an impact on the security situation. Eviction operations regularly lead to violent clashes (STDOK/BMLV 2/6/2026). The state is also involved in land disputes. For example, during an officially ordered forced eviction in mid-August 2025, at least twenty people were killed when clashes broke out between security forces and those being evicted (SG 14/8/2025). In this regard, the government adopts a significantly more cautious approach towards armed clans capable of putting up a fight than it does towards other sections of the population (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Islamic State in Somalia (ISS): As regards Mogadishu, there have been no reports of any activities by the so-called ISS since early 2025 (BMLV 11/9/2026). One source explains that whilst the group did attempt to gain a foothold in Mogadishu, people threatened by the ISS turned to al-Shabaab for help (MBZ 4/4/2025).

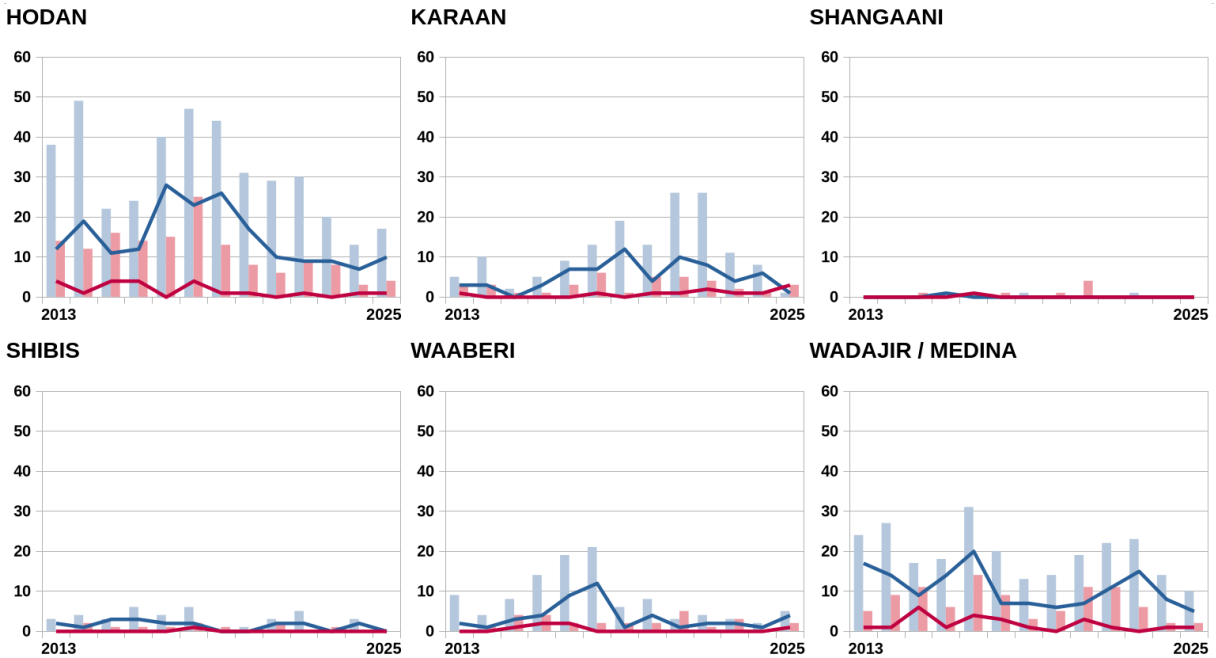
Incidents: According to one source, Benadir/Mogadishu has a population of 2,874,431 (IPC 13/12/2022). By comparison, the ACLED database recorded a total of 94 incidents in 2024 in which civilians were specifically targeted and killed (category *'violence against civilians'*). In 70 of these 94 incidents, one civilian was killed in each. In 2025, there were 69 such incidents (67 of which resulted in one fatality each). Taking population figures and data on *'violence against civilians'* together yields the following figures for 2025 (**incidents per 100,000 inhabitants**): 2.40; in 2025, the districts of Dayniile (29 incidents) and Hodan (21) were particularly affected, as were, to a lesser extent, the outlying district of Garasbaaley (19) and the districts of Dharkenley (14), Wadajir/Medina (12) and Heliwaa (10) were particularly affected by lethal violence. In 2025, civilians were primarily affected by lethal violence directed against them in the districts of Dayniile (12 incidents), as well as in Hodan (11) and Garasbaaley (10) (ACLED 15/1/2026).

Below is an overview for the years 2013–2025 of the total number of incidents resulting in fatalities, as well as the subcategory *'violence against civilians'*, which, according to a review of the dataset, also includes 'ordinary' murders. The figures are broken down into two subcategories: one fatality; multiple fatalities. Incidents resulting in fatalities that do not fall under *'violence against civilians'* but are tagged with the attribute *'civilian targeting'* have also been included. It should be borne in mind that, depending on the security situation and the information available, there may be cases of *over-* or *under-reporting*; the number of fatalities is not

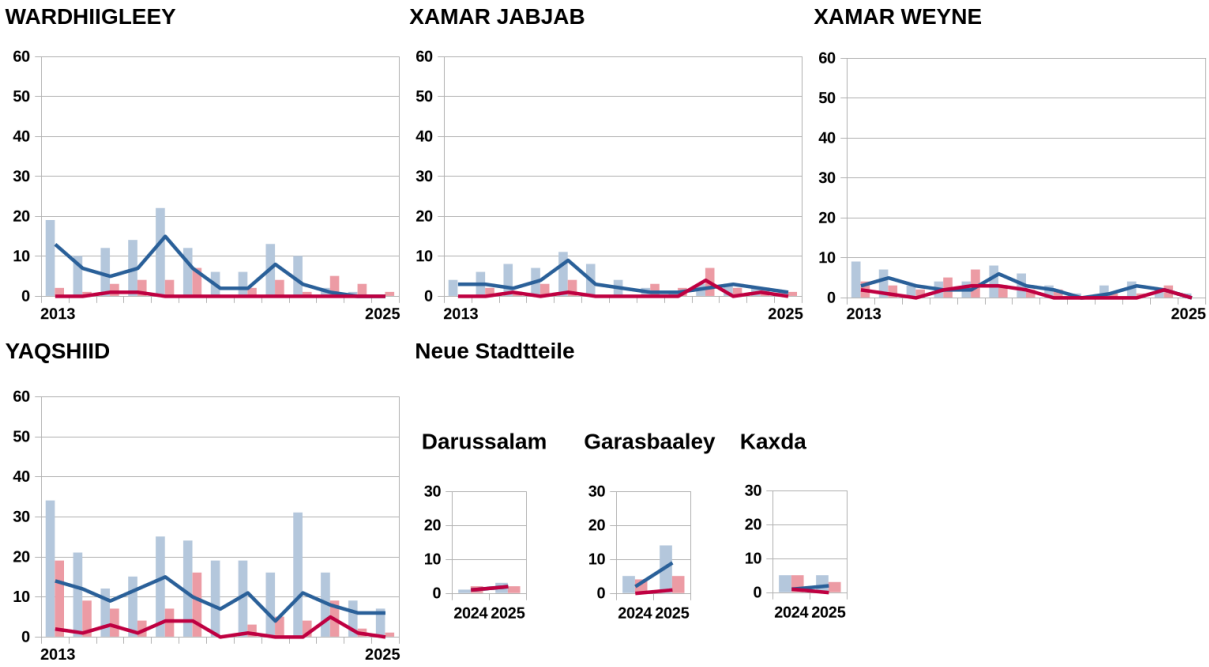
taken into account due to the margin of error in ACLED [*Note: Wardhiigleey is now also more frequently referred to by its new name, Warta Nabadda*]:



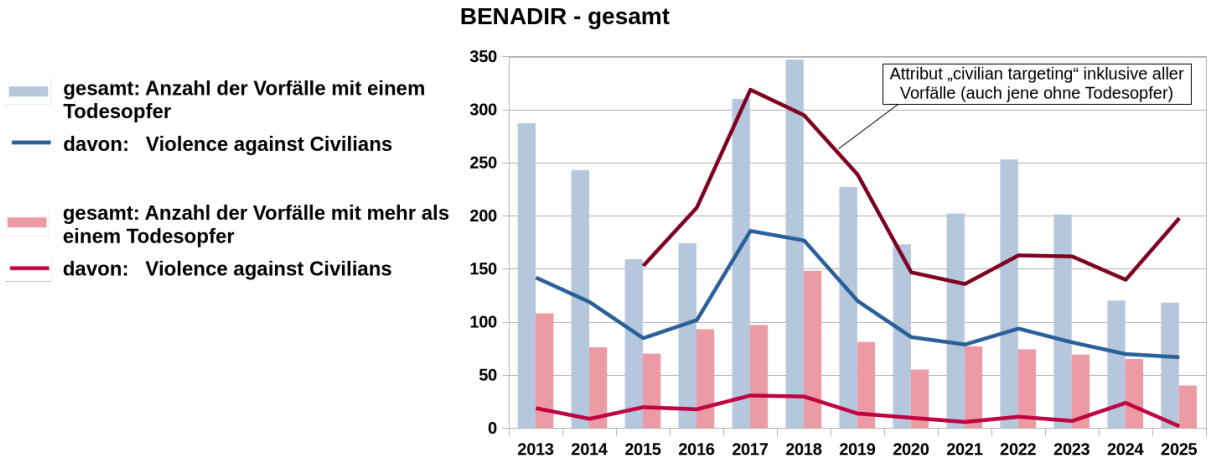
Sources 17: ACLED 15/1/2026 (and previous versions)



Sources 18: ACLED 15/1/2026 (and previous versions)



Sources 19: ACLED 15/1/2026 (and previous versions)



Sources 20: ACLED 15/1/2026 (and previous versions)

Sources

- ACLED - Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (15/1/2026): Curated Data - Africa (9 January 2026), https://acleddata.com/curated-data-files/, accessed 15/1/2026 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (6/2024): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation

- BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation (18/1/2021): Somali concern at US troop withdrawal, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55677077, accessed 11/10/2023
- BBC/Hanshi/Irungu - British Broadcasting Corporation (Publisher), Fardowsa Hanshi (Author), Anthony Irungu (Author) (15/6/2025): Somalia's construction boom in Mogadishu gives women high ambitions, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj427dy11j0o, accessed 16/6/2025
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (11/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/7/2025): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (2/6/2026): Expertengespräch, Länderexperte des BMLV
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2026a): Somalia: Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025b): Somalia – Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-05/2025_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 3/6/2025
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020a): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf/2f51bf86-ac96-f34e-fd02-667c6ae973a0/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf?t=1602225617645, accessed 12/10/2023
- GN - Goobjoog News (7/6/2026): Somalia Government and UN Clash Over Mogadishu Violence Toll as Weapons Row Deepens, https://en.goobjoog.com/somalia-government-and-un-clash-over-mogadishu-violence-toll-as-weapons-row-deepens/, accessed 6/7/2026
- GN - Goobjoog News (5/6/2026): Somali Police Display Weapons Seized After Mogadishu Clashes, https://en.goobjoog.com/somali-police-display-weapons-seized-after-mogadishu-clashes/, accessed 6/7/2026
- GN - Goobjoog News (2/10/2025): Police in Mogadishu Arrest Military Man Behind Shooting Incident, https://en.goobjoog.com/police-in-mogadishu-arrest-military-man-behind-shooting-incident/, accessed 25/11/2025
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (7/5/2024): State Of Somalia 2023 Report, https://8v90f1.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SOS-REPORT-2023-.pdf, accessed 27/5/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (4/10/2025): Somali Government reopens over 50 roads in Mogadishu after years of security closures, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Oct/203182/somali_government_reopens_over_50_roads_in_mogadishu_after_years_of_security_closures.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 25/11/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (28/4/2025): Mortar attack targets Halane Base Camp in Mogadishu; casualties unconfirmed, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Apr/201316/mortar_attack_targets_halane_base_camp_in_mogadishu_casualties_unconfirmed.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 16/6/2025
- INGO-C/STDOK/SEM - Internationale NGO C (Author), Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IO-D/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale Organisation D (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (14/5/2026): IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis, April-June 2026, https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Somalia_Projection_Update_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Malnutrition_Apr_Jun2026_Report.pdf, accessed 9/7/2026

- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (13/12/2022): Nearly 8.3 million people across Somalia face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity outcomes, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/fc2d405c-ca29-4526-ad96-6618c2756192/Multi-Partner-Technical-Release-on-Updated-IPC-Analysis-for-Somalia-fo-October-2022-to-June-2023-Final-(English)-13-Dec-2022.pdf, accessed 10/10/2023
- Kaab - Kaab TV (2/12/2025a): Mobile Phone Theft Increasing in Wadajir District, Banadir Region, https://en.kaabtv.com/mobile-phone-theft-increasing-in-wadajir-district-banadir-region/, accessed 3/12/2025
- Kaab - Kaab TV (29/11/2025d): Angry Residents Block Xoosh Road in Mogadishu Over Checkpoints, https://en.kaabtv.com/angry-residents-block-xoosh-road-in-mogadishu-over-checkpoints/, accessed 2/12/2025
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (8/9/2022): Somalia: Sikkerhetssituasjonen i Mogadishu og al-Shabaabs innflytelse i byen, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Respons-Somalia-Sikkerhetssituasjonen-i-Mogadishu-og-al-Shabaabs-innflytelse-i-byen-08092022-1.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023
- Marchal/CERI - Roland Marchal (Author), Centre de Recherches Internationales SciencesPo (Publisher) (1/2026): The Recognition of Somaliland by Israel as An indicator of a Geopolitical Dynamic between the Horn and the Gulf, Les Analyses du CERI, https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/files/Somaliland_Janvier2026_AnalyseCERI.pdf, accessed 30/1/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (11/1/2024): Informationen der Botschaft, per e-Mail
- PGN/EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (Publisher), Political Geography Now (Author) (31/3/2026): Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, in: EUAA (5.2026): Somalia: Security Situation, S.20, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- RD - Radio Dalsan (26/10/2023): Mogadishu officials conduct security inspection in Yaqshid district, https://www.radiodalsan.com/mogadishu-officials-conduct-security-inspection-in-yaqshid-district, accessed 18/4/2024
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (9/3/2026): A Pyrrhic Victory in Mogadishu, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 935, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (29/9/2025): The Fire Next Time, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 879, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (30/4/2025): Silent Killers: Counterfeit Drugs in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 816, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (6/9/2023): Securing Mogadishu, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 588, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (29/8/2022): Mogadishu's gang proliferation, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 444, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/7/2022): The rise of Mogadishu's street gangs, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 431, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (18/1/2022): The rise of Mogadishu's street gangs, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 309, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SG - Somali Guardian (14/8/2025): At least 20 dead as Somalia's security forces clash with civilians in Mogadishu, https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/at-least-20-dead-as-somalias-security-forces-clash-with-civilians-in-mogadishu/, accessed 9/10/2025
- SRF - Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (27/12/2021): Ein Staat ohne Macht - Somalia: Leben im gescheiterten Staat, https://www.srf.ch/news/international/ein-staat-ohne-macht-somalia-leben-im-gescheiterten-staat, accessed 11/10/2023
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (19/6/2026): Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - 1, https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at/at.gv.bfa.coicms-p/services/collection/237-1.pdf, accessed 19/6/2026 [Login required]
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024

- TEV/Odour - Barack Odour (Author), The Eastleigh Voice (Publisher) (24/6/2024): Journalist's memoir reveals story of Somalia's resilience, https://eastleighvoice.co.ke/somalia/52862/journalists-memoir-reveals-story-of-somalias-resilience, accessed 24/6/2024
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (10/2014): Population Estimation Survey 2014 – Somalia, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Population-Estimation-Survey-of-Somalia-PESS-2013-2014.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (27/1/2026): Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026, https://www.unocha.org/attachments/edea4204-0921-4741-862f-203c6f75a631/Somalia_HNRP_2026.pdf, accessed 23/3/2026
- UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Senior UN Official X (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (28/10/2024): Letter dated 15 October 2024 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4066421/files/S_2024_748-EN.pdf?ln=en, accessed 3/12/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

3.1.4 HirShabelle (Hiiraan, Middle Shabelle)

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

Al-Shabaab has reversed the gains made by the government during the offensive in 2022–2023. In addition to Moqokori and Hawadley (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026), Adan Yabaal (ICG 5/2025) was captured on 15 April 2025 and Maxaas on 27 July 2025 (BAMF 28/7/2025). Overall, large parts of the state are under the control of al-Shabaab, whilst AUSSOM and the federal army are increasingly confined to larger towns (SG 9/8/2025).

By the end of 2024, HirShabelle had already become a focal point of the fighting (HO 31/1/2025). And in 2025, too, the bulk of the fighting between al-Shabaab and government forces took place in this state (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025). This remains the case. HirShabelle remains the most active front against al-Shabaab. The group's most recent major successes there were the capture of Moqokori on 7 July 2026 and the capture of Teedan on 3 August 2026. By controlling these towns, al Shabaab is able to threaten the government's supply routes to forward bases from the flank (BMLV 11/9/2026). According to one source, al-Shabaab is concentrating its activities on the coastal strip of Middle Shabelle or the area in this direction, as well as on asymmetric attacks (including the use of explosive devices) on towns held by government forces along the road between Balcad and Belet Weyne – such as in Buulo Barde, Jalalaqsi and Belet Weyne (AQSOM 9 1/2026). HirShabelle is also witnessing – by Somali standards – exceptionally intense fighting. For example, the battle for Ceel Hareri between government troops and their Hawiye / Abgaal allies and al-Shabaab lasted four days, with dozens killed on both sides (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025; cf.ICG 5/2025). Dozens of combatants were also killed in the fighting over Moqokori (July 2026) and Teedan (August 2026) (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Since 2024, outbreaks of violence have occurred in the border region between Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle due to disputes over resources and land (AQSOM 9 1/2026; cf. MUST 22/1/2024; SMN 18/4/2024; HO 30/11/2024; EUAA 5/2025b; SMN 8/1/2025). At the end of 2025, clashes between the Hawadle, Abgaal and Bantu / Shiidle flared up there once again. The main

trigger is considered to be the access of nomads to the Shabelle and the resulting damage to the harvests of settled farmers (AQSOM 9 1/2026).

Hiiraan: The Hawiye / Hawadle are the most important clan in the region; they dominate the area north-east of the Shabelle. Other sub-clans of the Hawiye, such as the Galja'el and Badicadde, dominate the area south-west of the river. Smaller clans in the north-east of the region include the [Hawiye] / Udeejeen, Dir / Faqi Omar, Dir / FaqiMuhmed, Rer Aw Hassan and Makanne (EUAA 5/2025b).

Belet Weyne, Buulo Barde and Jalalaqsi are under the control of government forces and AUSSOM (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). This also applies to Halgan. The first two towns mentioned can be regarded as consolidated in terms of the presence of (state) security personnel and an established administration. The area along the Somali-Ethiopian border is also considered secure (BMLV 11/9/2026). Bases for bilateral Ethiopian forces are located in Feer Feer, Aabaley, Jawil, Belet Weyne and Halgan (AQSOM 9 5/2026). The south-western quarter of Hiiraan, as well as large parts of the area extending towards the border with Galgaduud, are under the control of al-Shabaab. The government has lost control of large parts of West Hiiraan once again – including the towns of Maxaas and Moqokori (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). Al-Shabaab captured Moqokori in early July 2025 (CT/Karr/Tesfaye/AEI 10/7/2025).

As early as late 2024 and early 2025, the Halgan–Buulo Barde corridor was characterised by sporadic clashes between the Federal Army and allied militias on the one hand, and al-Shabaab fighters who had advanced across the Shabelle River on the other (HO 15/1/2025). In early April, al-Shabaab captured the village of Aboorey near the road linking Belet Weyne to Buulo Barde, as well as a small village along this route (GO 9/4/2025; cf. ICG 5/2025; PGN 19/6/2025). Until then, both Aboorey and Moqokori had been regarded as strongholds of *the Ma'awiisley* (SG 13/7/2025; cf. PGN 19/6/2025; Sahan/SWT 16/7/2025).

In **Belet Weyne**, the security situation remains comparatively stable; violence or attacks by al-Shabaab occur only sporadically. The town is home to the regional command of the Federal Army, as well as bases for Djiboutian AUSSOM troops and the Ethiopian Army. There are also police officers from the African Union (AU). In addition, there is a relatively strong district administration and locally recruited police forces. Clan conflicts are not fought out in the town, but mostly outside it. The presence of al-Shabaab in Belet Weyne appears to be of little significance (BMLV 11/9/2026). However, the group does carry out sporadic attacks there; for example, in mid-March 2025, it attacked a meeting of the Galja'el, resulting in at least ten fatalities (Sahan/SWT 12/3/2025; cf. CT/Karr/Tyson/Ford/Banane 20/3/2025). This was the largest attack in Belet Weyne since 2022 (CT/Karr/Tyson/Ford/Banane 20/3/2025).

In January 2025, elders of the Hawadle and the Federal Government brokered a reconciliation with the Abgaal-dominated government of HirShabelle (Sahan/SWT 27/1/2025; cf.ICG 5/2025). The agreement also includes the transfer of security responsibilities in Belet Weyne to federal forces (ICG 5/2025). One source speaks of a de-escalation of the conflict (PGN 19/6/2025), whilst another reports that calm has returned following the agreement (BMLV 11/9/2026).

In the town of Jalalaqsi, serious clan clashes lasting several days broke out in June 2026. Numerous residents fled the town (FTL 20/6/2026; cf. BAMF 29/6/2026).

Middle Shabelle: The region is dominated by the Hawiye / Abgaal. The local minority groups include, in particular, the Bantu in the Jowhar district (EUAA 5/2025b). Jowhar, Balcad, Warsheikh and Cadale are under the control of government forces and AUSSOM (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). However, due to the uncertainty surrounding the withdrawal of the Burundian AUSSOM contingent, no clear statement can be made regarding the security situation in Jowhar and Balcad as of September 2026. In any case, Warsheikh and Cadale will remain under government control with Turkish support (BMLV 11/9/2026).

In the final quarter of 2025, al-Shabaab launched two series of attacks in Middle Shabelle: one from Xawaadley towards Jabad Godane (Balcad) and the other towards Nuur Dugle (Adan Yabaal). Both attacks were aimed at exerting pressure on the coastal road from Mogadishu to Ceel Dheer, possibly with the aim of recapturing Ceel Dheer. Around Jowhar, the group has consolidated its control and is levying charges on goods transported into the town (AQSOM 9 1/2026). According to other reports, however, the Federal Army is also on the offensive in Middle Shabelle. Between February and April 2026, most of the skirmishes in the eastern part of the region were initiated by the army itself. According to one source, al-Shabaab is determined to keep the Mogadishu–Xaradheere coastal road open, as a large proportion of the group's supplies are transported via this route. The various sub-clans of the Hawiye / Abgaal are partly aligned with the Federal Government, partly with the political opposition, and partly also actively supporting al-Shabaab (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). In general,however, the grouptends to play a defensive role inMiddle Shabelle. There, Turkey is pressing the federal government to clear the area inland from Warsheikh and Cadale. Xawaadley, which had been captured by al-Shabaab in 2025, was also recaptured by government forces in March 2026 (BMLV 11/9/2026). Government forces and AUSSOM control the coastal strip of Middle Shabelle. Overall, al-Shabaab controls around one-fifth of the region – primarily in the north. Al-Shabaab also controls territory in the area surrounding Balcadand, according to one source, the group also controls the town of Fidow on the road from Jowhar to Jalalaqsi (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026)

Balcad: In August 2024, al-Shabaab briefly stormed the town of Balcad (GO 13/8/2024). Balcad was attacked again on 25 February 2025 (Sahan/SWT 26/2/2025). According to the United Nations, al-Shabaab and other armed groups are causing intimidation and insecurity in Balcad (UNSC 28/10/2024). Al-Shabaab knows that it cannot hold the town for long (BMLV 11/9/2026). Nevertheless, Balcad remains a target for al-Shabaab – though more in the sense of disruptive manoeuvres aimed at hindering transit along this important north-south route. Consequently, any occupations to date have been of short duration (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 26/2/2025). Furthermore, even a brief capture of the town provides 'good headlines' and an opportunity to expose the government's weaknesses (BMLV 11/9/2026).

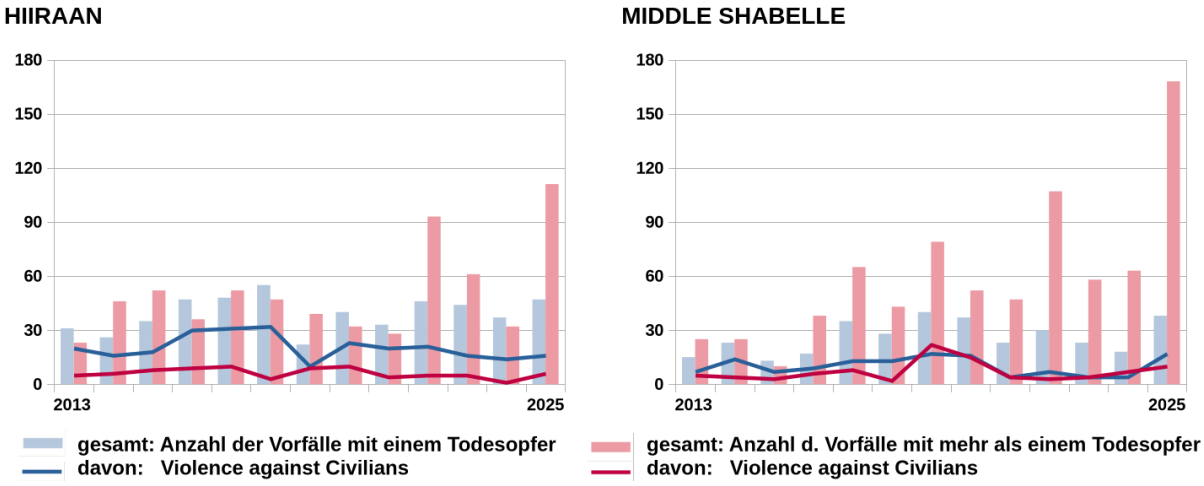
Jowhar is considered relatively peaceful. It is home – for the time being – to a garrison of 800 Burundian AU soldiers (ATMIS/AUSSOM) (BMLV 11/9/2026). On the outskirts of Jowhar, there are tensions between the Hawiye / Abgaal and the Bantu / Shiidle. The associated land

dispute escalated into violence at the end of 2025 (AQSOM 9 1/2026). In April 2026, the Federal Government deployed additional troops to Jowhar to put pressure on President Gudlawe to ensure he remains in line (CT/M. DeAngelo/A. Shah/AEI 16/7/2026).

Cadale is relatively safe and under government control. Further north, however, there are repeated clashes with al-Shabaab. The area between Cadale and Warsheikh is currently the main focus of Turkish interest in Somalia. There, too, there are repeated skirmishes between units of the Gorgor special forces and al-Shabaab, with the aim of driving the group's forces out of this area or dismantling them. This concerns the area bounded by the towns of Warsheikh, Xawaadley, Xaaji Cali and Cadale. The aim is to secure the camp currently under construction to protect the future Turkish 'missile base" (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Incidents: According to one source, the two regions of Hiiraan (420,060) and Middle Shabelle (961,554) have a combined population of 1,381,614 (IPC 13/12/2022). By comparison, the ACLED database recorded a total of 26 incidents in 2024 in which civilians were deliberately killed (category *'violence against civilians'*). In 18 of these 26 incidents, one civilian was killed in each. In 2025, there were 49 such incidents (33 of which resulted in one fatality each) (ACLED 15/1/2026). Taking into account both population size and *'violence against civilians'*, the following figures emerge for 2025 (**incidents per 100,000 inhabitants**): Hiiraan 5.24; Middle Shabelle 2.81.

Below is an overview for the years 2013–2025 of the total number of incidents resulting in fatalities, as well as the subcategory *'violence against* civilians', which, according to a review of the dataset, also includes 'ordinary' murders. The figures are broken down into two subcategories: one fatality; multiple fatalities. Incidents involving fatalities that do not fall under *'violence against civilians'* but are tagged with the attribute *'civilian targeting'* have also been included. It should be borne in mind that, depending on the control situation and the information available, *over-* or *under-reporting* may occur; the number of fatalities is not taken into account due to the margin of error in ACLED:



Sources 21: ACLED 15/1/2026 (and previous versions)

Sources

- ACLED - Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (15/1/2026): Curated Data - Africa (9 January 2026), https://acleddata.com/curated-data-files/, accessed 15/1/2026 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (5/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BAMF - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [Germany] (29/6/2026): Briefing Notes, https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Behoerde/Informationszentrum/BriefingNotes/2026/briefingnotes-kw27-2026.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3, accessed 3/7/2026
- BAMF - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [Germany] (28/7/2025): Briefing Notes KW 31/2025, https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Behoerde/Informationszentrum/BriefingNotes/2025/briefingnotes-kw31-2025.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=4, accessed 13/8/2025
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (11/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (6/6/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- CT/Karr/Tesfaye/AEI - Liam Karr (Author), American Enterprise Institute (Publisher), Critical Threats (Publisher), Edie Tesfaye (Author) (10/7/2025): First Trump Africa Summit; DRC Tensions; Shabaab Momentum: Africa File, July 10, 2025; Central Somalia, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/first-trump-africa-summit-drc-tensions-shabaab-momentum-uganda-shujaa-south-sudan-africa-file-july-10-2025, accessed 11/7/2025
- CT/Karr/Tyson/Ford/Banane - Liam Karr (Author), Jean-Philip Banane (Author), Yale Ford (Author), Cathryn Tyson (Author), Critical Threats (Publisher) (20/3/2025): Africa File, March 20, 2025: Qatari-Mediated Ceasefire in DRC; SAF Closes in on Khartoum; RSF Attacks Spread to South Sudan; Al Shabaab Ramadan Offensive; Tigray Simmers as Amhara Escalates; Russia's Red Sea Efforts; Burkinabe Massacres, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/africa-file-march-20-2025-qatari-ceasefire-in-drc-saf-khartoum-rsf-attacks-south-sudan-al-shabaab-ramadan-offensive-tigray-amhara-escalates-russia-ethiopia-navy-burkina-massacres#_edn1df7fc6a1826c874923c691261aed5ab112, accessed 17/6/2025
- CT/M. DeAngelo/A. Shah/AEI - Aaryaman Shah (Author), Michael DeAngelo (Author), American Enterprise Institute (Publisher), Critical Threats (Author) (16/7/2026): Puntland Standoff with the Federal Government of Somalia: Africa File, July 16, 2026, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/somalia-fgs-puntland-africa-file-july-16-2026, accessed 28/8/2026
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025b): Somalia – Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-05/2025_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 3/6/2025
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (20/6/2026): Deadly clan clashes enter third day in Hiran, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/deadly-clan-clashes-enter-third-day-in-hiran/, accessed 7/7/2026
- GO - Garowe Online (9/4/2025): Fierce Fighting Erupts in Central Somalia as Govt Troops Clash with Al-Shabaab, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/fierce-fighting-erupts-in-central-somalia-as-govt-troops-clash-with-al-shabaab, accessed 18/6/2025
- GO - Garowe Online (13/8/2024): Al-Shabaab attacks military base in Somalia, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/al-shabaab-attacks-military-base-in-somalia, accessed 17/12/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (31/1/2025): Somali forces, Ma'awisley militia push al-Shabaab back in Hiiraan offensive, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jan/200042/somali_forces_ma_awisley_militia_push_al_shabaab_back_in_hiiraan_offensive.aspx, accessed 3/6/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (15/1/2025): Six killed in clashes between al-Shabaab and local forces in Somalia's Hiiraan region, https://hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jan/199849/six_killed_in_clashes_between_al_shabaab_and_local_forces_in_somalia_s_hiiraan_region.aspx, accessed 28/1/2025

- HO - Hiiraan Online (30/11/2024): Inter-clan clashes in central Somalia leave six dead, ten injured, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Nov/199134/inter_clan_clashes_in_central_somalia_leave_six_dead_ten_injured.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 17/12/2024
- ICG - International Crisis Group (5/2025): CrisisWatch – Somalia, https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location[]=12&created=, accessed 4/6/2025
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (13/12/2022): Nearly 8.3 million people across Somalia face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity outcomes, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/fc2d405c-ca29-4526-ad96-6618c2756192/Multi-Partner-Technical-Release-on-Updated-IPC-Analysis-for-Somalia-fo-October-2022-to-June-2023-Final-(English)-13-Dec-2022.pdf, accessed 10/10/2023
- MUST - Mustaqbal Media (22/1/2024): Hiran Region: Clan Skirmishes Escalate at Hiran-Middle Shabelle Border, Causing Casualties, https://mustaqbalmedia.net/en/hiran-region-clan-skirmishes-escalate-at-hiran-middle-shabelle-border-causing-casualties/, accessed 24/1/2024
- PGN - Political Geography Now (19/6/2025): June 2025 Somalia Control Map & Timeline: Al Shabaab Resurgence, ISIS Retreat, Jubaland Defiant (Subscription), https://controlmaps.polgeonow.com/2025/06/june-2025-somalia-control-map-timeline/, accessed 23/6/2025 [fee required]
- PGN/EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (Publisher), Political Geography Now (Author) (31/3/2026): Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, in: EUAA (5.2026): Somalia: Security Situation, S.20, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/7/2025): The Fall of Moqokori – Implications, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 847, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/3/2025): Al-Shabaab Advances and Villa Somalia's Dhusamareb Strategy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 798, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (26/2/2025): A Resurgent Al-Shabaab Raids Bal'ad, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 793, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/1/2025): The Recognition of Xeer Issa, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 779, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SG - Somali Guardian (9/8/2025): Somali's army, Ugandan peacekeepers recapture Barire town near Mogadishu, https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/somalias-army-ugandan-peacekeepers-recapture-barire-town-near-mogadishu/, accessed 10/10/2025
- SG - Somali Guardian (13/7/2025): Al-Shabaab captures Tardo town in Somalia's Hiran region, https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/al-shabaab-captures-tardo-town-in-somalias-hiran-region/, accessed 4/9/2026
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (8/1/2025): Assailants Attack Civilians in Somalia's Middle Shabelle, One Dead, https://shabellemedia.com/armed-group-attacks-civilians-in-somalias-middle-shabelle-one-dead, accessed 17/6/2025
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (18/4/2024): Deadly Inter-Clan Clashes Erupt in Somalia, https://shabellemedia.com/deadly-inter-clan-clashes-erupt-in-somalia, accessed 7/5/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (28/10/2024): Letter dated 15 October 2024 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4066421/files/S_2024_748-EN.pdf?ln=en, accessed 3/12/2024

3.1.5 Galmudug (Galgaduud, parts of Mudug)

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

Cadaado, Dhusamareb, Cabudwaaq, Hobyo, Xaradheere and Ceel Dheere are under the control of AUSSOM and government forces. Ceel Buur, Wabxo, Osweyne and Galhareri are controlled by al-Shabaab. This also applies to most of the southern half of Galgaduud. According to one source, al-Shabaab's influence extends as far as the main route between Belet Weyne and Dhusamareb (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). In the centre of the Mudug region (west of the Wisil – Miroon line and south of the Baxdo – Dhusamareb axis), there are still areas under al-Shabaab

control. The same applies in Galgaduud to the areas north-west of the imaginary line Ceel Dheere– Galcad– Maxaas. The wider area from Ceel Buur to Xiindheere is considered to be under al-Shabaab control. Overall, the fight against al-Shabaab in Galmudug has reached a stalemate (BMLV 11/9/2026).

The towns of Dhusamareb and Guri Ceel are largely free of al-Shabaab. Dhusamareb is home to the headquarters of a division of the Federal Army as well as a garrison of AUSSOM troops from Djibouti; the latter, however, is due to be withdrawn in the medium term. The towns of Cadaado and Galkacyo can be regarded as consolidated in terms of the presence of (state) security personnel and an established administration. Dhusamareb is also considered largely secure and consolidated (BMLV 11/9/2026).

However, in Galmudug, efforts to recruit local forces (Darawish and police) have never been pursued with the same vigour as, for example, in Jubaland. As the federal state is struggling so much to establish a robust security apparatus, Galmudug is heavily dependent on federal government forces in the security sector. The Darawish and the police are limited in number and capacity. The federal government exercises partial control over the police; however, 400 police officers were trained for Galmudug as part of a UN training programme. President Qoorqoor is attempting to integrate clan militias into the Darawish. However, little progress has been made in this regard, and the local security forces continue to be predominantly clan-based. The 21st Division of the Federal Army is stationed in Dhusamareb, into which former ASWJ fighters [*Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a; note: a former Sufi militia*] have been integrated (BMLV 11/9/2026). In May 2026, the Federal Government deployed additional forces to Dhusamareb to increase pressure on President Qoorqoor to ensure he did not stand in the forthcoming elections – which he subsequently did not do (CT/M. DeAngelo/A. Shah/AEI 16/7/2026).

Clans: All eleven major clans based in Galmudug are heavily armed (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). In the Galgaduud region, sub-clans of the Hawiye / Habr Gedir – such as the Saleban and the Ayr –, the Hawiye / Duduble, the Hawiye / Murusade and the Darod / Marehan dominate. In Mudug, on the other hand, the Darod / Majerteen / Omar Mahmoud dominate in the north and the Hawiye / Habr Gedir / Sa'ad in the south. Other clans found there include the Darod /Leelkase, [Hawiye] / Sheikhal, Dir and Darod / Marehan (EUAA 5/2025b).

Galmudug is regarded as the most violent federal state in terms of clan-related violence (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Clan conflicts are endemic there. The causes include cycles of revenge killings, disputes over administrative boundaries, historical feuds, and competition for water, pasture and arable land (AQSOM 9 1/2026; cf. Kaab 2/11/2025b; ICG 25/9/2023). The state government has attempted to tackle some of these problems, albeit with mixed success (ICG 25/9/2023). Overall, however, Galmudug lacks the troops to intervene effectively in clan fighting (BMLV 11/9/2026). The number of incidents involving clan-related violence has risen (HO 8/6/2025).

The district of Cabudwaaq in particular is the scene of numerous clan feuds and land disputes (AQSOM 9 1/2026). In June 2024, several dozen people died in the Xeraale and Cabudwaaq areas during clashes between Dir and Marehan militias; more than 155 are reported to have

been injured. The clashes were triggered by disputes over grazing land and water sources, as well as acts of revenge. The Federal Government and the Government of Galmudug have attempted to intervene (VOA/O. Hassan 10/6/2024; cf.UNGA 23/8/2024). In mid-2024, more than 26,000 people were displaced during clashes in the Galdogob and Jariiban areas (Mudug) (UNSC 28/10/2024; cf. SMN 3/12/2024). In mid-November 2024, at least eleven people were killed and several more injured in clashes between clans over grazing land in the Labi Ano area (east of Dhusamareb) (HO 17/11/2024). Theconflict between the Hawiye / Habr Gedir / Sa'ad and Darod / Leelkase escalatedin 2024, including in the Galkacyo area. Dozens of deaths are attributed to this conflict. Here, the presidents of Galmudug and Puntland have attempted to help restore calm (Sahan/SWT 16/9/2024; cf. UNSC 28/3/2025). In the Galdogob area, the situation has largely stabilised since May 2025, but the conflict between the two clans remains unresolved and could flare up again (AQSOM 9 1/2026). In November 2025, at least four people were killed and nine others injured in clan clashes in the Gudoole area (Galgaduud) (Kaab 2/11/2025b).

Frontline developments: The territorial gains made by the government in 2023 had been almost entirely reversed by al-Shabaab by mid-2025 (BMLV 2/7/2025). In August 2025, Xaradheere (Mudug) was besieged by al-Shabaab. The group had previously carried out repeated attacks there, resulting in casualties, including roadside bombings and raids on nearby villages (Horn 17/8/2025). Most recently, on 12 September 2025, government forces successfully repelled a major al-Shabaab attack on Ceel Dheere, according to one source (UNSC 30/9/2025). However, according to other reports, al-Shabaab overran three government bases during the attack, killing dozens of soldiers and militiamen and seizing weapons and equipment. It was only afterwards that the group was driven out of the town again (Sahan/SWT 15/9/2025). Since then, there have been no further significant military developments or activities in Galmudug (BMLV 11/9/2026).

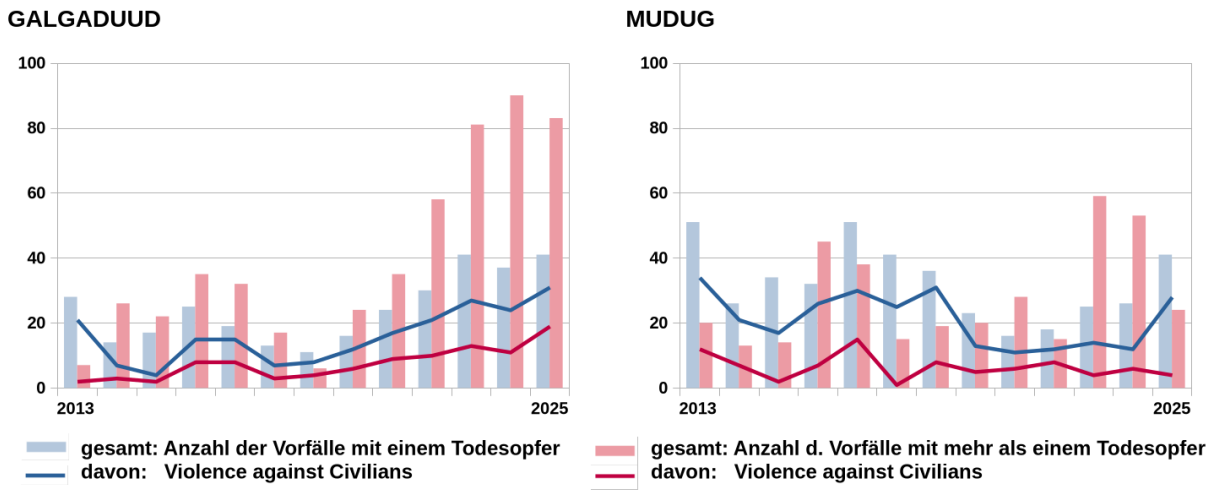
Galkacyo: Puntland and Galmudug reached an agreement in June 2020 to resolve past disputes (PGN 10/2020). The security situation in Galkacyo has stabilised since early 2021. In general, cooperation between the administrations and security forces of Galmudug and Puntland has improved significantly, which has also enabled members of al-Shabaab in Galkacyo to be tracked down and arrested. It is unclear whether the group collects taxes in Galkacyo; attacks are very rare. The group has lost ground there and has been unable to mobilise support from the population in either the northern or southern parts of the city (BMLV 2/7/2025).

The conflict between Sheikhal and Dir also has some impact on security in Galkacyo (AQSOM 9 1/2026). Overall, however, clan clashes have declined. Most recently, the federal government sought to win over Puntland troops to its side, but this move was rebuffed by Puntland. In the wake of this action, there was also a troop build-up in Galkacyo, though no shootings took place (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Incidents: According to one source, the two regions of Galgaduud (689,872) and Mudug (1,317,403) have a combined population of 2,007,275 (IPC 13/12/2022). By comparison, the ACLED database recorded a total of 53 incidents in 2024 in which civilians were specifically targeted and killed (category *'violence against civilians'*). In 36 of these 53 incidents, one civilian

was killed in each. In 2025, there were 82 such incidents (59 of which resulted in one fatality each) (ACLED 15/1/2026). Taking population figures and data on *'violence against civilians'* into account, the following figures emerge for 2025 (**incidents per 100,000 inhabitants**): Galgaduud 7.25; Mudug 2.43;

Below is an overview for the years 2013–2025 of the total number of incidents resulting in fatalities, as well as the subcategory *'violence against* civilians', which, according to a review of the dataset, also includes 'ordinary' murders. The figures are broken down into two subcategories: one fatality; multiple fatalities. Incidents resulting in fatalities that do not fall under *'violence against civilians'* but are tagged with the attribute *'civilian targeting'* have also been included. It should be borne in mind that, depending on the control situation and the information available , over- or *under-reporting*may occur; the number of fatalities is not taken into account due to the margin of error in ACLED:



Sources 22: ACLED 15/1/2026 (and previous versions)

Sources

- ACLED - Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (15/1/2026): Curated Data - Africa (9 January 2026), https://acleddata.com/curated-data-files/, accessed 15/1/2026 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (11/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/7/2025): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- CT/M. DeAngelo/A. Shah/AEI - Aaryaman Shah (Author), Michael DeAngelo (Author), American Enterprise Institute (Publisher), Critical Threats (Author) (16/7/2026): Puntland Standoff with the Federal Government of Somalia: Africa File, July 16, 2026, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/somalia-fgs-puntland-africa-file-july-16-2026, accessed 28/8/2026
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025b): Somalia – Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-05/2025_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 3/6/2025

- HO - Hiiraan Online (8/6/2025): Two civilians killed in suspected clan-related attack near Galkayo town, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jun/201787/two_civilians_killed_in_suspected_clan_related_attack_near_galkayo_town.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 16/10/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (17/11/2024): Inter-clan fighting in Galmudug kills 11 people, many displaced, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Nov/198959/inter_clan_fighting_in_galmudug_kills_11_people_many_displaced.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 10/6/2025
- Horn - Horn Observer (17/8/2025): Al-Shabaab Surrounds Coastal Town in Central Somalia as Fear Spreads to Villages Near Mogadishu, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3452/Al-Shabaab-Surrounds-Coastal-Town-in-Central-Somalia-as-Fear-Spreads-to-Villages-Near-Mogadishu, accessed 4/9/2026
- ICG - International Crisis Group (25/9/2023): Avoiding a New Cycle of Conflict in Somalia's Galmudug State, https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-09/b193-somalia-galmudug-state_0.pdf, accessed 30/1/2024
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (13/12/2022): Nearly 8.3 million people across Somalia face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity outcomes, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/fc2d405c-ca29-4526-ad96-6618c2756192/Multi-Partner-Technical-Release-on-Updated-IPC-Analysis-for-Somalia-fo-October-2022-to-June-2023-Final-(English)-13-Dec-2022.pdf, accessed 10/10/2023
- Kaab - Kaab TV (2/11/2025b): Renewed Clan Clashes Erupt in Gudoole, Galgaduud After Killing of Elderly Woman, https://en.kaabtv.com/renewed-clan-clashes-erupt-in-gudoole-galgaduud-after-killing-of-elderly-woman/, accessed 3/12/2025
- PGN - Political Geography Now (10/2020): Somalia Control Map & Timeline - October 2020, per e-Mail, https://controlmaps.polgeonow.com/2020/10/somalia-map-of-al-shabaab-control/, accessed 7/7/2022 [fee required, Login required]
- PGN/EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (Publisher), Political Geography Now (Author) (31/3/2026): Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, in: EUAA (5.2026): Somalia: Security Situation, S.20, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (15/9/2025): El Dheer Through The Looking Glass, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 873, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/9/2024): Deni and QoorQoor meet in Galkayo, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 732, per e-Mail [fee required]
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (3/12/2024): Land disputes: 39 killed in Somalia inter-clan clashes in 2 months – UN, https://shabellemedia.com/land-disputes-39-killed-in-somalia-inter-clan-clashes-in-2-months-un, accessed 5/12/2024
- UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (23/8/2024): Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan (A/HRC/57/80) [EN/AR/RU/ZH] - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/de0a5efb-ba80-4c3f-9692-054f1a04f1cc/g2414208.pdf, accessed 13/11/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (28/3/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/194], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2124148/n2506871.pdf, accessed 24/6/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (28/10/2024): Letter dated 15 October 2024 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4066421/files/S_2024_748-EN.pdf?ln=en, accessed 3/12/2024
- VOA/O. Hassan - Mohamed Olad Hassan (Author), Voice of America (Publisher) (10/6/2024): 'Dozens dead' in Somalia clan clashes, https://www.voanews.com/a/dozens-dead-in-somalia-clan-clashes-/7650081.html, accessed 28/6/2024

3.1.6 Puntland (Bari, Nugaal, parts of Mudug)

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:32

[*Note: For clashes in the border region with Somaliland, see*Security Situation / Somaliland*and its sub-chapter.*]

As of June 2026, according to one source, Puntland is more stable than it was a few years ago. In any case, the security crisis of 2024/2025 has been overcome. Overall, there is not much violence in this federal state (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026), and a basic level of security is guaranteed. The situation is calm in the larger parts of the region – with the exception of those parts of Bari affected by operations against the ISS (see below) (BMLV 11/9/2026). Nugaal is one of the calmest regions in Somalia (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. EUAA 5/2026a).

Puntland exercises a certain degree of control over almost the entire territory it claims. In the eastern hinterland, however, the government has less *'day-to-day authority'* and is reliant there on cooperation with local clans (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Although, according to President Deni, Puntland spends 80 per cent of its budget on security, the failure to pay salaries undermines both the morale of the security forces and the stability of the country (HO 12/8/2025). Failure to pay salaries can lead some of the most serious security incidents affecting Puntland (BMLV 11/9/2026).

The borders in the south and north-west are not clearly defined. This sometimes leads to minor skirmishes (AA 25/4/2025; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Occasionally, Puntland also experiences attacks or targeted assaults by al-Shabaab and the so-called Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) (AA 9/3/2026). In September 2025, Puntland and Somaliland agreed to cooperate closely in the fight against terrorists in future (HT 5/10/2025).

Clans: Three sub-clans of the Darod / [Harti] / Majerteen dominate in Puntland, namely the Isse Mohamud, who live mainly in the Nugaal region, as well as the Osman Mahmud and the Ali Saleban (EUAA 5/2025b). The most important clans are integrated into Puntland's state structure – including the security forces, which are staffed on a proportional basis (BMLV 11/9/2026). Clan militias play a minor role, although they remain present (AA 9/3/2026). Nevertheless, outbreaks of violence do occur from time to time; for example, in August 2025 near Bossaso, where two clan militias clashed over control of a new well. The government has sent a delegation to mediate a peace settlement (FTL 12/8/2025).

Garoowe: In Garoowe, there have been few incidents of note involving al-Shabaab; the city is described as safe and virtually free of al-Shabaab (BMLV 11/9/2026). Political disputes between President Deni, clans and the opposition led to clashes in the run-up to the January 2024 presidential elections. Twenty-five people were killed in Garoowe (AA 9/3/2026), including civilians (BMLV 1/12/2023). As early as February 2024, the United Nations reported that calm had returned to Garoowe (UNSC 2/2/2024). However, in mid-March 2025, a shootout took place between the police and other armed individuals, who were believed to belong to the *Puntland Security Force* (PSF). Amongst the parties to the conflict, two people were killed and five injured (HO 23/3/2025). In November 2025, 300 newly trained police officers took up their posts in Garoowe; they are expected to help improve the security situation (HO 2/11/2025).

Bossaso: The ISS was driven out of Bossaso in early 2025 (BBC/S. Ahmed 16/3/2026). As of July 2025, Bossaso was heavily secured, and neither the ISS nor al-Shabaab were able to infiltrate the city (BMLV 2/7/2025). As of September 2026, following the withdrawal of some units from operations against the ISS (*see below*), the groups have started to pay more attention to the city even though there have been no attacks (BMLV 11/9/2026).

[*Note: For* ***Galkacyo****, see*Security Situation / Galmudug]

Al-Shabaab is comparatively weak in Puntland (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026), and does not control any significant areas there; rather, it is only present in a few, hard-to-reach mountainous regions with camps (AA 9/3/2026; cf. PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026; INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023) – specifically in a small area in the mountains south-east of Bossaso, in the eastern al-Madow Mountains and in small parts of the Bari and Sanaag regions (UNSC 28/10/2024; cf. Sahan/SWT 11/6/2025). Al-Shabaab has been unable to influence Bossaso for some time now. The group is currently focusing on the gold trade – the gold being mined south of the al-Madow Mountains – as well as on its links with the Houthis in Yemen. At the same time, al-Shabaab is preparing to repel an imminent offensive by Puntland forces by bringing in reinforcements and rearming (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Islamic State in Somalia (ISS): The ISS was founded in 2015 when a faction of al-Shabaab defected and pledged allegiance to the then IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The ISS was recognised as an IS province in 2017. The group subsequently developed into a key administrative hub within the global IS network (CT/Tyson/AEI 11/6/2025). It has hosted the regional IS office for East Africa, al-Karrar, which oversees the financing, training and other support for IS personnel. In addition, the ISS generated millions of dollars annually through extortion and illegal taxes, which it used to distribute funds and trainers across Africa and elsewhere, including to the IS province of Khorasan in Afghanistan and IS offshoots in the DR Congo, Mozambique and Yemen (CT/Tyson/AEI 11/6/2025; cf. HO 18/6/2024a; UNSC 28/10/2024; Sahan/SWT 22/11/2024). In the past, the ISS focused on extorting protection money, particularly in Bossaso and Mogadishu (UNSC 6/2/2025).

The ISS is led by Abdiqadir Mumin as emir; his deputy is Abdirahman Fahiye Isse Mohamud (BMLV 11/9/2026). The US and other UN members, however, believe that Mumin could be the leader or ‘caliph’ of the entire Islamic State worldwide, who is known only by his nom de guerre, Abu Hafs al-Hashimi al-Qurashi (GO 15/2/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 11/6/2025; CRS 8/9/2025). This is a matter of debate amongst analysts (PGN 19/6/2025); one source explains that Mumin acts ’nominally” as caliph in order to protect the actual leader (BMLV 11/9/2026).

The ISS has not succeeded in recruiting locally. Instead, there has been an influx of foreigners (including Algerians, Moroccans, Syrians and Iraqis) (BMLV 4/7/2024; cf. UNSC 28/10/2024). It is reported that 50–60 per cent of the group’s members are foreigners (BBC/S. Ahmed 16/3/2026; cf. HO 18/6/2024b). The group has recruited illegal migrants on a large scale; several high-ranking ISS commanders are Ethiopian (Sahan/SWT 5/2/2025).

Offensive against the ISS: Puntland has been under pressure on several occasions with regard to the ISS. On the one hand, the group in Bossaso was becoming increasingly provocative and aggressive – particularly with regard to 'taxes' and associated attacks. On the other hand, the US has exerted pressure on Puntland to finally take action against the ISS (STDOK/BMLV 10/4/2025). Following months of preparations in 2024, 'Operation Hilaac' (Lightning) against the ISS began in 2025 (Sahan/SWT 10/1/2025; cf. PGN 19/6/2025). In January 2025, the US and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) carried out repeated air strikes against ISS bases (GO 17/2/2025; cf. PGN 19/6/2025). In February 2025, Puntland then launched an offensive in the Al-Miskat Mountains (Sahan/SWT 11/6/2025). Key ISS bases were captured, and the jihadists suffered heavy losses (Sahan/SWT 11/6/2025; cf. CT/Tyson/AEI 11/6/2025). According to one source, 800 ISS fighters were killed and 200 taken prisoner (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). 80 per cent of the ISS fighters killed were foreigners, mainly from North Africa (STDOK/BMLV 10/4/2025). However, the Puntland side also suffered: 400 soldiers were killed and 1,300 wounded. These losses amount to around one third of the forces deployed (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

The United Nations estimated the strength of the ISS in June 2025 at 800 fighters (BBC/S. Ahmed 16/3/2026). In early December 2025, the remaining strength of the ISS in Puntland was estimated at 200 fighters. In November 2025, US ground troops were deployed for the first time to combat them (Kaab 2/12/2025b). One source, however, estimates the strength of the ISS in June 2026 to be as high as 400 again (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). As of March 2026, the group still had bases in the mountains (BBC/S. Ahmed 16/3/2026). Another source stated in September 2026 that the strength had fallen again to between 150 and 250 men (BMLV 11/9/2026). The remoteness and the rugged terrain, as well as the group's dwindling numbers, have complicated the final phase of the operation (AQSOM 9 1/2026).

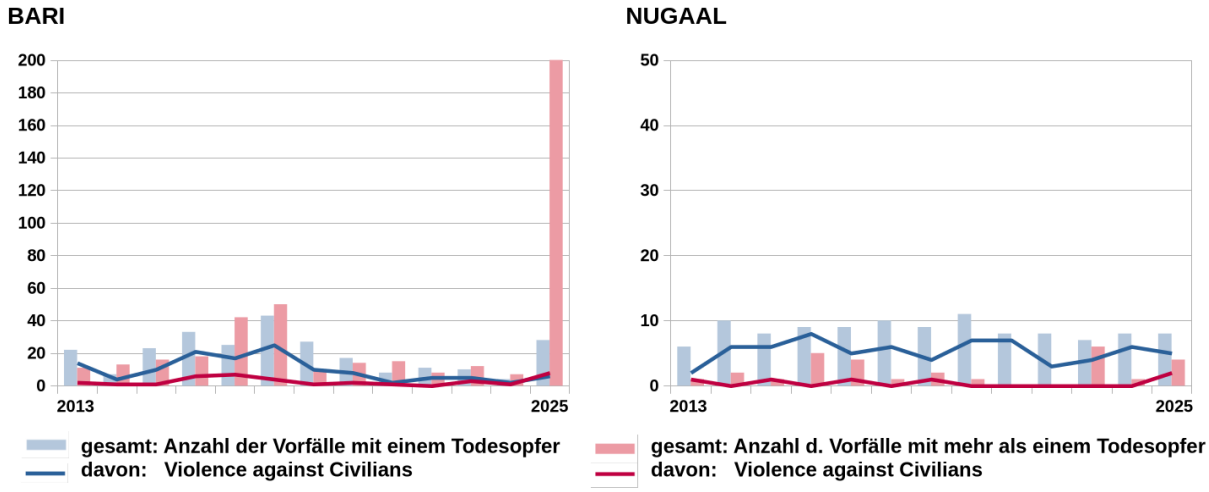
Despite the reduction in numbers and geographical influence, the ISS is capable of carrying out attacks on security forces in the areas surrounding the front line, primarily using explosive devices (AQSOM 9 1/2026; cf. BMLV 11/9/2026). However, according to one source, this is about the full extent of the group's capabilities (BMLV 11/9/2026). According to another source, the ISS is still present in Bossaso, although its ability to collect 'taxes' there has declined (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Overall, experts say its capacity to carry out attacks in Somalia has been significantly reduced. The ISS no longer poses a significant threat to Puntland and Somalia. However, the fight against the ISS is not yet over; the group has shown resilience and could recover (BBC/S. Ahmed 16/3/2026; cf. BMLV 11/9/2026).

The Puntland government, however, has simply run out of money. It is several months behind in paying soldiers' wages. Due to the resulting reduction in troop numbers in the frontline areas, there is an acute risk that the ISS may regroup and reorganise (BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). In any case, it has been clear since early 2026 that Puntland will not be able to keep the hard-won territory free of the ISS. The latter is, in part, seeping back into these areas (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). One reason for this is that Puntland was forced to withdraw forces from the offensive due to a lack of funds and personnel (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026), or that troops left the front of their own accord (HO 12/8/2025). The ISS has been significantly weakened but remains a serious threat (AA 9/3/2026; cf. Sahan/SWT 27/10/2025).

Puntland is, however, unable to track down all the scattered ISS fighters in the rugged terrain and to sustain the operation indefinitely. Mumin and other high-ranking leaders remain at large (Sahan/SWT 27/10/2025). As long as the core of the group remains intact, it is only a matter of time before it recovers (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Incidents: According to one source, the two regions of Bari (1,102,760) and Nugaal (572,139) have a combined population of 1,674,896 million (IPC 13/12/2022). By comparison, the ACLED database reported a total of 9 incidents in 2024 in which civilians were specifically targeted and killed (category *'violence against civilians'*). In 8 of these 9 incidents, one civilian was killed in each. In 2025, there were 21 such incidents (11 of which resulted in one fatality each) (ACLED 15/1/2026). Taking population figures and the data on *'violence against civilians'* into account, the following figures emerge for 2025 (**incidents per 100,000 inhabitants**): Bari: 1.27; Nugaal:1 .22;

Below is an overview for the years 2013–2025 of the total number of incidents resulting in fatalities, as well as the subcategory *'violence against civilians'*, which, according to a review of the dataset, also includes 'ordinary' murders. The figures are broken down into two subcategories: one fatality; multiple fatalities. Incidents resulting in fatalities that do not fall under *'violence against civilians'* but are tagged with the attribute *'civilian targeting'* have also been included. It should be borne in mind that, depending on the control situation and the information available, *over-* or *under-reporting* may occur; the number of fatalities is not taken into account due to the margin of error in ACLED:



Sources 23: ACLED 15/1/2026 (and previous versions)

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (25/4/2025): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 2025), April 202, https://www.ecoi.net/en/

file/local/2125924/Deutschland. Auswärtiges Amt, Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACLED - Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (15/1/2026): Curated Data - Africa (9 January 2026), https://acleddata.com/curated-data-files/, accessed 15/1/2026 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BBC/S. Ahmed - British Broadcasting Corporation (Publisher), Sahnun Ahmed (Author) (16/3/2026): 'We will go wherever they hide': Rooting out IS in Somalia, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj32d8e2m5eo, accessed 18/3/2026
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (11/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/7/2025): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (4/7/2024): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (1/12/2023): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (20/5/2026): Telefoninterview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- CRS - Congressional Research Service [USA] (8/9/2025): The Islamic State and Its Affiliates, https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF10328/IF10328.27.pdf, accessed 6/5/2026
- CT/Tyson/AEI - American Enterprise Institute (Publisher), Cathryn Tyson (Author), Critical Threats (Publisher) (11/6/2025): The Islamic State in Somalia's Area of Operations, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/the-islamic-state-in-somalias-area-of-operations?mkt_tok=NDc1LVBCUS05NzEAAAGa_1YnsTgQMP0FMCl5dncqzFCc_rP4XLGllsBbHZSkgfg5yz9cTg7e03ek0vdmhHKsWyaTHBtp6mzyjQn7pRnXxNuhOITurll68Bv5MBkcBPTxiKUddQ, accessed 12/6/2025
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2026a): Somalia: Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025b): Somalia – Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-05/2025_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 3/6/2025
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (12/8/2025): Clan Militias Clash Over Water Well in Puntland's Bari Region, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/clan-militias-clash-over-water-well-in-puntlands-bari-region, accessed 10/10/2025
- GO - Garowe Online (17/2/2025): US, and UAE carry out airstrikes against ISIS in Somalia's Puntland, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/us-and-uae-carry-out-airstrikes-against-isis-in-somalia-s-puntland, accessed 12/6/2025
- GO - Garowe Online (15/2/2025): UN Report: Abdulkadir Mumin in Somalia Likely Leading ISIS Global Operations, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/un-report-abdulkadir-mumin-in-somalia-likely-leading-isis-global-operations, accessed 12/6/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (2/11/2025): Puntland deploys 300 newly trained officers to Garowe to bolster security, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Nov/203502/puntland_deploys_300_newly_trained_officers_to_garowe_to_bolster_security.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 18/11/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (12/8/2025): Puntland troops block roads to Garowe airport over unpaid wages, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Aug/202545/puntland_troops_block_roads_to_garowe_airport_over_unpaid_wages.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 10/10/2025

- HO - Hiiraan Online (23/3/2025): Two soldiers killed in Garowe clash between Puntland police and forces linked to PSF, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200818/two_soldiers_killed_in_garowe_clash_between_puntland_police_and_forces_linked_to_psf.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 12/6/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (18/6/2024a): Islamic State in Somalia poses growing threat, US officials say, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Jun/196751/islamic_state_in_somalia_poses_growing_threat_us_officials_say.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 27/6/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (18/6/2024b): Who is Abdiqadir Mu'min? US airstrike targets ISIS leader in Somalia, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Jun/196747/who_is_abdiqadir_mu_min_us_airstrike_targets_isis_leader_in_somalia.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 27/6/2024
- HT - Horn Tribune (5/10/2025): BREAKING NEWS: Puntland and Somaliland Reach Historic Security Agreement in Nairobi Talks, https://horntribune.com/2025/10/05/breaking-news-puntland-and-somaliland-reach-historic-security-agreement-in-nairobi-talks/, accessed 7/10/2025
- INGO-C/STDOK/SEM - Internationale NGO C (Author), Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (13/12/2022): Nearly 8.3 million people across Somalia face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity outcomes, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/fc2d405c-ca29-4526-ad96-6618c2756192/Multi-Partner-Technical-Release-on-Updated-IPC-Analysis-for-Somalia-fo-October-2022-to-June-2023-Final-(English)-13-Dec-2022.pdf, accessed 10/10/2023
- Kaab - Kaab TV (2/12/2025b): Newly Appointed Daesh Leader in Hiding as Operations Against ISIS Intensify, https://en.kaabtv.com/newly-appointed-daesh-leader-in-hiding-as-operations-against-isis-intensify/, accessed 3/12/2025
- PGN - Political Geography Now (19/6/2025): June 2025 Somalia Control Map & Timeline: Al Shabaab Resurgence, ISIS Retreat, Jubaland Defiant (Subscription), https://controlmaps.polgeonow.com/2025/06/june-2025-somalia-control-map-timeline/, accessed 23/6/2025 [fee required]
- PGN/EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (Publisher), Political Geography Now (Author) (31/3/2026): Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, in: EUAA (5.2026): Somalia: Security Situation, S.20, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/10/2025): After the Lightning, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 888, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (11/6/2025): Puntland's Pivot from Lightning to Thunder, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 832, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (5/2/2025): Operation Hilaac Advances in Puntland, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 783, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (10/1/2025): Inside Operation Hilaac, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 772, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (22/11/2024): Stabilisation: ISIS in Somalia: Localised threat or new wave of global jihadism, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 758, per e-Mail [fee required]
- STDOK/BMLV - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Ministry of Defence [Austria] (10/4/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten des BMLV
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (6/2/2025): Thirty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/71/Rev.1, accessed 12/6/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (28/10/2024): Letter dated 15 October 2024 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2713 (2023) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4066421/files/S_2024_748-EN.pdf?ln=en, accessed 3/12/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (2/2/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/758], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2106391/n2401965.pdf, accessed 4/6/2024

3.1.7 Al-Shabaab

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:27

Al-Shabaab is described as the best-known, largest, wealthiest, deadliest and best-armed group affiliated with al-Qaeda (CRS 30/6/2025; RLInst 7/7/2026; Sahan/SWT 13/8/2025; SG/WP 28/5/2025; CT/Tyson/AEI 10/6/2025). It exhibits greater internal cohesion than the Federal Government and some of the federal states. Al-Shabaab successfully exploits local grievances to forge tactical alliances and recruit fighters (Sahan/SWT 27/3/2023). The group does not recognise the Federal Government as the legitimate government of Somalia (UNSC 10/10/2022) and regards elections and democracy as un-Islamic (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. BS 2026; K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). This applies accordingly to the constitution and federalism (Sahan/Bryden 5/7/2024). Its aim is to establish rule based on its strict interpretation of Islam and Sharia law (REU 21/11/2023; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025) as part of the establishment of a caliphate within the borders of Greater Somalia (*Somaliweyne*) (Sahan/SWT 27/3/2023; cf. BMLV 7/8/2024). This makes the group a threat to the territorial integrity not only of Somalia, but also of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya (Sahan/SWT 27/3/2023). Al-Shabaab employs a strategy of asymmetric guerrilla warfare, which has so far proved very difficult to counter (BMLV 11/9/2026). Furthermore, the group provides security and basic governance in the areas under its control (Sahan/SWT 27/3/2023). Al-Shabaab includes mafia-like elements – demanding protection money and threatening those unwilling to pay – whilst at the same time providing security and social services that are only provided sporadically by the federal government (Sahan/SWT 30/6/2025). Al-Shabaab's main strength lies in the weakness of the federal government (Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025; cf. RLInst 7/7/2026).

At the same time, al-Shabaab remains a well-organised and cohesive organisation (BMLV 11/9/2026), which cooperates, amongst others, with the Houthis in Yemen (weapons, technical expertise, training) (CRS 30/6/2025; cf. UNSC 6/2/2025; BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). Al-Shabaab is integrated into almost every facet of society, the economy and politics (GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022). Its persistent strength rests less on external support than on its ability to infiltrate state institutions, exploit corruption, manipulate clan structures and maintain an alternative administrative system in areas where the Somali state is weak. This combination of coercion, governance and economic integration has enabled the movement to withstand sustained military pressure for over fifteen years (RLInst 7/7/2026). [*Note: The non-violent but equally political-Islamist group*] *Al I'tisaam* is regarded as the ideological counterpart of al-Shabaab (Sahan/Bacon/Guiditta 7/8/2023).

Structure: The leader of al-Shabaab is Ahmed Diriye, alias Sheikh Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaidah (BMLV 11/9/2026). Command and control are relatively decentralised, with local units retaining a degree of autonomy at the operational level (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). Each region (*waliga*) has an appointed governor (*wali*) who oversees the entire civil service and financial administration in the areas controlled by the organisation (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022) and, in some cases, also plays a significant military role (BMLV 7/8/2024). In its division into *waligas*, al-Shabaab follows the system that Somalia applies to its regions. In those *waligas* under government control, the

group maintains shadow governments (AQ21 11/2023). Each location has a *hisba* (police force) which is responsible for enforcing the group's strict Islamic code and maintaining law and order (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022), and, according to one source, also for enforcing tax payments. Each *waliga* has its own militia of 500–600 men (AQ21 11/2023).

The military wing of al-Shabaab (*jabhat*) consists of geographically organised formations ('brigades') affiliated with local political units. The main task of *the jabhat*is to capture and defend territories. Each unit, typically comprising three hundred soldiers, has its own commanders and bases. The intelligence service (*amniyat*) is responsible for special operations, including suicide bombings, assassinations and attacks on centres of government power (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022). The *amniyat* is also tasked with infiltrating ministries, recruiting government employees, infiltrating the security forces, gathering information on, for example, military operations, and identifying targets (RLInst 7/7/2026; cf. TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022). The *Hisba* is also monitored by *the Amniyat* (AQ21 11/2023). Within the *Amniyat*, the *Mutafaajiraad* department is responsible for the manufacture and deployment of explosive devices (Sahan/SWT 7/8/2024). In the villages, the group has integrated networks of informants to track down and neutralise dissident elements (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Furthermore, al-Shabaab relies on the services of many members in support roles, including drivers, teachers and cooks (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022). One source divides the group's members into the following categories:

1. The Core: A stable membership structure with few changes over time; does not necessarily share all aspects of the purported ideological programme; rarely exposes its members to risk; and occasionally recruits promising individuals from the wider organisation.
2. *Amniyat*: The most ideologically fanatical component; plans and directs operations and carries out specialised functions.
3. Members, clan members: Numbers fluctuate frequently; subject to indoctrination and training by the *amniyat*; individuals join and participate to varying degrees. Some embrace the ideology, others less so. Social leaders; some rise through the ranks to join *the amniyat*.
4. Supporters: A changing group of individuals or temporary alliances with other groups; they carry out support tasks (courier services, distribution of propaganda) for the larger group; a high proportion of children and women.
5. Sympathisers: No fixed ties; individuals often sympathise with several groups and switch their allegiance opportunistically (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Administration: Al-Shabaab's **territory** is assessed as a proto- or quasi-state (Sahan/SWT 13/8/2025; cf. TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022; AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

The group is capable of performing state-like functions for the population living within its territory – similar to what *Hamas* has done in the Gaza Strip. In this respect, al-Shabaab appears to be better organised than the actual state structures (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). In the areas under its control, the group has established an extremely authoritarian and repressive form of rule,

combined with an administration based on Sharia law – without any separation of powers. It has set up its own courts, which enforce its Salafist interpretation of Sharia law. Many people prefer these courts as they are easily accessible and inexpensive, whilst at the same time delivering swift judgements based on clear rules. The aim of the Islamist militia is to control all aspects of public and private life (BS 2026). In the recent past, al-Shabaab has not been promoting its own rules of conduct and social norms to the outside world – that is, to the population living outside the areas under the group's constant control – to the same extent as before. By contrast, in the areas under al-Shabaab's permanent control, there has been no let-up in the enforcement of the established rules. There, al-Shabaab's own interpretation of Sharia law continues to apply, with the corresponding enforcement of prescribed rules of conduct, such as gender segregation, participation in recreational activities (football, etc.) and the consumption of stimulants (*khat*, tobacco, etc.) (BMLV 11/9/2026). [*Note: For information on al-Shabaab's jurisdiction, see*Legal protection, judicial system / Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland]

Al-Shabaab exercises power over the territory it directly governs (BS 2026) and performs all the basic functions of a normal government: it collects taxes, provides security and maintains law and order, and delivers (limited) social services (Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023; cf. Sahan/SWT 10/4/2025; Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023; TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023a; TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022). Al-Shabaab has succeeded in establishing a predictable level of taxation, security, legal certainty and social order in these areas, whilst being less corrupt than other Somali actors and cooperating with local clans (Schwartz/HO 12/9/2021). The group therefore invests in local governance systems. Al-Shabaab uses coercion and persuasion to enforce loyalty. In return, the group offers its own brand of 'law and order' as well as modest, basic services (Sahan/SWT 30/6/2023). Thanks to the relative lack of corruption in its administration, al-Shabaab is able to use its revenue effectively to consolidate its power (Sahan/SWT 10/4/2025). By providing public services – particularly in the areas of security and justice – al-Shabaab enjoys a certain degree of legitimacy in some areas. With the *hisba*, the group has its own police force (GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022). In addition, education is the most essential service offered by al-Shabaab. Children are brought up in accordance with the group's ideology (BMLV 11/9/2026). Al-Shabaab alsoappears to conduct a kind of census. The forms known to exist for this purpose require details to be provided on, amongst other things, clan and sub-clan, the number of children both inside and outside Somalia, the source of household income and the receipt of remittances (UNSC 10/10/2022). Al-Shabaab is very vigilant when it comes to corruption (AQ21 11/2023).

The areas under al-Shabaab's control are described as relatively safe and stable, with an absence of clan conflicts and low levels of crime (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). The group's rule normally ensures peace between the clans. Al-Shabaab does not tolerate any institution other than itself using force within its territories; it claims the monopoly on the use of force for itself. Those who disagree with this view are punished. The group maintains a rigorous judicial system which punishes misconduct – such as unauthorised violence against civilians. Consequently, offences committed by al-Shabaab fighters are rare. Overall, al-Shabaab's administration is based on two principles: fear and predictability (BMLV 11/9/2026).

[*Note: For information on* ***women, see*** Women / Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland]

Clans: Until around 2014, al-Shabaab excluded clan elders from its governing structures. Subsequently, the group recognised that granting the elders a certain degree of legitimacy would strengthen its own legitimacy in the eyes of the civilian population. In 2016, the group established a council of elders (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). Al-Shabaab has since become extremely adept at exploiting the clan system for its own interests (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). It recognises clans as fundamental 'building blocks of power" (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b), uses elders to consolidate its own power (MBZ 4/4/2025) and is increasingly deploying them in local administrations. They are integrated into al-Shabaab's governing structures, with clan leaders being granted a certain degree of power (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The group uses members of the *shura* [*Note: al-Shabaab's 'government' or supreme council*] as liaisons to various clans (BMLV 11/9/2026). However, al-Shabaab is not a clan-based organisation; rather, it skilfully exploits clan conflicts, mediates local disputes, recruits members from various clans, avoids dependence on individual clans, punishes collective resistance and rewards cooperation (RLInst 7/7/2026).

If clans have come to an arrangement with the government and the area subsequently falls back into al-Shabaab's hands, the communities face the threat of punishment by the group – for example, in the form of the execution of elders (Sahan/SWT 13/9/2023). At the same time, the government's inability to do so forces local clans to enter into peace agreements with al-Shabaab in order to ensure their own security (BMLV 2/7/2025; cf. HI 4/2023; ACLED 15/9/2023). Under military pressure, al-Shabaab tends to adopt a more conciliatory approach, concluding peace agreements with clans and easing the more brutal aspects of its rule. Agreements with clans are usually preceded by negotiations between clan elders and high-ranking al-Shabaab officials. These sometimes result in a formal written agreement in which both sides commit to specific measures (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). As early as the end of December 2022, a new agreement was concluded with parts of the Saleban (ICG 21/3/2023). In this case, the agreement provided for the following: al-Shabaab undertook to release 67 Saleban prisoners, not to carry weapons within their territories, and to guarantee freedom of movement and trade. In return, the Saleban pledged, amongst other things, to maintain neutrality and non-interference (including 'staying away from enemy camps' and not cooperating with the enemy), to the implementation of Sharia law, to national defence and environmental protection, and to maintaining good neighbourly relations with other clans (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023).

Clans – Elders: Al-Shabaab meets with the elders and holds discussions – a genuine exchange takes place. Agreements are then concluded. And as long as the clans adhere to these agreements, peace and order prevail (Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025). The influence of the civilian population on al-Shabaab depends on several factors. These include unity amongst the clans within a particular area, historical relationships between communities and al-Shabaab, and the strategic value the group attaches to a particular community (e.g. its military or political significance) (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). At the same time, clan leaders who align themselves with the group's objectives are rewarded. Al-Shabaab accepts, for example, that these elders mediate in disputes between clan members. Other traditional leaders, the *naqiibs* (inspectors),

act as intermediaries between al-Shabaab and the clans. They are involved in the collection of *zakat*, negotiate tax payments with businesspeople and settle cases before al-Shabaab's courts. Furthermore, *naqiibs* have the privilege of securing the release of individuals detained by al-Shabaab in the context of civil proceedings (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). [*Note: It is unclear whether these naqiibs are the same as al-Shabaab's 'own' elders mentioned here:*] Al-Shabaab often installs its 'own' elders. These act as liaisons between the individual communities and al-Shabaab. In this way, previously legitimate structures are held hostage (Sahan/SWT 26/10/2022). A source from the FFM Somalia 2023 report also states that al-Shabaab has 'its own' elders in most parts of southern and central Somalia. Parallel clan leadership structures are maintained – in all areas where al-Shabaab is active. Sometimes, the actual elders are then forced to flee. The elders appointed by al-Shabaab are therefore responsible for conflict resolution and policing, as well as matters of civil status (marriages, divorces). They may also represent their own clan members before al-Shabaab's courts. And if a clan member has a problem with al-Shabaab, they turn to the relevant elder, who in turn approaches al-Shabaab (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Elders assist al-Shabaab with administration, coordination, recruitment, taxation and propaganda (AQ21 11/2023; cf. Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023; MBZ 4/4/2025; AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). They are also deployed to encourage the government to release prisoners (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). However, elders also become targets of violence when, for example, they negotiate with the government or act as electors in elections (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Clan conflicts: Al-Shabaab mediates between rival clans (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b). On the other hand, Al-Shabaab also exploits tensions and clan conflicts to achieve its own objectives (AQ21 11/2023; cf. HI 4/2023; SPC 9/2/2022). In doing so, the group sometimes stokes the violence (Sahan/SWT 11/7/2024). For example, in order to weaken the *Ma'awiisley*, the group has fostered and fuelled rivalries between the sub-clans of the Hawadle (Sahan/SWT 16/7/2025) as well as between the Hawadle and the Abgaal (TSD 27/4/2024). Furthermore, the group stokes fear amongst the clans that foreign clan militias are threatening to attack them. This propaganda also serves as a means of recruitment, for example amongst the Murusade in Central Somalia (BMLV 2/7/2025). Time and again, it sends fighters into their own communities to assassinate a neighbouring clan elder, thereby provoking retaliatory measures. The assassin is viewed through the lens of his clan, and the bloodshed can quickly take on a life of its own. For al-Shabaab, fuelling these conflicts offers the opportunity to resolve them through their own clan representatives and to influence politics between the clans (Sahan/SWT 11/7/2024).

Al-Shabaab has also exploited the social marginalisation of certain groups (Sahan/SWT 24/10/2022). The fact that al-Shabaab at least pretends to set aside the clan system makes the group appear attractive to minorities (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). In particular, those clans lacking military power are more likely to turn to al-Shabaab when seeking protection or support (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). At the same time, according to informationfrom a sourcecited in the FFM Somalia 2023 report, al-Shabaab has specifically addressed minorities who are not represented by the government. In this way, the group has bought the loyalty of

every single minority in the south (IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Generally speaking, the security of one's own clan is always the paramount consideration when making decisions. Some clans join al-Shabaab voluntarily; al-Shabaab has concluded agreements with other clans (AQ21 11/2023).

Support: Only a minority actively supports al-Shabaab's Salafist-jihadist ideology (RLInst 7/7/2026). Many see the group as a guarantor that denies 'foreigners and crusaders' access to Somalia. This nationalist orientation brings al-Shabaab a significant number of supporters. Furthermore, acceptance often turns into active support because al-Shabaab ensures order in the areas under its control (BMLV 11/9/2026). Al-Shabaab's presence offers concerned communities a form of patronage and protection that the Somali government can only provide sporadically. The group promises benefits and fair treatment for those who follow its commands. It threatens all others with retaliation (Sahan/SWT 25/8/2023). According to other reports, the relationship between civilians and al-Shabaab is not solely one of violence and victimisation. As part of its indoctrination, al-Shabaab attempts to portray the federal government as rapists, robbers and extortionists. In areas under the group's control, people have little access to information that contradicts this narrative. When civilians in the group's territory face problems, they generally do turn to al-Shabaab for help. Furthermore, the group occasionally supports local communities, thereby returning a portion of *the zakat* it has collected. The *al- Ihsan* Foundation, which is affiliated with al-Shabaab, distributes aid in a targeted manner to secure the support of the population. Support is provided, for example, to those whom al-Shabaab considers to be 'underprivileged' (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023).

Strength: The US Congress reports a figure of 12,000 fighters (CRS 30/6/2025), one expert estimates 8,000–12,000 (Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025), the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs puts the figure at 6,000–15,000 (MBZ 4/4/2025), whilst another expert estimates at least 12,000–15,000 men who are permanently armed (the core of the *Jabhat* – see below for further details). In addition, there are local militias that al-Shabaab can mobilise at short notice (BMLV 11/9/2026). The group also has numerous 'part-time personnel' and 'freelancers' who are deployed only when required. One expert estimated the total number of all available personnel in 2023 at 25,000–30,000 (AQ21 11/2023). In general, al-Shabaab has infiltrated Somali society so deeply that it is difficult or even impossible to identify who is a member of the group. Added to this are the fighters of the *jabhat*, the agents of the *amniyat* and the police officers of the *hisba*; all estimates of al-Shabaab's size appear to focus on these personnel. However, the group also has a considerable cadre that is not directly involved in violence, but is equally important to the organisation's reach in Somalia. It is a complex organisation that is a mixture of a terrorist group, a rebel organisation, a mafia and a shadow government. And there are personnel for all these functions. Among others, al-Shabaab employs administrative officials, judges, tax collectors (Sahan/Bacon/Guiditta 7/8/2023), teachers and healthcare workers (BMLV 11/9/2026). In addition to agents, the *amniyat* has double agents, sources and informants who have infiltrated Somalia's institutions, economy and society as a whole. Some work with the group covertly, on a part-time basis or on *an ad hoc basis*. They move supplies, deliver messages and report on

everything – from cooperation with the government to economic activity. It is impossible to count them (Sahan/Bacon/Guiditta 7/8/2023).

Al-Shabaab has suffered significant losses as part of the offensive in central Somalia since August 2022 (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. BMLV 4/7/2024). To compensate, the group has recruited new fighters and more than made up for the losses suffered (BMLV 7/8/2024; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). Tensions surrounding the agreement on maritime access between Somaliland and Ethiopia have driven numerous volunteers to al-Shabaab (BMLV 7/8/2024). The group has not only grown in strength in terms of personnel; it has also expanded its capabilities (e.g. the use of drones, the manufacture of weapons (MBZ 4/4/2025)). The regular forces of the Federal Army are not a serious opponent for al-Shabaab. Special forces (such as the *Gorgor Brigades*), on the other hand, are far superior to the group (BMLV 11/9/2026). With the *amniyat*, al-Shabaab has the best intelligence network in the country (BMLV 7/8/2024).

Territory: Al-Shabaab continues to control the majority of southern and central Somalia. The group remains in a dominant position in rural areas and has a firm foothold there. Furthermore, in many cases it restricts regional and federal forces to urban areas, preventing them from moving freely between towns. Without having to physically control towns, al-Shabaab exerts influence and power over areas under the control of state forces through a combination of coercion and administrative effectiveness (BMLV 11/9/2026).

Al-Shabaab's core areas are the rural areas and towns it has held for a long time (AQSOM 4/ STDOK 6/2026). The group controls areas in the regions of Lower Juba and Gedo (Jubaland); Bakool, Bay and Lower Shabelle (SWS); Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle (HirShabelle); Galgaduud and – to a very limited extent – Mudug (Galmudug). The Middle Juba region is entirely under al-Shabaab's control (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026).

Capabilities: In principle, al-Shabaab has repeatedly demonstrated that it is adaptable in the face of pressure and capable of withdrawing and regrouping before striking back (Sahan/SWT 4/8/2023). Al-Shabaab remains capable of carrying out complex attacks, for example in and around Mogadishu. The group's ability to procure weapons and redeploy fighters remains intact (BMLV 11/9/2026). Al-Shabaab has infiltrated institutions and bodies throughout the country, as well as the private sector (e.g. banks and telecoms companies) (Sahan/SWT 12/2/2024; cf. Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023). This also applies to the NISA (intelligence service), the police and parts of the army (BMLV 11/9/2026). According to other sources, many civil servants cooperate because refusal can result in death, kidnapping, attacks on family members and the destruction of property. Al-Shabaab deliberately cultivates this climate of intimidation. In this way, the group has infiltrated parts of the state (RLInst 7/7/2026).

However, Al-Shabaab does not have sufficient capacity to maintain a constant presence everywhere. The group's area of operations is almost as large as Germany. In this vast region, which is poorly developed in terms of infrastructure, the group has to make do with approximately 10,000 armed fighters. This means that Al-Shabaab cannot, at any given time, exercise permanent control over all strategically important locations. The group cannot control all major roads, cannot maintain a permanent presence in every location in the hinterland, and cannot deal with

all local conflicts simultaneously (ACCORD 31/5/2021). According to other reports, al-Shabaab sometimes utilises its village militias for this under the supervision of the *hisba* (BMLV 11/9/2026). According to one source, the group has liaison officers within the clans (Kilmurry/RUSI 1/4/2022). Other information suggests that al-Shabaab's strategy involves a variety of tactics. In those areas where the group has the greatest influence and presence, there are well-developed administrative structures. By ensuring security and order there, whilst at the same time resolving conflicts between rival clans, al-Shabaab gains the support of the local population. In those areas, however, which are either under government control or disputed, al-Shabaab infiltrates existing structures and exerts influence through coercion. The state is undermined there through threats and violence. Using intelligence gathered by its security services, the group is able to deploy targeted threats, collect taxes and, more generally, influence the behaviour of civilians without having any significant territorial presence or influence (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). Another source explains that, even though there are no permanent outposts there, al-Shabaab's police regularly visit even remote areas. Nominally, al-Shabaab's reach in southern and central Somalia is unlimited. It maintains an overt or covert presence in most parts of the country (BMLV 11/9/2026). The group is capable of striking anywhere and can also move freely in many areas of southern and central Somalia (BMLV 11/9/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025).

'Control' is exercised – as one expert puts it – through 'exemplary violence', such as corporal punishment; by spreading rumours; and through terrorist attacks designed to intimidate the population. However, all this is carried out only as intensively and as frequently as is necessary to frighten the local population and ensure that the majority of people do in fact – inevitably – come to terms with al-Shabaab's rule (ACCORD 31/5/2021). Where al-Shabaab's structures are fully utilised – that is, where the group's control is undisputed – it creates a strict but stable environment in which it collects taxes, provides security and settles disputes between clans and individuals (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). There are no clan conflicts in these areas (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Businesses that pay taxes and abide by al-Shabaab's rules can operate with a greater degree of predictability and stability, as courts enforce contracts. In its 'capital', Jilib, however, surveillance is also more pronounced. For example, residents must report when a relative comes to visit from outside the area (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). Where al-Shabaab is unable to credibly demonstrate an adequate level of threat of violence, attempts at extortion are also less successful. For instance, businesspeople operating exclusively in Baidoa and Kismayo sometimes refuse to pay the demands (Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023). According to one source, refusing to pay in Kismayo is relatively easy, as al-Shabaab can no longer really enter the city (BMLV 11/9/2026). In principle, however, the group does not shy away from coercion and violence, direct attacks or the destruction of local resources in order to enforce its demands (HI 4/2023; cf. UNSC 6/10/2021).

Al-Shabaab's economic power: Al-Shabaab is regarded as 'wealthy', has a financial cushion and thus also leverage when it comes to recruiting new members (AQ21 11/2023). The group generates up to 200 million US dollars a year (CRS 30/6/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 10/4/2025).

The entire economy is dependent on al-Shabaab, for example when it comes to the transport of goods (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Furthermore, the group's deep-rooted structures within Mogadishu's economic sector are difficult to dismantle (Sahan/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Not only in the areas under al-Shabaab's direct control, but also elsewhere, surpluses from the annual collection *of zakat* and from 'taxes' frequently flow to the group's supporters who run small and medium-sized enterprises (Sahan/SWT 25/8/2023; cf. Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023). Al-Shabaab is building an economic empire; the group possesses the necessary expertise. Contract killings also appear to be a business model for al-Shabaab. Furthermore, the group has invested in many sectors (Sahan/STDOK/SEM 4/2023) – including outside Somalia (BMLV 11/9/2026) – and operates a number of businesses (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). The group operates –particularly outside its own territory – like a cartel or a mafia (IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. Sahan/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to one source, al-Shabaab is also involved in the smuggling of hashish produced in Jubaland and Lower Shabelle (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

[Note: *For information* ***on al-Shabaab's 'tax' and levy system,*** *which is not limited to the territory the group actually controls*, *see*Legal Protection, Judicial System / The al-Shabaab 'tax' system]

Sources

- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- ACLED - Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (15/9/2023): Situation Update September 2023; Somalia: The Government and al-Shabaab Vie for the Support of Clan Militias, https://acleddata.com/2023/09/15/somalia-situation-update-september-2023-the-government-and-al-shabaab-vie-over-the-support-of-clan-militias/, accessed 8/11/2023
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (11/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/7/2025): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (7/8/2024): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (4/7/2024): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- CRS - Congressional Research Service [USA] (30/6/2025): Somalia, https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF10155/IF10155.16.pdf, accessed 6/5/2026

- CT/Tyson/AEI - American Enterprise Institute (Publisher), Cathryn Tyson (Author), Critical Threats (Publisher) (10/6/2025): Al Shabaab's Area of Operations, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/al-shabaabs-area-of-operations, accessed 24/6/2025
- GITOC/Bahadur - Jay Bahadur (Author), Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (Publisher) (8/12/2022): Terror and Taxes. Inside al-Shabaab's revenue-collection machine, https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/AS-protection-economies.-WEB.pdf, accessed 9/10/2023
- HI - Hiraal Institute (4/2023): Governance Without Presence: The Somali Government's Liberation Struggles, https://hiraalinstitute.org/governance-without-presence-the-somali-governments-liberation-struggles, accessed 30/1/2024
- ICG - International Crisis Group (21/3/2023): Sustaining Gains in Somalia's Offensive against Al-Shabaab, https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2023-03/b187-somalias-offensive-against-al-shabaab_0.pdf, accessed 9/11/2023
- IO-D/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale Organisation D (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga - Khalif Farah, Marin Ouma, Samuel Nyanchoga (9/2025): Influence of Corruption on the Increased Prevalence of Terrorism in Somalia. In: African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies (AJPAS) 18(3) (September, 2025), 163-187, https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajpas/article/download/306463/288088, accessed 28/4/2026
- Kilmurry/RUSI - Hope Kilmurry (Author), Royal United Services Institute (Publisher) (1/4/2022): Somaliland: Avoiding Past Mistakes: Why Stabilisation in Somalia Needs to Change, https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/avoiding-past-mistakes-why-stabilisation-somalia-needs-change, accessed 16/11/2023
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI - Overseas Development Institute (Publisher), Ashley Jackson (Author), Mohamed Mubarak (Author) (8/2023): Playing the long game: Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control, https://odi.org/en/publications/playing-the-long-game-exploring-the-relationship-between-al-shabab-and-civilians-in-areas-beyond-state-control/, accessed 30/1/2024
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- PGN/EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (Publisher), Political Geography Now (Author) (31/3/2026): Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, in: EUAA (5.2026): Somalia: Security Situation, S.20, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- Q. Müller/Afrique XXI - Afrique XXI (Publisher), Quentin Müller (Author) (4/5/2025): En Somalie, les Chabab profitent de la crise et s'approchent de Mogadiscio, https://afriquexxi.info/En-Somalie-les-Chabab-profitent-de-la-crise-et-s-approchent-de-Mogadiscio, accessed 10/7/2025
- Researcher/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Researcher (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- REU - Reuters (21/11/2023): Somalia has year to eliminate al Shabaab militants - president, https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/somalia-has-year-eliminate-al-shabaab-militants-president-2023-11-21, accessed 23/11/2023
- RLInst - Robert Lansing Institute (7/7/2026): Somalia's Political Fragmentation Fuels Al-Shabaab's Resurgence, https://lansinginstitute.org/2026/07/07/somalias-political-fragmentation-fuels-al-shabaabs-resurgence/, accessed 10/7/2026
- Rollins/HIR - Kay Rollins (Author), Harvard International Review (Publisher) (27/3/2023): No Justice, No Peace: Al-Shabaab's Court System, https://hir.harvard.edu/no-justice-no-peace-al-shabaabs-court-system/, accessed 29/6/2023
- Sahan/Bacon/Guiditta - Tricia Bacon (Author), Maria Guiditta (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (7/8/2023): Estimating Al-Shabaab's Size, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 575, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]

- Sahan/Bryden - Matt Bryden (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (5/7/2024): The Road to Kabul: Villa Somalia and Negotiations with Al-Shabaab, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 701, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Sahan (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (13/8/2025): Al-I'tisaam: The Silent Twin of Al-Shabaab, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 859, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/7/2025): The Fall of Moqokori – Implications, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 847, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (30/6/2025): The jihadist protection racket and the conflict economy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 840, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (10/4/2025): Al-Shabaab at the Nexus of Terrorism and Crime, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 810, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (7/8/2024): Unpacking Al-Shabaab's PBIED Strategy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 715, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (11/7/2024): Historical Grievances Fuel Somalia's Clan Wars, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 703, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/2/2024): Infiltration and 'defectors' in the General Gordon attack, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 647, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (13/9/2023): A re-engagement of the clans, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 591, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (25/8/2023): Confronting Al-Shabaab's Patronage System, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 583, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (4/8/2023): Sequencing for Success: Liberation, Stabilisation and Reconciliation, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 574, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (30/6/2023): Hiiraan in Turmoil - Implications, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 559, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/3/2023): Al-Shabaab's Uncertain Future: The Mafia Scenario, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 523, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (26/10/2022): The deaths of clan elders in the struggle against Al-Shabaab, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 468, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (24/10/2022): Power, access, and social capital in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 467, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Schwartz/HO - Stephen Schwartz (Author), Hiiraan Online (Publisher) (12/9/2021): Somalia's Leaders Need to Seize Immediately the Lessons of Afghanistan, https://hiiraan.com/op4/2021/sept/183881/somalia_s_leaders_need_to_seize_immediately_the_lessons_of_afghanistan.aspx, accessed 18/10/2023
- SG/WP - Somali Guardian, Washington Post, The (28/5/2025): How U.S. cuts in Somalia could imperil the fight against al-Shabab, https://somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/how-u-s-cuts-in-somalia-could-imperil-the-fight-against-al-shabab, accessed 17/6/2025
- SPC - Somalia Protection Cluster (9/2/2022): Protection Analysis Update, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOM_PAU_Somalia-Protection-Analysis_Feb2022.pdf, accessed 15/11/2023
- TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen - Sif Heide-Ottosen (Author), James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (2022): Journeys through Extremism: The Experiences of Former Members of Al-Shabaab, https://resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-09/RSVE_RR_CBAGS_JourneysAlShabaab_Heide-Ottosenetal_Sept2022_UpdatedAug2023.pdf, accessed 29/1/2024
- TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen - James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Andrew Glazzard (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (12/2023a): Reaching behind Frontlines: Promoting Exit form al-Shabaab through Communications Campaigns, https://www.resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-12/RSVE_RR_LPBI_Reach

ingBehindFrontlines_AS_SomaliaDefections_KhalilEtAl_Dec2023_FINAL-UPDATE12.18.23.pdf, accessed 29/1/2024
- TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen - James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Andrew Glazzard (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (12/2023b): The 'Off-Ramp' from al-Shabaab: Disengagement during the Offensive in Somalia, https://resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-12/RSVE_RR_LPBI_TheOffRamp_AS_SomaliaDefections_KhalilEtAl_Dec2023_FINAL-UPDATE12.18.23.pdf, accessed 26/1/2024
- TSD - The Somali Digest (27/4/2024): Al-Shabab Regains Strategic Locations in Middle Shabelle Amid Clan Rivalries, https://thesomalidigest.com/al-shabab-regains-strategic-locations-in-middle-shabelle-amid-clan-rivalries/, accessed 3/6/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (6/2/2025): Thirty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/71/Rev.1, accessed 12/6/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (10/10/2022): Letter dated 10 October 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council: Letter dated 1 September 2022 from the Panel of Experts on Somalia addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia [S/2022/754], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2081261/N2263844.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (6/10/2021): Letter dated 5 October 2021 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council: Final report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia (S/2021/849), https://reliefweb.int/attachments/17a953bc-861a-348a-a59b-1e182f053030/S_2021_849_E.pdf, accessed 12/10/2023
- Williams/ACSS - Africa Center for Strategic Studies (Publisher), Wendy Williams (Author) (27/3/2023): Reclaiming Al Shabaab's Revenue, https://africacenter.org/spotlight/reclaiming-al-shabaabs-revenue, accessed 7/11/2023

3.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:31

[*Note: For information on the conflict in Laascaanood, see*Security Situation / North East State / Dhulbahante, Warsangeli]

Compared with other countries in the region, Somaliland enjoys a higher level of security, stability and democracy (AA 9/3/2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; HO 5/4/2025). Relative peace has prevailed there since the mid-1990s (Landinfo 5/3/2026; cf. Cannon/Conversation 22/11/2024; AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026), the situation is considerably better than in southern and central Somalia, and the security situation is largely stable (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). A source from the FFM Somalia 2023 explains that Somaliland has made considerable progress, and that peacebuilding, reconciliation and state-building are among the major successes the country has achieved (INGO-V/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). In fact, a reconciliation process was successfully completed as early as the 1990s. This laid the foundations for independent and comparatively successful state-building (BS 2026). One source regards Somaliland – apart from the conflict over Laascaanood – as a bulwark against extremist threats, particularly against al-Shabaab (Sahan/SWT 14/2/2024). Another source states that Somaliland is stable. According to this source, there are no signs of fragility, even though political disputes can occasionally lead to violence. However, the overall situation is tense in view of agitation by the federal government and tensions in Awdal and the Burco area (BMLV 2/9/2026).

Refugees from southern and central Somalia living in Hargeysa, who were interviewed by the Norwegian COI unit Landinfo, rate the security situation in Somaliland as 'good' (Landinfo 5/3/2026). Only one source states that peace in Somaliland is fragile (BS 2026).

According to one source, the government is able to govern most of its own territories outside the border regions of Sanaag and Sool [*Note: conflict with the SSC-Khatumo or, now, the North East State*] and implement projects there. Particularly in urban centres, the rule of law prevails, and the police and other institutions function reasonably well (BS 2026). In any case, in a comparatively peaceful environment, the security forces are able to ensure a significantly higher level of security with regard to terrorist activities and general crime than in other parts of the country. This applies in particular to the Awdal and Woqooyi Galbeed regions, which include the towns of Hargeysa and Berbera (AA 31/8/2026).

Somaliland's control ends roughly in the middle of the Sanaag region (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026); another source also states that Ceerigaabo in Sanaag is the easternmost town under Somaliland's control (BMLV 2/9/2026). In the Sool region, control ends at Oog; and the Cayn area in Togdheer (around Buuhoodle) is therefore not under Somaliland's control, although the majority of Togdheer is under Somaliland's control. The regions of Woqooyi Galbeed and Awdal are entirely under Somaliland's control (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026).

According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, no one is forced to leave western Somaliland due to an allegedly poor security situation, whilst in the east of the country, blood feuds could be a reason for migration. Most migrants reportedly leave the country in search of economic opportunities. For women, FGM (female genital mutilation) or the prospect of forced or early marriage may also be a reason (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). In 2025, 18,000 people (2024: 35,000) have been displaced in Somaliland due to conflict and insecurity (comparative figures in brackets: 2024): 14,000 in Sanaag (5,000); 2,000 in Togdheer (29,000), 2,000 in Sool (1,000) and none (none) in the capital region of Woqooyi Galbeed and in Awdal (UNHCR 2026b).

Cities: As far as **Hargeysa** is concerned, there are no security issues. The crime rate is relatively low. If a murder does occur, it is usually a targeted act of revenge stemming from a clan conflict (BMLV 2/9/2026). According to one source, one can walk through the whole city without any concerns (Sahan/SWT 29/10/2025). The city is described as peaceful (Marchal/CERI 1/2026). The diaspora is investing in Hargeysa (Economist/L. Taylor 29/8/2024; cf. Marchal/CERI 1/2026). A source from the FFM Somalia 2023 states that some people consider Hargeysa to be significantly safer than Nairobi. In any case, the source's staff are able to move about freely in Hargeysa (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In a survey carried out in early 2026 on behalf of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees' (BFA) Staatendokumentation programme, 78 per cent of the 200 respondents living in Hargeysa stated that they felt very safe in their neighbourhood. 15 per cent feel reasonably safe, 5 per cent feel somewhat unsafe and only 2 per cent feel unsafe (STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Sense of security]). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, youth gangs in Hargeysa still pose a problem, as does petty crime. There is unemployment and also drug use (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

In **Berbera**, too, the security situation is good and unproblematic (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Two further sources state that Hargeysa and Berbera are safe and peaceful cities (BMLV 2/9/2026; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In the **Burco** area, there are considerable tensions, particularly amongst the Isaaq / Habr Yunis, who had expected 'their' president, Irro, to grant them more influence, posts, etc. (BMLV 2/9/2026). Some sub-clans here are funded from outside to stir up unrest (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). The clashes between the Gadabursi and the Isse regularly have an impact on **Borama**, with repeated clashes occurring that have to be broken up by the police and the army (BMLV 2/9/2026).

The Somaliland police have repeatedly published crime statistics in recent years; the following table shows some figures:

Kriminalstatistik Somaliland	**2025**	**2024**	**2022**	**2021**
Registrierte Delikte gesamt	25073	28418	27801	
im Einverständnis (im trad. Recht) gelöst	9129	10840	11320	
an Gerichte übergeben	11092	11876	10916	
aus Mangel an Beweisen eingestellt	4852			
Morde (angezeigt/Täter verhaftet)	48/44	68/62	60/49	89/84
Vergewaltigungen (angezeigt/Verdächtige verhaftet)	278	321/270	266/240	
aus Mangel an Beweisen eingestellt	42			
Verdächtige vor Gericht angeklagt	212			

Sources: 2025: Dawan 4/11/2025; 2024: Halqabsi 23/10/2024; 2022: SD 4/11/2022; 2021: SD 4/11/2021

Al-Shabaab [*Note: For information on Al-Shabaab in eastern Somaliland, see*Security Situation / North East State / Dhulbahante, Warsangeli] has been unable to gain a foothold in Somaliland (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. JF 18/6/2021). The group does not control any territories there (AA 9/3/2026; cf. BMLV 2/9/2026) nor does it collect any 'levies' (BMLV 2/9/2026).

Somaliland has succeeded in largely containing the threat of terrorism by having al-Shabaab cells regularly uncovered and dismantled by the *National Intelligence Agency* and the police's counter-terrorism unit (Sahan/SWT 29/10/2025). Remarkable capabilities have been built up. The credibility of the existing institutions has fostered public trust in the administration. This, in turn, makes it more difficult for al-Shabaab to carry out its operations (Schwartz/HO 12/9/2021; cf. BMLV 2/9/2026). In addition to formal intelligence networks, there is an informal network of neighbourhood watch groups (BMLV 2/9/2026). The government relies on elders, local authority representatives and concerned citizens; and on them reporting suspicious activities and new arrivals to the police or the intelligence services (JF 18/6/2021). Consequently, terrorist plots are repeatedly foiled by the security forces and al-Shabaab operatives are arrested (Weiss/FDD 11/8/2021; cf. SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; MAIO-G/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; Halqabsi 29/1/2024). There have been no significant terrorist attacks in Somaliland since 2008 (BMLV 2/9/2026).

Sources from the FFM Somalia 2023 report that Somaliland is reasonably safe from al-Shabaab. Although threats may occasionally arise, the group lacks the capacity and personnel there; al-

Shabaab is unable to operate (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023) or does not become active there (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023), does not impose rules and does not set up checkpoints (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Another source confirms this. According to this source,acts of persecution by al-Shabaab against individuals aregenerally unknown inareas controlled by Somaliland(BMLV 2/9/2026). [*Note: No information could be found in the sources consulted to suggest that al-Shabaab deserters are at risk in Somaliland.*]

Overall, al-Shabaab has no significant presence in Somaliland's major towns, though it does have a network (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). A source from the FFM Somalia 2023 states that Hargeysa may be used by al-Shabaab as a safe haven (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In any case, there are sleeper cells of *the amniyat* [*Note: al-Shabaab's intelligence service*] in the larger towns (Sahan/SWT 29/10/2025; cf. SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Al-Shabaab maintains a network of sympathisers and supporters. It is unclear whether this network actually has operational personnel (agents) who could, for example, be deployed to carry out attacks (BMLV 2/7/2025). Most recently, Israel's recognition of Somaliland has slightly increased the terrorist threat. Consequently, there has been an increase in the number of suspected terrorists being arrested, and checks at checkpoints have been stepped up. According to the police, all travellers between Somaliland's major cities must now carry identification documents to make it easier to identify outsiders. The authorities have also called on the public to identify and question suspicious individuals (AQSOM 9 1/2026). As of September 2026, whilst there have been threats from al-Shabaab directed at Hargeysa, no corresponding incidents have been recorded by that date (BMLV 2/9/2026).

Clan distribution: The Awdal region is inhabited by the Gadabursi and Issa sub-clans of the Dir clan, with the Gadabursi forming the majority. In the capital region of Woqooyi Galbeed, Isaaq sub-clans dominate, namely the Habr Awal, Habr Yunis and Idagalle. In Hargeysa, there are various clans and sub-clans, including minority groups as well as the Habr Awal, Habr Yunis, Habr Jeclo and Idagalle. The Togdheer region is mainly inhabited by the Isaaq sub-clans Habr Yunis and Habr Jeclo. In addition, Isaaq / Idagalle live in the region west of Burco (EUAA 5/2025b).

As is the case throughout Somalia, **clan conflicts** also exist in Somaliland, and clashes and acts of revenge can occur, resulting in civilian casualties. However, clan conflicts do not pose a security problem that threatens the region's political stability (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. BMLV 2/9/2026). The authorities have succeeded in ensuring comparatively effective protection against violent outbreaks by effectively integrating informal clan structures into formal contexts (AA 9/3/2026).

Clan conflicts generally occur at a local level – particularly in remote areas (HO 5/4/2025) and primarily in the regions of Sanaag and Sool (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. HO 5/4/2025; Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; INGO-V/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). For example,in March 2025, fighting broke out in Sanaag over grazing rights, resulting in twelve fatalities (SLST 10/3/2025). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, whilst men from

East Somaliland may be affected by ongoing blood feuds, the situation in West Somaliland is reportedly different (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Land disputes are usually resolved through traditional channels – by elders (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). The government can mediate, for example in March 2025 together with the *suldaan* of the Warsangeli in Sanaag (SLST 10/3/2025) or, through the Vice-President, between the Habr Yunis and the Habr Jeclo in May 2025 in East Somaliland (ICG 5/2025). In another instance, in which five people were killed and six injured in the vicinity of Burco, a reconciliation conference was held. This was chaired by several Somaliland ministers (SLST 21/6/2023). Generally, in the event of clan conflicts, the government calls on the elders concerned to bring about a resolution to the conflict. Should the situation escalate further, security forces intervene, and the government attempts to resolve the problem independently. This approach is not always successful (STDOK 8/2017). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, however, the government only intervenes in conflicts if it has a vested interest in the matter at stake (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to another source, the government only intervenes once a conflict has escalated beyond the local level. Otherwise, it relies on the elders to resolve conflicts (BMLV 2/9/2026). As an ordinary citizen, one is affected by clan conflicts primarily in terms of freedom of movement, as it is not possible to travel through the conflict zones. In principle, only the clans involved are affected (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

In the **Awdal** region,there are(once again) Gadabursi separatists, but there efforts are primarily driven by the diaspora (BMLV 2/9/2026). Although some Gadabursi feel disadvantaged by the government in Hargeysa, there is little local enthusiasm for these diaspora separatists (BMLV 2/9/2026; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). In general, the Gadabursi have long been successfully integrated into Somaliland's political system (AQ21 11/2023). Clan elders have pledged their support to the new Somaliland president (HT 21/2/2025). In September 2025, the latter met the traditional leader, Ugas Abdirashid Ugas Roble, in Borama; he had previously been living in exile (SG 9/9/2025). On the other hand, the federal government in Mogadishu is also attempting to win over sections of the population of Awdal (Marchal/CERI 1/2026). Some sub-clans are being funded from abroad to stir up unrest (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026); for example, there are activities by Djibouti and Saudi Arabia (BMLV 2/9/2026). The government's mediation efforts have failed. Consequently, tensions between the Gadabursi and Issa in the region escalated into violence in the rural areas of the Zeyla and Lughaye districts during the final weeks of 2025 (AQSOM 9 1/2026). In December 2025, as well as in January and February 2026, several dozen people were killed in the region, primarily as a result of clashes between the Gadabursi and Issa, but also between security forces and demonstrators (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026).

The government attempted to contain the conflict by deploying additional troops and imposing a ban on militia members carrying weapons and assembling, but further violence cannot be ruled out (AQSOM 9 1/2026). In May 2026, one source described the situation in Awdal as remaining tense (BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026).

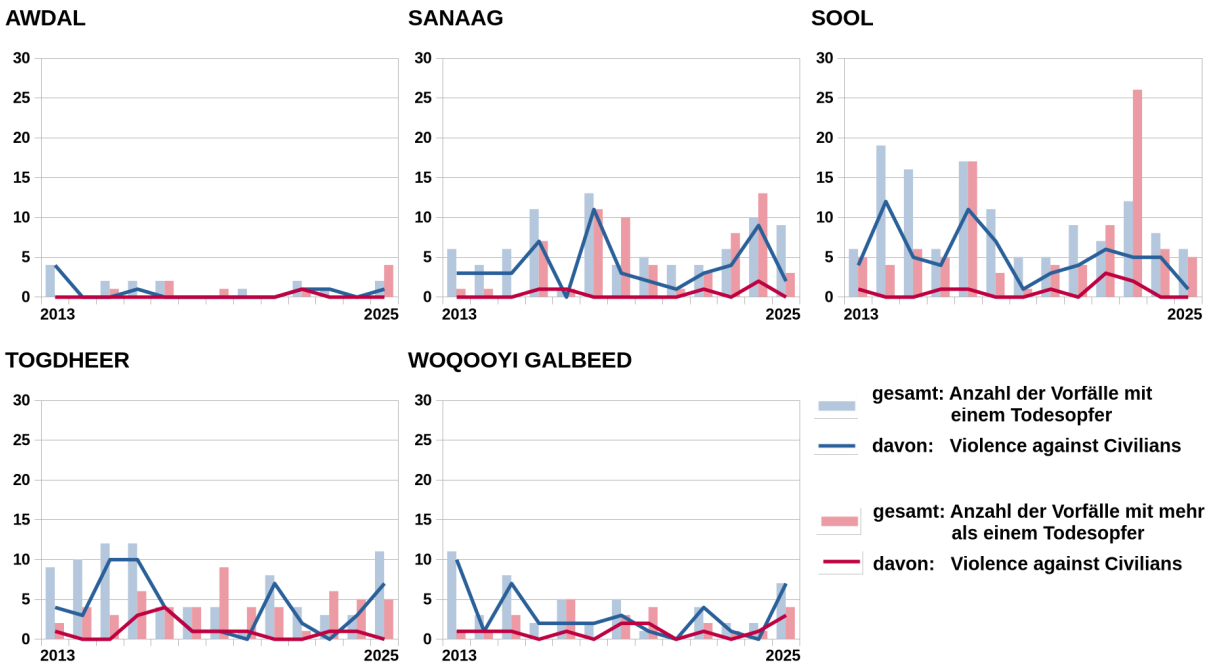
Eastern border region [Note: *see also the sub-chapter* 'Security Situation / North East State / Dhulbahante, Warsangeli']: The status of the eastern border regions remains disputed (BS

2026). According to the Puntland Constitution, the entire Sool region forms part of Puntland. This also applies to Sanaag (excluding the Ceel Afweyn district and the north-eastern part of the Ceerigaabo district) as well as the Buuhoodle district in Togdheer (MBZ 6/2023). A third party to the dispute, the North East State (NES), has now emerged; it lays claim to precisely those areas that are already disputed between Somaliland and Puntland (BMLV 2/9/2026).

Incident figures: In the Somaliland regions of Awdal (571,230), Sanaag (325,136), Sool (478,265), Togdheer (780,092) and Woqooyi Galbeed (1,313,146), a total of 3,467,869 inhabitants live, according to one source(IPC 13/12/2022).

By comparison, in 2024 the ACLED database recorded a total of 21 incidents in which civilians were deliberately killed (category*:'violence against civilians'* [*note: i.e. not collateral casualties*]). In 17 of these 21 incidents, one civilian was killed in each. In 2025, there were also 21 such incidents (18 of which resulted in one fatality each) (ACLED 15/1/2026). Taking population figures and data on *'violence against civilians'* together yields the following figures for 2025 (**incidents of *'violence against civilians'* per 100**,**000 inhabitants**): Awdal 0.18; Sanaag 0.62; Sool 0.21; Togdheer 0.90; Woqooyi Galbeed 0.76; [*Note: The figures could be considerably lower, as some sources cite a much higher population for Somaliland. For example*,*Al Jazeera and The Economist estimated a population of 6 million in 2024 (*AJ 19/11/2024; cf. Economist/ L. Taylor 29/8/2024*), whilst the Financial Times and the Somaliland Ministry of Health estimate 6.2 million (FT/Wallis 12/3/2026; cf. MoHDSL 1/4/2025).*]

Below is an overview for the years 2013–2025 of the total number of incidents resulting in fatalities, as well as the subcategory *'violence against civilians',*which, according to a review of the dataset, also includes 'ordinary' murders.The figures are broken down into two subcategories: one fatality; multiple fatalities. Incidents resulting in fatalities that do not fall under '*violence against civilians'* but are tagged with the attribute *'civilian targeting'* have also been included. It should be borne in mind that, depending on the control situation and the information available, *over-* or *under-reporting* may occur; the number of fatalities is not taken into account due to the margin of error in ACLED:



Sources 24: ACLED 15/1/2026 (and previous versions)

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (31/8/2026): Somalia – Reise- und Sicherheitshinweise (Reisewarnung), unverändert gültig seit 26.8.2026, https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/laender/somalia-node/somaliasicherheit/203132#content_1, accessed 31/8/2026
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACLED - Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (15/1/2026): Curated Data - Africa (9 January 2026), https://acleddata.com/curated-data-files/, accessed 15/1/2026 [Login required]
- AJ - Al Jazeera (19/11/2024): Opposition's Abdullahi wins presidential election in breakaway Somaliland, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/19/oppositions-abdullahi-wins-presidential-election-in-breakaway-somaliland, accessed 2/12/2024
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/7/2025): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (20/5/2026): Telefoninterview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Cannon/Conversation - Conversation, The (Publisher), Brandon J. Cannon (Author) (22/11/2024): Somaliland's new government is ready to drive change: these are its 3 big goals, https://theconversat

ion.com/somalilands-new-government-is-ready-to-drive-change-these-are-its-3-big-goals-244189, accessed 2/12/2024
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (4/11/2025): Somaliland Police Release Annual Crime Statistics, https://www.dawan.africa/news/somaliland-police-release-annual-crime-statistics, accessed 19/11/2025
- Economist/L. Taylor - Economist, The (Publisher), Liam Taylor (Author) (29/8/2024): Inside Somaliland, the state eager to become the world's next country, https://www.economist.com/1843/2024/08/29/inside-somaliland-the-state-eager-to-become-the-worlds-next-country, accessed 20/12/2024
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025b): Somalia – Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2025-05/2025_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 3/6/2025
- FT/Wallis - William Wallis (Author), Financial Times (Publisher) (12/3/2026): The breakaway African state building Coca-Cola plants and Emirati ports, https://www.ft.com/content/74d547fc-90b0-48bd-be5e-af6e4f317130?syn-25a6b1a6=1, accessed 18/3/2026 [fee required]
- Halqabsi - Halqabsi News (23/10/2024): Somaliland Police Report Highlights Surge in Serious Crime, https://halqabsi.com/2024/10/somaliland-police-report-highlights, accessed 24/6/2025
- Halqabsi - Halqabsi News (29/1/2024): Somaliland Authorities Detain Seven Al-Shabaab Members in Counter-Terror Operation, https://halqabsi.com/2024/01/somaliland-detain-7-al-shabaab, accessed 19/4/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (5/4/2025): Somaliland bans civilian firearms in El Afweyn after clan clashes, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Apr/200995/somaliland_bans_civilian_firearms_in_el_afwayn_after_clan_clashes.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 5/6/2025
- HT - Horn Tribune (21/2/2025): Awdal traditional leaders pledge to support President Abdirahman Irro, https://horntribune.com/2025/02/21/awdal-traditional-leaders-pledge-to-support-president-abdirahman-irro, accessed 5/6/2025
- ICG - International Crisis Group (5/2025): CrisisWatch – Somalia, https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location[]=12&created=, accessed 4/6/2025
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- INGO-V/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), International NGO V (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (13/12/2022): Nearly 8.3 million people across Somalia face Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or worse acute food insecurity outcomes, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/fc2d405c-ca29-4526-ad96-6618c2756192/Multi-Partner-Technical-Release-on-Updated-IPC-Analysis-for-Somalia-fo-October-2022-to-June-2023-Final-(English)-13-Dec-2022.pdf, accessed 10/10/2023
- JF - Jamestown Foundation, The (18/6/2021): Somaliland Elections Disrupt al-Shabaab's Regional Expansion; Terrorism Monitor Volume: 19 Issue: 12, https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2054590.html, accessed 23/10/2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- MAEZA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Organisation für bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MAIO-G/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Internationalen Organisation G (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Marchal/CERI - Roland Marchal (Author), Centre de Recherches Internationales SciencesPo (Publisher) (1/2026): The Recognition of Somaliland by Israel as An indicator of a Geopolitical Dynamic between the Horn and the Gulf, Les Analyses du CERI, https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/files/Somaliland_Janvier2026_AnalyseCERI.pdf, accessed 30/1/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (6/2023): General country of origin information report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 29/4/2024

- MoHDSL - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (1/4/2025): Health Conference Report. Theme of the Meeting: Healthcare expansion and Reform, 19th 20th February 2025, https://somalilandmohd.com/publications/, accessed 12/5/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Omer/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Ahmed Omer (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- PGN/EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (Publisher), Political Geography Now (Author) (31/3/2026): Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, in: EUAA (5.2026): Somalia: Security Situation, S.20, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (29/10/2025): Remembering Al-Shabaab's October attacks in Somaliland, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 889, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (14/2/2024): Possible Scenarios: Where Might the MoU Lead? in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 648, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Schwartz/HO - Stephen Schwartz (Author), Hiiraan Online (Publisher) (12/9/2021): Somalia's Leaders Need to Seize Immediately the Lessons of Afghanistan, https://hiiraan.com/op4/2021/sept/183881/somalia_s_leaders_need_to_seize_immediately_the_lessons_of_afghanistan.aspx, accessed 18/10/2023
- SD - Somali Dispatch (4/11/2022): Somaliland: Police issues an incomplete report on the crimes committed this year, https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/somaliland-police-issues-an-incomplete-report-on-the-crimes-committed-this-year/, accessed 14/11/2023
- SD - Somali Dispatch (4/11/2021): Somaliland police release figures for 2021 crimes in Somaliland, https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/somaliland-police-release-figures-for-2021-crimes-in-somaliland/, accessed 14/11/2023
- SECEX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Security Expert (Author) (4/2023):
  Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SG - Somali Guardian (9/9/2025): Somaliland president meets exiled clan leader as Somalia eyes Awdal for federal status, https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/somaliland-president-meets-exiled-clan-leader-as-somalia-eyes-awdal-for-federal-status/, accessed 26/11/2025
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (10/3/2025): 12 People Killed in Inter-Clan Clashes in Sanaag Region, https://somalilandstandard.com/somaliland-12-people-killed-in-inter-clan-clashes-in-sanaag-region, accessed 26/6/2025
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (21/6/2023): Burao reconciliation meeting comes amicably to a close, https://somalilandstandard.com/burao-reconciliation-meeting-comes-amicably-to-a-close/, accessed 23/6/2023
- SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somaliland National (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (19/6/2026): Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - 1, https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at/at.gv.bfa.coicms-p/services/collection/237-1.pdf, accessed 19/6/2026 [Login required]
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (8/2017): Fact Finding Mission Report Somalia; Sicherheitslage in Somalia; Bericht zur österreichisch-schweizerischen FFM, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1406268/5209_1502195321_ffm-report-somalia-sicherheitslage-onlineversion-2017-08-ke.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2026b): Somalia: Internal Displacement, https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/1, accessed 23/3/2026
- Weiss/FDD - Caleb Weiss (Author), Foundation for Defense of Democracies (Publisher) (11/8/2021): Analysis – Somaliland's lingering jihadi threat, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2021/08/analysis-somalilands-lingering-jihadi-threat.php, accessed 23/10/2023

3.2.1 Sool and Sanaag / SSC-Khatumo / North East State (NES) / Dhulbahante, Warsangeli

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

NES – Conflict with Somaliland: The conflict between the *SSC-Khatumo* [*Note: the North East State (NES) subsequently developed from this militia and established itself as a federal state. The term 'SSC-Khatumo' is still used below where this is relevant to past events.*] and Somaliland escalated in February 2023. Clashes between security forces and clan militias left over 100 people dead in the first few months of 2023, with more than 100,000 displaced. In August 2023, Somaliland troops withdrew from the area. Since then, the violence has subsided (BS 2026). In early November 2024, in the run-up to the Somaliland elections, clashes lasting several days broke out in the Buuhoodle area, resulting in deaths and injuries (SD 2/11/2024; cf. Mog24 2/11/2024; SD 3/11/2024). Following the elections, the new Somaliland president stated his intention to resolve the conflict peacefully (SG 15/12/2024). This statement was reiterated by the vice-president in March 2025. According to one source, however, the leadership of the NES is less inclined towards peace (HO 7/3/2025). On the other hand, one source describes the NES forces as a relatively loose coalition of heavily armed militias (Sahan/SWT 11/7/2025). In any case, tensions between Somaliland and the NES have eased in 2026. The Somaliland President, Irro, has spoken out in favour of a comprehensive peace agreement and a prisoner exchange (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Overall, however, the conflict remains unresolved (BS 2026).

NES – Control, Security: The NES has its base, or the core area under its control, in the towns of Laascaanood and Buuhoodle (Cayn area in the Togdheer region) as well as in the territory between them. Furthermore, according to one source, the separatists also control the towns of Xudun and Taleex, but do not have full control over the northern half of the Sool region. Along the important route from Caynaabo to Laascaanood, the front line has for some time run between the towns of Guumeys (NES) and Oog (Somaliland). In the Cayn area, the NES controls the territory north-west of Buuhoodle up to just before Qoorilugud (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). Daily life in **Laascaanood** has largely returned to normal (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025); traffic from Puntland is flowing, whilst traffic towards Somaliland and transit traffic in general remains blocked (BMLV 2/9/2026).

NES – Security forces: The NES is supported not only by the federal government with funds and weapons, but also by Turkey and the People's Republic of China (Sahan/SWT 25/8/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 11/7/2025; BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). Overall, however, the presence of NES security forces is very sparse, even though they – recruited locally – are present as far as the border with Sanaag. As of May 2025, the NES has approximately 5,000 registered fighters. Around 85 per cent of these are Dhulbahante. In addition, there are Warsangeli (4 per cent), Madhiban (5 per cent), Hawiye / Habr Gedir / Ayr / Fiqishini (3 per cent) as well as small numbers of Darod / Majerteen / Bicidyahan and Darod / Harti / Dashishle. Most members of these Darawish are veterans of the fighting against Somaliland, who, owing to their shared experiences, have a fairly strong sense of solidarity and belonging to the NES administration. The exception to this is the militia under the command of Abdi Madobe, which appears to be

loyal only to its commander.Only a few Warsangeli and members of Dhulbahante clans living further north (BMLV 2/9/2026)are involved.

NES – al-Shabaab: Among others, there is also a militia here under Ali Hussein Abdi Kamiin 'Abdi Madobe', a member of the al-Shabaab. This militia remains stationed near Laascaanood. Although Madobe recognises the NES's chain of command, he nevertheless commands his troops independently. He was dispatched by al-Shabaab in 2023 to support the NES – or, as it was then known, the *SSC-Khatumo*(BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). His militia is the best-armed and best-trained in the NES area (Sahan/SWT 23/4/2025). In April 2025, following a murder in Laascaanood, the NES administration admitted that members of al-Shabaab are openly active within NES territory (Sahan/SWT 23/4/2025; cf. SOCOM 21/4/2025). According to one source, al-Shabaab is attempting to infiltrate the NES (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). According to another source, there is no significant al-Shabaab presence within the NES area (AQSOM 4/ STDOK 6/2026).

Prisoners of war: Although there have been sporadic exchanges involving small numbers of prisoners of war, their total number was still estimated to be in the hundreds in May 2025 (SLST 5/5/2025). A spokesperson for the NES stated in November 2025 that the prisoners would only be released as part of a peace treaty with Somaliland (HO 23/10/2025). In July and August 2026, talks took place regarding the exchange or release of the remaining prisoners (BMLV 2/9/2026).

NES – Conflict with Puntland: In contrast to the conflict with Somaliland, tensions between the NES and Puntland – which explicitly rejects the new federal state – have escalated (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The NES lays claim to territory also claimed by Puntland (HO 4/5/2025) and also controls parts of the Sanaag region. As early as June 2025, a skirmish broke out in the far north-east of Sool between Puntland forces and those of the NES (then known as *the SSC-Khatumo*) (PGN 19/6/2025). Fighting was also reported in July (Abdi 2 5/7/2025) and October 2025 (Kaab 1/11/2025). The Warsangeli / Dubeys, who support the NES, are also involved in the fighting (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

At the same time, there has been increased cooperation between Puntland and Somaliland. In early October 2025, both entities signed a security agreement in Nairobi, which, amongst other things, provides for closer cooperation in the fight against terrorism. However, the agreement also contains a clause stating that 'the conflict in Laascaanood and the surrounding area must be brought to a lasting end" (HT 5/10/2025).

Sanaag – Control: According toone source, the eastern part of Sanaag is controlled by Puntland, but also falls partly into the category 'mixed/unclear/local control'. Accordingly, whilst the NES has influence in Central Sanaag, it does not control any towns in this region apart from the village of Fiqifuliye (PGN/EUAA 31/3/2026). Another source also confirms that the eastern third of Sanaag – including the towns of Badhaan and Laasqoray – is controlled by Puntland (BMLV 2/9/2026). In Laasqoray, there is also a growing militia supported by the Houthis in Yemen (Sahan/SWT 11/6/2025), or there may even be a Houthi base near the town (Sahan/SWT 31/ 10/2025). According to other sources, the Houthis do not have a permanent base in Sanaag, although they do use the stretch of coastline west of Laasqoray for trade. Somaliland, too, has

no permanent presence or administration in the Warsangeli areas, but controls the western part of the region, which is inhabited by the Isaaq (BMLV 2/9/2026).

Sanaag – Conflicts: Since 1994, there has been an agreement in Ceerigaabo between the four clans dominant there (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Following clashes in August 2024 between Isaaq clan militias / Habr Yunis / Muse Ismail and Dhulbahante / Naleeye Ahmed (at least 9 dead),heavy fighting broke out around Ceerigaabo inmid-December 2024 between Somaliland forces and those of *the SSC-Khatumo* (SD 15/12/2024). One source reports 15 fatalities (SG 15/12/2024). According to the United Nations, which described the incident as *'clan violence'*, 43,000 people sought refuge at the time, mainly in neighbouring areas (UN OCHA 18/12/2024). De facto, the *SSC-Khatumo* was defeated in Ceerigaabo(BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025). As a result, strong Isaaq / Gerhaji clan militias (approx. 2,000 men) were incorporated into the Somaliland army (BMLV 2/7/2025; cf. Mog24 2/3/2025). These militias had previously operated under the name 'SSB' and had engaged in several skirmishes with the *SSC-Khatumo* (PGN 19/6/2025). Militias were also integrated into the army in Ceel Afweyn and Garadag (Sanaag) as well as in Caynaabo (Sool) (ICG 5/2025).

In March 2025, a ban on carrying weapons was imposed in Ceerigaabo, which also applies to soldiers. Only police officers are exempt from this (SLST 27/3/2025). A ban on carrying weapons was also imposed in Ceel Afweyn in April 2025 (HO 5/4/2025).

At least 40 people were killed in clashes between two Warsangeli sub-clans in the Carmaale area in May 2026, triggered by disputes over resources. Puntland has deployed forces to de-escalate the conflict (Wardheer 8/5/2026). With regard to Sanaag, Puntland and Somaliland have joined forces to mediate between warring factions of the Warsangeli. Neither Somaliland nor Puntland wants the Warsangeli to join the NES (BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026).

Sanaag – al-Shabaab: Al-Shabaab has a presence (Sahan/SWT 29/10/2025) in the al-Madow Mountains, comprising (as of June 2026) a maximum of 800 fighters (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026); whilst another source puts the figure at over 1,500 (Sahan/SWT 11/3/2026). Overall, al-Shabaab has been able to make almost imperceptible inroads into Somaliland – and particularly into the Sanaag region – in recent years (ICG 10/11/2022). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, members of the group sometimes pass through the Ceerigaabo district 'in peaceful transit' – in convoys, flying white flags. The local communities accept al-Shabaab, and marriages are also taking place (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to another source, the Islamists have expanded their presence from Buuhoodle to the Sanaag coast (Sahan/SWT 25/8/2025) and can traverse the whole of Sool and Sanaag unhindered. Furthermore, al-Shabaab has recently received hundreds of reinforcements from southern Somalia (Sahan/SWT 29/10/2025). As Puntland is currently tied up militarily, al-Shabaab also has more room for manoeuvre in Sanaag. The group's aim is to assemble 2,000–3,000 men in Sanaag in order to be able to counter Puntland with a commensurate force (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026).

Sources

- Abdi 2 - Hodan J. Abdi (5/7/2025): Clashes erupt in Sanaag region between Puntland forces and pro-SSC administration politicians, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202088/clashes_erupt_in_sanaag_region_between_puntland_forces_and_pro_ssc_administration_politicians.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 23/6/2026
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/7/2025): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (20/5/2026): Telefoninterview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (6/6/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (23/10/2025): Northeastern Somali administration says Somaliland prisoners will be released after peace agreement, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Oct/203386/northeastern_somali_administration_says_somaliland_prisoners_will_be_released_after_peace_-agreement.aspx?utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront &utm_source=hiiraan, accessed 21/11/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (4/5/2025): SSC-Khaatumo defends federal ties, says no need to consult Puntland, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/May/201393/ssc_khaatumo_defends_federal_ties_says_no_need_to_consult_puntland.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 18/6/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (5/4/2025): Somaliland bans civilian firearms in El Afweyn after clan clashes, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Apr/200995/somaliland_bans_civilian_firearms_in_el_afwayn_after_clan_clashes.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 5/6/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (7/3/2025): Somaliland and SSC Khaatumo forces clash in Buqdharkayn as territorial dispute escalates, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200573/somaliland_and_ssc_khaatumo_forces_clash_in_buqdharkayn_as_territorial_dispute_escalates.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 18/6/2025
- HT - Horn Tribune (5/10/2025): BREAKING NEWS: Puntland and Somaliland Reach Historic Security Agreement in Nairobi Talks, https://horntribune.com/2025/10/05/breaking-news-puntland-and-somaliland-reach-historic-security-agreement-in-nairobi-talks/, accessed 7/10/2025
- ICG - International Crisis Group (5/2025): CrisisWatch – Somalia, https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location[]=12&created=, accessed 4/6/2025
- ICG - International Crisis Group (10/11/2022): Overcoming Somaliland's Worsening Political Crisis, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/overcoming-somalilands-worsening-political-crisis, accessed 23/10/2023
- Kaab - Kaab TV (1/11/2025): Clashes Reported in Bo'ame as Tensions Rise Between Puntland and Newly Formed Northeastern Administration, https://en.kaabtv.com/clashes-reported-in-boame-as-tensions-rise-between-puntland-and-newly-formed-northeastern-administration/, accessed 3/12/2025
- Mog24 - Mogadischu24.com (2/3/2025): Somaliland Officially Integrates First Armed Unit in Ceerigaabo, https://mogadishu24.com/somaliland-officially-integrates-first-armed-unit-in-ceerigaabo, accessed 26/6/2025

- Mog24 - Mogadischu24.com (2/11/2024): Somaliland Accuses Federal Gov't of Supporting SSC-Khatumo State forces in Pre-Election Clashes, https://mogadishu24.com/somaliland-accuses-federal-govt-of-supporting-ssc-khatumo-state-forces-in-pre-election-clashes, accessed 20/12/2024
- PGN - Political Geography Now (19/6/2025): June 2025 Somalia Control Map & Timeline: Al Shabaab Resurgence, ISIS Retreat, Jubaland Defiant (Subscription), https://controlmaps.polgeonow.com/2025/06/june-2025-somalia-control-map-timeline/, accessed 23/6/2025 [fee required]
- PGN/EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (Publisher), Political Geography Now (Author) (31/3/2026): Somalia - Approximate Territorial Control, in: EUAA (5.2026): Somalia: Security Situation, S.20, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (11/3/2026): More Guns, Less State in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 936, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (31/10/2025): Al-Shabaab, ISS, and Somalia's Fractured Islamism, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 890, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (29/10/2025): Remembering Al-Shabaab's October attacks in Somaliland, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 889, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (25/8/2025): North Eastern State: Caveat Emptor, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 864, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (11/7/2025): Federal Meddling Inflames Sanaag, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 845, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (11/6/2025): Puntland's Pivot from Lightning to Thunder, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 832, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (23/4/2025): Murder in Laas Aanood: SSC-Khaatumo admits Al-Shabaab presence, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 813, per e-Mail [fee required]
- SD - Somali Dispatch (15/12/2024): Fighting between SSC Khatumo and Somaliland forces in Erigavo now in its third day, https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/fighting-between-ssc-khatumo-and-somaliland-forces-in-erigavo-now-in-its-third-day, accessed 19/12/2024
- SD - Somali Dispatch (3/11/2024): Somaliland claims the death of SSC-Khatumo commander with Al Shabab ties, https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/somaliland-claims-the-death-of-ssc-khatumo-commander-with-al-shabab-ties, accessed 20/12/2024
- SD - Somali Dispatch (2/11/2024): Somaliland and SSC-Khatumo forces clash in Qoriludug, https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/somaliland-and-ssc-khatumo-forces-clash-in-qoriludug, accessed 20/12/2024
- SECEX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Security Expert (Author) (4/2023):
  Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SG - Somali Guardian (15/12/2024): Clashes between Somaliland and SSC intensify in Erigavo, entering second day, https://somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/clashes-between-somaliland-and-ssc-intensify-in-erigavo-entering-second-day, accessed 19/12/2024
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (5/5/2025): The Speaker of Somaliland House of Elders calls on the release of prisoners hailing from Sool to be released without condition, https://somalilandstandard.com/the-speaker-of-somaliland-house-of-elders-calls-on-the-release-of-prisoners-hailing-from-sool-to-be-released-without-condition, accessed 18/6/2025
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (27/3/2025): Somaliland Gov't bans carrying weapons in Erigavo, https://somalilandstandard.com/somaliland-govt-bans-carrying-weapons-in-erigavo, accessed 26/6/2025
- SOCOM - Somaliland.com (21/4/2025): Khaatumo Confirms: Al-Shabaab Behind Assassination of Ethiopian Diplomat, https://www.somaliland.com/news/somaliland/khaatumo-confirms-al-shabaab-behind-assassination-of-ethiopian-diplomat, accessed 18/6/2025
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (18/12/2024): Somalia: Armed Violence in Ceerigaabo town, Sanaag region Flash Update No.1 (as of 18 December 2024) - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-armed-violence-ceerigaabo-town-sanaag-region-flash-update-no1-18-december-2024, accessed 20/12/2024

- Wardheer - Wardheer News (8/5/2026): Clan Conflict in Sanaag Near Erigavo Leaves Heavy Casualties, Peace Efforts Underway, https://wardheernews.com/clan-conflict-near-erigavo-leaves-heavy-casualties-peace-efforts-underway/, accessed 7/7/2026

4 Legal protection, judicial system

4.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

The legal system in Somalia is based on a combination of the national Criminal Code dating from 1962, traditional (*xeer*) and Islamic customary law (Sharia) (AA 23/6/2025; cf. BS 2026; MBZ 4/4/2025; SFH 1/2026) and the Transitional Constitution of 2012 (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). These different legal systems are not well integrated (MBZ 4/4/2025) and conflict with one another (HO 27/3/2025). With the collapse of the state in 1991, formal law also collapsed in large parts of the country. At the same time, the importance of Sharia and *xeer* increased (BS 2026; cf. C.Maslen/U4ACRC/TI/CMI 16/2/2026). Sharia forms the basis of all judicial decision-making, and the state must submit to religious norms (BS 2026). It thus constitutes the main determinant of all law (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). However, those in custody include people convicted under all three legal systems, some of whom are there merely for the purposes of 'rehabilitation' because they have breached social norms (Sahan/SWT 31/7/2024).

The Federal Government has made little effort to draft, discuss or implement a legal framework, or to offer legal services to its citizens; the court system remains weak (BS 2026). The vast majority of cases are dealt with in *the xeer* (UNHRC 22/1/2026). Many people also turn to al-Shabaab's 'shadow court system', which combines elements of *xeer* and Sharia (Sahan/SWT 29/5/2024; cf. BS 2026).

Separation of powers: The principles of the separation of powers are enshrined in the 2012 Constitution. However, the reality on the ground is different (AA 9/3/2026). There is no strict separation of powers, either at federal or state level (BS 2026). In the areas actually controlled by the government, judges are subject to a variety of political influences exerted by state officials (AA 9/3/2026).

Rule of law: Similarly, there is no nationwide rule of law (BS 2026). Nationwide implementation and uniform application of the provisions laid down by the Somali Federal Government are not guaranteed (AA 23/6/2025). Decisions by state courts are largely unenforceable (Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023), and enforcement mechanisms are weak or non-existent (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). The very existence of al-Shabaab's parallel legal system demonstrates that the Somali state is unable to uphold the rule of law (Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023). Consequently, public confidence in the formal justice system is low. It is perceived as expensive, inefficient and susceptible to manipulation (BS 2026; cf. Sahan/SWT 27/1/2025). Furthermore, disregarding court judgements carries no consequences (Sahan/SWT 21/11/2022). Appeals against judgements handed down by ordinary courts are sometimes lodged within the traditional or Islamic legal framework. Cases involving internally displaced persons (IDPs) are often ignored by the courts, which are pressured to resolve such issues through the elders (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023).

There is no functioning land registry; this also applies to the majority of buildings and land in Mogadishu. The protection of individual or communal property depends primarily on support from clans and/or the military strength of allied groups (BS 2026).

State protection: There is no effective state authority covering the entire territory (AA 9/3/2026). State protection in southern and central Somalia must be regarded as weak or non-existent due to the persistently poor security situation and the lack of competence on the part of state security forces and the judiciary(ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). If IDPs or members of a particular clan or minority group are in danger or under threat, it cannot be assumed that access to effective state protection is guaranteed (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf . TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). State protection is also of little relevance in the case of clan conflicts. State security forces are generally too weak to intervene effectively in such situations. Consequently, 'resolution' is generally left to the clans themselves (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). According to other sources, state protection is more readily available, at least in Puntland, where the clan reportedly plays a less significant role (MBZ 4/4/2025). In individual cases, the formal justice system is also invoked following revenge killings arising from clan conflicts. For example, in November 2025 in Galmudug, two men were sentenced to death after being found guilty of the murder of a mother and her three daughters (Kaab 30/11/2025a).

Formal justice system – structure, jurisdiction, availability: The Constitution provides for a three-tier system comprising the State, Federal and Constitutional Courts (Sahan/SWT 27/1/2025). Ordinary courts have jurisdiction over criminal and civil law. In addition, there is a Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court in Mogadishu. Puntland and Somaliland each have their own formal and hierarchical court system (BS 2026). In general, courts are rare (Sahan/SWT 29/5/2024) or are only available in larger towns (BS 2026; cf. Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). International support focuses primarily on criminal law, whilst civil law and constitutional reform are neglected (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023).

Take Kismayo, for example (as of 2021): this city has two district courts, a high court and a court of appeal. In addition, there is a committee of elders to which disputes can be referred (*xeer*), as well as private Sharia courts. The three judicial systems coordinate under the umbrella of the formal courts, with final decisions being made by the latter. Separately, a special land committee has been established to deal with complex and sensitive land disputes. This committee has its own police unit to enforce its decisions (Majid/Abdirahman/LSE 26/3/2021).

Formal justice system – capacity and procedural rights: The formal justice system is characterised by major shortcomings: understaffing, inadequate training, a lack of resources, corruption, political interference and poor enforcement of court decisions (AA 9/3/2026). The courts lack capacity, (qualified) staff, financial resources and infrastructure (BS 2026; cf. UNHRC 22/1/2026). The judicial system is widely regarded, particularly by ordinary citizens, as corrupt, inefficient and inaccessible (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). Legal proceedings can cost up to 5,000 US dollars and may drag on for years (Sahan/SWT 21/11/2022; cf. AJ 14/9/2022; K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). One reason for the high costs is the non-payment of judges' salaries (BS 2026). Most of the rights to a fair trial enshrined in law are rarely upheld in

court (USDOS 22/4/2024). Many judges in state courts have been trained exclusively in Sharia law, for example in Sudan (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Judges and prosecutors also lack knowledge of human rights (UNHRCOM 6/5/2024).

Formal judiciary – independence: Shortcomings regarding the independence of the judiciary give cause for concern (BS 2026). The judiciary is also often influenced by clan dynamics, with politicians and elders intervening (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. BS 2026; UNHRC 22/1/2026), and the formal legal system is rendered ineffective. Influential clans and families can circumvent the law, for example by having courts dismiss cases as a result of pressure from elders (Sahan/SWT 28/5/2025). Alternatively, perpetrators are released and the case is dealt with 'in the Somali way': through negotiations between elders [*see below*] (MBZ 4/4/2025). Local courts, in particular, are reliant on the clans that dominate their areas in order to be able to enforce judgements at all (UNHRC 22/1/2026). Yet even before military courts, criminals have been able to evade prosecution on the basis of their clan affiliation (Sahan/SWT 29/5/2024).

Formal justice system – corruption: Furthermore, bribery and corruption play a role in the Somali justice system (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023; BS 2026). In some cases, prisoners have been released after security forces, prison officers, politicians or clan elders intervened on their behalf (USDOS 22/4/2024; cf. SIDRA 11/2019). Some court decisions are made not on the basis of their legal merit, but on the basis of payments made outside the regular judicial channels. In such cases, intermediaries sell court judgements outside the state court system to the highest bidder (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). Consequently, economically disadvantaged groups and minorities tend to be at a disadvantage (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).On an index measuring corruption in the judiciary, Somalia scores -2.26 points (Austria: +2.28; Ethiopia: -1.59; Kenya: +0.99) (UNIG-VDI 2025a). This index is based on the question of how often individuals or companies have had to pay additional fees or bribes in order to speed up or delay proceedings, or to influence court decisions (UNIG-VDI 3/2026).

Military courts: Civilians are **repeatedly** brought before military courts (UNHRC 22/1/2026). On the basis of an expired presidential decree on the state of emergency, signed in 2011 (for criminal offences) and Article 35 of the Anti-Terrorism Act (for terrorist offences), military courts also consider themselves competent to prosecute civilians (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). Consequently, they continue to hear and adjudicate on cases of all kinds, including civil cases that do not actually fall within their jurisdiction (AA 9/3/2026). For example, in November 2025, several men were sentenced to death for murders committed in the context of a clan conflict (Kaab 24/11/2025a). Furthermore, there are repeated instances of disregard for internationally recognised standards of fair trial (AA 9/3/2026; cf. HRW 4/2/2026). In so-called 'high-risk cases'before military courts, the death penalty is imposed significantly more frequently than is the case in civilian courts (AA 9/3/2026).

In Puntland, too, at least in the past, civilians have been tried before military courts (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). According to recent reports, the military court in Jubaland handles criminal cases in which soldiers, intelligence officers and police officers are listed as perpetrators (Kaab 2/11/2025a). According to yet other reports, the President of Puntland dissolved the military

courts in that federal state in November 2025 and transferred the cases pending there to the Court of Appeal (Dawan 30/10/2025).

***Xeer* (traditional law) – Background:** The legal system is dominated by Sharia and *xeer* (Sahan/SWT 27/1/2025). Like the clan system, *xeer* is an omnipresent part of the Somali way of life (UNESCO n.d) and is also significant for social peace and societal cohesion (SPC 9/2/2022). A source from 2017 describes the mechanisms of *xeer* – which operate at a grassroots level and draw on centuries-old procedures and norms familiar to the people – as important, and characterises the decision-making process as transparent and inclusive (UNHRC 6/9/2017).

Xeer is largely based on Sharia law, as well as on cultural traditions and religious and social norms (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). It is believed that this system existed even before Islamic or colonial regimes (USDOS 26/6/2024a). It is a centuries-old oral practice, purportedly based on the principles of mutual accountability, reconciliation and collective responsibility between clans (Sahan/SWT 28/5/2025). This is not a written code of law, but rather a tradition passed down orally from one generation to the next (UNESCO n.d; cf. Sahan/SWT 28/5/2025). The provisional constitution recognises *xeer* as a traditional conflict resolution mechanism. A dedicated policy on traditional conflict resolution is intended to regulate the application of *xeer* and limit it to 'non-serious' offences. In fact, *xeer* is applied in various ways in cases of criminal offences (USDOS 26/6/2024a). As unwritten customary law, it can vary greatly in practice depending on the geographical location and culture of different clan groups. Furthermore, *xeer* contains remnants of practices that are either prohibited or not otherwise reflected in Sharia law (e.g. FGM) (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023).

***Xeer* – Areas of law and application:** Clan protectiongenerally – though not always – works better than protection provided by the state or the police. For this reason, in the event of a conflict (crime, dispute, etc.), Somalis tend to resort to clan mechanisms (SEM 31/5/2017). Among other things, *xeer* facilitates safe travel, trade and marriages (UNESCO n.d). A wide variety of cases are dealt with – ranging from conflicts and crime (STDOK 8/2017; cf. Sahan/SWT 29/5/2024) to family disputes and even murders (Sahan/SWT 29/5/2024). 80 per cent of all civil and criminal cases are dealt with through *xeer* (UNHRC 22/1/2026; cf. SFH 1/2026).

On the one hand, *xeer* is important in those rural areas where administrative and judicial systems are weak or non-existent. On the other hand, *xeer* is also often used in towns and cities to resolve conflicts – for example, in disputes between politicians and traders (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. UNESCO n.d). It therefore also plays a role in places where the police and judicial authorities exist (LIFOS 9/4/2019). Furthermore, appeals may sometimes be lodged in *xeer* against judgements handed down by ordinary courts (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). It is possible, even in the case of serious crimes (murder, rape) and following a conviction by a state court, to buy one's way out of punishment or to settle the penalty through compensation under traditional law (FTL 8/9/2022).

Xeer also serves as a social safety net, a form of social and accident insurance (SEM 31/5/2017). If something happens to a person, they do not turn to the police, but first and foremost to their own family and clan (FIS 7/8/2020a). A source from the FFM Somalia 2023 states that, for

example, clans are usually involved in the settlement of accidents, whilst the police stay out of it (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). The compensation payments traditionally provided for cover numerous areas of civil and criminal law and apply, for example, in cases of manslaughter, car accidents resulting in personal injury or property damage, theft (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. ACCORD 31/5/2021) or rape or land disputes. In all such cases, the clan intervenes (ACCORD 31/5/2021). The amount to be paid also depends on the nature of the incident (SEM 31/5/2017).

***Xeer* – Responsibilities, Actors, Mechanisms:** Under the *xeer*, elders act as mediating judges and assist in the resolution of cases, taking into account precedents and customary law (UNESCO n.d) or examine local precedents before referring to the relevant passages of Sharia law (USDOS 26/6/2024a).Claims are negotiated on a case-by-case basis and implemented by the elders (BS 2026). In this system, elders act as mediators, arbitrators and judges (SFH 1/2026). Sometimes such negotiations or 'court proceedings' even take place in *WhatsApp* groups(Economist 23/1/2025). In some cases, the traditional justice system calls upon the police and court officials (LIFOS 9/4/2019); in others, the use of the *xeer* hinders the work of the police and the justice system. In any event, a decision reached in the *xeer* carries greater weight than a judgement handed down by a formal court. In cases of doubt, the decision reached in the *xeer* prevails (LIFOS 1/7/2019).

Usually, a death is settled primarily through the payment of blood money rather than through a revenge killing (Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA 3/7/2018). Consequently, in *the xeer*, the *jilib* – the so-called *mag/diya/*blood-money-payinggroup –is the key actor. The system is present throughout the Somali cultural sphere and offers – depending on the region, clan and status – a certain degree of (legal) protection. The social and political relationships between *jilibs* are governed by (oral) *xeer* contracts. *Mag/diya* (compensation payment) must be paid in the event of breaches of this contract. The payment of *mag/diya* is stipulated for criminal offences committed by a member of one group against a member of another *jilib* (SEM 31/5/2017). Under the *xeer* system, the entire kinship group is held accountable for the actions of a single member, with penalties or compensation being distributed amongst the wider clan. Thus, in cases of theft or bodily harm, the victim's family may receive *mag/diya*, but this payment is normally divided amongst the victim's clan and is not awarded to the individual claimant. Once the compensation has been paid, the perpetrator goes unpunished, and the settlement is regarded as a form of social rehabilitation (Sahan/SWT 27/1/2025) – even for murderers (Sahan/SWT 29/5/2024).

At the same time, the term 'clan protection' in this context traditionally refers to an individual's ability to be protected by their own clan against an aggressor from outside the clan. The rights of a group are protected by force or the threat of force. An individual's *jilib* or clan must be in a position to pay *mag/diya* – or to fight. An individual's protection and vulnerability are therefore closely linked to the power of their clan. Alliances also ensure that minorities are included within the system. If a member of a minority group allied with a large clan causes an accident, the large clan also contributes to *the mag/diya* (SEM 31/5/2017).

Thanks to this system of mutual deterrence, compensation is usually paid out. Members of a *jilib* are obliged to support one another in fulfilling the political and legal obligations laid down in *the*

xeer contract – particularly with regard to compensation payments. The latter are paid jointly by the entire group of the perpetrator or the person responsible (SEM 31/5/2017). Affected clans or individuals must rely on the agreements reached in *the xeer* between the clans in order to receive compensation. These agreements contain provisions based on the nature and severity of the offence, as well as the identity of the perpetrator and the victim (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). In general, *xeer* is compensatory rather than punitive (UNESCO n.d).

In a Deutsche Welle documentary, clan elders report that they collect money from across the entire clan. In the case of a murder, for example, 50,000 US dollars must be collected. The elders then telephone clan members, who each contribute between 5 and 200 US dollars. Payment is not optional but compulsory. Refusal results in punishment. Even murderers sentenced to death can be saved in this way. They remain in custody only until the victim's clan receives the money (DW 3/2021). This type of 'fundraising' is called *qaraan* (Majid/Abdirahman/Hassan 2017).

In recent years, it has been observed that the younger generation, for example in Hargeysa, is no longer necessarily aligned with the *xeer* system. High-profile cases (particularly sexual offences and murders) have attracted a great deal of attention on social media. However, this does not alter the fundamental functions – for instance, when it comes to family matters or even a broken foot (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

***Xeer* – Disadvantaged groups:** *Xeer* takes into account the power of the clans involved (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). The balance of power between the clans influences both the settlement of disputes and the enforcement of judgements handed down. As a result, minorities are often disadvantaged by the system. Sometimes, crimes against these clans even go unpunished, or the victims are treated unfairly in dispute resolution proceedings (Sahan/SWT 27/1/2025). A source from the FFM Somalia 2023 also states that those who are actually in prison are primarily those who have been abandoned by their clan or are outsiders in the local community (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Weaker clans and minorities often face difficulties – or lack any opportunity at all – to enforce their rights within *the xeer* (LIFOS 1/7/2019). The traditional justice system often has negative consequences for victims of gender-based violence, children, minority clans, people with disabilities and internally displaced persons (IDPs) (SPC 9/2/2022). Moreover, justice is generally often sacrificed to the narrow interests of the clan – partly because the emphasis is placed on collective responsibility rather than individual justice (Sahan/SWT 27/1/2025). Furthermore, for example, an individual without connections in Mogadishu cannot benefit from this system (SEM 31/5/2017). The systematic marginalisation of women is viewed critically. They are not regarded as full members of their *mag/diya* groups and have a subordinate legal status within *the xeer*. In the context of dispute resolution, women are dependent on the support of male relatives (Sahan/SWT 27/1/2025).

Sharia: In principle, Sharia is applied when deciding on family matters (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). However, it is interpreted differently by courts in different locations. In general, Sharia courts – including those run by al-Shabaab – are regarded as more efficient, less corrupt and

faster (BS 2026). According to one source, women can obtain justice more effectively under Sharia law than under the highly patriarchal and often opaque traditional legal system (ACCORD 31/5/2021).

Justice under al-Shabaab – Background: In the areas under al-Shabaab's control, the group holds a monopoly on the use of force – including with regard to the enforcement of court rulings, which are backed up by threats and violence (Sahan/SWT 21/11/2022). Furthermore, the principle of the separation of powers is not recognised there, in accordance with the group's Islamist ideology (AA 9/3/2026). Al-Shabaab has established its own judicial system based on an extremist interpretation of Sharia law (AA 9/3/2026; cf. BS 2026). According to two sources, *xeer* is used by al-Shabaab only on a case-by-case basis (MBZ 4/4/2025), where it does not contradict the group's own interpretation of Sharia law (BS 2026). Several other sources, however, report that al-Shabaab combines *xeer* and Sharia (Sahan/SWT 30/6/2025; cf. K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025; Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023). Another source explains that al-Shabaab has sidelined *xeer* in favour of Sharia, as Sharia is more advantageous for small clans (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Law under al-Shabaab – courts, jurisdictions: Al-Shabaab provides judicial services throughout the country (BS 2026), according to other sources, however, primarily in the areas under its control (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). Over the years, these courts have gained a fair amount of popularity and acceptance amongst the population – even in some government-controlled areas and amongst some members of the diaspora (Sahan/SWT 21/11/2022; cf. BS 2026). However, the government has achieved some success in that the group's mobile courts have disappeared from the Mogadishu area. In contrast, there are now a greater number of such courts in the nomadic areas controlled by the group (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Al-Shabaab operates four types of court: general courts, which deal with all disputes other than land disputes; special courts for land disputes; courts of appeal; and 'security forces' courts. Appeals courts deal exclusively with land disputes. Separately, the 'security forces' courts deal, on the one hand, with crimes committed by members of al-Shabaab and, on the other, with suspected spies (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). Overall, al-Shabaab's 'shadow courts" deal with a wide range of disputes, such as those concerning natural resources, economic disagreements or allegations of clan discrimination. They also deal with issues of extortion, corruption and unlawful arrests, which means that the group prosecutes government and law enforcement officials as well as civilians 'under criminal law" (Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, in areas controlled by al-Shabaab – that is, under its 'jurisdiction' – the clans are generally responsible when a murder is committed there. However, if the victim is a member of al-Shabaab, the case is dealt with by one of the group's courts (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to other reports, al-Shabaab's judicial system comprises a central court, regional courts and mobile courts. In addition, the *hisba* (police) also acts as a court: commanders can hand down judgements directly on the spot. Clan elders also participate in the judicial system (for example, as witnesses or attorneys) (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Law under al-Shabaab – Proceedings: In al-Shabaab court proceedings, the burden of proof typically lies with the claimant, and in the absence of evidence, the defendant is required to take an oath. Furthermore, al-Shabaab frequently consults land experts (in land disputes) and community elders to strengthen the legitimacy of its decisions (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). According to other sources, courts near Mogadishu have specialised in mediating land disputes through *tahkim* (reconciliation) or *sulh* (conciliation). As part of such intervention, the parties usually undertake to pay future land taxes and *zakat* (Sahan/SWT 30/6/2025). Appeals may only be lodged against judgements of the Court of Appeal concerning land disputes. All other matters are dealt with in accordance with written rules based on the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023).

Law under al-Shabaab – Acceptance, Capacity: Although al-Shabaab levies legal costs or court fees (HIPS 4/2021), its courts are preferred by a section of the population – including people from government-controlled areas (AA 9/3/2026; cf. Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023; Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). They are even consulted by government officials, soldiers and police officers (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025; cf. Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023). Compared with the state judicial system, al-Shabaab's courts are described as more accessible, more transparent, fairer, faster and cheaper, less corrupt or not corrupt at all, and more efficient overall (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025; BS 2026; AA 9/3/2026; Sahan/SWT 30/6/2025). At least a decision is reached there (IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Although a court run by the group may sometimes side with the party from which it can expect a long-term return (AQSOM 4 6/2024), these courts sometimes offer the only chance of obtaining justice at all (SRF 27/12/2021). For some women, for example, these courts are the only way to assert financial claims against former husbands or male relatives (UNSC 1/11/2019).

Law under al-Shabaab – Enforcement, Punishment: Unlike the state, al-Shabaab is both able and willing to enforce court rulings vigorously and strictly (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025; Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023). This is achieved through violence or the threat of violence (Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023; cf. Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; AA 9/3/2026) – even in government-controlled areas (AA 9/3/2026) and, at times, even in the case of judgements handed down by state courts (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025), as the group's courts sometimes overturn the judgements of formal courts (Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023; cf. AJ 14/9/2022). Anyone who fails to comply with al-Shabaab's judgements risks robbery, injury or the death of themselves or their relatives (Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023). In areas controlled by al-Shabaab, the enforcement of judgements is generally the responsibility of the *hisba*; in other areas, it falls to the *amniyat* (secret police) (MBZ 4/4/2025).

In areas controlled by the group, extreme corporal punishments are regularly imposed and carried out in public, including flogging or caning, hand amputations for theft, or executions for adultery (AA 9/3/2026; cf. BS 2026; MBZ 4/4/2025). The *hisba* occasionally arrests people for 'offences' such as smoking, listening to music, wearing a bra or failing to wear a hijab (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022) or failing to comply with prescribed dress codes (BS 2026), the sale of *khat*, or having an untidy haircut or beard (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022; cf. CFR 6/12/2022), unauthorised content on

a mobile phone, or watching or playing football (USDOS 12/8/2025). In some regions, women were sentenced to flogging for leaving the house without a male relative (BS 2026). From people caught with cigarettes, al-Shabaab demanded, for example, an AK-47 with 120 rounds of ammunition as punishment (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023).

The rules are not enforced uniformly (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022); the group operates differently from region to region. According to a recent source, over the past 2–3 years, the group has started to rethink some things. On occasion, even dancing or smoking is tolerated (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026), and even the consumption of *khat* is no longer strictly prohibited (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Law under al-Shabaab – Clans [*for the relationship between al-Shabaab and clans, see also* Al-Shabaab]: Clan protection is limited in areas under al-Shabaab's control or influence, but it is not non-existent. Depending on the circumstances, clans may also offer protection in these regions. Belonging to a majority clan can increase an individual's protection (SEM 31/5/2017); there is a certain degree of room for negotiation (Landinfo 21/5/2019a). Al-Shabaab's courts sometimes work directly with clans and elders (Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023).Members of minority groups regardal-Shabaab'scourts as more neutral and therefore make use of them (Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023; cf. K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, al-Shabaab often supports weaker clans against stronger ones (Researcher/ STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Elders have the powerto intervene withal-Shabaab in all matters that do not involve espionage or offences of bodily harm; alternatively, they have been able to persuade the (local) al-Shabaab not to enforce certain provisions (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023).

Traditional leaders, known as *naqiibs*, act as mediators between al-Shabaab and the clans. They are permitted to mediate cases before the group's courts, settle disputes outside the courts, and secure the release of individuals detained by al-Shabaab in civil proceedings (K.Farah/M.Ouma/ S.Nyanchoga 9/2025).

Law in areas controlled by clans and militias: There is very little information availableon the areas controlled neither by the government nor by al-Shabaab, but by clans or other militias. However, it can be assumed that law-making, adjudication and enforcement are mostly in the hands of clan elders. There is virtually no functioning separation of powers. Judgements are frequently handed down by elders in accordance with *xeer*. These proceedings generally concern only legal disputes within the clan. Where several clans are involved, out-of-court settlements (through 'peace judges') are common, including – and particularly – in criminal cases. Repression against family members and close associates (collective punishment) plays an important role in this context (AA 9/3/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (23/6/2025): Somalia – Reise- und Sicherheitshinweise (Reisewarnung), unverändert gültig seit 4.11.2024, https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/laender/somalia-node/somaliasicherheit/203132#content_1, accessed 23/6/2025
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AJ - Al Jazeera (14/9/2022): In Somalia, al-Shabab's courts win more converts, https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/9/14/in-somalia-citizens-eal-shabaabs-justice-system-to-the-state, accessed 3/6/2024
- AQSOM 4 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (6/2024): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- C.Maslen/U4ACRC/TI/CMI - Transparency International (Publisher), U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (Publisher), Christian Michelsen Institute (Publisher), Caitlin Maslen (Author) (16/2/2026): Somalia: Corruption and anti-corruption.U4 HELPDESK ANSWER 2026:4, https://knowledgehub.transparencycdn.org/helpdesk/Somalia-Corruption-and-AC.pdf, accessed 28/4/2026
- CFR - Council on Foreign Relations (6/12/2022): Backgrounder – Al-Shabab, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabab, accessed 18/6/2024
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (30/10/2025): Puntland President Dissolves the Military Court, https://www.dawan.africa/news/puntland-president-dissolves-the-military-court, accessed 20/11/2025
- DW - Deutsche Welle (3/2021): DW Documentary - Somalia Living with Violence and Terror, online nicht mehr verfügbar; vormals (Stand 27.7.2021) verfügbar auf, https://ne-np.facebook.com/aaferrooficial/videos/161693795787317/, accessed 27/7/2021
- Economist - Economist, The (23/1/2025): Government by social media in Somalia, https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/01/23/government-by-social-media-in-somalia, accessed 17/4/2026 [fee required]
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020a): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf/2f51bf86-ac96-f34e-fd02-667c6ae973a0/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf?t=1602225617645, accessed 12/10/2023
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (8/9/2022): Somaliland Murderer Spared after Agreeing to Pay 100 Camels in Compensation, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/somaliland-murderer-spared-after-agreeing-to-pay-100-camels-in-compensation, accessed 3/6/2024
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (4/2021): Structural Impediments To Reviving Somalia's Security Forces, https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Structural-Impediments-to-Security-English-version-April-17-Final-.pdf, accessed 15/3/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (27/3/2025): Outrage in Somalia after missing 8-year-old girl found with man claiming to be her husband, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200884/outrage_in_somalia_after_missing_8_year_old_girl_found_with_man_claiming_to_be_her_husband.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 6/5/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IO-D/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale Organisation D (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga - Khalif Farah, Marin Ouma, Samuel Nyanchoga (9/2025): Influence of Corruption on the Increased Prevalence of Terrorism in Somalia. In: African Journal of Politics

and Administrative Studies (AJPAS) 18(3) (September, 2025), 163-187, https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajpas/article/download/306463/288088, accessed 28/4/2026
- Kaab - Kaab TV (30/11/2025a): Galmudug Court Sentences Killers of Woman and Three Daughters to Death, https://en.kaabtv.com/galmudug-court-sentences-killers-of-woman-and-three-daughters-to-death/, accessed 2/12/2025
- Kaab - Kaab TV (24/11/2025a): Somali Military Court Sentences Individuals to Death Over Brutal Killings in Lower Shabelle, https://en.kaabtv.com/somali-military-court-sentences-individuals-to-death-over-brutal-killings-in-lower-shabelle/, accessed 2/12/2025
- Kaab - Kaab TV (2/11/2025a): Jubbaland Military Court Delivers Verdict in the Case of NISA Officer Accused of Murder, http://en.kaabtv.com/jubbaland-military-court-delivers-verdict-in-the-case-of-nisa-officer-accused-of-murder/, accessed 3/12/2025
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (21/5/2019a): Somalia: Al-Shabaab-områder i Sør-Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2009628/Respons_Somalia_Al-Shabaab-omr_der_i_S_r-Somalia_21052019.pdf, accessed 16/11/2023
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (1/7/2019): Somalia - Rätts- och säkerhetssektorn Version 1.0, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2012758/190704400.pdf, accessed 3/6/2024
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (9/4/2019): Somalia - Folkbokförning, medborgarskap och identitetshandlngar, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2007147/190423300.pdf, accessed 7/5/2024
- Majid/Abdirahman/Hassan - Nisar Majid, Khalif Abdirahman, Shamsa Hassan (2017): Remittances and Vulnerability in Somalia. Assessing Sources, Uses and Delivery Mechanisms, http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/633401530870281332/pdf/Remittances-and-Vulnerability-in-Somalia-Resubmission.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- Majid/Abdirahman/LSE - London School of Econonomics and Political Science (Publisher), Nisar Majid (Author), Khalif Abdirahman (Author) (26/3/2021): The Kismayo Bubble - Justice and Security in Jubbaland, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/109317/2/The_kismayo_bubble_updated.pdf, accessed 10/10/2023
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI - Overseas Development Institute (Publisher), Ashley Jackson (Author), Mohamed Mubarak (Author) (8/2023): Playing the long game: Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control, https://odi.org/en/publications/playing-the-long-game-exploring-the-relationship-between-al-shabab-and-civilians-in-areas-beyond-state-control/, accessed 30/1/2024
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Omer2/ALRC - Ahmed Omer 2, Africa Legal Risk Control Ltd (17/3/2023): Somali Family Law & Practice. An Expert Report (Bericht i.A. der österreichischen und deutschen Botschaften in Nairobi); per e-Mail
- Researcher/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Researcher (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Rollins/HIR - Kay Rollins (Author), Harvard International Review (Publisher) (27/3/2023): No Justice, No Peace: Al-Shabaab's Court System, https://hir.harvard.edu/no-justice-no-peace-al-shabaabs-court-system/, accessed 29/6/2023
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (30/6/2025): The jihadist protection racket and the conflict economy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 840, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (28/5/2025): Stolen Childhoods: Somalia's Enduring Crisis of Child Marriage, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 828, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/1/2025): The Recognition of Xeer Issa, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 779, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (31/7/2024): Inside Somalia's Prisons, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 711, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (29/5/2024): Pluralism at work: 'Justice' in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 687, per e-Mail [fee required]

- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (21/11/2022): Eradicating Al-Shabaab Courts in Somalia: A Judicial Dilemma, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 478, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- SFH - Swiss Refugee Council (1/2026): Factsheet Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2137060/260119_SOM_factsheet_web_DE.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- SIDRA - Somali Institute for Development Research and Analysis (11/2019): Youth Radicalization in Somalia, https://sidrainstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/YOUTH-RADICALIZATION-IN-SOMALIA.pdf, accessed 3/6/2024
- SPC - Somalia Protection Cluster (9/2/2022): Protection Analysis Update, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOM_PAU_Somalia-Protection-Analysis_Feb2022.pdf, accessed 15/11/2023
- SRF - Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (27/12/2021): Ein Staat ohne Macht - Somalia: Leben im gescheiterten Staat, https://www.srf.ch/news/international/ein-staat-ohne-macht-somalia-leben-im-gescheiterten-staat, accessed 11/10/2023
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (8/2017): Fact Finding Mission Report Somalia; Sicherheitslage in Somalia; Bericht zur österreichisch-schweizerischen FFM, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1406268/5209_1502195321_ffm-report-somalia-sicherheitslage-onlineversion-2017-08-ke.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen - Sif Heide-Ottosen (Author), James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (2022): Journeys through Extremism: The Experiences of Former Members of Al-Shabaab, https://resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-09/RSVE_RR_CBAGS_JourneysAlShabaab_Heide-Ottosenetal_Sept2022_UpdatedAug2023.pdf, accessed 29/1/2024
- UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (n.d): Individual case study - UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, The Xeer Traditional Legal System of Somalia, https://ich.unesco.org/en/individual-case-study-00988?id=00032, accessed 24/9/2025
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (22/1/2026): Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Somalia; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/HRC/WG.6/52/SOM/3], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138749.html, accessed 27/4/2026
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (6/9/2017): Report of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1422745/1930_1516796959_g1726077.pdf, accessed 16/11/2023
- UNHRC/UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (Publisher), United Nations Human Rights Council (Author) (30/1/2026): Visit to Somalia. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/52/Add.2, accessed 23/4/2026
- UNHRCOM - United Nations Human Rights Committee (6/5/2024): Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia [CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2108970/G2405613.pdf, accessed 24/5/2024
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (3/2026): V-Dem Codebook, https://v-dem.net/documents/70/codebook_v16.pdf, accessed 13/8/2026
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (2025a): Variable Graph – Judicial Corruption Decision, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/, accessed 10/12/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (1/11/2019): Letter dated 1 November 2019 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council; Letter dated 27 September 2019 from the Panel of Experts on Somalia addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia [S/2019/858], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2019947/S_2019_858_E.pdf, accessed 6/6/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (26/6/2024a): 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2111587.html, accessed 9/7/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024
- Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA - Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter am German Institute of Global and Area Studies (3/7/2018): Sachverständigengutachten zu 10 K 1802/14A

4.2 The al-Shabaab 'tax' system

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:27

In areas controlled by al-Shabaab, there is a centralised 'tax' system (BS 2026). Al-Shabaab maintains a register of 'its citizens' possessions in order to levy 2.5 per cent ***zakat***annually (Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023; cf. Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023), which sources describe as a 'compulsory donation' or 'protection money' (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. MBZ 6/2023; GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022). Originally, *zakat* is one of the five pillars of Islam, a religious obligation to give a percentage of one's possessions to the poor (UNSC 6/10/2021). In the case of al-Shabaab, this levy applies not only to individuals but also to businesses (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. MBZ 6/2023). The group collects *zakat* twice a year from the agricultural sector and once a year from the livestock sector and business owners. In addition, al-Shabaab receives further voluntary contributions, known as***infaq***, to support its fighters (UNSC 6/10/2021). According to other sources, this is a special tax which al-Shabaab's local officials can levy as required. A portion of this goes to the elders, and the group's schools are also funded from it (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). In addition, al-Shabaab earns **ransom money** from kidnappings (GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022; cf. UNSC 6/10/2021). Should financial difficulties arise, the group expects clan elders to plug any funding gaps (Gov Som 2022).

What is taxed? Unlike the Somali state, al-Shabaab 'taxes' everything and everyone in Somalia (SRF 27/12/2021). Clan elders assist al-Shabaab in determining the size and financial strength of their clan. On this basis, the group then calculates the 'taxes' due as well as the number of recruits the clan must provide (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). However, the group's main source of income is the taxation of the transit of vehicles and goods (UNSC 6/10/2021; cf. UNSC 10/10/2022; MBZ 4/4/2025). To this end, the group maintains dozens of checkpoints manned by 'tax' officials (GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022). Among other things, the following are 'taxed':

- Agriculture (*dalag beeraha*): on farms, agricultural produce and land (UNSC 6/10/2021; cf. UNSC 10/10/2022; Gov Som 2022; UNSC 6/10/2021; RLInst 7/7/2026); reports from Diinsoor indicate that returning IDPs had to apply for and pay for an agricultural licence in order to be allowed to farm their own land (UNSC 10/10/2022). According to one source, livestock farmers must hand over one camel for every 20 as *zakat* (UNSC 6/2/2025);
- Goods and transport (*badeeco*): a road toll is levied on all goods; the amount depends on the type and quantity (UNSC 6/10/2021; cf. UNSC 10/10/2022; Gov Som 2022; RLInst 7/7/2026). Both the owner of the goods and the owner of the vehicle are taxed (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). According to one source, a small lorry must pay 180 US dollars to pass through an al-Shabaab checkpoint, whilst large lorries cost 260 US dollars (UNSC 6/2/2025).

One source explains: if, for example, someone transports goods to the rural areas around Mogadishu or uses the area for transit, that person will pay levies to al-Shabaab (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026);

- Trade: According to a survey, wholesalers must pay US$120–160 per month, whilst retailers must pay US$60–100 (UNSC 6/2/2025);
- Property transactions and the property sector, property taxes (Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023; cf. Gov Som 2022; TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b; HI 10/2020); in Afgooye, for example, al-Shabaab demands 'taxes' from homeowners. US$150 for a stone house, US$300 for a multi-storey house; and US$100 for a corrugated iron shack (UNSC 10/10/2022).
- Vehicles (*gadiid*): Transit fees depend on the type of vehicle and the length of the journey. In any case, vehicles must be registered with al-Shabaab (UNSC 6/10/2021; cf. UNSC 10/10/2022; Gov Som 2022). The group extorts protection money from anything that (quote) 'sails, rolls or moves" (Detsch/FP 23/8/2023). Vehicles passing through an al-Shabaab checkpoint are either already registered with the group or must be entered into the register for a fee (including vehicle details and owner) (GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022). Al-Shabaab also issues its own number plates and thereby collects fees (UNSC 6/2/2025);
- Livestock (*xoolo*): the sale of livestock, particularly cattle, camels and goats (UNSC 6/10/2021; cf. UNSC 10/10/2022; Gov Som 2022; AI 21/4/2026; RLInst 7/7/2026);
- Imports and exports (BS 2026; cf. Gov Som 2022; Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023; Landinfo 8/9/2022; UNSC 10/10/2022); for every container that arrives in Mogadishu, levies must be paid to al-Shabaab (Detsch/FP 23/8/2023);
- Construction sector, construction work, construction firms (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025; AQSOM 9 1/2026); the group also collects levies on buildings under construction in Mogadishu. There, a developer is usually charged 25 per cent of the total value of the completed building (UNSC 10/10/2022);
- Certain services (HIPS 2020) or service providers, e.g. freight forwarders, travel agencies or hotels (Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025), as well as telecommunications (RLInst 7/7/2026);
- Educational institutions: for example, according to one source, al-Shabaab demands monthly levies of US$200–300 from private schools and universities near Mogadishu (Sahan/Caasimada 12/7/2023);
- Water points (AI 21/4/2026; cf. UNSC 10/10/2022) and irrigation systems (Gov Som 2022; cf. HI 10/2020);
- NGOs: These must pay 5–10 per cent of project costs – plus fees. There are ways to have a project exempted from tax. In addition, there are also projects commissioned directly by al-Shabaab from NGOs (e.g. bridge construction) (AQ21 11/2023);
- Remissen (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b).

Who pays levies: According totwo sources, al-Shabaab 'taxes' every major business operator in Mogadishu. Smaller market stalls and street vendors do not have to pay anything, or are of less importance to al-Shabaab (BMLV 7/8/2024; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; HI 10/2020). According to one source, small-scale farmers are not usually required to pay anything (Sahan/SWT 22/1/2025). Another source explains that civil servants and small businesses must also pay money (Detsch/FP 23/8/2023). The entire economy in the capital pays 'taxes' to al-Shabaab (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Many businesses and individuals continue to pay levies to the group because they do not believe the government is capable of protecting them from al-Shabaab (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. HI 10/2020). Older sources state that even staff of international organisations (STDOK 8/2017), federal civil servants and, on occasion, high-ranking members of the armed forces pay protection money to al-Shabaab (HI 10/2020). One source reports that many aid organisations also appear to pay 'taxes' to al-Shabaab. The same applies to hotels (Landinfo 8/9/2022). As long as someone pays money to al-Shabaab, the group has no objection to the same person or company also paying taxes to the state, even though, from their perspective, this constitutes 'financing apostates" (Sahan/SWT 30/6/2025).

Where and how levies are collected: The group collects taxes in 10 out of 18 Somali regions (Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024), including in areas not under the group's control (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. MBZ 6/2023). Consequently, most businesses in cities such as Mogadishu also pay 'taxes' to al-Shabaab (Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025), where the group has established a shadow administration (BS 2026). In Bossaso, al-Shabaab can no longer collect 'taxes'; the city is heavily secured (STDOK/BMLV 10/4/2025).

Part of the revenue is collected at a network of roadblocks (UNSC 6/10/2021). Sometimes the collection is also delegated to clan elders, who receive a salary from the taxes collected (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). According to one source, al-Shabaab generally charges levies in US dollars (AQ21 11/2023). Payments are made either in cash or via mobile applications ('*mobile money*'). According to another source, levies may also be paid in kind (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. MBZ 6/2023).

Government countermeasures: The government is threatening businesspeople (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. HO 9/2/2025), and some of them have stopped paying money toal-Shabaab (MBZ 4/4/2025). In some cases, individuals have been sentenced to several years' imprisonment for money laundering on behalf of the group (Sonna 23/9/2024).

Al-Shabaab's economic power: The entire economy is dependent on al-Shabaab, for example when it comes to the transport of goods (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Not only in the areas under its direct control but also elsewhere, surpluses from the annual collection of *zakat* and from 'taxes' frequently flow to supporters of the group who run small and medium-sized enterprises (Sahan/SWT 25/8/2023). Al-Shabaab is building an economic empire and possesses the necessary competences. Contract killings also appear to be becoming part of al-Shabaab's business model. Furthermore, the group has invested in many sectors, amassed wealth (Sahan/STDOK/SEM 4/2023) and operates a number of businesses (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

In doing so, the group invests, amongst other things, with the aim of exercising control over companies (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Each year, al-Shabaab earns an estimated total of 100–200 million US dollars (UNSC 6/2/2025); according to other sources, 200 million US dollars (Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 10/4/2025), whilst another source puts the figure at almost 250 million US dollars (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The group spends approximately 70 per cent of its revenue on operations, with the remainder being invested (UNSC 6/2/2025). It invests part of its budget in property and in small and medium-sized enterprises (Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023), both in Mogadishu and in Nairobi (Sahan/SWT 10/4/2025).

[*Note: Regarding the* ***non-payment of 'taxes',*** *see* Risks associated with protection rackets ('taxes')]

Sources

- AI - Amnesty International (21/4/2026): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia, accessed 21/4/2026
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (7/8/2024): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Detsch/FP - Jack Detsch (Author), Foreign Policy (Publisher) (23/8/2023): The Somali Underdogs Taking on Terrorists, https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/08/23/somalia-al-shabab-al-qaeda-terror-pentagon/, accessed 19/9/2023
- GITOC/Bahadur - Jay Bahadur (Author), Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (Publisher) (8/12/2022): Terror and Taxes. Inside al-Shabaab's revenue-collection machine, https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/AS-protection-economies.-WEB.pdf, accessed 9/10/2023
- Gov Som - Federal Government of Somalia [Somalia] (2022): National Risk Assessment on Money Laundering ans Terrorist Financing, https://frc.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/NRA-Report-2022.pdf, accessed 15/3/2024
- HI - Hiraal Institute (10/2020): A Losing Game: Countering Al-Shabab's Financial System, https://hiraalinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/A-Losing-Game.pdf, accessed 16/11/2023
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (2020): State of Somalia Report, Year in Review, https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/HIPS_2020-SOS-2019-Report-English-Version.pdf, accessed 16/11/2023
- HO - Hiiraan Online (9/2/2025): Somali ministers vow tough action against al-Shabaab financiers, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Feb/200171/somali_ministers_vow_tough_action_against_al_shabaab_financiers.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 8/5/2026
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (8/9/2022): Somalia: Sikkerhetssituasjonen i Mogadishu og al-Shabaabs innflytelse i byen, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Respons-Somalia-Sikkerhetssituasjonen-i-Mogadishu-og-al-Shabaabs-innflytelse-i-byen-08092022-1.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023

- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (6/2023): General country of origin information report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 29/4/2024
- Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI - Overseas Development Institute (Publisher), Ashley Jackson (Author), Mohamed Mubarak (Author) (8/2023): Playing the long game: Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control, https://odi.org/en/publications/playing-the-long-game-exploring-the-relationship-between-al-shabab-and-civilians-in-areas-beyond-state-control/, accessed 30/1/2024
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Q. Müller/Afrique XXI - Afrique XXI (Publisher), Quentin Müller (Author) (4/5/2025): En Somalie, les Chabab profitent de la crise et s'approchent de Mogadiscio, https://afriquexxi.info/En-Somalie-les-Chabab-profitent-de-la-crise-et-s-approchent-de-Mogadiscio, accessed 10/7/2025
- Researcher/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Researcher (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- RLInst - Robert Lansing Institute (7/7/2026): Somalia's Political Fragmentation Fuels Al-Shabaab's Resurgence, https://lansinginstitute.org/2026/07/07/somalias-political-fragmentation-fuels-al-shabaabs-resurgence/, accessed 10/7/2026
- Sahan/Caasimada - Caasimada (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/7/2023): Al-Shabaab extends extortion to private schools and universities near Mogadishu, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 564, per e-Mail. Originallink auf Somali, https://www.caasimada.net/al-shabab-oo-arrin-cusub-ka-billowday-duleedka-muqdisho/, accessed 16/1/2024
- Sahan/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Sahan (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (30/6/2025): The jihadist protection racket and the conflict economy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 840, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (10/4/2025): Al-Shabaab at the Nexus of Terrorism and Crime, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 810, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (22/1/2025): The Isbaaro Economy of Somalia's Roads, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 777, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (25/8/2023): Confronting Al-Shabaab's Patronage System, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 583, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sonna - Somali National News Agency [Somalia] (23/9/2024): Benadir Court Sentences Four Al-Shabaab sympathizers, https://sonna.so/en/benadir-court-sentences-four-al-shabaab-sympathizers, accessed 8/5/2026
- SRF - Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (27/12/2021): Ein Staat ohne Macht - Somalia: Leben im gescheiterten Staat, https://www.srf.ch/news/international/ein-staat-ohne-macht-somalia-leben-im-gescheiterten-staat, accessed 11/10/2023
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (8/2017): Fact Finding Mission Report Somalia; Sicherheitslage in Somalia; Bericht zur österreichisch-schweizerischen FFM, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1406268/5209_1502195321_ffm-report-somalia-sicherheitslage-onlineversion-2017-08-ke.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- STDOK/BMLV - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Ministry of Defence [Austria] (10/4/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten des BMLV
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen - James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Andrew Glazzard (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (12/2023b): The 'Off-Ramp' from al-Shabaab: Disengagement during the Offensive in

Somalia, https://resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-12/RSVE_RR_LPBI_TheOffRamp_AS_Somalia Defections_KhalilEtAl_Dec2023_FINAL-UPDATE12.18.23.pdf, accessed 26/1/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (6/2/2025): Thirty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities, https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/71/Rev.1, accessed 12/6/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (10/10/2022): Letter dated 10 October 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council: Letter dated 1 September 2022 from the Panel of Experts on Somalia addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia [S/2022/754], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2081261/N2263844.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (6/10/2021): Letter dated 5 October 2021 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council: Final report of the Panel of Experts on Somalia (S/2021/849), https://reliefweb.int/attachments/17a953bc-861a-348a-a59b-1e182f053030/S_2021_849_E.pdf, accessed 12/10/2023
- Williams/ACSS - Africa Center for Strategic Studies (Publisher), Wendy Williams (Author) (27/3/2023): Reclaiming Al Shabaab's Revenue, https://africacenter.org/spotlight/reclaiming-al-shabaabs-revenue, accessed 7/11/2023

4.3 Somaliland (the section on Somalia regarding the xeer should also be taken into account)

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

In principle, Islam is enshrined in the constitution as the state religion; all laws must comply with the principles of Sharia (USDOS 26/6/2024a).

Separation of powers: In Somaliland, there is a clearer separation of state powers (BS 2026). The Constitution provides for a horizontal separation of powers between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. This is also largely observed (AA 9/3/2026). According to other sources, the executive exerts substantial influence over both the legislature and the judiciary (BS 2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

The rule of law and the state's monopoly on the use of force: In urban areas, there is a basic level of rule of law; the police, the judiciary and other institutions function reasonably well (BS 2026; cf. INGO-V/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Principles of the rule of law are observed to some extent. This includes efforts to avoid discriminatory criminal prosecution and sentencing as far as possible (AA 9/3/2026). According to other sources, the lack of investigations into arbitrary arrests, unfair trials, the use of illegal detention facilities and impunity amount to a disregard for the rule of law (HRCSL 2025).

Apart from the border regions with Puntland and the parts of Sool and Sanaag controlled by the *SSC-Khatumo*, Somaliland holds a state monopoly on the use of force and is able to enforce laws across the majority of its territory (BS 2026). There is a reasonably functioning network of public authorities (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024) and police crime statistics are available [*see* Security Situation in Somaliland]. In remote areas, local authorities (usually elders) uphold the legal order. There, the rights of women and minorities are often inadequately protected and are also violated (BS 2026).

Formal judiciary – structure, jurisdiction: A four-tier hierarchical court system has been established in Somaliland. This consists of the Supreme Court, regional courts of appeal, regional courts and district courts. The legal infrastructure and the court system cover almost all urban centres (BS 2026). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, the district courts (*Maxkamadda Degmada*) have jurisdiction over family and inheritance law, as well as civil cases involving claims of less than three million Somaliland shillings [*approx. 330 US dollars*] and criminal cases carrying a sentence of less than three years' imprisonment. All cases exceeding these limits are referred to the regional court. Each region has a regional court of appeal, which handles all appeals from the courts of first instance (LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). So-called mobilecourts were established in 2008 with international assistance. These have improved access to the formal justice system (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). They play an important role in extending legal services from the district level right up to the Supreme Court (SLST 4/5/2025). In 2024, Somaliland courts dealt with 26,716 cases (14,046 civil cases, 7,908 criminal cases, 3,500 enforcement cases); of which 22,220 cases were concluded (SLST 4/5/2025).

Formal judiciary – quality, independence: Although Somaliland's judicial system faces challenges such as corruption, bias and a lack of resources, it is regarded as more effective than the courts in the rest of the country (Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023). However, the judiciary operates slowly (BS 2026). There is a shortage of trained judges, as well as a lack of comprehensible legal documentation (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024) and, more generally, a shortage of judges, prosecutors, training and financial resources (BS 2026). UNODC and other UN agencies are supporting improvements to the judicial system and prison conditions (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). There has been at least some progress in reforming the judicial system (FH 2024a). Efforts are being made to improve training through scholarships and short training courses (SLST 4/5/2025). Land disputes contribute to the overburdening of the courts; the number of such conflicts has risen in some towns due to urbanisation. In Hargeysa, however, where a modern land information system has been introduced, the figures are falling (SLST 4/5/2025).

The judiciary lacks independence from the executive. There is interference by clans (BS 2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024), for example when judges are appointed on the basis of their political or clan affiliations, or when elders influence the outcome of proceedings (BS 2026). According to one source, the repeated arbitrary arrest and release of journalists, which takes place without justification, underscores the 'collapse of the judicial system" (HRCSL 2025). On an index measuring corruption in the judiciary, Somaliland scores -0.41points (Southern/Central Somalia -2.26; Ethiopia -1.59; Kenya +0.99) (UNIG-VDI 2025a).

Formal justice – procedural rights: According to older information, the presumption of innocence, the right to a public hearing and the right to legal representation apply in Somaliland's courts. Defence lawyers are permitted to question and summon witnesses, and to appeal against judgements. Defendants accused of serious offences are entitled to free legal representation (USDOS 12/4/2022). However, the independent Human Rights Centre reports serious shortcomings. According to the Centre, arrests are often made without a warrant. Defendants are sometimes held in pre-trial detention for excessive periods and unlawfully, with no prospect of bail, and are denied access to the indictment (HRCSL 3/2024).

There is a functioning *Legal Aid Clinic*. This is based at the University of Hargeysa and is supported, amongst others, by the EU. People who would otherwise be unable to afford it, such as migrants or the homeless, receive legal advice and representation there. The project employs 16 people, most of whom are lawyers (LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Military courts: Trials against civilians are also held before Somaliland military courts (HRCSL 2025).

Sharia and *xeer* [*see also* Legal protection, Judicial system – South/Central Somalia, Puntland]: In addition to formal law, traditional law (*xeer*) and Sharia are also applied in Somaliland (BS 2026; cf. FH 2024a; AA 9/3/2026). These three legal systems sometimes contradict one another (SDG 1/2/2019). Islamic courts are primarily used in family matters, but are also becoming increasingly popular amongst businesspeople due to the speed of their decisions (BS 2026). Dispute resolution under Islamic law (*sulh*) plays a significant role in civil disputes (SLST 4/5/2025). One source explains that formal law is regarded as secondary to *xeer*. Furthermore, religious norms influence *xeer* (BS 2026). In traditional law, elders act as judges (LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

People's loyalty lies primarily with their own clan, and for this reason alone, negotiations between clan elders play a key role in conflict resolution – even in everyday disputes between private individuals (Landinfo 5/3/2026). Consequently, *xeer* is used in most cases between individual citizens and between clans (LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to a local lawyer, people feel more at ease within the informal system governed by *xeer* and administered by the elders (LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Generally, citizens turn first to their clan. Even in the case of murder, blood money is initially negotiated within the traditional legal system; if no resolution is reached there, the matter is referred to the courts (STDOK 8/2017). According to other sources, the parties to a dispute – provided both sides agree – turn to a Sharia court. The judge there acts as a mediator; there is no binding decision. Only when both these traditional bodies are unable to resolve a dispute do people turn to the formal justice system. Occasionally, however, minor criminal and civil cases are also settled and concluded directly at the police station – here too by elders and with the consent of the parties involved. In such cases, the elders are summoned by the disputing parties, not by the police (LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are also known as *maslaxa* (UNSOM 22/6/2022). For traditional dispute resolution, both sides send two to three representatives. A formal court may also send representatives there (in the sense of mediation) (LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Somaliland has, in fact, integrated the *xeer* and the associated compensation payments into its legal system in order to prevent escalation, including acts of revenge killing. Clans continue to conclude *xeer agreements*, but the state assumes the role of imposing penalties in the event of non-compliance with the terms of the agreement. For example, offenders are detained until the compensation payment has been made. If non-payment persists for too long, this may also lead to the carrying out of executions (Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA 3/7/2018). Courts recognise *xeer* decisions(SEM 31/5/2017). The Code of Criminal Procedure from 1960 – which remains in force – clarifies which offences must be dealt with by the formal justice system (e.g. theft) and

which are eligible for mediation by elders (Mire/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). An agreement reached by clan elders can lead to the case being dropped and the offender being spared punishment (AA 9/3/2026). For example, a man sentenced to death for murder was released in 2023 after the clan elders involved had agreed on compensation (AA 25/4/2025). For all such proceedings involving elders, there is a state-maintained list of traditional elders, administered by the Ministry of the Interior. In addition, each governor maintains a separate list of elders in their region. If a party does not belong to a clan and therefore has no clan elder, the state acts as a mediator: either the Attorney General's Office or the *Solicitor General's* Office will represent that person in the mediation process (Mire/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Areas not controlled by the government: In these areas, judgements are frequently handed down by clan elders in accordance with traditional law. In cases involving several clans, out-of-court settlements (justices of the peace) are common, including – and particularly – in criminal matters. Repression directed at family members and close associates ('clan liability') plays an important role in this context (AA 9/3/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (25/4/2025): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 2025), April 202, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2125924/Deutschland. Auswärtiges Amt, Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (2025): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2024, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Annual-Report-2025-1.pdf, accessed 24/4/2026
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (3/2024): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2023, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Annual-Report-HRC-2023-web-1.pdf, accessed 31/5/2024
- INGO-V/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), International NGO V (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- LAW-A/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Lawyer A (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Mire/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Cabdi Xasan Mire, Deputy Police Commissioner [Somaliland] (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]

- Rollins/HIR - Kay Rollins (Author), Harvard International Review (Publisher) (27/3/2023): No Justice, No Peace: Al-Shabaab's Court System, https://hir.harvard.edu/no-justice-no-peace-al-shabaabs-court-system/, accessed 29/6/2023
- SDG - SDG16+ Coalition (1/2/2019): Improving Access to Justice in Somaliland, https://www.kpsrl.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/Report-Improving-access-to-justice-in-Somaliland-25012019-2.pdf, accessed 6/6/2024
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (4/5/2025): Supreme Court Chief Justice Shares 2024 Judicial Performance Insights, https://somalilandstandard.com/supreme-court-chief-justice-shares-2024-judicial-performance-insights/, accessed 7/5/2026
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (8/2017): Fact Finding Mission Report Somalia; Sicherheitslage in Somalia; Bericht zur österreichisch-schweizerischen FFM, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1406268/5209_1502195321_ffm-report-somalia-sicherheitslage-onlineversion-2017-08-ke.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (2025a): Variable Graph – Judicial Corruption Decision, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/, accessed 10/12/2025
- UNSOM - United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (22/6/2022): Catching up on human rights needs in Sool and Sanaag after four years, https://unsom.unmissions.org/catching-human-rights-needs-sool-and-sanaag-after-four-years, accessed 13/3/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (26/6/2024a): 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2111587.html, accessed 9/7/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/4/2022): 2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2071126.html, accessed 4/10/2023
- Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA - Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter am German Institute of Global and Area Studies (3/7/2018): Sachverständigengutachten zu 10 K 1802/14A

5 Security authorities

5.1 Southern/central Somalia, Puntland

5.1.1 Foreign forces

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:27

The Federal Government is largely dependent on the *African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia* (AUSSOM) for security (BS 2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

AUSSOM: At the end of June 2024, the Security Council of the African Union(AU) approved a successor mission to the *African Union Transition Mission in Somalia* (ATMIS); the United Nations has given a positive assessment of the plan (BMLV 4/7/2024; cf. UNSC 27/9/2024; HO 23/6/2024). *AUSSOM* has a mandate for 12,626 personnel, including 1,040 police officers. Like its predecessors, the mission is intended to support the Somali security forces in the fight against al-Shabaab (BS 2026). In December 2025, AUSSOM's mandate was extended for one year (AI 21/4/2026). Logistically, the force is supported by*the United Nations Support Office in Somalia* (UNSOS) (UNSOS 8/4/2026). UNSOS handles virtually all food, fuel and emergency medical supplies for AUSSOM (BMLV 22/7/2026).

There is still no clarity regarding the funding of AUSSOM; no (long-term) donors have been found (BMLV 22/7/2026). UNSOS, as AUSSOM's supporter, also faces an uncertain future. The

largest donor – the USA – has announced that it intends to cease making payments to UNSOS from 2027 onwards (BMLV 22/7/2026; cf. RLInst 7/7/2026).

AUSSOM has around 50 bases in southern and central Somalia (BMLV 22/7/2026). At the start of 2023, ATMIS still had 71 such bases, but 21 were gradually closed or handed over to Somali forces by the end of 2024 (PGN 19/6/2025; cf. ÖB Nairobi 19/11/2024).

ENDF (*Ethiopian National Defence Force***):** With regard to bilateral deployments, there is, in principle, an understanding between Ethiopia and Somalia (GO 23/2/2025b). One source reports a troop strength of more than 6,000 (SWP/Kurtz/Roll/Lossow 28/10/2024), whilst another, in early 2025, even puts the figure at 10,000 (Mareeg 2/1/2025). A third source states that only around 3,500 troops are permanently stationed in Somalia, whilst a further 6,000–7,000 are positioned just across the Ethiopian border and can be deployed to Somalia relatively quickly (BMLV 22/7/2026). The exact figure is difficult to ascertain (Sahan/SWT 13/1/2025), not least because even the Ethiopian troops deployed to Somalia under bilateral agreements wear the green berets of AUSSOM (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025).

The Ethiopian troops are primarily deployed in Bakool, Bay, Gedo and Hiiraan (Sahan/SWT 13/1/2025; cf. BMLV 22/7/2026), and there, in particular, in the border region with Ethiopia (MBZ 4/4/2025), where they form a buffer to keep al-Shabaab out of Ethiopia (BMLV 22/7/2026). The ENDF cooperates with the forces of the respective federal states and local militias (SWP/Kurtz/Roll/Lossow 28/10/2024).

UPDF (*Ugandan People's Defence Force*): Uganda, too, has stationed bilateral troops in Somalia – at least 2,000 men. These troops are deployed exclusively in the Ugandan AUSSOM sector. They operate outside the AUSSOM mandate and are neither paid by the AU nor supported by the United Nations (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026).

Turkey: Turkey has stationed 300 special forces personnel and 200 technicians in Somalia to operate Bayraktar drones in Mogadishu (AQSOM 5 5/2025; cf. BMLV 22/7/2026). These (combat) drones (AQSOM 5 5/2025; cf. BS 2026; GO 23/7/2025) and fighter jets are also being used against al-Shabaab. Furthermore, Turkey also has main battle tanks in Mogadishu (BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026). The Qatari Prime Minister has stated that his country is funding the majority of the Turkish military presence in Somalia (AQSOM 5 5/2025). The Turkish Parliament has authorised the deployment of up to 2,500 soldiers to Somalia. So far, however, only a few tank crews have been seen on the ground (BMLV 22/7/2026); according to other reports, there are said to be around 500 Turkish soldiers in Somalia (SG 22/4/2025). In addition, there are several hundred personnel from the Turkish security and military company SADAT (BMLV 22/7/2026). According to one source , the stationed troops are primarily there to protect Turkish investments rather than to combatal-Shabaab (GO 23/7/2025).

Others: There are also other foreign military forces active in the country, including Turksom (a Turkish training centre in Mogadishu); EUTM (European Union Training Mission in Somalia); and US troops. Around 500 US soldiers are permanently stationed in Somalia (BMLV 22/7/2026).

Sources

- AI - Amnesty International (21/4/2026): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia, accessed 21/4/2026
- AQSOM 5 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 5 (5/2025): Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um einen analytischen Newsletter
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (22/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (4/7/2024): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (20/5/2026): Telefoninterview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (6/6/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- GO - Garowe Online (23/7/2025): Despite Billions in Aid, Somalia's Army Crumbles as Al-Shabaab Resurgence Gains Ground, Donors Losing Faith, https://garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/despite-billions-in-aid-somalia-s-army-crumbles-as-al-shabaab-resurgence-gains-ground-donors-losing-faith, accessed 21/10/2025
- GO - Garowe Online (23/2/2025b): Somalia Greenlights Ethiopian Troops in New AU Mission, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-greenlights-ethiopian-troops-in-new-au-mission, accessed 5/6/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (23/6/2024): AU Security Council proposes new Somalia mission to support state-building, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Jun/196812/au_security_council_proposes_new_somalia_mission_to_support_state_building.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 27/6/2024
- Mareeg - Mareeg (2/1/2025): Ethiopia Negotiates Participation in New AU Mission with Somalia, https://mareeg.com/ethiopia-negotiates-participation-in-new-au-mission-with-somalia/, accessed 3/6/2025
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (19/11/2024): Wochenbericht 11.11.-17.11.2024, per e-Mail an die Staatendokumentation
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- PGN - Political Geography Now (19/6/2025): June 2025 Somalia Control Map & Timeline: Al Shabaab Resurgence, ISIS Retreat, Jubaland Defiant (Subscription), https://controlmaps.polgeonow.com/2025/06/june-2025-somalia-control-map-timeline/, accessed 23/6/2025 [fee required]
- RLInst - Robert Lansing Institute (7/7/2026): Somalia's Political Fragmentation Fuels Al-Shabaab's Resurgence, https://lansinginstitute.org/2026/07/07/somalias-political-fragmentation-fuels-al-shabaabs-resurgence/, accessed 10/7/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (13/1/2025): A smile and a hug in Addis , in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 773, per e-Mail [fee required]
- SG - Somali Guardian (22/4/2025): Turkey sends troops to Somalia amid Al-Shabaab advances, https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/turkey-sends-troops-to-somalia-amid-al-shabaab-advances/, accessed 5/6/2026

- SWP/Kurtz/Roll/Lossow - Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Publisher), Gerrit Kurtz (Author), Stephen Roll (Author), Tobias von Lossow (Author) (28/10/2024): Escalations Risks in the Horn of Africa, https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2024C50, accessed 2/12/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (27/9/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2024/698], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116024/n2426310.pdf, accessed 14/11/2024
- UNSOS - United Nations Support Office in Somalia (8/4/2026): About – Mandate, https://unsos.unmissions.org/en/about/mandate, accessed 5/6/2026

5.1.2 Somali forces

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

The security forces play a prominent role, with a large proportion of the national budget being spent on the security sector (AA 9/3/2026). In 2024, 21.6 per cent was spent on the military alone (SIPRI 2025). However, the majority of the approximately 1.5 billion US dollars spent annually on security is financed by international partners anyway. The EU, the US, the UK and Turkey all provide funding, logistics and training. Even so, the Federal Government has not succeeded in restoring the state's monopoly on the use of force (BS 2026). The Somali security forces are fragmented (AA 9/3/2026; cf. BS 2026) and, in any case, too weak and poorly organised to be able to guarantee security in the country independently – without international support (BMLV 22/7/2026; cf. NM 5/12/2025). Furthermore, the security forces have been infiltrated by al-Shabaab (BMLV 22/7/2026) and, in the event of conflict, often split along clan lines (AA 9/3/2026).

Civilian oversight, accountability, reputation: The police are subject to insufficient civilian oversight. The actions of the state security forces are largely beyond public scrutiny. This applies in particular to the *National Intelligence and Security Agency* (NISA; secret service). Although the government affirms its commitment to its obligations under international law, judicial accountability for individual members of the security forces is generally weak (AA 9/3/2026). Even though the government is taking steps to punish public officials – particularly police officers and soldiers – impunity remains the norm (USDOS 12/8/2025), whilst investigations, accountability and legal remedies for state violations remain inadequate (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026).

Nepotism and corruption are rife in the appointment of security officials. As a result, many commanders lack the necessary qualifications. The resulting incompetence not only hinders the fight against al-Shabaab but also undermines the overall effectiveness of the security institutions (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025). Although training in human rights is supported internationally, it must still be assumed that the majority of regular forces have only a rudimentary understanding of the framework of international law governing their actions. This also applies to pro-government militias (AA 9/3/2026). Measures to prevent arbitrary arrests are not observed by the police, the NISA or military institutions. Furthermore, their work is undermined by corruption (FH 2024b). Overall, the security forces do not enjoy a good reputation amongst the population (AA 9/3/2026); indeed, trust in the security infrastructure is not always present (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023), and they are regarded as unreliable (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Structure: The country's security architecture remains unclear – for instance, with regard to the roles and responsibilities of the federal government and the federal states, as well as cooperation between different units (MBZ 4/4/2025). The transitional constitution provides for the following forces: the army, the secret service, the police and the prison service. In addition, the constitution authorises the federal states to maintain their own police forces (HIPS 1/2023). However, the respective jurisdictions of the federal police and local or regional police forces remain unclear (UNSC 15/6/2023). According to one source, *Darawish* [*Note: see below*] generallyremain in the federal states in which they are stationed and are not deployed beyond these areas (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Police: The national police force is under the authority of the Ministry of Internal Security (USDOS 20/3/2023). There is the regular police force, the paramilitary *Darawish*, elite units (*Haram'ad*, *Rapid Response Team*), regional police in the federal states and, in some federal states, regional *Darawish* as well (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). According to one source, the police have a total strength of 37,000 nationwide, of whom approximately half belong to the federal police (Sahan/SWT 17/11/2025). Another source reports approximately 16,000 members of the *Somali Police Force* (BMLV 22/7/2026), whilst yet another cites around 18,000 police officers under federal authority – 10 per cent of whom are women. According to this source, they are distributed as follows:

- Benadir/Mogadishu: 12,000 Federal Police, 1,000 *Haram'ad*, 1,000 *Darawish*, 3,000 regional police;
- Galmudug: 1,000;
- South West State: 500;
- HirShabelle: 600;
- Jubaland: 200 (in Gedo);
- Puntland: zero (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Police training: In the field of police training, there are training schools run by ATMIS (*African Union Transition Mission in Somalia*) [*Note: now AUSSOM (African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia)*] and UNSOM (*United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia*), bilateral initiatives (primarily for the training of police forces in Mogadishu), support from UNDP (*United Nations Development Programme*) and UNODC (*United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*), as well as IOM (*International Organisation for Migration*) (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024), UN Women and UNTMIS [*Note: United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia, the successor mission to UNSOM*] (UNSC 30/9/2025). The training of the *Federal Darawish* is carried out by the EU's civilian mission, EUCAP Somalia (BMLV 22/7/2026). Police officers have also been and continue to be trained in Serbia, the People's Republicof China and Egypt (GN 22/4/2024), as well as in Rwanda (RD 15/7/2022) and Djibouti (with support from Italy) (Dawan 24/4/2026). UNSOM supports the development of regulations, structures and capacities (UNSC 2/2/2024), whilst AUSSOM contributes to training in the field of human rights (Horn 4/6/2026).

Police capacities: Law enforcement agencies are weak (SPC 9/2/2022). There is no central criminal record (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 16/9/2022). This makes it difficult for the security forces to carry out investigations. Police stations maintain handwritten *'occurrence books*' (Sahan/SWT 16/9/2022). The focus is on security in urban areas. Poor logistics lead to staff shortages (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). Pay is usually irregular and low, which encourages corruption and criminal behaviour (AA 9/3/2026; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to a source in Mogadishu, there is now – after many years – an emergency number for crime-related emergencies that actually works (BMLV 22/7/2026).

Although the police do have some capacity, they also struggle to uphold human rights. The fact that the population does not necessarily regard the police as a force that protects them seems to be slowly changing in some larger cities. In these places, police officers have been recruited locally – taking local clan dynamics into account. This has led to improvements. This applies, for example, to Kismayo, Jowhar and Belet Weyne (BMLV 7/8/2024). In Galmudug and HirShabelle, the police are present only in the major cities; in rural areas, policing is left to the clans (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025; cf. BMLV 22/7/2026).

Special police unit: Turkey has trained and equipped the paramilitary **special unit *Haram'ad*** (Cheetah). The unit comprises approximately 1,200 men. Its home base is Mogadishu, although the unit is rarely stationed there in full strength. Parts of *Haram'ad* are constantly being deployed out of Mogadishu as reinforcements (BMLV 22/7/2026). The unit is under the command of the police (BMLV 7/8/2024).

Army: The Ministry of Defence is responsible for overseeing the army (USDOS 20/3/2023). According to one source, the Federal Army (also known as *the SomaliNational Army* / SNA) is a corrupt, motley coalition of clan militias. Exceptions to this are the US-trained *Danaab* and the Turkish-trained *Gorgor special forces* (Sahan 27/4/2024). The dividing line between the Federal Army and clan militias is very fine. A soldier may be working in the interests of the country one day and in the interests of his clan or a political group the next (BBC 1/6/2022). According to one source, clan militias 'park' their fighters in the army for financial reasons (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Few soldiers in the Federal Army hesitate to desert when their relatives call on them to fight in a clan conflict (NLM/Barnett 7/8/2023).

Overall, despite receiving around one billion US dollars in external military aid annually, the Federal Army faces multiple challenges: logistical coordination is poor, there is no effective rotation of troops, and mobility is lacking; salaries are paid only irregularly, and equipment is inadequate. Yet more than any other factor, the politicisation of the army has contributed to its current plight – be it in operations against Jubaland, in dealing with the SWS or with Hawiye sub-clans perceived as disloyal, or in the diversion of weapons for operations not directed against al-Shabaab (Sahan/SWT 30/5/2025). Another source reports fragmentation, disparities in training and equipment, desertions, defectors, infiltration by al-Shabaab, and soldiers holding multiple jobs (CTC Sentinel/P. D. Williams 4/2024).

Corruption is widespread (FH 2024b; cf. Sahan/SWT 30/5/2025), and there are also reports of the theft of equipment, weapons, ammunition and food (MBZ 4/4/2025). Equally worrying is the

promotion system within the Federal Army, which remains highly politicised and is unrelated to merit or operational experience. Officers with good political connections and those from more influential clans regularly rise through the ranks (Sahan/SWT 30/5/2025). Many of the senior ranks are filled with incompetent personnel (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). There is no functioning operational planning beyond the battalion level (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025), and a large part of the army is stationary due to a lack of transport (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). Yet despite all this, the Federal Army is in better shape today than it was in 2010 (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Army – Pay: Soldiers receive a pay of 200–250 US dollars (BMLV/STDOK 2/6/2026); according to another source, including provisions issued in kind, this amounts to 200–300 US dollars (EUAA 5/2025a). There are regular delays in payments (BMLV 22/7/2026); soldiers often go months without receiving any pay (Sahan/SWT 30/5/2025; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). By contrast, the members of *Gorgor* and those of *Danaab* are paid regularly. The latter is and has been funded by the USA (BMLV 22/7/2026).

Army – Training and Equipment: The Federal Army suffers from shortages in personnel, equipment, training and funding (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026), although it has received support in these areas from numerous actors over the past decade – notably from the EU (EUTMSOM 20/2/2024), Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Italy, Kenya, Sudan, Turkey, the UAE, Uganda, the UK, the US, the AU and the UN (P. D. Williams 2019; cf. THLSC 20/3/2023; BBC 1/6/2022). Even in Egypt (THLSC 20/3/2023), Qatar (FTL 5/7/2022; cf. BBC 1/6/2022) and Eritrea, soldiers have been trained (BMLV 7/8/2024). The UK alone has trained more than 2,000 Somali soldiers since 2016 (GOV.UK 18/8/2022), whilst Uganda trained a further 3,000 in 2022/2023 (HO 20/3/2023). Turkey has trained more than 15,000 soldiers for the *Gorgor* unit (NM 5/12/2025; cf. Soufan 29/2/2024). The EU mission EUTM has trained 3,600 soldiers (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024) and is now focusing on senior officers and special forces (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. Sonna 30/5/2026). The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is also involved in providing human rights training to security forces (ICRC 1/2025).

Overall, the many external actors involved in building up the Somali security forces are notoriously uncoordinated. As a result, a wide variety of units have been created, the security structure has become fragmented (BMLV 22/7/2026), and cohesion has been undermined (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. BMLV 22/7/2026). Owing to the large number of actors involved, a wide variety of uniforms and weapons can also be seen on the streets (BMLV 22/7/2026).

The Somali Armed Forces receive support in terms of pay, armaments and training from the AU, the EU, the USA and other countries, such as Turkey and Israel (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Several helicopters have been supplied from Turkey and are operated by pilots trained in Turkey (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025). In addition, the army also has its own drones, which were built in Turkey and financed by Qatar (Sahan/SWT 19/3/2025; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Since 2019, the EU has provided the army with equipment, supplies and ammunition worth 69 million US dollars (HO 4/1/2024). Turkey provides material support to the Federal Armed Forces, for example in the form of weapons (including assault rifles and machine guns), armoured vehicles, trucks and

uniforms (HIPS 1/2023). Egypt has also supplied armoured vehicles and artillery (BMLV 22/7/2026). The UN agency UNSOS is now providing logisticalsupport to 18,900 members of the security forces (UNSC 30/9/2025; cf. UNSOS 8/4/2026), for example with regard to food and water supplies, fuel, transport, the evacuation of the wounded or communications (HIPS 1/2023). The Somali armed forces have no overview of their own stockpiles. And although Somalia has procured thousands of weapons in recent years, not all soldiers are yet equipped with a weapon (BMLV 22/7/2026).

Army/Strength: Former police officer Hussen stated to the EUAA in March 2025 that the force numbers approximately 22,000 men (EUAA 5/2025a). At the same time, the personnel roll includes just as many soldiers who are not on active duty – including those who have retired, disabled veterans and those killed in action, whose dependants need to be provided for (Dawan 6/11/2025). Accordingly, although the Federal Army nominally comprises 35,000–45,000 personnel according to the latest figures, at least 12,000 of these are disabled or otherwise no longer fit for frontline service (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026).

According to sources, reliable armed forces are to be found in only three units: the Presidential Guard (77th Brigade), at *Gorgor* and at *Danaab* (Sahan/Bacon/Guiditta 7/8/2023; cf. HIPS 1/2023). Together, these units comprise around 13,000 men (BMLV 22/7/2026). They have the necessary transport capabilities to move around and carry out operations. The other units of the Federal Army can only be deployed stationarily (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Special forces: *Danaab* (Blitz) was established, trained, equipped and supported by the USA (Sahan/SWT 30/5/2025; cf. BMLV 22/7/2026). *Danaab* forms the 16th Brigade of the Federal Army and is divided into five operational units (Sahan/SWT 24/4/2024). This force comprises approximately 1,100 men (BMLV 22/7/2026). The unit's permanent bases are located in Bali Doogle and Kismayo (BMLV 22/7/2026).

Recruits are carefully selected and subsequently undergo intensive training (Sahan/SWT 30/5/2025). This is the only unit in which military experience and skill, rather than clan affiliation, play a role in recruitment (BMLV 7/8/2024; cf. UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; P. D. Williams 2019). According to other sources, there are fixed quotas to ensure that the soldiers come from all the different clans. *Danaab* is increasingly regarded as apolitical (WP 10/12/2022).

In principle, *Danaab* is a rapid reaction force. The unit was not trained to be in continuous combat (Detsch/FP 23/8/2023). *Danaab soldiers* are paid a regular salary (WP 10/12/2022). The monthly pay is 400 US dollars (SG/WP 28/5/2025). *Danaab* is the only unit that can directly request US air strikes (SG/WP 28/5/2025); its individual units are almost always accompanied by US soldiers during operations (BMLV 22/7/2026).

Special forces: *Gorgor* has been and continues to be trained and equipped with modern weapons, gear and armoured vehicles by Turkey (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026; cf. Bryden/TEL 8/11/2021; Robinson/TGO 27/1/2022). In addition to their standard pay, *Gorgor* members receive a monthly allowance of at least 100US dollars from Turkey upon completion of the first part of their basic training (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). Every few months, 300–400 newly trained

soldiers are assigned to the unit (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). The group was expanded from two brigades comprising approximately 4,300 men in November 2023 (BMLV 7/8/2024) to four brigades with up to 10,000 men, equipped throughout with Turkish materiel and organised into a command division. Recruitment is handled exclusively by the Turks. Training lasts about a year and also includes language training in Turkish. *Gorgor soldiers* are regarded as well-trained and disciplined; to a certain extent, clan loyalties are also set aside there (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). Most recently, the unit has been deployed more extensively in Mogadishu (BMLV/STDOK 2/6/2026) and is generally used by the Federal Government as a means of exerting pressure on political opponents or even to directly act against them, such as in the overthrow of the President of the South West State (SWS) (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Military Police Special Unit: Although technically subordinate to the army, this unit operates in Mogadishu under the command of the police (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Regional forces: The federal states have their own security forces (HIPS 1/2023; cf. USDOL 26/9/2023). These are not under the command of the federal government (USDOL 26/9/2023). In the SWS, the *Darawish* are also referred to as *Special Police Forces* (BMLV 22/7/2026). In Galmudug, there is apparently a paramilitary unit called *Galayr* (RD 16/11/2025). Following the offensive in Central Somalia, the *Darawish there* are now merely a shadow of their former selves or – as in HirShabelle – non-existent (BMLV 22/7/2026).

There are significant differences in the quality of the forces in the individual federal states. For example, those in Jubaland are described as considerably more competent than those in Galmudug (Sahan/SWT 17/11/2023). In Jubaland, the *Jubaland Defence Forces* (JDF) also carry out police duties (IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023); according to one source, the JDF has a strength of approximately 24,000 men (BMLV 22/7/2026). These consist mainly of Ogadeni, but also include some Rahanweyn, Marehan and Hawiye (STDOK/BMLV 10/4/2025). There are approximately 1,500 *Darawish* in Galmudug and approximately 400 in HirShabelle (BMLV 22/7/2026).

Kenya is training security forces for Jubaland. The United Kingdom (BMLV 7/8/2024) and Ethiopia are training security forces for the SWS (Sahan/SWT 5/3/2025; cf. RD 4/3/2025; BMLV 7/8/2024). Following the overthrow of President Laftagareen, some of the SWS's *Darawish* are to be integrated into the federal army (GN 13/4/2026).

Puntland: In total, the strength of Puntland's armed and security forces (*Darawish*, police, *Puntland Maritime Police Force* / PMPF and others) amounts to around 14,000 personnel (BMLV 22/7/2026). All security forces in Puntland are organised along clan lines. There are no mixed units. Each major clan has its own 'special unit', which are effectively institutionalised clan militias (BMLV 7/8/2024). Consequently, the state's security forces are highly fragmented. However, the government does exercise a degree of control over some clan militias (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

The PMPF was established by the UAE from 2011 onwards; according to one source, it comprises 4,000 personnel (Marchal/CERI 1/2026), whilst according to another, the figure is only

around 2,200 (BMLV 22/7/2026). It continues to be funded by the UAE (Kaab 29/11/2025a; cf. BMLV 22/7/2026). The same applies to some other parts of the Puntland forces (Marchal/CERI 1/2026). The *Puntland Intelligence Security Force* (PISF) is mainly recruited from Isse Mohamud; in addition, there is the *Puntland Security Commando Force* (PSCF). The *Bossaso Port Maritime Police* is part of the police force (BMLV 22/7/2026) and protects the port of Bossaso. Both this force and the PMPF receive support from the EU mission EUCAP, including training programmes (RD 30/11/2022).

In mid-August 2025, 500 new police officers were commissioned, having been trained at the police academy in Carmo (Bari) with support from the UAE (Dawan 17/8/2025). In the fight against the so-called Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) as part of the 2025 offensive, hundreds on the Puntland side were killed or wounded (Sahan/SWT 27/10/2025). The UAE has pledged to assist with compensation for the families of those killed in action (Kaab 29/11/2025a). The Puntland forces have a number of helicopters at their disposal (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025).

Outstanding pay remains a recurring problem which, in Puntland, can occasionally lead to disruptions to public life in the form of roadblocks or other acts of disruption (BMLV 22/7/2026; cf. HO 7/9/2025; HO 12/8/2025; GN 8/9/2025). However, these disruptions usually last no longer than a few hours (BMLV 22/7/2026).

Federal troops have also been present in Puntland since June 2026. The 17th Battalion is directly under the command of Mogadishu (GO 23/2/2025a). Another source mentions the newly activated 54th Division of the Federal Army in this context. Apparently, these are primarily the forces that previouslymade up the *Puntland Security Force* (PSF; Osman Mohamud forces) and the Araan Jaan (*'Puntland Commandos'*; Isse Mohamud forces) (BMLV 22/7/2026).

Militias that are not part of the Somali security forces but are loyal to regional governments also form part of the spectrum. In the past, they have often filled the security vacuum where state forces were unable to do so due to their weakness (RD 28/8/2022). As there is no nationwide police force, the federal government relies on the clans in the liberated areas to look after themselves; Mogadishu supplies ammunition and logistical support (Detsch/FP 23/8/2023). In this context, the Heritage Institute refers to informal *'community militias'*, which also **include** the **Macawiisley** (HIPS 1/2023). Two sources put the number of Macawiisley at up to 10,000 men (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 6/11/2023). A significant proportion of these, however, are not soldiers or professional militiamen, but cattle herders and nomads (Sahan/SWT 23/9/2022; cf. Sahan/Petrovski 3/5/2024; BMLV 9/2/2023), and are therefore not indefinitely available for combat (BMLV 9/2/2023). Consequently, there is also a high turnover rate (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). The Federal Government has sought to counteract this by promising the fighters a monthly pay of 100 US dollars. However, these payments have only been made irregularly (GO 11/11/2025). However, the Macawiisley also face other problems: the elders are under attack from al-Shabaab, their equipment is meagre, and the force is stationary. Furthermore, one faction of the clan is often at odds with another (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

All major political forces, as well as clans and sub-clans, have their own militias (AA 9/3/2026). Individual politicians, businesses and aid organisations have their own security personnel (HIPS

3/2021; cf. BMLV/STDOK 2/6/2026). Businesspeople have their own security teams or hire private security firms (BS 2026). The latter also secure high-value areas, amongst other things, though the quality varies. Local security firms are shaped by political allegiances, clans and patronage. There is no regulation. These firms attract talented soldiers and police officers, as salaries there range from 400 to 700US dollars . At the same time, they undermine the state's monopoly on the use of force (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). In Mogadishu, there are neighbourhood watch schemes. They patrol their residential areas and report suspicious incidents to the police – provided they have the necessary connections (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023).

NISA (*National Intelligence and Security Agency*): The NISA is responsible for national security and is vested with executive powers. Although NISA's executive units were formally integrated into the police force in 2018, this institution nevertheless plays an active role in counter-terrorism that goes beyond purely intelligence-gathering activities. Clashes with other security forces also occur time and again. Furthermore, the NISA carries out raids, makes arrests and is subject to few, if any, oversight and control mechanisms (AA 9/3/2026). In March 2023, the NISA was granted a legal basis through the NISA Act. The Act grants the agency broad powers regarding information gathering, arrest, investigation and the use of force (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025) – with minimal independent oversight (HRW 11/1/2024; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). Members of NISA cannot be investigated, sued or prosecuted without the authorisation of its Director-General, who enjoys immunity (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). According to one source, NISA has a staff of around 2,000 (BMLV 22/7/2026); according to another, 3,000–4,000, the vast majority of whom are stationed in Mogadishu, Middle Shabelle, Galmudug and Gedo (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). *Gashaan iyo Waran* is a special unit engaged in counter-terrorism operations in Mogadishu (BMLV 7/8/2024). Overall, NISA, founded in 2013, has gradually evolved within the broader security forces into a paramilitary and highly politicised parallel structure that now fulfils its actual tasks (internal and external intelligence) only sporadically (Sahan/SWT 4/6/2025). Owing to its operational strength in civil defence in Mogadishu, NISA has been granted greater powers, particularly with regard to manning checkpoints (AA 9/3/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation (1/6/2022): US troops back in Somalia to fight al-Shabab, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-61631439, accessed 19/4/2024
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (22/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (7/8/2024): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail

- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (9/2/2023): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (2/6/2026): Expertengespräch, Länderexperte des BMLV
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (6/6/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- Bryden/TEL - The Elephant (Publisher), Matt Bryden (Author) (8/11/2021): Fake Fight: The Quiet Jihadist Takeover of Somalia, https://www.theelephant.info/long-reads/2021/11/08/fake-fight-the-quiet-jihadist-takeover-of-somalia/#.YYjpCzdaMR4.twitter, accessed 9/11/2023
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- CTC Sentinel/P. D. Williams - Paul D. Williams (Author), Combating Terrorism Center at Westpoint (Publisher) (4/2024): The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CTC-SENTINEL-042024_article-4.pdf, accessed 2/6/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (24/4/2026): Somali Police Recruits Complete Training in Djibouti, https://www.dawan.africa/news/somali-police-recruits-complete-training-in-djibouti, accessed 2/6/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (6/11/2025): Over 10,000 Non-Active Personnel on Army Payroll says Somali CDF, https://www.dawan.africa/news/over-10000-non-active-personnel-on-army-payroll-says-somali-cdf, accessed 19/11/2025
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (17/8/2025): UAE Supports Training of 500 New Police Officers in Puntland's Bari Region, https://www.dawan.africa/news/uae-supports-training-of-500-new-police-officers-in-puntlands-bari-region, accessed 9/10/2025
- Detsch/FP - Jack Detsch (Author), Foreign Policy (Publisher) (23/8/2023): The Somali Underdogs Taking on Terrorists, https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/08/23/somalia-al-shabab-al-qaeda-terror-pentagon/, accessed 19/9/2023
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- EUTMSOM - European Union Training Mission in Somalia (20/2/2024): Official handover of military equipment to Somali National Army under the European Peace Facility, https://www.eutm-somalia.eu/handover-of-mil-equipment-to-sna, accessed 22/4/2024
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (5/7/2022): Gen. Odawaa in Qatar to Attend SNA Soldiers Graduation, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/gen-odawaa-in-qatar-to-attend-sna-soldiers-graduation/, accessed 17/7/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (13/4/2026): Somalia Pledges Equal Rights for South West Forces after Reintegration, https://en.goobjoog.com/somalia-pledges-equal-rights-for-south-west-forces-after-reintegration/, accessed 7/7/2026
- GN - Goobjoog News (8/9/2025): Municipal Forces Shut Down Galkayo District Headquarters Over Unpaid Dues, https://en.goobjoog.com/municipal-forces-shut-down-galkayo-district-headquarters-over-unpaid-dues/, accessed 26/11/2025
- GN - Goobjoog News (22/4/2024): 100 Somali Police Officers to Undergo Training Abroad to Enhance Security Skills, https://en.goobjoog.com/100-somali-police-officers-to-undergo-training-abroad-to-enhance-security-skills, accessed 7/5/2024
- GO - Garowe Online (11/11/2025): Abandoned on the Frontlines: Macawislay Fighters in Central Somalia Decry Months Without Pay, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/abandoned-on-the-frontlines-macawislay-fighters-in-central-somalia-decry-months-without-pay, accessed 19/11/2025
- GO - Garowe Online (23/2/2025a): Somalia: FGS sets up federal military command in strategic port of Bosaso, Puntland, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-fgs-sets-up-direct-federal-military-command-in-strategic-port-of-bosaso-puntland, accessed 3/7/2026

- GOV.UK - Government Digital Service [United Kingdom] (18/8/2022): New UK support to Somalia's Security Transition, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-uk-support-to-somalias-security-transition, accessed 17/7/2024
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (1/2023): Security Sector Reform in Somalia: Challenges and Opportunities, https://8v90f1.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Security-Sector-Reform-Jan-31.pdf, accessed 22/1/2024
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (3/2021): The Impediments To Good Governance In Somalia, http://www.heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Impediments-good-governance-2.pdf, accessed 3/6/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (7/9/2025): Puntland finance minister prioritizes roads over salaries, fueling protests and outrage, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Sept/202825/puntland_finance_minister_prioritizes_roads_over_salaries_fueling_protests_and_outrage.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 7/10/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (12/8/2025): Puntland troops block roads to Garowe airport over unpaid wages, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Aug/202545/puntland_troops_block_roads_to_garowe_airport_over_unpaid_wages.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 10/10/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (4/1/2024): US $1 million-plus worth of ammunition gifted to Somali National Army, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Jan/194443/us_1_million_plus_worth_of_ammunition_gifted_to_somali_national_army.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 25/1/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (20/3/2023): Somali, Ugandan Presidents attend graduation ceremony for newly trained soldiers in Kampala, https://hiiraan.com/news4/2023/Mar/190404/somali_and_ugandan_presidents_attend_graduation_ceremony_for_newly_trained_somali_soldiers_in_kampala.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 4/4/2024
- Horn - Horn Observer (4/6/2026): AUSSOM and SPF train 30 officers as trainers on Human Rights in policing, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3662/Somalia-AUSSOM-and-SPF-train-30-officers-as-trainers-on-Human-Rights-in-policing, accessed 6/7/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (11/1/2024): World Report 2024 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2103135.html, accessed 15/1/2024
- ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross (1/2025): Somalia - Facts & Figures 2024, https://blogs.icrc.org/app/uploads/sites/99/2025/02/ENG-Facts-and-Figures-2024.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IO-D/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale Organisation D (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga - Khalif Farah, Marin Ouma, Samuel Nyanchoga (9/2025): Influence of Corruption on the Increased Prevalence of Terrorism in Somalia. In: African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies (AJPAS) 18(3) (September, 2025), 163-187, https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajpas/article/download/306463/288088, accessed 28/4/2026
- Kaab - Kaab TV (29/11/2025a): UAE Assists Puntland in Compensating Fallen Soldiers in the Fight Against ISIS, https://en.kaabtv.com/uae-assists-puntland-in-compensating-fallen-soldiers-in-the-fight-against-isis/, accessed 2/12/2025
- MAEZA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Organisation für bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Marchal/CERI - Roland Marchal (Author), Centre de Recherches Internationales SciencesPo (Publisher) (1/2026): The Recognition of Somaliland by Israel as An indicator of a Geopolitical Dynamic between the Horn and the Gulf, Les Analyses du CERI, https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/files/Somaliland_Janvier2026_AnalyseCERI.pdf, accessed 30/1/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025

- NLM/Barnett - James Barnett (Author), New Lines Magazine (Publisher) (7/8/2023): Inside the Newest Conflict in Somalia's Long Civil War, https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/inside-the-newest-conflict-in-somalias-long-civil-war/, accessed 2/10/2023
- NM - Nordic Monitor (5/12/2025): Turkish intelligence report warns of Somalia's fragility as Ankara boosts military and economic role, https://nordicmonitor.com/2025/12/turkish-intelligence-report-warns-somalias-fragility-as-ankara-boosts-military-and-economic-role/, accessed 11/12/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- P. D. Williams - Paul D. Williams (2019): Building the Somali National Army: Anatomy of a failure, 2008-2018, In: Journal of Strategic Studies, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01402390.2019.1575210, accessed 17/7/2024 [Login required]
- RD - Radio Dalsan (16/11/2025): Galayr Forces Target Al-Shabaab Strongholds in Night Raid Near Ceel Lahelay, https://radiodalsan.com/national-news/296528/galayr-forces-target-al-shabaab-strongholds-in-night-raid-near-ceel-lahelay, accessed 18/11/2025
- RD - Radio Dalsan (4/3/2025): South West State President Laftagareen Inspects Ethiopian Military Training Camp, Commends Advanced Training for Special Police Forces, https://radiodalsan.com/2025/03/04/south-west-state-president-laftagareen-inspects-ethiopian-military-training-camp-commends-advanced-training-for-special-police-forces/, accessed 5/6/2026
- RD - Radio Dalsan (30/11/2022): From The State Police To The Maritime Police Force, EUCAP Somalia Support To The Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies In Puntland, https://www.radiodalsan.com/en/79095/2022/11/from-the-state-police-to-the-maritime-police-force-eucap-somalia-support-to-the-maritime-law-enforcement-agencies-in-puntland/, accessed 17/7/2024
- RD - Radio Dalsan (28/8/2022): Somali Army intervenes as two militia groups clash in Galguduud, Link ungültig [liegt in der Staatendokumentation auf], https://www.radiodalsan.com/en/76809/2022/08/somali-army-intervenes-as-two-militia-groups-clash-in-galguduud/, accessed 12/9/2022
- RD - Radio Dalsan (15/7/2022): Somali Police Chief Gen. Abdi Hassan attends the graduation ceremony of senior Somali police officers in Rwanda, https://en.radiodalsan.com/75879/2022/07/somali-police-chief-gen-abdi-hassan-attends-the-graduation-ceremony-of-senior-somali-police-officers-in-rwanda/, accessed 17/7/2024
- Robinson/TGO - Colin Robinson (Author), The Global Observatory (Publisher) (27/1/2022): New Name, but Little Sign of Change: The Revised Agreement on the African Union Mission in Somalia, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2022/01/revised-agreement-on-african-union-mission-in-somalia/, accessed 12/10/2023
- Sahan - Sahan (27/4/2024): Deni vs Diyaano plays out in Mogadishu, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 737, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/Bacon/Guiditta - Tricia Bacon (Author), Maria Guiditta (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (7/8/2023): Estimating Al-Shabaab's Size, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 575, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/Petrovski - Sara Petrovski (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (3/5/2024): Demystifying the Ma'awiisley, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 677, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (17/11/2025): Fiqi's 100,000-Troop Fantasy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 897, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/10/2025): After the Lightning, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 888, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (4/6/2025): The Politicised Revival of Mahad Salad at NISA, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 830, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (30/5/2025): Why the Somali National Army Keeps Failing, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 829, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (19/3/2025): Al-Shabaab's Offensive Steps Up Further, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 801, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (5/3/2025): Laftagareen Breaks From Villa Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 795, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (24/4/2024): The 'Lightning' Brigade and lessons for the SNA, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 674, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (17/11/2023): Planning for Jubaland, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 617, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]

- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (6/11/2023): BA positive appointment: Jeyte as Ma'wiisley commander, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 613, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (23/9/2022): The promise and the peril of the Ma'awiisley, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 455, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/9/2022): Exrajudicial killings in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 452, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SG/WP - Somali Guardian, Washington Post, The (28/5/2025): How U.S. cuts in Somalia could imperil the fight against al-Shabab, https://somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/how-u-s-cuts-in-somalia-could-imperil-the-fight-against-al-shabab, accessed 17/6/2025
- SIPRI - Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (2025): Military expenditure by country as percentage of government spending, 1949-2024, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRI-Milex-data-1949-2024_2.xlsx, accessed 10/12/2025
- Sonna - Somali National News Agency [Somalia] (30/5/2026): SNA and EUTM-Somalia Launch Second Basic Officers Course at General Dhagabadan Training Centre, https://sonna.so/en/sna-and-eutm-somalia-launch-second-basic-officers-course-at-general-dhagabadan-training-centre, accessed 7/7/2026
- Soufan - Soufan Center, The (29/2/2024): IntelBrief: Somalia-Türkiye Defense Deal and the Regional Implications for East Africa, https://thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-2024-february-29, accessed 19/4/2024
- SPC - Somalia Protection Cluster (9/2/2022): Protection Analysis Update, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOM_PAU_Somalia-Protection-Analysis_Feb2022.pdf, accessed 15/11/2023
- STDOK/BMLV - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Ministry of Defence [Austria] (10/4/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten des BMLV
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- THLSC - The Henry L. Stimson Center (20/3/2023): US Security Assistance to Somalia, https://www.stimson.org/2023/us-security-cooperation-with-somalia/, accessed 19/10/2023
- UNHRC/UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (Publisher), United Nations Human Rights Council (Author) (30/1/2026): Visit to Somalia. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/52/Add.2, accessed 23/4/2026
- UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Senior UN Official X (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (2/2/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/758], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2106391/n2401965.pdf, accessed 4/6/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (15/6/2023): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/443], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2094041/N2316278.pdf, accessed 2/10/2023
- UNSOS - United Nations Support Office in Somalia (8/4/2026): About – Mandate, https://unsos.unmissions.org/en/about/mandate, accessed 5/6/2026
- USDOL - United States Department of Labor [USA] (26/9/2023): 2022 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2098558.html, accessed 26/4/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (20/3/2023): 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2089065.html, accessed 4/10/2023
- WP - Washington Post, The (10/12/2022): U.S. troops are back in Somalia and scrambling to help its special forces, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/12/10/somalia-war-shabab-danab-military/, accessed 17/7/2024 [fee required, Login required]

5.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

State protection: In Somaliland, state protection is more effective than in South/Central Somalia. The country has its own army and its own police force (BMLV 22/7/2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Overall, around one third of the state budget is spent on security (MoFDSL 2025), and the security forces hold a particularly strong position. Although civilian control is patchy, it is stronger than in the rest of the country (AA 9/3/2026). Overall, the police and other government institutions function adequately (BS 2026), and the police and army are described as capable – apart from the defeat at Laascaanood [*Note: see*Security Situation / North East State (NES)]. Unlike other parts of the country, Somaliland has so far always been able to pay its own security forces on a regular basis. There is comparatively little corruption in the security sector, and offenders are severely punished. In general, Somaliland relies heavily on the police and local clan militias for security (BMLV 22/7/2026).

Police: The strength of the Somaliland police force stands at (as of 2023) approximately 6,000 (BMLV 22/7/2026); according to other sources, around 8,000, of whom approximately 5 per cent are women (H. Hussein Abdi 2024). In Hargeysa and along the road to Berbera, the FFM Somalia 2023 delegation repeatedly observed police stations (STDOK/SEM 5/2023a). In the past, UNSOM (*United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia*) and UNDP (*United Nations Development Programme*), amongst others, supported training programmes for the Somaliland police (Qaran 3/5/2024); later, this was done by UNSOM's successor mission UNTMIS (*United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia*), the UNDP and the EU mission EUCAP (UNTMIS 6/2025; cf. UNTMIS 9/2025).

People make use of the police's services; one can turn to the police in the event of an offence. The police arrest suspects. In this sense, there is also a form of the rule of law (BMLV 22/7/2026). Three sources from the FFM Somalia 2023 state that the police usually respond to complaints by launching investigations (INGO-V/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). One source adds, however, that the police generally suffer from limited capacity, poor pay and, at times, a shortage of fuel (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In more remote areas, the police rely on cooperation with elders to carry out their work and enforce the law (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Consequently, the police are also unable to escape the dynamics of the clan system. In eastern Somaliland – in the Sool region and the eastern part of Sanaag – the police are no longer present (BMLV 22/7/2026).

According to the Somaliland police, anyone can report incidents to the nearest police station. These are recorded in an occurence book. An investigator is assigned to follow up on the specific report. In addition, there is a police hotline and – in Hargeysa – a dedicated rapid response unit for such purposes. Hotlines are available in all major towns such as Borama, Berbera, Burco and Ceerigaabo. People are aware of the relevant numbers. Accordingly, there are 13 police stations in Hargeysa, as well as additional posts to which people can turn. Furthermore, every district in Somaliland has at least one police station and an investigation unit, whilst every region has a criminal investigation department (Mire/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Special police units include the *Rapid Reaction Unit* (RRU) (Norman/AFRA 3/3/2023; cf. BMLV 22/7/2026), which is funded and trained by the UK, and the *Special Police Unit* (SPU), which is responsible for the protection of international organisations and NGOs. In addition, there is the *National Coast Guard* (BMLV 22/7/2026) and the *National Intelligence Agency*, which serves as the intelligence service (Sahan/SWT 29/10/2025; cf. BMLV 22/7/2026; SMN 5/12/2023).

Army: The armed forces comprise approximately 4,500 personnel. The Somaliland Army is led by a central command in Hargeysa. It has regional commands and is organised into large and small units based on the Western model. The army's rank and file are relatively disciplined; offences are generally investigated and punished (BMLV 22/7/2026). Training takes place partly in Ethiopia (HO 11/7/2024); officers are sometimes trained in Taiwan (SLST 22/8/2025); and, according to one source, special forces are also trained in Israel (HO 25/5/2026). During the fighting for Laascaanood in 2023, the Somaliland army suffered considerable losses; one source reports 1,500 casualties (desertions, prisoners, wounded, killed) (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025).

Militias: In principle, every (sub-)clan has its own weapons and militias (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025). These are sometimes incorporated into the army along with their equipment – for example, this occurred in April 2025 in the Ceel Afweyne area (SLST 13/4/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (22/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (6/6/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- H. Hussein Abdi - Hassan Hussein Abdi (2024): Contribution and challenges of integrating women into police reform in Somaliland, in: South Florida Journal of Development, v.5, n.11. p.01-15, 2024, https://ojs.southfloridapublishing.com/ojs/index.php/jdev/article/view/4589/3174, accessed 1/6/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (25/5/2026): Somaliland special forces return from Israel training, report says, https://www.hiiraan.com/security4/2026/May/205240/somaliland_special_forces_return_from_israel_training_report_says.aspx, accessed 1/6/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (11/7/2024): Somaliland sends large contingent of army recruits to Ethiopia for training, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/July/197037/somaliland_sends_largest_army_recruit_contingent_to_ethiopia_for_training.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 1/6/2026
- INGO-V/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), International NGO V (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Mire/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Cabdi Xasan Mire, Deputy Police Commissioner [Somaliland] (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

- MoFDSL - Ministry of Finance Development [Somaliland] (2025): 2025 Citizen's Budget Book, https://cdn.sanity.io/files/e0lpub15/production/47ba32c60c76bb483b2e34923b685d6c3953e1dc.pdf, accessed 1/6/2026
- Norman/AFRA - Jethro Norman (Author), African Arguments (Publisher) (3/3/2023): Conflict in Las Anod and Crisis in Somaliland. External Investment, Intensifying Internal Competition, and the Struggle for Narrative, https://africanarguments.org/2023/03/conflict-in-las-anod-and-crisis-in-somaliland-external-investment-intensifying-internal-competition-and-the-struggle-for-narrative/, accessed 6/11/2023
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Qaran - Qaran News (3/5/2024): The Somaliland Police Force has been completed for training, https://qarannews.com/the-somaliland-police-force-has-been-completed-for-training/, accessed 1/6/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (29/10/2025): Remembering Al-Shabaab's October attacks in Somaliland, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 889, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Scholar/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Scholar, Hargeysa (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SECEX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Security Expert (Author) (4/2023):
  Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (22/8/2025): Somaliland Officers Graduate from Taiwan's National Defense University in Historic Partnership, https://somalilandstandard.com/somaliland-officers-graduate-from-taiwans-national-defense-university-in-historic-partnership, accessed 8/10/2025
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (13/4/2025): Somaliland Nationalizes Clan Militias in El-Afwein, https://somalilandstandard.com/somaliland-nationalizes-clan-militias-in-el-afwein/, accessed 1/6/2026
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (5/12/2023): Three suspected SSC and Puntland spies arrested in Sool region, https://shabellemedia.com/three-suspected-ssc-and-puntland-spies-arrested-in-sool-region, accessed 18/4/2024
- STDOK/SEM - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (5/2023a): FFM Somalia 2023 - Beobachtungen der Delegation
- UNTMIS - United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (9/2025): UNTMIS Police Quarterly Newsletter, https://untmis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/2025-10/Final_UNTMIS Police Newsletter Q3 copy.pdf, accessed 3/9/2026
- UNTMIS - United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (6/2025): UNTMIS Police Quarterly Newsletter, Issue #12, https://untmis.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/UNTMIS Police Newsletter_Q2_June_2025.pdf, accessed 3/9/2026

6 Torture and inhumane treatment

6.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

No allegations have been made regarding systematic torture by state forces. In individual cases, it cannot be ruled out that security forces may fail to comply with their obligations under international law and enjoy impunity for such violations (AA 9/3/2026). On the *Physical Violence Index* compiled by V-DEM, which assesses whether a country's own citizens are affected by state violence, Somalia scores 0.45 points on a scale of 0 (poor) to 1 (good) (Kenya: 0.61 ; Ethiopia: 0.26) (UNIG-VDI 2025b).

Killings: The government and its henchmen carry out arbitrary and unlawful killings. Civilians are also killed during armed clashes (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. BS 2026).

Torture: Although torture is prohibited under the Constitution, the Criminal Code contains no definition of it, nor does it make it a criminal offence (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). In any case, torture and inhuman treatment occur (USDOS 12/8/2025), or there are allegations of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in the context of counter-terrorism operations, which have also resulted in fatalities (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). Torture also takes place in secret prisons (UNHRCOM 6/5/2024). In general, detainees are at risk of being tortured (FH 2024b) or held in conditions that are degrading to human dignity (AA 9/3/2026).

Allegations of torture and ill-treatment have been levelled in particular against the *National Intelligence and Security Agency* (NISA) (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026; cf. USDOS 12/8/2025; BS 2026; UNHRC 22/1/2026), but also against other security forces and armed groups (UNHRC 22/1/2026), the Federal Army, the police, and (allied) clan militias (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026; USDOS 12/8/2025), the *Puntland Intelligence Agency* (USDOS 12/8/2025) and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) (HT 23/4/2024; cf. SJS 16/3/2024). On V-DEM's *Freedom from Torture Index*, Somalia scores 1.76 points on a scale of 0 (poor) to 4 (good) (Kenya: 2.4; Ethiopia: 1.17) (UNIG-VDI 2025c).

Enforced disappearances: There are no reports of enforced disappearances by federal authorities (USDOS 12/8/2025). According to other sources, there are reports of detentions in 'informal' facilities, which amount to enforced disappearances (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026).

Arrests: Arbitrary arrests are common. Security agencies detain people without charge for extended periods (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026; cf. USDOS 12/8/2025). There is at least one report of detention in an unknown location (*incommunicado*) (SJS 16/3/2024).

Accountability: According to one source, the government is taking credible steps to identify perpetrators (USDOS 12/8/2025). In early October 2025, a soldier was arrested in Mogadishu for allegedly injuring a civilian during a robbery (GN 2/10/2025). In November 2025, a soldier was arrested on suspicion of having beaten a woman (Kaab 30/11/2025b).

According to other reports, the authorities have taken no known steps to combat torture and ill-treatment (MBZ 4/4/2025). The regional forces have no institutions whatsoever to investigate such offences (BS 2026). With regard to torture by security forces, impunity remains the norm (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. FH 2024b). This also applies to arbitrary actions by the police, which generally go unpunished (AA 9/3/2026).

Al-Shabaab: The group kills, abducts and abuses civilians, perpetrates gender-based violence and forces women into marriages. Furthermore, al-Shabaab recruits and deploys children, and imposes and enforces harsh punishments in the areas under its control (USDOS 12/8/2025). In these areas, inhumane treatment is also to be expected when individuals act against the interests of al-Shabaab or are suspected of doing so ( ).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (2/10/2025): Police in Mogadishu Arrest Military Man Behind Shooting Incident, https://en.goobjoog.com/police-in-mogadishu-arrest-military-man-behind-shooting-incident/, accessed 25/11/2025
- HT - Horn Tribune (23/4/2024): Somaliland Accuses Somalia on Torturing Prisoners, https://horntribune.com/2024/04/23/somaliland-accuses-somalia-on-torturing-prisoners, accessed 7/5/2024
- Kaab - Kaab TV (30/11/2025b): Somali Soldier Arrested After Video Shows Abuse of Woman at Hamarweyne Market, https://en.kaabtv.com/somali-soldier-arrested-after-video-shows-abuse-of-woman-at-hamarweyne-market/, accessed 2/12/2025
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- SJS - Somali Journalists Syndicate (16/3/2024): SJS Annual Report 2023, https://sjsyndicate.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SJS-Annual-State-of-Press-Freedom-Report-Somalia-2023_protected-.pdf, accessed 3/6/2024
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (22/1/2026): Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Somalia; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/HRC/WG.6/52/SOM/3], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138749.html, accessed 27/4/2026
- UNHRC/UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (Publisher), United Nations Human Rights Council (Author) (30/1/2026): Visit to Somalia. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/52/Add.2, accessed 23/4/2026
- UNHRCOM - United Nations Human Rights Committee (6/5/2024): Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia [CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2108970/G2405613.pdf, accessed 24/5/2024
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (2025b): Variable Graph – Physical Violence Index, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/, accessed 10/12/2025
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (2025c): Interactive Map – Freedom from Torture, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/MapGraph/, accessed 10/12/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

6.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

Somaliland's security forces operate largely beyond public scrutiny. No allegations of systematic persecution have been raised (AA 9/3/2026). The US State Department's human rights report – as in previous years – does not mention any incidents of torture specifically relating to Somaliland; nor are there any reports of arbitrary killings by the authorities (USDOS 12/8/2025). In its 2024 annual report, the local NGO Human Rights Centre mentions the existence of unofficial 'torture detention facilities' run by the Somaliland intelligence service (HRCSL 2025). On V-DEM's *Freedom from Torture Index*, Somaliland scores 2.47 points on a scale of 0 (poor) to 4 (good) (Southern/Central Somalia: 1.76; Kenya: 2.40; Ethiopia: 1.17; Morocco: 2.19) (UNIG-VDI 2025c). On the *Physical Violence Index*, also compiled by V-DEM, which assesses whether a country's

own citizens are affected by state violence, Somaliland scores 0.66 points on a scale of 0 (poor) to 1 (good), placing it ahead of Kenya (0.61) (UNIG-VDI 2025b). There are no reports of enforced disappearances by Somaliland authorities (USDOS 12/8/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (2025): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2024, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Annual-Report-2025-1.pdf, accessed 24/4/2026
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (2025b): Variable Graph – Physical Violence Index, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/, accessed 10/12/2025
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (2025c): Interactive Map – Freedom from Torture, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/MapGraph/, accessed 10/12/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

7 Corruption

7.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:31

Somalia is one of the most corrupt countries in the world (BS 2026). Corruption is endemic (BS 2026; cf. HIPS 7/5/2024) and manifests itself in the country in a variety of ways: through bribery, embezzlement, nepotism and clientelism (Transparency Somalia 2025; cf. C.Maslen/U4ACRC/TI/CMI 16/2/2026). Bribery is commonplace both in people's everyday lives and at higher levels (C.Maslen/U4ACRC/TI/CMI 16/2/2026). Corruption has permeated every aspect of social, political and economic life (Sahan/SWT 18/8/2023). The judiciary, too, is regularly accused of corrupt practices (BS 2026), and corruption is even cited as the main obstacle to access to justice (RDI/NRC 29/1/2026). Security forces sometimes resort to extortion, for example by demanding 'protection money' from traders at markets or along the streets of Mogadishu (Kaab 29/11/2025c). International aid is also embezzled or stolen (BS 2026); this type of theft occurs systematically. Those who benefit from this include, for example, operators of IDP camps, local authorities, humanitarian workers and even members of the security forces, who intimidate and sometimes arrest those who refuse to pay. Nepotism, in the sense of favouring clan members when filling public offices, reduces the quality of the civil service and undermines the independence of the judiciary (C.Maslen/U4ACRC/TI/CMI 16/2/2026). All of this erodes public confidence in the government (OHCHR 21/5/2025).

Somalia ranks second from last out of 182 countries surveyed on Transparency International's 2025 Index, with a score of 9 points (out of a maximum of 100) (TI 10/2/2026). On the V-DEM Index, Southern/Central Somalia scores 0.92 points on a scale of 0 (good) to 1 (bad) (Ethiopia: 0.69; Kenya: 0.57) (UNIG-VDI 2025e).

[*Note: For information on protection rackets ('taxes') by al-Shabaab, see*Legal protection, judicial system / the al-Shabaab 'tax' system]

Measures: Impunity is commonplace – precisely because corruption is so widespread (Sahan/SWT 18/8/2023; cf. BS 2026). The Anti-Corruption Commission was dissolved in 2022 (OHCHR 21/5/2025). There are some control mechanisms at federal level, but there is no information available to assess how effectively these function (BS 2026). At present, the task of combating corruption falls to the Auditor-General in addition to his main duties (Sahan/SWT 5/7/2023). According to the Constitution, the Auditor-General is actually only responsible for auditing public finances and promoting transparency and accountability in the handling of public funds. The Auditor-General's independence is jeopardised by a lack of budgetary autonomy (C.Maslen/U4ACRC/TI/CMI 16/2/2026). Furthermore, he occasionally complains about the obstacles placed in his way when auditing public finances (FTL 26/8/2025). Even though those accused are occasionally dismissed, there are no legal consequences for them. The inability and unwillingness of the federal government and donors to combat endemic corruption are undermining the state-building process and the population's trust in the institutions (BS 2026).

Sources

- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- C.Maslen/U4ACRC/TI/CMI - Transparency International (Publisher), U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (Publisher), Christian Michelsen Institute (Publisher), Caitlin Maslen (Author) (16/2/2026): Somalia: Corruption and anti-corruption.U4 HELPDESK ANSWER 2026:4, https://knowledgehub.transparencycdn.org/helpdesk/Somalia-Corruption-and-AC.pdf, accessed 28/4/2026
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (26/8/2025): Auditor General Accuses Somali Judiciary of Blocking $2 Million Audit, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/auditor-general-accuses-somali-judiciary-of-blocking-2-million-audit, accessed 8/10/2025
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (7/5/2024): State Of Somalia 2023 Report, https://8v90f1.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SOS-REPORT-2023-.pdf, accessed 27/5/2024
- Kaab - Kaab TV (29/11/2025c): NISA Policies Exacerbate Hardships for Mogadishu Residents, https://en.kaabtv.com/nisa-policies-exacerbate-hardships-for-mogadishu-residents/, accessed 2/12/2025
- OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (21/5/2025): Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul. Country Visit to Somalia: End of Mission Statement, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2126395/20250521-eom-somalia-sr-terrorism-en.pdf, accessed 28/4/2026
- RDI/NRC - Roots Development Initiative (Author), Norwegian Refugee Council (Publisher) (29/1/2026): Final Report to Conduct. Conflict Protection Sensitive Analysis in Somalia, https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/conflict-protection-sensitive-analysis-in-somalia/pdf-report/final-report_conflict-protection-sensitivity-analysis_banadir_bari_galgaduud_somalia_29122025_rev.pdf, accessed 28/4/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (18/8/2023): The Spectre of Corruption, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 580, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (5/7/2023): The Limitations of Individual Arrests in Combating Government Corruption, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 561, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- TI - Transparency International (10/2/2026): Corruption Perceptions Index 2025, https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/CPI-2025-Report-EN.pdf, accessed 17/3/2026
- Transparency Somalia - Transparency Somalia Initiative (2025): Corruption in Somalia, https://transparency.so/corruption-in-somalia/, accessed 8/10/2025
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (2025e): Variable Graph – Public Sector Corruption Index, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/, accessed 10/12/2025

7.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:31

Corruption and nepotism remain a serious problem in Somaliland. Corruption is mostly practised on a clan basis. Overall, whilst Somaliland is making attempts to combat corruption, there is a lack of effective regulatory and oversight mechanisms (BS 2026) as well as mechanisms to tackle corruption. The Anti-Corruption Commission, established in 2010, is ineffective. State officials are rarely prosecuted for corruption (FH 2024a). On V-DEM's Public Sector Corruption Index, Somaliland is rated 0.64 on a scale of 0 (good) to 1 (bad), putting it on a par with Albania and Serbia (UNIG-VDI 2025e).

Sources

- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (2025e): Variable Graph – Public Sector Corruption Index, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/, accessed 10/12/2025

8 NGOs and human rights activists

8.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

Throughout the country, numerous UN agencies, hundreds of international and local NGOs (Ali/TEL 28/1/2022; cf. UNSC 1/9/2022) and a large number of civil society organisations from various sectors (e.g. women, young people, professional groups) are active (SPC 9/2/2022). As early as the mid-1990s, numerous NGOs and community-based organisations were established in Somalia. Many now operate professionally. Almost all organisations or interest groups have their roots in the clan system or are based on religious identity (BS 2026).

The democratic scope for civil society participation in the political process is limited. The Federal Government has not established any mechanism to involve civil society in decision-making (BS 2026). Human rights groups may be politically tolerated, but they are generally subjected to repression by state security agencies, which also act on their own initiative and in their own interests. There are instances of arrest, harassment (AA 9/3/2026) and intimidation (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026), as well as the use of force against civil society activists (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025).

Human rights organisations are unable to operate outside government-controlled areas (AA 9/3/2026). **Al-Shabaab** prohibits all UN agencies (FH 2024b) and most NGOs from operating in the territory under its control (BS 2026; cf. FH 2024b). The group suspects NGOs of spying for Western powers or spreading Western ideology (BS 2026). Furthermore, the scope of operations for organisations in southern and central Somalia is restricted due to hostilities, targeted attacks and general violence (HRW 4/2/2026).

Al-Shabaab continues to restrict access for humanitarian workers in the areas under its control (AI 29/4/2025; cf. UNSC 12/11/2025). Humanitarian workers in al-Shabaab-controlled territory are regularly subjected to targeted or indiscriminate violence (BS 2026). One of the few humanitarian organisations permitted to operate there is *Qatar Charity* (Sahan/SWT 10/3/2025).

The **presence of UN agencies and organisations** has been significantly expanded in recent years: At the end of 2014, there were 331 international and 951 national UN staff members in Somalia (UNSC 23/1/2015); by September 2025, the figures had risen to 1,017 international and 1,730 national UN staff members. Offices are located in Baidoa, Belet Weyne, Berbera, Bossaso, Dhobley, Dhusamareb, Doolow, Galkacyo, Garoowe, Hargeysa, Jowhar, Kismayo and Mogadishu (UNSC 30/9/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AI - Amnesty International (29/4/2025): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2024, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2124628.html, accessed 26/6/2025
- Ali/TEL - The Elephant (Publisher), Hodan Ali (Author) (28/1/2022): Somalia's Famines, Government Apathy and the Aid Industry, https://www.theelephant.info/features/2022/01/28/somalias-famines-government-apathy-and-the-aid-industry/, accessed 24/11/2023
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (10/3/2025): Somalia's Enduring Humanitarian Crisis, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 797, per e-Mail
- SPC - Somalia Protection Cluster (9/2/2022): Protection Analysis Update, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOM_PAU_Somalia-Protection-Analysis_Feb2022.pdf, accessed 15/11/2023
- UNHRC/UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (Publisher), United Nations Human Rights Council (Author) (30/1/2026): Visit to Somalia. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/52/Add.2, accessed 23/4/2026
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (12/11/2025): Children and armed conflict in Somalia; Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/735], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2133935/n2531234.pdf, accessed 28/4/2026
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (1/9/2022): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2022/665], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2078696/N2257941.pdf, accessed 9/10/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (23/1/2015): Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1235688/1226_1423052016_n1501704somal.pdf, accessed 3/6/2024

8.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-09-03 11:32

Most NGOs operate without serious interference from the state (BS 2026; cf. FH 2024a). Civil society organisations participate actively in political life (BS 2026). Although human rights organisations are politically endorsed, they face repression from state security agencies (AA 9/3/2026). Overall, there are only a few interest groups or organisations that are entirely independent of the clan system or religion (BS 2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024

9 Ombudsman

9.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-09-03 11:49

Between July and October 2025, the *National Independent Human Rights Commission* (NIHRC) was established and its members confirmed by Parliament (AI 21/4/2026; cf. HO 19/11/2025; HRW 4/2/2026; AA 9/3/2026). The selection process for members was described by sections of civil society as lacking transparency (AI 21/4/2026), whilst the opposition *Somali Salvation Forum* criticised the opaque decision-making process and the influence exerted by the federal government (HO 4/7/2025). According to one source, the Commission does not include any human rights experts or representatives of civil society, but rather career politicians and government allies (Sahan/SWT 13/10/2025). The Commission has no financial autonomy of its own, but has approached other bodies – such as the international community and foundations – for funding (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

In Puntland, the *Office of the Puntland Human Rights Defender* (OPHRD) also publicly advocates for the observance of human rights (AA 9/3/2026). This body investigates complaints from citizens, advocates on behalf of victims whose rights have been violated, and publishes an annual report on the human rights situation in Puntland (SD 22/8/2022). According to the United Nations, the OPHRD is independent and effective (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]

- AI - Amnesty International (21/4/2026): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia, accessed 21/4/2026
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- HO - Hiiraan Online (19/11/2025): Somalia's Upper House approves members of the National Human Rights commission, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Nov/203667/somalia_s_upper_house_approves_members_of_the_national_human_rights_commission.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 21/11/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (4/7/2025): Somali Cabinet approves Human Rights Commission candidates amid opposition criticism, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202076/somali_cabinet_approves_human_rights_commission_candidates_amid_opposition_criticism.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 28/4/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (13/10/2025): Mogadishu's Hollow Human Rights Victory, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 884, per e-Mail
- SD - Somali Dispatch (22/8/2022): Puntland Cuts Office of Human Rights Defender's budget, https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/puntland-cuts-office-of-human-rights-defenders-budget, accessed 5/6/2024
- UNHRC/UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (Publisher), United Nations Human Rights Council (Author) (30/1/2026): Visit to Somalia. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/52/Add.2, accessed 23/4/2026

9.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-09-03 11:50

Somaliland has a human rights commission that is independent in accordance with its statutes:the *Somaliland National Human Rights Commission.* However, the government does not allocate sufficient resources to it to carry out its tasks (AA 9/3/2026).

The police have set up a complaints office with an associated website and telephone number (SLST 6/11/2022).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (6/11/2022): Without collaborations with the members of the public, the police force cannot fulfill their duties- Major Gen Saqadi, https://somalilandstandard.com/without-collaborations-with-the-members-of-the-public-the-police-force-cannot-fulfill-their-duties-major-gen-saqadi/, accessed 3/6/2024

10 Military service and recruitment

10.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland – state forces and militias

Recruitment: The Somali Armed Forces consist exclusively of volunteers (BMLV 21/7/2026), with the state security forces recruiting largely on a voluntary basis (EUAA 5/2025a). There is no compulsory military service (AA 9/3/2026). In order to serve in the Federal Army, volunteers sign an employment contract of indefinite duration. There is neither a minimum nor a maximum period of service (BMLV 21/7/2026).

According to former police officer Zakia Hussen, the Federal Army typically recruits men and women aged between 18 and 22. Recruits should have completed secondary education and must be physically and mentally fit (EUAA 5/2025a). Due to high youth unemployment, the Federal Army is relatively attractive to young people (EUAA 5/2025a; cf. IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In the recent past, the Federal Army has mainly recruited in the greater Mogadishu area (EUAA 5/2025a; cf. BMLV 21/7/2026), although its recruitment drive is potentially aimed at all citizens. The soldiers include members of the Hawiye, Darod and Dir clans, amongst others (EUAA 5/2025a). Recruitment efforts are particularly well received by IDPs (BMLV 21/7/2026).

Forced recruitment: Coercion can occur within clan militias; for example, a clan elder may force clan members to take part in a conflict (INGO-V/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). One source explains that forced recruitment can also occur within clans in order to meet a prescribed recruitment quota (BMLV 7/8/2024). Two other sources also state that clans regularly – and in some cases threatening coercive measures against the family – recruit young men to serve in a militia, with the state security forces (AA 9/3/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025) or with al-Shabaab. The aim is to secure protection for their own clan or sub-clan (AA 9/3/2026). There is very little information available on individuals who have refused recruitment into the Federal Army (EUAA 5/2025a).

Desertion: Only a few soldiers in the Federal Army hesitate to desert when their relatives call on them to fight in a clan conflict (NLM/Barnett 7/8/2023). According to one source, deserters are placed on a wanted list. However, the units responsible for the manhunt have only very limited resources, which are scarcely used for actively searching for deserters. Desertion is regarded as high treason and falls under the jurisdiction of the military court. If a conviction for high treason through desertion is secured, the defendant faces a long prison sentence – possibly even life imprisonment (BMLV 21/7/2026). According to former police officer Zakia Hussen, however, ordinary soldiers who have deserted are not prosecuted. As a rule, their pay is suspended, and the deserters live normally with their relatives. Officers, however, who have refused orders or deserted are usually brought before a military court (EUAA 5/2025a). On the other hand, there were several reports of arrests of deserting soldiers in 2024 and 2025 (Mog24 10/4/2025; SG 3/3/2025; TSD 29/1/2024), including one instance where the soldiers were each sentenced to five years' imprisonment (TSD 29/1/2024). According to one source, these cases were used to set an example (BMLV 21/7/2026).

Child soldiers – general: Whilst most children are recruited by al-Shabaab, there are also reports of the recruitment and deployment of child soldiers by the federal army, regional forces and clan militias (USDOL 9/2025; cf. USDOS 12/8/2025). Human Rights Watch identifies vigilante groups and clan militias in particular as the perpetrators in this regard, whilst the Federal

Government has introduced guidelines on age assessment (HRW 4/2/2026). According to one source, it is generally common practice in Somali society to deploy minors as soldiers (MBZ 4/4/2025). Most of those directly involved in clan conflicts are men and boys aged between 15 and 40. Young people are therefore also mobilised for clan militias, both for attacks and for defence (EUAA 5/2025a). The UN reports a total of 648 verified cases of child recruitment for the year 2025 (UN OCHA 27/1/2026). By contrast, the United Nations has – subject to certain reservations – removed the Federal Army and the police from the list of actors accused of recruiting and using children (AA 9/3/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (21/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (7/8/2024): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- INGO-V/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), International NGO V (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IO-D/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale Organisation D (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- Mog24 - Mogadischu24.com (10/4/2025): Custodial Corps Command – Soldiers who fled the Frontlines are selling their weapon, https://mogadishu24.com/custodial-corps-command-soldiers-who-fled-the-frontlines-are-selling-their-weapon/, accessed 11/4/2025
- NLM/Barnett - James Barnett (Author), New Lines Magazine (Publisher) (7/8/2023): Inside the Newest Conflict in Somalia's Long Civil War, https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/inside-the-newest-conflict-in-somalias-long-civil-war/, accessed 2/10/2023
- SG - Somali Guardian (3/3/2025): Somalia arrests commander and soldiers for fleeing frontlines amid Al-Shabaab advance, https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/somalia-arrests-commander-and-soldiers-for-fleeing-frontlines-amid-al-shabaab-advance/, accessed 27/5/2026
- TSD - The Somali Digest (29/1/2024): SNA Deserters Sentenced, https://thesomalidigest.com/sna-deserters-sentenced, accessed 8/5/2024
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (27/1/2026): Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026, https://www.unocha.org/attachments/edea4204-0921-4741-862f-203c6f75a631/Somalia_HNRP_2026.pdf, accessed 23/3/2026
- USDOL - United States Department of Labor [USA] (9/2025): 2024 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2131787/Somalia.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

10.2 Al-Shabaab – (Forced) Recruitment and Child Soldiers

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

Al Shabaab's recruitment methods vary by region and depend on the degree of control the group exercises in a particular area and its needs at any given time. Several EUAA sources emphasise that, in recent years, there have been significantly more voluntary than forced recruitments (EUAA 5/2025a). Another source explains that al-Shabaab makes up for its losses through agreements with clans, but also through forced recruitment (CTC Sentinel/P. D. Williams 4/2024).

Child soldiers: Al-Shabaab continues to abduct children for recruitment.Among other things, the groupcarries out raids on schools, madrasas and mosques (USDOS 12/8/2025). Sometimes it approaches families directly (EUAA 5/2025a; cf. Sahan/SWT 6/5/2022). Families who refuse face fines; sometimes they are also threatened with prosecution or worse. Some families send their boys away to prevent them from being recruited (Sahan/SWT 6/5/2022). Sometimes clan elders or family members are threatened and blackmailed into handing children over to the group (USDOS 12/8/2025).

According to a source from the EUAA, children from around the age of 12 are recruited and trained. From the age of 15–16 (EUAA 5/2025a), they are then deployed in combat or as suicide bombers (EUAA 5/2025a; cf. USDOS 12/8/2025), as ammunition and supply carriers, for espionage, as guards, and also to plant explosive devices (USDOS 12/8/2025). According to other reports, there is no evidence of children under the age of 15 being deployed in combat, for example, there are no corresponding photographs of those killed in action. In principle, allthose fit for military service or who have received military training within a given area of al-Shabaab-controlled territory areavailable to the group as a territorial 'village militia' and are deployed as such when required. Young people aged 16, who are considered adults according to Somali tradition, are also eligible for military service. This age group comprises the youngest fighters deployed b yal-Shabaab. In any case,the overwhelming majority of the group's fighters are men over the age of 18 (BMLV 21/7/2026).

Schools and camps: Although al-Shabaab does recruit children as young as 8–9 years old, in practice these children are first indoctrinated in (Qur'anic) schools (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025; cf. EUAA 5/2025a; USDOS 12/8/2025). Al-Shabaab runs its own schools with their own curriculum (VOA/Maruf 16/11/2022). The education system it has created is designed to produce recruits (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023; cf. INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). So-called 'Islamic institutes' are organised along clan lines, are funded by clans and are subject to strict supervision by the local al-Shabaab authorities. The clans are expected to provide either money or pupils. In these schools, the illegitimacy of the federal government and the obligation to wage jihad are propagated (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). In one case, it is reported that pupils received a leaving certificate after two years (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b).

After completing such a school, graduates – who are usually teenagers – are then sent to training camps (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023; cf. EUAA 5/2025a; VOA/Maruf 16/11/2022; AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The best pupils are channelled into higher education (VOA/Maruf 16/11/

2022). According to an eyewitness, in his case graduates were able to decide for themselves on their future path within the organisation, such as whether they wished to pursue religious studies or join a sub-organisation (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b). According to another source, young men are sent to training camps as part of a 'compulsory military service' scheme (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

According to one source, children in al-Shabaab are subjected to brutal physical training. They do not receive adequate food, but are instead given weapons training, physical punishment and religious indoctrination. Children are forced to punish or execute other children (USDOS 12/8/2025). One source states that there is no evidence of this from sources on the ground (BMLV 21/7/2026).

Recruitment via clans: Al-Shabaab usually recruits via the clans and generally does so every year in April (unless

Ramadan falls in that month) – at the same time as *zakat* is collected (BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025). Clans within al-Shabaab-controlled territory are therefore required to pay tribute to the group in the form of young men. Al-Shabaab comes to the villages, approaches the elders and demands a specific number of men (IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; MBZ 6/2023; MBZ 4/4/2025; Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025). The clan will provide the required number. According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, the group has 'agents" within the clans who carry out the selection of recruits (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to other reports, elders often act as recruiters (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. AQ21 11/2023).

Where al-Shabaab recruits: al-Shabaab's main recruitment area is southern and central Somalia (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024), typically those areas controlled by the group (BMLV 21/7/2026; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026) or where it has a significant presence (MBZ 4/4/2025). Recruitment is easiest in those areas that have long been under the group's control (EUAA 5/2025a). There, people have little opportunity to resist (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Many fighters come from the Rahanweyn clan. Generally, however, al-Shabaab includes members of all clans (MBZ 6/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). However, many people from government-controlled areas also volunteer to join al-Shabaab (BMLV 7/8/2024). Recruitment takes place, for example, in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) – such as in the greater Kismayo or Mogadishu areas – (EUAA 5/2025a; cf. MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). A source from the EUAA emphasises that recruitment in Mogadishu is proving difficult for al-Shabaab. The group used to recruit at Koranic schools there, but with increasingly limited success (EUAA 5/2025a). In the 'border areas' between zones controlled by al-Shabaab and the government, the *amniyat* [*Note: al-Shabaab's secret police*] is present and identifies, amongst others, those who might be suitable for recruitment (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Who al-Shabaab recruits: Al-Shabaab usually recruits boys, young men and men aged between 11 and 25. According to the expert Marchal, the group's ranks include many Rahanweyn, Bantu/Jareer and members of minority groups from the area between Mogadishu and Kismayo. The expert Höhne adds that these individuals, however, rarely hold senior positions and almost always end up as foot soldiers (EUAA 5/2025a). Members of minority groups often

join voluntarily and do not need to be coerced. For them, al-Shabaab is attractive not least because the group claims to override the clan system and elevate weaker groups to positions of power. Al-Shabaab also exploits local tensions. Furthermore, many of the new recruits have grown up with the group (MBZ 6/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025), and many have passed through al-Shabaab's educational system (BMLV 7/8/2024). Overall, the group is most successful in recruiting from among young unemployed people; IDPs; those with low levels of education; and economically marginalised clans (RLInst 7/7/2026).

Being recruited by al-Shabaab does not necessarily mean being deployed as a fighter. The group naturally also needs, for example, mechanics, logistics personnel, drivers, porters, cleaners, cooks, judges, administrative and healthcare staff, as well as teachers (EASO 1/9/2021). In Mogadishu, on the other hand, the group focuses on recruiting individuals with social influence, such as professors, teachers, elders and doctors. These individuals, along with recruited IDPs, primarily serve as informants, spies and in logistical roles. Although they receive a modest payment, many cooperate out of fear. Al-Shabaab is critical of members of the diaspora, fearing infiltration by spies (EUAA 5/2025a). Another source reports that the group specifically targets university graduates in Mogadishu (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Reasons for joining al-Shabaab: Recruitment can involve many different factors: money, clan, ideology, personal interests – and, of course, threats and violence (EASO 1/9/2021; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Al-Shabaab attempts to lure young men through persuasion, ideological and religious influence, and financial promises. Those who are unemployed, poor and without prospects can – despite a lack of religious understanding – be motivated even by small sums of money. For some recruits, a desire for revenge against opponents of al Shabaab also plays a role (FIS 7/8/2020b; cf. Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI 1/2019), whilst for others it is a thirst for adventure (Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI 1/2019). According to one source, 52 per cent of al-Shabaab members joined the group for economic reasons, and 1 per cent out of a thirst for adventure (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). According to other reports, around two-thirds of al-Shabaab members joined the group either for financial reasons or because of grievances relating to clan discrimination or to mistreatment and corruption on the part of local authorities (Felbab 2020; cf. Rollins/HIR 27/3/2023). Financially, the group offers the same pay as that earned by soldiers in the federal army or police officers (EUAA 5/2025a). As long as the group has funds at its disposal, it also has significant recruitment potential. Furthermore, it attracts volunteers due to xenophobic – particularly anti-Ethiopian – sentiments (BMLV 7/8/2024; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). According to one source, al-Shabaab experienced a veritable 'boom' due to the so-called *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) between Ethiopia and Somaliland (BMLV 21/7/2026).

The main motive for joining al-Shabaab is usually of a secular rather than a religious nature (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). Field research among former members of al-Shabaab has revealed that 52 per cent of the group's senior ranks had joined for religious reasons, whereas among the rank and file the figure was only 15 per cent (Botha/SIGLA 2019). Only a small proportion therefore follow al-Shabaab for ideological reasons; the majority do so out of pragmatism. For many, it is a matter of protection – and in many districts of the country, al-Shabaab remains the most visible and viable option in this regard (Sahan/SWT 25/8/2023). A lack of legal protection

from the government (FIS 7/8/2020a) and other grievances are driving entire communities into the arms of al-Shabaab. They are seeking a tactical alliance – but do not harbour a jihadist vision; rather, they wish to outmanoeuvre their rivals. Al-Shabaab is keen to capitalise on such tensions and exploit them for its own ends (Sahan/SWT 30/9/2022; cf. Sahan/Menkhaus 23/8/2023).

Particularly in areas that have been under the group's control for many years, the population is more willing to provide recruits in exchange for security and stability (MBZ 6/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). The prospect of a wife is also used as a recruitment tool (USDOS 12/8/2025) – for example, amongst Somali Bantu, where mixed marriages with Somali clans are often taboo. Al-Shabaab, however, has encouraged precisely these members to marry women and girls from powerful Somali clans – such as the Hawiye or Darod (Ingiriis 2020). Finally, fear of al-Shabaab must not be overlooked as a motivating factor. Displays of extreme violence keep many people in the fold (Sahan/SWT 12/6/2023).

Pay within al-Shabaab: A source from the EUAA states that foot soldiers earn 200–300 US dollars, including provisions issued in kind (EUAA 5/2025a). Another source, however, states that the basic salary is still US$100, though this can be raised to up to US$180 for proven fighters (BMLV 21/7/2026).

Forced recruitment: In practice, direct coercion is rarely used during recruitment (BMLV 21/7/2026; cf. AQ21 11/2023; Ingiriis 2020); it is used only to a limited extent, in exceptional cases or under specific circumstances (BMLV 21/7/2026; cf. MBZ 6/2023; MBZ 4/4/2025). Al-Shabaab acts very much on a case-by-case basis. For example, coercion is used when the group needs to quickly replenish its ranks in an area following a battle in which it has suffered heavy losses (BMLV 21/7/2026). Another source also explains that al-Shabaab only resorts to coercion when under pressure (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). For example, immediately after the group captured Maxaas (Hiiraan) in July 2025, reports of forced recruitment emerged from there (UNHCR 29/7/2025). Forced recruitment rarely takes place directly, but rather via clans. This can sometimes lead to deals being struck (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

In any case, forced recruitment does occur – not only of children, but also of adults (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In two studies from 2016 and 2017, 10–11 per cent of the former al-Shabaab members surveyed stated that they had been forcibly recruited by the group or had joined it out of fear of reprisals (MBZ 6/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). Another source states that 13 per cent of the group's members are forced recruits (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Most people therefore join the group voluntarily (MBZ 6/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). However, according to sources from the FFM Somalia 2023, it is not possible to simply refuse a recruitment request in al-Shabaab-controlled territory. Even though al-Shabaab presents recruits as volunteers, they generally have no real choice (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Overall, recruitment attempts often involve a mixture of pressure/threats and incentives/promises (FIS 7/8/2020b; cf. MBZ 6/2023; MBZ 4/4/2025), and it is not always possible

to distinguish between ‘voluntary’ and ‘forced’ (MBZ 6/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). Furthermore, a source from the FFM Somalia 2023 explains that al-Shabaab also uses the demand for recruits as a form of punishment, for example against communities that have previously cooperated with the government. In other areas, however, where the group is attempting to win over clans, it has ceased recruiting children (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In urban areas, according to one source, bribery is now the primary method used, rather than extortion. For example, al-Shabaab buys information for small amounts of US dollars (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). According to other reports, many people collaborate with the group out of opportunism: some are blackmailed, whilst others sympathise with al-Shabaab; ideology rarely plays a role. However, rejecting the group can result in death, kidnapping, attacks on family members or the destruction of property (RLInst 7/7/2026).

Where forced recruitment occurs: Generally speaking, forced recruitment takes place exclusively in areas under al-Shabaab’s control. For example, there is no forced recruitment by al-Shabaab in Mogadishu (BMLV 21/7/2026; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025; AQ21 11/2023; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023), nor in places such as Baidoa or Kismayo. This applies, in any case, to the recruitment of fighters (BMLV 21/7/2026).

Refusal to be recruited: As mentioned above, al-Shabaab usually directs a call for recruitment to a clan or to entire communities, rather than to individuals. Pressure is sometimes exerted during negotiations with the elders. If problems arise during this process, this does not necessarily mean trouble for the individual who refuses, as the consequences of refusing recruitment are usually borne by the clan (BMLV 7/8/2024). This can, for example, lead to the abduction or murder of uncooperative elders (MBZ 6/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). For al-Shabaab to accept the refusal, some form of compensation must be provided. Either the clan or the individual pays, or non-payment is offset by providing recruits. Thus, those affected sometimes have the option of a ransom (BMLV 7/8/2024; cf. MBZ 6/2023; MBZ 4/4/2025). There appears to be scope for negotiation. If, for example, the group demands a certain number of schoolchildren, a clan can either send children of its own or pay for a certain number of schoolchildren from other clans (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). Generally speaking, larger clans are more likely to be able to buy their way out of recruitment obligations than minorities are, given their resources (MBZ 6/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). This option is, of course, not always available. In the cities, al-Shabaab’s focus tends to be on collecting taxes, whilst in rural areas it is on conscripting recruits (BMLV 7/8/2024).

Another option is to flee (MBZ 6/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). Parents sometimes send their children to government-controlled areas – usually to stay with relatives (UNSC 10/10/2022). Those who refuse to be recruited flee the al-Shabaab-controlled area (EUAA 5/2025a). Young men sometimes go to Mogadishu to avoid possible (forced) recruitment (BMLV 7/8/2024). On the other hand, an eyewitness reports that those young people who, after completing their education at an al-Shabaab school, fled to Mogadishu to escape possible forced recruitment, soon returned home because their parents had been punished (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b). In other cases, entire families have fled to escape the recruitment of

their children, with many ending up as IDPs (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

In theory, there is a possibility that a refuser may face execution if no compensation payment is made. Overall, however, there are no examples of al-Shabaab executing anyone who refused recruitment (BMLV 21/7/2026). Another source explains that anyone who generally resists recruitment is threatened or detained (Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). Ordinary people who have successfully evaded recruitment by al-Shabaab are not persecuted on a sustained basis or over long distances (BMLV 21/7/2026; cf. ACCORD 31/5/2021). However, if an entire community resists al-Shabaab's recruitment efforts, this usually leads to violence (BMLV 21/7/2026).

Recruitment of girls and women: Al-Shabaab forces girls and women into marriage (MBZ 4/4/2025). A source from the FFM Somalia 2023 report explains that, in such cases, al-Shabaab also turns to the clans and demands that women be provided as wives. This demand is then complied with out of fear. In areas not under al-Shabaab's control, the group therefore lacks sufficient leverage in this regard (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Bantu women and girls are sometimes also forced into marriages through death threats; in practice, these marriages tend to amount to temporary sexual enslavement (Benstead/Lehman 2021). Al-Shabaab does not pay a bride price. If a daughter is refused to the group, a son may be demanded as a recruit instead (AQ21 11/2023). Al-Shabaab sometimes abducts and forcibly marries off girls and women, for example when levies cannot be paid (Sahan/SWT 28/5/2025; cf. MBZ 6/2023; MBZ 4/4/2025).

Apart from marriage, according to two EUAA sources, women in al-Shabaab are also deployed in combat, espionage, recruitment, as fundraisers, cooks, seamstresses, cleaners, preachers and nurses, for the storage of weapons, in hiding assassins and equipment, and in money laundering (EUAA 5/2025a). Others serve as female suicide bombers (AQ21 11/2023; cf. ICG 27/6/2019a). The *amniyat* explicitly recruits women for deployment in Mogadishu (Sahan/SWT 31/10/2025).

Sources

- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- Benstead/Lehman - L.J. Benstead, D. van Lehman (2021): Two Classes of 'Marriage": Race and Sexual Slavery in Al- Shabaab-Controlled Somalia, in: The Journal of the Middle East and Africa. Zitiert in: EASO - European Asylum Support Office (9.2021): Somalia - Targeted Profiles, S.18 - u, https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2021_09_EASO_COI_Report_Somalia_Targeted_profiles.pdf, accessed 14/6/2024
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (21/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail

- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (7/8/2024): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (6/6/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- Botha/SIGLA - Dr. A. Botha (Author), Security Institute for Governance and Leadership in Africa, Stellenbosch University (Publisher) (2019): Reasons for joining and staying in al-Shabaab in Somalia, Research Brief 5/2019, https://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/milscience/sigla/Documents/Navy News 2019/SIGLA Brief 5 2019.pdf, accessed 14/6/2024
- CTC Sentinel/P. D. Williams - Paul D. Williams (Author), Combating Terrorism Center at Westpoint (Publisher) (4/2024): The Somali National Army Versus al-Shabaab: A Net Assessment, https://ctc.westpoint.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CTC-SENTINEL-042024_article-4.pdf, accessed 2/6/2026
- EASO - European Asylum Support Office (1/9/2021): Somalia – Targeted Profiles, https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2021_09_EASO_COI_Report_Somalia_Targeted_profiles.pdf, accessed 14/6/2024
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- Felbab - Vanda Felbab-Brown (2020): The Problem with Militias in Somalia; in: Hybrid Conflict, Hybrid Peace: How Militias and Paramilitary Groups Shape Post-conflict Transitions, Adam Day (Hrsg.), UN University, https://i.unu.edu/media/cpr.unu.edu/post/3895/HybridConflictSomaliaWeb.pdf, accessed 14/6/2024
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020a): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf/2f51bf86-ac96-f34e-fd02-667c6ae973a0/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf?t=1602225617645, accessed 12/10/2023
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020b): Somalia: Tiedonhankintamatka Mogadishuun maaliskuussa 2020, Mogadishun turvallisuustilanne ja humanitääriset olosuhteet, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf/f58d6cd5-271a-55fd-9b89-b3d32e4ff80b/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf?t=1596797440011, accessed 12/3/2024
- ICG - International Crisis Group (27/6/2019a): Women and Al-Shabaab's Insurgency, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2011897/b145-women-and-al-shabaab_0.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- Ingiriis - M.H. Ingiriis (2020): The anthropology of Al-Shabaab: the salient factors for the insurgency movement's recruitment project, in: Small Wars & Insurgencies, Vol. 31/2, 2020, pp. 359-380, zitiert in: EASO - European Asylum Support Office (9.2021): Somalia – Targeted Profiles, S.18, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2060580/2021_09_EASO_COI_Report_Somalia_Targeted_profiles.pdf, accessed 2/9/2026
- INGO-C/STDOK/SEM - Internationale NGO C (Author), Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IO-D/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale Organisation D (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI - Rory Brown (Author), et.al. (Author), James Khalil (Author), Royal United Services Institute (Publisher) (1/2019): Deradicalisation and Disengagement in Somalia. Evidence from a Rehabilitation Programme for Former Members of Al-Shabaab, https://static.rusi.org/20190104_whr_4-18_deradicalisation_and_disengagement_in_somalia_web.pdf, accessed 14/6/2024
- MAEZA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Organisation für bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025

- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (6/2023): General country of origin information report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 29/4/2024
- Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI - Overseas Development Institute (Publisher), Ashley Jackson (Author), Mohamed Mubarak (Author) (8/2023): Playing the long game: Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control, https://odi.org/en/publications/playing-the-long-game-exploring-the-relationship-between-al-shabab-and-civilians-in-areas-beyond-state-control/, accessed 30/1/2024
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Q. Müller/Afrique XXI - Afrique XXI (Publisher), Quentin Müller (Author) (4/5/2025): En Somalie, les Chabab profitent de la crise et s'approchent de Mogadiscio, https://afriquexxi.info/En-Somalie-les-Chabab-profitent-de-la-crise-et-s-approchent-de-Mogadiscio, accessed 10/7/2025
- Researcher/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Researcher (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- RLInst - Robert Lansing Institute (7/7/2026): Somalia's Political Fragmentation Fuels Al-Shabaab's Resurgence, https://lansinginstitute.org/2026/07/07/somalias-political-fragmentation-fuels-al-shabaabs-resurgence/, accessed 10/7/2026
- Rollins/HIR - Kay Rollins (Author), Harvard International Review (Publisher) (27/3/2023): No Justice, No Peace: Al-Shabaab's Court System, https://hir.harvard.edu/no-justice-no-peace-al-shabaabs-court-system/, accessed 29/6/2023
- Sahan/Menkhaus - Sahan (Publisher), Ken Menkhaus (Author) (23/8/2023): Political Unrest and the Somali Jareer Weyne, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 582, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (31/10/2025): Al-Shabaab, ISS, and Somalia's Fractured Islamism, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 890, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (28/5/2025): Stolen Childhoods: Somalia's Enduring Crisis of Child Marriage, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 828, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (25/8/2023): Confronting Al-Shabaab's Patronage System, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 583, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/6/2023): Is it important to undermine Al-Shabaab's ideology? in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 552, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (30/9/2022): Winning the war of grievances, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 458, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (6/5/2022): 'Teach them well and let them lead the way' – the plight of Somalia's children, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 382, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen - James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Andrew Glazzard (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (12/2023b): The 'Off-Ramp' from al-Shabaab: Disengagement during the Offensive in Somalia, https://resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-12/RSVE_RR_LPBI_TheOffRamp_AS_SomaliaDefections_KhalilEtAl_Dec2023_FINAL-UPDATE12.18.23.pdf, accessed 26/1/2024
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (29/7/2025): Thousands Displaced Amid Clashes Between Somali National Army and Al-Shabaab in Mahaas District, Hiran Region, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/d7f10e8e-1ee8-5bac-8fd2-1d240a8132a2/Flash Alert #14- Thousands Displaced Amid Clashes Between Somali National Army and Al-Shabaab in Mahaas District Hiran Region.pdf, accessed 20/7/2026
- UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Senior UN Official X (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (10/10/2022): Letter dated 10 October 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council: Letter dated 1 September 2022 from the Panel of Experts on Somalia addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia [S/2022/754], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2081261/N2263844.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023

- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- VOA/Maruf - Voice of America (Publisher), Harun Maruf (Author) (16/11/2022): Somalia Fights Back Against Al-Shabab Attack on Education Sector, https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-fights-back-against-al-shabab-attack-on-education-sector-/6837584.html, accessed 14/6/2024

10.2.1 Examples of recruitment and careers within al-Shabaab, everyday life within the group

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

Examples of careers within al-Shabaab, compiled by The Resolve Network (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022):

- In 2007, Ahmed was given a permanent role within al-Shabaab; he cooked for the frontline fighters in Mogadishu and also did the shopping for them at the market. Later, he became a nurse for members of the group.
- Mohamud joined the group in 2011. He had previously been a teacher and continued to work as a teacher in the secular education system in Lower Shabelle. In 2016, he became scholl principal.
- Jabir joined the group in 2011 and received three months' military training. He then became a member of the Hisba (police).
- Mukhtar is the only interviewee who states that he was forcibly recruited. This took place in 2015, when he was aged 16 or 17. Al-Shabaab picked him and his friends up whilst they were sitting outside a shop. He became a member of the Hisba.
- Sadiq joined the group voluntarily in Baraawe. He became a member of the Hisba in his home town and received a small and irregular income. In his role, he was also required to enforce the group's social rules.
- Yusuf joined the Jabhat (army) in 2006 and received five months' military training.
- Feisal joined the group in 2008 and received three months' military training. He became a foot soldier in the Jabhat and, in 2009, commander of 30 men. In 2015, he was transferred to the Amniyat, where he also played a part in assassinations. In 2020, he returned to the rank of foot soldier.
- Abdinoor had already been associated with the group in 2005, received three months' military training and became a foot soldier in Jabhat. In 2008, he became commander of 50 men, and in 2015 of 300 (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022).

Further examples can be found in another study by The Resolve Network (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b):

- In 2020, Al-Shabaab demanded that the local Abgaal sub-clan in the Ceel Dheere district (Galgaduud) provide a person to collect zakat during Ramadan and Eid. The clan elders

approached 29-year-old Osman, who complied out of a sense of duty to his clan. He continued to work as a livestock herder.

- Ahmed is a Hawadle and, in 2013, at the age of forty, he voluntarily joined al-Shabaab in the Buulo Barde district (Hiiraan). After four months' training, he was recruited into the Hisba.
- In 2020, al-Shabaab approached Mohammed's Abgaal sub-clan in the Xaradheere district (Mudug) and demanded volunteers. The man, aged around forty, volunteered 'to spare his clan". He received no training whatsoever and was deployed as a tax collector.
- At a young age, Abdinasir was lured from the Ethiopian Somali Regional State (SRS) to Somalia by a relative under false pretences, where he became a foot soldier in the Jabhat, later a commander of 13 and subsequently of 30 fighters.
- Ismael, a member of the Rahanweyn clan, was drawn by the lure of money and voluntarily joined al-Shabaab. He underwent six months' training and became a member first of the Hisba and then of the Jabhat.
- Said, an Abgaal from the Adan Yabaal district (Middle Shabelle), joined al-Shabaab at the age of around 31. Al-Shabaab had asked the elders of his clan to nominate someone to collect taxes. After a year, he was transferred to the Hisba, and after a further three years to the Jabhat. There he received military training.
- Ali, an Abgaal from the Cadale district (Middle Shabelle), joined al-Shabaab at the age of sixteen. The group had forced his clan (Abgaal) to name ten 'volunteer' youths to be trained at the local madrasa. After two years, he transferred to the Jabhat. Unusually, he did not – according to his own account – receive any military training.
- Jibril, an Abgaal from the Adan Yabaal district, became an 'informal' member of al-Shabaab in 2019 at the age of 36. His clan had expelled the group from its own territory. The group withdrew on the understanding that the clan would ensure its own security on behalf of al-Shabaab. The man was trained by al-Shabaab. Following a period in detention, he was forced to join Jabhat; he eventually became commander of a unit of eleven men and, at times, deputy commander of a unit of 120.
- Liban, also an Abgaal from Adan Yabaal, joined al-Shabaab in 2020 at the age of 25. He joined Jabhat as a volunteer. His clan was opposed to this move. He received training.
- Omar, an Abgaal from the Ceel Dheere district (Galgaduud), joined al-Shabaab in 2018 at the age of 31. He had previously been a fisherman. His motivations were protection and money. After completing his training, he was deployed as a tax collector.
- Hassan is a Hawadle from the Belet Weyne district (Hiiraan). He joined al-Shabaab voluntarily in 2016, although his clan was actually opposed to it. He became a driver for the Hisba (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b).

Mobile phones: Due toa combination of restrictions imposed by al-Shabaab and technical limitations, access to social media is generally severely restricted for members of the group.

Smartphones are largely banned within al-Shabaab, and internet access is sometimes restricted. Some sources state that, within al-Shabaab-controlled territory, only high-ranking members are permitted internet access. Two members of Jabhat state that they had unrestricted access to the internet whilst on leave. The following individuals generally have access to a wider range of communication options: members outside Jabhat; those of higher rank; and those deployed to less remote locations. Most of the defectors interviewed state that they had no access to smartphones during their time with al-Shabaab. Only one interviewee states that smartphones are permitted for members of the Hisba in his place of residence; another states that commanders are allowed to use smartphones (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b).

For members of al-Shabaab, access to 'conventional' mobile phones is also strictly regulated, although this varies depending on location, unit, rank and time of service. Defectors who had previously served with al-Shabaab outside the Jabhat – for example, with the Amniyat or as tax collectors – had unrestricted access. Rank-and-file fighters, on the other hand, frequently report restrictions: a few minutes per month; several hours at weekends (Thursday and Friday); one hour per day (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b). During leave, usage appears to be less restricted. In any case, members of al-Shabaab often remain in contact with family members or acquaintances. Several deserters state that they were allowed to call whoever they wanted; for some, however, the circle of people they could contact was restricted (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023a).

Interaction with locals: According todeserters, (rank-and-file) members of al-Shabaab are not permitted to discuss politics or internal procedures with locals, on pain of detention or transfer (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023a).

Radio: The restrictions imposed by al-Shabaab on radio reception vary depending on the operational area, unit and time. Some deserters state that they were only permitted to listen to al-Shabaab radio programmes or programmes affiliated with the group. Others were also able to receive the BBC, but were not allowed to listen to any programmes associated with the state. Still others were permitted to listen to any programme, but not to music. One deserter states that these were guidelines rather than strict rules. Most of the deserters interviewed state that al-Shabaab did not restrict members' access to the radio whilst on leave (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023a).

Leave: Some deserters interviewed for a study report that al-Shabaab provides for a right to leave – for both the Hisba and the Jabhat (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b). Accordingly, members of al-Shabaab also receive leave allowances, which enable them to visit their families (provided they are located in areas under the insurgents' control), and are granted time for rest and recuperation, etc. The allowances vary depending on the unit, location and time, and in relation to marital status. Defectors have cited the following examples: a) a married member of the Jabhat in Middle Shabelle – automatically entitled to three months' leave per year; b) unmarried members, on the other hand, must obtain permission if they hold higher ranks; c) a commander is entitled to three months' leave after every five months of active service; d) another officer, however, states that he received only ten days' leave during his entire two

years withal-Shabaab (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023a). The possibility of taking leave naturally also depends on the military situation (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b).

Punishment: Many of the deserters interviewed report that they were punished with imprisonment for various offences during their time with al-Shabaab. The 'offences' included, for example: unauthorised interference in another commander's area of responsibility (4 days' detention); refusal to defend one's own district (1 month's detention, discharge after taking an oath); damaging a radio (15 days); firing celebratory shots (25 days); refusing a local transfer (5months) (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b); refusing to kill an injured comrade (15 days) (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023a).

Sources

- TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen - Sif Heide-Ottosen (Author), James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (2022): Journeys through Extremism: The Experiences of Former Members of Al-Shabaab, https://resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-09/RSVE_RR_CBAGS_JourneysAlShabaab_Heide-Ottosenetal_Sept2022_UpdatedAug2023.pdf, accessed 29/1/2024
- TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen - James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Andrew Glazzard (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (12/2023a): Reaching behind Frontlines: Promoting Exit form al-Shabaab through Communications Campaigns, https://www.resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-12/RSVE_RR_LPBI_ReachingBehindFrontlines_AS_SomaliaDefections_KhalilEtAl_Dec2023_FINAL-UPDATE12.18.23.pdf, accessed 29/1/2024
- TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen - James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Andrew Glazzard (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (12/2023b): The 'Off-Ramp' from al-Shabaab: Disengagement during the Offensive in Somalia, https://resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-12/RSVE_RR_LPBI_TheOffRamp_AS_SomaliaDefections_KhalilEtAl_Dec2023_FINAL-UPDATE12.18.23.pdf, accessed 26/1/2024

10.3 Al-Shabaab – Deserters and former fighters

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

Time and again, members of al-Shabaab desert and turn themselves in to the authorities. On such occasions, photographs of the deserters are sometimes published in online media (examples: GN 23/3/2025, GO 9/2/2025, Halqabsi 20/4/2024). It is mostly lower-ranking members who desert (UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In a study, al-Shabaab deserters cited various reasons for deserting: misdeeds committed by the group, personal animosities, pressure from family, inadequate pay, poor living conditions, fear of hostilities against their own clan, and, more generally, the risk to life and limb (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b; cf. Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI 1/2019). The latter refers not only to the danger of combat operations, but also to the punishments meted out by al-Shabaab for (alleged) breaches of the rules (Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI 1/2019).

Fighters who have previously been forcibly recruited in areas not under the constant control of al-Shabaab are the most likely to desert (EUAA 5/2025a).

Desertion – Process: Desertion often resembles an escape, accompanied by a corresponding fear of reprisals by al-Shabaab – including the death penalty. Some deserters wait months or even years before an opportunity to escape presents itself (Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI 1/2019; cf. TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022; TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b).Attempts to escape are severely punished. A former member of Jabhat reports that, after expressing his wish to leave to a commander, he was blindfolded and then beaten (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022).

The deserters interviewed for a study fled in various ways [*Note: The deserters interviewed here all took the formal route – that is, they surrendered to government forces*]. Some did not return to al-Shabaab after going on leave. Others left whilst on active duty; still others fled in the course of combat operations. Almost all had previously made arrangements for safe passage with the security forces. Some surrendered in the immediate vicinity of the front line, whilst others travelled to Afgooye or Mogadishu to surrender. Most of the deserters interviewed were able to flee by utilising personal contacts (mostly family or clan). Clans play a decisive role in desertion; they lend money or arrange safe passage with the security forces (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b; cf. TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022). Examples of desertions from the study by *The Resolve Network* (TRN) (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b):

- Osman rang a relative who works for the security forces. This relative also lent him money for the journey to Mogadishu. He was able to make this journey because, at that time, al-Shabaab had very few resources left to devote to checkpoints due to the government offensive. In Mogadishu, the relative handed him over to the criminal investigation department.
- Ahmed had applied for leave to visit his sick mother. He stayed there for six months; only then did his commander demand his return. However, he set off for Mogadishu on a motorbike. He had borrowed money from relatives for this and phoned a relative in Afgooye, who arranged for him to surrender to the *National Intelligence and Security Agency* (NISA).
- Mohammed was granted a week's leave to relocate his family. Hecontacted a family member with the*Ma'awiisley* [*Note: clan militias allied with the government*] , who arranged for him to desert and accompanied him to Mogadishu. There, he contacted another family member who works for the Criminal Investigation Department. He then surrendered to this person.
- Abdinasir was granted leave on medical grounds. He rang a former comrade who was at the time in the Serendi Camp [*Note: rehabilitation centre for deserters*]. This comrade instructed him to travel to Baraawe and organised a safe escort for him. There, he surrendered to the Federal Army.
- Ismael borrowed a mobile phone from a civilian and rang his family. They contacted relatives in the Federal Army. Ismael informed the army of his location and was picked up there.
- A member of the Abgaal clan fled during a redeployment, contacted a relative in the local administration, who in turn notified the *Ma'awiisley*. He continued his escape on foot and arrived at the agreed meeting point with the *Ma'awiisley* after seven hours.

- Following an advance by the Federal Army in the vicinity, another Abgaal fled. He contacted a brother, who organised safe passage for him with the Federal Army.
- When the Federal Army had advanced close to his position, another Abgaal turned to his relatives, who arranged for him to be handed over to clan members within the Federal Army.
- Liban escaped in the chaos following an air strike. He rang his father using a villager's mobile phone, and his father arranged for him to be escorted safely by the Federal Army.
- One man – a tax collector – first evacuated one of his two families from al-Shabaab-controlled territory and warned the other. He then left the area under al-Shabaab control, whilst his family arranged for him to be escorted safely by the Federal Army.
- A Hawadle has not returned from a holiday. His clan organised contact with the *Ma'awiisley*, who then handed him over to the Federal Army (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b).

Further examples from another TRN study (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022):

- A man contacted relatives who arranged safe passage with the security forces.
- Another man fell seriously ill and was unable to work for six months. He applied to be discharged on medical grounds so that he could receive treatment in Mogadishu. This was granted. His brother, a member of the NISA, helped him to surrender.
- Another man – although he was unfamiliar with the area – boarded a bus and travelled to Mogadishu. There, he surrendered to the security forces.
- One person remained in a location when government forces took it over. The man allowed himself to be arrested.
- Another man was wounded and, without his mother's permission, had himself collected from the al-Shabaab hospital and taken to a hospital under government control. He later returned to his home town, but felt unsafe there – due to al-Shabaab's reputation for punishing deserters. His mother arranged for him to be escorted safely by an uncle serving in the Federal Army.
- Another man slipped out of the camp at night. His parents contacted the elders, who approached clan members in the army and arranged a safe escort.
- Members of *the amniyat* [*note: al-Shabaab's secret police*] had been dispatched in 2018 to arrest a member of al-Shabaab. The state authorities intercepted this information and offered the person concerned safe passage (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022).

Other ways of securing release: Generally speaking, not all former al-Shabaab fighters are deserters. There are examples where relatives have been able to secure the release of a family member from al-Shabaab (Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI 1/2019) or where elders have acted

as mediators (UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). For example, one man told TRN that hehad been discharged from service upon request. He had made the request because his wife had died and he needed to look after the children. The request was initially rejected but was later granted after elders had intervened (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022).

Furthermore, in exceptional cases, it appears that a deserter may also reach an agreement with al-Shabaab – for example, by providing favours such as money, information or access (BMLV 7/8/2024; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b; IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Furthermore, al-Shabaab fighters are not deployed as soldiers indefinitely. After a certain period (which may vary depending on their role), they are disarmed and discharged from service. These trained fighters – *de facto* 'reservists' – can be rapidly reactivated in an emergency (BMLV 7/8/2024; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). There are also known cases where individuals were permitted to leave al-Shabaab for medical reasons (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022). Some deserters also return to al-Shabaab (Sahan/SWT 18/11/2021).

Killing of deserters: Al-Shabaab does not tolerate desertion (EASO 1/9/2021). The group assumes that deserters have strayed from the right path and therefore believes it has the right to kill them (IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to one source, al-Shabaab never pardons deserters (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to some sources, there are reports that deserters are persecuted by al-Shabaab as apostates (*murtadd*) and, in some cases, executed (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. Sahan/SWT 18/11/2021). One source states that it is unaware of any documented instances where deserters have been executed after some time has passed upon their leaving al-Shabaab (BMLV 21/7/2026).

Generally speaking, the desertion of an individual poses a lesser problem for al-Shabaab than the defection of entire clans and their associated militias (BMLV 21/7/2026). Furthermore, al-Shabaab does not have the capacity to kill all deserters (BMLV 21/7/2026; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023), nor is it at all prepared to devote significant resources to pursuing ordinary deserters (BMLV 21/7/2026). Rather, the group focuses its attention on more prominent deserters (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. BMLV 21/7/2026; Landinfo 8/9/2022). Two experts state that it is extremely unlikely that deserting al-Shabaab foot soldiers will be pursued over long distances (ACCORD 31/5/2021; cf. BMLV 21/7/2026). Whether deserters become targets depends largely on their former role within al- Shabaab (BMLV 21/7/2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). A recent example of the murder of a deserter concerns a former member of *the amniyat*, who apparently possessed sensitive information and had, moreover, joined the Ethiopian forces. He was murdered by al-Shabaab in April 2025 in the vicinity of the *SSC-Khatumo* in the Laasaanood (Sool) area (SOCOM 21/4/2025).

Given the resources at its disposal, al-Shabaab focuses on carrying out acts of violence in an 'exemplary' manner. Punishments are used to instil fear in the population, deserters and potential deserters (ACCORD 31/5/2021; cf. EASO 1/9/2021; IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). There are also very few known examples of deserters being killed (BMLV 21/7/2026; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; FIS 7/8/

2020a). Indeed, there are no concrete figures or reports regarding the killing of deserters (BMLV 21/7/2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Persecution of deserters: If al-Shabaab is determined to find a deserter, the group will track them down (BMLV 7/8/2024). It is difficult (IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023) or, according to one source, virtually impossible to hide from al-Shabaab (MBZ 4/4/2025). In principle, al-Shabaab is able to track down deserters across almost the entire country thanks to a network of informants. To this end, the group utilises, amongst other things, clan networks (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). This also applies to larger cities (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023), such as Kismayo (IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023) or Mogadishu (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to a deserter, if a member of al-Shabaab arrives at one of the group's checkpoints, the relevant superior is contacted by telephone to verify whether the reason for travel given by the traveller is correct (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b). Many deserters are afraid of being tracked down by *the amniyat* (BBC/Harper 27/5/2019). They fear punishment for themselves and their families (TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen 12/2023b). 70 per cent of the 32 deserters surveyed in a 2017 study reported having received death threats from al-Shabaab. Other deserters reported that their families had been threatened. Of those who had not been threatened, most had changed their telephone numbers (Taylor/Semmelrock/McDermott 2019). In contrast, in another study, in which a total of 129 deserters were interviewed between 2015 and 2017,a threat (via text message) was actually made in only onecase (Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI 1/2019).

Such acts of intimidation are cost-effective for al-Shabaab and do not necessarily mean that the deserter is actually being sought; nor is it reasonable to assume that al-Shabaab pursues deserters on a large scale (BMLV 7/8/2024). Most people released from rehabilitation centres remain in the city where they underwent rehabilitation. They do not return to rural areas and are better able to integrate into city life (UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). The expert Marchal emphasises that, for deserters who have fled to Mogadishu, the clan plays a specific role – depending on whether the clan has a strong or weak presence within al-Shabaab. For those whose extended family is strongly represented in Mogadishu and whose clan has little representation within al-Shabaab (e.g. Hawiye / Habr Gedir), there is the possibility of going into hiding. For others whose clan does not hold a strong position in Mogadishu and which, moreover, is heavily involved with al-Shabaab (e.g. Rahanweyn), going into hiding can sometimes be difficult (EASO 1/9/2021).

Following their release from a state-run rehabilitation centre, social discrimination has hardly been a significant problem for former members of al-Shabaab, no doubt partly because many have managed to keep their past a secret. Although many of the deserters come from Mogadishu, the majority are from Lower Shabelle, Middle Juba, Hiiraan or Galgaduud (Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI 1/2019). Nevertheless, many opt for reintegration in Mogadishu – sometimes because they can enjoy relative anonymity there (Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI 1/2019; cf. BBC 23/11/2020; EUAA 5/2025a). Many of the deserters interviewed as part of a study – who had been discharged from centres as rehabilitated – have not returned to their actual home regions due to security concerns. Some of them also avoid certain areas of Mogadishu because they fear being

identified there as former members of al-Shabaab. Overall, rehabilitated individuals frequently express security concerns regarding al-Shabaab; there is also a latent risk of being recognised by former comrades(Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI 1/2019).

Defectors in Somaliland and Puntland are generally not considered to be at risk (exception: the *SSC-Khatumo* area). However, deserters from southern/central Somalia find themselves in a difficult situation there if they have no local contacts, as they do not know whom they can trust or who is affiliated with al-Shabaab (BMLV 21/7/2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Government amnesty: In 2023, a new amnesty was declared for al-Shabaab fighters (GN 28/8/2023); reference was also made to this in 2025 (Sahan/SWT 12/3/2025; cf. SMN 27/1/2025). The amnesty applies to fighters who lay down their arms, renounce violence and pledge allegiance to the state. As of April 2025, there is no legal basis for this (AA 25/4/2025). Nevertheless, deserters are repeatedly granted pardons (examples: GN 23/3/2025, GO 9/2/2025).

Rehabilitation/reintegration: The Somali government operates several rehabilitation centres for former members of al-Shabaab who have been classified as 'low-risk' (UNSC 2/2/2024). The *National Programme for the Treatment and Handling of Disengaged Combatants*, launched in 2012, has rehabilitated around 9,000 people (including more than 1,300 women) through outpatient,community-based programmes. The two centres set up for women were closed in 2024 for financial reasons; the three centres for men have recently switched from a residential to a community-based model. As of January 2026, 300 defectors were participating in the programme; the existing demand cannot be met (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (25/4/2025): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 2025), April 202, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2125924/Deutschland. Auswärtiges Amt, Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation (23/11/2020): Life after al-Shabab: Driving a school bus instead of an armed pickup truck, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/stories-55016792, accessed 17/6/2024
- BBC/Harper - Mary Harper (Author), British Broadcasting Corporation (Publisher) (27/5/2019): Somalia's frightening network of Islamist spies, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48390166, accessed 17/6/2024
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (21/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (7/8/2024): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- EASO - European Asylum Support Office (1/9/2021): Somalia – Targeted Profiles, https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2021_09_EASO_COI_Report_Somalia_Targeted_profiles.pdf, accessed 14/6/2024
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026

- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020a): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf/2f51bf86-ac96-f34e-fd02-667c6ae973a0/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf?t=1602225617645, accessed 12/10/2023
- GN - Goobjoog News (23/3/2025): Authorities in South West Parade Al-Shabaab Defectors in Baidoa, https://en.goobjoog.com/authorities-in-south-west-parade-al-shabaab-defectors-in-baidoa/, accessed 28/5/2026
- GN - Goobjoog News (28/8/2023): FGS-FMS to form 'joint war command' to fight Al-Shabaab-communique, https://en.goobjoog.com/fgs-fms-to-form-joint-war-command-to-fight-al-shabaab-communique, accessed 8/11/2023
- GO - Garowe Online (9/2/2025): Somali Military Court Releases Young Al-Shabaab Couple, Supports Their Union, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somali-military-court-releases-young-al-shabaab-couple-supports-their-union, accessed 28/5/2026
- Halqabsi - Halqabsi News (20/4/2024): Highest Number of Al-Shabaab Defectors Surrender to Government Forces, https://halqabsi.com/2024/04/highest-number-of-al-shabaab-defectors, accessed 7/5/2024
- INGO-C/STDOK/SEM - Internationale NGO C (Author), Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IO-D/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale Organisation D (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Khalil/Brown/et.al./RUSI - Rory Brown (Author), et.al. (Author), James Khalil (Author), Royal United Services Institute (Publisher) (1/2019): Deradicalisation and Disengagement in Somalia. Evidence from a Rehabilitation Programme for Former Members of Al-Shabaab, https://static.rusi.org/20190104_whr_4-18_deradicalisation_and_disengagement_in_somalia_web.pdf, accessed 14/6/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (8/9/2022): Somalia: Sikkerhetssituasjonen i Mogadishu og al-Shabaabs innflytelse i byen, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Respons-Somalia-Sikkerhetssituasjonen-i-Mogadishu-og-al-Shabaabs-innflytelse-i-byen-08092022-1.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Researcher/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Researcher (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/3/2025): Al-Shabaab Advances and Villa Somalia's Dhusamareb Strategy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 798, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (18/11/2021): A blueprint for the fight against Al-Shabaab, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 272, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (27/1/2025): Somali Minister Calls on Youth to Accept Presidential Amnesty for Leaving Al-Shabaab, https://shabellemedia.com/somali-minister-calls-on-youth-to-accept-presidential-amnesty-for-leaving-al-shabaab/, accessed 28/5/2026
- SOCOM - Somaliland.com (21/4/2025): Khaatumo Confirms: Al-Shabaab Behind Assassination of Ethiopian Diplomat, https://www.somaliland.com/news/somaliland/khaatumo-confirms-al-shabaab-behind-assassination-of-ethiopian-diplomat, accessed 18/6/2025
- Taylor/Semmelrock/McDermott - C. Taylor, T. Semmelrock, A. McDermott (2019): The Cost of Defection: The Consequences of Quitting Al-Shabaab, in: International Journal of Conflict and Violence, Vol. 13/2019, S.1-13, https://www.ijcv.org/index.php/ijcv/article/view/3122/pdf, accessed 17/6/2024
- TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen - Sif Heide-Ottosen (Author), James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (2022): Journeys through Extremism: The Experiences of Former Members of

Al-Shabaab, https://resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-09/RSVE_RR_CBAGS_JourneysAlShabaab_Heide-Ottosenetal_Sept2022_UpdatedAug2023.pdf, accessed 29/1/2024
- TRN/Khalil/Abdi Y./Glazzard/Nor/Zeuthen - James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Andrew Glazzard (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (12/2023b): The 'Off-Ramp' from al-Shabaab: Disengagement during the Offensive in Somalia, https://resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-12/RSVE_RR_LPBI_TheOffRamp_AS_SomaliaDefections_KhalilEtAl_Dec2023_FINAL-UPDATE12.18.23.pdf, accessed 26/1/2024
- UNHRC/UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (Publisher), United Nations Human Rights Council (Author) (30/1/2026): Visit to Somalia. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/52/Add.2, accessed 23/4/2026
- UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Senior UN Official X (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (2/2/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/758], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2106391/n2401965.pdf, accessed 4/6/2024

10.4 Somaliland and the North Eastern State (NES)

Last modification 2026-09-04 14:26

There is no compulsory military service in Somaliland (AA 9/3/2026).

As a general rule, there is no compulsion within the Somaliland army; on the Somaliland side, no one is forced to fight. Before the conflict over Laascaanood began, the army did not recruit via clan militias. This has changed in the course of the conflict. When the clan leader calls for war, people obey. The clan leader – for example, the *suldaan* – goes to the communities, to the sub-subclans. There, he demands 10–20 fighters from the local elder. The elder then goes to his people and selects individual men to fight, or asks fathers to nominate their sons. Naturally, some of those nominated do not want to fight at all. But when the traditional leader approaches a family or a sub-clan, a contribution must be made – even without consent. Should anyone still refuse, this can also lead to punishment. This is because the elders must meet their quota. If soldiers desert, this is regarded as a disgrace to the clan. In a sense, one could also refer to this as forced recruitment. Overall, however, an attempt to recruit someone into the Somaliland army can be refused without consequences (BMLV 21/7/2026).

Dhulbahante / North Eastern State / SSC-Khatumo: A source from the FFMSomalia 2023 explains that, on the Dhulbahante side, people are sometimes forced to fight (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Another source explains that, in the case of the Dhulbahante militias, a kindof forced military agreement can arise. Each clan elder must contribute some of his clan members to the conflict. And these clan elders may well resort to coercion (INGO-V/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Yet another source explains that, whilst recruitment at the start of the fighting in 2022/23 was indeed carried out on a clan basis, there was considerable support at that time. Overall, clan fighters are therefore temporary combatants. If someone from *the SSC-Khatumo* defects to Somaliland, that person will find themselves in trouble; but if someone simply returns of their own accord from their deployment to their job, then that person will not face any problems (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (21/7/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- INGO-V/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), International NGO V (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Scholar/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Scholar, Hargeysa (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

11 General human rights situation

11.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-09-07 09:57

The Somali Constitution enshrines the protection of human rights as well as the defining role of Sharia as a source of law (AA 9/3/2026). The United Nations is concerned that the primacy of Sharia law is undermining human rights in Somalia (UNHRCOM 6/5/2024). Furthermore, compliance with international human rights obligations is not a priority for the Federal Government. It focuses on the fight against al-Shabaab and humanitarian crises. Advances in human rights are not always regarded as part of the solution to these problems (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Overall, the human rights situation in Somalia remains fragile (SFH 1/2026). All political actors in southern and central Somalia are involved in serious and systematic human rights abuses in their quest for political and economic power (BS 2026; cf. AI 21/4/2026) – including state and regional security forces (BS 2026). Civilians bear the brunt of the armed conflict in Somalia; arbitrary attacks and the disproportionate use of force occur in all parts of the country (BS 2026). Serious human rights violations include, amongst other things, arbitrary and unlawful killings; the recruitment and use of child soldiers; torture and other cruel treatment; and unjustified arrests (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. BS 2026). Al-Shabaab is responsible for the majority of serious human rights violations (USDOS 12/8/2025) and for the bulk of civilian fatalities (BS 2026). During fighting involving the international peacekeeping force [*Note: AUSSOM*], the government, militias and al-Shabaab, civilians are killed, injured and displaced, and other war crimes are committed by all parties to the conflict (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). There are numerous reports that the government and its henchmen are arbitrarily and extrajudicially killing people (USDOS 12/8/2025). According to other sources, extrajudicial killings do not constitute a structural problem within the security forces (AA 9/3/2026). In any case, security forces are accused of having arbitrarily attacked civilians during disputes over land, at checkpoints, during forced evictions and on other occasions (BS 2026). They are also accused of human rights violations such as rape, robbery, illegal checkpoints, corruption, intimidation of journalists and the arbitrary use of weapons. Due to the dysfunctional judicial system, impunity can often be assumed (AA 9/3/2026).

[*Note: Figures on civilian deaths can be found in the chapter* on the security situation in Southern/ Central Somalia and Puntland]

[*Note:Information on enforced disappearances can be found in the chapter* on Torture / Southern/ Central Somalia, Puntland]

Fundamental rights are rarely upheld during the arrest and detention of suspects. It is not uncommon for arrests to be made without justification and under inhumane conditions (AA 9/3/2026) by federal and regional authorities as well as by allied militias (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. BS 2026). In such arrests, the government often cites alleged membership of al-Shabaab as the grounds (USDOS 12/8/2025).

Although the Federal Government is taking credible steps to identify and punish state officials who have committed human rights abuses, impunity remains the norm (USDOS 12/8/2025).

Al-Shabaab systematically violates fundamental rights in the areas under its control (BS 2026). Extrajudicial killings take place (AA 9/3/2026). The group is responsible for the majority of serious human rights violations (USDOS 12/8/2025), including, amongst others, terrorist attacks against civilians; murders, assassinations and summary executions; rape and other forms of sexual violence; abductions; forced recruitment of boys (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. UNHRC 22/1/2026); restrictions on civil rights and freedom of movement (USDOS 12/8/2025); forced marriages (UNHRC 22/1/2026). In areas controlled by al-Shabaab, cruel corporal punishments are regularly imposed and carried out in public, e.g. flogging or caning, and the amputation of hands for thieves. The group regularly executes, without due process, people accused of cooperating with the government, international organisations or Western aid organisations (AA 9/3/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AI - Amnesty International (21/4/2026): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia, accessed 21/4/2026
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- SFH - Swiss Refugee Council (1/2026): Factsheet Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2137060/260119_SOM_factsheet_web_DE.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (22/1/2026): Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Somalia; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/HRC/WG.6/52/SOM/3], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138749.html, accessed 27/4/2026
- UNHRCOM - United Nations Human Rights Committee (6/5/2024): Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia [CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2108970/G2405613.pdf, accessed 24/5/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

11.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-09-04 14:46

The Constitution of Somaliland enshrines the protection of human rights as well as the defining role of Sharia as a source of law (AA 9/3/2026). Although Somaliland is not internationally recognised, it has, of its own accord and voluntarily, submitted to international human rights conventions (SIHA 3/2025). In the centres of Somaliland, the rule of law essentially prevails, and the police and other authorities function reasonably well. In the country's remote areas, local authorities maintain law and order. In this context, the rights of women and local minorities are often inadequately safeguarded (BS 2026).

Human Rights Watch reports only issues relating to freedom of expression with regard to human rights problems in Somaliland for the year 2025 [*Note: see* Freedom of Expression and of the Press / Somaliland] (HRW 4/2/2026). The non-governmental Somaliland Human Rights Centre reports the following human rights issues in its annual report for 2024: freedom of expression and freedom of the press, the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs), the conflict over Ceerigaabo, and the inadequate handling of cases of gender-based violence. With regard to freedom of expression, arbitrary arrests and detention without charge continue to occur (HRCSL 2025). One source states that the situation regarding civil liberties has improved following the presidential elections at the end of 2024 (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (2025): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2024, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Annual-Report-2025-1.pdf, accessed 24/4/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- SIHA - Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (3/2025): Briefing Paper, Is the Democratic Dream Still Possible? Navigating the Growing Backlash Against Women's Rights in Somaliland, https://sihanet.org/briefing-paper-is-the-democratic-dream-still-possible-navigating-the-growing-backlash-against-womens-rights-in-somaliland/, accessed 24/9/2025

12 Freedom of opinion and freedom of the press

12.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-09-04 15:23

Laws and the constitution provide for freedom of expression and of the press (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. BS 2026), however, neither the federal nor the regional governments adhere to them (USDOS 12/8/2025). Freedom of expression and media freedom are restricted (AI 21/4/2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024); the Somali media landscape has long been characterised by violence,

impunity and systemic restrictions (RD 31/5/2025). On V-DEM's *Freedom of Expression Index*, Somalia scores 0.55 points on a scale of 0 (poor) to 1 (good) (Kenya: 0.87; Ethiopia: 0.24) (UNIG-VDI 2025d).

According to one source, freedom of expression is restricted in areas under government control. Nevertheless, the source reports that there is open and intense discussion on social media (AA 9/3/2026). According to other reports, journalists and individuals who express views that contradict those of the authorities are subjected to intimidation, threats, arbitrary arrest or persecution in all parts of the country (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. RD 31/5/2025; UNHRC 22/1/2026). Critical voices are threatened and silenced (BS 2026). Freedom of expression is restricted, and criticism of those in power, as well as discussion of sensitive topics, including religion, can result in reprisals (BS 2026; cf. USDOS 12/8/2025; AA 9/3/2026). According to a source from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), there is censorship and the suppression of protests (UNHRC 22/1/2026).

Legislation contains various restrictions, including bans on speaking out against Islam; restrictions where public security, order or stability are at risk; and bans on statements deemed unethical (without specifying what constitutes this) (BS 2026). At the same time, the dissemination of unspecified 'fake news' is criminalised by law, with penalties of up to six months' imprisonment (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). Furthermore, 'propaganda against the dignity of an individual, an institution or the government" is also prohibited. In addition, ethically defined requirements relating to religion, culture and morality may lead to arbitrary arrest (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). In March 2025, the Minister for Information issued a decree banning the publication of 'news that could threaten national security or that directly or indirectly misuses or fabricates information" (AI 21/4/2026). Journalists are also treated as criminals under the 1964 Criminal Code, the more recent Media Act or the Anti-Terrorism Act (SMN 15/9/2025; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). In the latter, the definition of 'terrorism" is very broad, to the extent that journalistic activity can sometimes be equated with criminal behaviour. Journalists who report on security issues, armed groups or military operations risk prosecution for 'spreading terrorist ideas" or 'supporting terrorist narratives" (UNHRC 22/1/2026).

A climate of fear is fostered (UNHRC 22/1/2026), self-censorship is widespread (AA 9/3/2026; cf. USDOS 12/8/2025; UNHRCOM 6/5/2024) and is further encouraged by arrests, intimidation and assaults (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026).

The *National Union of Somali Journalists* (NUSOJ) documented 59 attacks on the media nationwide in the first nine months of 2025 (SMN 15/9/2025). The *Somali Journalists' Syndicate* (SJS) also reports on such incidents. A report on all incidents recorded in 2025 can be found on the organisation's website (SJS 2026).

Media: Somalia has a wide range of regional media outlets – including newspapers, television and radio stations, online media and media associations – some of which are biased and have links to various factions, whilst others campaign for media rights, freedom of expression and the improvement of journalism (BS 2026). Radio is the most widespread and most accessible

medium. Most towns have radio stations; conservative estimates put the total number of stations in Somalia at 60 (Sahan/SWT 22/3/2024).

Mobile internet is available without access restrictions in large parts of the country (AA 9/3/2026). In the past, so-called 'influencers' have occasionally been detained for allegedly inciting violence between clans or for immoral behaviour. Some have been sentenced to prison terms lasting several months (HO 4/8/2024).

Journalists are regularly subjected to pressure or even coercive measures by state authorities (AA 9/3/2026). The government attempts to control and censor them (AI 21/4/2026). They work in a corrupt, hostile environment and are subjected to intimidation, death threats, arbitrary arrests and harassment by state, clan or Islamist authorities (BS 2026; cf. AI 21/4/2026; SMN 15/9/2025; UNHRCOM 6/5/2024; ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Journalists who cover sensitive topics, such as security, human rights and corruption, face a particular risk (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. SMN 15/9/2025). Occasionally, intimidation and blackmail are also used to prevent the publication of reports or to force a public apology for reports that have already been published (SMN 15/9/2025).

In Reporters Without Borders' 2025 *World Press Freedom* Index, Somalia ranks 136th out of 180 countries assessed (2024: 145) (RSF 2025). The federal government, state governments, affiliated militias, al-Shabaab and other actors regularly kill, abuse and harass journalists (USDOS 12/8/2025), resulting in physical attacks (AA 9/3/2026), intimidation, arbitrary arrest and prosecution (HRW 4/2/2026; cf.USDOS 12/8/2025; AA 9/3/2026; SMN 15/9/2025). According to the SJS, in 2025 there were a total of 149 so-called *'media violations*' in Southern/Central Somalia and Puntland, of which 118 occurred in the Benadir capital region, nine each in Galmudug and the SWS, and seven in Puntland (SJS 2026).

Somalia is considered one of the most dangerous countries for journalists (BS 2026). In 2024, two journalists were killed (AI 29/4/2025), and two more in 2025. Two more were tortured, and a further two were abducted (SJS 2026). Crimes against journalists are rarely investigated – impunity prevails (SJS 16/3/2024; cf. AA 9/3/2026). On *the Global Impunity Index*, which ranks countries in terms of impunity for the murder of journalists, Somalia is ranked third (BS 2026).

Arrests: Federal and regional authorities arrest journalists and others who criticise the authorities (USDOS 12/8/2025). According to the SJS, 112 journalists were arrested in Southern/Central Somalia and Puntland in 2025 (SJS 2026). Nationwide, nine out of ten detainees are released after a few days at the latest (SJS 2026); according to other sources, many are released after a few days or weeks (SMN 15/9/2025). Most are released without charge (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). On 15 March 2025, officers from the National Intelligence and Security Agency

(NISA) searched the home of a TV reporter and arrested her. She was held for around four hours at the Wardhigley police station in Mogadishu. Prior to this, she had published a post on TikTok in which she criticised the lack of rubbish collection in Wardhigley. She was released without charge (AI 21/4/2026). On 18 March 2025, the police arrested at least 22 journalists who had reported on an assassination attempt on the Federal President (AI 21/4/2026; cf. HRW 4/2/

2026). The police searched the offices of the Risaala Media Corporation, which had broadcast a video from the scene of the attack, and arrested five of the company's employees. They were questioned at the Hamar Jajab police station in Mogadishu and released on the same day. On 1 April 2025, police officers searched the offices of Five Somali TV and arrested four journalists. This followed a report by the broadcaster on the alleged desertion of police officers. They were also released on the same day without charge (AI 21/4/2026).

Al Shabaab: There is no freedom of expression in theterritory controlled by Al-Shabaab (MBZ 4/4/2025). There, public life and public opinion are subject to strict control by the group, and independent media are banned (BS 2026). According to one source, the latter also applies to smartphones and television in general (MBZ 4/4/2025). According to another source, the situation is more complicated. According to this source, satellite television is severely restricted. Restaurants and other public venues are only permitted to broadcast Al Jazeera in Arabic and English. Music channels, Bollywood films and Mexican soap operas – all of which are significant foreign TV exports to Somalia – are banned. Egyptian channels showing historical dramas are tolerated, whereas those showing romantic films are not (Sahan 15/7/2024).

The group carries out attacks on journalists, some of which are fatal (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. BS 2026). Al-Shabaab also threatens and harasses journalists outside its own territory (BS 2026). Manyinfluencers therefore do notdare to criticise al-Shabaab directly (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/ 2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AI - Amnesty International (21/4/2026): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia, accessed 21/4/2026
- AI - Amnesty International (29/4/2025): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2024, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2124628.html, accessed 26/6/2025
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (4/8/2024): Seven social media influencers sentenced to six months for online misconduct, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Aug/197382/seven_somali_social_media_influencers_sentenced_to_six_months_for_online_misconduct.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 23/4/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- RD - Radio Dalsan (31/5/2025): Somali Press Freedom Under Siege: Mogadishu Dialogue Demands Action, https://radiodalsan.com/2025/05/21/somali-press-freedom-under-siege-mogadishu-dialogue-demands-action, accessed 23/4/2026

- RSF - Reporters Without Borders (2025): Press Freedom Index 2025, https://rsf.org/en/index?year=2025, accessed 23/4/2026
- Sahan - Sahan (15/7/2024): Al-Shabaab's Shadow 'War on Football', in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 705, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (22/3/2024): In Praise of Public Radio. Lessons for Somalia from Tanzania, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 664, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SJS - Somali Journalists Syndicate (2026): SJS Annual Report 2025, https://sjsyndicate.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Violence-Harassment-and-Gendered-Challenges_SJS-2025-Report.pdf, accessed 23/4/2026
- SJS - Somali Journalists Syndicate (16/3/2024): SJS Annual Report 2023, https://sjsyndicate.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/SJS-Annual-State-of-Press-Freedom-Report-Somalia-2023_protected-.pdf, accessed 3/6/2024
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (15/9/2025): No Democracy Without Media Freedom in Somalia, NUSOJ Says, https://shabellemedia.com/no-democracy-without-media-freedom-in-somalia-nusoj-says/, accessed 26/11/2025
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (22/1/2026): Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Somalia; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/HRC/WG.6/52/SOM/3], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138749.html, accessed 27/4/2026
- UNHRC/UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (Publisher), United Nations Human Rights Council (Author) (30/1/2026): Visit to Somalia. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/52/Add.2, accessed 23/4/2026
- UNHRCOM - United Nations Human Rights Committee (6/5/2024): Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia [CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2108970/G2405613.pdf, accessed 24/5/2024
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (2025d): Variable Graph – Freedom of Expression Index, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/, accessed 10/12/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

12.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-09-04 15:38

Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are enshrined in the constitution (BS 2026; cf. HRCSL 2025). However, the government restricts freedom of expression (AI 21/4/2026; cf. HRCSL 2025). On V-DEM's *Freedom of Expression Index*, Somaliland scores 0.63 points on a scale of 0 (poor) to 1 (good) (Southern/Central Somalia: 0.55; Kenya: 0.87; Ethiopia: 0.24) (UNIG-VDI 2025d).

Journalists are frequently charged with defamation and libel (HRCSL 2025). Furthermore, various laws prohibit the publication or dissemination of exaggerated or biased news reports that could disrupt public order. This provision is also used by public officials to arrest and prosecute journalists (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. HRCSL 3/2024) or to impose fines on them (USDOS 12/8/2025). The authorities frequently employ intimidation tactics and harassment to actively suppress freedom of expression. The right to criticise the government is often met with reprisals and intimidation (HRCSL 2025). A report on all incidents of journalists' arrests recorded in Somaliland in 2025 can be found on the *Somali Journalists' Syndicate* (SJS) website (SJS 2026).

Arrests: The authorities in Somaliland continue to restrict discussion of topics deemed controversial by arresting journalists, politicians and other alleged critics of the government (HRW 4/2/

2026) – arbitrarily and without a warrant (HRCSL 2025). Journalists covering sensitive topics, such as corruption, are particularly affected by these detentions. The authorities also continue to impose fines on journalists on grounds of ’defamation” or other vague allegations, or have them arbitrarily detained (USDOS 12/8/2025).

According to the *Somali Journalists' Syndicate*, 36 journalists were arrested in 2025 (SJS 2026). According to other sources, the figure was at least 24 in 2025 (AI 21/4/2026). Nationwide, nine out of ten detainees are released within a few days at the latest (SJS 2026). Of the twelve journalists arrested in 2024, nine were released within a period of one to six days, whilst one media worker was only released after 42 days (HRCSL 2025). The length of prison sentences imposed ranges from a few days to several months (USDOS 12/8/2025).Journalists arealso frequentlyintimidated or threatened (HRCSL 2025).

People have been arbitrarily arrested in connection with discussions concerning, for example, the *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) with Ethiopia, the political instability resulting from the clashes with the *SSC-Khatumo*, or the conflict in Ceerigaabo (HRCSL 2025). There are also several reports that citizens have been arrested for criticising government institutions, public services or corruption in posts on so-called social media (USDOS 12/8/2025). Here are some examples of arrests:

- In mid-August 2025, a journalist was arrested over a Facebook post (HRW 4/2/2026; cf. AI 21/4/2026). He was charged with spreading false news and, after approximately one month, was fined 150 US dollars and released from custody (AI 21/4/2026).
- In September 2024, an opposition MP was arrested, even though Parliament had refused to authorise his extradition. The public prosecutor accused him, amongst other things, of holding meetings with Somali officials and of criticising the handling of the conflict in Laascaanood. After the Constitutional Court had declared his arrest unlawful, the man was released after just under a month (AI 29/4/2025).

Media: Various private media organisations, including print, television and online media, operate nationwide in Somaliland. The state has restricted the registration of new newspapers and holds a monopoly in the radio sector (BS 2026; cf. FH 2024a). Many of the media outlets havelinks to the political sphere (FH 2024a).

The security forces take repressive action against **citizens who question Somaliland’s independence**. For instance, even displaying the Somali flag is a criminal offence (AA 9/3/2026). In mid-August 2025, for example, a social media influencer was arrested for displaying flags that ’are not recognised by the Somaliland authorities” (Dawan 15/8/2025). In the past, there have also been instances of people being arrested on suspicion of spying for the *SSC-Khatumo* or for Puntland (SMN 5/12/2023).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]

- AI - Amnesty International (21/4/2026): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia, accessed 21/4/2026
- AI - Amnesty International (29/4/2025): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2024, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2124628.html, accessed 26/6/2025
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (15/8/2025): Somaliland Police Arrest Social Media Influencer Over Galmudug Celebration in Hargeisa, https://www.dawan.africa/news/somaliland-police-arrest-social-media-influencer-over-galmudug-celebration-in-hargeisa, accessed 9/10/2025
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (2025): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2024, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Annual-Report-2025-1.pdf, accessed 24/4/2026
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (3/2024): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2023, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Annual-Report-HRC-2023-web-1.pdf, accessed 31/5/2024
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- SJS - Somali Journalists Syndicate (2026): SJS Annual Report 2025, https://sjsyndicate.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Violence-Harassment-and-Gendered-Challenges_SJS-2025-Report.pdf, accessed 23/4/2026
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (5/12/2023): Three suspected SSC and Puntland spies arrested in Sool region, https://shabellemedia.com/three-suspected-ssc-and-puntland-spies-arrested-in-sool-region, accessed 18/4/2024
- UNIG-VDI - Universität Göteborg - V-Dem Institute (Varieties of Democracy) (2025d): Variable Graph – Freedom of Expression Index, https://v-dem.net/data_analysis/VariableGraph/, accessed 10/12/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

13 Freedom of assembly and association, opposition

13.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-09-04 15:53

The current constitution guarantees freedom of assembly and association. However, freedom of assembly is repeatedly restricted (AA 9/3/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025; BS 2026). Permits are required for demonstrations (FH 2024b). Furthermore, freedom of assembly remains effectively restricted in many areas due to the security situation (MBZ 4/4/2025).

At the same time, the government regularly reaffirms its commitment to guaranteeing the aforementioned rights. With regard to freedom of assembly, however, it is never entirely clear how local security forces will react in government-controlled areas; in some cases, these forces are also deployed for political purposes (AA 9/3/2026). Demonstrations are frequently taking place and can lead to violent clashes at any time. This may also result in road blockades (AA 23/6/2025) and the use of firearms (BS 2026). There have been repeated incidents of fatalities, arrests and restrictions on freedom of assembly, sometimes justified on the grounds that the protests had turned violent (AA 9/3/2026). Public demonstrations remain risky, with deaths and injuries occurring time and again (BS 2026). For example, during a demonstration against forced

evictions in Mogadishu in September 2025, security forces used live ammunition, killing at least one person (SG 21/9/2025).

The influence of civil society has grown over the years. However, its control over the government remains relatively weak, and civil society organisations continue to operate in an insecure environment where their rights are not protected and criticism is often met with repression or even violence (BS 2026).

In areas controlled by al-Shabaab, there is neither freedom of assembly nor freedom of association (AA 9/3/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025; BS 2026). The formation of interest groups outside religious groups is prohibited (BS 2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (23/6/2025): Somalia – Reise- und Sicherheitshinweise (Reisewarnung), unverändert gültig seit 4.11.2024, https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/laender/somalia-node/somaliasicherheit/203132#content_1, accessed 23/6/2025
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- SG - Somali Guardian (21/9/2025): Mass protests erupt in Mogadishu over alleged land grabs and forced evictions, https://www.somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/somalia-mass-protests-erupt-in-mogadishu-over-alleged-land-grabs-and-forced-evictions/, accessed 25/11/2025

13.1.1 Opposition, political parties

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

In November 2024, the Somali Parliament passed a new Political Parties Act, which provides for political associations and political parties (AA 9/3/2026). At the beginning of September 2025, a total of 57 parties were registered with the National Electoral Commission (NIEBC) (Dawan 7/9/2025); according to other sources, the figure was 61 (UNSC 30/9/2025). Before the introduction of new requirements, the figure stood at 110 in January 2025 (Sahan/SWT 24/1/2025).

Under the Political Parties Act, the three political associations that received the most votes in local elections qualify as political parties. Only political parties may stand for election at regional and federal level (AA 9/3/2026).

According to one source, the existing parties are more akin to coalitions, and party affiliation carries little weight. The role of parties remains undefined; so far, they have been driven by prominent figures and consist of alliances of small circles of political elites (BS 2026). Political loyalties are determined primarily by clan affiliation or religious ties to informal groups (AA 9/3/2026). To date, elections have always been held within the framework of a system based on

clans. Consequently, the significance of political parties remains unclear (FH 2024b). According to recent reports, however, parties are becoming increasingly important (BMLV/STDOK 2/6/2026).

In the Federal Parliament in Mogadishu, discussions and verbal exchanges between MPs take place regularly. Opposition activity is, in principle, possible in government-controlled areas. However, due to the sometimes unclear balance of power, it is difficult to determine whether, in individual cases, opponents and critics of the government are being obstructed or violently attacked by state or quasi-state actors, or by third parties (AA 9/3/2026). According to other reports, political activists and opponents of the government are often intimidated and may at any time face repression, beatings or violent arrest by national and regional security forces (BS 2026). Occasionally, planned opposition demonstrations are declared illegal (Dawan 25/9/2025). Turkish-manned weapon systems are also deployed to intimidate the opposition, for example by fighter jets flying low over Mogadishu or by positioning tanks at prominent points in the city (BMLV/STDOK 20/5/2026). Most recently, the Gorgor special forces unit was also deployed against the opposition (BMLV/STDOK 2/6/2026). The Federal Government is in open conflict with the opposition coalition, the Somali Future Council, which, amongst other things, opposes the extension of the Federal President's term of office and is threatening to hold parallel elections. In this regard, violent clashes broke out in Mogadishu in June 2026 (CT/M. DeAngelo/A. Shah/AEI 6/8/2026).

For example, in the run-up to the district council elections in Mogadishu in November 2025, the government deployed security forces against opposition meetings, demonstrations and journalists (Sahan/SWT 12/11/2025). At the end of September 2025, the former President and now opposition figure Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and his entourage were attacked by security forces; at least ten people were injured in the ensuing exchange of fire (Sahan/SWT 29/9/2025). In early April 2025, a politician from the opposition group *Shacabka* (the People) was arrested. Colleagues and human rights groups described the arrest as a form of abduction (Horn 11/4/2025). As early as January 2025, the federal government had attempted to break up gatherings of MPs and opposition parties in Mogadishu. In addition, letters were sent to several hotels informing them that such gatherings are prohibited without prior authorisation from the federal government (Sahan/SWT 12/2/2025).

In Puntland, in mid-2025, a Member of Parliament was stripped of his mandate after his parallel involvement with the *SSC-Khatumo* and the North Eastern State (NES) came to light (RD 15/7/2025).

Al-Shabaab is openly anti-democratic and rejects democracy, which it describes at times as un-Islamic and Western, and at other times as Christian or Jewish. The group's aim is to establish a caliphate (BS 2026). In the areas under its control, opposition activity is not tolerated. Al-Shabaab does not shy away from executing political opponents (AA 9/3/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (2/6/2026): Expertengespräch, Länderexperte des BMLV
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (20/5/2026): Telefoninterview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- CT/M. DeAngelo/A. Shah/AEI - Aaryaman Shah (Author), Michael DeAngelo (Author), American Enterprise Institute (Publisher), Critical Threats (Author) (6/8/2026): Tigray on the Precipice; New FDLR Demobilization Plan; Saudi Red Sea Task Force: Africa File, August 6, 2026, https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/ethiopia-tplf-drc-fdlr-rwanda-red-sea-saudi-houthi-somalia-fgs-us-aussom-africa-file-august-6-2026, accessed 28/8/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (25/9/2025): Banadir Regional Administration Issues Warning On Planned Opposition Protests, https://www.dawan.africa/news/banadir-regional-administration-issues-warning-on-planned-opposition-protests, accessed 25/11/2025
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (7/9/2025): Somalia's Electoral Commission Registers 14 New Political Parties, https://www.dawan.africa/news/somalias-electoral-commission-registers-14-new-political-parties, accessed 7/10/2025
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- Horn - Horn Observer (11/4/2025): NISA Transfers Kidnapped Opposition Politician to Police Custody, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3276/Somalia-NISA-Transfers-Kidnapped-Opposition-Politician-to-Police-Custody, accessed 29/4/2026
- RD - Radio Dalsan (15/7/2025): Puntland Parliament Ousts MP Abdirashid Yusuf Jibril Amid Lasanod Political Tensions, https://radiodalsan.com/2025/07/15/puntland-parliament-ousts-mp-abdirashid-yusuf-jibril-amid-lasanod-political-tensions/, accessed 23/6/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/11/2025): Hassan Sheikh's Calculated Electoral Gamble in Mogadishu, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 895, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (29/9/2025): The Fire Next Time, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 879, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/2/2025): Suppressing Opposition, One Hotel at a Time, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 786, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (24/1/2025): One-person, one-vote, one-time?, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 778, per e-Mail [fee required]
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025

13.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-09-07 15:59

In principle, the constitution guarantees freedom of assembly and association (BS 2026). There are a large number of civil society organisations active across all parts of the country in various sectors (e.g. women, young people, professional groups) (SPC 9/2/2022). Demonstrations are, however, sometimes suppressed (HRCSL 2025).

The opposition is involved in planning voter registration for the next upcoming elections (HT 15/9/2025). Most NGOs and political parties are able to operate without interference. The

authoritarian tendencies following 2016 gave cause for concern, but this trend has reversed since the 2024 elections (BS 2026).

According to the constitution, only three parties at a time are permitted to stand in an election (BS 2026; cf. FH 2024a). The parties currently authorised are Kulmiye, Kaah and Waddani. Political disputes between the government and the opposition are commonplace both within and outside parliament (AA 9/3/2026). In the run-up to the November 2024 elections, several members of Waddani – which was then in opposition – were arrested. In the presidential elections, however, the Waddani candidate emerged victorious (MBZ 4/4/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (2025): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2024, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Annual-Report-2025-1.pdf, accessed 24/4/2026
- HT - Horn Tribune (15/9/2025): Somaliland National Parties Hold Meeting on Elections and Voter Registration, https://horntribune.com/2025/09/15/somaliland-national-parties-hold-meeting-on-elections-and-voter-registration/, accessed 26/11/2025
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- SPC - Somalia Protection Cluster (9/2/2022): Protection Analysis Update, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOM_PAU_Somalia-Protection-Analysis_Feb2022.pdf, accessed 15/11/2023

14 Prison conditions

Last modification 2026-09-07 16:51

Conditions: Conditions in prisons and detention centres do not meet international standards (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). Prisons are overcrowded and many lack water, electricity, sanitation facilities and medical care (AA 9/3/2026; cf. UNHRC 22/1/2026), and the infrastructure is outdated. In early 2026, it is reported that the central prison in Mogadishu, which has a capacity of 500–700 prisoners, is housing 1,700 (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). In some cases, prison conditions are life-threatening (AA 9/3/2026; cf. UNHRC 22/1/2026). Prison officers lack knowledge and professional skills (AA 9/3/2026).

In Somaliland, too, according to one source, prisons are overcrowded and conditions there are harsh (FH 2024a). According to other reports, prison conditions in Hargeysa and Garoowe (Puntland) meet international standards (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The independent Human Rights Centre reports, with regard to prisons visited in Somaliland, that there is a lack of adequate sanitary facilities and also of an adequate food supply. Accordingly, overcrowding is also an issue, and prisoners are sometimes chained together (HRCSL 3/2024).

One source estimates that there are only three prisons nationwide in which prisoners are granted daily access to food, water, exercise and hygiene: Mogadishu Central Prison; Garoowe Prison; and the newly built *Mogadishu Prison and Court Complex* (MPCC). However, even in these prisons, inmates rely on their families and networks to supplement the limited supply of food and medical care. Without access to additional food and support, inmates with weaker ties to their clan and families may face a far harsher prison stay than their cellmates (Sahan/SWT 31/7/2024).

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has built new prisons or refurbished old ones in Mogadishu, Bossaso, Garoowe and Hargeysa. For example, the organisation helped to build the MPCC in Mogadishu, which opened in March 2024. In addition to courtrooms, the facility also houses three detention blocks (UN News 4/3/2024). The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is also involved in the maintenance of detention facilities (ICRC 1/2025). In addition, prison staff are being trained, for example in the areas of human rights and prison management (UNSC 30/9/2025).

Remand prisoners are housed together with convicted prisoners (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). According to a source from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), gender segregation is not always observed in prisons, nor are minors separated from adults (UNHRC 22/1/2026). The latter is also reported from Somaliland (HRCSL 3/2024). Corporal punishment as a penalty for offences committed in prison is not prohibited but widely accepted (OHCHR 9/11/2022). In Somaliland, consideration is sometimes given to inmates with mental health conditions (Odero 4/2024).

Monitoring: In Southern/Central Somalia, the Attorney General's Office supervises and inspects prisons. The commander of the correctional service must respond to any concerns raised. Monitoring is also carried out by the Human Rights Committee of the upper house of parliament, by civilian inspection committees and by the Puntland Human Rights Commissioner. The ICRC regularly visits prisons and detention facilities run by the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA). The UN agency UNODC also visits prisons at regular intervals. Civil society organisations, on the other hand, have very limited access (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). In 2024, the ICRC was able to visit 16 detention centres nationwide (ICRC 1/2025). In Somaliland, partner organisations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are also able to provide support to detainees in detention centres (UNHCR 23/3/2026).

Al-Shabaab detains individuals – some of whom have been arrested for relatively minor offences – in inhumane conditions. Treatment by Al-Shabaab is often harsh (USDOS 12/8/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024

- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (3/2024): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2023, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Annual-Report-HRC-2023-web-1.pdf, accessed 31/5/2024
- ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross (1/2025): Somalia - Facts & Figures 2024, https://blogs.icrc.org/app/uploads/sites/99/2025/02/ENG-Facts-and-Figures-2024.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Odero - Vitalis Okoth Odero (4/2024): Mental Health: A Situational Analysis of Somaliland 2023, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380792721_MENTAL_HEALTH_A_SITUATIONAL_ANALYSIS_OF_SOMALILAND_2023, accessed 3/7/2024
- OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (9/11/2022): Experts of the Committee against Torture Commend Somalia on Progress in Rebuilding State and Government Institutions, Raise Questions on the Definition of Torture and the Death Penalty, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/experts-committee-against-torture-commend-somalia-progress-rebuilding-state, accessed 3/6/2025
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (31/7/2024): Inside Somalia's Prisons, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 711, per e-Mail [fee required]
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (23/3/2026): Operational Update (February 2026) - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/1a005975-9ff8-5936-b0dd-1d4147bb4eb6/UNHCR Somalia - Monthly Operational Update February 2026.pdf, accessed 24/3/2026
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (22/1/2026): Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Somalia; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/HRC/WG.6/52/SOM/3], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138749.html, accessed 27/4/2026
- UNHRC/UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (Publisher), United Nations Human Rights Council (Author) (30/1/2026): Visit to Somalia. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/52/Add.2, accessed 23/4/2026
- UN News - United Nations News (4/3/2024): UN crime prevention chief pledges enhanced cooperation in Somalia, https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147222, accessed 13/3/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

15 Death penalty

Last modification 2026-09-08 08:13

The death penalty is imposed and carried out in all parts of the country, though significantly less frequently in areas under the control of the respective government – and there, only for the most serious crimes [*Note: in contrast to areas controlled by al-Shabaab*] (AA 9/3/2026). The Criminal Code provides for the death penalty for crimes such as high treason, espionage and endangering public safety. Islamic courts may therefore also impose it for crimes that contravene Sharia law, including same-sex sexual relations, adultery, theft, the consumption of alcohol and drugs, as well as drug trafficking and banditry (UNHRC 22/1/2026). In some cases, the death penalty is imposed in breach of fundamental procedural rights (AA 9/3/2026; cf. HRW 4/2/2026), and is sometimes handed down by military courts against civilians (UNHRC 22/1/2026).

The law stipulates that executions are to be carried out by firing squad in camera. This is not always respected (Sahan/SWT 21/6/2023). In 2025, 25 people were sentenced to death in Somalia (four members of the security forces, nine members of al-Shabaab, twelve civilians).

The death penalty was carried out 24 times in 2025 (two members of the security forces, thirteen members of al-Shabaab, nine civilians) (AA 9/3/2026). According to the *World Coalition Against the Death Penalty*, 139 people sentenced to death are currently in custody (WCDP 2025).

In **Somaliland**, two police officers were executed by firing squad in February 2025. They had been found guilty of the murder of a colleague (GN 8/3/2025). It is possible to secure the release of those sentenced to death for murder through negotiations (FTL 8/9/2022; cf. AA 25/4/2025). The compensation usually consists of the equivalent of one hundred camels. One source reports such a last-minute agreement shortly before the execution (FTL 8/9/2022).

Al-Shabaab: Al-Shabaab executes people on such grounds as allegations of espionage or collaboration (USDOS 12/8/2025). The death penalty is also imposed for adultery and 'cooperation with the enemies of Islam" [*Note: generally the government, AUSSOM, the UN or aid organisations*] (AA 9/3/2026). Death sentences are often handed down following unfair trials (HRW 11/1/2024). Executions carried out by Al-Shabaab take place in public (AA 9/3/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (25/4/2025): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 2025), April 202, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2125924/Deutschland. Auswärtiges Amt, Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (8/9/2022): Somaliland Murderer Spared after Agreeing to Pay 100 Camels in Compensation, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/somaliland-murderer-spared-after-agreeing-to-pay-100-camels-in-compensation, accessed 3/6/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (8/3/2025): Two Police Officers Executed in Somaliland for Murder of Colleagues, https://en.goobjoog.com/two-police-officers-executed-in-somaliland-for-murder-of-colleagues, accessed 27/4/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (11/1/2024): World Report 2024 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2103135.html, accessed 15/1/2024
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (21/6/2023): The Death Penalty in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 556, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (22/1/2026): Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Somalia; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/HRC/WG.6/52/SOM/3], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138749.html, accessed 27/4/2026
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- WCDP - World Coalition against the Deaht Penalty (2025): Somalia, https://worldcoalition.org/pays/somalia, accessed 27/4/2026

16 Religious freedom

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

Over 99 per cent of the Somali population professes Sunni Islam (AA 9/3/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). According to other sources, 99.9 per cent of the population are Muslim, comprising 98.1 per cent Sunnis, 1.2 per cent Shia and 0.6 per cent Islamic schismatics (SFH 1/2026). This

makes Somalia one of the countries with the highest concentration of Muslims in the world. Islam is so closely intertwined with every aspect of life in the country that the term 'Somali' always implies a Muslim identity (EuroCon/U. Bulut 22/8/2024).

In any case, only a very small minority actually adheres to another religion or Islamic denomination (USDOS 26/6/2024a; cf. FH 2024b; AA 9/3/2026). One source estimates the Christian community at 1,000 members (USDOS 26/6/2024a), whilst another source, the Norwegian COI unit Landinfo, puts the figure at 2,000–3,000. Another source reports that there are still 20–30 Catholics in Mogadishu, though they are scarcely active, if at all. There are therefore also genuine converts (Landinfo 8/9/2025).

In Somalia, the conditions for the free practice of religion are still not in place (ACN 2026). Only Sunni Islam enjoys significant rights as a religious community. Christians enjoy no legal or social protection whatsoever (OpD 2026).

According to one source, society throughout the country is hostile towards Christianity (UNHRC 22/1/2026; cf. EuroCon/U. Bulut 22/8/2024). Christians must practise their faith in secret (OpD 2026; cf. UNHRC 22/1/2026; ACN 2026; Landinfo 8/9/2025). Christian congregations are very small and meet only sporadically (Landinfo 8/9/2025). Possession of Christian scriptures or the expression of Christian beliefs carries a significant risk of reprisals (UNHRC 22/1/2026).

Somalis traditionally followed the *Shafi'i school* of Islamic law, guided by several dominant Sufi orders or sects(*turuuq*) (Bryden/TEL 8/11/2021). Sufism has spread throughout East Africa over the past 200 years and has taken on its own forms in Somalia (AQSOM 2 7/2022), but has been in decline for the past few decades (Sahan/SWT 27/8/2025). Depending on the region, the interpretation and practice of Islam are increasingly taking on conservative or even neo-Salafist characteristics. This restricts freedom of belief in these areas and, in some cases, prevents progressive legislation. This is facilitated by the numerous Saudi-funded and Wahhabi-influenced schools in the country (AA 9/3/2026; cf. Sahan/SWT 27/8/2025). This trend towards a more conservative, 'purist' interpretation of Islam applies to both Somalia and Somaliland. Religious norms are increasingly influencing politics, the economy and society (BS 2026). According to one source, Salafism has gained the upper hand in the mosques (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

On the other hand, despite the aggressive advance of imported Salafism, many Somalis continue to value their Sufi faith and customs (Bryden/TEL 8/11/2021). Galgaduud and Hiiraan are regarded as Sufi strongholds (Sahan/SWT 14/10/2022). Salafists, al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab, on the other hand, abhor the Sufi interpretation of Islam (AQSOM 2 7/2022). According to one source, the younger generation is increasingly disillusioned with Islamist movements, which they associate with corruption or terrorism (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Society: Regardless of government regulations, and particularly in areas beyond the reach of the state's effective authority, Islamic and local traditions, as well as Islamic customary law, are widespread (AA 9/3/2026). There is strong social pressure to follow the traditions of Sunni Islam (USDOS 26/6/2024a). For most Somalis, *'Somaliness'* is synonymous with being a Muslim. Conversion and apostasy from Islam therefore not only constitute a rebellion against the funda-

mental religious and social order, but in the eyes of many Somalis also signify a renunciation of Somali identity (Landinfo 8/9/2025) or a turning away from one's own clan (OpD 2026). Due to this social pressure, it is not possible to lead an openly non-Muslim lifestyle; doing so can lead, in particular, to exclusion from the clan system and the family, which has serious social consequences (AA 9/3/2026).

Superstition, on the other hand, is accepted. According to one study, 75–100 per cent of people believe in black magic, jinn and evil spirits (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024).

Conversion to another religion is forbidden; it is regarded as socially unacceptable and as a betrayal of one's clan, family and identity (OpD 2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). Those suspected of having converted, as well as their families, must expect harassment (USDOS 26/6/2024a), whilst self-declared converts face threats, violence (Landinfo 8/9/2025) and persecution by their own family or community (UNHRC 22/1/2026). Conversion, apostasy and statements that could be regarded as blasphemy can all lead to discrimination and violence (MBZ 4/4/2025) and even to arrest (USDOS 26/6/2024a). According to one source, in 2023 and 2024, Christians and people suspected of proselytising (including aid workers) were victims of acts of violence such as abduction, displacement, assault and murder (ACN 2026). Another source reports that converts face honour killings, disownment or execution – often at the hands of their own families (OpD 2026).

One convert told the Norwegian COI unit Landinfo that, in the first few years following his conversion, he had been subjected to death threats and physical violence – including from family members. However, this had gradually subsided. Another female convert had her children taken away; she was alsosent to a 're-education centre' (*dhaqan ceelis*) and mistreated with electric shocks there. Some of Landinfo's sources, however, also report cases of converts who have been tolerated by their families and clans and continue to live in their home country. These are, however, individuals who keep a low profile and sometimes have considerable resources or connections (Landinfo 8/9/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACN - Aid to the Church in Need (2026): Bericht über die Religionsfreiheit in der Welt 2025 - Country Report Somalia, https://acninternational.org/de/religiousfreedomreport/berichte/land/2025/somalia, accessed 11/5/2026
- AQSOM 2 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 2 (7/2022): Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um einen analytischen Newsletter
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- Bryden/TEL - The Elephant (Publisher), Matt Bryden (Author) (8/11/2021): Fake Fight: The Quiet Jihadist Takeover of Somalia, https://www.theelephant.info/long-reads/2021/11/08/fake-fight-the-quiet-jihadist-takeover-of-somalia/#.YYjpCzdaMR4.twitter, accessed 9/11/2023
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026

- EuroCon/U. Bulut - Uzay Bulut (Author), European Conservative, The (Publisher) (22/8/2024): Somalia: The Near Complete Islamization of a Society, https://europeanconservative.com/articles/analysis/somalia-the-near-complete-islamization-of-a-society/, accessed 11/5/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (8/9/2025): Somalia - Kristne somaliere, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Somalia-respons-Kristne-somaliere-08092025.pdf, accessed 13/1/2026
- M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik - M.M. Islam, A.A. Siyad, S.M.M.R. Malik (9/9/2024): Mental health problems in Somalia after decades of humanitarian crises: a qualitative exploration of perceptions and experiences. Trop Med Health 52, 58 (2024), https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1186/s41182-024-00618-z.pdf, accessed 9/1/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- OpD - Open Doors (2026): World Watch List 2026. Situation of Religious Freedom for Christians. Somalia, https://www.opendoors.org/persecution/reports/Somalia-Country_Dossier-ODI-2026.pdf, accessed 11/5/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/8/2025): Women in Somalia's Gendered Political Economy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 865, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (14/10/2022): Hassan Sheikh and the politics of mawlid in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 463, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SFH - Swiss Refugee Council (1/2026): Factsheet Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2137060/260119_SOM_factsheet_web_DE.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (22/1/2026): Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Somalia; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/HRC/WG.6/52/SOM/3], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138749.html, accessed 27/4/2026
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (26/6/2024a): 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2111587.html, accessed 9/7/2024

16.1 Areas under government control

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:28

According to its constitutional self-definition, Somalia is an Islamic state that is not primarily geared towards religious diversity and tolerance (AA 9/3/2026). The constitutions of Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland designate Islam as the state religion. Islamic law (Sharia) is cited as the fundamental source of state legislation (AA 9/3/2026; cf. OpD 2026), and all laws must comply with the general principles of Sharia. The constitutions of the other federal states also declare Islam to be the official religion (USDOS 26/6/2024a).

The constitution enshrines a prohibition on discrimination on the grounds of religion (FH 2024b) as well as freedom of religious practice (UNHRC 22/1/2026; cf. USDOS 26/6/2024a). At the same time, however, proselytising or the promotion of other religions is prohibited (FH 2024b; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025; AA 9/3/2026). Conversion to another religion and apostasy are not explicitly prohibited by law, however, Sharia law is interpreted accordingly. Blasphemy and 'insulting Islam', on the other hand, are criminal offences punishable by up to two years' imprisonment (USDOS 26/6/2024a; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). According to other sources, Muslims are prohibited from adopting another religion (AA 9/3/2026; cf. OpD 2026) and Christianity is effectively criminalised (OpD 2026). There are no known recent cases in which apostasy has been prosecuted by the state. Nevertheless, non-Muslims do not practise their faith freely (MBZ 4/4/2025). According

to other sources, the religious police in Puntland allegedly monitor suspected converts (OpD 2026).

It is illegal to describe oneself as an atheist or non-religious. In April 2019, a university professor was sentenced to two and a half years' imprisonment for making 'blasphemous" remarks (he had asked on Facebook whether praying was a sensible strategy in the face of the drought). The professor was released after ten months in prison but continued to receive death threats (HumInt 28/8/2020). In Benadir,the governor issued a warningduring Ramadan 2024 stating that restaurants and hotels serving guests during fasting hours risked having their operating licences revoked. According to the warning, the public consumption of khat or tobacco is also prohibited (HO 11/3/2024).

In Mogadishu and, for example, Merka, Sufi festivals and celebrations continue to take place. Some even speak of a resurgence of Sufism. According to one source, Sufis are not persecuted in Mogadishu. Many army and police commanders are Sufis (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (11/3/2024): Mogadishu mayor bans dining during Ramadan, soldiers, traders warned, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Mar/195397/mogadishu_mayor_bans_dining_during_ramadan_soldiers_traders_warned.aspx, accessed 7/5/2024
- HumInt - Humanists International (28/8/2020): Freedom of Thought Report - Somalia, https://fot.humanists.international/countries/africa-eastern-africa/somalia, accessed 4/11/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- OpD - Open Doors (2026): World Watch List 2026. Situation of Religious Freedom for Christians. Somalia, https://www.opendoors.org/persecution/reports/Somalia-Country_Dossier-ODI-2026.pdf, accessed 11/5/2026
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (22/1/2026): Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Somalia; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/HRC/WG.6/52/SOM/3], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138749.html, accessed 27/4/2026
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (26/6/2024a): 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2111587.html, accessed 9/7/2024

16.2 Areas controlled by al-Shabaab

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

In the areas under al-Shabaab's control, politics and administration are shaped by religious dogma (BS 2026). There, the practice of moderate Islam and other religions is prohibited. Violations are met with severe penalties (AA 9/3/2026). In the areas controlled by the group, even

Shia Muslims behave with great restraint; moderate Sunnis are also occasionally persecuted (OpD 2026).

Al-Shabaab forcibly imposes its own harsh interpretation of Islam and Sharia law in the areas under its control (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. ACN 2026). The group harasses, injures or kills people for various reasons, including when they fail to comply with the group's edicts. Parents, teachers and communities who do not comply with al-Shabaab's regulations are threatened (USDOS 26/6/2024a). People are ordered by al-Shabaab's police (*hisba*) to attend compulsory prayers in the mosques (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022). The group generally prohibits 'un-Islamic behaviour' within its territory – cinemas, television, music, the internet, watching sports broadcasts, the sale of *khat*, smoking and much more. The requirement to wear a full veil applies (USDOS 26/6/2024a; cf. TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022; CFR 6/12/2022). However, al-Shabaab appears to take a pragmatic approach to enforcing such norms (ICG 27/6/2019b), or rather, enforcement is not applied uniformly (TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen 2022).

The terrorist group also targets non-Muslims and those with differing views, meaning that Christians and other religious minorities cannot practise their faith openly. The practice of any faith other than Islam is prohibited (ACN 2026). The group undoubtedly poses a mortal danger to converts (Landinfo 8/9/2025). According to one source, al-Shabaab executes Christians – particularly converts (OpD 2026). With regard to the Sufis, there has been a slight easing of tensions on the part of al-Shabaab, although their situation within the group's territory is not entirely safe (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Apostasy is punishable by death (FH 2024b). Criticism of Islam and blasphemy can lead to execution (HumInt 28/8/2020). On 5 August 2021, an 83-year-old man was executed by a firing squad carried out by al-Shabaab near the town of Ceel Buur (Galmudug). According to the court that handed down the verdict, the man had confessed to insulting the Prophet (BAMF 9/8/2021; cf. USDOS 12/4/2022). In June 2024, the group abducted twenty Sufi clerics in Lower Shabelle (MBZ 4/4/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACN - Aid to the Church in Need (2026): Bericht über die Religionsfreiheit in der Welt 2025 - Country Report Somalia, https://acninternational.org/de/religiousfreedomreport/berichte/land/2025/somalia, accessed 11/5/2026
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BAMF - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [Germany] (9/8/2021): Briefing Notes, https://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Behoerde/Informationszentrum/BriefingNotes/2021/briefingnotes-kw32-2021.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2, accessed 18/6/2024
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- CFR - Council on Foreign Relations (6/12/2022): Backgrounder – Al-Shabab, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabab, accessed 18/6/2024

- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- HumInt - Humanists International (28/8/2020): Freedom of Thought Report - Somalia, https://fot.humanists.international/countries/africa-eastern-africa/somalia, accessed 4/11/2024
- ICG - International Crisis Group (27/6/2019b): Women and Al-Shabaab's Insurgency, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2011897/b145-women-and-al-shabaab_0.pdf, accessed 28/6/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (8/9/2025): Somalia - Kristne somaliere, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Somalia-respons-Kristne-somaliere-08092025.pdf, accessed 13/1/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- OpD - Open Doors (2026): World Watch List 2026. Situation of Religious Freedom for Christians. Somalia, https://www.opendoors.org/persecution/reports/Somalia-Country_Dossier-ODI-2026.pdf, accessed 11/5/2026
- TRN/Heide-Ottosen/Abdi Y./Nor/Khalil/Zeuthen - Sif Heide-Ottosen (Author), James Khalil (Author), Yahye Abdi (Author), Abdullahi Ahmed Nor (Author), Martine Zeuthen (Author), The Resolve Network (Publisher) (2022): Journeys through Extremism: The Experiences of Former Members of Al-Shabaab, https://resolvenet.org/system/files/2023-09/RSVE_RR_CBAGS_JourneysAlShabaab_Heide-Ottosenetal_Sept2022_UpdatedAug2023.pdf, accessed 29/1/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (26/6/2024a): 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2111587.html, accessed 9/7/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/4/2022): 2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2071126.html, accessed 4/10/2023

16.3 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

Although the Somaliland Constitution provides for freedom of religion, it simultaneously declares Islam to be the state religion and prohibits conversion to another religion as well as proselytising for another religion (BS 2026; cf. AA 9/3/2026). Blasphemy is also prohibited (USDOS 12/8/2025).

In 2017, a Catholic church was operating in Hargeysa [*Note: It was visited by the FFM Somalia delegation in 2017*]. However, it had to be closed due to protests. In June 2023, the church was able to reopen, but it is not permitted to carry out any missionary activities. It is attended primarily by Indians and Kenyans living in Somaliland. According to a source from the Norwegian COI unit Landinfo, an estimated 100 Somali Christians live in Somaliland (Landinfo 8/9/2025).

According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, there are occasional instances of discrimination on religious grounds against Ethiopian Christians living in the country (LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Another source states that Christianity is viewed with hostility (OpD 2026).

The state occasionally prosecutes non-Muslims: on 6 August 2022, a 22-year-old woman was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment by a regional court for converting to Christianity (USDOS 22/4/2024; cf. ACIA 10/5/2023); the sentence was reduced by two years in May2023 (USDOS 22/4/2024). As early as August 2022, another convert had also been sentenced to five years' imprisonment by the Regional Court in Hargeysa (ACIA 10/5/2023) – on charges of blasphemy, apostasy, insulting Islam and the Prophet, and spreading Christianity. In October 2023, the appeal of one of the two women was heard before the Supreme Court in Hargeysa. She was

released after her 'return' to Islam (USDOS 26/6/2024a).The other woman was (as of May 2023) in custody; she, too, has lodged an appeal against the verdict (ACIA 10/5/2023). [*Note: No more recent information is available on this matter.*]

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACIA - ACI Africa (10/5/2023): Catholic Charity Calls for Release of Somali Women Detained for Converting to Christianity, https://www.aciafrica.org/news/8225/catholic-charity-calls-for-release-of-somali-women-detained-for-converting-to-christianity, accessed 26/4/2024
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (8/9/2025): Somalia - Kristne somaliere, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Somalia-respons-Kristne-somaliere-08092025.pdf, accessed 13/1/2026
- LAW-A/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Lawyer A (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- OpD - Open Doors (2026): World Watch List 2026. Situation of Religious Freedom for Christians. Somalia, https://www.opendoors.org/persecution/reports/Somalia-Country_Dossier-ODI-2026.pdf, accessed 11/5/2026
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (26/6/2024a): 2023 Report on International Religious Freedom - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2111587.html, accessed 9/7/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024

17 Minorities and clans

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

Clans [*on clan protection and traditional law (xeer), see also*legal protection, judicial system]: In Somalia, there is a strong tradition of social organisation outside the state. This is based primarily on social trust within kinship groups. Since the collapse of the state, this social network structure has reorganised and strengthened itself to ensure the survival of its individual members (BS 2026). As a result, following the collapse of the state, clan structures have, in some respects, taken over the role of the state (AA 9/3/2026). The clan is the most significant socio-political and economic unit in Somalia. For Somalis, it represents the most important identity, one worth fighting and dying for (NLM/Barnett 7/8/2023). Clans fight for their individual members. At the same time, all men in the clan are regarded as warriors (AQSOM 4 6/2024). Clan affiliation influences a person's social relationships as well as their access to employment, resources, power, justice and security (SFH 1/2026; cf. AQSOM 4 6/2024).

Clan elders act as intermediaries between the state and society. They are not simply chosen on the basis of their age. Authority and leadership are earned, not inherited. A clan elder represents his community and acts as its representative in dealings with the state. Within the community, he acts as a peacemaker, conflict mediator and guardian of traditional law (*xeer*). In disputes

with other clans, the clan elder is the negotiator (Sahan/SWT 26/10/2022). Traditional leaders therefore exert considerable influence on Somali society. In peace efforts, they can complement or even surpass the role of official political actors (SG 12/5/2025).

Clan territory: One's clan affiliation always has a geographical dimension. Various clans in Somalia and neighbouring countries dominate different areas, the so-called *degaan* (Landinfo 5/3/2026) – the core territories of the patrilineal kinship group (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). All majority clans, as well as some of the ethnic minorities – but not the professional groups – have their own territory (SEM 31/5/2017). The extent of this territory may change, for example, as a result of conflicts (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Clan knowledge: All Somalis know their clan – with the exception of very few orphans (Landinfo 5/3/2026; cf. ACCORD 31/5/2021). Knowledge of one's own origins and genealogy is of paramount importance. This knowledge serves as a means of self-identification and identification by others (Shukri/TEL 3/5/2021). Clan affiliation determines where a person lives, works and is protected. This is why Somalis usually know their exact position within the clan system (SEM 31/5/2017). Even young people in urban areas know their clan, although they sometimes lack the details – such as information about clan elders. According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, this tends to affect young women in particular (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to another source, it is becoming increasingly difficult to motivate young Somalis to engage with their own clan. In recent years, it has been observed that the younger generation, for example in Hargeysa, is no longer necessarily *attached to the xeer*. Furthermore, young people – particularly in urban areas – are nowadays much more likely to identify with the town or district they come from, or with a football team. Even in rural areas, the influence of the internet is making itself felt. In fact, before 1991, many people knew very little about their clan. It was only with the collapse of the regime and the escalation of the conflict that the clan became relevant again (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Clan identity can also change. In Jubaland, for example, there are Hawiye / Galja'el who, for many years, identified as Darod on the basis of an agreement and only reclaimed their Hawiye identity in the wake of the civil war (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). According to one source, one's own clan network can also be extended to include members of a social network – forexample, a school friend (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). There are no physical characteristics that would indicate membership of a particular clan (Landinfo 4/4/2016).

Discrimination within the clan system: Society is divided not along ethnic lines, but along clan affiliations. Discrimination occurs on the basis of membership of certain minority clans or of a clan that lacks a sufficient power base and strength in a particular region (AA 9/3/2026). Most states are founded on a fragile balance between different clans. In this environment, less powerful clans and minorities are often neglected (BS 2026). Even relatively strong clans can be outmanoeuvred by a local rival, leading to a loss of control over a city or a regional administration. It is usually the second-strongest lineage in a district or region that is most dissatisfied with the distribution of power and privileges (Sahan/SWT 30/9/2022). At the same time, whilst unity may appear to prevail at one level within a clan when viewed superficially, a closer look reveals

conflicts between the lower levels of the clan (NLM/Barnett 7/8/2023). According to the expert Höhne, in any case, those powerful groups which have a long genealogy (*laan dheere*) and usually have many members can be described as privileged. If such a group also has access to weapons, it can dominate others (EUAA 5/2025a).

The structural discrimination against minority clans can be empirically demonstrated on the basis of socio-economic data (AA 9/3/2026). Groups that are already marginalised face discrimination and encounter difficulties in exercising their right to participate in economic, social, cultural and political processes (UNSOM 5/8/2023; cf. BS 2026). This marginalisation leads to an unjust and discriminatory distribution of resources (UNSOM 5/8/2023) – for example, in terms of access to humanitarian aid (AA 9/3/2026). People who do not belong to any of the major clans find themselves significantly disadvantaged in society. This applies, for example, to access to justice (UNHCR 22/12/2021a); and they are also sometimes excluded from politics and the economy. Minorities and professional castes are forced into subordinate roles – despite the often highly significant economic contribution made by precisely these groups (BS 2026).Furthermore, women from minority clans are more frequently at risk of sexual violence (AA 9/3/2026). Overall, however, it is evident that there are significant differences in terms of the vulnerability and capacity of different minority groups (UN OCHA 14/3/2022).

Law [*see also*Legal Protection, Judicial System]: The Transitional Constitution and the constitutions of the federal states prohibit discrimination and provide for minority rights (UNHCR 22/12/2021a). However, factors such as financial resources, educational attainment or the size of the minority group can make it more difficult for minorities to access the justice system (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Obtaining legal protection through the courts is even more difficult for members of minority groups than for other sections of the population (FIS 7/8/2020a). State discrimination does occasionally occur. For example, in Mogadishu, a criminal trial in which Rahanweyn and Bantu had brought a case against a police officer from a large clan was summarily dismissed by the court (Horn 6/5/2024).

In *the xeer system*, too, an individual's protection and vulnerability are closely linked to the power of their clan (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). They must, for example, know how they can actually claim the clan's protection (MBZ 4/4/2025). Furthermore, however, it is possible for members of minority groups to join another clan or place themselves under its protection within the framework of formal agreements (*gashanbuur*) (AQSOM 4 6/2024; cf. DI 6/2019). This resilience measure was employed by some groups, for instance, in the face of the 2011 famine and the 2016/17 drought (DI 6/2019). Such alliances also ensure that minorities are included within the *xeer* system. If a member of a minority group allied with a large clan causes an accident, the large clan also contributes to *the mag/diya* (compensation payment) (SEM 31/5/2017). According to one source, weaker clans and minorities nevertheless often find it difficult – or are simply unable – to enforce their rights within *the xeer system* (LIFOS 1/7/2019), as the bilateral structure of *the xeer* between two clans or sub-clans often leads to unequal outcomes, with the power dynamics between the clans influencing both the resolution and the enforcement of judgements. Within the framework of *the xeer*, lower social castes receive less compensation or face unfair judgements. The expression *'looma ooyaan'* (nobody weeps for

them) symbolises that crimes against these clans often go unpunished and that victims are disadvantaged in dispute resolution processes (Sahan/SWT 27/1/2025).

Networks outside clans: Membership of Islamic organisations and associations is becoming increasingly significant. It offers an opportunity for social organisation across clan boundaries. Membershipcan, to a limited extent, compensate for a 'wrong' clan affiliation. At least in certain parts of Somalia, a form of social capital is also emerging amongst members of the younger generation who share life experiences and interests (education or career) and are sometimes organised in youth organisations or meet in informal discussion groups and online (BS 2026). Social networks outside one's own clan – e.g. marriage, maternal relatives, friends – can also be significant in one's life; yet in situations of conflict and crisis, the clan takes precedence (Landinfo 5/3/2026).

According to one source, there are communities led by charismatic *sheikhs*that are based on *Sufi* orders (*Jamaaca, Tariiqa*). Their members are engaged in agriculture and religious study and disregard genealogical or other obligations (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Clan conflicts [*for details on individual clan conflicts, see*the security situation and conditions in the various regions*and sub-chapters*]: Clan conflicts can be triggered by various factors, including access to resources, land and land rights, jobs and markets; violations of the protected status of women or other vulnerable groups; insults; and competition for political and administrative power (EUAA 5/2025a).

Blood feuds: According to one source, even people returning home after years in the diaspora can be affected by these. Whilst security forces intervene in larger clan conflicts, they rarely do so in the case of blood feuds, or intervention is not always possible. At the same time, police officers are themselves members of a clan, which complicates matters (STDOK 8/2017). Feuds between rival clans can, in some cases, date back generations and lead to murders – often of young men who are targeted solely because of their lineage. In southern and central Somalia, rivalries are spreading, particularly in rural areas. However, also in towns revenge killings are on the rise. Sometimes conflicts stem from long-standing competition over resources (e.g. access to grazing land or water). Yet even minor incidents can sometimes trigger a deadly feud – for example, a remark made by a politician. A local organisation recorded more than 160 clan-related murders in 2022, most of which went unprosecuted (BBC/A. Ali 19/4/2025).

In Somaliland, according to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, revenge killings may occur in the event of a murder (e.g. if one's own brother has killed a member of another clan). In most cases, there are agreements between sub-clans under the *xeer* to deal with such situations. These agreements stipulate whether a murder is avenged by another murder or by a payment. According to this source, an ordinary citizen in Hargeysa need not worry about this. In larger towns, the security forces are involved in the event of a murder, and perpetrators are arrested. In the eastern parts of the country – particularly in Sanaag and Sool – the police are, however, rarely involved; the traditional system prevails there (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

[*For information on clan disputes in Somaliland, see*Security Situation / Somaliland]

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AQSOM 4 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (6/2024): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- BBC/A. Ali - British Broadcasting Corporation (Publisher), Abdinasir Ali (Author) (19/4/2025): Actor in film warning of revenge killings shot dead in family feud, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy9vn3e3wjzo, accessed 26/5/2026
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- DI - Development Initiatives (6/2019): Towards an improved understanding of vulnerability and resilience in Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Report_Towards-an-improved-understanding-of-vulnerability-and-resilience-in-Somalia.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020a): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf/2f51bf86-ac96-f34e-fd02-667c6ae973a0/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf?t=1602225617645, accessed 12/10/2023
- Horn - Horn Observer (6/5/2024): Controversial Somali court decision grants immunity to perpetrator of human rights abuses, https://hornobserver.com/articles/2744/Controversial-Somali-court-decision-grants-immunity-to-perpetrator-of-human-rights-abuses, accessed 7/5/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (4/4/2016): Practical issues and security challenges associated with travels in Southern Somalia, https://landinfo.no/asset/3569/1/3569_1.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (1/7/2019): Somalia - Rätts- och säkerhetssektorn Version 1.0, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2012758/190704400.pdf, accessed 3/6/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- NLM/Barnett - James Barnett (Author), New Lines Magazine (Publisher) (7/8/2023): Inside the Newest Conflict in Somalia's Long Civil War, https://newlinesmag.com/reportage/inside-the-newest-conflict-in-somalias-long-civil-war/, accessed 2/10/2023
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Omer/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Ahmed Omer (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/1/2025): The Recognition of Xeer Issa, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 779, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]

- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (26/10/2022): The deaths of clan elders in the struggle against Al-Shabaab, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 468, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (30/9/2022): Winning the war of grievances, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 458, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- SFH - Swiss Refugee Council (1/2026): Factsheet Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2137060/260119_SOM_factsheet_web_DE.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- SG - Somali Guardian (12/5/2025): Somaliland, SSC clan leaders pledge to halt hostilities amid renewed push for peace, https://somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/somaliland-ssc-clan-leaders-pledge-to-halt-hostilities-amid-renewed-push-for-peace, accessed 18/6/2025
- Shukri/TEL - The Elephant (Publisher), Saeed Shukri (Author) (3/5/2021): Unrecognized Vote: Somaliland's Democratic Journey, https://www.theelephant.info/long-reads/2021/05/03/unrecognized-vote-somalilands-democratic-journey/, accessed 13/10/2023
- SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somaliland National (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (8/2017): Fact Finding Mission Report Somalia; Sicherheitslage in Somalia; Bericht zur österreichisch-schweizerischen FFM, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1406268/5209_1502195321_ffm-report-somalia-sicherheitslage-onlineversion-2017-08-ke.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (22/12/2021a): Citizenship and Statelessness in the Horn of Africa, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2065866/61c97bea4.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (14/3/2022): Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA SOMALIA HUMANITARIAN BULLETIN - FEBRUARY 2022.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- UNSOM - United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (5/8/2023): Muna Mohamed Abdi: Helping include marginalised communities in Kismayo, https://unsom.unmissions.org/muna-mohamed-abdi-helping-include-marginalised-communities-kismayo, accessed 17/1/2024

17.1 Demographic structure

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

Somalia is one of the few countries in Africa where there is a dominant majority culture and language. The majority of the population is organised within the traditional Somali clan structures (UNHCR 22/12/2021b; cf. BS 2026). According to one source, the population is ethnically homogeneous; nevertheless, the proportion of ethnic minorities within the total population is described as 'unclear' (AA 9/3/2026). One source gives the following figures: 85 per cent ethnic Somalis, 15 per cent Bantu and other non-Somali groups (SFH 1/2026), such as the Benadiri and Bajuni (BS 2026). However, there is no uniform view regarding the definition of minorities in Somalia (UN OCHA 14/3/2022).

Apart from this, Somalia is characterised by fragmentation into numerous clans, sub-clans and sub-sub-clans, whose membership is determined by kinship ties or a traditional sense of belonging (AA 18/4/2021). This subdivision extends right down to the nuclear family (SEM 31/5/2017).

Large clan families: The so-called 'noble' clan families can (according to their own accounts) trace their ancestry back to mythical common ancestors and the Prophet Muhammad. Most

minority groups are unable to do so (SEM 31/5/2017). Somalis regard themselves as a nation of Arab descent; 'noble' clan families are mostly nomads:

- The Darod are divided into three main groups: the Ogaden, the Marehan and the Harti, as well as several smaller clans. The Harti are a federation of three clans: the Majerteen are the most important clan in Puntland, whilst the Dulbahante and Warsangeli live in the border regions disputed between Somaliland and Puntland. The Ogaden are the most important Somali clan in Ethiopia, but also wield considerable influence in the Juba regions of southern Somalia and in north-eastern Kenya. The Marehan are found in southern and central Somalia.
- The Hawiye live mainly in southern and central Somalia. The most important Hawiye clans are the Habr Gedir and the Abgaal, both of which wield considerable influence in and around Mogadishu.
- The Dir live in the west of Somaliland and in the neighbouring areas of Ethiopia and Djibouti, as well as in smaller areas of southern and central Somalia. The main Dir clans are the Issa, Gadabursi (both in the north) and Biyomaal (in southern and central Somalia).
- The Isaaq are the most important clan group in Somaliland, where they live in a compact community. They are sometimes classified as part of the Dir (SEM 31/5/2017). They do not, however, regard themselves as part of the Dir (AQSOM 4 6/2024). There are hardly any Isaaq in southern and central Somalia; those who are there usually stay only temporarily for professional reasons (Landinfo 5/3/2026).
- The Rahanweyn, or Digil-Mirifle, are another clan family (SEM 31/5/2017).

Minorities: The term 'minorities' refers tothose groups which, due to their smaller numbers, are weaker than the 'noble' majority clans. These include groups of other ethnic origins; groups practising occupations traditionally regarded as impure; and members of 'noble' clans who do not live within their clan's territory or are small in number (SEM 31/5/2017).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (18/4/2021): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2050118/Auswärtiges_Amt,_Bericht_über_die_asyl-_und_abschieberelevante_Lage_in_der_Bundesrepublik_Somalia_(Stand_Januar_2021),_18.04.2021.pdf, accessed 17/10/2024 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (6/2024): Expertengespräche
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024

- SFH - Swiss Refugee Council (1/2026): Factsheet Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2137060/260119_SOM_factsheet_web_DE.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (22/12/2021b): Citizenship and Statelessness in the Horn of Africa, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2065866/61c97bea4.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (14/3/2022): Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA SOMALIA HUMANITARIAN BULLETIN - FEBRUARY 2022.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024

17.1.1 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-09-03 05:54

Main clans in Somaliland:

- Awdal: mainly Dir / Gadabursi, Dir / Issa;
- Woqooyi Galbeed and Togdheer: mainly the Isaaq sub-clans Habr Jeclo, Habr Yunis, Idagala and Habr Awal;
- Sool: mainly Darod / Dulbahante (Taleex, Xudun, Laascaanood), Isaaq / Habr Yunis (Xudun, Laascaanood) and Isaaq / Habr Jeclo (Caynabo);
- Sanaag: mainly Darod / Warsangeli (Las Qooray, Ceerigaabo), Isaaq / Habr Yunis (Ceerigaabo) and Isaaq / Habr Jeclo (Ceel Afweyn) (EASO 2/2016).

The individual clans of the minority professional castes in Somaliland are grouped under the term ‘Gabooye’ (Muse Dheriyo, Tumal, Madhiban, Yibir) (UNHRC 28/10/2015; cf. SEM 31/5/2017; Landinfo 19/1/2026). In addition, there are long-established families of Arab descent (HRCSL 3/2024).

Overall, Somaliland is dominated by the Isaaq, who make up around two-thirds of the population. There are no clan links between Somaliland and South/Central Somalia. The Somaliland clans have no traditional tribal territories (*degaan*) there, and vice versa (Landinfo 5/3/2026).

Sources

- EASO - European Asylum Support Office (2/2016): Somalia Security Situation, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1158113/1226_1457606427_easo-somalia-security-feb-2016.pdf, accessed 13/10/2023
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (3/2024): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2023, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Annual-Report-HRC-2023-web-1.pdf, accessed 31/5/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (19/1/2026): Somalia - Gaboye (midgan), https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Respons-Somalia-Gaboye-midgan-19012026.pdf, accessed 4/3/2026
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024

- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (28/10/2015): Report of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Bahame Tom Nyanduga, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1340193/1930_1451399567_a-hrc-30-57-en.docx, accessed 13/3/2024

17.2 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

Politics: In Southern/Central Somalia, political representation, political parties, local administrations and even the national parliament are organised around the various clans and sub-clans, with the four largest clans (Darod, Hawiye, Dir and Digil-Mirifle) dominating administration, politics and society – in accordance with the so-called *4.5 formula* (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). This means that the four major clans are entitled to the same number of parliamentary seats, whilst smaller clans and minority groups together receive only half of this number (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. FH 2024b) [*see also*Political Situation / Southern/Central Somalia]. As a result, smaller groups are politically marginalised (FH 2024b). They are excluded from key political posts, and the few members of minority groups who do hold such posts have little opportunity to advocate for their communities (SPC 9/2/2022). Thus, all the relevant clans and groups are represented in the current government (AA 9/3/2026), and the Ministries for Women and the Environment are headed by members of minority groups (AQ21 11/2023). However, experts have pointed out to the EUAA that members of minority groups have little power or political influence, even in high-ranking positions (EUAA 5/2025a). In southern and central Somalia, the formal representation of minorities under the *4.5 formula* does not equate to actual political influence, as decisions are made under the influence and pressure of politically powerful clans. The formula contributes to the perpetuation of existing structures and thus to the social and political marginalisation of minorities (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Furthermore, the government is increasingly dominated by the Hawiye (Sahan/SWT 16/9/2024).

Situation: Individual minorities live under particularly difficult social conditions and find themselves economically, politically and socially marginalised by the rest of the population – and, indirectly, by state authorities as well (AA 9/3/2026; cf. FH 2024b). Furthermore, their mutual support systems are less well-developed, they have fewer resources (Sahan/SWT 24/10/2022) and receive fewer remissions (Sahan/SWT 24/10/2022; cf. SPC 9/2/2022). Minorities are only sparsely represented in state authorities – such as the police and the judiciary – (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The powerful groups receive the lion's share of jobs, resources, contracts, remissions and humanitarian aid. Vulnerable groups receive little to nothing. During the 1991 famine, most of those who died of starvation were either Digil-Mirifle or Bantu [*Note: Both groups are primarily farmers rather than nomads and find it harder to relocate during droughts*]. This also applies to the famine in 2011. One reason for this is that humanitarian aid is monopolised by more powerful clans (Sahan/SWT 24/10/2022). Even in Mogadishu, members of minority groups receive less food aid (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). They face a higher degree of food insecurity (UN OCHA 14/3/2022). The internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the overcrowded camps on the outskirts of Mogadishu and other major cities are largely members of Bantu ethnic groups or professional castes (Sahan/SWT 14/5/2025).

Due to the (previous) support for al-Shabaab by some minority groups, reprisals may occur in areas from which al-Shabaab has withdrawn (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Reports of rape made by women from marginalised groups tend to be ignored (UNSOM 5/8/2023).

Mogadishu: In the capital, the Hawiye clans Abgaal, Habr Gedir and, to some extent, Murusade hold a position of pre-eminent power. However, members of all Somali clans live in the city, and the individual districts are also mostly heterogeneous in this respect (AQSOM 4 6/2024; cf. FIS 7/8/2020b). According to one expert, the Rahanweyn now also dominate certain parts of the city. Overall, a great many different clans live in Mogadishu; all are free to own property, engage in economic activity (AQSOM 4 6/2024), move about freely and settle wherever they choose (MBZ 4/4/2025). However, aperson's own clan background determineswhich part of the city is safest for them (FIS 7/8/2020a). Furthermore, people tend to live within their own clan's territory. Ties to the Abgaal or Habr Gedir – whether familial, economic, marital or based on friendship – are advantageous for averting or resolving conflicts. Generally speaking, however, Mogadishu's dominant clans do not operate in a legal vacuum, as they must expect retaliation in other parts of Somalia for wrongs committed in places like Mogadishu (AQSOM 4 6/2024). Generally speaking, it is difficult to distinguish people who have grown up in Mogadishu by clan on a superficial basis. There are no physical differences, and even the accent is the same. It is not even possible to classify people ethnically on the basis of their names, as Arabic names are predominantly used (DIS/UNFPA 25/6/2020). [*For information on the clan system in Mogadishu, see also*Security Situation / Southern/Central Somalia / Banadir.]

[*For information on* ***al-Shabaab's*** *relationship with clans and minorities, see the chapter*on Security Situation / Al-Shabaab]

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (6/2024): Expertengespräche
- DIS/UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (25/6/2020): Skype-Interview des DIS mit UNFPA, in: DIS (11.2020): Somalia - Health System, S.79-84, https://www.nyidanmark.dk/-/media/Files/US/Landenotater/COI_report_somalia_health_care_nov_2020.pdf?la=en-GB&hash=3F6C5E28C30AF49C2A5183D32E1B68E3BA52E60C, accessed 12/3/2024
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020a): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf/2f51bf86-ac96-f34e-fd02-667c6ae973a0/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf?t=1602225617645, accessed 12/10/2023
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020b): Somalia: Tiedonhankintamatka Mogadishuun maaliskuussa 2020, Mogadishun turvallisuustilanne ja humanitääriset olosuhteet, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf/f58d6cd5-271a-55fd-9b89-b3d32e4ff80b/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf?t=1596797440011, accessed 12/3/2024

- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (14/5/2025): 'Mogadishu Rising' washed away, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 822, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/9/2024): Deni and QoorQoor meet in Galkayo, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 732, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (24/10/2022): Power, access, and social capital in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 467, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SPC - Somalia Protection Cluster (9/2/2022): Protection Analysis Update, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOM_PAU_Somalia-Protection-Analysis_Feb2022.pdf, accessed 15/11/2023
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (14/3/2022): Somalia Humanitarian Bulletin, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA SOMALIA HUMANITARIAN BULLETIN - FEBRUARY 2022.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- UNSOM - United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (5/8/2023): Muna Mohamed Abdi: Helping include marginalised communities in Kismayo, https://unsom.unmissions.org/muna-mohamed-abdi-helping-include-marginalised-communities-kismayo, accessed 17/1/2024

17.2.1 Ethnic minorities, current situation

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:31

Ethnic minorities have a different ancestry and, in some cases, also speak a different language to the rest of the population in the Somali-speaking region. The social status of the individual ethnic minorities varies (SEM 31/5/2017). They are sometimes regarded as outsiders (SPC 9/2/2022). Consequently, members of ethnic minorities may encounter problems – including statelessness – if, for example, they were born in a refugee camp outside Somalia (UNHCR 22/12/2021b).

In general, members of minority groups are no longer subject to systematic persecution, as was the case in the early 1990s (MBZ 4/4/2025). In the cities, the population is generally mixed; children attend school and people go to hospital regardless of their ethnic background (UNFPA/DIS 25/6/2020). According to other sources, members of ethnic minorities may face discrimination and disadvantage – for example, in terms of access to social security or humanitarian aid. They are also marginalised within *the xeer* (MBZ 4/4/2025).

The **Bantu (Jareer)** are the largest minority in Somalia (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. FIS 7/8/2020b). They are partly descended from farming peoples who lived along the rivers even before the expansion of the Somali; and partly from slaves imported into Somalia. '*Adoon*' – a derogatory term still used by some ethnic Somalis to refer to the Jareer – literally means 'slave'. Another derogatory term for Somali Bantu – *'tiimo jareer'* ('hard hair') – ostensibly refers to the tight curls of their hair, in contrast to the 'soft curls' of ethnic Somalis. The Bantu themselves have adopted this and refer to themselves as 'Jareer" ('the hard ones"). Once they realised their numerical

strength, the name changed to 'Jareer Weyne" – 'the great hard ones". What was once an insult is now a badge of honour (Sahan/Menkhaus 23/8/2023).

Traditionally, Somali Bantu were scattered across various, separate communities in southern Somalia. These include, for example, the Makanne, Shiidle, Gobaweyne, Mushunguli and Shangani (Sahan/Menkhaus 23/8/2023), as well as the Kabole, Reer Shabelle and Oji. Traditionally, they live as settled farmers in the fertile valleys of the Juba and Shabelle rivers (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. UNHCR 22/12/2021b). Furthermore, Bantu people are often employed in manual labour. They undertake work that is regarded by ethnic Somalis as beneath them (Sahan/Menkhaus 23/8/2023). They cultivate fields, tend livestock, clean houses, cook, run small-scale retail businesses and sell goods on the streets (Sahan/SWT 5/4/2025).

For decades, the Bantu have been subjected to systematic discrimination, exclusion and violence by the Somali government and the Somali majority society (Sahan/SWT 3/11/2023). They are the most marginalised, excluded and exploited Somali community. They are frequently excluded from positions of power at local and national level (Sahan/Menkhaus 23/8/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). The Bantu are racially stigmatised and discriminated against throughout Somalia (ACCORD 31/5/2021; cf. Sahan/SWT 13/10/2025), and many Somalis regard them as inferior (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. SEM 31/5/2017; UNHCR 22/12/2021b) or as second-class citizens (BS 2026). They find themselves at the very bottom of society (LIFOS 19/6/2019). The lack of access to education, employment and political representation has created a cycle of poverty and exclusion and limited opportunities for economic and social advancement. This, in turn, reinforces social stereotypes (Sahan/SWT 3/11/2023; cf. TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). In cities such as Kismayo, the Bantu lack resources and support (Sahan/SWT 1/12/2023).

In IDP camps, they face discrimination, and Bantu women lack the protection afforded by the traditional clan structure (USDOS 22/4/2024; cf. LIFOS 19/6/2019). The Bantu have virtually no access to *the xeer* (LIFOS 19/6/2019) and are consequently particularly defenceless (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. FIS 7/8/2020b). They are also barely represented in politics (Sahan/SWT 13/10/2025). Discrimination against Bantu people is also rife within the federal army and the Somali legal system. They are often denied access to justice and face a higher risk of being treated unfairly in court (Sahan/SWT 3/11/2023); within the judicial system itself, the Bantu are scarcely represented (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). The Minister for Information, Daud Aweys, is a Bantu (Sahan/SWT 5/4/2025).

According to other sources, some Bantu groups have formed alliances with locally powerful clans in order to protect themselves (FIS 7/8/2020b). For example, the Bantu on the eastern bank of the Juba are partly affiliated with the Digil-Mirifle, on the western bank partly with the Darod / Ogaden, and in the town of Buale on both sides with the Digil-Mirifle (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). One source explains that most of them, as a lower caste, belong to a dominant Somali clan. At the same time, the expert Ken Menkhaus comments on recent developments amongst the Bantu in Somalia: until recently, the various Bantu groups had no sense of a shared identity. Their problems and sense of identity were also local rather than national. Describing themselves as 'Jareer' is a recent development. Until recently, the Bantu were unarmed and therefore politically

weak and vulnerable to raids. The rise of al-Shabaab has changed that. The group exploits grievances, and the Jareer are an obvious target. Joining al-Shabaab was often seen as an attractive option, as it provided Jareer youths with a salary, a weapon, status and protection. Although most Jareer are now wary of al-Shabaab and many have fled the militant group's territory, the fact that so many have become fighters has begun to alter their status (Sahan/ Menkhaus 23/8/2023).

Today, almost 80 per cent of the hundreds of thousands of IDPs in the Greater Mogadishu area are Bantu (FIS 7/8/2020b). Many were driven out of the river valleys as early as the beginning of the 1990s and now form an impoverished underclass in the suburbs (Sahan/SWT 5/4/2025). Menkhaus explains in this regard: Somali Bantu now make up a significant percentage of the urban population in southern Somalia. This could well prove significant in general elections and is one of the main reasons why politically influential clans in the cities insist on referring to the Jareer as IDPs, who by definition belong elsewhere. In reality, however, their resettlement has been permanent. The Jareer now form a large urban underclass with limited prospects for social mobility and a better life outside the so-called IDP camps. It is also true, however, that at least some urban Jareer are now armed and capable of leading gangs or militias in Mogadishu and mobilising street protests. This is an extraordinary development that would have been unthinkable not so long ago (Sahan/Menkhaus 23/8/2023). This happened, for example, when an officer of the Federal Army – a Bantu – was arrested. This led to protests by Bantu people in both Baidoa and Mogadishu (Sahan/SWT 16/8/2024).

Interracial marriages are stigmatised (LIFOS 19/6/2019). A Jareer woman who marries a man from a *laan dheer* (a nomadic Somali clan) is generally tolerated because she is marrying 'upwards'. Conversely, however, a marriage between a Jareer man and a woman from a 'noble' clan is considered taboo, which can lead to violence (Sahan/SWT 5/4/2025). Many al-Shabaab foot soldiers who come from Middle Shabelle belong to low-status groups – such as the Bantu. Al-Shabaab has encouraged these members to marry women and girls from 'noble' clans (e.g. Hawiye, Darod) (Ingiriis 2020).

According to the expert Höhne, **'Benadiri'** is an umbrella term for various groups who typically inhabit the so-called Benadir Coast (Mogadishu, Merka, Baraawe, Kismayo). The term 'Benadir' derives from the Persian word *'bandar'* (port) (EUAA 5/2025a). According to a Benadiri elder, members of these groups are found either in urban areas or as farmers – for example, around Afgooye. The expert Höhne explains that the Ashraf / Hassan / Sarmon in particular are found in the hinterland (as far north as Bakool) (EUAA 5/2025a). They have mixed ancestry from Somalia, Arabia, Persia, India and Portugal (SEM 31/5/2017). Many Benadiri are regarded as 'light-skinned' (*gibil cad*), whilst others – such as the Ashraf / Hassan /Sarman, the Bandhabow and the Dhabarweyne – are considered dark-skinned (*gibil madow*) (EUAA 5/2025a).

Before 1991, the Benadiri enjoyed a privileged status. However, without an armed militia, they were defenceless during the civil war. Today, the Benadiri are generally respected as traders (SEM 31/5/2017), and their position in society is stronger than that of other minorities (MBZ 4/4/2025). In Mogadishu, the Benadiri constitute the second-largest minority group. Some

of them have managed to become wealthy (FIS 7/8/2020b). Intermarriage with the dominant clans occurs, thereby strengthening their social security (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. EUAA 5/2025a). According to one source, the Benadiri are integrated into wider society (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Whilst discrimination may occur, they are not systematically victimised on the basis of their ethnicity (MBZ 4/4/2025). According to one expert, although the Benadiri are marginalised and have no influence, they are, however, able to live in their ancestral homelands (AQSOM 4 6/2024). Many Reer Xamar (a sub-group of the Benadiri) have succeeded in regaining their former properties in the Xamar Weyne district (Mogadishu) through payments. There, they also constitute the majority of the population (Landinfo 21/5/2019b). According to a source from the EUAA, there are Benadiri in the government; according to another source, they have a certain degree of access to state institutions (EUAA 5/2025a). They have 5–6 members of the Somali Parliament and provide one deputy mayor of Mogadishu (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

The **Bajuni** are a small fishing community living on the Bajuni Islands in southern Somalia and in Kismayo (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. UNHCR 22/12/2021b), as well as along the Kenyan coast as far as Lamu. The UNHCR classifies the Bajuni as part of the Benadiri (UNHCR 22/12/2021b). The Bajuni now also live in Mogadishu (EUAA 5/2025a). According to one source, they are among the most marginalised groups in Somalia, alongside the Bantu (MBZ 4/4/2025).

Children from mixed marriages involving al-Shabaab members: Some Somali girls and women have married foreign al-Shabaab fighters (e.g. from Europe, the USA, Asia). The children born of such marriages are, in some cases, easy to identify (ICG 27/6/2019a).

Sources

- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AQSOM 4 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (6/2024): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- DIS/UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (25/6/2020): Skype-Interview des DIS mit UNFPA, in: DIS (11.2020): Somalia - Health System, S.79-84, https://www.nyidanmark.dk/-/media/Files/US/Landenotater/COI_report_somalia_health_care_nov_2020.pdf?la=en-GB&hash=3F6C5E28C30AF49C2A5183D32E1B68E3BA52E60C, accessed 12/3/2024
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020b): Somalia: Tiedonhankintamatka Mogadishuun maaliskuussa 2020, Mogadishun turvallisuustilanne ja humanitääriset olosuhteet, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf/f58d6cd5-271a-55fd-9b89-b3d32e4ff80b/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf?t=1596797440011, accessed 12/3/2024
- ICG - International Crisis Group (27/6/2019a): Women and Al-Shabaab's Insurgency, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2011897/b145-women-and-al-shabaab_0.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- Ingiriis - M.H. Ingiriis (2020): The anthropology of Al-Shabaab: the salient factors for the insurgency movement's recruitment project, in: Small Wars & Insurgencies, Vol. 31/2, 2020, pp. 359-380, zitiert

in: EASO - European Asylum Support Office (9.2021): Somalia – Targeted Profiles, S.18, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2060580/2021_09_EASO_COI_Report_Somalia_Targeted_profiles.pdf, accessed 2/9/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (21/5/2019b): Somalia Rer Hamar-befolkningen i Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2009629/Respons_Somalia_Rer_Hamar-befolkningen_i_Mogadishu_21052019.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (19/6/2019): Minoritetsgruppen bantu i Somalia Version 1.0, https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentAttachmentId=46795, accessed 12/3/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Sahan/Menkhaus - Sahan (Publisher), Ken Menkhaus (Author) (23/8/2023): Political Unrest and the Somali Jareer Weyne, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 582, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (13/10/2025): Mogadishu's Hollow Human Rights Victory, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 884, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (5/4/2025): Sheegow, the Bantu, and the cost of injustice, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 807, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/8/2024): Somalia's Humanitarian Crisis: Need and Greed, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 719, per e-Mail [kostenpflichtig, Login erforderlich] [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (1/12/2023): Clans and displacement in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 622, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (3/11/2023): Discrimination in Somali security sector and selective justice undermine war efforts, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 612, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- SPC - Somalia Protection Cluster (9/2/2022): Protection Analysis Update, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOM_PAU_Somalia-Protection-Analysis_Feb2022.pdf, accessed 15/11/2023
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (22/12/2021b): Citizenship and Statelessness in the Horn of Africa, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2065866/61c97bea4.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024

17.3 Occupational groups (Gabooye, Madhiban, etc.)

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:32

Occupational groups do not differ from the majority population in terms of ancestry, language or culture (SEM 31/5/2017); ethnically, they are Somali (Landinfo 19/1/2026). An expert explained to the EUAA that some sections of the Gabooye could also be counted amongst the pre-Islamic and pre-Somali groups that inhabited the country before the nomadic Somalis arrived (EUAA 5/2025a). In any case, in the past these groups were strictly isolated on the basis of their social status, which was determined by birth. They were also excluded from the *diya* system and were

therefore not entitled to receive or pay compensation. As a result, they were excluded from the Somali system of justice and collective security (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Now, however, they are organised according to genealogy (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. Landinfo 19/1/2026) and some can trace up to 15 ancestors on the paternal line (Landinfo 19/1/2026). In contrast to the 'noble' clans, they are said to be unable to trace their lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad (SEM 31/5/2017). One source refers to 'pseudo-genealogies' (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Their traditional occupations are regarded as unclean or dishonourable (UNHCR 22/12/2021a; cf. SEM 31/5/2017) – such as hunters, hairdressers, cobblers, leatherworkers, well-diggers, basket weavers, carpenters, blacksmiths or traditional healers (MBZ 4/4/2025). These occupational groups occupy the lowest rung of the social hierarchy. They live scattered throughout the Somali cultural region, but predominantly in towns and cities. A collective term known particularly in the north for certain occupational groups is 'Gabooye', which encompasses, for example, the Tumal, Madhiban, Muse Dheriyo and Yibir (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. AQSOM 4 6/2024; Landinfo 19/1/2026) as well as the Hawle (Landinfo 19/1/2026). According to the expert K.D. Ashour, the collective term 'Gabooye' encompasses the following groups throughout Somalia and the Somali-speaking parts of neighbouring countries: Madhiban, Muse Dheriyo, Tumal, Yibir, Hawle, Wardheere, Yahar, Galgale, Asowe and Hawrarsame. At the same time, the expert Vitturini explains that only the Madhiban and Muse Dheriyo belong to the Gabooye (EUAA 5/2025a). One expert explains that 'Gabooye' is a fabricated collective term that is frequently used, particularly in northern Somalia (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Another collective term is 'Midgan' (UNHCR 22/12/2021a); according to other sources, this term was used in the past and is now considered obsolete and derogatory (Landinfo 19/1/2026). In Somaliland, it is now frowned upon (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). It is unclear which umbrella term is commonly used for the Gabooye in the south of the country. Sources cited by Landinfo have consistently used the word 'Midgan" in the past. According to Landinfo, the occupational groups native to southern Somalia are far less organised than those in the north and therefore generally live in association with the majority clans. They are regarded as a minority in all Somali regions and are therefore considered the weaker party in relation to stronger clans (Landinfo 19/1/2026). When such groups are attacked by a locally dominant clan, it is virtually impossible for them to obtain justice (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

The expert Ashour named the following groups to the EUAA:

- Madhiban: traditionally barbers, tanners, leatherworkers, cobblers, craftspeople and service providers; women are also active in traditional medicine, as circumcisers or in spiritual services – the latter carries a considerable stigma in an increasingly conservative Sunni society;
- Muse Dheriyo: mainly in Somaliland and the Somali region of Ethiopia; traditionally hairdressers; women are also sometimes traditional healers and female circumcisers;
- Tumal: throughout Somalia; traditionally blacksmiths, and more recently also mechanics in car workshops;

- Hawle, Asowe and Wardheere: mainly in the Ethiopian Somali Region, with very few in Somalia;
- Yahar: mainly in southern and central Somalia, in Galgaduud, Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle;
- Galgale: mainly in Puntland and in southern/central Somalia;
- Hawrasame: mainly in the Somali Region of Ethiopia, in Puntland and in southern and central Somalia
- Yibir: traditional healers and spiritual mediums, sometimes regarded as 'sorcerers' (EUAA 5/2025a).

A source from Landinfo reports that members of majority clans pose as Gabooye when applying for asylum in the West. In this regard, some Gabooye offer 'consultations' to potential asylum seekers in return for payment (Landinfo 19/1/2026).

Sources

- AQSOM 4 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (6/2024): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (19/1/2026): Somalia - Gaboye (midgan), https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Respons-Somalia-Gaboye-midgan-19012026.pdf, accessed 4/3/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (22/12/2021a): Citizenship and Statelessness in the Horn of Africa, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2065866/61c97bea4.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023

17.3.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:32

In principle, the Gabooye were regarded as impure by the majority clans, and physical contact was to be avoided wherever possible. Based on his field research, Vitturini explains that this norm has largely disappeared (Landinfo 19/1/2026). Two sources, however, report that the majority population still largely avoids contact with the Gabooye and that prejudices regarding their impurity remain widespread (Landinfo 19/1/2026; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). This leads to verbal abuse (AQSOM 4 6/2024).

On the one hand, members of professional castes can settle anywhere in Mogadishu; on the other hand, they lack established networks there. Most of them live scattered, in isolation and in constant fear. The strategy of 'hiding' appears to be systematic. Some households also seek protection from neighbours or local clans (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). According to one source, however, members of minority groups in the capital are not subjected to systematic violence. Nevertheless, all those who do not belong to a dominant clan in the city are potentially more vulnerable to crime (Landinfo 21/5/2019b). One expert explains that whilst the Gabooye are not being attacked, they do live in fear of such attacks. According to this source, minorities are not attacked simply because they belong to a minority group, unless they stand in the way of a particular plan (AQSOM 4 6/2024).

However, members of professional castes are subjected to harassment and exploitation (Sahan/SWT 1/12/2023). They are regarded as second-class citizens (BS 2026; cf. AQSOM 4 6/2024), and are sometimes discriminated against and excluded (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. BS 2026). A contributing factor to their discrimination is that they are less strictly organised and much poorer. Consequently, they are less able to pay compensation or threaten blood feuds (Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA 3/7/2018; cf. SEM 31/5/2017); furthermore, they regularly fare worse both in negotiations within *the xeer* and in political appointments (Sahan/SWT 13/10/2025).

Access for professional castes to education, the labour market and, to some extent, healthcare is restricted. The taboo against intermarriage [*see below*] leads to the isolation of the Gabooye (EUAA 5/2025a; cf. AQSOM 4 6/2024). Overall, social status and the associated poverty are the main problem for many. Added to this is the fact that these minorities generally tend to have a poorer understanding of the legal system. Access to education for these occupational groups is hampered because, for example, there are no schools in the areas where they live. Furthermore, many children leave school early to work. Many families are dependent on such income. This generally poorer level of education, in turn, leads to disadvantages when seeking employment, where clan affiliation can often lead to discrimination anyway. As professional groups have only a small diaspora, they also benefit to a lesser extent from remittances than majority clans (SEM 31/5/2017).

There are six members of parliament from the professional castes, and they also hold two ministerial posts (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Overall, however, they have hardly any significant political influence in Mogadishu (Landinfo 19/1/2026).

Sources

- AQSOM 4 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (6/2024): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (19/1/2026): Somalia - Gaboye (midgan), https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Respons-Somalia-Gaboye-midgan-19012026.pdf, accessed 4/3/2026

- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (21/5/2019b): Somalia Rer Hamar-befolkningen i Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2009629/Respons_Somalia_Rer_Hamar-befolkningen_i_Mogadishu_21052019.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (13/10/2025): Mogadishu's Hollow Human Rights Victory, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 884, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (1/12/2023): Clans and displacement in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 622, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA - Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter am German Institute of Global and Area Studies (3/7/2018): Sachverständigengutachten zu 10 K 1802/14A

17.3.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

The Constitution is committed to the principle of non-discrimination (AA 9/3/2026). In Somaliland, participatory decision-making and the protection of minorities are comparatively well established (Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA 3/7/2018). In public discourse, discrimination against the Gabooye is frowned upon, and publicly denigrating them is no longer socially acceptable (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The clan elders of the minority groups are officially recognised on an equal footing with those of the majority clans (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. Landinfo 19/1/2026), and Gabooye people can, at least in Hargeysa, participate inthe *diya* system [*see*'Minorities and Clans'] (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Officially, however, there is no protection for minorities (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024), and discrimination occurs in everyday life (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). The Gabooye are disadvantaged when it comes to access to the labour market, education, local politics or the justice system (HRCSL 3/2024). They continue to face inequality and have limited resources; they are less educated and are regarded as *'low status'* (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). For example, they were effectively excluded from *the World Food Programme's* (WFP) cash-for-food scheme. When arrested, the Gabooye cannot draw on a network similar to that available to members of large clans (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). In general, clan affiliation plays a major role (AA 9/3/2026).

Minorities: According to figures from 2021, the Gabooye had one representative each in both the Upper House (*guurti*) and the Lower House (*gaalti*) at that time (Landinfo 19/1/2026). Minority clans are represented in the President's Cabinet (AA 9/3/2026); the Minister for Agriculture is a Gabooye (Landinfo 19/1/2026; cf. Horn 14/12/2024a). In addition, the Gurgura, Akisho, Tolje'le (Justice) and Ayuub (Health) clans, as well as the Habr-Awal coalition from the previous government and the clans from Sanaag and Sool (Warsangeli – Fisheries, Development; Dhulbahante – Communications) were taken into account in the formation of the government (Horn 14/12/2024a). However, one expert pointed out to EUAA that members of minority groups, even in high-ranking positions, have little power or political clout (EUAA 5/2025a). Overall, they have hardly any significant political influence (Landinfo 19/1/2026).

According to the researcher Vitturini, relations between Gabooye groups and majority clans in Hargeysa are no longer purely patron-client relationships. Rather, the Muuse Dheriyo, for example, are recognised as an independent *diya* group (Landinfo 19/1/2026). There is no systematic persecution (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). However, this recognition has not altered the social status of the Gabooye (Landinfo 19/1/2026). Members of this group suffer from social and economic disadvantage and face discrimination in the labour market (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. HRCSL 3/2024; Landinfo 19/1/2026). Within the justice system, members of minority groups face prejudice (FH 2024a) and discrimination (HRCSL 3/2024). There are instances where offences committed against members of minority groups are not investigated by the police. However, they are, for the most part, treated fairly by the Somaliland courts; there is no systematic discrimination by the police or the courts. The official recognition of Gabooye *suldaans* has led to an enhancement of the status of these professional groups. As a result, their social standing has generally improved. This is also accompanied by social security. Although Gabooye have rights under *xeer* (traditional law) (SEM 31/5/2017), it can happen that majority clans fail to make compensation payments due to their position of power (Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA 3/7/2018).

According to Landinfo sources, between 20,000 and 60,000 Gabooye live in Hargeysa (Landinfo 19/1/2026). In Ceerigaabo, all Gabooye (approx. 500 households) live outside the city centre. It is possible to attend primary school in Sanaag; however, when it comes to higher education, the Gabooye often face financial barriers. In 2022, only one Gabooye worked in the regional administration; two were employed by local councils (UNSOM 22/6/2022). Overall, however, according to two sources from the FFM Somalia 2023, the situation had improved (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Whilst in the early 1990s there were hardly any Gabooye in schools, and with those being harassed there, this has now changed. According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, there is no longer any bullying, although some prejudices remain (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023) – such as the belief that Gabooye are dirty, promiscuous or dangerous (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

During his field research in 2015, Vitturini found that the Gabooye in Hargeysa still largely earn their living through their traditional occupations, including hairdressers, metalworkers and shoemakers. Vitturini identified only two Gabooye employed by private companies, as well as eleven others who worked for government departments in Somaliland. They are also largely excluded from camel husbandry; most own a few goats or sheep. For many Gabooye in Hargeysa, rental income also represents an important source of income (Landinfo 19/1/2026). As many Gabooye are active in the manufacturing sector, cheap imports – particularly from Asia – have a negative economic impact (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

There are a number of NGOs that explicitly advocate for minorities. With regard to professional groups, these include, amongst others: *Daami Youth Development Organisation* (DYDO), *Somaliland National Youth Organisation* (SONYO Umbrella), *Ubax Social and Welfare Organisation* (USWO), *Voices of Somaliland Minority Women Organisation* (VOSOMWO) (SEM 31/5/2017). Cases of violence against Gabooye are generally documented in the media and lead to public debate (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- Horn - Horn Observer (14/12/2024a): Somaliland President Abdirahman Abdillahi Irro Unveils Inclusive Somaliland Cabinet, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3071/Somaliland-President-Abdirahman-Abdillahi-Irro-Unveils-Inclusive-Somaliland-Cabinet, accessed 20/12/2024
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (3/2024): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2023, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Annual-Report-HRC-2023-web-1.pdf, accessed 31/5/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (19/1/2026): Somalia - Gaboye (midgan), https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Respons-Somalia-Gaboye-midgan-19012026.pdf, accessed 4/3/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somaliland National (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- UNSOM - United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (22/6/2022): Catching up on human rights needs in Sool and Sanaag after four years, https://unsom.unmissions.org/catching-human-rights-needs-sool-and-sanaag-after-four-years, accessed 13/3/2024
- Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA - Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter am German Institute of Global and Area Studies (3/7/2018): Sachverständigengutachten zu 10 K 1802/14A
- YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), YOVENCO Berbera (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

17.3.3 Mixed marriages

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:32

Traditionally, marriages between a ‘strong’ and a ‘weak’ group, or between a majority and a minority group, are frowned upon. In everyday life, however, they are nevertheless common due to individual preferences or for love. Many minority groups marry predominantly amongst themselves. Mixed marriages between members of the majority clans and minority groups such as the Ashraf, Sheikhal and Benadiri are accepted. In such cases, the wives typically come from the minority group (EUAA 5/2025a).

Particularly in the case of the Gabooye and the Bantu/Jareer, mixed marriages with members of the majority clans are generally not accepted (EUAA 5/2025a) or are considered a strong taboo

(Landinfo 19/1/2026). There are reservations (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023) and stigmatisation (FH 2024a) in this regard. This applies in particular when a woman from the majority group marries a man from a minority group. The reverse situation is less problematic (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). However, according to a source from the EUAA, this too can lead to rejection by the families or to the children of the couple being insulted (EUAA 5/2025a).

Overall, such mixed marriages are extremely rare (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. FIS 5/10/2018; Landinfo 19/1/2026). There are, however, regional differences in this regard: In the north of the Somali cultural region, where clans are more homogeneous, mixed marriages are less common and, at the same time, more heavily stigmatised than in the south (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. SEM 31/5/2017). According to one source, mixed marriages are more common in the south (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). According to one source, the Hawiye and Rahanweyn take a less restrictive view of mixed marriages. Furthermore, pressure to enter into mixed marriages is particularly pronounced in rural areas (SEM 31/5/2017). In Mogadishu, mixed marriages are possible (FIS 5/10/2018).

Under al-Shabaab, mixed marriages between members of the majority and minority groups are more common (EUAA 5/2025a). The group has encouraged foot soldiers belonging to low-status groups to marry women and girls from ‘noble’ clans (e.g. Hawiye, Darod) (Ingiriis 2020).

A mixed marriage almost never leads to violence or even killings. Rare incidents in which violence occurred in connection with mixed marriages, for example in Somaliland, are documented in the Somaliland media (SEM 31/5/2017). Nevertheless, these marriages can have negative consequences for the spouses – particularly if the husband belongs to a minority (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). For instance, the spouse from a ‘noble’ clan is often disowned by their own family members (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The latter no longer visit the couple, do not look after their children or break off contact entirely; this leads to social pressure (SEM 31/5/2017). This type of ostracism can occur particularly in rural areas. A mixed marriage certainly gives rise to discussion and gossip; however, according to one source, it is usually accepted after a certain period of time (FIS 5/10/2018). According to a source from the EUAA, a mixed marriage to a man from the Gabooye or Bantu/Jareer can lead to a major conflict between the families concerned. This could result in threats or physical attacks (EUAA 5/2025a).

In Somaliland, mixed marriages are rejected by the Isaaq and Darod clans, but are more readily accepted by the Dir clan (SEM 31/5/2017). A Gabooye organisation interviewed by Landinfo was aware of only one single example of a mixed marriage in Somaliland in 2025: namely that of the Minister for Agriculture, who, as a Gabooye, is married to an Isaaq woman. In 2016, Gabooye organisations reported three such marriages. What all these marriages had in common was that they provoked strong reactions from the majority clans involved. These clans intervened and, in two cases, secured the dissolution of the marriage (Landinfo 19/1/2026).

Sources

- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche

- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (5/10/2018): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi, January 2018, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia_-Fact_Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi January 2018.pdf/2abe79e2-baf3-0a23-97d1-f6944b6d21a7/Somalia_Fact_Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi January 2018.pdf.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- Ingiriis - M.H. Ingiriis (2020): The anthropology of Al-Shabaab: the salient factors for the insurgency movement's recruitment project, in: Small Wars & Insurgencies, Vol. 31/2, 2020, pp. 359-380, zitiert in: EASO - European Asylum Support Office (9.2021): Somalia – Targeted Profiles, S.18, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2060580/2021_09_EASO_COI_Report_Somalia_Targeted_profiles.pdf, accessed 2/9/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (19/1/2026): Somalia - Gaboye (midgan), https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Respons-Somalia-Gaboye-midgan-19012026.pdf, accessed 4/3/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somaliland National (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

17.4 Members of other clans in a minority position, and those without a clan

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:31

Even members of powerful clans can become minorities. This is the case when they live in an area where another clan is dominant. This can affect individuals or even entire groups. Generally speaking, an individual assumes the role of a minority whenever they are present within another clan's territory. They thus lose the privileges associated with their clan membership. Under the 'hosts and guests' system, people who settle outside their own clan's territory are at a disadvantage compared with members of the clan based there. This system also applies to internally displaced persons (IDPs) (SEM 31/5/2017). An example of such consequences comes from Puntland. There, security forces arrested several young men believed to be behind a series of attacks on members of the Ogadeni [*Note: the clan predominant in Jubaland and the Somali-speaking areas of Kenya*] in Garoowe. The attacks were triggered when a group of youths in Nairobi assaulted a young man from Garoowe and filmed the incident. The attacks in Garoowe are regarded as retaliation for the attack in Nairobi (HO 8/9/2024).

Discrimination: Members of locally dominant clans enjoy significant advantages in terms of security and economic opportunities, whilst people outside their own *degaan* (clan territory) are more severely affected by conflicts and political and socio-economic exclusion (Landinfo 5/3/2026; cf. USDOS 22/4/2024). It can alsohappen that people belonging to a small group within a large clan are perceived as a minority by their neighbours and discriminated against (AQSOM 4 6/2024). This is because even within powerful clans there are marginalised sub-clans. Members

of such sub-clans may be vulnerable; according to one source, for example, they are sometimes forced to pay for crimes for which they bear no responsibility whatsoever (MBZ 4/4/2025).

According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, people from Somaliland are not discriminated against in southern/central Somalia. They have representatives within the system, in the government and in parliament. Despite the poor security situation, some young Somalilanders go to southern/central Somalia because of the opportunities there, particularly in the humanitarian sector (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

The Ashraf and Sheikhal have traditionally been respected by other clans as 'religious people' or even 'religious teachers'. The name Ashraf is derived from the Arabic word *sharif* (honour). The Ashraf consist mainly of the Hassan and Hussein groups; many of them live in and around Mogadishu, extending as far as Afgooye. Some also live amongst the Digil in the Bakool region. The Sheikhal are divided into the main lineages of Loboge and Jazeera (mainly in and around Mogadishu) and Aw Qutub (mainly in Ethiopia). Most Ashraf and Sheikhal are considered to have fair skin (*gibil cad*). In recent years, they have gained political and economic influence in southern Somalia. They also have access to education. Some Ashraf and Sheikhal are successful in business, including on a large scale in Mogadishu. According to one source, members of both groups are occasionally subjected to discrimination and human rights violations due to their clan origins (EUAA 5/2025a).

The very rare exception of **people who do not know their clan identity** are those who were abandoned as infants outside an orphanage (Landinfo 5/3/2026). For aperson without a clan identity, there is no social protection. This does not automatically lead to mistreatment, but it does increase vulnerability. Should a person without a clan identity and without resources return, it will be very difficult for them to survive, both physically and economically, in the current Somali context. However, according to experts, there is virtually no one who does not know where they come from (ACCORD 31/5/2021).

Somaliland – Dhulbahante / Conflict in Sool and Sanaag (*SSC-Khatumo*, North Eastern State): Fundamentally, the Isaaq and Dhulbahante have always been closely intertwined. They are the two clans in Somalia most closely linked through intermarriage. In Hargeysa alone, 60–70 per cent of marriages are interclan. Here, one cannot even distinguish the clans by their dialect – precisely because they are so intermingled.During the conflict over Laascaanood [*Note: See the chapter on*the security situation / North-Eastern State (NES)] families were put to the test (Sahan/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Fears and hatred were fuelled via so-called social media (Sahan/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Overall, during the conflict over Laascaanood, a sometimes alarming level of ethnically motivated hate speech was observed on both sides, fuelled in particular by the diaspora (AA 23/8/2024; cf. Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). The situation later calmed down and emotions subsided (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

According to several sources from the FFM Somalia 2023, as of May 2023, Dhulbahante in Hargeysa and Central Somaliland were not being threatened or targeted (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf.MAIO-G/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; INGO-V/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; Sahan/STDOK/SEM

4/2023; IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Nevertheless, Dhulbahante people now sometimes feel unsafe or uncomfortable in Isaaq territory (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to a source from the EUAA, only a few Dhulbahante and Warsangeli remain in Hargeysa due to the conflict in eastern Somaliland (EUAA 5/2025a). Two sources stated in 2023 that the Dhulbahante were occasionally treated with hostility (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). A recent source explains that there are no known instances of violence against the Dhulbahante in Hargeysa. Some of them have, however, left the city for Laascaanood. Nevertheless, Dhulbahante continue to live in Hargeysa, for example as politicians or as wives (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). Dhulbahante were taken into account during the formation of the government in 2024 (Horn 14/12/2024a).

[*Note: No recent information could be found in publicly available sources that would indicate discrimination against the Dhulbahante in, for example, Hargeysa.*]

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (23/8/2024): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, https://milo.bamf.de/otcs/cs.exe/app/nodes/30275841, accessed 4/9/2024 [Login required]
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AQSOM 4 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (6/2024): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (8/9/2024): Puntland security arrests youth over TikTok-inspired clan attacks, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Sept/197917/puntland_security_arrests_youth_over_tiktok_inspired_clan_attacks.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 18/10/2024
- Horn - Horn Observer (14/12/2024a): Somaliland President Abdirahman Abdillahi Irro Unveils Inclusive Somaliland Cabinet, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3071/Somaliland-President-Abdirahman-Abdillahi-Irro-Unveils-Inclusive-Somaliland-Cabinet, accessed 20/12/2024
- INGO-V/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), International NGO V (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IO-D/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale Organisation D (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- MAEZA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Organisation für bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MAIO-G/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Internationalen Organisation G (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- Omer/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Ahmed Omer (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Sahan/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Sahan (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Scholar/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Scholar, Hargeysa (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SECEX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Security Expert (Author) (4/2023):
  Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somaliland National (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024

18 Relevant population groups

18.1 Women – in general

Last modification 2026-09-14 15:16

Women's rights continue to be severely restricted by legal, structural and social barriers – including child marriage, limited educational opportunities, discrimination and widespread gender-based violence. Somalia has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (HRW 4/2/2026). In principle, the Sharia rules of civil and criminal law apply. Here, different legal standards apply to women than to men (e.g. half the inheritance share) (AA 9/3/2026).

Under *xeer* (traditional law), women are systematically marginalised, as they are not regarded as full members of their *mag/diya* (blood money) paying groups and have a subordinate legal status within the system. Women are excluded from dispute-resolution assemblies and must rely on the intercession of male relatives (Sahan/SWT 27/1/2025; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; SIHA 8/2024). Acts of violence against women are often settled outside the state system between clan elders, meaning that victim protection is not guaranteed (AA 9/3/2026). In the traditional system, cases of rape are often dealt with within the framework of collective clan responsibility between the clans concerned (that of the perpetrator and that of the victim) (ÖB Nairobi 11/1/2024; cf. SIHA 8/2024). According to one source, the victim is allowed to have a say in determining the amount of compensation (ÖB Nairobi 11/1/2024). According to other accounts, victims are rarely involved. In general, however, it is difficult for women to obtain justice in cases of sexual violence (SIHA 8/2024).

Whilst laws enacted in this regard under formal law do send a signal, this is directed primarily outwards (ÖB Nairobi 11/1/2024). Enforcement is inconsistent. Furthermore, victims fear stigmatisation or reprisals, which deters them from reporting offences and seeking support (UNHRC 22/1/2026).

On the other hand, in cases of clan conflicts, women are often regarded as neutral, as it is easier for them to approach different clans, for example to request a ceasefire. Consequently, women wield considerable power in peace-building due to kinship ties (AQ21 11/2023).

Whilst women in Somalia are increasingly taking on key economic roles and often act as the main breadwinners for their families, they face obstacles when seeking political and economic opportunities. They often find themselves in poorly paid positions (BS 2026). According to a study on Southern/Central Somalia and Puntland, women there have access to only 50per cent of the opportunities available to men – specifically in terms of participation in the economy; economic opportunities; politics; and education (SOMSUN 6/4/2021). Many traditional and religious elites vehemently oppose greater participation by women in political life; political actors, too, have no interest whatsoever in opening up the political arena to women for competitive reasons (AA 25/4/2025). Consequently, there is a notable absence of women in decision-making positions and at all political levels. Overall, this can be attributed to the patriarchal, clan-based society (Sahan/SWT 19/1/2024; cf. AA 25/4/2025; UNHRC 22/1/2026). Nevertheless, women can be found in government departments, among the *Ma'awiisley*, in the federal army, at the *National Intelligence and Security Agency* and among the *Darawish*; in the police force, they account for approximately 10 per cent (AQ21 11/2023; cf. Sahan/SWT 9/9/2022).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (25/4/2025): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 2025), April 202, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2125924/Deutschland. Auswärtiges Amt, Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (11/1/2024): Informationen der Botschaft, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/1/2025): The Recognition of Xeer Issa, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 779, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (19/1/2024): Elections and women's representation in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 637, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]

- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (9/9/2022): Sports, women and the struggle for visibility in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 449, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SIHA - Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (8/2024): Briefing Paper, Addressing Sexual Offenses in Somalia and Somaliland - Legal Challenges and Legislative Responses, https://issuu.com/halayassin/docs/sob_briefing_paper_-_somali_region, accessed 25/9/2025
- SOMSUN - Somaliland Sun (6/4/2021): In All Sectors Women have Nearly Half the Opportunities Afforded to Men - Oxfam, https://www.somalilandsun.com/somalia-in-all-sectors-women-have-nearly-half-the-opportunities-afforded-to-men-oxfam/, accessed 20/6/2024
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (22/1/2026): Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Somalia; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/HRC/WG.6/52/SOM/3], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138749.html, accessed 27/4/2026

18.1.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-09-14 16:07

Discrimination: The current constitution places particular emphasis on the role and human rights of women and girls, and on the state's responsibilities in this regard. This stands in stark contrast to the precarious situation faced by women and girls in everyday life (AA 9/3/2026). Although the provisional constitution and the legal system provide formal safeguards against discrimination on the grounds of gender, these are scarcely effective in practice. Women face widespread discrimination in areas such as housing, education and employment (FH 2024b).

In some Somali towns, dress codes have been imposed in the past – specifically, the wearing of a *niqab* (veil) was banned. This occurred, for example, in Kismayo, Baidoa and Doolow. In each case, the measure was justified on the grounds of security concerns (HO 6/8/2024).

[*For information on* ***the economy and employment, see*** Basic Services/Economy / Economy and Employment / Southern/Central Somalia]

Women in politics: Women are marginalised in political decision-making (UNSC 2/2/2024). The intended 30 per cent quota for women MPs in the Somali Parliament is not being met; the figure stands at just under 20 per cent in the Lower House (FH 2024b; cf. UNSC 13/5/2022) and 26 per cent in the Upper House (FH 2024b; cf. UNSC 8/2/2022). As of July 2024, there were seven women in the 75-member Council of Ministers (Sahan/SWT 29/7/2024). Among the 66 members of parliament sworn in in Puntland in early 2024, there is only one woman (Sahan/SWT 19/1/2024).

Violence against women: Gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual abuse, child marriage and human trafficking, remains widespread (UNHRC 22/1/2026; cf. AA 9/3/2026). Violence against wives is common and is often tolerated; however, there are taboos surrounding this issue, and the violence must not result in serious physical harm (Bakonyi/ACCORD 9/12/2025).

Sexual violence is widespread – internally displaced persons (IDPs) are particularly affected (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. HRW 4/2/2026). Of the 32 people registered by the United Nations as victims of conflict-related sexual violence between January and September 2024, 16 were IDPs (AI 29/4/2025). In the period March–September 2025, the figure was twelve out of twelve (AI 21/

4/2026). Women from minority groups are also particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, crime, exploitation and discrimination, whilst at the same time having virtually no access to justice or clan protection (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

To illustrate: in 2021, according to the UNFPA (*United Nations Population Fund*), cases of gender-based violence broke down as follows: 62 per cent physical violence; 11 per cent rape; 10 per cent sexual assault; 7 per cent denial of resources; 6 per cent psychological violence; 4 per cent forced or child marriage. 53 per cent of cases occurred in the victims' homes (UNFPA 14/4/2022). According to the United Nations, 14,915 cases of gender-based violence were reported in the period from March to September 2025 alone; in 9,210 of these cases, victims received support (psychosocial, medical and counselling) (UNSC 30/9/2025). Women and girls remain exposed to the risks of rape, abduction and systematic sexual enslavement (AA 9/3/2026; cf. UNSC 30/9/2025).

Sexual violence – legal framework: The Criminal Code deals with sexual violence less in terms of bodily harm and more in terms of a violation of morality and 'sexual honour' (BS 2026). The focus is therefore not on physical integrity, but on decency and honour (HRW 11/1/2024). According to other sources, rape is prohibited by law (AA 9/3/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). The penalty is 5–15 years' imprisonment; in military courts, it may also include the death penalty(MBZ 4/4/2025). Rape or sexual assault within marriage, however, is not prohibited (MBZ 4/4/2025: cf. UKFCO 22/11/2024). At the same time, according to one source, consensual sexual intercourse outside marriage is generally prohibited (UKFCO 22/11/2024). Overall, the legal situation is unclear and is applied inconsistently (Sahan/SWT 9/2/2024), with existing laws being hardly ever enforced (MBZ 4/4/2025).

Sexual violence – state protection: Cases of sexual and gender-based violence are often dismissed as trivial offences, and the conviction of perpetrators is prevented through bribery or compensation payments (AA 9/3/2026). If a woman – despite her fear of social ostracism – lodges a complaint against her husband, for example, it is usually not the police who take action, but elders or family members (Horn 6/2/2024); or the police fail to record or investigate cases (UNHRC 22/1/2026), are reluctant to act, or demand fees (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026). Furthermore, violence against women is often not reported at all due to the risk of stigmatisation and the lack of response from the male-dominated law enforcement and judicial systems (SW 3/2023; cf. Sahan/SWT 9/2/2024; ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Victims of sexual and gender-based violence are marginalised and face significant barriers to accessing the justice system (UNHRC 22/1/2026).

Consequently, victims of rape cannot rely on state protection (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. BS 2026). In practice, criminal prosecutions for rape are rare (AA 9/3/2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024), and the clearance rate is negligible (AA 9/3/2026).

Sexual violence – traditional law (*xeer*): For the most part, cases of sexual violence are dealt with within the traditional legal framework (Sahan/SWT 13/3/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025), where women must be represented by a male relative (Sahan/SWT 9/2/2024). However, *xeer* prioritises the interests of the clan and clan relationships over those of the victim (MBZ 4/4/2025).

Occasionally, the victim is forced to marry the perpetrator (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 28/5/2025), and perpetrators are not punished (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Sexual violence – support: Overall, victims of sexual violence face considerable barriers to accessing the support they need (USDOS 22/4/2024). Somali women and girls have only extremely limited access to programmes that protect them from violence (Sahan/SWT 13/3/2023), and there are hardly any legal or medical support services available (Sahan/SWT 9/2/2024). According to a 2020 study, 17 per cent of women and girls affected by gender-based violence received support (USDOS 22/4/2024). UNFPA is driving forward the establishment of so-called *'one-stop centres'* and *'Women and Girls' Safe Spaces'* (WGSS) and maintains these facilities. The aim is to provide comprehensive care for victims of gender-based violence. In such facilities, they can safely access medical, psychosocial, legal and other forms of support (UNFPA 16/6/2023; cf. UNSC 30/9/2025; UNFPA 31/3/2026). In 2025, UNFPA, together with its partners, supported more than 5,000 victims of gender-based violence. WGSS are located in Doolow, Xudur, Bossaso, Belet Weyne and Mogadishu (UNFPA 31/3/2026), whilst one-stop centres are situated in Kismayo, Baidoa and Dhusamareb, amongst other places (UNSC 30/9/2025). The Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) also offers support to victims – ranging from psychosocial services to legal assistance (SRCS 2025). IDPs affected by gender-based violence are sometimes supported by UNHCR with, amongst other things, psychosocial services and case management (UNHCR 23/1/2024; cf. UNHCR 23/6/2024). This includes, amongst other things, a so-called '*safe* house*'*, meals, financial assistance and medical care (UNHCR 23/6/2024). There is at least one women's shelter in Mogadishu. This shelter takes in victims of gender-based violence or forced marriages – including women who have become pregnant before marriage (Love Does 20/10/2023). The NGO *Elman Peace* runs crisis centres for victims of gender-based violence under the name '*Sister Somalia*'. Psychosocial, medical and trauma support is also available there (Elman n.dc). The NGO SWSC offers psychosocial and legal support in Jubaland, whilst the NGO SWDC does so in Mogadishu and the South West State (SW 11/2023).

Overall, there is a lack of adequate accommodation, psychosocial support and legal aid (UNHRC 22/1/2026). Women who are subjected to domestic violence often flee to siblings, parents or other relatives (Bakonyi/ACCORD 9/12/2025). The cases of violence against female activists and journalists in Mogadishu, Baidoa and Kismayo recorded in *the Violence Observatory System* reveal a geographical imbalance: Whilst in Baidoa 98 per cent of cases were not referred to a safe space, the figure was 71 per cent in Kismayo and 66 per cent in Mogadishu. The response to the question of whether victims wish to take legal action is even more uneven: 80 per cent of victims in Baidoa ruled out taking legal action against the perpetrator; by contrast, the figure was only 23 per cent in Kismayo and just 8 per cent in Mogadishu (SW 11/2023).

Sexual violence – Puntland: Puntland is the only region where a law criminalises all forms of sexual violence (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. UNFPA 14/4/2022), and rape is explicitly prohibited (Sahan/SWT 9/2/2024). [*Note: It is unclear whether this also applies to marital rape.*] There is a UNFPA-supported mobile legal aid clinic that provides advice and legal support to women and girls from vulnerable and marginalised groups (GN 10/11/2022a). Overall, however, the above-mentioned

law is not being implemented (MBZ 4/4/2025). Often, pressure from elders prevails, requiring a victim to marry the perpetrator or to be satisfied with compensation payments (AQ21 11/2023).

Single women are particularly at risk when they live in IDP camps. There, they face an increased risk of experiencing sexual violence. For women who cannot rely on a clan network, the risk is even greater. The main source of protection lies within the woman's extended family. If a woman does not live with her extended family, her safety is compromised. Women who belong to a majority clan can expect a certain degree of protection (MBZ 4/4/2025).

Women – al-Shabaab: In the areas under its control, al-Shabaab manages to provide women and girls with a certain degree of physical protection against sexual violence and abduction (ICG 27/6/2019a; cf. SW 3/2023). The group also intervenes, for example, in cases of domestic violence (ICG 27/6/2019a). Al-Shabaab has sentenced rapists to death (USDOS 22/4/2024). This is also one reason whyrape occurs relatively rarely in areas controlled by al-Shabaab (ICG 27/6/2019a; cf. DI 6/2019). [*Note: It is unclear whether this refers only to rape outside marriage.*]

According to reports, women and girls are frequently abducted and forced into marriage with al-Shabaab fighters (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026; cf. USDOS 22/4/2024). They and their families generally have little choice (USDOS 22/4/2024). According to other sources, most marriages to members of al-Shabaab are entered into voluntarily, although the influence of parents and the clan, as well as the young age at which marriage takes place, should not be underestimated. Such a marriage offers the wife and her family a certain degree of financial stability; even widows receive a pension (ICG 27/6/2019a). This contrasts with older reports suggesting that many parents have taken their daughters to towns to keep them safe from al-Shabaab (DI 6/2019).

Reports suggest that sexualised violence is deliberately used by al-Shabaab in the armed conflict (AA 9/3/2026). Women and girls are forced into sexual slavery and domestic labour, or trained as female fighters. Displaced persons, members of minority groups and marginalised clans are disproportionately affected (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026).

Al-Shabaab significantly restricts women's freedom and opportunities in the territory under its control (SW 3/2023; cf. TEL/Warah 11/3/2019). The application of an extreme form of Sharia law leads to widespread discrimination against women (AA 9/3/2026). Their economic opportunities are restricted; for example, there is no trade in *khat* or tobacco; teahouses and restaurants – otherwise common in Somalia – are not permitted to be run by women. They are expected, above all, to stay at home and refrain from interacting with men outside their immediate family (Sahan/SWT 27/8/2025). In theory, they areonly permitted to leave their own homes if accompanied by a male relative (ICG 27/6/2019a). However, al-Shabaab applies these theoretical rules only arbitrarily or pragmatically (Sahan/SWT 27/8/2025); cf. ICG 27/6/2019a; AQ21 11/2023). Women are still able to work, particularly at the market – after all, they do pay taxes (Sahan/SWT 27/8/2025). Women are sometimes required to pay a special fee if they own a business (AQ21 11/2023). As more and more families are dependent on women's income, the group tends to allow them to pursue their economic activities (ICG 27/6/2019a).

[*For informationon the* ***(forced) recruitment of women and girls by al-Shabaab***, *see*Military Service / Al-Shabaab – (Forced) Recruitment and Child Soldiers]

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AI - Amnesty International (21/4/2026): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia, accessed 21/4/2026
- AI - Amnesty International (29/4/2025): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2024, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2124628.html, accessed 26/6/2025
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- Bakonyi/ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (Publisher), Jutta Bakonyi (Author) (9/12/2025): E-Mail-Auskunft an ACCORD, zitiert nach: ACCORD (12.12.2025): Anfragebeantwortung zu Somalia: Informationen zu Scheidung (Voraussetzungen, Gründe für Männer, Gründe für Frauen, Rolle der Familie, Rolle der familiären Herkunft der Frau); Informationen zu Flucht aus gewaltsamer Ehe; Konsequenzen [a-12748]
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- DI - Development Initiatives (6/2019): Towards an improved understanding of vulnerability and resilience in Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Report_Towards-an-improved-understanding-of-vulnerability-and-resilience-in-Somalia.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- Elman - Elman Peace (n.dc): Sister Somalia, http://elmanpeace.org/our-work/sister-somalia, accessed 21/6/2024
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (10/11/2022a): Reclaiming hope and justice for survivors of sexual violence during drought and hunger crisis in Somalia, https://goobjoog.com/english/reclaiming-hope-and-justice-for-survivors-of-sexual-violence-during-drought-and-hunger-crisis-in-somalia/, accessed 20/6/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (6/8/2024): Jubbaland enforces niqab ban in Kismayo to counter Al-Shabaab threat, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Aug/197416/jubbaland_enforces_niqab_ban_in_kismayo_to_counter_al_shabaab_threat.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 26/5/2026
- Horn - Horn Observer (6/2/2024): Third woman and children rescued amid a rising tide of femicide in Somalia, https://hornobserver.com/articles/2640/Third-woman-and-children-rescued-amid-a-rising-tide-of-femicide-in-Somalia, accessed 19/4/2024
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (11/1/2024): World Report 2024 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2103135.html, accessed 15/1/2024
- ICG - International Crisis Group (27/6/2019a): Women and Al-Shabaab's Insurgency, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2011897/b145-women-and-al-shabaab_0.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- Love Does - Love Does (20/10/2023): Stories from the Somalia Safe House, https://lovedoes.org/stories-from-the-somalia-safe-house, accessed 21/6/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/8/2025): Women in Somalia's Gendered Political Economy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 865, per e-Mail [fee required]

- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (28/5/2025): Stolen Childhoods: Somalia's Enduring Crisis of Child Marriage, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 828, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (29/7/2024): Editing Women Out of Politics and Power, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 711, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (9/2/2024): Somalia's gender-based violence crisis, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 646, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (19/1/2024): Elections and women's representation in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 637, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (13/3/2023): Climate Change, Displacement, and Gender-Based Violence in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 518, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SRCS - Somali Red Crescent Society (2025): Annual Report 2024, https://data-api.ifrc.org/documents/SO/Annual Report_Somalia_2024.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- SW - Saferworld (11/2023): Adressing gender-based violence against women activists in Somalia: Violence Observatory Systems, https://www.saferworld-global.org/downloads/somalia-violence-observatory-systems.pdf, accessed 21/6/2024
- SW - Saferworld (3/2023): Defining the endgame. Civil society voices on how to build a just, stable Somalia, https://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/defning-the-endgame-web.pdf, accessed 19/10/2023
- TEL/Warah - Rasna Warah (Author), The Elephant (Publisher) (11/3/2019): The Invisible Clan: Is Somalia Ready for a Women's Revolution?, https://www.theelephant.info/features/2019/03/11/the-invisible-clan-is-somalia-ready-for-a-womens-revolution/, accessed 20/6/2024
- UKFCO - United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office [United Kingdom] (22/11/2024): Guidance - Somalia: information for victims of rape and sexual assault, https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/somalia-information-for-survivors-of-rape-and-sexual-assault/somalia-information-for-victims-of-rape-and-sexual-assault, accessed 3/9/2026
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (31/3/2026): Somalia Annual Report, 2025, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2date26-date3/UNFPA Somalia Annual Report_2025 (1).pdf, accessed 11/5/2026
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (16/6/2023): UNFPA Somalia Annual Report 2022, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa_somalia_annual_report_2022_1.pdf, accessed 20/6/2024
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (14/4/2022): Overview of Gender Based Violence Situation in Somalia, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/somalia_gbv_advocacy_brief_09april22.pdf, accessed 20/6/2024
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (23/6/2024): Operational Update (May 2024) - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/unhcr-somalia-operational-update-may-2024, accessed 11/7/2024
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (23/1/2024): UNHCR Somalia Factsheet: December 2023 - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/unhcr-somalia-factsheet-december-2023, accessed 22/4/2024
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (22/1/2026): Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Somalia; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/HRC/WG.6/52/SOM/3], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138749.html, accessed 27/4/2026
- UNHRC/UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (Publisher), United Nations Human Rights Council (Author) (30/1/2026): Visit to Somalia. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/52/Add.2, accessed 23/4/2026
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (2/2/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/758], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2106391/n2401965.pdf, accessed 4/6/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (13/5/2022): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2022/392], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2073538/N2233663.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023

- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (8/2/2022): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2022/101], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2068141/S_2022_101_E.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024

18.1.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

Politics and law: Women are excluded from *the guurti* (Upper House) (USDOS 12/4/2022). President Irro's cabinet comprises three female ministers (Horn 14/12/2024b). Following the May 2021 election, there was not a single female Member of Parliament in the Lower House or House of Representatives (FH 2024a). In May 2023, a woman was sworn in as the successor to a deceased UCID parliamentarian (SD 14/5/2023). Only three of the 220 local councillors countrywide are women (USDOS 12/4/2022). According to an NGO, there was an increase in arrests, harassment and violence against women campaigning for gender equality in 2023 and 2024 (SIHA 3/2025).

Domestic violence remains a problem (FH 2024a), and gender-based violence also remains widespread due to the fragile legal system and a lack of law enforcement (HRCSL 2025).

Law enforcement: A new bill concerning rape and sexual offences was introduced and passed by the House of Representatives in August 2020. This bill contravenes several international human rights standards. Among other things, it permits child and forced marriage and excludes marital rape. The bill was still before Parliament at the time of writing this report and had not yet come into force (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), rape is prosecuted under Article 398 of the Criminal Code. However, the definition of rape under this provision is very narrow, and judges often require evidence of the use of force (e.g. torn clothing, injuries) (UNDP 27/3/2025).

Cultural and social stigmas pose significant barriers for victims of sexual and gender-based violence when it comes to accessing justice and support services (UNDP 22/1/2025). Due to social pressure, rapes are rarely reported (FH 2024a). For the year 2024, the Somaliland police reported 321 cases of rape (HRCSL 2025). Rape cases are also investigated and reported at the instigation of women's refuges, leading to arrests (UNICEF 26/2/2024). However, the number of unreported cases is high; many rape cases are still dealt with by elders within the traditional legal framework. In such proceedings, the rights of the victims are not adequately taken into account (HRCSL 2025). The conviction rate for reported cases remains low. At the same time, of the 752 cases of gender-based violence recorded in the State Human Rights Commission's annual report for 2023, only 271 were referred to the public prosecutor's office. This suggests that many of these cases were settled outside the justice system (HRCSL 2025). In this regard, the then President Bihi signed a decree in June 2024 prohibiting the adjudication of rape cases by clan elders. Accordingly, all such cases are to be referred to the state judiciary (HO 25/6/2024a; cf. HRCSL 2025).

In November 2025, a Koranic teacher was sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment by the Court of Appeal in Togdheer. The convicted man was found guilty of sexually abusing children in his care (Kaab 29/11/2025b). Another perpetrator of sexual violence was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment (UNDP 27/3/2025).

Support: The NGO WAAPO – a partner of several UN organisations – runs women's shelters in Hargeysa, Borama and Burco. The services are aimed at victims of gender-based violence and FGM(female genital mutilation) and also serve to protect children. The centres offer psychosocial counselling, medical support, legal aid and mediation (WAAPO n.da; cf. UN OCHA 2022). These services are provided free of charge. The shelters also work in collaboration with the police. Women are helped to seek justice following acts of violence (UNICEF 26/2/2024). The organisation *Baahi-Koob*, which is supported by the UNDP and the EU, also cooperates with WAAPO. It campaigns against gender-based violence and works to ensure that victims have access to support and justice (UNDP 27/3/2025; cf. UNDP 22/1/2025; HRCSL 2025). The first *Baahi-Koob Centre* (BKC) wasestablished in 2008 at the *Hargeisa Group Hospital*; similar centres were later set up at hospitals in Burco and Borama. The BKC centres provide vital medical care, psychological support and legal advice, and serve as safe havens for those affected. Victims also benefit from referrals to legal aid and economic empowerment programmes. Furthermore, cases are referred to the law enforcement authorities. Today, the centres handle an average of around 60 cases per month – predominantly rape victims. Since 2008, a total of 7,055 victims have been assisted (6,456 women and 599 men, including 5,059 children under the age of 18) (UNDP 22/1/2025). In Burco, there is also a UNFPA-supported *Women & Girls Safe Space* (UNFPA 31/3/2026).

[*For information on* ***the economy and employment, see*** Basic Services/Economy / Economy and Employment / Somaliland]

Sources

- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (25/6/2024a): Somaliland president bans clan elders from adjudicating rape cases, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Jun/196837/somaliland_president_bans_clan_elders_from_adjudicating_rape_cases.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 27/6/2024
- Horn - Horn Observer (14/12/2024b): Women Secure Three Ministries in Somaliland's New Cabinet, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3072/Women-Secure-Three-Ministries-in-Somalilands-New-Cabinet, accessed 7/1/2026
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (2025): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2024, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Annual-Report-2025-1.pdf, accessed 24/4/2026
- Kaab - Kaab TV (29/11/2025b): Somaliland Court Sentences Quran School Teacher to 14 Years for Rape Amid Opposition from Scholars, https://en.kaabtv.com/somaliland-court-sentences-quran-school-teacher-to-14-years-for-rape-amid-opposition-from-scholars/, accessed 2/12/2025
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025

- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- SD - Somali Dispatch (14/5/2023): Somaliland Parliament welcomes the first female MP, https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/somaliland-parliament-welcomes-the-first-female-mp, accessed 2/5/2024
- SIHA - Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (3/2025): Briefing Paper, Is the Democratic Dream Still Possible? Navigating the Growing Backlash Against Women's Rights in Somaliland, https://sihanet.org/briefing-paper-is-the-democratic-dream-still-possible-navigating-the-growing-backlash-against-womens-rights-in-somaliland/, accessed 24/9/2025
- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme (27/3/2025): A Mother's Fight for Justice in Somaliland, https://www.undp.org/somalia/stories/mothers-fight-justice-somaliland, accessed 24/4/2026
- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme (22/1/2025): Baahi-koob, a go-to place for survivors of violence in Somaliland, https://www.undp.org/european-union/stories/baahi-koob-go-place-survivors-violence-somaliland, accessed 24/4/2026
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (31/3/2026): Somalia Annual Report, 2025, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2date26-date3/UNFPA Somalia Annual Report_2025 (1).pdf, accessed 11/5/2026
- UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (26/2/2024): A path towards independence and self-reliance, https://www.unicef.org/somalia/stories/path-towards-independence, accessed 21/6/2024
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2022): Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan 2022, Appeal Data, https://projects.hpc.tools/project/184533/view, accessed 21/6/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/4/2022): 2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2071126.html, accessed 4/10/2023
- WAAPO - WAAPO (n.da): Safe Houses, https://waapo.org/safe-house/, accessed 21/6/2024

18.1.3 Family, marriage, forced marriage, divorce, honour killings

Last modification 2026-09-14 13:48

Sharia law is the most important source of law in Somalia and Somaliland, particularly with regard to family law. It applies, for example, to marriage, inheritance, adoption and custody. Whilst civil law may be applied alongside Sharia law, it must always be compatible with Sharia law. In the event of any discrepancy, Sharia law takes precedence (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023).

Marriage: The provisions of *xeer* (traditional law) and Sharia law, which are virtually identical in this regard, are relevant to the conclusion of marriage (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). Polygamy is permitted under both legal systems and is socially accepted (UNHRCOM 6/5/2024; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). There is no civil marriage (Landinfo 14/6/2018). In large parts of southern and central Somalia, al-Shabaab administers justice – including in matters of marriage, divorce and the resulting custody arrangements (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023).

Marriage is extremely important, and it is virtually unthinkable in Somali society for a young person to remain unmarried (LIFOS 16/4/2019). According to a United Nations estimate, in 2025 more than 63 per cent of women aged 15–49 were living in a marriage or partnership. In the 15–19 age group, the figure was 16 per cent, whilst in the 20–24 age group it was already 63 per cent (UNDESA 2024). According to other figures, only around half of the population aged 15 and over is married; 37.9 per cent have therefore never been married. This latter group is increasingly found in urban areas (42.1 per cent) and is less common in rural areas (30 per cent) (GN 28/3/2023a).

Arranged marriage is the norm, particularly for a first marriage (Landinfo 14/6/2018). Marriages across clan boundaries [*Note: large or 'noble' clans*] are common (FIS 5/10/2018).

Society expects a bride to be a virgin at the time of her first marriage (LIFOS 16/4/2019), although, according to one source, virginity tests are no longer widespread (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023), though other sources indicate that it does occur, particularly in rural areas, in the form of checking for existing FGM (female genital mutilation) (DRC/U.A.Hashi 4/11/2020).

Marriage (procedure): Generally, the imam must be certain of the spouses' identities before the marriage takes place. Furthermore, the imam must ensure, in a personal one-to-one conversation with both spouses, that they are marrying of their own free will (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). A marriage is only legally valid if both spouses are acting of their own free will (USDOS 12/8/2025). This must also be attested to by the witnesses present. The bride specifies the dowry, which is then confirmed by the groom. All parties (the couple, the guardian, the witnesses and the imam) must sign the marriage contract / marriage certificate (deed of marriage). With the increase in the number of Somalis living in the diaspora, marriages conducted over the telephone are no longer uncommon. This usually requires an imam at both ends of the line. Once a marriage has been solemnised before an imam and in accordance with the requirements of Sharia law (maturity, voluntary consent, witnesses), it is legally valid under Somali law (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023).

[*For information on* ***child marriage and the minimum age for marriage, see*** Children]

Arranged marriage / forced marriage: Furthermore, under the *xeer*, it is entirely possible for parents or a guardian to exert influence over minors so that they consent 'voluntarily' to a marriage – as required by Sharia law. The consent required under Sharia law is relativised under the *xeer*. Child marriages and arranged marriages often do not involve genuine voluntary consent. Strictly speaking, such marriages would not be valid under Islamic law (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). According to other sources, families suggest potential partners to the children. In some rural areas, family and clan considerations do play a greater role, but as a rule, the wishes and concerns of those involved are respected. In principle, however, the decision lies with the clan, the family and, ultimately, the father (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Accordingly, the line between an arranged marriage and a forced marriage is blurred (MBZ 4/4/2025). In the former case, there is more or less explicit consent from both spouses, although varying degrees of pressure are exerted. In the case of forced marriage, on the other hand, consent is entirely or almost entirely absent (Landinfo 14/6/2018).

In any case, according to a 2018 study, one in five women report having been forced into marriage; many of them were under 15 years of age at the time of the marriage (LIFOS 16/4/2019). Women and many underage girls are forced into marriage (AA 9/3/2026). Some girls have only consented to a marriage in order to avoid being disowned by their own family (SPA 1/2021; cf. Sahan/SWT 28/5/2025). Violence is sometimes used against women who refuse to marry a partner chosen by their family (Landinfo 14/6/2018; cf. Sahan/SWT 28/5/2025). The extent of this is unclear, but honour killings are not a tradition in Somalia in this context (Landinfo 14/6/2018). Rather, women who resist an arranged marriage and/or run away may lose their

network of kinship support (ACCORD 31/5/2021; cf. Landinfo 14/6/2018). [*For support and women's refuges, see*Women – Southern/Central Somalia*and*Women – Somaliland]

Marriages are viewed by parents, amongst other things, as a form of protection and are desired for economic reasons (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). In nomadic areas, women are sometimes married off in exchange for grazing rights (*godob reeb*), and sometimes to settle a blood debt (*diya*). Furthermore, it sometimes happens that the sister of a deceased wife must marry the widower; this practice, provided for in *the xeer*, is known as *higsian* (Sahan/SWT 28/5/2025). There are no known initiatives by the federal government or regional authorities to combat forced marriages (USDOS 12/8/2025).

A source dating back to 2004 already states that traditions are changing, however, and that many marriages are entered into without the involvement, knowledge or consent of the parents (Landinfo 14/6/2018). This is also confirmed by a recent source. Nowadays, partners meet via social media, within the education system or at work (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Many young Somalis no longer accept arranged marriages (LIFOS 16/4/2019). In cities in particular, it is increasingly possible to choose one's own spouse (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026; cf. LIFOS 16/4/2019; Landinfo 14/6/2018). In the capital, it is not uncommon for marriages to result from love – albeit often agreed upon in advance with the families (Landinfo 14/6/2018). Arranged marriages are rather uncommon there. According to one estimate, in 80 per cent of cases, spouses were able to choose their own partner or have a say in the decision (FIS 5/10/2018).

In addition, there is also the tradition of elopement (*qubdo sireed*), whereby the marriage takes place without the parents' knowledge or consent (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023; cf. FIS 5/10/2018). This form of marriage occurs throughout the country and is generally accepted (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). According to one source, the problem with these 'secret marriages' is that they are not registered anywhere and, for example, the husband can claim at any time that he is not actually married and that these are not his children. In this regard, a new law is being drafted which provides for the civil registration of such marriages (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Marriage registration: At the imam's, copies of the documents signed by all parties are made and distributed to all those present. One copy is filed in the mosque's register. This is not always possible, but such registration is not strictly necessary for a marriage to be valid. Where possible, the marriage is also registered at a registry office or local court in the nearest municipality that is able to do so. In Somaliland, such registration is more easily arranged with the local authority or the regional court. The civil registration of a marriage is entirely voluntary. The legal validity of a marriage derives from the fulfilment of the requirements under Sharia law (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). [*For documents, see also*Documents / Southern/Central Somalia*and*Documents / Somaliland]

Divorce is permitted (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024) and is also very common (Bakonyi/ACCORD 9/12/2025); in Mogadishu, for example, it is an everyday occurrence. According to one source, divorce used to be considered a disgrace (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). According to another source, however, it was found as early as 1991 that more than half of women over the age of 50 had been married more than once (Landinfo 14/6/2018). According to other figures from 2023,

9 per cent of the population aged 25–29 are divorced, whilst the figure for those aged 30–34 is 7.6 per cent (GN 28/3/2023a). Divorce is also permitted within al-Shabaab and is practised by the group (ICG 27/6/2019a). Divorce – and remarriage – are not stigmatised (Bakonyi/ACCORD 9/12/2025; cf. Landinfo 14/6/2018; FIS 5/10/2018). According to another source, divorce is still frowned upon in rural areas, where it can therefore lead to social pressure (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

It is easy for men to get a divorce. However, sufficient grounds are required, which the husband must explain to his family and also to the wife's male relatives. According to the expert Jutta Bakonyi, 'I no longer like my wife' is not a sufficient ground for divorce (Bakonyi/ACCORD 9/12/2025).

The wife has the right to expel her husband from the shared household (AQ21 11/2023). Divorces are often initiated by the wife. The grounds for divorce cited by women include: the husband taking a second wife without consultation; adultery; the family's money being spent, for example, on the husband's *khat* consumption; and the husband failing to look after the family (Höhne/ACCORD 8/12/2025). The wife's own family may support her in the divorce, which they are more likely to do if violence is involved. Without such support, divorced women with children often face extreme poverty (Bakonyi/ACCORD 9/12/2025).

Regardless of who is at fault for the divorce, the husband is required to provide maintenance for his ex-wife if she has children or is pregnant. In most cases, the amount of maintenance is determined by the (Sharia) court or elders, in accordance with the husband's financial means. By contrast, the ex-wife is under no obligation whatsoever to pay maintenance to her former husband (Musawah 1/3/2022). According to other sources, the ex-husband may be required to pay maintenance to the woman for 3–12 months – if he was at fault for the divorce. If, on the other hand, the wife is at fault for the divorce, she must pay compensation equivalent to the bride price (UNDP 2018). Many men also simply disappear and offer their wives and children no support whatsoever (AQ21 11/2023). In order to receive support, the divorced woman usually moves in with her parents or relatives, taking the children with her (FIS 5/10/2018).

Whilst it used to be the norm for children to remain with the father, today the situation is often the reverse (AQ21 11/2023; cf. FIS 5/10/2018). Custody of boys under the age of ten and girls under the age of fifteen remains with the mother, although this may be extended by the court in the best interests of the child. If the mother remarries, she may consequently lose custody of the children from her previous marriage (UNDP 2018). According to one source, it can still happen sporadically today that children are awarded to the husband following a divorce (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Traditionally, a period of three to six months is required after a divorce before a new marriage may be contracted (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). When choosing a new spouse, divorcees generally have greater freedom than they did when entering into their first marriage (Landinfo 14/6/2018).

Annulment: A marriage may only be annulled or contested if conclusive evidence is presented that one spouse did not give voluntary consent; that one spouse lacks the necessary maturity

(mentally and physically); if evidence subsequently comes to light that the wife was already married and the divorce had not yet been finalised; if the prescribed period of 3–6 months between divorce and remarriage had not yet elapsed; or if the husband is already married to four wives. Sterility or other physical limitations do not constitute grounds for annulment, but they do constitute grounds for divorce (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023).

Honour killings: In Somalia, there is no tradition of so-called honour killings in the sense of the accepted killing of women who have transgressed certain social norms – e.g. the birth of an illegitimate child (Landinfo 14/6/2018). However, a child born out of wedlock is regarded as a disgrace to the woman's entire family. Both mother and child are stigmatised; in the worst-case scenario, they are disowned by the family (FIS 5/10/2018; cf. Love Does 20/10/2023). According to one source, extramarital or premarital sexual intercourse is a criminal offence (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- Bakonyi/ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (Publisher), Jutta Bakonyi (Author) (9/12/2025): E-Mail-Auskunft an ACCORD, zitiert nach: ACCORD (12.12.2025): Anfragebeantwortung zu Somalia: Informationen zu Scheidung (Voraussetzungen, Gründe für Männer, Gründe für Frauen, Rolle der Familie, Rolle der familiären Herkunft der Frau); Informationen zu Flucht aus gewaltsamer Ehe; Konsequenzen [a-12748]
- DRC/U.A.Hashi - Danish Refugee Council, Ugbad Ahmed Hashi (4/11/2020): Interview with Ugbad Ahmed Hashi, senior staff and FGM expert at NAFIS Network (Network Against FGM in Somaliland) and lecturer at University of Hargeisa, https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/bwidks1y/drc-temarapport-somalia_fgm_dec2020.pdf, accessed 30/9/2025
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (5/10/2018): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi, January 2018, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia_-Fact_Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi January 2018.pdf/2abe79e2-baf3-0a23-97d1-f6944b6d21a7/Somalia_Fact_Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi January 2018.pdf.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (28/3/2023a): Divorce highest between ages 25 and 29 in Somalia, https://goobjoog.com/english/divorce-highest-between-ages-25-and-29-in-somalia/, accessed 17/1/2024
- Höhne/ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (Publisher), Markus Höhne (Author) (8/12/2025): E-Mail-Auskunft an ACCORD, zitiert nach: ACCORD (12.12.2025): Anfragebeantwortung zu Somalia: Informationen zu Scheidung (Voraussetzungen, Gründe für Männer, Gründe für Frauen, Rolle der Familie, Rolle der familiären Herkunft der Frau); Informationen zu Flucht aus gewaltsamer Ehe; Konsequenzen [a-12748],
- ICG - International Crisis Group (27/6/2019a): Women and Al-Shabaab's Insurgency, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2011897/b145-women-and-al-shabaab_0.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (14/6/2018): Somalia: Marriage and divorce, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2013990/Report-Somalia-Marriage-and-divorce-14062018-2.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024

- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (16/4/2019): Somalia - Kvinnlig könsstympning (version 1.0), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2007150/190416400.pdf, accessed 21/6/2024
- Love Does - Love Does (20/10/2023): Stories from the Somalia Safe House, https://lovedoes.org/stories-from-the-somalia-safe-house, accessed 21/6/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- Musawah - Musawah - Equality and Justice in the Muslim Family (1/3/2022): Somalia - Overview of Muslim Family Laws & Practices, https://www.musawah.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Somalia-Overview-Table-1.pdf, accessed 19/12/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Omer2/ALRC - Ahmed Omer 2, Africa Legal Risk Control Ltd (17/3/2023): Somali Family Law & Practice. An Expert Report (Bericht i.A. der österreichischen und deutschen Botschaften in Nairobi); per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (28/5/2025): Stolen Childhoods: Somalia's Enduring Crisis of Child Marriage, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 828, per e-Mail [fee required]
- SPA - Somali Public Agenda (1/2021): A comparative review of Somalia's controversial Sexual Offences Bills, https://somalipublicagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SPA_Governance_Briefs_11_2021_ENGLISH.pdf, accessed 21/6/2024
- UNDESA - United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2024): Women of Reproductive Age Who Are Married or in a Union 2024, Dataset, https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd_2024_ds_1970-2030_fp_rev-2024.xlsx, accessed 11/12/2025
- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme (2018): Somalia - Gender Justice & The Law, https://arabstates.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Somalia Country Assessment - English.pdf, accessed 19/12/2025
- UNHRCOM - United Nations Human Rights Committee (6/5/2024): Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia [CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2108970/G2405613.pdf, accessed 24/5/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

18.2 Girls / Women – Female Genital Mutilation and Circumcision (FGM/C)

Last modification 2026-09-14 16:16

Types of circumcision: *Gudniin* is the general Somali term for circumcision – whether performed on a woman or a man (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). According to a study carried out in Puntland, there are also other names for FGM/C, such as *dhufaanid* (castration) or *tolid* (sewing up) (UNFPA 4/2022). Two forms of FGM/C are prevalent in Somalia:

a) On the one hand, the most widespread form, known as Pharaonic circumcision (*gudniinka fircooniga*), which largely corresponds to WHO Type III (infibulation) (UNFPA 4/2022; cf. CEDOCA 20/2/2025; HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015) and is understood by the Somali population under the synonym 'FGM' – a term now also commonly used there (UNFPA 4/2022; cf. HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015).

b) On the other hand, there is the *sunna* (*gudniinka sunna*) (CEDOCA 20/2/2025; cf. HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015), which, according to one source, generally corresponds to the less drastic WHO Type I (LIFOS 16/4/2019), according to another source, WHO Types I and II (AV 2017);

according to a third source, WHO Type IV (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021); and finally, according to yet other sources, a wide range of procedures (CEDOCA 20/2/2025; cf. HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015), which, according to several sources from the Belgian COI unit CEDOCA as well as the researcher Johansen, encompasses all four WHO types (CEDOCA 20/2/2025; cf. DIS 2/2021). Generally speaking, many sources state that in the case of a *'sunna'*, the vulva is not sutured; some sources report that it involves only the piercing of the clitoris (i.e. without any circumcision) (CEDOCA 20/2/2025). Alternatively, *'sunna'* is further subdivided into the so-called 'major *sunna'* (*sunna kabir*) and the 'minor *sunna'* (*sunna saghir*); there are also hybrid forms (LIFOS 16/4/2019; cf. HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). According to sources, the term *'sunna'* can de facto refer to any form – ranging from a small incision to almost complete Pharaonic circumcision – that deviates from the traditional form of FGM (infibulation) (FIS 5/10/2018; cf. CEDOCA 20/2/2025). Due to the problem that there is no clear definition of *'sunna'* (LIFOS 16/4/2019; cf. FIS 5/10/2018), parents, according to one source, often have no idea exactly what procedure the circumciser will perform (LIFOS 16/4/2019). Generally, the *sunna* is regarded as harmless by parents and those affected; only minor health complications are associated with this form (UNFPA 4/2022; cf. CEDOCA 20/2/2025). Furthermore, it is considered religiously permissible (CEDOCA 20/2/2025).

In a study from Somaliland, *sunna* is classified as WHO Type IV ('… other injurious procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g. pricking, piercing, cutting, scraping, cauterising"). Participants in the study describe two types of *sunna*: on the one hand, the form involving a limited excision (*'small cut"*) followed by suturing with one or two stitches; on the other hand, a milder form in which the clitoris is pricked with a needle and no further abuse takes place – in particular, no suturing (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021).

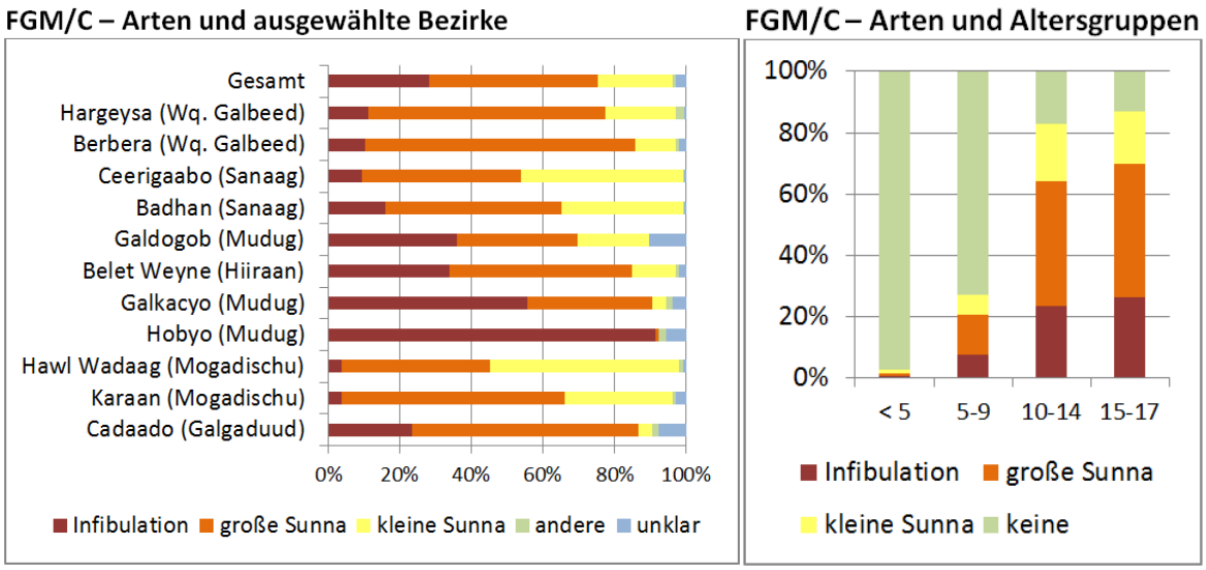
In contrast, Crawford and Ali describe the following forms of FGM/C for Somalia (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015):

Sunna		
	Sunna Saghir	- teilweise oder völlige Entfernung der Klitoris und/oder der Klitorisvorhaut • Typ Ia: Beschneidung der Klitorisvorhaut • Typ Ib: Entfernung von Klitorisvorhaut und Klitoris Es kann aber auch anders eingegriffen werden: • Typ IIa: ausschließlich Entfernung der inneren Schamlippen • Typ IIb: Teilweise oder komplette Entfernung der Klitoris und der inneren Schamlippen • Typ IIc: Teilweise oder komplette Entfernung der Klitoris sowie der äußeren und inneren Schamlippen
	Sunna Kabir	modifizierte Form der Infibulation (WHO IIIa oder IIIb); • Beschneidung der inneren und/oder äußeren Schamlippen mit oder ohne Entfernung der Klitoris • Die oberen Bereiche der äußeren oder inneren Schamlippen werden zugenäht. • Die Öffnung verbleibt größer, als es bei einer Infibulation der Fall wäre.
	Andere	Es könnte auch weitere Formen der Sunna geben, da weder die Beschneiderinnen noch die allgemeine Bevölkerung genau wissen, wie die Sunna eigentlich aussehen sollte.
Infibulation		
	Fircooni	die eigentliche pharaonische Beschneidung bzw. Infibulation • Zumachen der Vaginalöffnung durch Beschneiden und zusammennähen von äußeren (Typ IIIb) oder inneren (Typ IIIa) Schamlippen • mit oder ohne Abschneiden der Klitoris
	Fadumo Hagoog	eine Form von Typ III • kein Vernähen der Schamlippen – hier werden die Wunden offengelassen und die Beine des Mädchens eng zusammengebunden, damit die Schamlippen miteinander verwachsen • kommt v.a. in ländlichen Gemeinschaften in Puntland und Süd-/Zentralsomalia vor. • eine eher altertümliche Praxis, unklar, ob diese Tradition gegenwärtig noch vorkommt

Sources 25: HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015

Prevalence [*see also sub-chapter*]: FGM remains widespread in Somalia (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. AA 9/3/2026) and continues to be the norm (Landinfo 14/9/2022). For a long time, the proportion of women affected was reported as 98 per cent (FIS 5/10/2018), and some sources still cite figures such as 97 per cent to 99 per cent today (AA 9/3/2026; cf. CEDOCA 20/2/2025). According to the Somali Ministry of Health, however, the prevalence had fallen to 95 per cent by 2015 and to 90 per cent by 2018 (FIS 5/10/2018). UN News and the Somali Red Crescent both report figures of 'more than 90 per cent" (UNN 4/2/2022; cf. SRCS 2025). According to a 2017 study, around 13 per cent of girls aged 15–17 are uncircumcised (STC 9/2017). In the 15–49

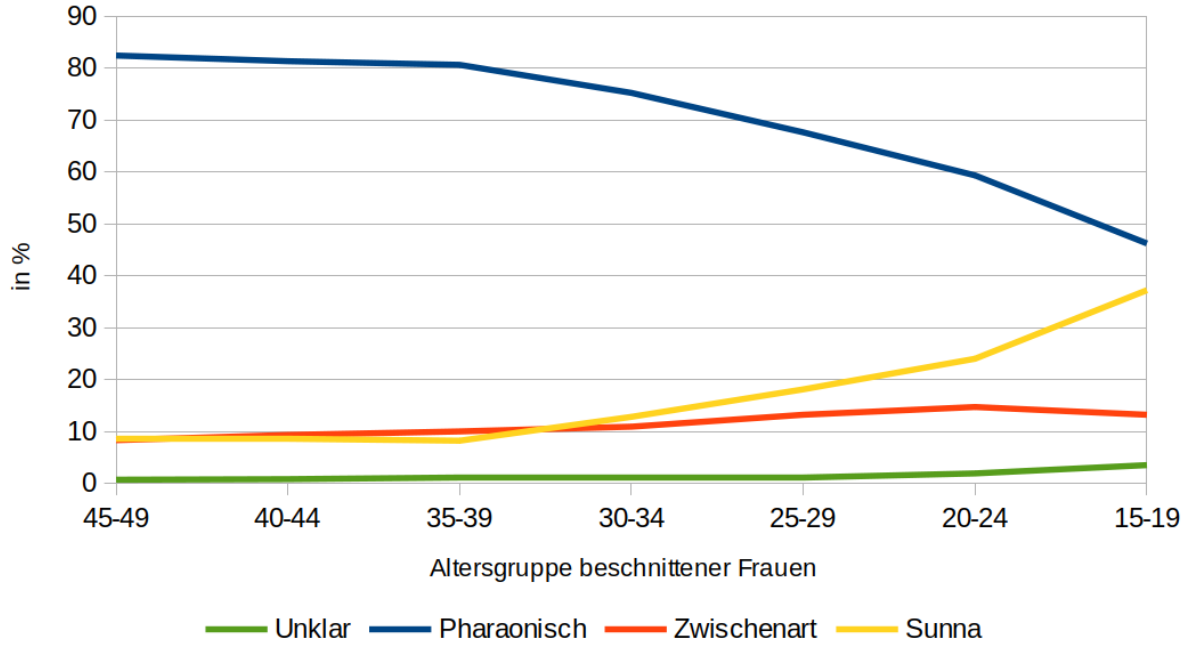
age group, however, the prevalence stands at 98 per cent, whilst that of infibulation is 77 per cent, as another study states (BMC/Yussuf/et al. 2020). According to another source, 88 per cent of girls aged 5–9 have already been circumcised or mutilated (CARE 4/2/2022). Overall, there is very little recent data on this subject. In general, a slight decline can be assumed (LIFOS 16/4/2019; cf. STC 9/2017).



Sources 26: (STC 9/2017)

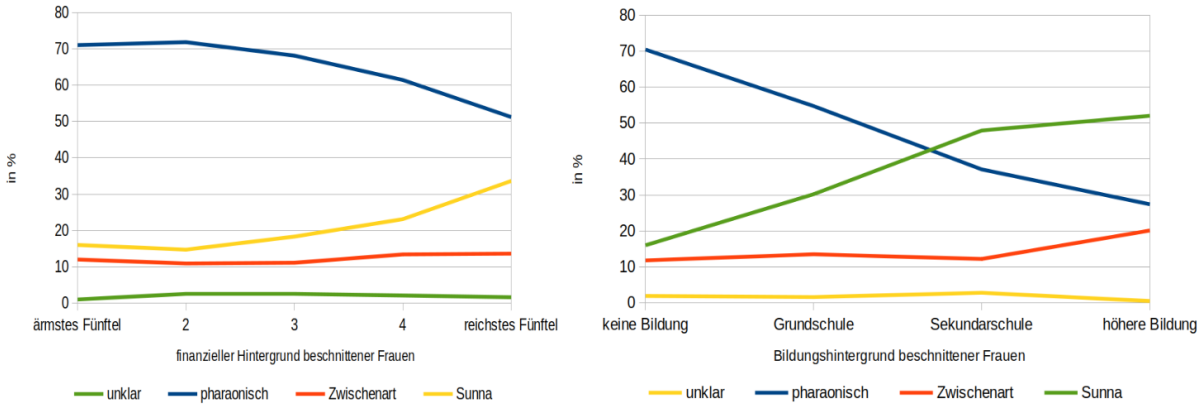
In general, FGM is widespread throughout Somalia. Unlike in other countries, there are no significant differences with regard to, for example, ethnicity, literacy, membership of a particular group or lifestyle (CEDOCA 20/2/2025). According to the anthropologist S.A. Koshin, people with disabilities are not subjected to FGM (DRC/S.A.Koshin 6/11/2020).

Trend away from infibulation and towards *sunna*[*see also sub-chapter*]: Infibulation has been largely curbed overall, as confirmed by numerous sources. The trend is clearly towards *sunna* (DIS 2/2021; cf. Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023; HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015; FGMCRI n.d; Landinfo 14/9/2022; LIFOS 16/4/2019; DIS 1/2016; FIS 5/10/2018; PC/Powell/Yussuf 1/2018; BMC/Yussuf/et al. 2020; CEDOCA 20/2/2025; UNFPA 4/2022):



Sources 27: DNS/Gov Som 2020

Both financial and educational background play a role in the decision regarding the type of procedure:



Sources 28: DNS/Gov Som 2020

In terms of geographical distribution in 2006, infibulation appears to have been least prevalent in southern/central Somalia, at 72 per cent; in Puntland, it was most prevalent, at 93 per cent (LIFOS 16/4/2019). For Somalia as a whole, one source puts the rate of infibulation at 64 per cent (DNS/Gov Som 2020). In urban areas, *sunna* is increasingly preferred, whilst infibulation predominates in rural areas (DRC/AQSOM 8 5/11/2020; cf. HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). Many people – particularly in urban areas – increasingly regard the more extreme forms of FGM as unacceptable, but continue to practise Type I (UNICEF 29/6/2021; cf. UNFPA 4/2022), which is socially accepted (Landinfo 14/9/2022). According to a source from 2015, young girls in

Mogadishu are no longer subjected to infibulation, but mainly to *sunna* (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015).

Religious considerations play a role here (DIS 2/2021; cf. MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). In a study conducted in Somaliland, religious leaders stated that all schools of Islamic law prohibit infibulation or 'Pharaonic circumcision'. In contrast, *sunna* is obligatory according to the *Shafi'i* school, which is the most widespread in Somalia, whilst the *Hanafi* school, for example, permits circumcision but does not require it (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). Another source also explains that some religious leaders advocate the *sunna*, and that this is now even regarded by many Somalis as a religious obligation (DIS 2/2021).

Society [*see also sub-chapter*]: The practice is a tradition deeply rooted in Somali culture. It is closely linked to moral concepts and ideals regarding the female body, as well as health-related beliefs (DIS 2/2021; cf. DRC/AQSOM 8 5/11/2020). The mutilation is intended to prepare the girl for adult life and marriage (DIS 2/2021). In a 2015 study, the majority of respondents opposed the continuation of infibulation, whilst there was little support for the complete abolition of FGM (CEDOCA 9/6/2016). Support for FGM/C has, in any case, declined (BMC/Yussuf/et al. 2020). For example, an NGO reports that, following awareness-raising campaigns in the Cadaado district (Mudug) in November 2020, only 28 out of 278 procedures were performed as infibulation; in December, the figure was 22 out of 222. By contrast, at the start of 2019, there were still over 200 infibulations per month. Here, too, the *sunna* has become the norm (RE 15/2/2021). When assessing this trend, however, it must be borne in mind that in some cases it can be assumed that the tissue is simply not sutured as far as it used to be; the remainder of the procedure, however,effectively corresponds to infibulation – and is nevertheless referred to as *'sunna'* by those affected (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015).

Who arranges or decides on circumcision: According to consistent reports from several sources, the decision as to whether circumcision should take place lies primarily or usually with the mother (CEDOCA 20/2/2025; cf. FIS 5/10/2018; Landinfo 14/9/2022; HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015; MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021; DRC/AQSOM 6 24/10/2020). The father, on the other hand, is rarely involved (Landinfo 14/9/2022; cf. HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015) or the decision is 'sometimes' made jointly (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). FGM is regarded as a 'women's issue', and consequently the mother takes centre stage here. However, the grandmother can also exert a considerable influence (CEDOCA 20/2/2025). Traditionally, mothers make the decision regarding FGM and fathers make the decision regarding the circumcision of their sons (CEDOCA 20/2/2025; cf. UNFPA 4/2022). According to one source, fathers have recently tended to be given a greater say. Overall, however, it is the mother who is responsible for her daughters' virginity, purity and suitability for marriage (UNFPA 4/2022; cf. CEDOCA 20/2/2025). Finally, the UNFPA (*United Nations Population Fund*) has stated to the Danish COI Unit that in Somali society, a decision can hardly ever be made against the father's will (DIS 2/2021).

In principle, it is less a question of 'whether' and more a question of 'how and when' (Landinfo 14/9/2022). It is not easy for a mother to say 'no' to female genital mutilation (FGM) (Landinfo 14/9/2022; cf. DRC/AQSOM 8 5/11/2020), as failing to do so affects not only the daughter's reputation

but also that of the family (CEDOCA 20/2/2025). Avoiding female genital mutilation depends on the mother's character and resolve (CEDOCA 20/2/2025; cf. DIS 1/2016). If the child's father also opposes female genital mutilation and remains steadfast, it is easier to withstand the psychological pressure from society and, where applicable, from the family (DIS 1/2016). Sometimes the father is bypassed by the mother when the decision is made (UNFPA 4/2022; cf. LIFOS 16/4/2019) or else a supposedly joint decision in favour of a milder form of *sunna* is subsequently 'corrected' by the mother – without the father's knowledge – to infibulation (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). According to other sources, it is up to the parents to decide which form of FGM is to be performed on their daughter (LIFOS 16/4/2019; cf. FIS 5/10/2018).

Sometimes grandmothers or other female relatives have a say in the matter. In rural areas, grandmothers are more likely to exert influence (LIFOS 16/4/2019; cf. FIS 5/10/2018). In such areas, it is sometimes also more difficult to question the practice of FGM (FIS 5/10/2018). According to other sources, grandmothers are often significantly involved in the decision (Landinfo 14/9/2022; cf. MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021; CEDOCA 20/2/2025; HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015) or exert significant influence (UNFPA 8/10/2023). According to yet other reports, a mother may seek advice from female relatives (UNFPA 4/2022). A study from Somaliland states that mothers play the key role, with grandmothers coming second. Sometimes girls themselves request circumcision (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021; cf. DRC/AQSOM 6 24/10/2020) in order to escape stigmatisation by friends, neighbours and acquaintances (DRC/S.A.Koshin 6/11/2020).

Sources from the Swedish COI unit Lifos cite the (theoretical) scenario in which a child living with their grandparents is subjected to FGM by their grandmother without the parents' consent (LIFOS 16/4/2019). Several sources from *the Danish Refugee Council* (DRC) assume that FGM can take place without parental consent; real-life examples are also cited (DRC 12/2020; cf. DRC/AQSOM 8 5/11/2020; DRC/Ifrah Ahmad 18/9/2020; DRC/S.A.Koshin 6/11/2020). The Danish COI Unit also reports that grandmothers, in particular, attempt to uphold the tradition. Consequently, circumcisions can take place without the parents' consent. The motivation here is love for, or concern for, the child, in order to spare her from her shameful situation – but, of course, also the reputation of the entire family (DIS 2/2021; cf. DRC/S.A.Koshin 6/11/2020).

Motivation: The main driving force behind girls continuing to undergo FGM/C is the pressure to conform to social expectations and norms (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021; cf. DRC/AQSOM 6 24/10/2020; HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). In a study conducted in Puntland in 2018, 55 per cent of the women surveyed stated that they had undergone FGM due to social pressure (DIS 2/2021). FGM is regarded as a tradition passed down from generation to generation. In Somali culture, the 'three female pains' are regarded as an integral part of womanhood: circumcision, the wedding night and childbirth (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). There is a widespread misconception that circumcision is mandatory in Islam (CEDOCA 20/2/2025; cf. MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). This is where the concept of purity comes into play; as uncircumcised women are regarded as impure, they are sometimes also considered too impure to pray (DIS 2/2021). At the same time, female circumcision is regarded as a prerequisite for marriage and starting a family (CEDOCA 20/2/2025).

Women fear social exclusion and discrimination – both for themselves and for their daughters. Female genital mutilation, on the other hand, brings social benefits and ensures the integration of the family and the girl into society (UNFPA 4/2022; cf. MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). For example, there are reports of adult women who have undergone infibulation because they felt compelled to do so by (social) pressure (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). There is a prevailing fear of stigmatisation, shame and discrimination (CEDOCA 20/2/2025; cf. MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). Occasionally, uncircumcised girls themselves exert pressure on their parents, due to social pressure, to ensure that the mutilation is carried out (UNFPA 4/2022; cf. MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021; HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015; LIFOS 16/4/2019; ACCORD 31/5/2021).

Circumcision is regarded as an honour for a girl, as an investment in her future. It ensures that the girl is accepted by society, is considered chaste and marriageable, and guarantees premarital virginity (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021; cf. LIFOS 16/4/2019; Landinfo 14/9/2022; CEDOCA 20/2/2025; cf. DIS 2/2021). Furthermore, infibulation is regarded as aesthetically pleasing (Landinfo 14/9/2022; cf. UNFPA 4/2022).

Procedure: The majority of circumcisions are carried out by traditional circumcisers (*guddo*) (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). However, girls are also increasingly being circumcised by medical professionals (UNFPA 4/2022; cf. MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021; FGMCRI n.d). In a study in Somaliland, only 5 per cent of mothers reported having been circumcised by a healthcare professional themselves; by contrast, the figure for their daughters was 33 per cent (Landinfo 14/9/2022). This 'medicalisation' of FGM/C is particularly evident in urban areas and amongst the diaspora (UNICEF 29/6/2021; cf. MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021) and primarily when the parents wish to have only a *'sunna'* performed (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). FGM/C is therefore increasingly taking place in medical settings – in hospitals, clinics or even during home visits. In Mogadishu, there are even street advertisements for '*FGM clinics*'. Overall, however, the practitioners are still often traditional birth attendants, midwives and circumcisers (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). A traditional circumciser usually charges 20 US dollars for a procedure; for families on low incomes, this price can be reduced to 5 US dollars (UNFPA 4/2022).

The procedure is carried out on individual girls or on groups of girls. In rural areas of Puntland and Somaliland, it is usually performed in groups. This is also the usual practice in Mogadishu. There is often a celebration for the girls afterwards (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). A Somaliland source also reports that circumcision is associated with a neighbourhood celebration (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). An anthropologist reports that sometimes all girls who have not yet been circumcised are gathered together and the circumcision often takes place in groups (DRC/S.A.Koshin 6/11/2020).

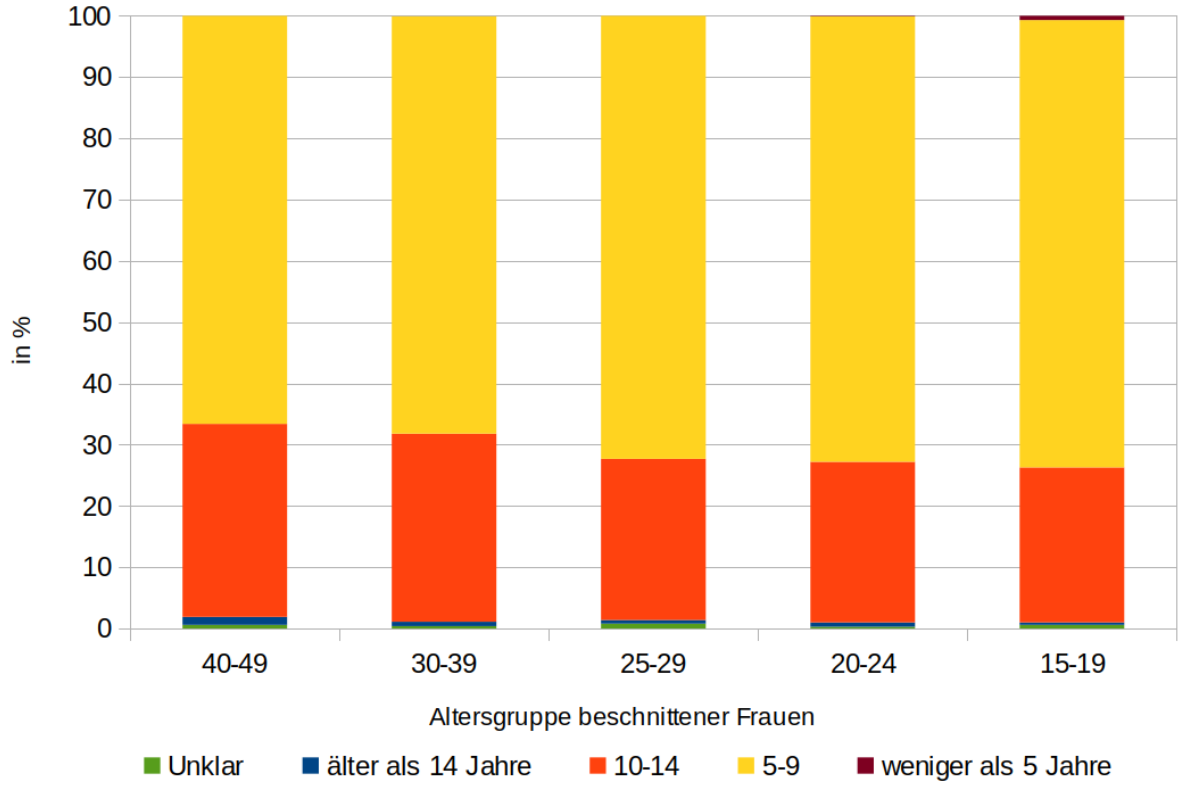
Age at the time of circumcision: There are varying accounts regarding this. Several sources cite an age of 5–10, 5–9 or 4–9 years (CEDOCA 20/2/2025; cf. LIFOS 16/4/2019; DIS 2/2021; UNFPA 8/10/2023). A major study from 2020 gives the following figures for Somalia: 71 per cent of women aged 15–49 were circumcised between the ages of 5 and 9, 28 per cent between the ages of 10 and 14, and less than 1 per cent each in the under-5 and over-15 age groups (DNS/Gov Som 2020). Three sources cite the 10–14 age group for Somalia as a whole (DIS 2/2021;

cf. STC 9/2017; FGMCRI n.d). Another source cites the age range 10–13 years (AA 9/3/2026), whilst a further source cites 0–15 years (UNHRC 22/1/2026). UNICEF is quoted as stating that better-educated and more affluent people are more likely to have their daughters circumcised earlier than was previously customary – namely between the ages of 5 and 8 (CEDOCA 20/2/2025). It is generally believed that a girl should be circumcised before her first period (DIS 2/2021).

According to one source, girls sent from the diaspora to Somalia for the purpose of FGM are usually older than is generally the case (Landinfo 14/9/2022), and are therefore sometimes even older than 14 years. Furthermore, families also have very young girls circumcised if they are about to migrate to Europe (DIS 2/2021).

In Puntland and Somaliland, according to a study from 2011, the procedure is usually carried out between the ages of 10 and 14 (LIFOS 16/4/2019). A study from 2022, however, states that in Puntland, girls must undergo the procedure by their 13th birthday if their mother wishes to avoid ridicule (UNFPA 4/2022). A 2020 study, however, cites the following figures for Somaliland: 57 per cent of girls were circumcised between the ages of 5 and 9, 41 per cent between 10 and 14, and 1 per cent even later (MoPNDSL 2021).

One source explains that the age at which FGM is performed is steadily falling (CARE 4/2/2022). This trend is also evident in the 2020 study [*see chart below*]. Among women aged 40–49, 67 per cent were circumcised between the ages of 5 and 9, whereas in the 15–19 age group the figure is 73 per cent (DNS/Gov Som 2020). In Somaliland, too, the age at which circumcision takes place has fallen to 5–8 years as part of the shift towards *sunna*, according to one source (PC/Powell/Yussuf 1/2018). However, the figures from a 2020 study do not reveal such a trend (MoPNDSL 2021).



Sources 29: DNS/Gov Som 2020

Among the Benadiri and Arab communities in Somalia, where *sunna* is generally practised, circumcision appears to take place at birth, possibly even as merely a symbolic cut (DIS 1/2016).

Abolition: The practice is declininginthe diaspora. The pressure diminishes with increasing distance from the homeland and family (Landinfo 14/9/2022). In some communities, for example in Borama, Garoowe or Mogadishu, where awareness-raising campaigns regarding FGM have taken place, households are collectively opposing any form of FGM (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). Of those not reached by awareness-raising campaigns, only a small minority comprising well-educated people and members of the diaspora have renounced all forms of FGM (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015; cf. Landinfo 14/9/2022). According to one activist, it is virtually impossible to avoid circumcision (DRC/U.A.Hashi 4/11/2020). One expert explains that whilst there is no coercion regarding FGM, there is a form of peer pressure (ACCORD 31/5/2021). Consequently, it can happen that girls living in the diaspora are flown 'home' or to certain European cities where FGM is carried out (GN 3/11/2022). On the other hand, the pressure is easing amongst the younger generation; some young people see no reason for the stigmatisation and discrimination against those who have not undergone FGM (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021).

According to several sources from the Danish COI Unit, a family must be resourceful and well-educated to withstand social pressure. Furthermore, the family's social network should share a similar attitude towards FGM. In any case, it requires the determination and steadfastness

of both parents to withstand the pressure. After all, marriage is a social obligation, and FGM a prerequisite for marriage. If the girl's eligibility for marriage is compromised, the reputation of the entire family suffers which consequently will exert pressure on the girl and her parents (DIS 2/2021). Refusing any form of FGM represents a radical decision in Somali culture, one that contravenes fundamental norms. For parents to be able to oppose the circumcision of their daughter of their own accord, they must possess knowledge and arguments against the practice, as well as sufficient resilience and resources (Landinfo 14/9/2022).

In any case, despite all the adversities, there are parents in both urban and rural areas who do not have their daughters mutilated (DIS 1/2016; cf. CEDOCA 20/2/2025), as well as women who openly admit to this. According to UNFPA figures, by 2025, following awareness-raising campaigns, more than 31,000 people had publicly declared that they no longer wished to practise the procedure (UNFPA 31/3/2026). One study participant reported that she had suffered greatly as a child due to her mutilation. For this reason, she did not have her daughters circumcised and is also urging other parents to take this step. A few participants in the study in question have openly stated that they do not wish to have their daughters circumcised (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021). Some mothers in communities where awareness-raising about the negative consequences of female genital mutilation has taken place openly admit that their daughters have not undergone the procedure (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). However, it should also be noted here that the English term 'FGM' is often directly associated with infibulation in Somali. Consequently, mothers whose daughters have undergone a *sunna* sometimes state that no FGM was performed (CEDOCA 20/2/2025).

One study shows that the prevalence in the 15–24 age group is approximately 98.7 per cent, and approximately 99.7 per cent amongst older women (DNS/Gov Som 2020). Two other sources state that only a very small number of women have not been circumcised (DRC/AQSOM 7 2/11/2020; cf. DRC/U.A.Hashi 4/11/2020). However, female circumcisers report a lower income because parents no longer use their services (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021).

Life without circumcision: According tosources from the Finnish FFM in 2018, it is no longer a problem to refuse circumcision, particularly in towns and cities. Consequently, the number of uncircumcised girls is rising there (FIS 5/10/2018). According to other reports, the acceptance of uncircumcised women – or those who have not undergone infibulation – depends largely on the family. Generally speaking, people in urban areas tend to be more open-minded towards them (LIFOS 16/4/2019). According to older data, only a few mothers 'admit' that they have not had their daughters circumcised; and these mainly come from communities that had previously undergone awareness-raising campaigns (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). According to a DRC source, such campaigns have also helped the younger generations to develop a greater awareness of the issue (DRC/AQSOM 8 5/11/2020).

The information circulating within the community that a woman has not been infibulated affects her reputation and, ultimately, her marriage prospects and those of other daughters in the family (LIFOS 16/4/2019; cf. Landinfo 14/9/2022). If a girl's uncircumcised status becomes known, this can lead to teasing and stigmatisation (LIFOS 16/4/2019). Culturally, the clitoris is

regarded as ‘dirty’ (Landinfo 14/9/2022; UNFPA 4/2022). Consequently, uncircumcised women are sometimes regarded as dirty or un-Somali, as abnormal and shameless (Landinfo 14/9/2022; cf. DIS 2/2021; DRC/AQSOM 8 5/11/2020; HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015; BBC/Bushra Mohamed 21/7/2024) or as un-Islamic. Among other things, they are teased and bullied at school, and they and their families are regarded as a disgrace to the community (UNFPA 4/2022; cf. DRC/AQSOM 6 24/10/2020; DRC/AQSOM 7 2/11/2020). A derogatory term used in this context is *‘buurya qab’* (UNFPA 4/2022), whilst another is derived from the word for clitoris (*‘kintir’*): *‘Kinitrey’* (Landinfo 14/9/2022). There is a prevailing belief that the genitals will continue to grow and eventually come to resemble those of a man (DRC/S.A.Koshin 6/11/2020). It is assumed that uncircumcised women are already very sexually active before marriage (DRC/AQSOM 6 24/10/2020), that they become uncontrollable and akin to prostitutes. Consequently, they are also deemed incapable of keeping themselves clean; indeed, there is a belief that their genitals are teeming with bacteria (DRC/S.A.Koshin 6/11/2020).

However, in a study conducted in Somaliland, only 14 out of 212 women stated that they knew of any (completely) uncircumcised women at all (Landinfo 14/9/2022). According to a recent study from Puntland, however, the *sunna* is accepted as an alternative to infibulation (UNFPA 4/2022).

Another option for a family that has decided against FGM is to try to keep this fact a secret (FIS 5/10/2018). This may require them to move house (DRC/AQSOM 7 2/11/2020). In larger towns and cities, it is also possible to conceal one’s uncircumcised status entirely. Anonymity is more likely to be maintained, whilst social interaction is reduced; this can sometimes be very difficult in villages (DIS 1/2016; cf. LIFOS 16/4/2019). No physical examinations are carried out to determine whether a girl has undergone female genital mutilation (DIS 1/2016; cf. ACCORD 31/5/2021). However, people do talk to one another; they might, for example, ask a girl where she had been circumcised (ACCORD 31/5/2021).

According to other sources, it is not uncommon for a community to know which girls have been circumcised and which have not. The reason for this is that girls of the same age from a neighbourhood or village are often circumcised at the same time (Landinfo 14/9/2022; cf. DIS 2/2021). At the same time, FGM is also a topic of discussion amongst the girls themselves. It is not only mothers who discuss amongst themselves whether their daughters have already been circumcised; girls also talk about it amongst themselves (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015).

A mother may conceal her daughter’s status by claiming that she has undergone a *‘sunna’* (DIS 1/2016). For example, in a study conducted in Somaliland, one mother reported that she had been pressured by her own daughters to have them circumcised. She took them to a medical facility where, amongst other things, a procedure was simulated using fake anaesthetics and artificial blood. Since then, the daughters have been regarded as having been circumcised (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021).

Returnees: Some Somalis believe that returnees from the West must undergo a kind of ‘cultural rehabilitation’ (*dhaqan ceelis*) because they have ‘lost’ their Somali culture. For women, this process may involve FGM. In any case, they are subjected to social pressure (DIS 2/2021).

According to two DRC sources, daughters of Somalis from the diaspora are at risk of FGM upon their return (DRC/AQSOM 8 5/11/2020; cf. DRC/Ifrah Ahmad 18/9/2020). An anthropologist also reports a case in which a mother-in-law had her granddaughter subjected to FGM without the mother's consent (DRC/S.A.Koshin 6/11/2020).

As many Somalis are aware that FGM is banned in Western countries, girls from the diaspora are not expected to have been circumcised. Upon their return, this issue may therefore be raised within the wider family. If it transpires that a girl who has returned has in fact not been circumcised, she is treated no differently than if she had spent her whole life in Somalia. This leads to condemnation, social pressure and stigmatisation (DIS 2/2021).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AV - Africa's Voices (2017): Beliefs and practices of Somali citizens related to child protection and gender, https://issuu.com/africasvoices/docs/gender_and_child_protection_report_, accessed 26/6/2024
- BBC/Bushra Mohamed - Bushra Mohamed (Author), British Broadcasting Corporation (Publisher) (21/7/2024): FGM survivors fight back: 'I wanted my clitoris back', https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cyx0perl8yno, accessed 2/1/2026
- BMC/Yussuf/et al. - BMC Health Services Research (Publisher), et al. (Author), Mohamed Yussuf (Author) (2020): Exploring the capacity of the Somaliland healthcare system to manage female genital mutilation / cutting-related complications and prevent the medicalization of the practice: a cross-sectional study, https://www.orchidproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/exploring-the-capacity-of-the-somaliland-healthcare-system-to-manage-female.pdf, accessed 25/6/2024
- CARE - CARE International (4/2/2022): Somalia - Betroffene von Genitalverstümmelung werden immer jünger, https://care.at/presse/somalia-betroffene-von-genitalverstummelung-werden-immer-junger/, accessed 25/6/2024
- CEDOCA - Center for Documentation and Research of the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons [Belgien] (20/2/2025): Somalië - Vrouwelijke genitale verminking (VGV) (Update), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2122508/coi_focus_somalie._vrouwelijke_genitale_verminking_vgv_20250220.pdf, accessed 25/9/2025
- CEDOCA - Center for Documentation and Research of the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons [Belgien] (9/6/2016): Somalië - Vrouwelijke genitale verminking (VGV) in Somaliland en Puntland; Dokument liegt bei der Staatendokumentation auf.
- DIS - Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (2/2021): Somalia: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2046605/COI_notat_somalia_FGM_feb.pdf, accessed 25/9/2025
- DIS - Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (1/2016): South Central Somalia - Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1061775/1226_1455786226_fgmnotat2016.pdf, accessed 25/6/2024
- DNS/Gov Som - Directorate of National Statistics [Somalia] (Author), Federal Government of Somalia [Somalia] (Publisher) (2020): The Somali Health and Demographic Survey 2020, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/FINAL SHDS Report 2020_V7_0.pdf, accessed 26/6/2024
- DRC - Danish Refugee Council (12/2020): Temarapport Somalia - Udbredelsen af Kvindelig Omskæring (FGM) i Somalia, https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/bwidks1y/drc-temarapport-somalia_fgm_dec2020.pdf, accessed 26/9/2025

- DRC/AQSOM 6 - Danish Refugee Council, Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 6 (24/10/2020): Interview with anonymous source i, - Organisation working with GBV victims in South-Central Somalia, https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/bwidks1y/drc-temarapport-somalia_fgm_dec2020.pdf, accessed 30/9/2025
- DRC/AQSOM 7 - Danish Refugee Council, Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 7 (2/11/2020): Interview with anonymous source ii - organisation working with GBV in South-Central Somalia, https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/bwidks1y/drc-temarapport-somalia_fgm_dec2020.pdf, accessed 30/9/2025
- DRC/AQSOM 8 - Danish Refugee Council, Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 8 (5/11/2020): Interview with anonymous source iii - Organisation working on health issues of women and children in Somaliland, https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/bwidks1y/drc-temarapport-somalia_fgm_dec2020.pdf, accessed 30/9/2025
- DRC/Ifrah Ahmad - Danish Refugee Council, Ifrah Ahmad (18/9/2020): Interview with Ifrah Ahmad, Founder and Programme Director of the Ifrah Foundation and Gender Advisor to the Government of Somalia, https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/bwidks1y/drc-temarapport-somalia_fgm_dec2020.pdf, accessed 30/9/2025
- DRC/S.A.Koshin - Danish Refugee Council, Sahra Ahmed Koshin (6/11/2020): Interview with anthropologist and ph.d. Sahra Ahmed Koshin, 06.11.2020, https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/bwidks1y/drc-temarapport-somalia_fgm_dec2020.pdf, accessed 30/9/2025
- DRC/U.A.Hashi - Danish Refugee Council, Ugbad Ahmed Hashi (4/11/2020): Interview with Ugbad Ahmed Hashi, senior staff and FGM expert at NAFIS Network (Network Against FGM in Somaliland) and lecturer at University of Hargeisa, https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/bwidks1y/drc-temarapport-somalia_fgm_dec2020.pdf, accessed 30/9/2025
- FGMCRI - FGM/C Research Initiative (n.d): Somalia, https://www.fgmcri.org/country/somalia/, accessed 26/6/2024
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (5/10/2018): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi, January 2018, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia_-Fact_Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi January 2018.pdf/2abe79e2-baf3-0a23-97d1-f6944b6d21a7/Somalia_Fact_Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi January 2018.pdf.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (3/11/2022): Somali refugees in Germany strive to leave old practices behind, https://goobjoog.com/english/somali-refugees-in-germany-strive-to-leave-old-practices-behind/, accessed 26/6/2024
- HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 - Health and Education Advice and Resource Team (Publisher), Sheena Crawford (Author), Sagal Ali (Author) (2015): Assignment Report. Situational analysis of FGM/C stakeholders and interventions in Somalia, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899140f0b64974000154/Situational-analysis-if-FGM-stakholders-and-interventions-somalia-UN.pdf, accessed 26/6/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (14/9/2022): Kjønnslemlestelse av kvinner [FGM], https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Somalia-temanotat-Kjonnslemlestelse-av-kvinner-03032021_oppdatert-16112021_13092022.pdf, accessed 25/6/2024
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (16/4/2019): Somalia - Kvinnlig könsstympning (version 1.0), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2007150/190416400.pdf, accessed 21/6/2024
- MoHDSL/UNFPA - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland], United Nations Population Fund (2021): Looking Beyond Numbers. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) Study Report, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/somaliland_fgm-c_report_final_signed_0.pdf, accessed 21/6/2024
- MoPNDSL - Ministry of Planning and National Development, Central Statistics Department [Somaliland] (2021): The Somaliland Health and Demographic Survey 2020, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/slhds2020_report_2020.pdf, accessed 25/6/2024
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Omer2/ALRC - Ahmed Omer 2, Africa Legal Risk Control Ltd (17/3/2023): Somali Family Law & Practice. An Expert Report (Bericht i.A. der österreichischen und deutschen Botschaften in Nairobi); per e-Mail
- PC/Powell/Yussuf - Richard A. Powell (Author), Mohamed Yussuf (Author), Population Council (Publisher) (1/2018): Changes in FGM/C in Somaliland: Medical narrative driving shift in types of cutting. Evidence to End FGM/C: Research to Help Women Thrive, https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1534&context=departments_sbsr-rh, accessed 2/1/2026

- RE - Radio Ergo (15/2/2021): Fewer Somali girls in Adado being subjected to full cut, https://radioergo.org/en/2021/02/15/fewer-somali-girls-in-adado-being-subjected-to-the-full-cut/, accessed 26/6/2024
- SRCS - Somali Red Crescent Society (2025): Annual Report 2024, https://data-api.ifrc.org/documents/SO/Annual Report_Somalia_2024.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- STC - Save the Children (9/2017): Changing Social Norms in Somalia: Exploring the Role of Community Perception in FGM/C, Fact Sheet No. 6, https://somalia.savethechildren.net/sites/somalia.savethechildren.net/files/library/FS06_FGM_SNaP.pdf, accessed 26/6/2024
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (31/3/2026): Somalia Annual Report, 2025, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2date26-date3/UNFPA Somalia Annual Report_2025 (1).pdf, accessed 11/5/2026
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (8/10/2023): Landmark innovation bootcamp empowers girls to fight FGM in Somalia, https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/news/landmark-innovation-bootcamp-empowers-girls-fight-fgm-somalia, accessed 14/3/2024
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (4/2022): Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM Puntland, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/community_knowledge_attitudes_and_practices_on_fgm_puntland.pdf, accessed 26/6/2024
- UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Council (22/1/2026): Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Somalia; Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [A/HRC/WG.6/52/SOM/3], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138749.html, accessed 27/4/2026
- UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (29/6/2021): Ending child marriage and female genital mutilation in Eastern and Southern Africa: Case studies of promising practices from across the region, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Ending-Child-Marriage-FGM-Case-Studies-ESA-2021 (1).pdf, accessed 26/6/2024
- UNN - UN News (4/2/2022): Daughters of Somalia, a continuous pledge to end female genital mutilation, https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1111242, accessed 26/6/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

18.2.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-09-14 17:06

Legal situation: The Transitional Constitution states that female circumcision is a cruel and degrading practice tantamount to torture and is therefore prohibited (HRW 29/3/2024; cf. USDOS 12/8/2025; AA 9/3/2026; MBZ 4/4/2025). However, there is no definition of 'circumcision', and it is unclear whether this refers to FGM (HRW 29/3/2024). Furthermore, no penalties are specified. Although the Criminal Code of 1964 provides for penalties for causing bodily harm to a person, but there are no known cases where FGM/C has led to criminal prosecution on these grounds – even where a girl has died as a result of the mutilation (LIFOS 13/5/2025).

In any case, there is no national legislation that expressly prohibits or criminalises FGM (CEDOCA 20/2/2025; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025; Landinfo 14/9/2022; TEA 17/12/2022; UNFPA 5/3/2021). There are two distinct agendas at play: one aims to eradicate all forms of FGM/C, whilst the other targets only the severe forms and advocates for the preservation of the *sunna* (PC/Powell/Yussuf 1/2018).

Legal situation – federal states: In Puntland, the so-called *FGM Zero Tolerance Bill* was signed by the President and passed by the Cabinet in June 2021 (UNFPA 6/10/2021; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). This law prohibits all forms of FGM. Not only those who perform the procedure, but also medical staff involved in FGM, parents and helpers are criminalised under the law (UNFPA 6/10/2021). As early as 2013, religious leaders and academics had issued a *fatwa* prohibiting all

forms of FGM (UNFPA 4/2022; cf. LIFOS 13/5/2025). There is no information as to whether this law is actually enforced in Puntland (MBZ 4/4/2025). According to one source, it has never been brought into force (LIFOS 13/5/2025). Galmudug passed anti-FGM legislation in March 2024. It remains to be seen whether this will lead to a change in practice (AA 9/3/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025; Halqabsi 24/3/2024). The same applies to Jubaland, where a law banning FGM came into force in March 2025 (AA 9/3/2026; cf. UNSC 30/9/2025).

Al-Shabaab had originally banned all forms of FGM. The ban now applies to infibulation, whilst *sunna* is accepted (LIFOS 13/5/2025). According to other sources, FGM is neither endorsed nor condemned by the Islamic scholars associated with the group. The practice is therefore regarded as a private rather than a religious matter (DIS 2/2021). Al-Shabaab does not enforce its own regulations in this regard (MBZ 4/4/2025); according to one source, up to 98per cent of women and girls have undergone FGM (LIFOS 13/5/2025).

Society: In a 2020 study, 76 % of respondents stated that circumcision should continue. However, this study did not ask about specific types. In urban areas, 70 per cent of women are in favour of continuing the practice, whilst among nomadic communities the figure is 83 per cent. Financial and educational status also play a role: Only 64 per cent of wealthier women stated that FGM should continue, compared with 81 per cent of the poorest; 44 per cent of those with the highest level of education, compared with 78 per cent of those with no education (DNS/Gov Som 2020).

Prevalence: In a comprehensive study conducted in 2020, 99 per cent of the Somali women surveyed stated that they had undergone some form of FGM/C. The rate is falling only slowly across the different age groups: amongst those aged 45–49, the rate of FGM is almost 99.8 per cent, whilst amongst those aged 15–19 it is 98.8 per cent (DNS/Gov Som 2020).

Types: Overall, 64 per cent of women have undergone infibulation, 12 per cent an intermediate form, and 22 per cent have undergone *sunna*. There are no significant differences in this regard based on place of residence (urban, rural, nomadic). *Sunna* is more common amongst younger women and girls. Amongst the 15–19-year-old group, the figure is 37 per cent, whereas amongst 45–49-year-old women it is only 9 per cent. In contrast, 82 per cent of the 45–49 age cohort underwent infibulation. Women with higher levels of education are more likely to have undergone *sunna* (52 per cent), whilst those with lower levels of education or no education at all are more likely to have undergone infibulation (70 per cent). A similar pattern applies to the wealthy (51 per cent infibulation) versus the poor (71 per cent) (DNS/Gov Som 2020).

Exceptions: According to the researcher Johansson, some minority groups in the coastal regions practise a less invasive form of circumcision. UNICEF has informed the Danish COI Unit that there are some communities in Lower Shabelle and Benadir which do not practise FGM, or practise it only in a minimally invasive manner (DIS 2/2021). Generally, infibulation is not carried out, for example, in some rural communities of the Rahanweyn and among some Bantu groups on the Ethiopian border, as well as in the urban communities of the Reer Xamar and Reer Baraawe. Although *sunna* is practised there, infibulation is not. In any case, such groups are the exception rather than the rule (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015).

Prevalence and types – Puntland: Figures for Puntland collected as early as 2011 showed a declining rate of FGM. In the 45–49 age group, 97.8 per cent of women had undergone some form of FGM in 2011; in the 15–19 age group, the figure was 97.3 per cent; and in the 10–14 age group, it was 82.3 per cent (CEDOCA 9/6/2016). The infibulation rate fell from 93.2 per cent in 2005 to 86.7 per cent in 2011 (CEDOCA 9/6/2016; cf. LIFOS 16/4/2019). In contrast, in a 2018 study conducted in Puntland, only 65 per cent of the women surveyed stated that they themselves had been circumcised; only a third stated that their own daughter had been circumcised (LIFOS 16/4/2019).

Education: International and local NGOs runawareness-raising programmes (UNFPA 4/2022). Campaigns funded by international organisations are combating FGM nationwide, and several ministries are also actively involved. UNFPA reports that 890 Somali communities ceased practising FGM between 2014 and 2017 (LIFOS 16/4/2019). The agency runs the *'Dear Daughter'* campaign, which raises awareness amongst parents – and particularly mothers – about the consequences of FGM. Whilst the subject was previously considered taboo, politicians and public figures now speak out publicly against FGM (TEA 17/12/2022). The Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) also carries out awareness-raising work (SRCS 2025).

State assistance: None of the sources interviewed by the Danish COI Unit or the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) were able to name any protection or support measures provided by NGOs or clans to which those at risk of FGM could turn (DIS 2/2021; cf. DRC/Ifrah Ahmad 18/9/2020). The Swedish COI Unit assumes that there is no state protection with regard to FGM (LIFOS 13/5/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- CEDOCA - Center for Documentation and Research of the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons [Belgien] (20/2/2025): Somalië - Vrouwelijke genitale verminking (VGV) (Update), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2122508/coi_focus_somalie._vrouwelijke_genitale_verminking_vgv_20250220.pdf, accessed 25/9/2025
- CEDOCA - Center for Documentation and Research of the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons [Belgien] (9/6/2016): Somalië - Vrouwelijke genitale verminking (VGV) in Somaliland en Puntland; Dokument liegt bei der Staatendokumentation auf.
- DIS - Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (2/2021): Somalia: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2046605/COI_notat_somalia_FGM_feb.pdf, accessed 25/9/2025
- DNS/Gov Som - Directorate of National Statistics [Somalia] (Author), Federal Government of Somalia [Somalia] (Publisher) (2020): The Somali Health and Demographic Survey 2020, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/FINAL SHDS Report 2020_V7_0.pdf, accessed 26/6/2024
- DRC/Ifrah Ahmad - Danish Refugee Council, Ifrah Ahmad (18/9/2020): Interview with Ifrah Ahmad, Founder and Programme Director of the Ifrah Foundation and Gender Advisor to the Government of Somalia, https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/bwidks1y/drc-temarapport-somalia_fgm_dec2020.pdf, accessed 30/9/2025
- Halqabsi - Halqabsi News (24/3/2024): UNSOM Welcomes Galmudug's Ban on FGM, https://halqabsi.com/2024/03/unsom-welcomes-galmudugs-ban-on-fgm, accessed 17/10/2024
- HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 - Health and Education Advice and Resource Team (Publisher), Sheena Crawford (Author), Sagal Ali (Author) (2015): Assignment Report. Situational analysis of FGM/C stakeholders and interventions in Somalia, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899

140f0b64974000154/Situational-analysis-if-FGM-stakholders-and-interventions-somalia-UN.pdf, accessed 26/6/2024
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (29/3/2024): Somalia: Constitutional Proposals Put Children at Risk, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2106432.html, accessed 19/4/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (14/9/2022): Kjønnslemlestelse av kvinner [FGM], https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Somalia-temanotat-Kjonnslemlestelse-av-kvinner-03032021_oppdatert-16112021_13092022.pdf, accessed 25/6/2024
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (13/5/2025): Landinformation: Somalia. Kvinnlig könsstympning (version 2.0), https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentAttachmentId=50839, accessed 2/1/2026
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (16/4/2019): Somalia - Kvinnlig könsstympning (version 1.0), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2007150/190416400.pdf, accessed 21/6/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- PC/Powell/Yussuf - Richard A. Powell (Author), Mohamed Yussuf (Author), Population Council (Publisher) (1/2018): Changes in FGM/C in Somaliland: Medical narrative driving shift in types of cutting. Evidence to End FGM/C: Research to Help Women Thrive, https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1534&context=departments_sbsr-rh, accessed 2/1/2026
- SRCS - Somali Red Crescent Society (2025): Annual Report 2024, https://data-api.ifrc.org/documents/SO/Annual Report_Somalia_2024.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- TEA - The East African (17/12/2022): Alarm as 20 Somali girls subjected to FGM in Somalia's Kismayu, https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/alarm-as-20-girls-undergo-fgm-in-somalia-4058338, accessed 25/6/2024
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (4/2022): Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on FGM Puntland, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/community_knowledge_attitudes_and_practices_on_fgm_puntland.pdf, accessed 26/6/2024
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (6/10/2021): A tribute to Puntland for bold actions to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/tribute-puntland-bold-actions-eliminate-female-genital-mutilation, accessed 25/6/2024
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (5/3/2021): Overview of Gender Based Violence in Somalia, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/somalia_gbv_advocacy_brief_05march21.pdf, accessed 25/6/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025

18.2.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-09-14 17:15

Legal situation: On 1 February 2022, the Somaliland Parliament passed a law to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect. This is the country's first children's act. It also closes the legal loophole regarding FGM/C (PLAN/Presseportal 3/2/2022). It was signed by the President in October 2022 and has come into force. However, according to one source, this law makes no mention of FGM (CRR/Jama 1/6/2024). Another source also states that there is no law in Somaliland that criminalises FGM (LIFOS 13/5/2025).

Since 2018, however, there has been a religious edict (*fatwa*) issued by the Somaliland Ministry of Religious Affairs, which has banned the two most severe of the three forms of FGM/C – specifically including infibulation (USDOS 22/4/2024; cf. AA 9/3/2026). *Sunna* is not covered by this ban (MoHDSL/UNFPA 2021; cf. FH 2024a). The *fatwa* awards compensation to victims of FGM/C (USDOS 22/4/2024). Overall, according to one source, the *fatwa* has not led to any

measurable change in practice (AA 9/3/2026). However, according to another source, it has resulted in the *sunna* being practised more frequently and infibulation less frequently (LIFOS 13/5/2025).

Society: Awareness-raising initiatives are taking place. For example, staff from the

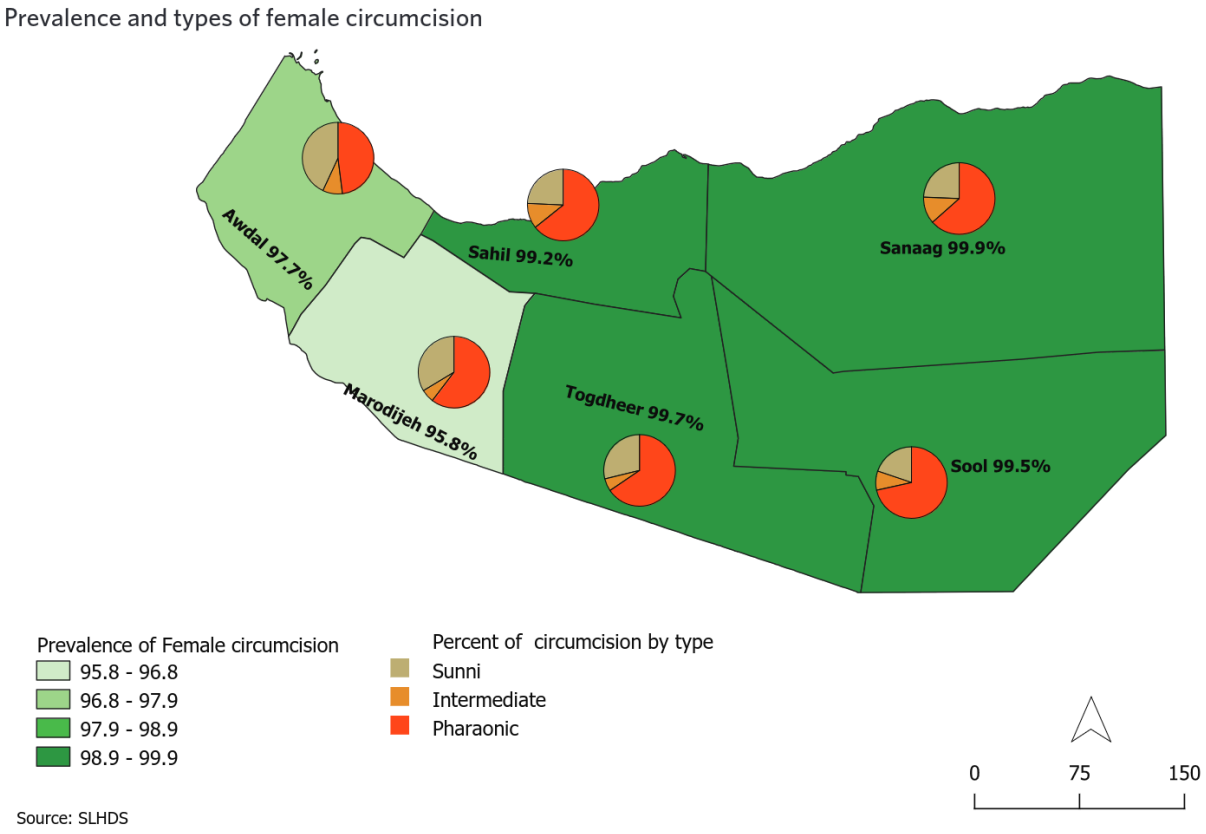
Somaliland Family Health Association travel from village to village to raise awareness amongst the population about the harms of FGM (USDOS 22/4/2024). In another example, CARE informs women and girls about their rights and trains them so that they can support one another and campaign against FGM/C (CARE 4/2/2022).

In a 2011 study, only 29 per cent of women surveyed in Somaliland stated that traditional infibulation should be retained; in 2006, the figure had been 65 per cent (BMC/Yussuf/et al. 2020). In a 2020 study, 53 per cent of respondents stated that female genital cutting should continue. However, this study did not ask about specific types (MoPNDSL 2021).

Prevalence: In a comprehensive study from 2020, 98 per cent of Somaliland women surveyed reported having undergone some form of FGM/C (MoPNDSL 2021). In 2011, this figure was 99 per cent of women (BMC/Yussuf/et al. 2020). At the same time, the rate is falling across the different age groups: amongst 45–49-year-olds, the rate of female genital mutilation is almost 100 per cent, whereas amongst 15–19-year-olds it stands at 96 per cent (MoPNDSL 2021).

Types: Awareness-raising measuresin Somaliland have led to a fundamental shift in the practice of FGM/C – namely, away from the drastic mutilation in the form of infibulation and towards a milder or less invasive form of circumcision – e.g. in the form of *sunna* (PC/Powell/Yussuf 1/2018; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). According to one source, this is regarded as a positive development; according to this source, *'sunna'* involves pricking or incising the clitoris (PC/Powell/Yussuf 1/2018). In 2020, 61 per cent of the women surveyed stated that they had undergone infibulation, 29 per cent *sunna* and 7 per cent an intermediate form (MoPNDSL 2021). In a study conducted in the early 1990s, only 5.5 per cent of the women surveyed reported having undergone *sunna* (PC/Powell/Yussuf 1/2018). A further comparison illustrates this rapid change even more clearly: in a 2016 study conducted in the Somaliland regions of Maroodi Jeex and Togdheer, only 34 per cent of girls aged 12–14 reported having undergone infibulation. Among those aged over 25, however, the figure was 96 per cent (PC/Powell/Yussuf 1/2018). On average across all age groups, however, infibulation remains the predominant form (USDOS 22/4/2024). Government figures also indicate that *sunna* is more widespread amongst younger women and girls. According to these figures, the rate is 55 per cent among 15–19-year-olds, compared with just 5 per cent among women aged 45–49. Conversely, 90 per cent of women in the 45–49 age cohort had undergone infibulation. In addition to age, living conditions also play a role: amongst nomads, 100 per cent of women are circumcised (69 per cent infibulation), whilst in towns the figure is 97 per cent (56 per cent infibulation) (MoPNDSL 2021); Women with higher levels of education (secondary education) were more likely to have undergone a *sunna*, whilst those with lower levels of education or no education at all were more likely to have undergone infibulation. A similar pattern applies to the rich versus the poor. With regard to the regions of Somaliland, FGM is most prevalent in Sanaag (100 per cent) and least

prevalent in the capital region (96 per cent). *Sunna*, in turn, is most prevalent in the Awdal region (42 per cent), whilst infibulation is most common in Sool (70 per cent) (MoPNDSL 2021).



Sources 30: MoPNDSL 2021

According to a source from the Swedish COI Unit, it is very uncommon in Somaliland for grandparents to decide on circumcision without consulting the parents. If this does happen, it is more likely to occur in rural areas. However, if the parents' opinions differ, female relatives may gain influence (LIFOS 13/5/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- BMC/Yussuf/et al. - BMC Health Services Research (Publisher), et al. (Author), Mohamed Yussuf (Author) (2020): Exploring the capacity of the Somaliland healthcare system to manage female genital mutilation / cutting-related complications and prevent the medicalization of the practice: a cross-sectional study, https://www.orchidproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/exploring-the-capacity-of-the-somaliland-healthcare-system-to-manage-female.pdf, accessed 25/6/2024
- CARE - CARE International (4/2/2022): Somalia - Betroffene von Genitalverstümmelung werden immer jünger, https://care.at/presse/somalia-betroffene-von-genitalverstummelung-werden-immer-junger/, accessed 25/6/2024
- CRR/Jama - Guleid Ahmed Jama (Author), Children's Rights Research (Publisher) (1/6/2024): Children's rights in Somaliland, https://www.childrensrightsresearch.com/stories/?view=article&id=54-alias-title, accessed 25/6/2024

- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (13/5/2025): Landinformation: Somalia. Kvinnlig könsstympning (version 2.0), https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentAttachmentId=50839, accessed 2/1/2026
- MoHDSL/UNFPA - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland], United Nations Population Fund (2021): Looking Beyond Numbers. Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) Study Report, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/somaliland_fgm-c_report_final_signed_0.pdf, accessed 21/6/2024
- MoPNDSL - Ministry of Planning and National Development, Central Statistics Department [Somaliland] (2021): The Somaliland Health and Demographic Survey 2020, https://somalia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/slhds2020_report_2020.pdf, accessed 25/6/2024
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- PC/Powell/Yussuf - Richard A. Powell (Author), Mohamed Yussuf (Author), Population Council (Publisher) (1/2018): Changes in FGM/C in Somaliland: Medical narrative driving shift in types of cutting. Evidence to End FGM/C: Research to Help Women Thrive, https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1534&context=departments_sbsr-rh, accessed 2/1/2026
- PLAN/Presseportal - PLAN International (Author), Presseportal.ch (Publisher) (3/2/2022): Meilenstein zur Beendigung weiblicher Genitalverstümmelung und Beschneidung, https://www.presseportal.ch/de/pm/100018128/100884761, accessed 25/6/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024

18.2.3 Reinfibulation, deinfibulation

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

The issue of reinfibulation (restoration of an infibulation, re-sewing) concerns those women and girls who have already undergone infibulation and were later deinfibulated. The latter may take place, for example, during childbirth, to facilitate sexual intercourse (LIFOS 16/4/2019; cf. Landinfo 14/9/2022) or, for instance, at the family's request if menstrual discomfort occurs (LIFOS 16/4/2019; cf. Landinfo 14/9/2022).

A 2015 study cites the following reasons why women opt for re-infibulation, meaning closure as extensive as possible: a) following childbirth: Some women request reinfibulation, for example, because they had become accustomed to their condition over the years and the open scar feels unfamiliar and uncomfortable; b) some divorced women wish to appear as virgins; c) parents of rape victims ask for it; d) in some Bantu communities in southern and central Somalia, women whose husbands are away from home for long periods wish to undergo reinfibulation as a sign of fidelity (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). There are anecdotal reports that a new procedure (reinfibulation) was carried out because the family wanted a more extensive mutilation than the original one (Landinfo 14/9/2022; cf. HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015).

However, reinfibulation occurs primarily when women – usually before their first marriage – wish to feign virginity (DIS 1/2016). Although, according to one source, there is no physical examination to verify virginity prior to marriage (LIFOS 16/4/2019), young girls who have, for example, been victims of rape may face pressure or coercion from their parents to undergo a reinfibulation (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015; cf. CEDOCA 20/2/2025). Victims of rape are often re-sewn

up (HO 27/2/2019; cf. Landinfo 14/9/2022). The researcher Johansen reports to the Belgian COI unit CEDOCA that her Somali interviewees spoke exclusively of reinfibulation following rape (CEDOCA 20/2/2025). There are anecdotal reports of cases in which unmarried girls or young women from the diaspora were sent to Somalia to carry out reinfibulation (Landinfo 14/9/2022). Socially, the issue of deinfibulation or reinfibulation following marriage generally loses significance, as the requirement for purity/virginity has become irrelevant (LIFOS 16/4/2019).

If a woman undergoes deinfibulation prior to childbirth, reinfibulation may take place after the birth. This decision is generally left to the woman concerned (LIFOS 16/4/2019). According to one source, reinfibulation in the context of childbirth is not a routine procedure. There is no evidence to suggest that reinfibulation takes place systematically following childbirth or divorce. According to the researcher Johansen, the wound is usually left to heal naturally after childbirth. Somalian migrant women interviewed in Norway have also stated that reinfibulation takes place as part of the natural healing process. In this sense, an intact infibulation is only relevant at the time of the first marriage (CEDOCA 20/2/2025). According to other sources, women do ask the midwife for a reinfibulation after giving birth. According to these sources, such a procedure is common after childbirth (DIS 2/2021; cf. HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). Some women undergo reinfibulation several times in their lives (HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 2015). According to other reports, such reinfibulation may occur in rural areas, but is rather uncommon in towns and cities (FIS 7/8/2020a). The prevalence also appears to vary geographically: in studies of Somali women in Kenya, 35 out of 57 women underwent reinfibulation. According to another study, 95 per cent of women in Puntland choose not to undergo reinfibulation after giving birth (CEDOCA 9/6/2016). According to Somali migrant women interviewed, however, reinfibulation is not a common practice in Somalia. Nor was any of the women interviewed pressured into undergoing such a procedure (CEDOCA 20/2/2025).

Overall, there are no studies on reinfibulation, and its prevalence is unknown. A researcher who has been studying FGM in Somalia for years sees no basis for the claim that reinfibulation is systematically carried out following childbirth or divorce – neither in the past nor at present. In the Somali context, therefore, infibulation is carried out to ‘prove’ virginity before marriage. Consequently, it makes no sense to reinfibulate a married woman after childbirth (Landinfo 14/9/2022; cf. CEDOCA 20/2/2025).

Admittedly, it may happen that a woman – if, for example, she is physically unable to make a decision – is subjected to reinfibulation against her will; in such cases, the decision is made by female relatives or the midwife. Nor can it be entirely ruled out that women may be pressured into undergoing reinfibulation by their family, friends or husband. Overall, whilst the risk of reinfibulation depends on the woman’s living environment and physical condition after giving birth, the decision generally rests with her. She may choose not to undergo reinfibulation after giving birth. None of the numerous sources consulted on this matter by the Swedish COI unit LIFOS has ever heard of a deinfibulated returnee to Somalia being forcibly reinfibulated there, although pressure may be exerted on her to undergo such a procedure (LIFOS 13/5/2025).

Sources

- CEDOCA - Center for Documentation and Research of the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons [Belgien] (20/2/2025): Somalië - Vrouwelijke genitale verminking (VGV) (Update), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2122508/coi_focus_somalie._vrouwelijke_genitale_verminking_vgv_20250220.pdf, accessed 25/9/2025
- CEDOCA - Center for Documentation and Research of the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons [Belgien] (9/6/2016): Somalië - Vrouwelijke genitale verminking (VGV) in Somaliland en Puntland; Dokument liegt bei der Staatendokumentation auf.
- DIS - Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (2/2021): Somalia: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2046605/COI_notat_somalia_FGM_feb.pdf, accessed 25/9/2025
- DIS - Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (1/2016): South Central Somalia - Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1061775/1226_1455786226_fgmnotat2016.pdf, accessed 25/6/2024
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020a): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf/2f51bf86-ac96-f34e-fd02-667c6ae973a0/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf?t=1602225617645, accessed 12/10/2023
- HEART/Crawford/Ali 2 - Health and Education Advice and Resource Team (Publisher), Sheena Crawford (Author), Sagal Ali (Author) (2015): Assignment Report. Situational analysis of FGM/C stakeholders and interventions in Somalia, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a0899140f0b64974000154/Situational-analysis-if-FGM-stakholders-and-interventions-somalia-UN.pdf, accessed 26/6/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (27/2/2019): Somali refugee's fight against 'silent killer' of FGM inspires film, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2019/feb/162482/somali_refugee_s_fight_against_silent_killer_of_fgm_inspires_film.aspx, accessed 28/6/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (14/9/2022): Kjønnslemlestelse av kvinner [FGM], https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Somalia-temanotat-Kjonnslemlestelse-av-kvinner-03032021_oppdatert-16112021_13092022.pdf, accessed 25/6/2024
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (13/5/2025): Landinformation: Somalia. Kvinnlig könsstympning (version 2.0), https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentAttachmentId=50839, accessed 2/1/2026
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (16/4/2019): Somalia - Kvinnlig könsstympning (version 1.0), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2007150/190416400.pdf, accessed 21/6/2024

18.3 Children

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

[*Note: Regarding child soldiers, see*Military service and recruitment / Al-Shabaab – (forced) recruitment and child soldiers]

The government rarely enforces children's rights (Sahan/SWT 22/7/2022). The following figures were cited for December 2025: acute malnutrition affecting 1.7 million children under the age of five, of whom 470,000 are severely malnourished (UNSC 30/9/2025). Somalia has the highest child mortality rate in the world. On a national average, 137 out of every 1,000children die before their fifth birthday. The rate is highest in Southern/Central Somalia (ACAPS 10/11/2025); in Somaliland, the figure is 91 (MoHDSL 2022).

Violence: Somalia remains one of the countries in which the United Nations has recorded the highest number of serious violations of children's rights (HRW 4/2/2026). All parties to the conflict are responsible for abuse and human rights violations against children (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Between March and September 2025, 1,394 cases of serious human rights violations against

children were documented, affecting 1,096 children. Of these offences, 522 involved abductions, 482 involved the recruitment and use of child soldiers, 248 involved killings and maimings, and 119 involved rape and other forms of sexual violence. Al-Shabaab was responsible for 77 per cent of the offences, with clan militias and unknown perpetrators each accounting for 9 per cent (UNSC 30/9/2025). Children alleged to have links to al-Shabaab are repeatedly arrested and detained (HRW 11/1/2024). Upon arrest and whilst serving prison sentences, children are sometimes treated like adults (HRW 29/3/2024). Overall, it can be assumed that the actual number of serious crimes against children is far higher than the number of reported and verified cases (SPC 9/2/2022).

Children who are sent from poor (mostly rural) areas to better-off relatives in the cities can sometimes also fall victim to human trafficking (Sahan/SWT 22/7/2022). There are known cases where young people – including minors – are placed in a kind of 'protective custody' by state authorities at the request of their parents or other family members, in order to deter them from the dangerous attempt to migrate to the Arabian Peninsula or to Europe (AA 9/3/2026). Furthermore, parents from the diaspora send young people to so-called reform schools in Somalia if they believe their children are becoming increasingly 'westernised'. As these institutions are very expensive, some young people are also sent to live with relatives in Somalia (MBZ 4/4/2025). Corporal punishment is widely accepted and is not prohibited at home, at school, in nursery schools or in prisons (OHCHR 9/11/2022).

Legal age of majority / marriage age: Generally speaking, the terms 'adult' and 'child' are controversial in Somalia and are not, in fact, explicitly defined by law (SPA 1/2021). The Transitional Constitution defines children as persons under the age of 18 (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). However, this has little practical effect; Sharia and *xeer* [*Note: traditional law*] are based on physical development (MBZ 4/4/2025).

Rechtsquelle	Mindestalter
Scharia	Kein Mindestalter für (Ehe) Physische und geistige Reife (Ehe) Zustimmung beider Ehepartner (Ehe)
Xeer	Kein Mindestalter (Ehe) Zusammenleben erst bei Geschlechtsreife erlaubt (Ehe)
Übergangsverfassung	Anerkennung der Scharia als oberste Rechtsquelle Volljährigkeit mit 18 (generell) Aber Ehe bei „age of maturity“ möglich (Ehe) Zustimmung beider Ehepartner (Ehe) 18 (Wahl) 18 (Rekrutierung in die Bundesarmee)
Ratifizierte Kinderrechtskonvention	18 (Ehe) Übergangsverfassung bekennt sich zur Einhaltung ratifizierter Konventionen
Familiengesetz 1975	18 (Ehe)
Strafgesetz 1963	14-17 (Strafmündigkeit bei Sexualvergehen)
Jugendstrafgesetz	15 (Strafmündigkeit)

Sources 31: Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023

According to other sources, Somali civil law (family law) stipulates a minimum age of 15 for marriage (ICG 27/6/2019a). However, this law is not applied and can be regarded as having been repealed (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). Sharia law, which does not stipulate a minimum age, has largely replaced the Family Law (Sahan/SWT 19/9/2022). Furthermore, Sharia and *xeer* do not apply a quantitative criterion, but rather a qualitative one – namely, the mental and physical maturity of both spouses. As there is no accepted statutory minimum age for marriage, the decision as to when a person is considered to have reached the age of majority is a highly subjective matter, left entirely to the discretion of the *imam* involved (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). However, following an amendment to the Transitional Constitution in March 2024, two ages have now been established: a) theageof maturity is 15 years; b) the age of (criminal) responsibility is 18 years. This contravenes international standards – which Somalia has also ratified (HRW 29/3/2024).

Child marriage: Somalia has the tenth-highest rate of child marriage worldwide (WHO 4/3/2026); child marriage is widespread (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. UNHRCOM 6/5/2024; FH 2024b; MBZ 4/4/2025), and neither the central government nor the regional governments are taking any measures to combat it (USDOS 12/8/2025). It is reported that 17 per cent of girls are married before their 15th birthday and 36 per cent before their 18th (HRW 29/3/2024). According to other figures, the figures are 8 per cent before their 15th birthday and 45 per cent before their 18th birthday (GNB 2025; cf. SIHA 8/2024; WHO 4/3/2026). Girls are often marriedbetween the ages often and 16, with the marriage having been arranged by their parents at a very early stage.

The actual wedding takes place when the girl reaches puberty (FIS 5/10/2018). According to other sources, girls may be married upon reaching puberty; in rural areas, this can occur as early as the age of eleven or twelve (MBZ 4/4/2025). Occasionally, after the marriage has taken place, a wife continues to live with her own family for some time – up to over a year – and this too can be contractually agreed between the families. Once a marriage has taken place, the offence of sexual intercourse with a minor can no longer be prosecuted (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). According to other sources, there is no statutory minimum age for sexual intercourse in the first place (USDOS 22/4/2024).

There may be various reasons for child marriage. On the one hand, *ceeb* – the fear of shame and disgrace – plays an important role. The earlier a girl is married, the sooner her virginity, and thus her 'purity' and the family's honour, are protected. On the other hand, there are also 'practical' reasons for marrying off a girl, including, for example, an exchange for *godob reeb* (grazing rights) or the payment of *diya* (blood money). In any case, poverty is also a significant factor (Sahan/SWT 28/5/2025). Marriages are therefore viewed by parents, amongst other things, as a form of protection and for economic reasons. Sometimes girls are encouraged to marry older, wealthy men (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). In a 2017 survey, approximately 60per cent of respondents stated that marriage for girls under the age of18 is not a problem (AV 2017, p.36). According to one source, however, there is a slow shift in society's attitude towards child marriage towards a marriage age of 18 (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). Another source explains that early marriages occur mainly in rural areas, but not in the major cities (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Child labour: Child labour remains widespread (AA 9/3/2026; cf. SFH 1/2026). There are significant gaps in the laws and regulations governing child labour. Children work, for example, in agriculture as herders, in construction (such as crushing stones), in domestic service or on the streets, as porters or *khat sellers*. Furthermore, children are recruited by state and non-state actors (USDOL 9/2025). Children are used as unpaid labour by their families and communities. Despite various initiatives, little progress has been made in Somalia towards eliminating child labour (Sahan/SWT 28/7/2023), as child labour is not regarded as immoral or illegal and is therefore relatively commonplace (Sahan/SWT 22/7/2022). In rural Somalia, children are primarily employed for farm work or as assistants to nomads, whilst in urban centres they are used for simple errands and chores (AA 9/3/2026). In a survey conducted in Hargeysa, Mogadishu and Kismayo on behalf of Staatendokumentation (267 respondents), 8 per cent of parents stated that their own children contributed significantly to the household income. For 13 per cent, the children contributed to some extent to the income, whilst for 79 per cent they did not contribute at all (STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Children: School attendance and contribution to household income]).

Adoption: The conflict has left many children orphaned. Furthermore, many children have been separated from their biological parents (UNHCR 22/12/2021a). Nevertheless, there is neither an official, state-regulated adoption system nor a state adoption law (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023; UNHCR 22/12/2021a). Nor does Sharia law provide for full adoption; instead, it favours a system of guardianship (*kafala*). Under this system, the guardian

assumes all the duties of a parent, but without severing the child's legal ties to their biological family (UNHCR 22/12/2021a). Accordingly, adoption in Somalia is much more akin to foster care or guardianship. In Somali culture, this is a relatively informal process and is generally based on a relatively close family relationship. Only rarely does foster care take place outside the extended family at the sub-clan level (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). Many children and orphans are brought up within the extended family. There is no legal agreement; the placement happens in a relatively informal manner (UNHCR 22/12/2021a; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The biological parents retain their legal rights as long as the child is a minor. In practice, however, it is not unusual for these temporary foster care arrangements to continue in the long term and become permanent following the parents' death. Under Sharia law, however, the new parents always remain foster parents and are simultaneously bound by the obligations (*waqaaf*) laid down therein. In *xeer*, too, full adoption based on the Western model is not possible; only foster care exists. This has significant legal and practical consequences for the adopted child. The child retains their birth identity, in particular the name of their biological father (provided itis known or obvious). Furthermore, under Sharia law, foster children are disadvantaged in matters of inheritance (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023).

Official documents are usually unavailable or would not stand up to document verification (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The Ministry of the Interior may examine applications for guardianship on a case-by-case basis; this involves basic identity, security and protection checks, but takes place without a clear legal or administrative basis. There are no formal requirements regarding the registration of an adoption or guardianship, neither under Sharia law nor under *xeer*, nor in civil or administrative proceedings. Such a process is merely noted. Somalia is not a party to the Hague Convention on Adoption (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). Consequently, no official document is required in Somalia itself regarding guardianship; however, a *'declaration of responsibility'* may be issued for specific purposes (SOMEN/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). [*See also:*Documents / Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland]

In the case of children in orphanages – such as those run by SOS Children's Villages – for whom there are no records of either parent, the state effectively acts as a 'collective parent'. The state assumes full decision-making authority over the child's legal interests until they reach the age of majority (18 years) (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). There are several orphanages in Mogadishu (FIS 7/8/2020a; cf. FTL 6/5/2025). However, this system does not function adequately, which is why there are also many street children in the city (FIS 7/8/2020a). In Somaliland, it is possible for a court to grant an (orphaned) child a new identity so that they can obtain documents and attend school (UNHCR 22/12/2021a).

The Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) assists with tracing missing relatives nationwide and, as part of this, also offers free telephone services for contacting relatives. In 2024, the SRCS traced 138 people who had gone missing from their families (SRCS 2025). According to the Somaliland police, there has been a recent increase in cases of children being abandoned (Halqabsi 23/10/2024). In Mogadishu, a total of 84 children who had been left behind were registered in 2024 (Mog24 19/5/2025).

Education: The formal education system collapsed in 1991 (BS 2026). Today, the sector is a patchwork of schools run by al-Shabaab, madrasas funded by the Gulf states and a number of institutions with only weak state oversight, most of which are under the authority of the state governments rather than the Federal Ministry of Education (Sahan/SWT 24/11/2025).There is a shortage of teachers and teacher training (BS 2026).

In many areas, children have no access to schools – whether due to poverty, insecurity, long journeys to school or household chores (USDOS 22/4/2024). UNESCO estimates that only 15% of Somali primary school pupils attend state-funded schools (Sahan/SWT 25/8/2023); according to other figures, the figure is just1% (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). As the education sector is dominated by private schools, many families cannot afford to send their children to school (Sahan/SWT 17/4/2023). Koranic schools, on the other hand, are found throughout the country (BS 2026).

There are varying figures regarding school attendance. According to one source, only around 26 per cent of children of primary school age actually attend school (Kenya: 95 per cent; Ethiopia: 71 per cent) (UNESCO 2024; cf. Sahan/SWT 24/11/2025). According to other figures,the enrolment rate stands at30 per cent for primary school and 26 per cent for secondary school (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).According to yet other figures, around 39per cent of children in Somalia attendprimary school (BS 2026; cf. USDOL 26/9/2023), whilst in Somaliland the figure is 44.2per cent (USDOL 26/9/2023); according to further data, the overall figure is not even 35 per cent. According to one source, 3.3 million children do not attend school (SFH 1/2026). In a survey commissioned by Staatendokumentation (267 respondents), 10 per cent of parents stated that all their children attended school. For 40 per cent, some of their children attended, whilst for 50 per cent, none did. There were hardly any differences between the cities surveyed: Mogadishu 12–40–48; Hargeysa 11–33–56; Kismayo 7–46–47 (STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Children: School attendance and contribution to household income]).

The adult literacy rate is one of the lowest in the world, standing at 40 per cent (BS 2026); according to other figures, it is 54 per cent among the population aged 15 and over (UNESCO 2024). Overall, only 5 per cent of the population have completed secondary education (BS 2026). Furthermore, literacy also depends on an individual's financial situation; those living in poverty cannot afford an education (BS 2026). However, there also appears to be free education available – for example, in 50 state schools in the Galmudug region (RE 20/3/2025).

In 2023, the state budget allocated to education was quadrupled to 34 million US dollars (Sahan/SWT 17/4/2023). There are also NGOs – such as Gargaar in Dhusamareb (Galmudug) – which support children and young people in various ways (including financially) to help them complete their education (UNSOM 17/12/2022). In Kismayo, there is an EU-funded school for returnees, located in an IDP camp. It is attended by 1,400 children, most of whom are voluntary returnees from Dadaab in Kenya. Overall, the EU is running a programme that supports 48,000 pupils through the construction of schools, the recruitment of teachers and the procurement of teaching materials (EEAS 21/6/2023). Programmes jointly funded by the UK and the US have enabled 100,000 children and young people to receive accelerated basic education. In addition, 90,000

adolescent girls and young women have been able to acquire basic skills in reading, writing, numeracy, financial literacy and leadership (GN 16/7/2024).

In Somaliland, there have been improvements in the field of education and training. Many institutions are run in partnership by state bodies, local communities and external donors – including the diaspora. The private education sector is flourishing, with numerous universities and colleges offering courses (BS 2026). In 2023, Somaliland allocated around 8.4 per cent of its national budget to education – equivalent to approximately 24.9 million US dollars (MoFDSL n.da).

Al-Shabaab has established its own schools, in which its Salafist version of Islam is taught. Other schools are permitted to operate, subject to high fees (Sahan/SWT 28/7/2023). Schools in the areas under its control have had its interpretation of Islam imposed upon them. On occasion, teachers who failed to comply with these demands have been threatened or executed. The Salafist curricula prioritise Arabic over Somali. Furthermore, certain subjects are sometimes banned, such as English, geography and history. Girls and boys are taught separately, and there are dress codes for female pupils (Sahan/SWT 28/7/2023; cf. Sahan/SWT 17/4/2023).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACAPS - Assessment Capacities Project, The (10/11/2025): Somalia - Anticipated effects of drought on malnutrition drivers, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2132623.html, accessed 5/1/2026
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AV - Africa's Voices (2017): Beliefs and practices of Somali citizens related to child protection and gender, https://issuu.com/africasvoices/docs/gender_and_child_protection_report_, accessed 26/6/2024
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- EEAS - European Union / European External Action Service (21/6/2023): Returning refugees and internally displaced children receive a free education in Somalia in EU-funded schools, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/somalia/returning-refugees-and-internally-displaced-children-receive-free-education_en, accessed 17/1/2024
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020a): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf/2f51bf86-ac96-f34e-fd02-667c6ae973a0/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf?t=1602225617645, accessed 12/10/2023
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (5/10/2018): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi, January 2018, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia_-Fact_Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi January 2018.pdf/2abe79e2-baf3-0a23-97d1-f6944b6d21a7/Somalia_Fact_Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi January 2018.pdf.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (6/5/2025): Somali-Turkish Task Force Provides Humanitarian Aid to Orphanages in Mogadishu, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/somali-turkish-task-force-provides-humanitarian-aid-to-orphanages-in-mogadishu, accessed 5/1/2026
- GN - Goobjoog News (16/7/2024): Over 11,000 Girls and Young Women Graduate From US, UK Funded Literacy Programme in Somalia, https://en.goobjoog.com/over-11000-girls-and-young-women-graduate-from-us-uk-funded-literacy-programme-in-somalia, accessed 5/1/2026

- GNB - Girls Not Brides (2025): Somalia, https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/learning-resources/child-marriage-atlas/regions-and-countries/somalia/, accessed 2/12/2025
- Halqabsi - Halqabsi News (23/10/2024): Somaliland Police Report Highlights Surge in Serious Crime, https://halqabsi.com/2024/10/somaliland-police-report-highlights, accessed 24/6/2025
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (29/3/2024): Somalia: Constitutional Proposals Put Children at Risk, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2106432.html, accessed 19/4/2024
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (11/1/2024): World Report 2024 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2103135.html, accessed 15/1/2024
- ICG - International Crisis Group (27/6/2019a): Women and Al-Shabaab's Insurgency, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2011897/b145-women-and-al-shabaab_0.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- MoFDSL - Ministry of Finance Development [Somaliland] (n.da): Central Government Budget FY 2023, https://cdn.sanity.io/files/e0lpub15/production/6e9f92baedf12e6b528cb9f7a3a0248db4817540.pdf?dl=, accessed 16/10/2024
- Mog24 - Mogadischu24.com (19/5/2025): Registration of 84 abandoned children found on the streets of Mogadishu, https://mogadishu24.com/registration-of-84-abandoned-children-found-on-the-streets-of-mogadishu/, accessed 5/1/2026
- MoHDSL - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (2022): National Health Policy III 2022, https://somalilandmohd.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Somaliland_New_HP_Final-1.pdf, accessed 2/7/2024
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (9/11/2022): Experts of the Committee against Torture Commend Somalia on Progress in Rebuilding State and Government Institutions, Raise Questions on the Definition of Torture and the Death Penalty, https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/experts-committee-against-torture-commend-somalia-progress-rebuilding-state, accessed 3/6/2025
- Omer2/ALRC - Ahmed Omer 2, Africa Legal Risk Control Ltd (17/3/2023): Somali Family Law & Practice. An Expert Report (Bericht i.A. der österreichischen und deutschen Botschaften in Nairobi); per e-Mail
- RE - Radio Ergo (20/3/2025): New teaching jobs in Galmudug revive education and provide salaries for unemployed teachers, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/03/new-teaching-jobs-in-galmudug-revive-education-and-provide-salaries-for-unemployed-teachers, accessed 5/1/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (24/11/2025): Echoes of 1990 in Mogadishu Stadium, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 900, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (28/5/2025): Stolen Childhoods: Somalia's Enduring Crisis of Child Marriage, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 828, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (25/8/2023): Confronting Al-Shabaab's Patronage System, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 583, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (28/7/2023): A Stranglehold On Education, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 571, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (17/4/2023): Rebuilding Somalia's Education System, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 531, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (19/9/2022): Worsening drought in Somalia leads to rise in child marriages, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 453, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (22/7/2022): Mo Farah, global migration, and the perils of child trafficking, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 429, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SFH - Swiss Refugee Council (1/2026): Factsheet Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2137060/260119_SOM_factsheet_web_DE.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026

- SIHA - Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (8/2024): Briefing Paper, Addressing Sexual Offenses in Somalia and Somaliland - Legal Challenges and Legislative Responses, https://issuu.com/halayassin/docs/sob_briefing_paper_-_somali_region, accessed 25/9/2025
- SOMEN/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Somali Embassy Nairobi [Somalia] (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SPA - Somali Public Agenda (1/2021): A comparative review of Somalia's controversial Sexual Offences Bills, https://somalipublicagenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SPA_Governance_Briefs_11_2021_ENGLISH.pdf, accessed 21/6/2024
- SPC - Somalia Protection Cluster (9/2/2022): Protection Analysis Update, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOM_PAU_Somalia-Protection-Analysis_Feb2022.pdf, accessed 15/11/2023
- SRCS - Somali Red Crescent Society (2025): Annual Report 2024, https://data-api.ifrc.org/documents/SO/Annual Report_Somalia_2024.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (19/6/2026): Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - 1, https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at/at.gv.bfa.coicms-p/services/collection/237-1.pdf, accessed 19/6/2026 [Login required]
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2024): World Education Statistics 2024, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000391221, accessed 10/12/2025
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (22/12/2021a): Citizenship and Statelessness in the Horn of Africa, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2065866/61c97bea4.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- UNHRCOM - United Nations Human Rights Committee (6/5/2024): Concluding observations on the initial report of Somalia [CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2108970/G2405613.pdf, accessed 24/5/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025
- UNSOM - United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (17/12/2022): Ahmed Abdullahi Ahmed: Creating educational opportunities for disadvantaged communities, https://unsom.unmissions.org/ahmed-abdullahi-ahmed-creating-educational-opportunities-disadvantaged-communities, accessed 28/6/2024
- USDOL - United States Department of Labor [USA] (9/2025): 2024 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2131787/Somalia.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- USDOL - United States Department of Labor [USA] (26/9/2023): 2022 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2098558.html, accessed 26/4/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024
- WHO - World Health Organization (4/3/2026): Somalia - Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA), https://reliefweb.int/attachments/07986a16-85f6-48ab-842a-8751a528cf3c/PHSA Somalia 040326.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026

18.4 Sexual minorities

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

Legal framework and enforcement: Sexual intercourse with a person of the same sex is punishable by a prison sentence of up to three years (AA 9/3/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025; FH 2024b; HRW 4/2/2026). The legal basis for this is Section 409 of the Criminal Code (AA 9/3/2026). In areas controlled by al-Shabaab or where Sharia law is strictly interpreted, the death penalty also applies (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. FH 2024b; AA 9/3/2026). Homosexuality is a criminal offence

in Somaliland as well (FH 2024a). Severe penalties apply to active homosexuality (USDOS 22/4/2024).

As the state legal system is underdeveloped, many criminal matters are settled by clan decisions, and the issue is a social taboo, there is no information available on actual criminal prosecution practices (AA 9/3/2026). There are no known reports indicating that the provisions of the Criminal Code or Sharia law have been enforced, or that the state has carried out any prosecutions or imposed any penalties (IZAM/BAMF 9/2024; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). One source explains this by stating that the government does not wish to run into problems with the international community (MBZ 4/4/2025). Even from the al-Shabaab-controlled area, only two cases are known (2013, 2017) in which executions are said to have taken place on the grounds of homosexuality. However, in the case from 2013, it is unclear whether this actually took place. In the case from 2017, al-Shabaab itself announced that it had publicly executed two young men in Buale for homosexual acts (Landinfo 16/6/2021; cf. HDTrust 17/12/2024). There have been no such reports in the recent past (MBZ 4/4/2025). In contrast, according to one source, Somaliland enforces the relevant law. In March 2023, according to this source, a parliamentary committee reported that 40 people were being held in custody for homosexuality. Four of them were sentenced to eight years' imprisonment; the others are awaiting charges or were released by the end of the year (USDOS 22/4/2024).

Society: Overall, there is very little information available on the situation of members of sexual minorities in Somalia (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. HDTrust 17/12/2024). Homosexuality is a taboo subject (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. Landinfo 16/6/2021; AA 9/3/2026), as it is regarded by the population as being at odds with Somali culture and Islam. It is generally believed that homosexual acts are sinful, lead to religious ruin and bring shame upon oneself and the social and family communities to which one belongs (Landinfo 16/6/2021). According to the expert Höhne, any form of sexuality that deviates from the heterosexual norm is not tolerated by society. Those affected are regarded as sick (EUAA 5/2025a).

According to one source, members of sexual minorities are stigmatised, isolated, discriminated against and mistreated by their own community (e.g. family, neighbours), and are sometimes even beaten or forced into marriage (MBZ 4/4/2025). This social stigma prevents people from revealing their sexual identity publicly (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). According to one source, homosexuals face the threat of being excluded from their family if they reveal their sexual orientation; in some cases, this may even lead to death threats from family members (Landinfo 16/6/2021) or pressure, or parents may attempt to 'cure' their children of this 'illness', using force if necessary. This takes the form, for example, of abuse or admission to 'reformation centres' (*dhaqan ceelis*) – where abuse may also occur. Should such 'treatment" fail, Somalia expert Höhne speculates that families might decide to have the person in question killed (EUAA 5/2025a).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- HDTrust - Human Dignity Trust (17/12/2024): Somalia, https://www.humandignitytrust.org/country-profile/somalia, accessed 24/9/2025
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- IZAM/BAMF - Federal Office for Migration and Refugees [Germany] (Publisher), Informationszentrum Asyl und Migration (Author) (9/2024): Länderkurzinformation Somalia, SOGI (Sexuelle Orientierung und geschlechtliche Identität): Situation von LGBTIQ-Personen, https://milo.bamf.de/otcs/cs.exe/app/nodes/30316166, accessed 4/11/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (16/6/2021): Somalia - Forhold for homofile, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2054237/Respons-Somalia-Forhold-for-homofile-16062021.pdf, accessed 13/3/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024

18.5 Targets of targeted assassinations by al-Shabaab and other terrorist groups

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

For al-Shabaab, all those who pose a risk to the group's ideological and economic interests become targets (MBZ 4/4/2025). Although al-Shabaab favours high-profile targets, lower-ranking individuals are also attacked. Furthermore, bystanders and civilians are often affected by attacks, even if they are not the actual targets (EUAA 5/2025a). The following groups of people are repeatedly targeted by al-Shabaab in targeted assassinations or other activities:

- Members of AUSSOM (*African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia*) (BS 2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024) and their local staff (BMLV 2/9/2026);
- representatives and staff of national and regional authorities (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. BS 2026);
- Members of the national security forces (BS 2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025; EUAA 5/2025a); al-Shabaab has on occasion executed individuals on suspicion of belonging to the Federal Army (MBZ 4/4/2025) or attacks those who are only de facto associated with the Federal Army but who work for that institution either formally or informally (EUAA 5/2025a);
- politicians (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. BS 2026);

- civilians associated with the government (AA 9/3/2026; cf. USDOS 12/8/2025; UNHCR 4/2025; EUAA 5/2025a) and former or retired state officials – e.g. former district heads (TSD 20/9/2023; cf. Sahan/SWT 6/3/2024);
- employees of NGOs and international organisations (USDOS 12/8/2025) and persons working with them (AA 9/3/2026);
- Businesspeople, particularly if they refuse to pay protection money ('taxes') to al-Shabaab (MBZ 4/4/2025) or if they have installed government surveillance cameras on their business premises (in Mogadishu) (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. HIPS 7/5/2024);
- Elders and community leaders (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023; MBZ 4/4/2025); according to Somali government figures, al-Shabaab murdered 324 elders in the period 2012–2022 alone. Some of the victims were involved in electoral processes (KM 31/8/2022). Elders who do not cooperate, or do not cooperate sufficiently, with the group are sometimes intimidated, abducted or murdered (MBZ 4/4/2025) – for example, elders of the Hawadle (BMLV 7/8/2024; cf. HO 21/3/2023) or the Galja'el (Sahan/SWT 12/3/2025);
- members of clan militias who have actively opposed al-Shabaab (EUAA 5/2025a). Supporters of *the Ma'awiisley*, e.g. civilian informants; entire communities are threatened with reprisals (Sahan/Petrovski 3/5/2024). According to recent reports, al-Shabaab no longer kills captured *Ma'awiisley* (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025);
- Election delegates (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023) and their relatives (USDOS 12/8/2025); al-Shabaab regards those who take part in elections as apostates (MBZ 4/4/2025) and considers elections in and of themselves to be un-Islamic (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025);
- Members of diplomatic missions (USDOS 12/8/2025) and the international community (EUAA 5/2025a);
- human rights and peace activists, or civil society organisations (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. BS 2026);
- People who do not follow al-Shabaab's interpretation of the faith (BMLV 7/8/2024) [*Note: see* 'Freedom of religion'] as well as religious leaders (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023; AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025); for example, in June 2024, twenty Sufi clerics were abducted by al-Shabaab (MBZ 4/4/2025). Clerics belonging to *al-I'ttisam* have also fallen victim to the group (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025);
- journalists (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. BS 2026) and media staff (USDOS 12/8/2025);
- Humanitarian workers (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. BS 2026);
- telecommunications workers (USDOS 12/8/2025);
- suspected collaborators and spies – see also below (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. UNHCR 4/2025); the *amniyat* maintains a presence in frontline areas, for example, and identifies those who cooperate with the government there (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025);

- (alleged) members or sympathisers of the so-called Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) (AA 9/3/2026; cf. HO 26/3/2023);
- Buyers of land in Mogadishu: According to one source, the spokesperson for al-Shabaab has threatened those involved in the so-called 'land grab'[*Note: land grabbing in the sense and course of forced evictions*] with serious consequences (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025);
- [*Note: For information on individuals who fail to pay protection money ('taxes"), see*risk associated with protection rackets ('taxes")];
- [*Note: For information on deserters, see*Military Service and Recruitment / Al-Shabaab – Deserters and Former Fighters];

The risk of becoming a target is heightened if individuals in these categories fail to pay protection money or 'taxes" to al-Shabaab. At the same time, it must be assumed that numerous attacks and murders targeting the above-mentioned groups of people are politically motivated or are simply criminal acts not attributable to al-Shabaab (BMLV 7/8/2024).

Espionage and collaboration: In areas controlled by al-Shabaab, supporting the government or making statements against al-Shabaab (whether in exile or locally) is considered sufficient grounds to be convicted of treason and executed (AA 9/3/2026). Al-Shabaab executes individuals accused ofspying for, or collaborating with, security forces or militias (USDOS 12/8/2025; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). The threshold for what al-Shabaab perceives as collaboration with the enemy is sometimes set very low. Particularly in frontline areas or places where control is changing hands, even selling tea to soldiers can be perceived as collaboration. In general, however, the extent and/or certainty of the collaboration; the location of the incident; and the relationships of the person concerned are decisive in determining whether al-Shabaab will impose the corresponding consequences. Persons who meet the following criteria are particularly at risk: a) the collaboration is obvious; b) the location makes it easy to identify the collaborator; c) an execution is perceived as a significant deterrent; d) if the collaboration took place in a location where control is fluid (STDOK 8/2017).

On the other hand, many people collaborate with al-Shabaab. Administrative structures and security forces have been infiltrated. Such collaboration may be motivated by financial or ideological reasons, but often also by fear. It seems unwise to reject an 'offer' from al-Shabaab (BMLV 2/9/2026).

Fundamental objectives: As a rule, al-Shabaab targets AUSSOM and the international community with major (and sometimes complex) attacks, as well as, in particular, the state (security forces, politicians, administration) and its representatives, infrastructure and equipment (including vehicles, buildings and personnel). Hotels and restaurants frequented by associated individuals are also targeted, although attacks on such establishments are primarily linked to al-Shabaab's demands for payment. In isolated cases, separate attacks also occur, such as when several politicians gather for a celebration in a hotel, or when al-Shabaab seeks to remind people – through an attack on football spectators in a restaurant – that football, from the group's perspective, 'un-Islamic" (BMLV 2/9/2026). According to a statement from a source of the FFM

Somalia 2023, a person is not usually targeted because of their clan background, but rather because of their own actions and behaviour (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Threats: A source from the FFM Somalia 2023, whose staff work in many parts of Somalia, explains that threats from al-Shabaab cannot be verified. In fact, it often remains unclear who is behind a threat – whether it relates to the employer, to something personal, or to a family member (for example, because the father is a police officer) (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Another FFM source explains in this regard: if a person has received a text message from al-Shabaab containing only threats and no demands, it is often difficult to actually identify al-Shabaab as the sender. The message may also originate from another source with its own motives. Furthermore, al-Shabaab acts as a proxy for other mafia-like structures. If, for example, a murder is carried out due to economic or clan interests, it may be carried out by al-Shabaab – or the group may be blamed for it (UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Alternatives: If al-Shabaab threatens a person, that person can, of course, flee. Some do so – sometimes out of fear and in the knowledge that the government cannot protect them because it lacks the necessary capacity (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to one source, it is virtually impossible to evade al-Shabaab (MBZ 4/4/2025) or to hide effectively (IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025); according to two other sources, it is possible for a person to hide from al-Shabaab in Mogadishu (BMLV 2/9/2026; cf. AI 13/2/2020) – provided they are not a high-profile target and keep a low profile (i.e. do not, for example, publicly present themselves as a deserter). For example, a person who was earmarked by their own clan in the Jowhar district for recruitment by al-Shabaab and who has fled to Mogadishu could go into hiding (BMLV 2/9/2026).

In general, al-Shabaab has the capacity to track down anyone – even in Mogadishu – (BMLV 2/9/2026; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). It is unclear, however, for which individuals al-Shabaab is actually prepared to deploy these capabilities. Furthermore, al-Shabaab is also subject to clan dynamics. The group is bound by certain constraints when selecting targets. Its links with various clans automatically impose restrictions. Furthermore, with every attack and every assassination it carries out, al-Shabaab also seeks to reach a specific audience (BMLV 2/9/2026).

Al-Shabaab does not issue arrest warrants. A search is conducted via its own, in-house information systems. The group knows how to track down individuals (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to two sources, an individual is reasonably safe from al-Shabaab in Somaliland, Garoowe and Bossaso. The group therefore lacks the capacity and personnel in those areas. However, threats can still arise there (BMLV 2/9/2026; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Al-Shabaab usually targets the specific individual they wish to capture. If the person in question cannot be found, a family member may be targeted instead. Once al-Shabaab has captured or murdered the actual target, there is no longer any reason to threaten or murder family members. In some cases, family members may be subjected to extortion (BMLV 7/8/2024).

The **ISS** operates almost exclusively in Puntland. In 2025 and 2026, no activities by the group were observed in Mogadishu. The ISS's main targets in Puntland are government forces and officials (BMLV 2/9/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AI - Amnesty International (13/2/2020): 'We live in perpetual fear': Violations and Abuses of Freedom of Expression in Somalia [AFR 52/1442/2020], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2024685/AFR5214422020ENGLISH.PDF, accessed 9/10/2023
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (7/8/2024): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (7/5/2024): State Of Somalia 2023 Report, https://8v90f1.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SOS-REPORT-2023-.pdf, accessed 27/5/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (26/3/2023): Heavy fighting between al-Shabaab and Daesh in northeastern Somalia leaves 40 militants dead, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2023/Mar/190509/heavy_fighting_between_al_shabaab_and_daesh_in_northeastern_somalia_leaves_40_militants_dead.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 27/3/2023
- HO - Hiiraan Online (21/3/2023): Assassination of Mumin Garig highlights Al-Shabaab's targeting of Hawadle elders, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2023/Mar/190428/assassination_of_mumin_garig_highlights_al_shabaab_s_targeting_of_hawadle_elders.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 16/1/2024
- INGO-C/STDOK/SEM - Internationale NGO C (Author), Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IO-D/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale Organisation D (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga - Khalif Farah, Marin Ouma, Samuel Nyanchoga (9/2025): Influence of Corruption on the Increased Prevalence of Terrorism in Somalia. In: African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies (AJPAS) 18(3) (September, 2025), 163-187, https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajpas/article/download/306463/288088, accessed 28/4/2026
- KM - Keydmedia (31/8/2022): Al-Shabaab killed 324 elders involved in elections – minister, https://www.keydmedia.net/news/al-shabaab-killed-324-elders-involved-in-elections-minister, accessed 4/6/2024
- MAEZA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Organisation für bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025

- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Sahan/Petrovski - Sara Petrovski (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (3/5/2024): Demystifying the Ma'awiisley, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 677, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/3/2025): Al-Shabaab Advances and Villa Somalia's Dhusamareb Strategy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 798, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (6/3/2024): Peace at what cost? Negotiations with Al-Shabaab, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 657, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (8/2017): Fact Finding Mission Report Somalia; Sicherheitslage in Somalia; Bericht zur österreichisch-schweizerischen FFM, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1406268/5209_1502195321_ffm-report-somalia-sicherheitslage-onlineversion-2017-08-ke.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- TSD - The Somali Digest (20/9/2023): Al-Shabaab killed former deputy district commissioner of Bal'ad, https://thesomalidigest.com/al-shabaab-killed-former-deputy-district-commissioner-of-balad, accessed 14/3/2024
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (4/2025): Flash Alert 4, April 2025 - Fierce Clashes Displace 1,800 individuals in Adan Yabaal, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/b7c474d3-146e-567b-b85c-385669cefb92/Flash Alert #5 Adan Yabaal_April 2025.pdf, accessed 21/4/2026
- UNOFFX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Senior UN Official X (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- Williams/ACSS - Africa Center for Strategic Studies (Publisher), Wendy Williams (Author) (27/3/2023): Reclaiming Al Shabaab's Revenue, https://africacenter.org/spotlight/reclaiming-al-shabaabs-revenue, accessed 7/11/2023

18.5.1 Risks associated with protection rackets ('taxes")

Last modification 2026-09-18 10:58

[*Note: For information on al-Shabaab's 'taxation' system, see*Legal Protection, Judicial System / The al-Shabaab 'Tax' System]

Al-Shabaab operates like a criminal syndicate (Weiss/FDD 11/8/2021). The group relies on its reputation for omnipresence and intimidation – typical of a mafia-style organisation. The *zakat* [*Note: compulsory religious levy in Islam; under al-Shabaab, effectively a form of taxation*] is enforced by *the amniyat* [*Note: al-Shabaab's intelligence service*] – through intimidation and violence (Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023). Refusal to pay is met, for example, with threats (BS 2026), the confiscation of goods (MBZ 4/4/2025), the destruction of property and business assets (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022; MBZ 4/4/2025; HI 10/2020) or, alternatively, al-Shabaab ensures that businesses no longer receive contracts (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Delays in paying 'tax' demands usually result in heavy fines (GN 10/11/2022b; cf. HI 10/2020) or exclusion from markets (HI 10/2020). If, for example, a driver refuses to pay a levy or attempts to bypass an al-Shabaab checkpoint, he is usually required to pay double the amount as a penalty. This non-negotiable penalty is 'served' via text message, for instance, or vehicle owners or drivers are summoned via a message to one of the group's Sharia courts (GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022). Al-Shabaab can track down virtually any telephone number; the group has contacts

amongst the mobile network operators (BMLV 2/9/2026). Consequently, the group can reach anyone. In Mogadishu, for example, they call staff at a source of the FFM Somalia 2023 and say: 'Come to location X and give us 2,000 US dollars." In other areas, al-Shabaab has more direct access (IO-D/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). However, it is always possible that it is not al-Shabaab behind the extortion demands at all, but other criminal actors posing asal-Shabaab (Landinfo 8/9/2022).

Later, death threats follow (HI 10/2020). After several warnings, the group then resorts to violence (MBZ 4/4/2025). Two sources assume that, for example, attacks on hotels in Mogadishu are primarily linked to outstanding protection money payments (Sahan/SWT 30/6/2025; cf. BMLV 2/9/2026), although other objectives may also be pursued at the same time (headline-grabbing actions, targeting specific individuals or groups of people, etc.) (BMLV 2/9/2026). In isolated cases, al-Shabaab may kill individuals who refuse to pay the fees (BS 2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025; Williams/ACSS 27/3/2023). Violence is rarely used against minor 'tax evaders' (BMLV 2/9/2026; cf. GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022). Such violence then serves as a deterrent and a means of intimidation (BMLV 2/9/2026) and ensures that others being extorted pay 'taxes' voluntarily out of fear (GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022).

In theory, tax demands are non-negotiable; in practice, however, a certain degree of negotiation is possible – precisely because clan elders play an important role in tax collection (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI 8/2023). Other sources explain that in many cases there is scope for negotiation regarding the amount of payments (Landinfo 8/9/2022; cf. Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025; BMLV 2/9/2026) or at least with regard to the payment deadline (MBZ 4/4/2025). It also depends entirely on the goodwill and consistency of the relevant al-Shabaab body (BMLV 2/9/2026). One source reports successful negotiations between businesspeople from Jowhar and al-Shabaab (AQSOM 9 1/2026). There are also reports from Mogadishu that 'taxes' can be negotiated there (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Businesspeople usually keep quiet about it when they pay money to al-Shabaab (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

In general, al-Shabaab enforces the payment of levies through threats of violence and, in individual cases, through the actual use of violence (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022; AQ21 11/2023). The threat of violence is a cost-saving measure in that, from al-Shabaab's perspective, it requires less oversight (AQ21 11/2023). To prevent any payment to al-Shabaab, a person must be capable of suffering. High-ranking and lucrative targets, as well as their close relatives, must under no circumstances enter areas under al-Shabaab's control. In Garoowe, for example, there is virtually no pressure to pay. As regards the so-called Islamic State in Somalia (ISS), Bossaso (Puntland) is now very well secured. Neither the ISS nor al-Shabaab currently levy taxes in the port city, and they are also largely unable to enter it due to the existing controls. At present, however, it is unclear how the situation in this regard will develop now that the pressure on the ISS has eased (BMLV 2/9/2026).

Sources

- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche

- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- GITOC/Bahadur - Jay Bahadur (Author), Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (Publisher) (8/12/2022): Terror and Taxes. Inside al-Shabaab's revenue-collection machine, https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/AS-protection-economies.-WEB.pdf, accessed 9/10/2023
- GN - Goobjoog News (10/11/2022b): Somalia's al-Shabab militants widening revenue base, https://goobjoog.com/english/somalias-al-shabab-militants-widening-revenue-base/, accessed 15/3/2024
- HI - Hiraal Institute (10/2020): A Losing Game: Countering Al-Shabab's Financial System, https://hiraalinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/A-Losing-Game.pdf, accessed 16/11/2023
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IO-D/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale Organisation D (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (8/9/2022): Somalia: Sikkerhetssituasjonen i Mogadishu og al-Shabaabs innflytelse i byen, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Respons-Somalia-Sikkerhetssituasjonen-i-Mogadishu-og-al-Shabaabs-innflytelse-i-byen-08092022-1.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- Mubarak/Jackson A./ODI - Overseas Development Institute (Publisher), Ashley Jackson (Author), Mohamed Mubarak (Author) (8/2023): Playing the long game: Exploring the relationship between Al-Shabab and civilians in areas beyond state control, https://odi.org/en/publications/playing-the-long-game-exploring-the-relationship-between-al-shabab-and-civilians-in-areas-beyond-state-control/, accessed 30/1/2024
- Q. Müller/Afrique XXI - Afrique XXI (Publisher), Quentin Müller (Author) (4/5/2025): En Somalie, les Chabab profitent de la crise et s'approchent de Mogadiscio, https://afriquexxi.info/En-Somalie-les-Chabab-profitent-de-la-crise-et-s-approchent-de-Mogadiscio, accessed 10/7/2025
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (30/6/2025): The jihadist protection racket and the conflict economy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 840, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Weiss/FDD - Caleb Weiss (Author), Foundation for Defense of Democracies (Publisher) (11/8/2021): Analysis – Somaliland's lingering jihadi threat, https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2021/08/analysis-somalilands-lingering-jihadi-threat.php, accessed 23/10/2023
- Williams/ACSS - Africa Center for Strategic Studies (Publisher), Wendy Williams (Author) (27/3/2023): Reclaiming Al Shabaab's Revenue, https://africacenter.org/spotlight/reclaiming-al-shabaabs-revenue, accessed 7/11/2023

19 Freedom of movement and relocation

19.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

Laws protect the right to freedom of movement within the country and the right to leave the country. These rights are restricted in some parts of the country (USDOS 22/4/2024), but are respected to a certain extent (MBZ 4/4/2025). They are restricted by checkpoints and roadblocks set up by the respective authorities in certain areas, as well as by armed conflict. Internally

displaced persons (IDPs) in the camps in and around Mogadishu are, in some cases, subject to strict restrictions on their freedom of movement. Apart from this, there are no known restrictions on specific groups (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). From 1 January 2026, a *national ID* (identity card) must be carried when travelling within the country [*Note: It is unclear whether this refers only to air travel or also to land travel*] (Dawan 6/8/2025).

Overland travel: Dozens of permanent and temporary checkpoints – known as *'isbaaro'* (Sahan/SWT 22/1/2025) – operated by government forces, clan militias, AUSSOM and al-Shabaab, hinder freedom of movement (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. AA 31/8/2026). They are found along the main supply routes, at the entrances to towns, or as temporary, makeshift installations on side roads. They are most common in contested areas. Less established checkpoints often do not even have a physical barrier, but consist merely of a few militiamen loitering about, who levy a tax on every passer-by (Sahan/SWT 22/1/2025). Such 'pop-up checkpoints' are known as *isbaaro soo booda* and are set up by bandits (*mooryaan*) as well as by clan militias, soldiers and others (RVI/Schouten 2023).

Occasionally, theft, robbery, extortion, harassment and violence occur at checkpoints (MBZ 4/4/2025). According to one source, such crimes are primarily attributed to roadblocks set up by clan militias, whilst those set up by al-Shabaab or government forces are considered to be better organised and safer. Generally speaking, four types of roadblocks can be identified: 1. those set up solely to rob travellers – irrespective of clan conflicts or power struggles; 2. those set up in the context of clan conflicts (where violence may also occur); 3. roadblocks set up by al-Shabaab [*see below*]; and 4. roadblocks set up by government forces (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023).

At checkpoints, security forces often identify a passer-by's origin based on their accent. Outsiders are questioned about their movements (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, only drivers are required to show identification at roadblocks; passengers may pass unhindered (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Unsurprisingly, members of influential clans can pass through checkpoints more easily and at lower cost than members of clans from lower castes (Sahan/SWT 22/1/2025).

The general population can move about freely or undertake overland journeys without difficulty. Civilians and businesspeople use the overland routes on a daily basis; people do not travel without being informed (BMLV 2/9/2026). Travellers and drivers try to adapt their journeys based on the latest security information (Landinfo 28/6/2019). For example, passengers travelling through al-Shabaab-controlled territory will not carry their smartphones with them (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In general, however, people can reach any destination in southern and central Somalia (BMLV 2/9/2026). To reach smaller villages, it is usually necessary to change transport in the nearest district capital (Landinfo 28/6/2019).

Overland journeys are usually made by minibus (9-seater), on lorries or on foot. It is easy to organise such a journey in Mogadishu (Landinfo 28/6/2019). There are buses, for example, to Belet Weyne, Dhusamareb and Galkacyo (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Minibuses also run from Kismayo or Middle Juba to all sorts of destinations, including Kenya and through al-

Shabaab-controlled territory to Mogadishu (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Road conditions and security concerns may, in some cases, make access to certain destinations impossible (Landinfo 28/6/2019). 90 per cent of the approximately 22,000 kilometres of roads are in very poor condition (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023).

However, such journeys are not without risk (MBZ 4/4/2025). Al-Shabaab remains a significant threat to freedom of movement along main supply routes in southern and central Somalia. The group uses improvised explosive devices and sets up ambushes along these roads. Sometimes, al-Shabaab also places improvised explosive devices in order to divert traffic onto roads where it maintains checkpoints at which tolls are collected (BMLV 2/9/2026). At the same time, fighting breaks out at checkpoints between clan militias – occasionally involving state forces – over control of the revenue (AA 9/3/2026). Even away from roadblocks, the outbreak of armed clashes can pose a risk (FH 2024b).

Specific overland routes:

- **Baidoa – Mogadishu:** Al-Shabaab does not have a permanent presence on this route. According to one source, the village of Leego, situated between Wanla Weyne and Buur Hakaba, is controlled by government forces; however, al-Shabaab is positioned not far from the road (BMLV/STDOK 24/6/2026). Whilst normal passenger and goods traffic flows unhindered (BMLV 2/9/2026), the government and the Federal Army must rely on heavily secured convoys when using this road (BMLV 2/9/2026; cf. AQSOM 9 1/2026). According to information from January 2026, access to the Wanla Weyne –Buur Hakaba section remained restricted due to sporadic clashes and illegal checkpoints. Crime, ongoing resistance from militias and the fact that al-Shabaab controls the area in the immediate vicinity of Leego make the route fragile and prone to disruption (AQSOM 9 1/2026). Al-Shabaab has access to the entire road; it controls the route from Baidoa to Buur Hakaba and on to Bali Doogle. The group operates roadblocks around Baidoa (BMLV 2/9/2026). Al-Shabaab has also, at times, succeeded in disrupting traffic on the Mogadishu–Afgooye stretch (EUAA 5/2026a). Militias loyal to the ousted president of the South West State (SWS) are also causing unrest in the vicinity of Baidoa (BMLV 2/9/2026).
- **Baidoa – Bakoo :** This route is currently relatively quiet (BMLV 2/9/2026).
- **Baidoa – Luuq – Doolow (Ethiopia):** This is one of the best-secured stretches of road in Somalia; it is the main supply route for Ethiopian forces to Baidoa and the Bay and Bakool regions. There are almost never any incidents in the area between Doolow and Luuq (BMLV 2/9/2026).
- **Mogadishu – Merka:** The coastal road is closed to officials and the military; al-Shabaab operates checkpoints between Gendershe and Jilib Marko (Kaab 24/11/2025b).
- **Mogadishu – Belet Weyne:** This route is unpredictable due to checkpoints, ambushes, booby traps and recurring hostilities (UN OCHA 27/1/2026). During the last quarter of 2025, al-Shabaab focused on asymmetric warfare (including the use of explosive devices) along this route, primarily against AUSSOM and Federal Army troops (AQSOM 9 1/2026).

Al-Shabaab has since also succeeded in disrupting traffic on the stretch from Mogadishu to Balcad (EUAA 5/2026a) and to Jowhar (Horn 21/2/2025).

- **Mogadishu – northern coastal road:** As al-Shabaab has advanced towards the coast, the group has managed to block part of the road from Mogadishu to Warsheikh (EUAA 5/2026a; cf. BMLV 2/9/2026).
- **Belet Weyne – Dhusamareb:** The route from Belet Weyne to Dhusamareb is largely secure (BMLV 2/9/2026).
- **Kismayo – Kenya:** Al-Shabaab controls parts of the main supply route from Kismayo to Dhobley (BMLV 2/9/2026). The group has checkpoints on all main roads leading out of Kismayo – both towards Jamaame and towards Dhobley or Kolbiyow (GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022). In general, along the road links in the Lower Juba region, attacks by al-Shabaab may occur (BMLV 2/9/2026).
- **Lower Juba:** Jamaame and Jilib are easily accessible by land, whereas the areas to the north, which are controlled by al-Shabaab, are not (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).
- **Gedo:** Attacks by al-Shabaab may occur on the roads in Gedo south of Garbahaarey (BMLV 2/9/2026).
- **Bakool:** In Bakool, incidents are rare along the roads between Waajid, Yeed and Ceel Barde. The routes to and from Xudur are subject to recurring attacks by al-Shabaab. Xudur is surrounded by al-Shabaab (BMLV 2/9/2026).

[*Note:For information on freedom of movement **within Mogadishu**, see*Security Situation/BRA-Mogadishu]

Women: According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, women can move about without difficulty (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). It is not unusual to encounter elderly women travelling alone. Conversely, families tend to avoid sending younger women to travel unaccompanied – primarily due to the risk of sexual violence (Landinfo 28/6/2019). Women face an increased risk of this at roadblocks (FIS 7/8/2020b).

Al-Shabaab roadblocks: The network of roadblocks and checkpoints remains stable and is also responsible for a large proportion of al-Shabaab's revenue. As of 2022, the group operates over 100 checkpoints in southern and central Somalia (UNSC 10/10/2022). The checkpoints in its own territories as well as in disputed areas serve several purposes: identifying spies (Landinfo 28/6/2019; cf. BMLV 5/11/2024), collecting taxes and duties (Landinfo 28/6/2019; cf. BMLV 5/11/2024; AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025), gathering intelligence (systematic recording of travellers' identities to identify potential recruits, informants or targets), projecting power (deterring rival clan militias and state forces through a visible presence) and restricting movement (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

In rural areas throughout the southern half of Somalia, one must also expect al-Shabaab to set up impromptu checkpoints at any time (AA 31/8/2026). Outside the areas actually controlled by the government and its allies, there is a high probability of encountering an al-Shabaab

roadblock. In general, however, it is neither al-Shabaab's aim to prevent people from travelling, nor are travellers themselves a target (Landinfo 28/6/2019; cf. BMLV 2/9/2026). The group generally has no interest in bringing traffic to a standstill (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). People may, for example, travel from al-Shabaab-controlled areas to towns to seek medical treatment there (Landinfo 28/6/2019). A report on the 'taxation' of road traffic and goods at al-Shabaab checkpoints shows that traffic is possible in, out of and through al-Shabaab-controlled territory in southern and central Somalia (GITOC/Bahadur 8/12/2022; cf. BMLV 2/9/2026).

However, al-Shabaab's behaviour at roadblocks is unpredictable and, during periods of fighting, increasingly paranoid. People can never predict how they will be treated there. Fees are levied, and the identity of all travellers is verified. Al-Shabaab is aware of many people's backgrounds; its intelligence service is efficient (BMLV 2/9/2026). So if a person is stopped at such a checkpoint and there is a report about them within al-Shabaab's extensive networks – for example, that they attracted negative attention a few months ago – this can lead to reprisals (ACCORD 31/5/2021). On occasion, even relatives of soldiers in the Federal Army have been singled out at the group's checkpoints (BMLV 2/9/2026). Generally speaking, the greatest danger lies in a traveller being mistaken for an enemy at a roadblock. Travellers therefore try to keep a low profile and avoid arousing suspicion (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). According to older reports, there is a risk to life, particularly at roadblocks in areas not fully under al-Shabaab's control. In such areas, spies may be summarily executed – without trial. In areas under al-Shabaab's control, suspects are generally arrested and brought to trial. This, too, results in the death penalty if found guilty. Furthermore, individuals may be targeted if al-Shabaab suspects them of having links to the government or of being spies – for example, for carrying certain items (smartphones, government documents, symbols associated with the government, etc.). Travellers who have neither family nor clan connections in the area through which they are travelling may also, under certain circumstances, be suspected of being spies by al-Shabaab (unless they have a guarantor). This applies in particular if the person's destination is within the territory controlled by al-Shabaab (Landinfo 28/6/2019).

Alternatives and internal migration: In any case, internal flight alternatives do exist for part of the population (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). In the event of flight from al-Shabaab-controlled areas not motivated by individual persecution, urban centres and rural areas under state control offer relative safety. However, it is difficult to define relatively safe areas of refuge in general terms, as these depend on the reason for displacement and personal circumstances (AA 9/3/2026).

The prevailing clan structures pose a challenge to social and economic integration in areas outside one's own clan (AA 9/3/2026). People from southern/central Somalia can, for example, settle in Somaliland and Puntland, but are sometimes only 'half' accepted there; in Somaliland, they are not granted citizenship rights (ACCORD 31/5/2021). Nevertheless, there is greater freedom in Somaliland and Puntland (except in the disputed areas) (AA 9/3/2026). Furthermore, Somalis usually enjoy the protection of their own clan, which is why it can be assumed that they are generally safe in areas where their clan wields influence (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Even IDPs find it easier to integrate if, for example, they have connections and clan ties in Mogadishu. Sometimes, specific professional skills can also aid integration (FIS 7/8/2020b).

Apart from Somali Bantu (BMLV 5/11/2024), there are no physical characteristics that would indicate membership of a particular clan. In Mogadishu and other major cities, it is not immediately apparent which clan a person belongs to (Landinfo 28/6/2019). Members of all Somali clans live in Mogadishu; they are free to move about, settle and rent accommodation there (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; FIS 7/8/2020b). However, new arrivals usually seek to be near their own clan, as they expect to receive considerably more support there (BMLV 5/11/2024).

In general, internal migration has increased sharply since 2012, particularly the influx into urban areas. People hope to find a better future and better living conditions in the city than, for example, in rural areas, where recurring droughts and floods have made a nomadic or agricultural way of life difficult (FIS 7/8/2020b; cf. ACCORD 31/5/2021). More and more people are fleeing and arriving in Mogadishu (Guardian/Mohamed Ahmed 8/6/2022). [*Note: See also*Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)]

By air: Many senior civil servants and politicians travel by air within Somalia. Domestic flights connect Mogadishu with Cadaado, Baidoa, Bossaso, Galkacyo, Garoowe, Guri Ceel, Hargeysa and Kismayo (MBZ 4/4/2025). Even for the short journey (90km) to Jowhar, they are reliant on air travel for security reasons (Horn 21/2/2025). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, all major towns except Afgooye and Balcad have airports or airstrips. The costs for selected flights from Mogadishu were given by this source as follows (in US dollars): Jowhar 90; Kismayo 170–190; Garoowe 190–210; Hargeysa 250. Flights are not booked online but through travel agencies. According to this source, no ID is required for a domestic flight (except to Hargeysa), although passengers may be questioned by security forces (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

By sea: Passenger transport by boat is not very common (Researcher/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). There is an irregular passenger boat service between Mogadishu and Merka (MBZ 4/4/2025). This is mainly used by members of the military and government officials (Kaab 24/11/2025b).

Exit controls: There are no effective exit controls at the border crossings with neighbouring countries. Both the land and sea borders are largely unmonitored. Checks are, however, carried out on flights departing from Mogadishu, Garoowe and Bossaso (AA 9/3/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (31/8/2026): Somalia – Reise- und Sicherheitshinweise (Reisewarnung), unverändert gültig seit 26.8.2026, https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/laender/somalia-node/somaliasicherheit/203132#content_1, accessed 31/8/2026
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche

- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (5/11/2024): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (24/6/2026): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (6/8/2025): Somalia to Require National ID for Domestic Travel and Passport Applications, https://www.dawan.africa/news/somalia-to-require-national-id-for-domestic-travel-and-passport-applications, accessed 10/10/2025
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2026a): Somalia: Security Situation, https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2026-05/2026_05_EUAA_COI_Report_Somalia_Security_Situation.pdf, accessed 8/7/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024b): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somalia, https://freedomhouse.org/country/somalia/freedom-world/2024, accessed 8/7/2024
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020b): Somalia: Tiedonhankintamatka Mogadishuun maaliskuussa 2020, Mogadishun turvallisuustilanne ja humanitääriset olosuhteet, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf/f58d6cd5-271a-55fd-9b89-b3d32e4ff80b/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf?t=1596797440011, accessed 12/3/2024
- GITOC/Bahadur - Jay Bahadur (Author), Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (Publisher) (8/12/2022): Terror and Taxes. Inside al-Shabaab's revenue-collection machine, https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/AS-protection-economies.-WEB.pdf, accessed 9/10/2023
- Guardian/Mohamed Ahmed - Fathi Mohamed Ahmed (Author), The Guardian (Publisher) (8/6/2022): Mogadishu shops shuttered as soaring food prices add to desperation in Somalia, https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jun/08/mogadishu-shops-shuttered-as-soaring-food-prices-add-to-desperation-in-somalia, accessed 5/11/2024
- Horn - Horn Observer (21/2/2025): Al-Shabaab Launches Terror Attacks, Seizes Military Trucks in Middle Shabelle, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3204/Al-Shabaab-Launches-Terror-Attacks-Seizes-Military-Trucks-in-Middle-Shabelle, accessed 3/6/2025
- INGO-C/STDOK/SEM - Internationale NGO C (Author), Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Kaab - Kaab TV (24/11/2025b): Al-Shabaab oo maleeshiyaad iyo gaadiid dagaal ku kala jartay Muqdisho iyo Marka, https://kaabtv.com/al-shabaab-oo-maleeshiyaad-iyo-gaadiid-dagaal-ku-kala-jartay-muqdisho-iyo-marka/, accessed 2/12/2025
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (28/6/2019): Somalia: Praktiske og sikkerhetsmessige forhold på reise i Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Somalia-temanotat-Praktiske-og-sikkerhetsmessige-forhold-på-reise-i-Sør-Somalia-28062019.pdf, accessed 5/11/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Researcher/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Researcher (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

- RVI/Schouten - Peer Schouten (Author), Rift Valley Institute (Publisher) (2023): Paying the price – The political economy of checkpoints in Somalia, https://riftvalley.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Paying-the-Price_Final-Reduced3-reduced.pdf, accessed 3/6/2025
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (22/1/2025): The Isbaaro Economy of Somalia's Roads, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 777, per e-Mail [fee required]
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (27/1/2026): Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026, https://www.unocha.org/attachments/edea4204-0921-4741-862f-203c6f75a631/Somalia_HNRP_2026.pdf, accessed 23/3/2026
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (10/10/2022): Letter dated 10 October 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council: Letter dated 1 September 2022 from the Panel of Experts on Somalia addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia [S/2022/754], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2081261/N2263844.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024

19.1.1 Registration and citizenship

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

[*For individual **documents**, see*Documents / Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland]

Registration system: There is no (centralised) registration or civil status system in Somalia (AA 9/3/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025; A. M. Mohamed 2025). Somali authorities have no overview of their own population (Landinfo 31/3/2022). Some local municipal authorities maintain registers and also issue certificates or identity documents (A. M. Mohamed 2025).

Only around 3 per cent of births have been registered (IPS 17/6/2025); in urban areas, the figure is 3–7 per cent (UNICEF 10/8/2025). Furthermore, there are neither wanted lists nor criminal records (AA 9/3/2026; cf. Sahan/SWT 16/9/2022). Identities are often reliably established only by a village council of elders or by relatives or acquaintances (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Even before 1991 (UNHCR 22/12/2021a) – and all the more so after 1991 – most people born in Somalia were never officially registered (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Consequently, it is not possible to obtain reliable information about Somali nationals in Southern/Central Somalia and Puntland from official registers (AA 9/3/2026).

The country is currently taking steps to modernise its *Civil Registration and Vital Statistics* (CRVS) system, which is intended to cover the registration of births, marriages, divorces, guardianship and residence. According to one source, the digital CRVS system is operational in 48 districts (UNICEF 10/8/2025). According to other reports, however, this is merely an announcement, and the system is currently active in only 19 districts (Biometric 12/5/2025). The ambitious plan is to register 15 million citizens in 2026. However, this plan faces obstacles – such as regional disparities, security concerns and limited infrastructure (HO 14/1/2025).

Citizenship: In general, the Citizenship Act of 1962 remains in force (UNHCR 22/12/2021a). The Somali government has been working on drafting an amendment to this Act since 2015. It remains unclear when the amendment can actually be expected to be passed (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Somali citizenship is therefore still acquired at birth if the father is Somali. A 'Somali' is defined here as anyone who belongs to the Somali nation by descent, language or tradition (UNHCR 22/12/2021a). Anyone who is an ethnic Somali is therefore considered a potential citizen (Landinfo 5/3/2026). Consequently, it is not decisive whether a person comes from Somalia or lives in Somalia. Rather, what is relevant is whether they are of Somali ethnicity (Landinfo 31/3/2022). Consequently, ethnic Somalis from Ethiopia, Djibouti or Kenya may also obtain Somali passports (Landinfo 31/3/2022).

Children of Somali fathers continue to acquire citizenship at birth, but children of Somali mothers do not (UN Women/UNHCR 6/3/2026; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). Conversely, a woman automatically acquires Somali citizenship if she marries a Somali man; the reverse is not the case (UNHCR 22/12/2021a; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025). It can sometimes be difficult for members of ethnic minorities to obtain a passport. This is particularly true if they have grown up as refugees outside Somalia. They must 'prove' to the Somali authorities that they originate from Somalia – usually by demonstrating the relevant language skills (Landinfo 31/3/2022).

Dual citizenship: Although the aforementioned Citizenship Act of 1962 prohibits dual citizenship (Landinfo 31/3/2022; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025; UNHCR 22/12/2021a), it is formally accepted (Landinfo 31/3/2022). The Transitional Constitution does not permit dual citizenship, but neither does it prohibit it. Rather, it states that Parliament is to enact a law to that effect (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). According to other sources, the Transitional Constitution permits dual citizenship (CRAI n.d). Furthermore, Article 8 states: A Somali citizen cannot be deprived of Somali citizenship, even if they become a citizen of another state (Landinfo 31/3/2022). Furthermore, the Constitution states that Somali citizenship cannot be renounced – even if a person has acquired another citizenship. This means that dual citizenship is de facto accepted (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. UNHCR 22/12/2021a). Millions of Somalis within the country, in the region and in the diaspora hold foreign passports (Wardheer/Dayib Sh. Ahmed 30/11/2025). Many political leaders hold dual citizenship. It is unclear whether the ban on dual citizenship has ever actually been enforced – including before the collapse of state institutions in1991 (Landinfo 31/3/2022).

Somalia, of course, also regards all Somalis living in Somaliland as Somali citizens, whilst Somaliland regards them as Somaliland citizens (LIFOS 9/4/2019). According to the Transitional Constitution, citizenship is not an exclusively federal matter. Under Article 54, powers in sensitive areas such as citizenship and immigration must first be negotiated and agreed between the federal government and the federal states (Wardheer/Dayib Sh. Ahmed 30/11/2025). According to other sources, the Transitional Constitution provides for citizenship matters to be administered by the federal government; however, Puntland, for example, has introduced its own citizenship (UNHCR 22/12/2021a).

Sources

- A. M. Mohamed - Abshir Moalin Mohamed ‚Dhiblawe' (2025): The Role of Civil Registration in Enhancing National Security and Stability in Somalia, in: Horn of Africa Journal of Social Science, 3(3), 25-32, https://hornafricajss.com/index.php/hajos/article/view/31/28, accessed 12/5/2026
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- Biometric - BiometricUpdate.com (12/5/2025): Somalia rolls out digital CRVS system on foundations laid with UNICEF support, https://www.biometricupdate.com/202508/somalia-rolls-out-digital-crvs-system-on-foundations-laid-with-unicef-support, accessed 12/5/2026
- CRAI - Citizenship Rights in Africa Initative (n.d): Somalia, https://citizenshiprightsafrica.org/region/somalia/, accessed 12/5/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (14/1/2025): Somalia launches ambitious civil registration overhaul, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jan/199818/somalia_launches_ambitious_civil_registration_overhaul.aspx, accessed 12/5/2026
- IPS - Inter Press Service (17/6/2025): Regaining Progress on Birth Registration Is Critical to Child Protection, https://www.ipsnews.net/2025/06/regaining-progress-on-birth-registration-is-critical-to-child-protection/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=regaining-progress-on-birth-registration-is-critical-to-child-protection, accessed 12/5/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (31/3/2022): Somalia – Statsborgerskap, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Respons-Somalia-Statsborgerskap-31032022.pdf, accessed 7/5/2024
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (9/4/2019): Somalia - Folkbokförning, medborgarskap och identitetshandlngar, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2007147/190423300.pdf, accessed 7/5/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Omer2/ALRC - Ahmed Omer 2, Africa Legal Risk Control Ltd (17/3/2023): Somali Family Law & Practice. An Expert Report (Bericht i.A. der österreichischen und deutschen Botschaften in Nairobi); per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/9/2022): Exrajudicial killings in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 452, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (22/12/2021a): Citizenship and Statelessness in the Horn of Africa, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2065866/61c97bea4.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023
- UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (10/8/2025): Giving Every Child a Legal Identity: Somalia's Progress towards a Birth Registration System, https://www.unicef.org/somalia/stories/legal-identity, accessed 12/5/2026
- UN Women/UNHCR - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (6/3/2026): Background Note on Gender Equality, Nationality Laws and Statelessness 2026, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2137905/background_note_gender-20269mar2678.pdf, accessed 12/3/2026
- Wardheer/Dayib Sh. Ahmed - Wardheer News (Publisher), Dayib Sh. Ahmed (Author) (30/11/2025): The arbitrary nature of the citizenship approach by the newly constituted NIRA, https://wardheernews.com/the-arbitrary-nature-of-the-citizenship-approach-by-the-newly-constituted-nira/, accessed 12/5/2026

19.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

Freedom of movement is respected to a certain extent (FH 2024a). Several sources from the FFM Somalia 2023 state that citizens can move about without restrictions, including in Sanaag (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; INGO-V/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). There are occasionally police checkpoints on the roads – particularly on the outskirts of larger towns (STDOK/SEM 5/2023b). Due to the slightly increased risk of terrorism following Israel's recognition, checks at checkpoints have been stepped up. According to the police, all travellers between major cities must now carry identification documents (AQSOM 9 1/2026). Checks are also carried out for illegal Ethiopian migrants (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Restrictions are also occasionally in place (USDOS 22/4/2024), for example in the Sool region (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Previously, there was a great deal of travel back and forth between Hargeysa and Puntland; this is no longer the case (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Some areas of Sool and Laascaanood can only be reached from Puntland; this also applies to humanitarian aid. Many people travel to Buuhoodle via Ethiopia. As the roads to Garoowe and Buuhoodle are blocked, the route from Bossaso to Laas Qooraay has become more important. However, according to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, this route is not safe for members of the Isaaq clan because the Warsangeli living in Sanaag are morally aligned with the Dhulbahante. In general, however, people in Sanaag are able to move about freely (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). A source confirms that the information in this paragraph remains valid (BMLV 2/9/2026).

Another source explains that clan affiliations can pose an obstacle when a person wishes to change residence within Somaliland (FH 2024a).

Entry/Exit: There are no effective exit controls at Somaliland's border crossings with neighbouring countries. Both the land and sea borders are largely unmonitored. Checks are carried out on flights departing from Hargeysa (AA 9/3/2026). In principle, it is possible for foreigners – including those from southern and central Somalia – to enter Somaliland and reside there without formal authorisation (Landinfo 5/3/2026).

According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, there are no restrictions on freedom of movement for people from other parts of Somalia – particularly if they are engaged in business activities. If a person is unable to provide proof of identity, this could lead to problems (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Accordingly, when moving from Mogadishu to Hargeysa, for example, it is important – though not strictly necessary – to have a guarantor in the new location (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

[*Note: For further information on entry and exit – including for people from Somalia – see:*Return / Somaliland]

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]

- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BMLV - Ministry of Defence [Austria] (2/9/2026): Auskunft eines Länderexperten an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- INGO-V/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), International NGO V (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- MAEZA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Organisation für bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Scholar/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Scholar, Hargeysa (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SECEX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Security Expert (Author) (4/2023):
  Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- STDOK/SEM - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (5/2023b): Beobachtungen im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024

19.2.1 Registration and citizenship

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

[*For details of individual **documents**, see*Documents / Somaliland]

Population registers: There are only few, if any, state records or population registers (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). According to other sources, a digital population register managed by the Ministry of the Interior has been in place since 2015 (UNHCR 22/12/2021a). Prior to registration, the person concerned is interviewed, elders are consulted and data from family members is cross-checked (LIFOS 9/4/2019). Biometric data is also recorded and cross-checked (LIFOS 9/4/2019; cf. STDOK/SEM 2017), thereby preventing duplicate entries (STDOK/SEM 2017). The associated identity card is increasingly required in order to access public services (UNHCR 22/12/2021a). e*Government* links many aspects with each other, such as the telephone number to the ID and the ID to the Ministry of Finance. This means that people automatically receive notifications about taxes due, which can then be paid via their mobile phone. The payment confirmation is also sent to their phone (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Births: UNICEF supports the registration of births and young children, as well as the issuing of birth certificates (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Nevertheless, only 7 per cent of children under the age of two were registered at birth (MoHDSL 2022; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). According to other figures, just under 20 per cent of under-fives are registered (UNHCR 22/12/2021a). A birth can be declared by affidavit at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Hargeysa. Furthermore, Somaliland is making efforts to enable births to be registered at health centres as well (UNHCR 22/12/2021a).

Citizenship: Unlike in Somalia, where every ethnic Somali is considered a potential citizen, under Somaliland's citizenship law (2002), only those persons whose fathers are descended from individuals who lived on Somaliland territory on or before 26 June 1960 are considered citizens (Landinfo 5/3/2026; cf. BS 2026; UNHCR 22/12/2021a). Under the Citizenship Act, descendants of Somaliland mothers may also acquire citizenship if the father is unknown (UNHCR 22/12/2021a). Nationality is determined by the spoken dialect, the clan and reference persons (Landinfo 5/3/2026). Generally, a certificate of citizenship must be issued if a (officially registered) clan elder confirms the person's origin. There is no indication that such a declaration made by an elder can be contested (UNHCR 22/12/2021a).

Somaliland's citizenship law permits dual citizenship (Landinfo 5/3/2026; cf. Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). An exception is made for women who marry a foreign national and take on his nationality (UNHCR 22/12/2021a).

Sources

- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (9/4/2019): Somalia - Folkbokförning, medborgarskap och identitetshandlngar, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2007147/190423300.pdf, accessed 7/5/2024
- MoHDSL - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (2022): National Health Policy III 2022, https://somalilandmohd.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Somaliland_New_HP_Final-1.pdf, accessed 2/7/2024
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Omer2/ALRC - Ahmed Omer 2, Africa Legal Risk Control Ltd (17/3/2023): Somali Family Law & Practice. An Expert Report (Bericht i.A. der österreichischen und deutschen Botschaften in Nairobi); per e-Mail
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- STDOK/SEM - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (2017): Informationen aus den Protokollen der FFM Somalia 2017
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (22/12/2021a): Citizenship and Statelessness in the Horn of Africa, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2065866/61c97bea4.pdf, accessed 6/10/2023

20 Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees

20.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

The Somali government is working with the UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations to provide protection to refugees as well as to returning refugees, asylum seekers and other relevant groups (USDOS 12/8/2025). In Southern/Central Somalia, the *National Commission for Refugees and IDPs* (NCRI) is responsible for registration, whilst in Puntland this responsibility lies with the *Human Protection Department* within the Ministry of the Interior. Both organisations work in collaboration with the UNHCR (UNHCR n.da).

IDP figures and urbanisation: According to the UNHCR, 3.3 million people were considered internally displaced as of February 2026 (UNHCR 23/3/2026). In Southern/Central Somalia and Puntland, the figure stood at just under 3 million as of January 2026 (UNHCR 2026a). In 2025 and 2024 (in brackets) respectively, 664,000 (547,000) people were newly displaced, of whom 52 per cent (1 per cent) were displaced due to drought, 35 per cent (53 per cent) due to insecurity and 7 per cent (26 per cent) due to flooding (UNHCR 2026b). 80 per cent of IDPs are women and children (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026; cf. AI 29/4/2025). There are 3,700 (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026) IDP camps; according to other sources, there are more than 2,400. The vast majority of these (85 per cent) are informal camps on private land in urban areas (MBZ 4/4/2025). The camps are overcrowded and often lack access to clean drinking water and medical services (BS 2026).

IDPs vs. the urban poor: Somalia has one of the fastest rates of urbanisation in the world (NH 17/8/2023; cf. Spiegel/Hoffmann 24/9/2022). Hundreds of thousands of Somalis are abandoning pastoralism and the drought-stricken rural areas. Strictly speaking, most of them would be classified as the urban poor rather than as IDPs (Sahan/SWT 31/5/2023). In any case, this movement has led to enormous and unregulated urban growth (ACCORD 31/5/2021). According to data compiled by the World Bank, the proportion of the population living in urban areas in Somalia has risen from 33 per cent in 2000 to 55 per cent in 2024 (WB 2026c). According to figures from 2022, there were at that time at least 600,000 so-called IDPs living in Baidoa; this was significantly more than the city's population. Baidoa is sometimes described as the fastest-growing city in Africa (Spiegel/Hoffmann 24/9/2022). However, there are no figures for 'normal' urbanisation in Somalia. As a rule, only those IDPs living in camps are counted. Members of large clans, however, usually find accommodation with relatives and therefore do not live in camps (ACCORD 31/5/2021). In practice, they are generally not regarded as IDPs either, but rather asthe *urban poor* – even if they live in IDP camps. In contrast, even those Bantu who had already fled to Mogadishu in 1991 are still counted as IDPs (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). People seek help, safety and work in the cities. It is unlikely that those who have lost everything will ever return to their rural homes. Consequently, emergency aid – as is provided for IDPs, for example – is not required; rather, sustainable solutions are needed, such as training. This is because their agricultural knowledge cannot be transferred to the economic and social reality of city life (NH 17/8/2023).

Evictions: In any case, the influx into cities has led to high demand for land but also to further evictions (SPC 9/2/2022). Evictions remain a major problem, particularly in Mogadishu (HRW 4/2/2026). In 2024, approximately 200,000 evictions were recorded nationwide (AI 29/4/2025). In 2025, the government in Mogadishu frequently had land cleared, often without prior notice, in order to sell it at a profit. At least 142,000 people – mainly members of marginalised groups – were once again displaced as a result (Sahan/SWT 13/10/2025; cf. UN OCHA 27/1/2026). According to the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the figure for 2025 stood at more than 194,000 people nationwide, of whom around 150,000 were in Mogadishu; in the first four months of 2026, the figure stood at just under 15,000 (NRC 4/2026). *Amnesty International puts* the number of forced displacements for the year 2025 at more than 250,000 (AI 21/4/2026).

Human rights: According to one source, the term 'IDP' in Somalia is now a code for outsiders – for people who are expected to return to their home regions; for people who do not enjoy the same rights as residents and cannot access the same services (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Some of the IDPs are subjected to ongoing, serious human rights violations (AA 9/3/2026; cf. BS 2026); their particular vulnerability and need for assistance are exploited and abused by all manner of non-state – as well as state – bodies. Beatings, rape, the diversion of food aid, restrictions on movement and discrimination based on clan affiliation are commonplace (AA 9/3/2026). Female and underage IDPs are particularly at risk of sexual violence and exploitation (UNHRC/UNGA 30/1/2026; cf. USDOS 12/8/2025; AI 29/4/2025). The burden of domestic work, including collecting firewood and water, falls predominantly on women's shoulders. As they are forced to travel long distances with inadequate safety measures in place, the risk of becoming victims of gender-based violence increases (Sahan/SWT 31/5/2023; cf. Sahan/SWT 9/2/2024). According to the UN, new arrivals in particular face an increased risk in this regard (UNSC 3/6/2024). On the other hand, there are hardly any attacks by al-Shabaab on IDP camps, as their own families often live there too (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Provision: IDPs generally lack access to sufficient food and acceptable accommodation (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). However, the condition of IDP camps varies. Whilst the newer ones are usually extremely rudimentary, older camps generally have basic sanitation, healthcare and educational facilities (FIS 7/8/2020b). Neighbourhood support networks have often been established there as well (ACCORD 31/5/2021). [*Note: For further information, see* REFERENCE NOT FOUND: Basic services and the humanitarian situation]

Support: A media report states that 20,000 IDPs in Baidoa are living on land that has been transferred to them (Spiegel/Hoffmann 24/9/2022). In Galmudug, too, land title deeds were issued to a hundred IDPs (RD 11/3/2024). UNHCR reports on the construction of both temporary and permanent accommodation, for example in Cadaado (Galmudug) (UNHCR 23/6/2024). The houses in Cadaado were handed over to 117 IDP families in June 2025 (Dawan 12/6/2025). In 2024, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) provided more than 171,000 IDPs with essential items (e.g. tarpaulins, mattresses, mosquito nets) (ICRC 1/2025). NGOs describe the situation of IDPs in Puntland as thoroughly positive; for example, they are able to engage in regular work (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). In early 2025, a thousand IDP families in Garowe were handed over small plots of land with houses – funded through a World Bank programme (RE 16/

1/2025). Furthermore, IDPs in Puntland were allowed to exercise their right to vote and stand for election in the last local elections. Bantu and Digil/Mirifle from southern Somalia were also elected (Horn 22/4/2024). In Doolow (Jubaland), the African Development Bank is providing US$21 million in funding for a project that includes the construction of 2,000 shelters and training programmes for displaced persons (Dawan 16/6/2026).

Refugees: As of January 2026, there were approximately 6,800 refugees and asylum seekers in Southern/Central Somalia, and 14,700 in Puntland. Nationwide, these people originate almost entirely from Ethiopia (65 per cent), Yemen (29 per cent) and Syria (5 per cent) (UNHCR 2026a). Since spring 2024, Somalia has had its own law protecting refugees and asylum seekers (Halqabsi 3/3/2024; cf. USDOS 12/8/2025). Asylum seekers from Yemen are granted asylum status *on a prima facie basis* (USDOS 12/8/2025). Through partner organisations, psychosocial support, education, counselling, medical assistance and also support with living expenses are provided (UNHCR n.db).

In early 2025, Puntland deported an estimated thousand Ethiopian nationals who were undocumented (HO 20/2/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AI - Amnesty International (21/4/2026): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia, accessed 21/4/2026
- AI - Amnesty International (29/4/2025): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2024, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2124628.html, accessed 26/6/2025
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (16/6/2026): Jubaland Launches $21 Million Project For Displaced in Doolow, https://www.dawan.africa/news/jubaland-launches-dollar21-million-project-for-displaced-in-doolow, accessed 3/7/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (12/6/2025): Over 100 Displaced Families Receive Permanent Housing in Somalia, https://www.dawan.africa/news/over-100-displaced-families-receive-permanent-housing-in-somalia, accessed 17/10/2025
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020b): Somalia: Tiedonhankintamatka Mogadishuun maaliskuussa 2020, Mogadishun turvallisuustilanne ja humanitääriset olosuhteet, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf/f58d6cd5-271a-55fd-9b89-b3d32e4ff80b/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf?t=1596797440011, accessed 12/3/2024
- Halqabsi - Halqabsi News (3/3/2024): President Hassan Sheikh Signs New Law on Refugees and Asylum Seekers, https://halqabsi.com/2024/03/hassan-sheikh-signs-new, accessed 22/4/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (20/2/2025): Puntland expands deportations as foreign nationals allegedly join ISIS, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Feb/200332/puntland_expands_deportations_as_forei

gn_nationals_allegedly_join_isis.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 20/4/2026
- Horn - Horn Observer (22/4/2024): One region, that may reshape the security structure of Somalia, https://hornobserver.com/articles/2718/One-region-that-may-reshape-the-security-structure-of-Somalia, accessed 7/5/2024
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross (1/2025): Somalia - Facts & Figures 2024, https://blogs.icrc.org/app/uploads/sites/99/2025/02/ENG-Facts-and-Figures-2024.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- NH - New Humanitarian, The (17/8/2023): 'There's no future in this IDP camp': Why Somalia's crisis needs a rethink, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2096012.html, accessed 25/9/2023
- NRC - Norwegian Refugee Council (4/2026): Somalia Evictions, https://somevictions.app.nrc.no, accessed 20/4/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- RD - Radio Dalsan (11/3/2024): Galmudug State Commission for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons issue title deeds to families in the regional State, https://www.radiodalsan.com/galmudug-commission-for-refugees-and-internally-displaced-persons-issue-title-deeds-to-families-in-the-regional-state, accessed 7/5/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (16/1/2025): New houses and amenities for 1,000 IDP families in Garowe, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/01/new-houses-and-amenities-for-1000-idp-families-in-garowe/, accessed 7/1/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (13/10/2025): Mogadishu's Hollow Human Rights Victory, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 884, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (9/2/2024): Somalia's gender-based violence crisis, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 646, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (31/5/2023): Somalia's displaced population: Urban and unidentified, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 547, per e-Mail
- SPC - Somalia Protection Cluster (9/2/2022): Protection Analysis Update, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOM_PAU_Somalia-Protection-Analysis_Feb2022.pdf, accessed 15/11/2023
- Spiegel/Hoffmann - Heiner Hoffmann (Author), Spiegel, Der (Publisher) (24/9/2022): 'Es gibt kein Leben mehr in dieser Gegend', https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/klimawandel-wegen-einer-duerre-steht-somalia-vor-der-hungersnot-a-1f1f0b33-5f19-4bea-a4a8-ba14507971fc, accessed 15/12/2023
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (n.da): Applying for asylum in Somalia, https://help.unhcr.org/somalia/en/asylum, accessed 16/9/2025
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (n.db): Assistance in Somalia, https://help.unhcr.org/somalia/en/services, accessed 16/9/2025
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (23/3/2026): Operational Update (February 2026) - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/1a005975-9ff8-5936-b0dd-1d4147bb4eb6/UNHCR Somalia - Monthly Operational Update February 2026.pdf, accessed 24/3/2026
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2026a): Operational Data Portal - Somalia, https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/som, accessed 25/3/2026
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2026b): Somalia: Internal Displacement, https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/1, accessed 23/3/2026
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (23/6/2024): Operational Update (May 2024) - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/unhcr-somalia-operational-update-may-2024, accessed 11/7/2024
- UNHRC/UNGA - United Nations General Assembly (Publisher), United Nations Human Rights Council (Author) (30/1/2026): Visit to Somalia. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Ben Saul, https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/61/52/Add.2, accessed 23/4/2026

- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (27/1/2026): Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026, https://www.unocha.org/attachments/edea4204-0921-4741-862f-203c6f75a631/Somalia_HNRP_2026.pdf, accessed 23/3/2026
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (3/6/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/426) [EN/AR/RU/ZH], https://reliefweb.int/attachments/2ee6cff6-d8b3-4bac-bf53-5c07f96b1a9f/n2414191.pdf, accessed 28/6/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- WB - World Bank, The (2026c): Urban population (% of total population) - Somalia, Fed. Rep., https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?locations=SO, accessed 17/4/2026

20.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:31

Refugees and asylum seekers: Somaliland cooperates with the UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations to provide support to refugees as well as to returning refugees, asylum seekers and other relevant groups (USDOS 12/8/2025). The *National Displacement and Refugee Agency* (NDRA) is responsible for registering asylum seekers. The procedure is handled by the UNHCR in two stages (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. UNHCR n.da). The *Ministry of Resettlement and Humanitarian Affairs* (MoRHA) and the UNHCR register new arrivals; in January 2026, this figure stood at 322 people. A total of 233 asylum-seeker certificates and 229 identity cards were issued to them (UNHCR 23/3/2026).

According to – older – data from the FFM Somalia 2023, people from Syria and Yemen are granted *prima facie* asylum, whilst people from East Africa – particularly from Ethiopia – undergo an asylum procedure. Asylum seekers are issued with a specific asylum seeker's document. Following a rejection by the court of second instance, rejected asylum seekers must leave Somaliland of their own accord within 30 days; otherwise, they may be arrested by the police and deported to Ethiopia. Ethiopians can register for an AVRR programme and are then assisted by the IOM with their return (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

In January 2026, there were more than 25,400 registered asylum seekers and refugees in Somaliland. Almost all of them came from Ethiopia, Yemen and Syria (UNHCR 2026a). There are reports from both September 2022 (SD 4/9/2022) and February 2025 that some Ethiopians have been deported to their home country (SD 24/2/2025). In August 2025, the government called on unregistered Ethiopians to register with the immigration authorities in order to obtain a residence permit (HO 30/8/2025).

The **UNHCR supports refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs** and, in some cases, members of the host community by providing, amongst other things, legal advice and representation, mediation and assistance in securing emergency accommodation (UNHCR 23/6/2024; cf. LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Through partner organisations, psychosocial support, education, counselling, medical assistance, support with living expenses (UNHCR n.db; cf. UNHCR 23/3/2026) and assistance with legal matters are provided (UNHCR 23/3/2026). In addition, UNHCR operates a helpline and has access to refugees and asylum seekers who are in detention. Those of school age are supported with registration and admission to examinations (UNHCR 23/6/2024). As of

February 2026, UNHCR's cooperation with the *Hargeysa Group Hospital* had been suspended, thereby restricting medical care for refugees (UNHCR 23/3/2026).

In a survey on interaction with migrants in some neighbourhoods of Hargeysa, around 50 per cent of respondents stated that they help migrants. A quarter reported having social interactions. Assistance is provided in the form of food (89 per cent), water (55 per cent), money (40 per cent), as well as clothing, accommodation, help with finding work or medical support (MMC/IOM 19/8/2022). However, in August 2025, attacks on Ethiopian migrants took place in Hargeysa. The government and the police have condemned these incidents and announced that those responsible will be prosecuted (HO 30/8/2025).

IDPs: As of January 2026, there were approximately 359,000 IDPs in Somaliland(UNHCR 2026a); in May 2024, the figure was approximately 613,000 **(** UNHCR 23/6/2024).

IDPs are affected by further displacement, forced evictions and also by the government's neglect of their basic needs. Many of them live in remote areas, far from basic services, and often lack a regular income, which restricts their freedom of movement and contributes to insecurity and social isolation (HRCSL 2025).

IDPs / people from southern/central Somalia: According to sources from the Norwegian COI unit Landinfo, very few people migrate from southern/central Somalia to Somaliland. If they do go to northern Somalia, they usually choose Puntland. Only 3 per cent of IDPs in Hargeysa come from the south (Landinfo 5/3/2026). A source from the FFM Somalia 2023 explains that moving to Somaliland is difficult. People from other parts of Somalia are perceived there, on the one hand, as not being citizens and, on the other, as potential militants. However, even though such a move can sometimes be difficult, people from southern/central Somalia can live in Somaliland (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). People from other parts of Somalia are generally referred to as *'xamrawi'* in Somaliland (STDOK/SEM 5/2023b).

A fundamental problem is that people originating from southern and central Somalia are regarded as IDPs by the international community, but as refugees by Somaliland. From Somaliland's perspective, they are not citizens (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023; Landinfo 5/3/2026). The UNHCR, for its part, rules out the possibility of Somali citizens being designated as refugees within their own country (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The situation of refugees from southern and central Somalia is fundamentally precarious (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024); there is, in practice, no legal framework and no status for these people (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023). The NDRA, the government body formerly responsible for this matter, stated that whilst these individuals are not registered, this has the advantage that they cannot be rejected under the asylum system (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). As such, irregular migrants from southern and central Somalia are tolerated and not deported (Landinfo 5/3/2026).

According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, there is no discrimination by the government against people who have fled from southern/central Somalia – for example, due to the drought – and are living in IDP camps (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Another source explains that

there are no restrictions in everyday life for people from Southern/Central Somalia in Somaliland (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The state refugee agency, the NDRA, states that people from Somalia can move freely in Somaliland and are able to work and rent accommodation there. In IDP camps, they can make use of the services provided there (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to other reports, it can sometimes be difficult for people from southern/central Somalia to travel within Somaliland. For example, at checkpoints – after being identified by their accent – they must produce documents and are questioned there about their plans. If a person cannot produce any documents, they are asked for a contact who can be phoned (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to another source, people from southern/central Somalia receive no state protection. IDPs are therefore subject to arbitrary arrests and discrimination (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). According to other reports, whilst these people are tolerated, they have only limited opportunities. Without belonging to a local clan, they automatically have poorer job prospects and are hardly able to defend their interests in the event of conflicts with the local population (Landinfo 5/3/2026).

Sources from the FFM Somalia 2023 have provided the following information: People from Somalia do not have access to a Somaliland identity card in Somaliland (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). However, such an ID card is required to access public services in Somaliland (LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). This also applies to formal employment. As a result, people from Somalia are de facto excluded from jobs with the government or NGOs (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to the NDRA, the government agency formerly responsible for this matter, people from southern and central Somalia, on the other hand, are able to access all public services and open bank accounts using their Somali ID. If someone already has family in Somaliland, they can help; if not, one can ‘get a sponsorship by a Somalilander’ (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Furthermore, according to one source, the authorities can issue a work permit; these are issued, for example, to skilled workers (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to several sources, work in the informal sector or as a casual worker is open to everyone – whether they are Ethiopians or people from Somalia (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to one source, people from southern and central Somalia can acquire property and set up companies in Somaliland (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). There are also some who own businesses in Somaliland and are able to make a very good living from them (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Deportations: In earlyOctober 2021, Somaliland deported thousands of refugees from southern Somalia from the town of Laascaanood. These were primarily people from the South West State (SWS) who had been resident in Somaliland for many years (SD 4/10/2021; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; Sahan/Abdi 6/10/2021; AI 29/3/2022b). Those deported were members of the Rahanweyn ethnic group (Sahan/Abdi 6/10/2021). According to a source from FFM Somalia 2023, the deportations from Laascaanood are the only known deportations of people from Southern/Central Somalia (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The NDRA has stated in this regard that, should the situation in Southern/Central Somalia improve, Somaliland will issue a ‘Go Home’ certificate to refugees originating from there (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Sources

- AI - Amnesty International (29/3/2022b): Amnesty International Report 2021/22, The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2070229.html, accessed 11/7/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (30/8/2025): Somaliland police warn of prosecution after attack on Ethiopian nationals in Hargeisa, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Aug/202730/somaliland_police_warn_of_prosecution_after_attack_on_ethiopian_nationals_in_hargeisa.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 7/10/2025
- HRCSL - Human Rights Centre (Somaliland) (2025): Annual Review of Human Rights Centre 2024, https://hrcsomaliland.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Annual-Report-2025-1.pdf, accessed 24/4/2026
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- LAW-A/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Lawyer A (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MMC/IOM - Mixed Migration Centre, International Organization for Migration (19/8/2022): Interactions between local communities and transiting migrants in Hargeisa, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/a70ebc42-0430-4195-a39f-21e2bf8740f5/241_Snapshot_Hargeisa.pdf, accessed 11/7/2024
- NDRA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), National Displacement and Refugee Agency [Somaliland] (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Sahan/Abdi - Sahan (Publisher), Rashid Abdi (Author) (6/10/2021): Somaliland's soft power debacle: Putting Laas Anood in wider perspective, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 243, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Scholar/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Scholar, Hargeysa (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SD - Somali Dispatch (24/2/2025): Somaliland deports undocumented Ethiopian migrants, https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/somaliland-deports-undocumented-ethiopian-migrants, accessed 20/4/2026
- SD - Somali Dispatch (4/9/2022): Somaliland begun to deporting foreigners, https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/somaliland-begun-to-deporting-foreigners/, accessed 11/7/2024
- SD - Somali Dispatch (4/10/2021): Some Las Anod Traditional leaders not satisfied with deportations, https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/some-las-anod-traditional-leaders-not-satisfied-with-deportations/, accessed 11/7/2024
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somaliland National (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- STDOK/SEM - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (5/2023b): Beobachtungen im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (n.da): Applying for asylum in Somalia, https://help.unhcr.org/somalia/en/asylum, accessed 16/9/2025
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (n.db): Assistance in Somalia, https://help.unhcr.org/somalia/en/services, accessed 16/9/2025

- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (23/3/2026): Operational Update (February 2026) - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/1a005975-9ff8-5936-b0dd-1d4147bb4eb6/UNHCR Somalia - Monthly Operational Update February 2026.pdf, accessed 24/3/2026
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2026a): Operational Data Portal - Somalia, https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/som, accessed 25/3/2026
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (23/6/2024): Operational Update (May 2024) - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/unhcr-somalia-operational-update-may-2024, accessed 11/7/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- Wria/SEM/STDOK - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Rashid Wria (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

21 Basic services/economy

21.1 Economy and employment

21.1.1 Southern/Central Somalia

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:31

Somalia has achieved a number of significant milestones in recent years: securing substantial debt relief amounting to 4.5 billion US dollars; integration with international financial institutions (HIPS 7/5/2024); accession to the East African Community (EAC), with its 300 million inhabitants and its customs and trade union (SG 25/11/2023; cf. HIPS 7/5/2024). Furthermore, the opening of *Ziraat Katilim Bank* in Mogadishu in 2024 marked the return of foreign banks to Somalia after five decades (HIPS 7/5/2024). Overall, however, Somalia is regarded as one of the least developed countries in the world (AI 29/4/2025).

General economic overview: Economic growthstood at 3.5 per cent in 2021, 2.7 per cent in 2022, 4.2 per cent in 2023 and 4.0 per cent in 2024 (BS 2026). By 2025, it had fallen to (an estimated) 3 per cent (WB 13/5/2026) and is forecast at 3.1 per cent for 2026 and 3.4 per cent for 2027 (AFDB 2026). However, economic growth is largely offset by population growth. This hinders the reduction of poverty (BS 2026). In 2025, for example, GDP per capita growth was recorded at less than 0 per cent, and a slightly negative GDP per capita growth is forecast for 2026. In 2027, GDP per capita is forecast to grow by 0.2 per cent (AFDB 2026). For 2025, GDP per capita is reported as 1,404 US dollars (Ethiopia: 3,095; Kenya: 5,995) (AFDB 2026). The country receives approximately US$124 per capita per year in aid (BS 2026).

Private household consumption has risen from US$9.3 billion in 2016 to US$13.3 billion in 2022. Over the same period, exports rose from 1.1 billion (of which 431 million US dollars was for livestock) to 1.8 billion US dollars (558 million for livestock) (NBS 2023).

Where the government has lacked resources and capacity, private companies have stepped in. According to estimates, local companies such as *Hormuud Telecom*, *Salaam Somali Bank*, BECO and *Buruuj* alone have invested over 2.5 billion US dollars in the country's core infrastructure over the last two decades (GO 27/6/2023).

Remittances also make a significant contribution to investment in the country – for example, in the construction sector (BS 2026; cf. AFDB 27/5/2025). In 2023, an estimated US$1.73 billion was remitted to Somalia (HO 15/7/2025b; cf. NH 30/9/2025). The World Bank estimates that these remittances account for 30–50 per cent of Somalia's total GDP (HO 15/7/2025b). Alongside the diaspora (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. Landinfo 5/3/2026), many UN agencies (such as UN-Habitat, UNICEF and UNHCR) are also actively involved in rebuilding the country (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). In urban areas, the economy across Somalia is showing signs of economic recovery. This is evident, for example, in the construction boom and the reopening of supermarkets, restaurants and shops (BS 2026). In general, the service sector is currently the driving force behind the economy (GN 30/6/2025). Somalia's economy is increasingly being controlled by the [*Note: Salafist]* Islamist group *al-I'ttisam* (AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025).

Overall, economic growth is taking place primarily in the rapidly expanding urban areas – particularly in Mogadishu, Hargeysa and Bossaso. Smaller towns and rural areas, on the other hand, are not benefiting from this (BS 2026). Furthermore, the Somali economy remains generally fragile, partly due to its narrow economic base (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The majority of the population and the Somali economy as a whole are dependent on agriculture and fisheries and are therefore particularly vulnerable to external and environmental influences (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. Sahan/SWT 11/10/2023). Over 70 per cent of the population rely on agriculture for their livelihood (Sahan/SWT 14/8/2023); according to other sources, 80 per cent work in agriculture (Kenya: 54 per cent; Ethiopia: 67 per cent) (OWID n.d). Agriculture, trade, communications and mobile money transfer services make a significant contribution to GDP; agriculture alone – and in particular livestock farming – accounts for around 60 per cent of GDP and 80 per cent of exports (BS 2026). At the same time, the majority of the economy and economic activity falls within the informal sector (UNSC 10/10/2022). Overall, reliable data on the economy is difficult or impossible to obtain or verify (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024), and trustworthy data is virtually non-existent (BS 2026). It is known that Somalia has to cover just under 90 per cent of its food requirements through imports, which drives up prices in times of crisis (e.g. the Iran–US conflict) (MSF 27/3/2026).

Inflation, currency, payment services: Inflation has fallen steadily – from 6.8 per cent in 2022 (NBS 2023) to 6.1 per cent (2023) (AFDB 27/5/2025), 5.5 per cent (2024) and 3.8 per cent in 2025. The forecasts for 2026 and 2027 are 5.2 per cent and 4.1 per cent respectively (AFDB 2026). As regards cash, so-called 'dollarisation' has progressed significantly; there are now only a few *shilling* banknotes left in circulation. These are now used only for small transactions. Mobile money transfers have largely replaced the physical exchange of banknotes (BS 2026). According to one source, the *shilling* is sometimes even refused as a means of payment (RE 18/6/2026). As early as 2021, around 73 per cent of adults in Mogadishu had access to mobile payment services (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, the only people who still pay in cash are those who either do not have a mobile phone or for whom carrying one is dangerous. Furthermore, the report states that only very poor people still pay with *Somali shillings*. Mobile money transfers are also reportedly made in US dollars (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

National budget: The government is heavily dependent on external aid. More than two-thirds of the national budget is financed by external actors (BS 2026; cf. Sahan/SWT 5/9/2025; Sahan/SWT 7/11/2025; Dawan 20/8/2025; UNSC 2/2/2024). Government expenditure is dominated by spending on administration (35 per cent) and security (25 per cent) (BS 2026). The government is dependent, amongst other things, on the priorities of donors, who finance around 73 per cent of the budget (HIPS 7/5/2024). The size of the budget has risen steadily in recent years: from 671 million US dollars in 2021 (GN 1/11/2021) to 1,300 million in 2025 (HO 8/10/2024).

Due to a lack of control over the territory – but also in terms of technical capabilities – the government has so far been unable to establish a national tax system. The federal government collects taxes primarily in and around Mogadishu. In addition, the governments of the federal states levy their own taxes (BS 2026; cf. Sahan/SWT 5/9/2025), which are not shared with the federal government (Sahan/SWT 5/9/2025). Jubaland, for example, collects approximately 200 million US dollars a year, whilst Puntland collects around 300 million (Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025). The federal government has improved its ability to collect taxes in Mogadishu (BS 2026). Nevertheless, its own revenue grew from US$260 million in 2021 (GN 1/11/2021) to US$357 million in 2025 (Sahan/SWT 7/11/2025; cf. Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025). Overall, international support fell from a peak of US$3 billion in 2020 to approximately US$2 billion (BS 2026). According to other sources, US$5–7 billion in aid flows into the country each year, in the form of humanitarian aid, security assistance and direct budget support (Sahan/SWT 5/9/2025).

Unemployment rate: According to data used by the World Bank, the unemployment rate has stood at around 19 per cent in each of the past four years (WB 2026a), whilst youth unemployment stood at around 34 per cent (WB 2026b). [*Note: For information on the labour market, see*Basic Services/Economy / Labour Market]

Sources

- AFDB - African Development Bank Group (2026): African Economic Outlook 2026, https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/afdb26-04_aeo_complete_english_0525.pdf, accessed 28/9/2026
- AFDB - African Development Bank Group (27/5/2025): African Economic Outlook 2025, https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/african-economic-outlook-2025, accessed 10/7/2025
- AI - Amnesty International (29/4/2025): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2024, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2124628.html, accessed 26/6/2025
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (20/8/2025): Somalia Risks Losing $500 Million in Aid as Development Projects Collapse, https://www.dawan.africa/news/somalia-risks-losing-dollar500-million-in-aid-as-development-projects-collapse, accessed 9/10/2025
- GN - Goobjoog News (30/6/2025): Somalia's Economy Grows 4.1% in 2024, Boosted by Investment and Services Sector, https://en.goobjoog.com/somalias-economy-grows-4-1-in-2024-boosted-by-investment-and-services-sector, accessed 17/4/2026
- GN - Goobjoog News (1/11/2021): Cabinet okays $700m expenditure for 2022, donor share at $470m, https://goobjoog.com/english/cabinet-okays-700m-expenditure-for-2022-projects-a-revenue-slump/, accessed 15/11/2024

- GO - Garowe Online (27/6/2023): Private sector key in accelerating Somalia's economic growth, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/featured/business-n/private-sector-key-in-accelerating-somalia-s-economic-growth, accessed 22/4/2024
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (7/5/2024): State Of Somalia 2023 Report, https://8v90f1.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SOS-REPORT-2023-.pdf, accessed 27/5/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (15/7/2025b): U.S. remittance tax threatens $1.7 billion Somali lifeline, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202205/u_s_remittance_tax_threatens_1_7_billion_somali_lifeline.aspx, accessed 17/4/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (8/10/2024): Somali Cabinet approves $1.3 billion budget for 2025 fiscal year, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Oct/198375/somali_cabinet_approves_1_3_billion_budget_for_2025_fiscal_year.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 17/4/2026
- INGO-C/STDOK/SEM - Internationale NGO C (Author), Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- MSF - Doctors Without Borders (27/3/2026): Somalis struggle to reach healthcare amid overwhelming fuel prices, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138678.html, accessed 29/4/2026
- NBS - National Bureau of Statistics [Somalia] (2023): Somalia Gross Domestic Product Report 2022, https://nbs.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Somalia-Gross-Domestic-Product-Report-2022-1.pdf, accessed 5/4/2024
- NH - New Humanitarian, The (30/9/2025): The diaspora lifeline that helps keep Somali families afloat, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2025/09/30/diaspora-lifeline-helps-keep-somali-families-afloat-remittances, accessed 17/4/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- OWID - Our World in Data (n.d): Share of the labor force employed in agriculture; Our World in Data based on International Labor Organization (via the World Bank) and historical sources – processed by Our World in Data, https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/share-of-the-labor-force-employed-in-agriculture?mapSelect=SOM~{}KEN~{}ETH, accessed 9/12/2025
- Q. Müller/Afrique XXI - Afrique XXI (Publisher), Quentin Müller (Author) (4/5/2025): En Somalie, les Chabab profitent de la crise et s'approchent de Mogadiscio, https://afriquexxi.info/En-Somalie-les-Chabab-profitent-de-la-crise-et-s-approchent-de-Mogadiscio, accessed 10/7/2025
- RE - Radio Ergo (18/6/2026): Shillings turn to trash in the hands of Somali small traders and poor consumers, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/06/shillings-turn-to-trash-in-the-hands-of-somali-small-traders-and-poor-consumers, accessed 10/9/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (7/11/2025): A New Humanitarian Crisis Looms, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 893, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (5/9/2025): HIPC hiccups or financial Armageddon?, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 869, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (11/10/2023): Somalia's political economy and debt relief, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 603, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (14/8/2023): Environmental Peacebuilding in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 578, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SG - Somali Guardian (25/11/2023): Somalia joins east Africa trade bloc as it eyes new opportunities, https://somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/somalia-joins-east-africa-trade-bloc-as-it-eyes-new-opportunities, accessed 22/4/2024
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (2/2/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2023/758], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2106391/n2401965.pdf, accessed 4/6/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (10/10/2022): Letter dated 10 October 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed

to the President of the Security Council: Letter dated 1 September 2022 from the Panel of Experts on Somalia addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia [S/2022/754], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2081261/N2263844.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023
- WB - World Bank, The (13/5/2026): Somalia's Growth Continues, But Shocks and Aid Cuts Intensify Risks to Jobs and Livelihoods, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2026/05/13/somalia-growth-continues-but-shocks-and-aid-cuts-intensify-risks-to-jobs-and-livelihoods, accessed 28/9/2026
- WB - World Bank, The (2026a): Data, Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) - Somalia, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=SO, accessed 17/4/2026
- WB - World Bank, The (2026b): Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) - Somalia, Fed. Rep., https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=SO, accessed 17/4/2026

21.1.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:29

The main drivers of the economy and GDP are livestock farming and services (BS 2026; cf. MoFDSL n.db); livestock is the main export (GovSL 2026a). The economy is dominated by the informal sector (ISIR/A. Sancawl 3/2025; cf. FH 2024a). Potential resources such as mineral wealth, fisheries, forestry, agriculture and tourism are scarcely exploited due to inadequate infrastructure (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

In 2024, GDP per capita stood at US$1,361 per capita according to one source (FAF 17/2/2025); today, it stands at US$1,500, according to government figures (GovSL 2026a). According to other figures – also from the government – GDP rose from US$696 per capita in 2020 to US$912 in 2024. [*Note: The discrepancies are presumably due, above all, to the fact that different population figures were used in each case*] In any case, total GDP has risen from US$2.925 billion in 2020 to US$4.280 billion in 2024 (current price) or from 2.272 to 2.607 billion US dollars (constant price) (MoPNDSL 2025).Despite the progress in GDP, economic instability poses a significant risk, according to one source (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Budget: Somaliland's annual budget has grown in recent years (BS 2026). In 2015, it amounted to just 156 million US dollars (HD 14/1/2021), whilst the budget for 2026 is estimated at 4.58 trillion Somaliland shillings (approx. 424.5 million US dollars) (HD 29/11/2025; cf. Araweelo 16/2/2026). Revenue comes primarily from customs duties and foreign trade (BS 2026). In 2024, more than 38 per cent of government expenditure went towards security, 21 per cent towards governance, 18 per cent towards the economic sector, 5 per cent towards healthcare and 7 per cent towards education (MoPNDSL 2025).

Somaliland has virtually no debt; debt repayment accounts for only around 2 per cent of the budget (MoFDSL n.da). The country cannot borrow abroad and therefore has no external debt (FT/Wallis 12/3/2026); without state recognition, it is denied access to funding from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Welt/Putsch 10/7/2025). Due to the lack of recognition, much of the donor funding bypasses the government and goes to NGOs (Odero 4/2024). Consequently, the government relies almost exclusively on revenue generated within

the country for its budget (Sahan/SWT 16/10/2024). Overall, the budget is too small to provide the population with more than basic services (BS 2026).

Economy: The economy is essentially dominated by nomads; around 50 per cent of the population keep a few goats, camels and sheep (MoHDSL 2022). Livestock sold to Arab countries also constitutes the main export, accounting for 70 per cent (FT/Wallis 12/3/2026; cf. GovSL 2026a), whilst livestock farming contributes 50 per cent to GDP. The rest of the agricultural sector focuses on crops such as sorghum, maize, sesame, vegetables and fruit (FAF 17/2/2025). Nevertheless, the majority of staple foods must be imported. Efforts have been made in the fruit and vegetable sector to increase local production. As for the main cereal crops – maize and sorghum – droughts repeatedly lead to significant fluctuations in harvest yields (MoHDSL 2022).

Electricity is very expensive by regional standards (MIATR 11/2025). The World Bank supported a project to expand the energy infrastructure with just under 24 million US dollars in 2024 alone (MoFDSL 2025).

Remittances from the Somali diaspora play a crucial role in supporting the economy by providing financial assistance to households and funding various economic activities (DRC/Danida 2/2024). Remittances from the diaspora have halved since 2021 to around US$1.2 billion (MoFDSL 2025). According to other figures, remittances account for around one-third of the GDP of US$4.28 billion (FT/Wallis 12/3/2026). Through remittances and direct investment, the diaspora plays a crucial role in economic development (Landinfo 5/3/2026; cf. GovSL 2026a). According to older figures, almost 80per cent of the start-up capital for small and medium-sized enterprises comesfrom the diaspora (Sahan/SWT 4/10/2021). Indeed, a great deal of investment has been mobilised from the diaspora, and Hargeysa boasts a thriving economy (Marchal/CERI 1/2026). The service sector is growing (FAF 17/2/2025).

Inflation and payment services: Inflation has recently been high (Welt/Putsch 10/7/2025). Whilst it stood at 5.6 per cent in 2020 and 3.8 per cent in 2021, it has risen to 9.2 per cent per annum by 2024. Inflation was driven in particular by rising food prices (MoPNDSL 2025). The exchange rate of *the Somaliland Shilling* against the US dollar has fallen from 1:6,409 in 2012 to 1:9,003 in 2024 (MoFDSL 2025).

Mobile payment services [*Note: via mobile phone*] are increasingly replacing banknotes overall, whilst the economy largely uses the US dollar (BS 2026). According to one estimate, 90 per cent of transactions in Somaliland are carried out via mobile services; this does not require an internet connection – simply dialling a telephone number is sufficient. Payments are made via the two services *Zaad* (*Telesom*) and *eDahab* (*Dahabshiil*). For example, the Somaliland government pays its employees via this so-called 'mobile money' (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). To register for these services, at least in Somaliland, an identity card is required (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The FFM Somalia 2023 delegation observed that every market stall and every shop displays a six-digit number (*Zaad*) and a five-digit number (*eDahab*) – for example, on posters, table stands or at the shop entrance. Very few people use cash (STDOK/SEM 5/2023b), with the *Somaliland Shilling* serving as change for dollar banknotes (STDOK/SEM 5/2023b; cf. DRC/Danida 2/2024).

Unemployment: According to one source, (official) youth unemployment in Somaliland stands at an estimated 60 per cent (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024); according to other figures, it is as high as 75 per cent (Dawan 13/5/2025). According to the World Bank, however, unemployment amongst the working-age population across the whole of Somalia stood at 18.9 per cent in 2025 (WB 2026a), whilst youth unemployment was reported to be 34.2 per cent (WB 2026b). In a study from 2024, however, only 25 per cent of 192 respondents stated that they were not in employment (DRC/Danida 2/2024).

Sources

- Araweelo - Araweelo News Network (16/2/2026): Historic Milestone: Somaliland Unveils Its Largest Ever National Budget for 2026, https://www.araweelonews.com/news-in-english/historic-milestone-somaliland-unveils-its-largest-ever-national-budget-for-2026, accessed 24/3/2026
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (13/5/2025): Somaliland Aims for 75% Youth Jobs via Vocational Training, https://www.dawan.africa/news/somaliland-aims-for-75percent-youth-jobs-via-vocational-training, accessed 24/3/2026
- DRC/Danida - Danish Refugee Council, Danida (2/2024): Labour Market Analysis Somaliland. Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for Migrants, https://drc.ngo/media/japkaaka/labour-market-analysis-somaliland.pdf, accessed 16/7/2025
- FAF - Foreign Affairs Forum (17/2/2025): What is Somaliland Socio-economic and political background - 2025?, https://www.faf.ae/home/2025/2/17/what-is-somaliland-socio-economic-and-political-background-2025, accessed 24/3/2026
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- FT/Wallis - William Wallis (Author), Financial Times (Publisher) (12/3/2026): The breakaway African state building Coca-Cola plants and Emirati ports, https://www.ft.com/content/74d547fc-90b0-48bd-be5e-af6e4f317130?syn-25a6b1a6=1, accessed 18/3/2026 [fee required]
- GovSL - Government of Somaliland [Somaliland] (2026a): The Economy, https://www.govsomaliland.online/article/the-economy, accessed 24/3/2026
- HD - Horn Diplomat (29/11/2025): Somaliland Cabinet Endorses Record $424 Million Budget for 2026, Citing Strong Revenue Outlook, https://www.horndiplomat.com/somaliland-cabinet-endorses-record-424-million-budget-for-2026-citing-strong-revenue-outlook, accessed 24/3/2026
- HD - Horn Diplomat (14/1/2021): Somaliland Budget Analysis 2021, https://www.horndiplomat.com/2021/01/14/somaliland-budget-analysis-2021/, accessed 15/12/2023
- ISIR/A. Sancawl - Institute for Strategic Insights and Research (Publisher), Abdiwahab Sancawl (Author) (3/2025): Can Sales Tax Be Effective in Somaliland's Informal Economy? Challenges, Impacts, and Policy Solutions, https://isirthinktank.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Sales-Tax-Effectiveness-V1.pdf, accessed 24/3/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- Marchal/CERI - Roland Marchal (Author), Centre de Recherches Internationales SciencesPo (Publisher) (1/2026): The Recognition of Somaliland by Israel as An indicator of a Geopolitical Dynamic between the Horn and the Gulf, Les Analyses du CERI, https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/files/Somaliland_Janvier2026_AnalyseCERI.pdf, accessed 30/1/2026
- MIATR - Millî İstihbarat Akademisi (11/2025): Türkiye-Somali Ilişkileri: Çok Boyutlu Bir Ortaklik Modeli, https://mia.edu.tr/uploads/f/topic_6.pdf, accessed 9/12/2025
- MoFDSL - Ministry of Finance Development [Somaliland] (n.da): Central Government Budget FY 2023, https://cdn.sanity.io/files/e0lpub15/production/6e9f92baedf12e6b528cb9f7a3a0248db4817540.pdf?dl=, accessed 16/10/2024
- MoFDSL - Ministry of Finance Development [Somaliland] (n.db): Budget Outlook Paper FY 2024, https://cdn.sanity.io/files/e0lpub15/production/633a938e99c1985ce00b27aeac6371bbc69d1df0.pdf?dl=, accessed 16/10/2024

- MoFDSL - Ministry of Finance Development [Somaliland] (2025): 2025 Citizen's Budget Book, https://cdn.sanity.io/files/e0lpub15/production/47ba32c60c76bb483b2e34923b685d6c3953e1dc.pdf, accessed 1/6/2026
- MoHDSL - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (2022): National Health Policy III 2022, https://somalilandmohd.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Somaliland_New_HP_Final-1.pdf, accessed 2/7/2024
- MoPNDSL - Ministry of Planning and National Development, Central Statistics Department [Somaliland] (2025): Leading Macroeconomic Indicators, https://mopnd.govsomaliland.org/site/downloadfile/file/MjAyNS8xMS8yMDI1LTExLTA2LTA1LTUzLTM4LTk3NC0xNzYyNDA4NDE4LnBkZg==, accessed 24/3/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Odero - Vitalis Okoth Odero (4/2024): Mental Health: A Situational Analysis of Somaliland 2023, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380792721_MENTAL_HEALTH_A_SITUATIONAL_ANALYSIS_OF_SOMALILAND_2023, accessed 3/7/2024
- Omer/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Ahmed Omer (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/10/2024): Fantasy Economics in Somalia's Budget Strategy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 744, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (4/10/2021): The pitfalls of diaspora-led state-building, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 241, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- STDOK/SEM - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (5/2023b): Beobachtungen im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- WB - World Bank, The (2026a): Data, Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate) - Somalia, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=SO, accessed 17/4/2026
- WB - World Bank, The (2026b): Unemployment, youth total (% of total labor force ages 15-24) (modeled ILO estimate) - Somalia, Fed. Rep., https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=SO, accessed 17/4/2026
- Welt/Putsch - Christian Putsch (Author), Welt (Publisher) (10/7/2025): Horn von Afrika: „Jeder will diesen 850 Kilometer langen Küstenstreifen', https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article256239118/horn-von-afrika-jeder-will-diesen-850-kilometer-langen-kuestenstreifen.html, accessed 24/3/2026

21.2 Basic services and the humanitarian situation

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:31

Somalia was most recently ranked 192nd out of 193 countries surveyed on *the Human Development Index* (UNDP 2025). The country remains dependent on international aid and financial support (BS 2026). The basic food supply for the population is not guaranteed in large parts of the country, particularly in rural areas of southern and central Somalia (AA 9/3/2026). The country is dependent on food imports (rice, pasta, sugar, flour, oil) (BS 2026). Acute food insecurity remains high (IPC 23/9/2026a), due to a combination of factors: the lingering effects of previous droughts, erratic rainfall during the *Gu* rainy season (April–June), conflict and insecurity, above-average food prices, and the expected El-Niño-induced flooding during the forthcoming *Deyr* rainy season (October–December) (IPC 23/9/2026a; cf. AA 9/3/2026). There are hardly any public services; services such as water and electricity supply, as well as education and

healthcare, are mostly provided by private service providers. And even though there is substantial international support in place, such services are difficult or impossible for many people to access (BS 2026). At the same time, humanitarian aid was drastically reduced as early as 2025. The target for 2025 was scaled back from 4.6 million people reached to 1.3 million, and the estimated costs were reduced from 1.42 billion to 367 million US dollars (UN OCHA 6/7/2025; cf. UNSC 30/9/2025). This trend continued in 2026; for the period July–September, the target number of people in need of aid reached was stated as just over 400,000 (IPC 23/9/2026a).

Somaliland – specifics: Overall, the supply situation in Somaliland is generally better than in Southern/Central Somalia, owing to the improved security situation, the more streamlined organisation of public bodies and better-coordinated official interventions. However, even there, the basic supply of food to the population is not consistently guaranteed (AA 9/3/2026). Whilst the government is able to provide some basic services, a high level of poverty still prevails in the country. There is no public welfare system. Social support is provided either through Islamic charitable organisations, NGOs or the clan. Housing, the labour market and poverty alleviation are the responsibility of the private sector. The extended family and the clan form the actual social safety net. Remittances from abroad also contribute significantly to this network (BS 2026). The government, in collaboration with private investors, is attempting to make the country less dependent on food imports by investing millions in the agricultural sector. To date, Somaliland imports a considerable proportion of the food consumed in the country; its own agriculture cannot sufficiently meet demand (SLST 12/5/2025).

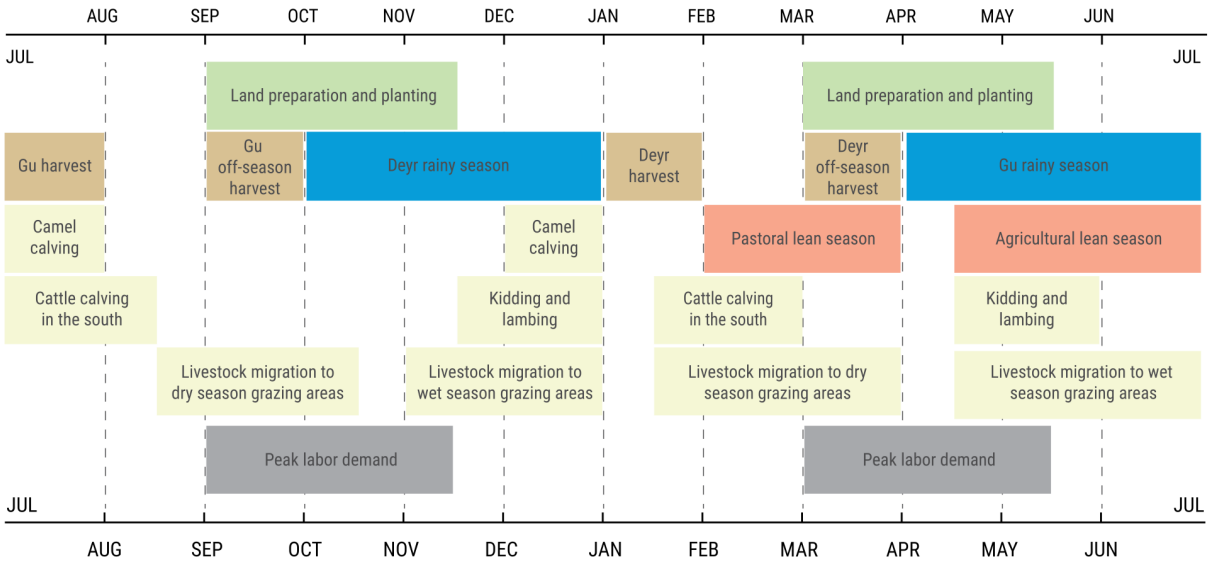
Poverty: Large sections of the population in Somalia suffer from poverty and food insecurity. An estimated 54 per cent of the population live below the poverty line (WFP 27/6/2025). According to the African Development Bank, however, the poverty rate has risen from 54 per cent in 2022 to 67 per cent in 2024 (AFDB 27/5/2025). According to yet other figures, seven out of ten people in Somalia live on less than US$1.90 a day (WHO 4/3/2026; cf. BS 2026). In any case, according to UNICEF, 80 per cent of children (aged 5–17) live in multidimensional poverty (Dawan 19/6/2026). Poverty is particularly severe and widespread in rural areas and in settlements for internally displaced persons (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. Dawan 19/6/2026). The poor live on the breadline and lack adequate access to basic services such as housing, clean water, healthcare, schools and energy (BS 2026). In general, Somali households are vulnerable to emergencies due to natural disasters, epidemics, injury or death. A lack of education, excessive dependence on agricultural income, high unemployment, low levels of prosperity and large household sizes further contribute to this (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Drought, rainfall, climate: On the INFORM Risk Index for the first half of 2025, Somalia ranks second from last out of 191 countries surveyed, with a score of 8.2 (0 = very good, 10 = very poor) (EC/DRMKC 2025). The index assesses the likelihood of humanitarian crises and disasters (EC/DRMKC n.d). Fundamentally, Somalia is the second most vulnerable country in the world in terms of climate change (Sahan/SWT 31/1/2025). Climate shocks are no longer sporadic occurrences (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026), and they are becoming increasingly extreme, making livestock farming – the lifeblood of agriculture in Somalia – increasingly unsustainable. As a result, people in southern and central Somalia are being displaced, and the trend towards

migration to the cities is intensifying (Sahan/SWT 14/5/2025; cf. Q. Müller/Afrique XXI 4/5/2025). Furthermore, deforestation, overgrazing and generally unsustainable resource management are leading to the destruction of ecosystems, falling groundwater levels and soil erosion, which in turn are causing mass displacement triggered by recurring environmental shocks (BS 2026). At the same time, natural disasters, caused by the dwindling of grazing land and water resources, also contribute to the escalation of conflicts between clans (Sahan/SWT 31/1/2025).

In November 2025, the federal government and several federal states declared a drought emergency. This led to widespread water shortages, crop failures, livestock losses and displacements. The situation was exacerbated by the failure of the *Karan* rainy season in the north and the *Deyr* rainy season across the country. The northern regions thus experienced their fourth consecutive rainy season without rainfall (WHO 4/3/2026). Rainfall during the 2026 *Gu* rainy season – despite being below average – contributed to an improvement in food security in pastoral, agropastoral and riverine areas. With the exception of Gedo in particular, rainfall levels in southern Somalia were largely in line with the average. This has favoured plant growth, improved grazing and forage conditions, and led to a moderate recovery of grazing and water resources, which in turn benefits livestock farming and the recovery of livestock numbers. In northern and central Somalia, as well as in parts of the Bay, Bakool, Hiiraan and Gedo regions, rainfall was insufficient to below average and unevenly distributed. Overall, the 2026 *Gu* rainy season thus brought mixed results for arable farming and livestock husbandry. Whilst favourable conditions in many southern areas boosted production, rainfall deficits elsewhere led to below-average crop yields, local shortages of crops, pasture and water, and only limited recovery of livelihoods in the affected regions. For the coming *Deyr* rainy season, average to above-average rainfall is expected across large parts of Somalia, largely due to the *El Niño* phenomenon (IPC 23/9/2026a).

The United Nations outlines the usual climatic and agricultural phases of the Somali year [*Note: Apart from these, there are other specific rainy seasons in some areas*]:



Sources 32: UN OCHA 27/1/2026

Floods: In 2025 and 2026 (up to 23 September), comparatively few people were displaced by flooding – 46,000 (mainly in Middle Shabelle) and 13,000 (mainly in Hiiraan) (UNHCR/PSMN 2026). During the 2026 Deyr rainy season, heavy rainfall and severe flooding are expected in the river valleys and low-lying areas due to *El Niño* (IPC 23/9/2026a).

Displacement due to drought: In 2025, approximately 345,000 people across Somalia were displaced by persistent drought – particularly in November and December (approximately 300,000). The regions of Sool, Mudug, Sanaag, Bari and Nugaal were particularly affected – in other words, the east of Somaliland and the whole of Puntland. By 27 September 2026, a total of more than 567,000 people had been counted as displaced due to drought, 500,000 of whom were displaced between January and April (by way of comparison: at the height of the previous drought in 2022, there were a total of 1.2 million displaced people). In 2026, the regions of Mudug (187,000), Galgaduud (122,000), Middle Shabelle (70,000), Lower Juba (38,000), Lower Shabelle (30,000) and Sanaag (25,000) were particularly concerned. By contrast, the UNHCR/PSMN platform reports no drought-displaced persons from the Awdal and Woqooyi Galbeed regions (UNHCR/PSMN 2026).

Agricultural production, prices: The well below-average *Deyr* harvests in 2025 have meant that food prices for key staple foods have remained high in many parts of the country – despite an above-average harvest in July 2026. Cereal production for the 2026 *Gu* season is estimated at 150,400 tonnes for southern Somalia. This represents the largest *Gu* harvest since 2018, which is also 32 per cent above the long-term average (1995–2025). In contrast, production from the *Gu/Karan* harvest in the north-west is estimated at just 10,020 tonnes – 76 per cent below the 2010–2025 average. The situation regarding pasture and livestock varies across the country. In the southern regions, pasture and water resources are of average to good quality (with shortages in parts of Hiiraan and Gedo). In contrast, grazing, fodder and water conditions in the central and northern regions range from below average to poor, with the worst conditions found in the central and northern parts of the east coast, in the regions of Sanaag, Sool and Bari, and in parts of the Nugaal, Mudug and Galgaduud regions (IPC 23/9/2026a).

In July 2026, prices for maize and sorghum remained high – 28 per cent above the five-year average. Strong demand, limited market supply, the security situation and high levies are keeping cereal prices high. Prices for imported staple foods have also risen – due to the devaluation of the national currency, the declining acceptance of the Somali shilling in parts of southern Somalia, conflicts and high transport costs. Consequently, the cost of the basket of goods required to meet minimum needs was 23 per cent above the five-year average. Households with low incomes and few coping strategies are particularly affected. Prices for local and imported food are expected to remain above average in most parts of the country until the end of 2026 (IPC 23/9/2026a).

Water supply: 52 per cent of the population have access to basic water supply; in rural areas, the figure is just 28 per cent (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). According to a United Nations survey, 18 per cent of respondents face difficulties with their water supply, with the highest figures in the Bakool, Bari and Bay regions (UN OCHA 27/1/2026). The withdrawal of US aid has also led to cutbacks

in the water supply sector. Among other things, water tanker services have been suspended in some areas; 300,000 people have lost access to clean water (UN OCHA 6/7/2025). At the same time, the federal government is unable to guarantee adequate access to clean water (AI 21/4/2026). Severe water shortages and reliance on water transport by lorry have led to a significant rise in water prices (IPC 23/9/2026a). In Puntland, for example, water prices have risen to between 12 and 15 US dollars per barrel (200 litres). There, 80 per cent of watercourses had dried up by early 2026. But in HirShabelle, for example, dozens of wells are out of service, and in Gedo and Bay too, the price of a barrel of water has risen by up to 35 per cent (WHO 4/3/2026). Humanitarian organisations are helping to tackle the crisis; for example, Médecins Sans Frontières provided 32 million litres of drinking water and rehabilitated two wells in the first two months of 2026 (MSF 27/3/2026).

In Somaliland, the rate of access to clean drinking water stands at 41 per cent, with urban areas faring slightly better at 45 per cent (MoHDSL 1/4/2025). Through the Barwaaqo programme, the World Bank is providing several million US dollars to support sustainable solutions for water resources in rural areas (MoFDSL 2025). In April 2026, more households in Hargeysa were connected to the public water supply (RE 16/7/2026).

In a survey, 80 per cent of the nearly 400 IDPs interviewed in Mogadishu stated that they faced obstacles in accessing water. 60 per cent obtain slightly contaminated water, whilst only 21 per cent obtain water via the public supply (Y. H. Abdi/Y. B. Abdullahi/M. S. Abdi/S. G. Bashir/N. I. Ahmed 5/8/2025; cf. EUAA 5/2026b), with 59 per cent of these stating that the pipe actually carries water on only one day a week (Y. H. Abdi/Y. B. Abdullahi/M. S. Abdi/S. G. Bashir/N. I. Ahmed 5/8/2025). In a survey conducted in early 2026 on behalf of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees' (BFA) Staatendokumentation project in Hargeysa, Kismayo and Mogadishu, involving 200 people in each location, respondents provided the following information regarding their access to drinking water:

Sauberes Trinkwasser ist für mich verfügbar...	**gesamt**	**Männer**	**Frauen**	**Hargeysa**	**Kismayo**	**Mogadischu**
immer	43	44	41	41	37	50
manchmal	27	30	24	21	35	27
selten	15	16	14	17	16	12
nie	15	10	21	21	12	11

Sources 33: STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Access to clean drinking water]

Energy: The lack of a reliable energy supply poses a significant obstacle to economic development (ENPO 28/6/2023). According to available data, approximately 50 per cent of the population has access to an energy supply (OWID 1/9/2025; cf. MIATR 11/2025), whilst only 20 per cent have access to a formal electricity grid (RD 5/7/2025). Electricity is primarily generated by diesel generators and is expensive compared with, for example, Ethiopia or Kenya. Per capita energy consumption in Somalia stands at just 250 kWh (Turkey: 22,668 kWh; USA:

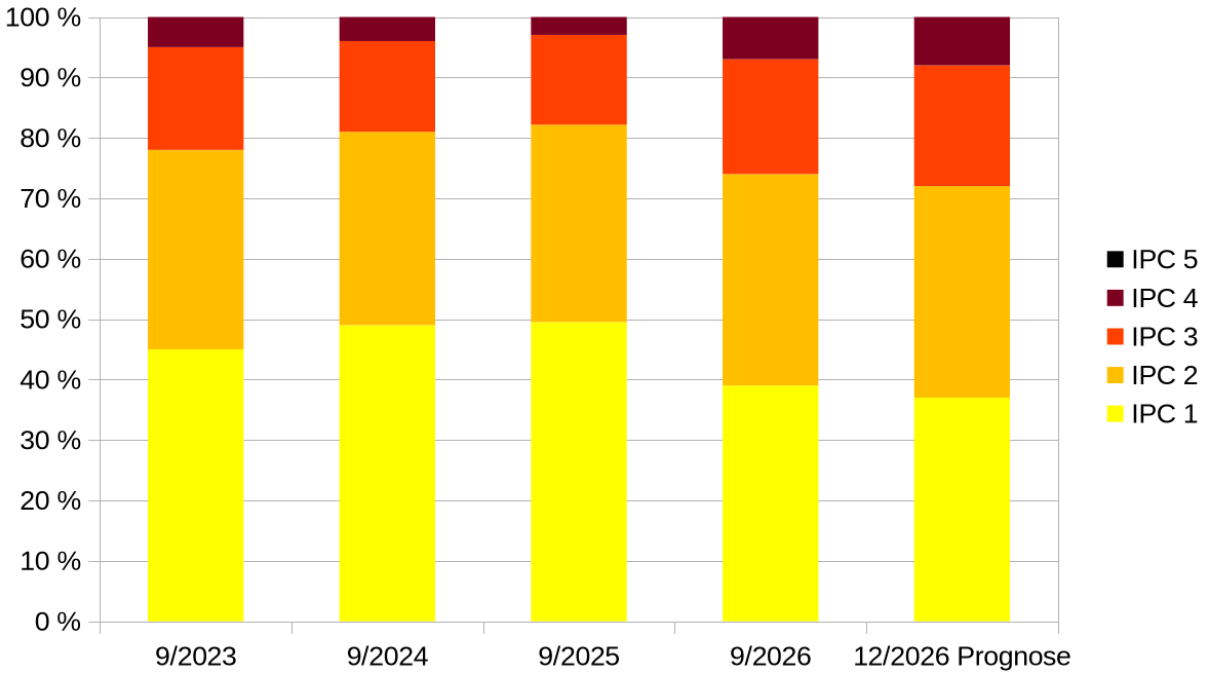
77,000 kWh) (MIATR 11/2025). According to other figures, per capita consumption in Somalia in 2024 was 190 kWh (Kenya: 1,199 kWh; Ethiopia: 693 kWh) (OWID 2025). In a survey carried out in early 2026 on behalf of the BFA's Staatendokumentation Unit in Hargeysa, Kismayo and Mogadishu, involving 200 people in each location, respondents provided the following information, by percentage, regarding the electricity supply situation in their own homes:

Strom ist in der eigenen Wohnstätte verfügbar...	**gesamt**	**Männer**	**Frauen**	**Hargeysa**	**Kismayo**	**Mogadischu**
immer	44	46	42	53	31	50
meistens	20	25	12	17	23	20
manchmal	18	17	18	13	29	10
nie	18	12	28	17	17	20

Sources 34: STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Access to electricity in dwelling]

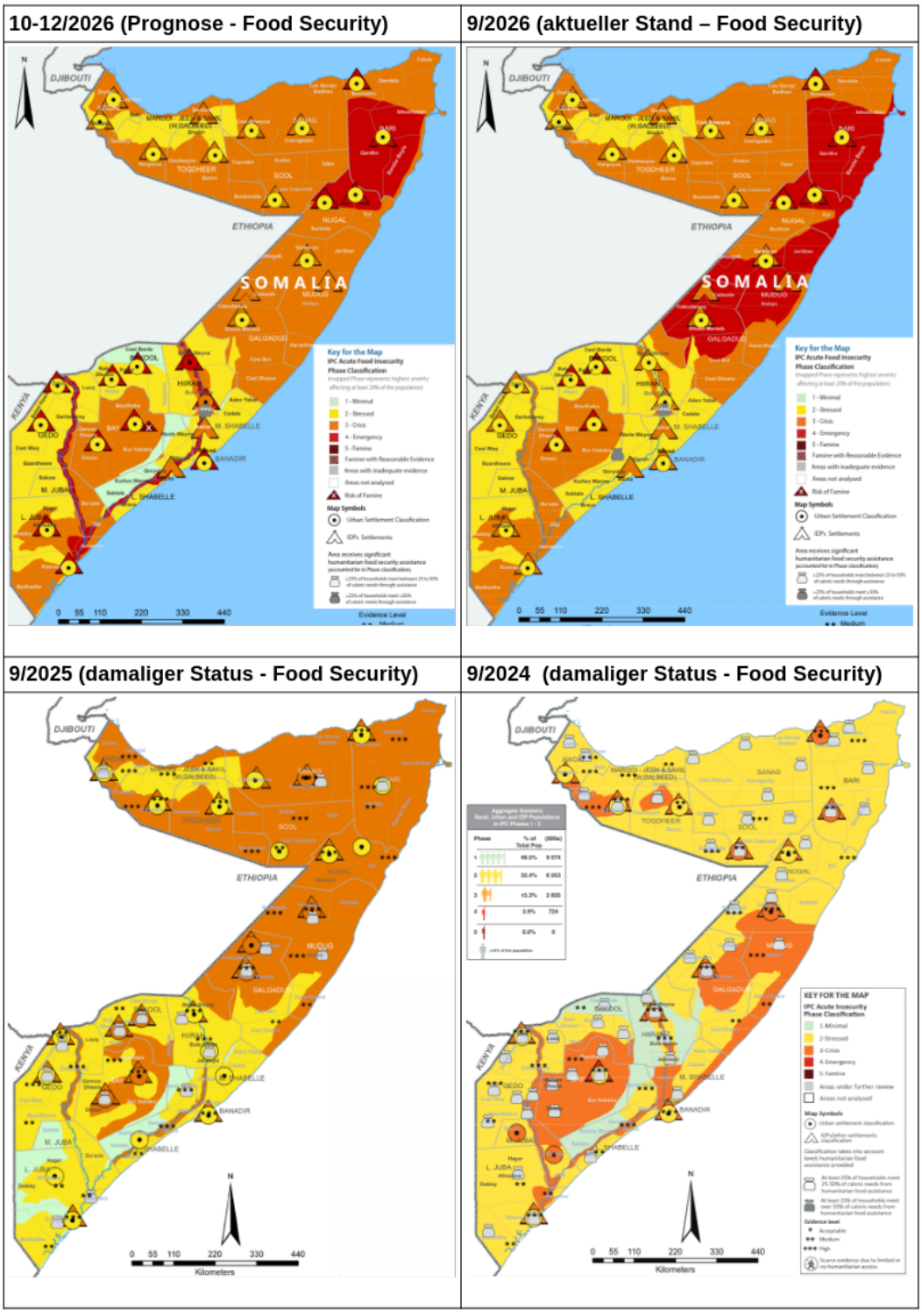
Telecommunications: Mobile data is cheaper in Somalia than in, for example, the United Kingdom, Finland or Japan. Connections are very good even in remote areas of the country (Economist 23/1/2025).

Hunger, food security / IPC : [IPC = *Integrated Phase Classification for Food Security*; 1–moderate to 5–famine].On the Global Hunger Index compiled by Deutsche Welthungerhilfe and *Concern Worldwide*, Somalia ranks 123rd out of 123 countries assessed in 2025. However, on a scale where zero is the best score, the figure has improved from 64.3 to 42.6 since 2000 (DWHH/CWW 10/2025). Recurring climate shocks, insecurity, ongoing conflicts, environmental degradation, limited investment and inadequate infrastructure continue to undermine food systems and hinder the availability of and access to adequate food (WHO 4/3/2026). Somalia continues to face a volatile and complex crisis in its food and supply situation. In some areas, there is a risk of famine by the end of 2026 – specifically for the internally displaced population (IDPs) in Baidoa. As of September 2026, 6.8 millionpeople, or 35per cent of the population,werein IPC Phase 2 (*stressed*), 3.7 million (19per cent) were in IPC 3 (*crisis*), 1.4 million in Phase 4 (*emergency*) and none in IPC 5 (*catastrophe*) (IPC 23/9/2026a). Developments over recent years:



Sources 35: IPC 23/9/2026a; IPC 23/9/2025a; IPC 23/9/2024; IPC 18/9/2023

The following IPC maps on *food insecurity* show the situation from September 2024 to September 2026, as well as a forecast up to December 2026:



Sources 36: IPC 23/9/2026a; IPC 23/9/2025a; FSNAU/IPC 23/9/2024

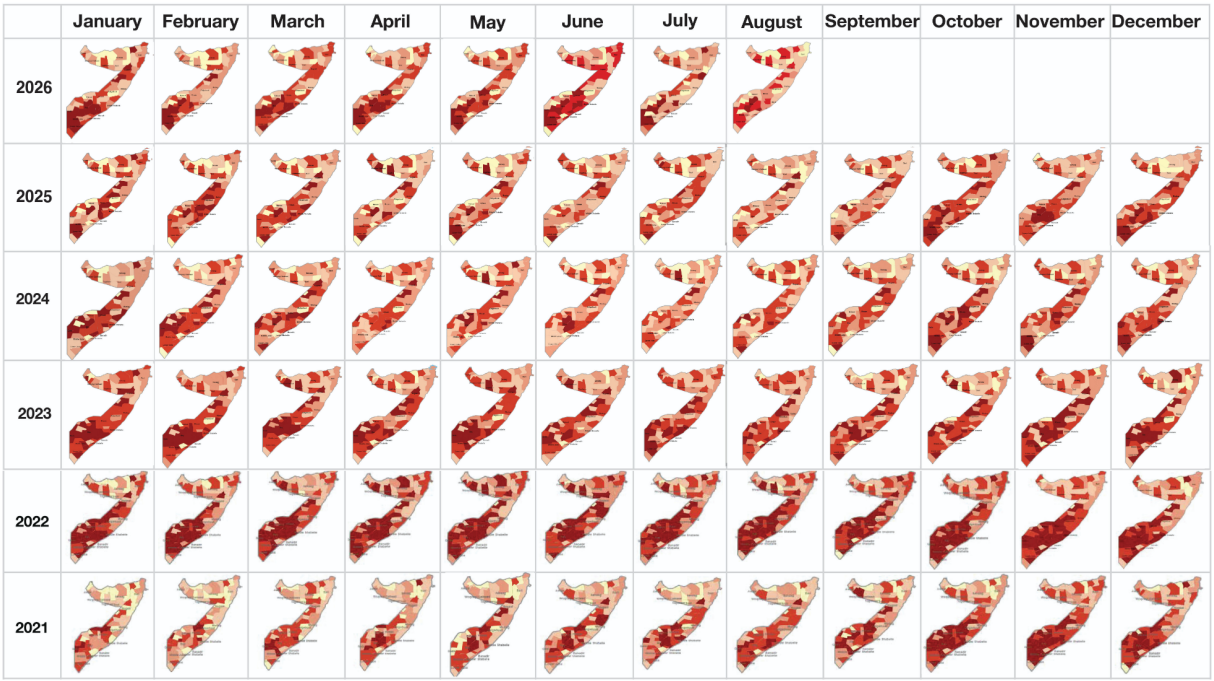
Generally speaking, people who suffer from food insecurity, as well as from malnutrition or undernutrition are more common amongst IDPs (USDOS 22/4/2024). In the IPC map for September 2026 (see above), the local population in the towns is consistently classified as IPC 2, whilst the IDP populations in these towns are classified as IPC 3; in Bossaso, Garoowe, Qardho (all in Puntland), Xudur, Waajid, Baidoa and Qansax Dheere (all in SWS) they are even classified

as IPC 4 (IPC 23/9/2026a). IPC distribution by region as a percentage of the population for September 2024, 2025 and 2026:

	9/24	9/25	9/26	9/24	9/25	9/26	9/24	9/25	9/26	9/24	9/25	9/26	9/24	9/25	9/26
	Bevölkerungszahl			IPC 1+2 (%)			IPC 3 (%)			IPC 4 (%)			IPC 5 (%)		
Awdal	636.108	655.893	661.373	84	85	81	14	12	16	2	3	2	0	0	0
Sanaag	428.699	442.034	445.736	85	77	64	14	18	26	1	5	10	0	0	0
Sool	548.975	566.052	570.788	79	81	65	20	15	24	1	5	11	0	0	0
Togdheer	860.684	887.449	894.874	84	83	81	14	13	16	2	4	4	0	0	0
Woqooyi Galbeed	1,447.484	1,492.507	1,504.986	84	85	82	13	11	16	3	3	2	0	0	0
Bakool	543.371	560.266	564.958	81	85	81	13	13	14	6	2	6	0	0	0
Bari	1,232.231	1,270.552	1,281.189	83	74	54	13	23	30	4	3	16	0	0	0
Bay	1,247.975	1,286.786	1,297.550	63	72	54	25	20	29	12	9	17	0	0	0
Benadir/Mogadischu	3,171.391	3,262.132	3,289.438	84	88	81	11	10	15	5	2	3	0	0	0
Galgaduud	812.638	837.918	844.925	73	74	59	20	19	26	7	8	16	0	0	0
Gedo	975.586	1,005.923	1,014.335	79	85	81	16	12	16	5	3	3	0	0	0
Hiiraan	504.816	520.516	524.876	85	82	77	14	16	18	1	2	5	0	0	0
Lower Juba	1,158.256	1,194.276	1,204.269	84	91	78	13	9	17	3	0	5	0	0	0
Lower Shabelle	1,593.117	1,642.667	1,656.402	87	84	89	12	14	11	1	1	1	0	0	0
Middle Juba	430.129	443,506	447.217	79	90	83	19	10	15	2	0	3	0	0	0
Middle Shabelle	1,013.352	1,044.873	1,053.608	78	85	89	19	13	10	3	2	1	0	0	0
Mudug	1,470.309	1,516.035	1,528.722	76	74	57	20	21	27	4	5	16	0	0	0
Nugaal	631.810	651.465	656.910	84	78	54	15	19	28	1	2	19	0	0	0

Sources 37: IPC 23/9/2026a; IPC 23/9/2025a; IPC 23/9/2024

Another set of maps, which exclusively summarises several alarming figures relating to food security, illustrates the trend over recent years (the darker the red, the more alarm thresholds have been exceeded):



Sources 38: FSNAU 22/9/2026

In a United Nations survey, 63 per cent of households (IDPs: 75 per cent) cited food as their most urgent need; in 2024, the figure was 57 per cent. The need is therefore particularly acute amongst IDPs in urban areas, especially in Bay and Bakool. 22 per cent of households stated that they did not have sufficient income or other resources to meet their basic food needs (UN OCHA

27/1/2026). In a survey conducted in early 2026 on behalf of the BFA's Staatendokumentation team in Hargeysa, Kismayo and Mogadishu, involving 200 people in each location, respondents provided the following figures regarding their ability to provide their own families with sufficient food:

Wir können ausreichend Nahrungsmittel für die Familie besorgen...	**gesamt**	**Männer**	**Frauen**	**Hargeysa**	**Kismayo**	**Mogadischu**
geht sich aus	24	27	20	38	17	17
geht sich knapp aus	32	32	32	18	47	32
geht sich kaum aus	36	34	39	33	31	44
geht sich nicht aus	8	7	9	11	5	8

Sources 39: STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Impact of current food prices on family's ability to buy food]

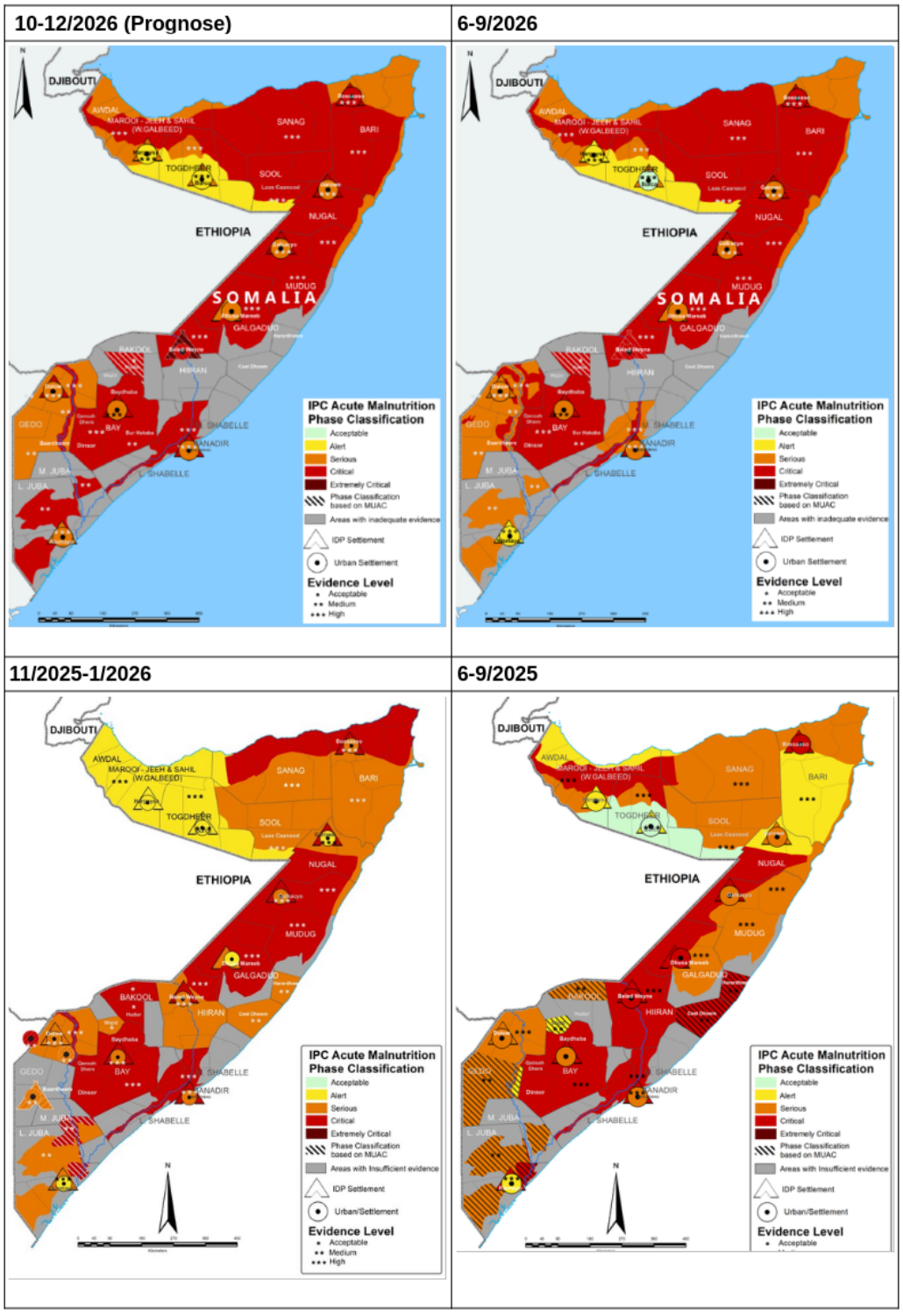
Acute malnutrition remains a serious problem in Somalia. According to forecasts, between July 2026 and June 2027, approximately 1.92 million children aged between 6 and 59 months will suffer from acute malnutrition (AM) and require treatment, including 433,000 cases of severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Almost 62per cent of these cases are concentrated in the south of the country. Between January and July 2026, 672,000 children were treated for acute malnutrition. During the same period, there was a significant decline in the provision of care for malnourished pregnant and breastfeeding women: only 28,000 women received support, compared with 87,000 in the same period in 2025 (IPC 23/9/2026a).

Between February 2022 and September 2026, the situation regarding malnutrition among children under five was as follows [*GAM = acute malnutrition; of which SAM = severe acute malnutrition; figures in per cent*]:

Livelihood Zone	Landesteil (Z-Zentral, N-Nord, S-Süd etc.)	GAM	SAM	GAM	SAM	GAM	SAM	GAM	SAM	GAM	SAM
		2/2022		9/2023		9/2024		3/2025		9/2026	
Guban Pastoral	N-Awdal, Küste von W. Galbeed	7.7	0.3	5,9	0,7	6,4	0,2	11,3	2,0	11,0	2,6
West Golis	Z-Awdal, Z-W. Galbeed, N-Togdheer	6.6	0.8	16,4	3,5	11,0	2,1	7,8	2,3		
Northwest Agropastoral	S-Awdal, S-Woqooyi Galbeed	6.3	1.3	10,9	1,4	10,1	1,5	7,4	0,5	12,0	2,0
Hargeysa IDPs	Stadt, Woqooyi Galbeed	7.7	2.0	9,6	1,1	10,4	3,1	11,0	1,3		
Hargeysa Urban	Stadt, Woqooyi Galbeed	7.3	0.7	5,4	0,3	7,9	0,3	8,2	0,5		
Burco IDPs	Stadt, Togdheer	8.7	1.2			11,7	1,5	5,2	0,5	12,4	2,3
Burco Urban	Stadt, Togdheer	4.1	0.5			4,1	0,4	6,5	1,2		
Northern Inland Pastoral NW	S/Z-Sanaag, Sool,	11.0	1.3	11,6	1,5	8,6	1,0	9,1	0,8		
Hawd Pastoral Northwest	S-W. Galbeed S/Z-Togdheer, S-Sool	20.0	4.0	10,2	0,5	6,8	0,2	3,6	0,2		
East Golis	N-Sanaag, N-Bari	13.0	2.4	9,3	1,9	9,4	1,3	9,3	1,5	14,4	1,9
Bossaso IDPs	Stadt, Bari	13.7	1.9	18,9	4,0	17,5	3,8	17,9	3,4	24,4	4,2
Bossaso Urban	Stadt, Bari	14.5	2.1	14,4	3,6	15,0	5,6	12,9	3,3		
Northern Inland Pastoral NE	S/Z-Bari, N-Nugaal	7.8	0.3	5,2	0,8	8,3	0,6	8,4	0,4		
Hawd Pastoral NE (Central)	S-Nugaal, O-Mudug, N/O-Galgaduud	19.7	3.7	12,6	1,3	16,2	1,5	13,4	2,1	18,2	2,6
Coastal Deeh Northeast	Küste von Mog. bis Iskushuban	5.9	0.2	6,5	0,6	8,5	1,5	7,1	0,2	11,6	2,6
Garoowe IDPs	Stadt, Nugaal	11.2	0.9	13,3	2,1	6,8	1,3	11,4	1,0	21,9	6,8
Garoowe Urban	Stadt, Nugaal	5.8	0.0	5,4	0,4	6,2	0,4	6,7	0,4		
Galkacyo IDPs	Stadt, Mudug	14.0	2.7	19,1	3,3	24,7	4,9	19,1	2,4		
Galkacyo Urban	Stadt, Mudug	15.5	2.3	17,6	2,0	14,1	1,7	12,6	0,9		
Dhusamareb IDPs	Stadt, Galgadud	14.9	1.4	11,7	1,8	12,6	3,6	13,1	3,4	13,2	2,5
Dhusamareb Urban	Stadt, Galgadud	9.6	2.0	12,4	2,3	12,0	2,2	12,1	1,9		
Addun Pastoral	S/O-Nugal, Z/O-Mudug, Z-Galgad.	13.0	1.5	11,0	0,7	10,4	0,6	13,7	1,7		
Belet Weyne District (Riv.)	Hiiraan	18.3	3.5	17,7	3,8	10,2	1,8	16,4	3,1		
Belet Weyne Urban	Stadt, Hiiraan	17.4	2.5	10,8	2,3	12,3	3,0	10,9	2,2		
Shabelle Riverine	Shabelle-Tal, W-M.Shabelle	15.2	2.9	12,4	2,6	13,7	3,0	16,0	2,8	16,8	3,8
Shabelle Agropastoral	Z-Hiiraan	14.1	2.4	13,1	2,7	14,4	2,2	14,8	2,1		
Mogadishu Urban	Stadt, Benadir	14.5	2.6	14,8	3,1	15,5	2,1	12,1	2,1		
Mogadishu IDPs	Stadt, Benadir	17.0	3.9	18,4	3,9	16,8	4,1	16,1	3,5	15,9	2,6
Bay Agropastoral I	Baidoa, Buur Hakaba	13.9	2.9	9,8	1,0	12,1	2,3	18,7	5,2	15,5	3,7
Baidoa IDPs	Stadt, Bay	17.0	3.9	10,8	2,1	15,0	3,1	11,1	2,0		
Baidoa Urban	Stadt, Bay	8.4	2.0	9,3	0,9	11,8	3,0	9,4	2,0		
Doolow IDPs	Stadt, Gedo	14.9	2.5	16,1	1,9	14,3	2,5	14,2	2,1	13,9	4,1
Doolow Urban	Stadt, Gedo	9.7	1.1	12,5	1,7	10,9	0,5	10,6	0,7		
North Gedo Pastoral	N-Gedo	11.3	1.1	14,3	1,8	10,3	1,5	10,2	1,7	13,3	1,7
North Gedo Riverine	N-Gedo	15.6	3.2	15,3	1,6	17,1	2,4	13,8	1,8	14,6	3,4
Kismayo Urban	Stadt, Lower Juba	12.0	2.1	10,3	2,4	10,5	1,2	9,1	0,6		
Kismayo IDPs	Stadt, Lower Juba	11.7	3.2	17,0	2,9	18,7	5,6	12,6	2,2	14,2	2,6

Sources 40: FSNAU 23/9/2026; FSNAU/FAO 24/2/2025; FSNAU 25/9/2024; FSNAU 18/9/2023; FSNAU 10/2/2022

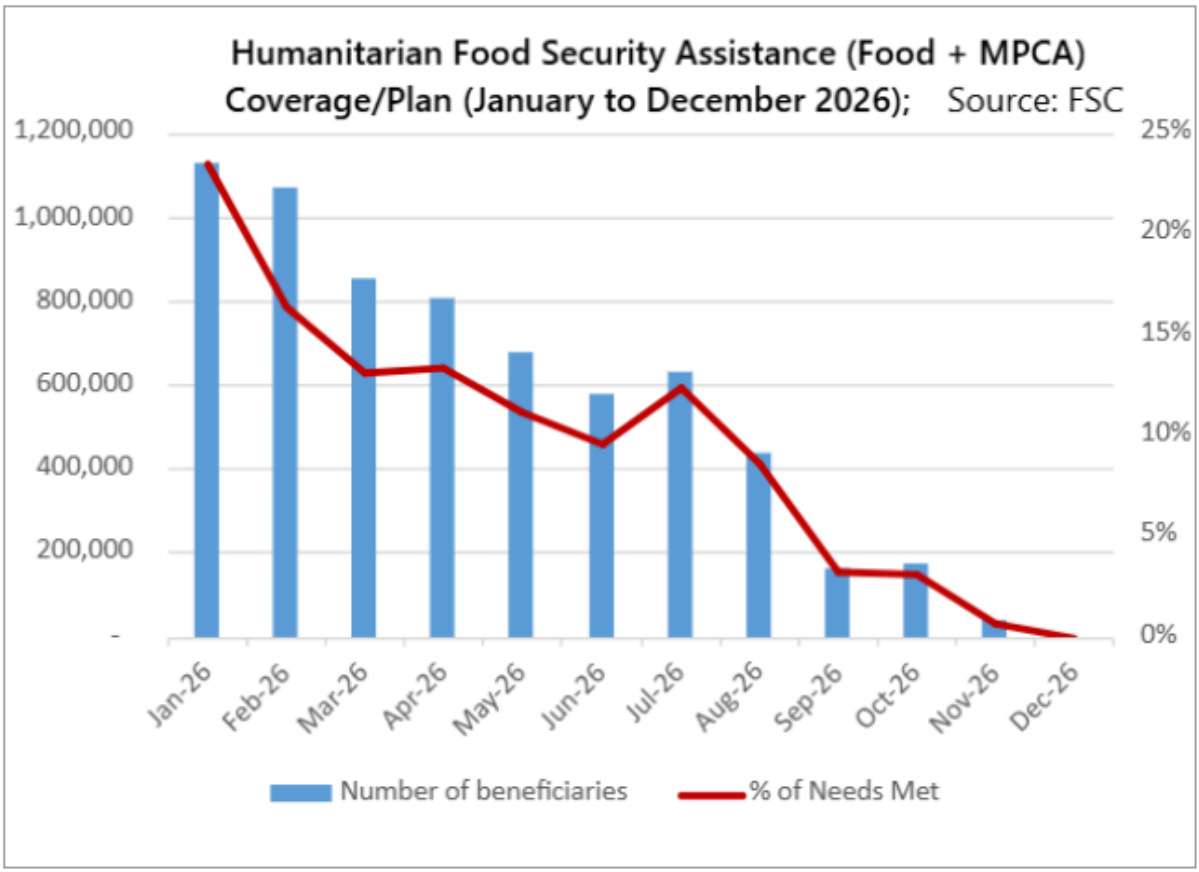
The IPC stages for undernutrition and malnutrition have developed as follows since mid-2025 (including a forecast up to December 2026):



Sources 41: IPC 23/9/2026b; IPC 24/2/2026; IPC 23/9/2025b

Humanitarian aid: Massive shortfalls in humanitarian funding are limiting the scale of life-saving assistance in the areas of nutrition and healthcare (IPC 23/9/2026a). For example, the US, which has spent an average of 450 million US dollars per year on humanitarian aid for Somalia over the last ten years, cut its aid to 128 million in 2025. Other countries, such as the Netherlands, the UK and Germany, have also scaled back their support (NYT 17/10/2025a).

Aid projects run by the United Nations or aid organisations do not reach everyone in need (AA 9/3/2026). In October 2025, the WFP announced that it would reduce emergency food aid by 68 per cent, from 1.1 million beneficiaries to 350,000 (AnA 20/11/2025; cf. Sahan/SWT 7/11/2025; UN OCHA 27/1/2026). According to other figures, food aid was reduced from 2.2 million people at the start of 2025 to 600,000 (WHO 4/3/2026). Between July and September 2026, only 2 per cent of the total population will be reached by food security and healthcare measures, whilst 26 per cent are in urgent need of assistance. Despite rising needs, support will continue to decline between October and December 2026, reaching less than 0.5 per cent of the total population. Funding cuts have also led to the closure of 233 nutrition centres and 380 health facilities (IPC 23/9/2026a). This chart illustrates the extent of the cuts:

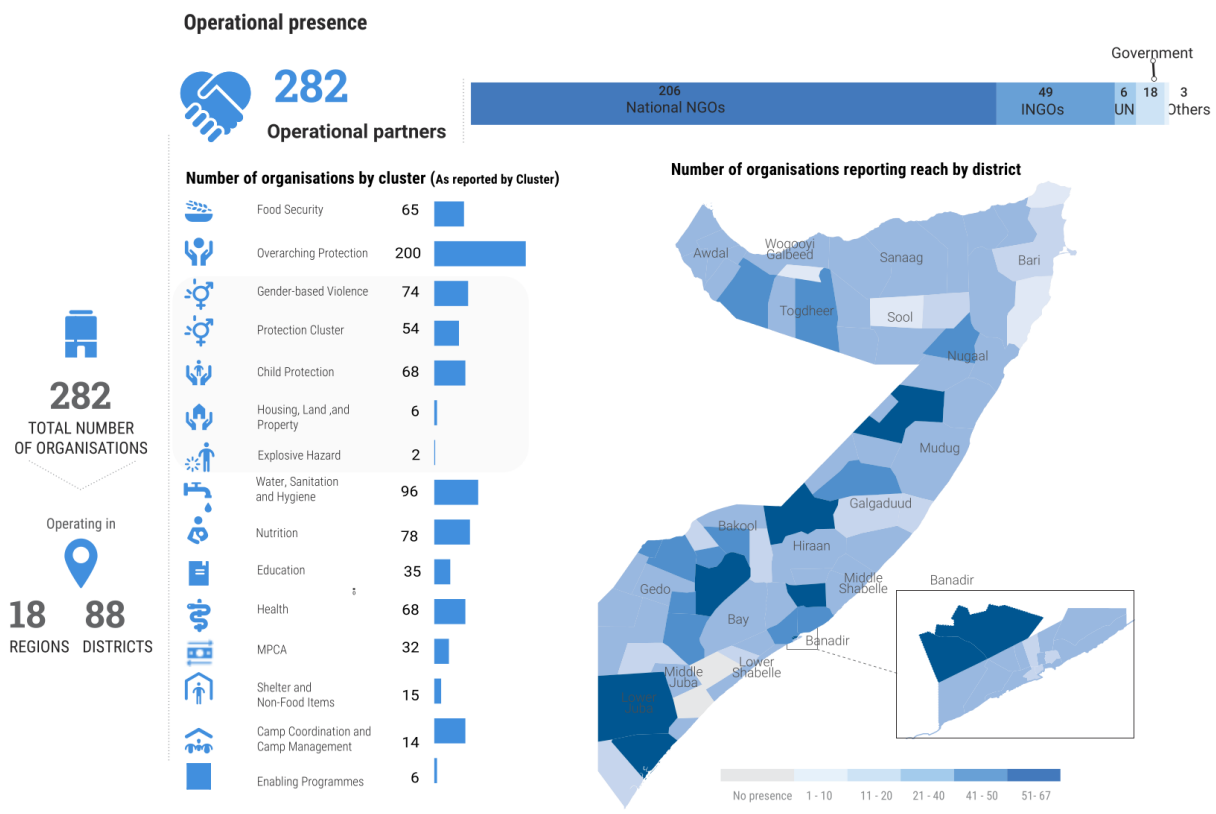


Sources 42: IPC 23/9/2026a

This reduction does not, therefore, mean that humanitarian needs have fallen overall; rather, the reprioritisation simply reflects the need to align humanitarian efforts with available resources (UNSC 30/9/2025). Hard-to-reach areas are particularly affected by the cuts (WHO 4/3/2026). According to other sources, the limited funding for life-saving aid is being prioritised for those areas with the greatest food insecurity and the highest needs, as well as for households classified as IPC 4 and above – in 21 priority districts. The focus is on vulnerability, on particularly at-risk groups (households headed by women, members of minority groups, older people, households with disabled members, newly displaced people, households with acutely malnourished chil-

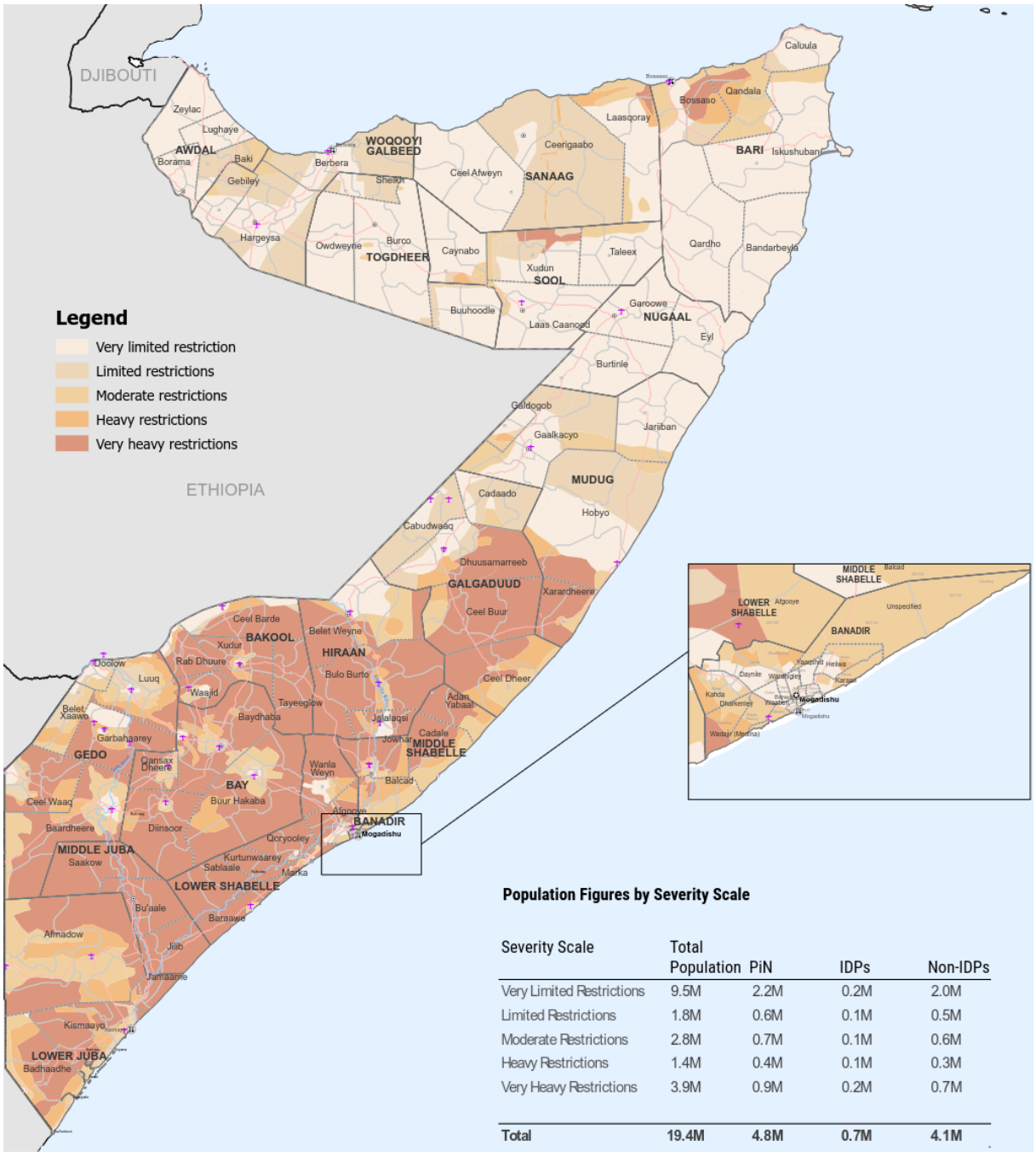
dren, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and livestock-owning and agro-pastoral households affected by shocks) (IPC 23/9/2026a).

The 282 organisations cooperating on humanitarian aid in Somalia under the auspices of the United Nations were distributed across districts and thematic areas as follows in 2025:



Sources 43: UN OCHA 27/1/2026

The security situation and bureaucratic hurdles are hampering the work of humanitarian workers (UNSC 27/9/2024; cf. HRW 4/2/2026; USDOS 12/8/2025; UNSC 3/6/2024; SMN 20/8/2024). Overall, the number of incidents targeting humanitarian workers has fallen year-on-year from 243 to 179, but has risen in regions such as Gedo or Middle Shabelle due to clan conflicts or military operations (WHO 4/3/2026). Al-Shabaab is restricting access for humanitarian workers in the territory under its control (MBZ 4/4/2025). The United Nations describes the hard-to-reach areas as follows:



Sources 44: UN OCHA 27/1/2026

In IDP camps, corruption also affects the distribution of humanitarian supplies (Sahan/SWT 16/8/2024; cf. IR 30/8/2023). The state-run SODMA (*Somali Disaster Management Agency*) is also accused of withholding development aid and exploiting humanitarian aid for political purposes (Sahan/SWT 14/5/2025). People are sometimes excluded from aid on the basis of their clan affiliation. Furthermore, a great deal of money has flowed into Somalia in a short space of time with little oversight; some of it does not reach those in need (AQ21 11/2023; cf. Sahan/SWT 7/11/2025). There is systematic misappropriation of humanitarian supplies – particularly financial aid (Sahan/SWT 7/11/2025; cf. HIPS 7/5/2024; AQ21 11/2023).

Public and social support: There is no public welfare system (BS 2026), no social housing and no social assistance (AA 9/3/2026). The housing and labour markets, as well as poverty alleviation, are the responsibility of the private sector (BS 2026). The actual social safety net is the extended family, the sub-clan or the clan. These often provide at least a rudimentary level of protection (AA 9/3/2026; cf. BS 2026; Sahan/SWT 8/7/2024). If a member of one's own clan needs support, providing it is non-negotiable (Sahan/SWT 24/10/2022); it is simply a matter of course (MBZ 4/4/2025). The *jilib* [*Note: lower level in the clan system*] is responsible, amongst other things, for supporting members in difficult financial situations. Traditional law (*xeer*) forms a social safety net here, a kind of social and accident insurance. If a person needs support, they turn to the *jilib* or – depending on the extent of the need – to lower levels (e.g. the extended family) (SEM 31/5/2017). Within the clan, there is a system of fundraising (*qaraan*). In Somalia and amongst the diaspora, this is carried out not only to collect so-called blood money in the event of a murder, but also to meet other needs of a clan member (Majid/Abdirahman/Hassan 2017), such as accommodation, food, employment or financial support. The duration of this support depends on the financial capacity of the sub-clan concerned. Wealthy sub-clans can provide such support over a very long period (MBZ 4/4/2025). For example, there are dedicated WhatsApp groups in which elders have the authority to collect funds. Members are obliged to make monthly contributions to these groups. These funds, in turn, are used to help members who find themselves in financial difficulty or who need to pay for medical treatment. Anyone who fails to contribute is excluded from the groups (Economist 23/1/2025).

The patrilineal (paternal) kinship community is the primary group providing solidarity and protection. However, there is also the mother's paternal line and, in addition, possibly relatives by marriage (ACCORD 31/5/2021; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025). All three lines generally form – as one expert puts it – 'a quite remarkable kinship cosmos" (ACCORD 31/5/2021). Help and solidarity can be sought within this network; there is a moral obligation in this regard. However, kinship ties must also be nurtured. What is decisive, therefore, is not necessarily the number of relatives, but the quality of the relationships. Those who are positioned as weak actors within this network are treated less favourably than those in strong positions (ACCORD 31/5/2021). At the same time, the amount of social capital available varies greatly from clan to clan: members of powerful clans naturally have access to strong networks for mutual support, protection and the exchange of information (BS 2024).

Examples of clan and family solidarity:

- A woman in Hananbure (Galmudug) borrowed 500 US dollars from a relative so that she could set up a children's clothing shop and thereby secure an income. Another woman from the same village also reports that she collected money from relatives to open a restaurant (RE 14/1/2026).
- A man in Mogadishu reports that he also uses his income to support his parents and other relatives (RE 10/7/2026).

- Another man from Dhusamareb reports that, with his income of US$10 a day, he supports his family of seven and also helps five related families living in the countryside (RE 2/4/2026).

In Somalia, social networks have long been a source of resilience in the event of droughts and other crises, forming an effective part of the coping strategy (Elsamahi/Ochieng/Bedelian 9/6/2023; cf.DI 6/2019) that has contributed to the survival of households. The most frequently cited sources of support in a study are family, friends and neighbours (24 per cent), followed by international (15 per cent) and local NGOs (8 per cent) (Elsamahi/Ochieng/Bedelian 9/6/2023). In addition to family, clan and friends, other social connections also play a role – such as gender-specific or youth groups, acquaintances, professional groups or religious associations (DI 6/2019). Social support is also provided through Islamic charities and NGOs (BS 2026). According to one source, social cohesion and social networks function better in Somaliland than in other parts of the country (OXFAM/Fanning 6/2018).

Social contacts also played a crucial role during the most recent drought (Elsamahi/Ochieng/Bedelian 9/6/2023). Without mutual support – without sharing – the disaster would have been far worse (Spiegel/Hoffmann 24/9/2022). Households supported one another in a variety of ways, both materially and non-materially, including with cash, food, information and emotional support. Often, those with stronger social connections and better access to resources shared with households that were less well connected. This solidarity sometimes extended to external aid as well – such as cash assistance from humanitarian organisations. Local leaders have set up community funds into which households contribute a portion of the aid they receive. This ensured, on the one hand, that vulnerable households did not go empty-handed and, on the other, helped to alleviate tensions between households receiving aid and those that did not. In this context, vulnerable community members include, for example, older and/or disabled people who can no longer support themselves, orphans and widows (Elsamahi/Ochieng/Bedelian 9/6/2023).

It is also common practice to place children with close or distant relatives if a family is unable to support them itself (SIDRA 6/2019; cf. OXFAM/Fanning 6/2018; RE 15/6/2026). A higher-than-average proportion of the IDP families surveyed in a study in Somaliland have placed their children with relatives (76 per cent) or in institutional care facilities (7 per cent). A further 54 per cent send their children to neighbours for meals (OXFAM/Fanning 6/2018).

Furthermore, the tradition of exchanging gifts is deeply rooted in Somali society – including amongst the Bantu (DI 6/2019). People who have little themselves share their meagre possessions and help others to survive. There is a strong sense of solidarity (ACCORD 31/5/2021). A community leader from a village near Garoowe explains, for example, that people would not abandon their relatives. Consequently, they share as long as there is something to share (UN OCHA 23/11/2023). Remissen are also sometimes shared with neighbours, relatives and friends (DI 6/2019). Households often borrow money or goods from local businesses (Elsamahi/Ochieng/Bedelian 9/6/2023).

However, not everyone benefits from these systems: in a study conducted in 2023, 56 per cent of the households surveyed stated that they had no sources of support whatsoever. 85 per cent stated that they had been unable to secure a loan from anywhere (Elsamahi/Ochieng/Bedelian 9/6/2023). The increasing frequency of climate shocks in recent years has eroded social coping mechanisms and led to greater dependence on humanitarian aid. Weaker clans and minorities are particularly affected by this (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). Some of the following examples illustrate that mutual aid can sometimes be extremely rudimentary:

- An unemployed mother of eight children in an IDP camp near Kismayo is dependent on food donated by neighbours, as she can no longer run up a tab (RE 3/9/2026).
- An unemployed man with a family of 13 in Baidoa relies on occasional help from long-term residents in his IDP camp. The family is sometimes lucky enough to get one meal a day. In addition, they receive 20 litres of water daily from neighbours. At night, the children sleep in other families' huts, whilst the adults stay outdoors (RE 3/3/2026).
- A single mother of nine children who has lost her job has been relying for months on food she has begged for. She has found shelter with relatives and shares a single room there with her children (RE 22/1/2026).
- Another single mother of nine children, who has lost her job, reports that in the IDP camp, residents share food when they can, but that everyone's resources have become scarce (RE 22/1/2026).
- An unemployed woman reports that she and her children are reliant on help from relatives (RE 20/4/2026).
- An unemployed man in Hargeysa states that he relies on support from relatives and neighbours to provide for his family (RE 16/7/2026).

Remittances: Payments from abroad also provide assistance (BS 2026). 40 per cent of Somali households receive remittances to cover their daily expenses (NH 30/9/2025). Many families rely on the US$50–200 sent to them each month by relatives abroad (HO 15/7/2025b). See also: Basic Needs/Economy / Labour Market / Income

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AFDB - African Development Bank Group (27/5/2025): African Economic Outlook 2025, https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/african-economic-outlook-2025, accessed 10/7/2025
- AI - Amnesty International (21/4/2026): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia, accessed 21/4/2026

- AnA - Anadolu Agency (20/11/2025): Nearly a quarter of Somalia's population face acute hunger: WFP, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/nearly-a-quarter-of-somalia-s-population-face-acute-hunger-wfp/3749028#, accessed 21/11/2025
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2024): BTI 2024 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2024_SOM.pdf, accessed 18/3/2024
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (19/6/2026): 80% of Somali Children 5-17 Live in Poverty, Report Says, https://www.dawan.africa/news/80percent-of-somali-children-5-17-live-in-poverty-report-says, accessed 3/7/2026
- DI - Development Initiatives (6/2019): Towards an improved understanding of vulnerability and resilience in Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Report_Towards-an-improved-understanding-of-vulnerability-and-resilience-in-Somalia.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- DWHH/CWW - Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V., Concern Worldwide (10/2025): Welthungerindex 2025, 20 Jahre Fortschritt im Blick: Zeit für ein neues Bekenntnis zu Zero Hunger, https://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/de/2025.pdf, accessed 28/9/2026
- EC/DRMKC - European Commission (Publisher), Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (Author) (n.d): INFORM Risk, https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/INFORM-Risk, accessed 20/3/2026
- EC/DRMKC - European Commission (Publisher), Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (Author) (2025): INFORM Risk Index Mid 2025, https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/Portals/0/InfoRM/2025/INFORM_Risk_Mid_2025_v071.xlsx, accessed 20/3/2026
- Economist - Economist, The (23/1/2025): Government by social media in Somalia, https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/01/23/government-by-social-media-in-somalia, accessed 17/4/2026 [fee required]
- Elsamahi/Ochieng/Bedelian - M. Elsamahi, G.A. Ochieng, C. Bedelian (9/6/2023): Coping with the drought crisis in Somalia: Formative research findings from the Resilience Population Measurement (RPM) project. Mogadishu, Somalia: Resilience Population Measurement (RPM) Activity, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/68a8e2c2-c0a4-43d0-a013-05c236a629ba/CopingwithDroughtCrisisSomaliaRPMresearch.pdf, accessed 23/11/2023
- ENPO - Energy Portal (28/6/2023): Energy Infrastructure Development: A Key Driver of Somalia's Economic Recovery, https://www.energyportal.eu/news/energy-infrastructure-development-a-key-driver-of-somalias-economic-recovery/47029/, accessed 22/4/2024
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2026b): Somalia - Displacement in Mogadishu, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-displacement-mogadishu, accessed 24/9/2026
- FSNAU - Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia (23/9/2026): Somalia 2026 Post Gu Seasonal Food Security and Nutrition Assessment: Key Nutrition Results Summary, https://fsnau.org/downloads/Somalia_2026_Post_Gu_Key_Nutrition_Results_Summary_23_Sep_2026.pdf, accessed 28/9/2026
- FSNAU - Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia (22/9/2026): Somalia Early Warning-Early Action: Trends in Risk Factors, Jan 2021 - Aug 2026 (Indicators in Alarm Phase), https://fsnau.org/downloads/Early-Warning-Early-Action-Indicators-progression-August-2026.pdf, accessed 28/9/2026
- FSNAU - Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia (25/9/2024): Somalia 2024 Post Gu Assessement Key Nutrition Results Summary, https://fsnau.org/downloads/Somalia-2024-Post-Gu-Assessment-Key-Nutrtion-Results-Summary-25-Sep-2024.pdf, accessed 7/10/2024
- FSNAU - Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia (18/9/2023): Somalia 2023 Post Gu Seasonal Food Security and Nutrition Assessment, https://fsnau.org/downloads/Somalia-2023-Post-Gu-Nutrition-Results-Summary-18-Sep-2023.pdf, accessed 20/11/2023

- FSNAU - Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia (10/2/2022): Somalia 2021 Post Deyr Seasonal Food Security and Nutrition Assessment, https://fsnau.org/downloads/2021-Post-Deyr-Nutrition-Results-2022.pdf, accessed 20/11/2023
- FSNAU/FAO - Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia (Author), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (Publisher) (24/2/2025): Somalia 2024 Post Deyr Seasonal Food Security and Nutrition Assessment: Key Nutrition Results Summary, https://fsnau.org/downloads/2024 Post Deyr Key Summary results_revised Feb 24_2025 fnl.pdf, accessed 8/7/2025
- FSNAU/IPC - Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit Somalia, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (23/9/2024): Somalia Acute Food Insecurity Situation Overview, Rural, Urban and IDP: Food Security Outcomes: Current: July-September 2024, https://fsnau.org/downloads/FSNAU-IPC-Combined-Current-Gu-2024.pdf, accessed 7/10/2024
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (7/5/2024): State Of Somalia 2023 Report, https://8v90f1.p3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SOS-REPORT-2023-.pdf, accessed 27/5/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (15/7/2025b): U.S. remittance tax threatens $1.7 billion Somali lifeline, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/July/202205/u_s_remittance_tax_threatens_1_7_billion_somali_lifeline.aspx, accessed 17/4/2026
- HRW - Human Rights Watch (4/2/2026): World Report 2026 - Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2136256.html, accessed 18/3/2026
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (23/9/2026a): Somalia: IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis July-December 2026 Report, https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Somalia_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Malnutrition_Jul_Dec2026_Report.pdf, accessed 28/9/2026
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (23/9/2026b): Somalia - Acute Malnutrition Situation June to September 2026 and Projection October to December 2026, https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1165452/?iso3=SOM, accessed 28/9/2026
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (24/2/2026): Somalia - Acute Malnutrition Situation November 2025 to January 2026 and Projections for February to March 2026 and for April to June 2026, https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1161023/?iso3=SOM, accessed 28/9/2026
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (23/9/2025a): Somalia: IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis July-December 2025 Report, https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Somalia_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Malnutrition_Jul_Dec2025_Report.pdf, accessed 28/9/2026
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (23/9/2025b): Somalia - Acute Malnutrition Situation June to September 2025 and Projection October to December 2025, https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1159741/?iso3=SOM, accessed 28/9/2026
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (23/9/2024): Somalia IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis, July-December 2024, https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Somalia_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Malnutrition_July-dec_2024_Report.pdf, accessed 7/10/2024
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (18/9/2023): Somalia - IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Report, August-December 2023, https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Somalia_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Malnutrition_Aug_Dec2023_Report.pdf, accessed 28/9/2026
- IR - Islamic Relief (30/8/2023): One in four people in Somalia have now fled their homes, https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/one-in-four-people-in-somalia-have-now-fled-their-homes/#:~:text=A quarter of all people,displacement crisis hits record levels, accessed 12/12/2023
- Majid/Abdirahman/Hassan - Nisar Majid, Khalif Abdirahman, Shamsa Hassan (2017): Remittances and Vulnerability in Somalia. Assessing Sources, Uses and Delivery Mechanisms, http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/633401530870281332/pdf/Remittances-and-Vulnerability-in-Somalia-Resubmission.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- MIATR - Millî İstihbarat Akademisi (11/2025): Türkiye-Somali Ilişkileri: Çok Boyutlu Bir Ortaklik Modeli, https://mia.edu.tr/uploads/f/topic_6.pdf, accessed 9/12/2025

- MoFDSL - Ministry of Finance Development [Somaliland] (2025): 2025 Citizen's Budget Book, https://cdn.sanity.io/files/e0lpub15/production/47ba32c60c76bb483b2e34923b685d6c3953e1dc.pdf, accessed 1/6/2026
- MoHDSL - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (1/4/2025): Health Conference Report. Theme of the Meeting: Healthcare expansion and Reform, 19th 20th February 2025, https://somalilandmohd.com/publications/, accessed 12/5/2026
- MSF - Doctors Without Borders (27/3/2026): Somalis struggle to reach healthcare amid overwhelming fuel prices, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138678.html, accessed 29/4/2026
- NH - New Humanitarian, The (30/9/2025): The diaspora lifeline that helps keep Somali families afloat, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2025/09/30/diaspora-lifeline-helps-keep-somali-families-afloat-remittances, accessed 17/4/2026
- NYT - New York Times, The (17/10/2025a): America's Retreat From Aid Is Devastating Somalia's Health System, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/17/health/somalia-children-malnutrition-usaid.html, accessed 28/11/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- OWID - Our World in Data (1/9/2025): Share of the population with access to electricity, 2023, https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/share-of-the-population-with-access-to-electricity?mapSelect=ETH~{}KEN~{}SOM, accessed 9/12/2025
- OWID - Our World in Data (2025): Energy use per person, 2024, https://ourworldindata.org/explorers/energy?facet=none&hideControls=false&Total or Breakdown=Total&Energy or Electricity=Primary energy&Metric=Per capita consumption&country=USA~GBR~CHN~OWID_WRL~IND~BRA~ZAF, accessed 9/12/2025
- OXFAM/Fanning - OXFAM (Publisher), Emma Fanning (Author) (6/2018): Drought, Displacement and Livelihoods in Somalia/Somaliland. Time for gender-sensitive and protection-focused approaches, http://regionaldss.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/bn-somalia-somaliland-drought-displacement-protection-280618-en-002.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- Q. Müller/Afrique XXI - Afrique XXI (Publisher), Quentin Müller (Author) (4/5/2025): En Somalie, les Chabab profitent de la crise et s'approchent de Mogadiscio, https://afriquexxi.info/En-Somalie-les-Chabab-profitent-de-la-crise-et-s-approchent-de-Mogadiscio, accessed 10/7/2025
- RD - Radio Dalsan (5/7/2025): Norway Partners with South West State to Boost Electricity Development in Somalia, https://radiodalsan.com/2025/07/05/norway-partners-with-south-west-state-to-boost-electricity-development-in-somalia, accessed 17/4/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (3/9/2026): New Kismayo settlement has schools and healthcare for IDPs – but no jobs for income, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/09/new-kismayo-settlement-has-schools-and-healthcare-for-idps-but-no-jobs-for-income, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (16/7/2026): Hargeisa piped water expansion puts humble donkey cart vendors out of work, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/hargeisa-piped-water-expansion-puts-humble-donkey-cart-vendors-out-of-work, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/7/2026): Radio sews the seeds of success for Mogadishu family man, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/radio-sews-the-seeds-of-success-for-mogadishu-family-man, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (15/6/2026): Scrap metal collectors in Dusamareb make a hard living for their families, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/06/scrap-metal-collectors-in-dusamareb-make-a-hard-living-for-their-families, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (20/4/2026): Families in Lower Shabelle get new chance to build up a living, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/04/families-in-lower-shabelle-get-new-chance-to-build-up-a-living, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (2/4/2026): Central Somali pastoralists find motorbikes more reliable than livestock, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/04/central-somali-pastoralists-find-motorbikes-more-reliable-than-livestock, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (3/3/2026): Drought-displaced Bay villagers fear a bleak future without education for their children, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/03/drought-displaced-bay-villagers-fear-a-bleak-future-without-education-for-their-children, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (22/1/2026): Families in Merka flounder as mothers lose house plastering work, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/01/families-in-merka-flounder-as-mothers-lose-house-plastering-work, accessed 11/9/2026

- RE - Radio Ergo (14/1/2026): Peace deal reconciling warring clans enables families to rebuild lives in Hananbure after five years away, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/01/peace-deal-reconciling-warring-clans-enables-families-to-rebuild-lives-in-hananbure-after-five-years-away, accessed 10/9/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (7/11/2025): A New Humanitarian Crisis Looms, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 893, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (14/5/2025): 'Mogadishu Rising' washed away, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 822, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (31/1/2025): The Threat of Wet-Bulb Temperatures to Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 781, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (16/8/2024): Somalia's Humanitarian Crisis: Need and Greed, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 719, per e-Mail [kostenpflichtig, Login erforderlich] [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (8/7/2024): Inequality and Underfunding in Somalia's Healthcare Sector, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 702, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (24/10/2022): Power, access, and social capital in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 467, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- SIDRA - Somali Institute for Development Research and Analysis (6/2019): Rape: A rising Crisis and Reality for the Women in Somalia, https://sidrainstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Rape-Policy-Brief.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (12/5/2025): Somaliland Announces Millions of dollars in Agriculture Investments, https://somalilandstandard.com/somaliland-announces-millions-of-dollars-in-agriculture-investments, accessed 9/7/2025
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (20/8/2024): UN calls for protection of aid workers, civilians in Somalia, https://shabellemedia.com/un-calls-for-protection-of-aid-workers-civilians-in-somalia/, accessed 7/10/2024
- Spiegel/Hoffmann - Heiner Hoffmann (Author), Spiegel, Der (Publisher) (24/9/2022): 'Es gibt kein Leben mehr in dieser Gegend', https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/klimawandel-wegen-einer-duerre-steht-somalia-vor-der-hungersnot-a-1f1f0b33-5f19-4bea-a4a8-ba14507971fc, accessed 15/12/2023
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (19/6/2026): Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - 1, https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at/at.gv.bfa.coicms-p/services/collection/237-1.pdf, accessed 19/6/2026 [Login required]
- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme (2025): Human Development Report 2025, https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2025reporten.pdf, accessed 19/9/2025
- UNHCR/PSMN - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Protection and Solutions Monitoring Network (2026): Somalia: Internal Displacement, https://data.unhcr.org/en/dataviz/1, accessed 24/9/2026
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (27/1/2026): Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026, https://www.unocha.org/attachments/edea4204-0921-4741-862f-203c6f75a631/Somalia_HNRP_2026.pdf, accessed 23/3/2026
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (6/7/2025): Somalia: Monthly Humanitarian Update, June 2025 - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/81d65809-4360-430a-99c9-49765869e71d/Monthly Humanitarian Update - June 2025.._corr.pdf, accessed 10/7/2025
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (23/11/2023): Battered by climate extremes - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-battered-climate-extremes, accessed 23/11/2023
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (30/9/2025): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2025/613], https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2131524.html, accessed 14/11/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (27/9/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General [S/2024/698], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116024/n2426310.pdf, accessed 14/11/2024

- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (3/6/2024): Situation in Somalia - Report of the Secretary-General (S/2024/426) [EN/AR/RU/ZH], https://reliefweb.int/attachments/2ee6cff6-d8b3-4bac-bf53-5c07f96b1a9f/n2414191.pdf, accessed 28/6/2024
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024
- WFP - World Food Programme (27/6/2025): WFP Somalia Country Brief, May 2025, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/02d06551-dcd6-4432-9e42-963e1702776c/WFP Somalia Country Brief May 2025.pdf, accessed 11/7/2025
- WHO - World Health Organization (4/3/2026): Somalia - Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA), https://reliefweb.int/attachments/07986a16-85f6-48ab-842a-8751a528cf3c/PHSA Somalia 040326.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- Y. H. Abdi/Y. B. Abdullahi/M. S. Abdi/S. G. Bashir/N. I. Ahmed - Yusuf Hared Abdi, Yakub Burhan Abdullahi, Mohamed Sharif Abdi, Sharmarke Gaiye Bashir, Naima Ibrahim Ahmed (5/8/2025): Household water treatment and storage practices in Mogadishu's IDP camps: a cross-sectional study; in: Journal of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development (2025) 15 (8): 697-712, https://doi.org/10.2166/washdev.2025.086, accessed 1/10/2026

21.3 Labour market

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:31

The majority of the population lives on the breadline, whether as small traders, small-scale livestock farmers or farmers. In addition, remittances provide a basic income for many people and families, giving them access to water, healthcare, education and electricity (BS 2026). According to figures from the African Development Bank, in 2021, 56 per cent of the working population were employed in the service sector, 17.7 per cent in industry and 26.3 per cent in agriculture (AFDB 30/5/2024). However,a major study by the *United Nations Population Fund* (UNFPA) from 2016 revealed that the vast majority of working men and womenwere employed in agriculture, livestock farming and fisheries (62.8per cent). According to the study, the next largest proportion of people worked in the service sector or in trade (14.1per cent):

	Arbeit nach Berufsgruppen							
	Management	Facharbeit, Technik im Gesundheitsbereich, in der Bildung und in anderen Sektoren	Büro/Sekretariat	Dienstleistung und Verkauf	Landwirtschaft, Viehzucht, Fischerei (v.a. primärer Sektor)	Handwerk und assoziierter Handel	Maschinentechnik und Maschinenbau	Hilfsarbeit ohne Ausbildung
Awdal	2,2	7,3	0,6	12,0	69,0	3,3	2,4	3,1
Bari	3,4	8,3	0,2	21,8	56,6	1,3	3,9	4,5
Nugaal	1,9	3,4	0,3	5,4	82,8	2,0	2,2	2,0
Mudug	2,5	8,0	0,3	15,2	62,1	3,4	6,6	1,9
Galgaduud	0,4	4,4	0,1	14,5	68,6	3,6	3,8	4,5
Hiiraan	0,2	2,6	0,1	5,8	75,6	4,5	4,4	6,9
Middle Shabelle	0,3	2,1	0,1	12,8	73,9	1,5	4,6	4,7
Benadir/Mogad.	7,9	20,8	0,7	31,8	1,3	15,6	10,7	11,2
Lower Shabelle	0,3	3,3	0,1	8,8	77,4	5,1	3,1	1,9
Bay	0,1	2,0	0,0	6,3	81,6	0,7	4,4	5,0
Bakool	0,1	1,3	0,1	13,1	82,7	1,3	1,3	0,3
Gedo	0,5	1,6	0,1	20,5	64,4	4,7	5,5	2,8
Middle Juba	2,8	12,0	0,1	7,3	62,9	3,8	2,3	8,8
Lower Juba	1,2	6,9	0,4	12,2	62,9	6,9	6,0	3,3
Sanaag	1,2	3,4	0,1	6,1	85,4	1,1	2,0	0,6
Sool	1,5	3,0	0,3	14,4	73,8	3,1	3,0	0,9
Togdheer	3,3	10,8	0,6	22,5	48,1	6,3	7,2	1,3
Woqoyi Galbeed	7,6	12,7	1,3	21,7	38,8	7,7	6,0	4,2
Durchschnitt	2,3	6,9	0,3	14,1	62,8	4,8	4,7	4,1

Sources 45: (UNFPA 2016)

Overall, approximately 95 per cent of the working population is employed in the informal sector [*Note: This may explain the differing figures presented above*] (USDOS 12/8/2025). The *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP) estimates that 400,000 Somalis enter the labour market every year, yet the urban labour market is unstable and ill-equipped to cope with such numbers (Sahan/SWT 31/5/2023).

In a survey on interaction with migrants in Hargeysa (the districts of Dami, State House and Cakara), in which more than 200 adults (70 per cent female, 30 per cent male) were interviewed, those with their own income (84) identified as belonging to the following groups: self-employed (30), employees (28) and day labourers (26). Women worked mainly in small businesses – such as shops, catering and services (25 out of 44) – as well as domestic workers (9); among the men (40), 11 were self-employed, 7 were construction workers and 7 were transport workers. Of those not in employment (117), 57 per cent stated that they were looking after children or running the household – almost exclusively women. 17 per cent described themselves as unemployed, 14per cent were students and 12 per cent were elderly or ill (MMC/IOM 19/8/2022). In another study in Somaliland, 192 respondents reported the following: 37per cent were

self-employed; 32 per cent were day labourers; 29 per cent were employees; 1 per cent were pieceworkers (DRC/Danida 2/2024).

In a survey carried out in early 2026 on behalf of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees' (BFA) Staatendokumentation project in Hargeysa, Kismayo and Mogadishu, involving 200 people in each location, the respondents reported the following statuses (figures in per cent):

Ich habe/bin...	**gesamt**	**Männer**	**Frauen**	**Hargeysa**	**Kismayo**	**Mogadischu**
fortlaufend Arbeit	17	21	12	23	10	20
gelegentlich Arbeit	18	22	12	16	21	17
arbeitslos	30	30	29	39	18	31
Schüler/Student	25	27	22	17	34	23
Hausfrau	10	-	25	5	17	9

Sources 46: STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Occupation and type of employment]

As there are very few formal jobs in the country, many young Somalis find themselves in poorly paid, informal and unstable employment situations (Sahan/SWT 29/5/2023). According to other sources, the rapidly growing cities (particularly Hargeysa, Mogadishu and Bossaso) have become centres of growth and economic opportunity. In contrast, these developments are bypassing smaller towns and rural areas (BS 2026).

There are numerous occupations in which the interviewees for the FFM Somalia 2023 consider skills and training to be helpful when looking for work. In particular, the demand for technical and craft-based skills is growing (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). There is a significant gap here between supply and demand – or between what the market wants and what people are capable of (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. Said H./Meer 28/2/2025; Dawan 13/5/2025; DRC/Danida 2/2024). There is a lack of understanding that someone who has completed four years of training is worth more than someone with a short-term qualification. Consequently, hardly anyone invests in vocational training, whilst there is a willingness to do so in the university sector (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Yet it is not easy to find a suitable job with a university degree, because private universities do not necessarily equip graduates with the skills relevant to the labour market (for example, technical subjects are still hardly taught at all) (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. Said H./Meer 28/2/2025). Furthermore, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is not well established (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023), and there are far too few programmes in this area (Said H./Meer 28/2/2025). Jobseekers therefore often lack vocational skills. In Somaliland, however, TVET is not a political priority, for example, even though training capacity is limited (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023) and demand is not being met (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Measures: In Somaliland at least, the education and training sector has improved. Here, government bodies, local communities and external donors – including the diaspora – usually

work together. Private education providers are booming, and there are several universities and colleges (BS 2026). Furthermore, society places greater emphasis on women completing their education before starting a family. As early as 2017, 50 per cent of students were female (SZ/von Eichhorn 13/2/2017); according to other figures, the proportion stood at 35 per cent in 2021 (HIPS 11/2024).

Some hotels therefore run their own hospitality training programmes, such as the *Sky Hotel* in Hargeysa. There are also a few NGO projects (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023), such as YOVENCO in Berbera (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). In Somaliland, the NGO WAAPO offers microloans to victims of gender-based violence so that they can put their own business ideas into practice (WAAPO n.da). The NGO also works with underprivileged young people, offering them further education and vocational training (WAAPO n.db). OXFAM runs a programme – in collaboration with the organisation *Shaqadoon* and its *Hargabits Academy* in Somaliland, amongst others – to tackle youth unemployment. The programme offers training in skills sought after in the labour market (e.g. digital and IT skills) and improved job placement – particularly for marginalised young people (OXFAM n.d). SOS Children's Villages launched the *Next Economy Programme* in 2016 in collaboration with a number of partners. Young people receive additional training to help them find employment on the labour market, either as employees or as self-employed individuals. Those who wish to become self-employed must raise US$500 themselves; this amount is then supplemented by the programme (SOS-CDN 10/8/2022). Entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in the Somali economy. According to estimates, this alone accounts for more than three-quarters of all jobs created (WB/Friedson 22/3/2022). For example, the telecoms group *Hormuud Telecom* has created thousands of jobs and was already employing more than 20,000 men and women in 2021 (EAT 14/2/2021). The Federal Government has launched a programme to train 3,000 new teachers. It has also announced that, within its first year in office, it recruited 23,000 young Somalis – most of them as soldiers (SD 17/6/2023). In general, however, the government makes poor use of its human resources. In the civil service, there are low wages, frequent staff turnover, appointments based on political deals and patronage (BS 2026). The Somaliland government has developed a plan that provides for the expansion of vocational training and the establishment of secondary schools and technical colleges (Mog24 23/2/2025; cf. SLST 27/2/2025).

Migrant workers: Due tothe shortage of skilled workers, for many jobs migrant workers have to be employed (Mog24 1/10/2023; cf. Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023; SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). In various sectors – such as construction, fisheries, technical trades or the healthcare sector – work is carreid out by nationals from Ethiopia, Yemen, Syria, Egypt, Kenya, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and other countries (Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023; cf. SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to a well-informed source, 98 per cent of qualified mechanics come from abroad, primarily from Kenya or Ethiopia (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In the many new, upmarket hotels in Hargeysa, many waiters and hotel staff are foreigners, as there is a lack of qualified local personnel. Many Kenyans and Asians work in this sector – including as hotel managers. Interior design offers a large market, which is dominated by Yemenis and Syrians (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Egyptian doctors run a clinic in Hargeysa (Wria/SEM/STDOK

5/2023). One interviewed farmer stated that he has to rely on Ethiopian transit migrants for harvest work; apart from them, he cannot find any willing workers (Welt/Putsch 20/7/2025).

Professions in demand: Certain occupational fields are more promising due to ongoing economic activity and development efforts (IOM-D 12/2025). All professions required for house-building are in demand on the labour market (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Even a basic level of skill can make all the difference here (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Overall, the occupational fields in demand are as follows [*Note: the sources FFM Somalia 2023 and DRC refer primarily to Somaliland, but the information is also considered relevant for the rest of Somalia*]:

- Construction workers (DRC/Danida 2/2024; cf. Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; IOM 2/3/2023)
- Bricklayers (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- Carpenters and joiners (DRC/Danida 2/2024; cf. YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- Steel construction (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- Plumbers (DRC/Danida 2/2024; cf. YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; IOM 2/3/2023)
- Interior design, furniture making (DRC/Danida 2/2024; cf. Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- Tilers (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023)
- Electricians (DRC/Danida 2/2024; cf. SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- Painters (DRC/Danida 2/2024)
- Mobile phone repair (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- (Car) Mechanics (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; IOM 2/3/2023)
- Hospitality, chefs, hotel industry (DRC/Danida 2/2024; cf. Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; STDOK/SEM 5/2023b; SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; IOM 2/3/2023)
- Horticulture (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- Agriculture (IOM-D 12/2025; cf. DRC/Danida 2/2024; YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023), specifically agriculture, livestock farming, agricultural advisory services, agro-processing, irrigation management (IOM-D 12/2025), greenhouse operations (DRC/Danida 2/2024)
- Refrigeration and air-conditioning technology (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- Communication (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)

- Management (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- Retail (DRC/Danida 2/2024): branch management, small business ownership, sales, retail management (IOM-D 12/2025)
- Logistics (IOM-D 12/2025; cf. DRC/Danida 2/2024)
- IT (DRC/Danida 2/2024; cf. IOM-D 12/2025; SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; IOM 2/3/2023), specifically *IT support*, network administration, software development, digital services (IOM-D 12/2025)
- Telecommunications (IOM-D 12/2025; cf. SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- *Cyber security* (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- *Human Resources* (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- Fisheries (coastal areas): knowledge of how to use GPS, echo sounders and fish-finding equipment (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)
- Tailor (DRC/Danida 2/2024; cf. MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023)
- Henna artist (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023)
- Solar technology (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023)
- Medical sector (doctors, nurses, midwives, etc.) (IOM 2/3/2023)
- *Marketing and Sales* (DRC/Danida 2/2024; cf. IOM 2/3/2023)
- Accounting (DRC/Danida 2/2024; cf. IOM 2/3/2023)
- Healthcare (DRC/Danida 2/2024): doctors, nursing staff, pharmacists, healthcare administration (IOM-D 12/2025)
- Transport: taxi and tuk-tuk drivers (IOM-D 12/2025)
- Security guards (DRC/Danida 2/2024)
- Teachers (DRC/Danida 2/2024)

There are also still many opportunities in the processing of agricultural products (e.g. the production of ketchup or fruit juice) (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Unskilled workers: Many people moved from rural areas to the city during the drought to find work, for example in the construction industry (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Without any particular qualifications, one can find work there as a day labourer. A healthy man can approach a construction company directly and enquire about available work (IOM 2/3/2023). In addition, there are also opportunities for unskilled workers, for example as porters at the docks (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. IOM 2/3/2023), as a cleaner (IOM 2/3/2023; cf. YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023), as a brickmaker or in the delivery sector. With a minimum level of training, it may also be possible to find work as, for example, a painter. In smaller towns, there are also employment opportunities in the livestock sector (IOM 2/3/2023).

One IDP reports that, in his camp, most women find work as laundresses and most men on building sites (HO 25/6/2024b). Generally speaking, IDPs make up a large proportion of the lowest-paid workforce, but also of workers in the construction sector and as domestic helpers (EUAA 5/2026b).

Womenface disadvantages in both the formal and informal labour markets (BS 2026). They encounter structural barriers to economic participation. Social norms limit their opportunities, and very few of them have significant independent capital (BS 2026). At the same time, it is also well known that women have fewer prospects of securing full-time employment (SOMSUN 6/4/2021). Negative, patriarchal attitudes towards women continue to shape perceptions. One study reports a clear preference for men in the workplace, as well as widespread views that paid work is a man's job (HIPS 11/2024).

On the other hand, the civil war has led many women to take on the role of head of the household and, consequently, to enter the workforce (HIPS 11/2024). The heavy toll taken on the male population during the long-running conflict, but also the prevalence of *khat* consumption amongst men and the high divorce rate have led to women increasingly entering sectors of the economy that were formerly male-dominated – such as livestock farming, agriculture and trade (ICG 27/6/2019a). The presence of women in economic life has increased dramatically (HIPS 11/2024). In one study, 53 per cent of the households surveyed stated that they had a female head of household. At the same time, 81 per cent stated that they were married. Accordingly, in at least 28 per cent of the households surveyed, the woman is regarded as the head of the household, even though a husband also lives there (Elsamahi/Ochieng/Bedelian 9/6/2023). According to other figures, more than 70 per cent of all households are headed by women (HIPS 11/2024; cf. Sahan/SWT 27/8/2025). In a United Nations survey, for IDPs this figure was 25 per cent in 2025 (2015: 17 per cent) (UN OCHA 27/1/2026).

Women now often contribute the lion's share of the family income (ICG 27/6/2019a). According to one source, women arethe main breadwinners in 74per cent of households andthe sole breadwinnersin 62per cent (AQ21 11/2023; cf. HIPS 11/2024). Women take on almost every conceivable economic role. They form the economic backbone of the country (Sahan/SWT 27/8/2025). They may work as small-scale traders (VOA/Maruf 11/4/2023; cf. RE 19/2/2021); small-scale trade is dominated by women (HIPS 11/2024; cf. TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). 80–90 per cent of trade conducted in this way is controlled by women. They sell goods at markets or on the street, such as fuel (FIS 5/10/2018), food, *khat,* firewood, charcoal, foodstuffs or second-hand clothing; however, in recent years they have also moved into more profitable sectors, such as livestock farming, agriculture and fishing (HIPS 11/2024). In Mogadishu, female IDPs often work as laundresses or in small-scale retail (EUAA 5/2026b).

In large private businesses, women also play a leading role. In Mogadishu and Bossaso, approximately 45per cent of all formal businesses are owned bywomen (WB/Friedson 22/3/2022), whilst in Hargeysa more than half of all family businesses, or so-called 'householdenterprises', are owned by women (WB/Friedson 22/3/2022; cf. WB/Friedson 22/3/2022). At the large livestock market in Hargeysa, women account for around 90 per cent of the traders (ARTE/Unger/

Bergeron 2021). Women are now also found in 'more exotic' professions: the BBC reports, for instance, that 5 per cent of engineers are female. Whilst there are occasionally hurdles for them, there is also a high demand due to the high level of construction activity – particularly in Mogadishu. There are well-known examples of female engineers who have implemented multi-million projects (BBC/Hanshi/Irungu 15/6/2025).

Overall, however, women play hardly any role in the formal economy (Sahan/SWT 27/8/2025). Generally speaking, women find employment mainly in the informal sector, but many lack education (AQ21 11/2023). Many women arrive in Mogadishu on their own, in the hope of earning some money there. Children are sometimes left in the care of relatives in the countryside (RE 7/2/2026). For women moving from the countryside to the cities in particular, the only work usually available is as a laundress, for example (VOA/Maruf 11/4/2023). Women also work, for example, in agriculture or making prayer mats (VOA/Maruf 11/4/2023). Others work as maids, street vendors, cooks, seamstresses, waste collectors (OXFAM/Fanning 6/2018) or even on building sites (FIS 5/10/2018; cf. OXFAM/Fanning 6/2018). Many of the hundreds of street cleaners in Mogadishu are widows and the sole breadwinners for their families. The highest income available here is 150 US dollars a month; some receive food rations. The city council is also trying to recruit male cleaners, but with little success. Many men seem to refuse to carry out such work (AJ 21/7/2022).

During the FFM Somalia 2023, it was observed that working women could be seen, for example, in hotels (Hargeysa, Berbera) in cleaning roles. At Hargeysa Airport, many women work in security, the immigration service, shops and at the gates. In roadside restaurants, it is not unusual to see female waiters, even though the clientele consists largely of men (STDOK/SEM 5/2023b). Women also work as street vendors or sell snacks on the street or at building sites. Women without qualifications often work as laundresses or cleaners (IOM 2/3/2023). Cleaning services are in high demand (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Other women work as domestic helpers or in tea houses. With a minimum level of training, they can also find employment as hairdressers, henna artists, in beauty salons or as shop assistants (IOM 2/3/2023). All the occupations mentioned so far take women beyond the sphere traditionally attributed to them, namely that of their own households (OXFAM/Fanning 6/2018).

One source puts the proportion of women in the public sector for the years 2018–2021 at:

Name	Year	% Women in the Public Sector
Federal Government	2018 – 2021	37%
Galmudug State	2020 – 2021	25%
Hirshabelle State	2021	4.5%
Jubbaland State	2020 – 2021	3.8%
Puntland State	2020 – 2021	28%
Southwest State	2019 – 2020	15.5%

Sources 47: HIPS 11/2024

However, many of these women work as cleaners (32 per cent) (HIPS 11/2024).

Sources

- AFDB - African Development Bank Group (30/5/2024): African Economic Outlook 2024, https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/2024/06/06/aeo_2024_-_country_notes.pdf, accessed 15/11/2024
- AJ - Al Jazeera (21/7/2022): The street cleaners of Mogadishu: Doing Somalia's riskiest job, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/21/street-cleaners-the-women-doing-mogadishus-riskiest-job?sf168184671=1, accessed 13/12/2024
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- ARTE/Unger/Bergeron - M. Unger (Author), E. Bergeron (Author), ARTE (Publisher) (2021): Reportage – Somaliland: Der Staat, der nicht sein darf, filmische Dokumentation, https://www.arte.tv/de/videos/104232-000-A/somaliland-der-staat-der-nicht-sein-darf/, accessed 16/10/2024
- BBC/Hanshi/Irungu - British Broadcasting Corporation (Publisher), Fardowsa Hanshi (Author), Anthony Irungu (Author) (15/6/2025): Somalia's construction boom in Mogadishu gives women high ambitions, https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj427dy11j0o, accessed 16/6/2025
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (13/5/2025): Somaliland Aims for 75% Youth Jobs via Vocational Training, https://www.dawan.africa/news/somaliland-aims-for-75percent-youth-jobs-via-vocational-training, accessed 24/3/2026
- DRC/Danida - Danish Refugee Council, Danida (2/2024): Labour Market Analysis Somaliland. Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for Migrants, https://drc.ngo/media/japkaaka/labour-market-analysis-somaliland.pdf, accessed 16/7/2025
- EAT - East Africa Today (14/2/2021): Hormuud Launches Women's Only Tellers; Webpage nicht mehr verfügbar, Quelle liegt bei der Staatendokumentation auf, https://www.eastafricatoday.com/somalia-hormuud-launches-womens-only-tellers/, accessed 26/7/2022
- Elsamahi/Ochieng/Bedelian - M. Elsamahi, G.A. Ochieng, C. Bedelian (9/6/2023): Coping with the drought crisis in Somalia: Formative research findings from the Resilience Population Measurement (RPM) project. Mogadishu, Somalia: Resilience Population Measurement (RPM) Activity, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/68a8e2c2-c0a4-43d0-a013-05c236a629ba/CopingwithDroughtCrisisSomaliaRPMresearch.pdf, accessed 23/11/2023
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2026b): Somalia - Displacement in Mogadishu, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-displacement-mogadishu, accessed 24/9/2026
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (5/10/2018): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi, January 2018, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia_-Fact_Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi January 2018.pdf/2abe79e2-baf3-0a23-97d1-

f6944b6d21a7/Somalia_Fact_Finding Mission to Mogadishu and Nairobi January 2018.pdf.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (11/2024): Fostering Safe and Inclusive Workplaces for Women in Somalia, https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Fostering-Safe-Workplaces-Nov-2024.pdf, accessed 23/9/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (25/6/2024b): IDPs in Mogadishu have to choose between caring for sick children and working, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Jun/196839/idps_in_mogadishu_have_to_choose_between_caring_for_sick_children_and_working.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 27/6/2024
- ICG - International Crisis Group (27/6/2019a): Women and Al-Shabaab's Insurgency, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2011897/b145-women-and-al-shabaab_0.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IOM - International Organization for Migration (2/3/2023): Information on the socio-economic situation in Somalia/Somaliland; Anfragebeantwortung an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- IOM-D - Internationale Organisation für Migration - Deutschland (12/2025): Somalia - Länderinformationsblatt 2025, https://iompwesagerrfg001.blob.core.windows.net/rfg/bdaab9a6-2526-4e86-a3e3-a1ce0331cf65-CFS_Somalia_2025_DE.pdf, accessed 10/4/2026
- MAEZA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Organisation für bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MMC/IOM - Mixed Migration Centre, International Organization for Migration (19/8/2022): Interactions between local communities and transiting migrants in Hargeisa, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/a70ebc42-0430-4195-a39f-21e2bf8740f5/241_Snapshot_Hargeisa.pdf, accessed 11/7/2024
- Mog24 - Mogadischu24.com (23/2/2025): Somaliland aims for 75 youth jobs via vocational training, https://mogadishu24.com/somaliland-aims-for-75-youth-jobs-via-vocational-training/, accessed 18/7/2025
- Mog24 - Mogadischu24.com (1/10/2023): Somaliland Raises Concerns Over Rising Unemployment Rates, https://mogadishu24.com/somaliland-raises-concerns-over-rising-unemployment-rates, accessed 23/4/2024
- Omer/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Ahmed Omer (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- OXFAM - OXFAM (n.d): Getting Somaliland's youth back to work through skills training, https://heca.oxfam.org/latest/stories/getting-somalilands-youth-back-work-through-skills-training, accessed 18/11/2024
- OXFAM/Fanning - OXFAM (Publisher), Emma Fanning (Author) (6/2018): Drought, Displacement and Livelihoods in Somalia/Somaliland. Time for gender-sensitive and protection-focused approaches, http://regionaldss.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/bn-somalia-somaliland-drought-displacement-protection-280618-en-002.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- RE - Radio Ergo (7/2/2026): Women leaving their children behind in drought-hit rural villages to seek jobs in Mogadishu, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/02/women-leaving-their-children-behind-in-drought-hit-rural-villages-to-seek-jobs-in-mogadishu, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (19/2/2021): Somali IDP women in Beletweyne set up businesses to educate their children, https://radioergo.org/en/2021/02/19/somali-idp-women-in-beletweyne-set-up-businesses-to-educate-their-children/, accessed 15/12/2023
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/8/2025): Women in Somalia's Gendered Political Economy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 865, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (31/5/2023): Somalia's displaced population: Urban and unidentified, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 547, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (29/5/2023): Somalia's Youth Unemployment: A vicious cycle, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 546, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Said H./Meer - Hibo Said (Author), Meer (Publisher) (28/2/2025): Facing the future: Somaliland's youth and the job crisis, https://www.meer.com/en/85600-facing-the-future-somalilands-youth-and-the-job-crisis, accessed 17/4/2026

- Scholar/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Scholar, Hargeysa (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SD - Somali Dispatch (17/6/2023): PM Hamse says his government created employment for 23 thousand youths, https://www.somalidispatch.com/latest-news/pm-hamse-says-his-government-created-employment-to-23-thousand-youths/, accessed 9/4/2024
- SLST - Somaliland Standard (27/2/2025): President Abdirahman Irro launches National Symposium on Vocational and Technical Education, https://somalilandstandard.com/president-abdirahman-irro-launches-national-symposium-on-vocational-and-technical-education, accessed 24/9/2026
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Employer from Hargeysa dealing with vacancies (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SOMSUN - Somaliland Sun (6/4/2021): In All Sectors Women have Nearly Half the Opportunities Afforded to Men - Oxfam, https://www.somalilandsun.com/somalia-in-all-sectors-women-have-nearly-half-the-opportunities-afforded-to-men-oxfam/, accessed 20/6/2024
- SOS-CDN - SOS Children's Villages Canada (10/8/2022): Youth partnership helps young entrepreneurs find work in Somaliland, https://www.soschildrensvillages.ca/news/youth-partnership-helps-young-entrepreneurs-find-work-somaliland-321, accessed 18/11/2024
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (19/6/2026): Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - 1, https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at/at.gv.bfa.coicms-p/services/collection/237-1.pdf, accessed 19/6/2026 [Login required]
- STDOK/SEM - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (5/2023b): Beobachtungen im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SZ/von Eichhorn - Caroline von Eichhorn (Author), Süddeutsche Zeitung (Publisher) (13/2/2017): Wo Mütter die Wirtschaft schmeißen, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/somaliland-wo-muetter-die-wirtschaft-schmeissen-1.3377028, accessed 21/6/2024
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (2016): Economic Characteristics of the Somali People, https://nbs.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Economic-Characteristics-of-the-Somali-People-—-Volume-4.pdf, accessed 15/11/2024
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (27/1/2026): Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026, https://www.unocha.org/attachments/edea4204-0921-4741-862f-203c6f75a631/Somalia_HNRP_2026.pdf, accessed 23/3/2026
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- VOA/Maruf - Voice of America (Publisher), Harun Maruf (Author) (11/4/2023): Displaced Somali Women Utilize Survival Skills, https://www.voanews.com/a/displaced-somali-women-utilize-survival-skills-/7045960.html, accessed 9/4/2024
- WAAPO - WAAPO (n.da): Safe Houses, https://waapo.org/safe-house/, accessed 21/6/2024
- WAAPO - WAAPO (n.db): UPSHIFT Innovative Livelihood Program, https://waapo.org/economic-empowerment-and-livelihood/, accessed 21/6/2024
- WB/Friedson - Sophia Friedson-Ridenour (Author), World Bank, The (Publisher) (22/3/2022): Voices of women entrepreneurs in a changing Somalia, https://blogs.worldbank.org/nasikiliza/voices-women-entrepreneurs-changing-somalia, accessed 20/6/2024
- Welt/Putsch - Christian Putsch (Author), Welt (Publisher) (20/7/2025): Ostkorridor: „Umkehren kommt nicht infrage' – warum diese gefährliche Migrationsroute boomt, https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article256293416/ostkorridor-umkehren-kommt-nicht-infrage-warum-diese-gefaehrliche-migrationsroute-boomt.html, accessed 24/3/2026
- Wria/SEM/STDOK - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Rashid Wria (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

- YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), YOVENCO Berbera (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

21.3.1 Job search [primarily information from the FFM Somalia 2023]

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:31

Independent job placement: There are no institutions in Mogadishu that support the unemployed in their search for work (IOM 2/3/2023). However, there is an online job market and job placement portals (Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023; cf. MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023), such as the website somalijobs.org (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023) or the sites shaqodoon.net and qaranjobs.com (IOM 2/3/2023). The government launched the *Somali National Job Portal* in 2025 (Sonna 16/3/2025).

However, only some vacancies are advertised online (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). *Somalijobs*, for example, features job advertisements from UN agencies, NGOs, private companies (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023) and governments across all parts of Somalia, e.g. from *Dahabshiil* or *eDahab* or from educational institutions (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to one source, these adverts are for positions that require a great deal of experience and knowledge (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023) – in other words, where qualified staff are needed. Job hunting via *Somalijobs* is not dependent on one's own clan. A person can also apply from Mogadishu for a job in Hargeysa (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

In the major cities, there are larger companies, such as hotels, restaurants, IT and telecommunications firms (DIPL-X/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Large firms, such as *Hormuud*, *Dahabshiil* and *Telesom*, try to find the best people (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023), and vacancies are advertised accordingly (DIPL-X/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). For example, the port operator *DP World* is recruiting staff for the port in Berbera via social media (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Overall, however, there are only a few such companies (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023) and, in total, only a few formal jobs. This also applies to Mogadishu (DIPL-X/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. IOM 2/3/2023). In Somaliland at least, some positions are also advertised on the websites of the government or lower-level administrative bodies (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023) or via social media (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023). Some shops also advertise vacancies with signs in their shop windows (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Sometimes recruitment agencies are also used – for example, in the field of private security personnel or for cleaning and building services (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). In Berbera, YOVENCO, an NGO active in vocational training, reports that it is in contact with companies and the local administration to place trainees there. In return, small businesses also approach the NGO when they are looking for staff (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Take Berbera as an example: according to one source, whilst the issue of clan affiliation has not been completely eliminated in the recruitment process at the port operator *DP World* in

Berbera, the situation is changing. People from places such as Hargeysa, who do not have roots in Berbera, are now also applying for jobs with this company. Things have also changed at Berbera's local council. As a result, municipal employees who do not meet the employer's requirements are now occasionally dismissed. The city administration is increasingly modelling itself on *DP World*: it is seeking qualified staff (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Connections: In a society ravaged by decades of conflict, an individual's opportunities generally depend very heavily on their own and their family's background, as well as on their location (BS 2026). There are two ways to find work. Either one possesses very strong skills; in that case, one can find a job regardless of clan affiliation. If that is not the case, one needs family connections (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Apart from international or large companies, the practice of advertising vacancies and accepting applications is relatively uncommon in the private sector (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). The labour market is largely informal (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023), and as a result, job placement often takes place informally – via personal networks, family, friends and the clan (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; IOM 2/3/2023). Many jobs are not awarded on the basis of qualifications (Said H./Meer 28/2/2025; cf. IOM 2/3/2023), and many businesses continue to operate largely through family connections. Relatives are hired (Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023; cf. DIPL-X/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; Said H./Meer 28/2/2025) or other people who are trusted (Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023). Clan connections play a crucial role in job-seeking (FH 2024a), and clan members are often given preference (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. USDOS 22/4/2024). However, many jobs are simply family-oriented, for example when a family runs a small shop (DIPL-X/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). It is therefore usually necessary to have relatives, acquaintances or connections when looking for work (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Contrary to the information given above, according to two sources this applies in particular to 'better' jobs or those requiring a university degree (FIS 7/8/2020a; cf. Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023) and also in the civil service, where, due to the prevailing nepotism in the allocation of posts, clan interests take precedence. Here, relatives are appointed regardless of their qualifications (K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga 9/2025).

Many job vacancies are passed on through word of mouth (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). It is therefore more difficult for people who do not have good clan connections, and for IDPs, to find work (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf. FIS 7/8/2020a; Sahan/SWT 29/5/2023). Opportunities are also often limited for minorities, as they have only a limited number of businesses and connections, as well as restricted access to education. In Hargeysa, many of them work as hairdressers or cobblers, whilst only a small number are employed in other occupations (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

So even though competence has become more important, jobs go to members of one's own clan. In this way, the money also remains within the clan. This also applies to Mogadishu (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). One example is the *Hotel Ambassador* in Hargeysa, where, according to one source, all staff – from cleaners to security guards – belong to the owner's clan. Even outside businesses, recruitment often takes place via the clan, according to this source from the FFM Somalia 2023 – for example, in Somaliland within the police force or the civil

service, which is divided amongst the major clans (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Whilst there are employees from different clans in Somaliland's ministries, negotiations take place between the ministries to achieve this – in other words, positions are exchanged amongst them to avoid the impression that recruitment is limited to members of one's own clan (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to sources from the Norwegian COI unit Landinfo, it is difficult for people from southern and central Somalia to find work in Somaliland (Landinfo 5/3/2026).

References: The requirements regarding proof of one's skills depend on the advertised position. Sometimes diplomas, certificates and qualifications (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023), as well as guarantors and references (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023), are required – particularly for formal jobs. In Somaliland, an identity card is required for formal employment in any case (IOM 2/3/2023). Companies review CVs and copies of, for example, university diplomas; only after an interview and assessment are the originals sometimes requested (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). And sometimes employers carry out a reference check and contact the institutions that issued the documents (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023) as well as guarantors and referees directly. In doing so, companies tend to rely more on references than on documents (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). For simple jobs, proof of qualifications is not usually required. What counts here is practical experience, personal recommendations and connections. In Somaliland, an identity card is not required for this either (IOM 2/3/2023).

Unskilled workers: It is easier to find work as a day labourer (Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023). Unskilled jobs are open to everyone (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). If you are looking for informal work – such as a construction worker or unskilled labourer – you do not need many skills or connections, provided you are physically capable of doing the work (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to another source, connections may sometimes be necessary here too. One source explains that it is easier to find a job in Mogadishu because the construction sector there is booming (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). At the port of Berbera or in Mogadishu, anyone can find work as a labourer or porter (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). If a person simply wants to work as a domestic helper or cleaner, family connections are usually not required (SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to the IOM, however, even such jobs are often given to relatives. In any case, there are no vacancies for unskilled jobseekers on job-matching portals. They must go directly to construction sites, for example, and ask for work there (IOM 2/3/2023).

Women: The economic viability of single women depends in particular on the extended family and their clan or sub-clan. A woman can organise work through these networks. Furthermore, the level of education of those affected is a key factor. It is easier for women with a higher level of education to survive economically. The greatest challenge for women in the labour market is often not the fact that they are single, but that they lack education (MBZ 4/4/2025). Women without formal training usually take on domestic tasks or find employment through family contacts, or by going from door to door. Women without contacts in Mogadishu often have to take on the lowest-paid jobs – such as laundry workers or cleaners (IOM 2/3/2023). In Hargeysa, there are specialist cleaning companies. No particular background is required to be employed

by such a company (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Women can register with one of these firms when looking for work (IOM 2/3/2023).

In general, women are treated differently when applying for jobs. Before their professional qualifications and experience are taken into account, they are assessed on the basis of their age, their appearance and how urgently they need to find a job. Men are often clearly favoured; male workers are regarded as more competent and capable. At the same time, decisions regarding recruitment, promotion and other professional matters are frequently made outside the workplace in informal male-only circles in which women do not participate (HIPS 11/2024).

[*Note: For information on employment opportunities for* ***people from southern/central Somalia in Somaliland****, see*Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Refugees / Somaliland]

Sources

- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- DIPL-X/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Diplomatic Source X (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- FH - Freedom House (2024a): Freedom in the World 2024 - Somaliland, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2109065.html, accessed 8/7/2024
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020a): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf/2f51bf86-ac96-f34e-fd02-667c6ae973a0/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf?t=1602225617645, accessed 12/10/2023
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (11/2024): Fostering Safe and Inclusive Workplaces for Women in Somalia, https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Fostering-Safe-Workplaces-Nov-2024.pdf, accessed 23/9/2026
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IOM - International Organization for Migration (2/3/2023): Information on the socio-economic situation in Somalia/Somaliland; Anfragebeantwortung an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- K.Farah/M.Ouma/S.Nyanchoga - Khalif Farah, Marin Ouma, Samuel Nyanchoga (9/2025): Influence of Corruption on the Increased Prevalence of Terrorism in Somalia. In: African Journal of Politics and Administrative Studies (AJPAS) 18(3) (September, 2025), 163-187, https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ajpas/article/download/306463/288088, accessed 28/4/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- MAEZA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Organisation für bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- Omer/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Ahmed Omer (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (29/5/2023): Somalia's Youth Unemployment: A vicious cycle, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 546, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]

- Said H./Meer - Hibo Said (Author), Meer (Publisher) (28/2/2025): Facing the future: Somaliland's youth and the job crisis, https://www.meer.com/en/85600-facing-the-future-somalilands-youth-and-the-job-crisis, accessed 17/4/2026
- Scholar/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Scholar, Hargeysa (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SECEX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Security Expert (Author) (4/2023):
  Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Employer from Hargeysa dealing with vacancies (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Sonna - Somali National News Agency [Somalia] (16/3/2025): Ministry of Labour launches the National Job Portal, https://sonna.so/en/ministry-of-labour-launches-the-national-job-portal, accessed 24/9/2026
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (22/4/2024): 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices - Somalia, https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/somalia, accessed 23/4/2024
- Wria/SEM/STDOK - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Rashid Wria (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), YOVENCO Berbera (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

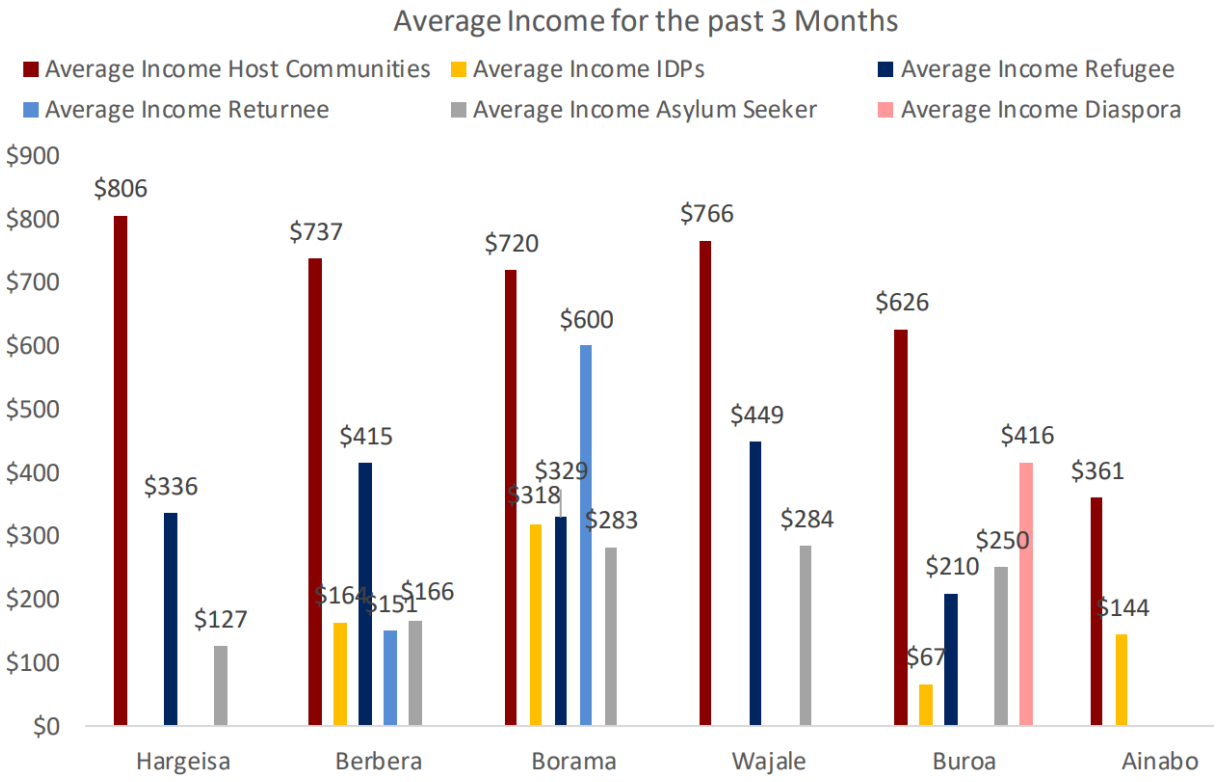
21.3.2 Income

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:31

There is no national minimum income (USDOS 12/8/2025). Although Somaliland is generally better off, the economic situation of households there is more or less the same as in the south of the country (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Sources from the FFM Somalia 2023 report that salaries in Mogadishu and Hargeysa are roughly the same (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; cf.SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). In a survey on interactions with migrants in Hargeysa (the Daami, *State House* and Cakara districts), in which more than 200 adults (70 per cent female, 30 per cent male), 42 per cent stated that they had their own income. Among male respondents, the figure was 67 per cent, whilst among female respondents it was 31 per cent (MMC/IOM 19/8/2022). In a subsequent study in Somaliland, 23 per cent of respondents stated that they received a fixed salary, a further 21 per cent earned money as day labourers, 20 per cent as self-employed workers; 9 per cent had no income (DRC/Danida 2/2024).

Level of income: According to the IOM, the average monthly income can vary depending on location, occupation, education and sector of employment. In Mogadishu, the average monthly income is reported to be between 232 and 325 euros (IOM 8/5/2024). According to other sources, 100 US dollars appears to represent something of a standard wage (SECEX/STDOK/SEM 4/2023); according to another source, skilled workers earn at least 200 US dollars

a month (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). IOM Germany also states that the average income in Somalia is between 100 and 200 US dollars (IOM-D 12/2025). Informal jobs are also available for day labourers on a monthly basis. According to one source, a person can earn between 100 and 500 US dollars from such work. The 500 US dollars is paid if the person has been carrying out the work to the employer's satisfaction at a particular company for, say, ten years. Beginners therefore earn no more than US$100–150, for example as a waitress or in small shops. In smaller towns, earnings are lower (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to other figures from the IOM, people earn an average of US$200–600, though the organisation adds that there are no official data on the population's income situation (IOM/STDOK 21/2/2025). Another source puts the median income for Somaliland at 100–250 US dollars (KGHP/MoHDSL 2025). Yet another source collected the following data on average incomes in a survey conducted in Somaliland (192 respondents):



Sources 48: DRC/Danida 2/2024

Below is a comprehensive collection of income examples showing **daily earnings** in US dollars for the years 2024–2026:

Verdienst	Tätigkeit	Ort	Region	Anmerkung	Quelle
2	Verkäuferin von Feuerholz	Garoowe	Nugaal	IDP	(RE 19.3.2024)
2	Arbeiter bei einem Bananenhändler	Afgooye	L. Shabelle		(RE 20.4.2026)
2,5	Steinbrecher		Bari		(RE 23.6.2026)
2-3	Hilfsarbeiter am Bau	Caynaabo	Sool	25 Jahre, Familie mit 2 Kindern	(RE 6.3.2024)
2-3	Stroh-/Grassammler	Togga Jaceel	Bari	männlich, 12-köpfiger Haushalt	(RE 15.4.2026)
3	Straßenhändlerin (Obst/Gemüse)	Hargeysa	Somaliland	Alleinerzieherin mit 7 Kindern	(RE 13.8.2024)
3	Tagelöhner	Badhan	Sanaag	ehem. Bauer	(RE 2.4.2025)
3	Wäschewaschen	Mogadischu, IDP-Lager	Benadir	weiblich, IDP, 7 Kinder	(RE 11.8.2026)
3	Wäschewaschen	Kismayo	L. Juba	weiblich, IDP, 8 Kinder	(RE 3.9.2026)
3-4	Milchverkäuferin	Janaale	L. Shabelle	weiblich, 6-köpfige Familie	(RE 2.7.2026)
4	Wäschewaschen	Mogadischu, IDP-Lager	Benadir	Witwe, IDP, 8 Kinder	(RE 11.8.2026)
4	Be- und Ablader	Kismayo	L. Juba	männlich, 12-köpfige Familie, reicht nur für eine Mahlzeit/Tag	(RE 3.9.2026)
4	Reinigungskraft	Doolow	Gedo	weiblich, 36 Jahre	(RE 3.7.2026)
4	Saisonarbeiter (Landwirtschaft)	Beder	L. Shabelle	männlich, 7-köpfige Familie	(RE 2.7.2026)
4-5	Trägerin	Mogadischu	Benadir	Weiblich, IDP, 10-köpfige Familie	(RE 6.5.2026)
4-6	Altmetallsammlerin	Dhusamareb	Galgaduud	weiblich, IDP, 9 Kinder	(RE 15.6.2026)
5	Salzbergbau	Hinlabi	Mudug	42 Jahre, 7 Kinder, ehemaliger Nomade	(RE 10.4.2024)
5	Angestellte in einem Fruchtsäfte-Kiosk	Cadaado	Galgaduud	-	(RE 13.1.2024)
5	Besitzerin eines Kleidungsgeschäfts	Hananbure	Galgaduud	Alleinerzieherin, 7 Kinder	(RE 14.1.2026)
5-7	Verkäuferin von Kinderkleidung	Garoowe	Nugaal	IDP, 11 Kinder	(RE 19.3.2024)
5-7	Besitzerin eines kleinen Restaurants	Hananbure	Galgaduud	geschiedene Frau mit 6 Kindern, 33 Jahre	(RE 14.1.2026)
5-10	Inhaberin eines kl. Geschäftes	Garoowe	Nugaal	IDP aus Gedo, Familie mit 8 Kinder, Mann arbeitslos	(RE 19.3.2024)
5-11	Tuk-Tuk-Fahrerin	Burco	Somaliland	37 Jahre, 6 Kinder und 5 Geschwister	(RE 19.6.2024)
6-7	Gemüsegeschäft (Gewinn)	Gobweyn	Lower Juba	Witwe, 10-köpfige Familie	(RE 22.1.2025)
6-7	Messerschleifer	Kismayo	Lower Juba	12 Jahre, ernährt Eltern und Geschwister (2 Mahlzeiten/Tag)	(RE 26.4.2025)
6-8	Schneiderin/Gewandverkäuferin	Badhan	Sanaag	versorgt 12-köpfigen Haushalt	(RE 2.4.2025)
6-10	Besitzerin eines kleinen Kaffeehauses	Madah-Lagu	Sool	Witwe, 41 Jahre, 8 Kinder	(RE 8.7.2026)
7-8	Mechaniker (angestellt)	Baidoa	Bay	männlich, 8-köpfige Familie, IDP	(RE 10.12.2025)
7-10	Sandförderer und -Transporteur	Baidoa	Bay	männlich, 50 Jahre, 10-köpfiger Haushalt	(RE 29.8.2026)
8	kleines 1-Zimmer-Geschäft	Badhan	Sanaag	weiblich	(RE 12.8.2026)
8-9	Tischlerin	Baidoa	Bay	geschiedene Frau, IDP, 6 Kinder	(RE 17.7.2026)
10	Betreiberin einer Fischküche			9 Kinder	(RE 8.5.2024)
10	Schlachter und Fleischer	Hargeysa	Somaliland	24 Jahre, Familie mit 3 Kindern, Eltern und 3 Geschwister	(RE 13.8.2024)
10	Motorradtaxi / Bote	Hargeysa	Somaliland	18 Jahre, Mutter und 9 Geschwister	(RE 13.8.2024)
10	Honigverkäufer	Merka	Lower Shabelle	33 Jahre, ältester Sohn, Vater und Geschwister	(RE 20.8.2026)
10	Motorradkurier und -Transporteur	Dhusamareb	Galgaduud	männlich, 5-köpfige Familie, unterstütz 5 weitere Familien	(RE 2.4.2026)
10-12	Tischlerin	Baidoa	Bay	weiblich, 4 Kinder	(RE 17.7.2026)
10-13	Kleinhändler	Baragaha Qol	Sanaag	Familie mit 12 Kindern	(RE 16.1.2024)
10-15	Betreiberin eines Fischimbisses	Hobyo	Mudug	Familie mit 9 Kindern	(RE 8.5.2024)
10-15	Bananenverkäuferin	Afgooye	L. Shabelle	weiblich, 8-köpfige Familie	(RE 20.4.2026)
10-15	Häuser mit Dung verputzen	Merka	L. Shabelle		(RE 22.1.2026)
10-15	Motorradkurier und -Taxi	Hananley	Galgaduud	männlich, ehem. Landwirt, 5-köpfige Familie	(RE 2.4.2026)
15	Elektriker	Badhan	Sanaag	ehem. Bauer	(RE 2.4.2025)
18	Wasserlieferant (selbstständig)	Hargeysa	Somaliland	24 Jahre, Frau, 3 Kinder, Eltern und 3 Geschwister	(RE 13.8.2024)
10-20	Lieferdienste (Motorrad)	Mogadischu	Benadir	28, IDP Mutter und 4 Geschwister	(RE 24.3.2024)
10-20	Tuk-Tuk-Fahrer	Burco	Somaliland	-	(RE 19.6.2024)
10-25	Bekleidungsgeschäft (Gewinn)	Gobweyn	Lower Juba	Frau, 12-köpfige Familie	(RE 22.1.2025)
15-20	Lieferdienste (Motorrad)	Mogadischu	Benadir	25 Jahre, 2 Kinder, 4 Geschwister und Mutter	(RE 24.3.2024)
15-30	Fischer		Bari		(RE 23.6.2026)
25	Verkauf frischer Fruchtsäfte	Cadaado	Galgaduud	männlich, 38 Jahre, Familie mit 2 Kindern + 6 Neffen/Nichten	(RE 13.1.2024)
30-40	Motorradfahrer	Mogadischu	Benadir	Männlich, 42, Familie mit 2 Frauen und 13 Kindern	(RE 15.6.2025)

(RE 3/9/2026; RE 29/8/2026; RE 20/8/2026; RE 12/8/2026; RE 11/8/2026; RE 17/7/2026; RE 8/7/2026; RE 3/7/2026; RE 2/7/2026; RE 23/6/2026; RE 15/6/2026; RE 6/5/2026; RE 20/4/2026; RE 15/4/2026; RE 2/4/2026; RE 22/1/2026; RE 14/1/2026; RE 10/12/2025; RE 26/4/2025; RE 2/4/2025; RE 22/1/2025; RE 13/8/2024; RE 19/6/2024; RE 8/5/2024; RE 10/4/2024; RE 24/3/2024; RE 19/3/2024; RE 6/3/2024; RE 16/1/2024; RE 13/1/2024)

Here are some examples of **monthly earnings** in US dollars for the years 2023–2026:

Verdienst	Tätigkeit	Ort	Region	Anmerkung	Quelle
50	Feuerholzsammlerin	Baidoa	Bay	weiblich	(RE 10.3.2026)
80	Reinigungskraft (privat)	Mogadischu	Benadir	weiblich	(RE 24.3.2024)
80-100	Trägerin und Wäscherin	Mogadischu	Benadir	weiblich, IDP, 6 Kinder	(RE 6.5.2026)
100	Arbeiter auf einer Schaffarm	Abdaal	Somaliland	männlich	(RE 16.6.2026)
100	Honigproduzentin (angestellt)	Baidoa	Bay	weiblich, 40 Jahre, IDP aus Bakool, ehem. Landwirtin	(RE 10.3.2026)
100	private Reinigungskraft	Hargeysa	Somaliland	Witwe, 8 Kinder	(RE 10.4.2026)
150	Reinigungskraft bei Deegaan-Dhowr	Mogadischu	Benadir	weiblich, 18 Jahre	(RE 18.9.2023)
150	Schweißer	Caynaabo	Sool	männlich, Familie mit 2 Kindern	(RE 6.3.2024)
150	Bauarbeiter	Garoowe	Puntland	männlich, IDP aus Gedo	(RE 19.3.2024)
150	Kellner im Restaurant	Mogadischu	Benadir	männlich, 18 Jahre, Familie mit 2 Kindern	(RE 26.10.2023)
150	Straßenreinigung	Baidoa	Bay	Witwe, 44 Jahre, IDP, 7 Kinder	(RE 1.4.2025)
150	Fischer	Gunbah	Bari	männlich, sechs-köpfige Familie, ehem. Nomade	(RE 10.6.2026)
150	Polizist		Somaliland		(BMLV 6.6.2025)
150	Soldat		Somaliland		(BMLV 6.6.2025)
150-200	Hauslehrerin	Hargeysa	Somaliland	weiblich, 23 Jahre, sechsköpfige Familie	(RE 17.8.2026)
150-200	Honigproduzentin	Baidoa	Bay	weiblich, 20 Jahre	(RE 10.3.2026)
160	Altmetallsammler	Dhusamareb	Galgaduud	Männlich, 15-köpfige Familie	(RE 15.6.2026)
180	Müllarbeiter	Cabudwaaq	Galgaduud	männlich, 41 Jahre, IDP	(RE 12.12.2024)
200	Landarbeiter auf einer Farm	Baxdo-Gaabo	Mudug	männlich, 38 Jahre, Familie mit 5 Kindern; zzgl. Naturalien	(RE 6.8.2024)
200	Motorradbote (Milchsammler)	Bezirk Galkacyo	Mudug		(RE 17.2.2025)
200-230	Mechaniker (angestellt)	Baidoa	Bay	Männlich, 7-köpfige Familie, IDP, ehem. Landwirt	(RE 10.12.2025)
200-250	Kleinhändlerin	Hargeysa	Somaliland	weiblich, 7 Kinder, Alleinerzieherin	(RE 13.8.2024)
200-300	Herstellung von Blumentöpfen aus Ton		Somalia	männlich	(RE 3.3.2025)
200-300	Hauslehrerin	Hargeysa	Somaliland	weiblich, 20 Jahre, Sekundarschulabschluss	(RE 17.8.2026)
200-300	Soldat	Bundesarmee	Somalia	inkl. Naturalien	(EUAA 5.2025b)
200-300	Polizist		Somalia	inkl. Naturalien	(EUAA 5.2025b)
200-500	Landwirtschaft			Landwirtschaft, Viehhaltung, landwirtsch. Beratungsdienste, Agroverarbeitung, Bewässerungsmanagement	(IOM-D 12.2025)
200-1000	Regierungsangestellte		Somalia		(INGO-F 4.2023)
220	Verwaltungsangestellter Privatfirma	Cabudwaaq	Galgaduud	männlich, 29 Jahre, 9-köpfige Familie + vier Geschwister	(RE 12.12.2024)
250	Supervisor bei Reinigungsfirma	Mogadischu	Benadir	weiblich, 40 Jahre, Kinder, Alleinerzieherin	(RE 18.9.2023)
250-300	Schweißereibetreiber	Caynaabo	Sool	männlich, 32 Jahre, Familie mit 10 Kindern	(RE 6.3.2024)
250-300	Taxi- oder Tuktukfahrer			über private Unternehmen	(IOM-D 12.2025)
250-400	Kompost- und Setzlingsproduzent	Mogadischu	Benadir	männlich, 47 Jahre,	(RE 10.7.2026)
300	Kellnerin/Kassiererin (14:00-24:00 Uhr)	Mogadischu	Benadir	weiblich, 2017 aus Saudi Arabien zurückgekehrt	(RE 28.8.2023)
300	Fortgeschrittener Landarbeiter	Baxdo-Gaabo	Mudug	männlich	(RE 6.8.2024)
300-600	Einzelhandel und Logistik			Filialleitung,Kleinunternehmertum, Verkauf, Logistik	(IOM-D 12.2025)
300-600	Gesundheitswesen			Pflegekräfte und Apotheker	(IOM-D 12.2025)
320	Lehrer (Mathematik, Technologie)	Cadaado	Galgaduud	männlich	(RE 20.3.2025)
350	Arbeiter auf einer Gemüsefarm	Belet Weyne	Hiiraan	männlich	(RE 12.7.2023)
400	Elitesoldaten	Bundesarmee-Danaab	Somalia		(SG/WP 28.5.2025)
400-500	Qualifizierte Lehrer im *TVET*-Bereich		Somaliland		(YOVENCO 5.2023)
400-700	private Sicherheitsfirma	Mogadischu	Benadir		(AQSOM 4 10.2025)
400-1000	IT und Telekommunikation			IT-Support, Netzwerkadministration, Softwareentwicklung, digitale Dienste	(IOM-D 12.2025)
500	Elektriker	Galkacyo	Mudug	männlich, 25 Jahre	(RE 19.10.2023)
500	Fernfahrer	Belet Weyne	Hiiraan	männlich	(RE 17.3.2023)
500-600	Gesuchte Handwerker		Somaliland		(Scholar 5.2023)
500-700	Gewinn Herrenbekleidungsgeschäft	Mogadischu	Benadir	männlich	(RE 13.3.2025)
500-1000	Arzt				(IOM-D 12.2025)
536	Hebamme	Mogadischu	Benadir		(NYT 17.10.2025)
2000	Angestellter einer internationalen NGO		Somaliland		(SOMNAT 5.2023)
3000	Angestellter einer internationalen NGO		Somalia		(SOMNAT 5.2023)
bis 1200	Elektriker	Galkacyo	Mudug	männlich, 30 Jahre, 1 Kind	(RE 19.10.2023)
5000	Abgeordneter	Mogadischu	Benadir		(Sahan 13.12.2023)

(AQSOM 4/STDOK 10/2025; BMLV/STDOK 6/6/2025; EUAA 5/2025a; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; IOM-D 12/2025; NYT 17/10/2025b; RE 17/8/2026; RE 10/7/2026; RE 16/6/2026; RE 15/6/2026; RE 10/6/2026; RE 6/5/2026; RE 10/4/2026; RE 10/3/2026; RE 10/12/2025; RE 1/4/2025; RE 20/3/2025; RE 13/3/2025; RE 3/3/2025; RE 17/2/2025; RE 12/12/2024; RE 13/8/2024; RE 6/8/2024; RE 24/3/2024; RE 19/3/2024; RE 6/3/2024; RE 26/10/2023; RE 19/10/2023; RE 18/9/2023; RE 28/8/2023; RE 12/7/2023; RE 17/3/2023; Sahan/SWT 13/12/2023; Scholar/STDOK/

SEM 5/2023; SG/WP 28/5/2025; SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)

State support, the unemployed, pensioners: There is no state support for the unemployed, either in Somaliland or elsewhere in Somalia. If one has no income, or no decent income, one is dependent on relatives and clan ties. As a rule, people can rely on these (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. IOM-D 12/2025). There is also no national welfare, social assistance or pension system (IOM-D 12/2025).

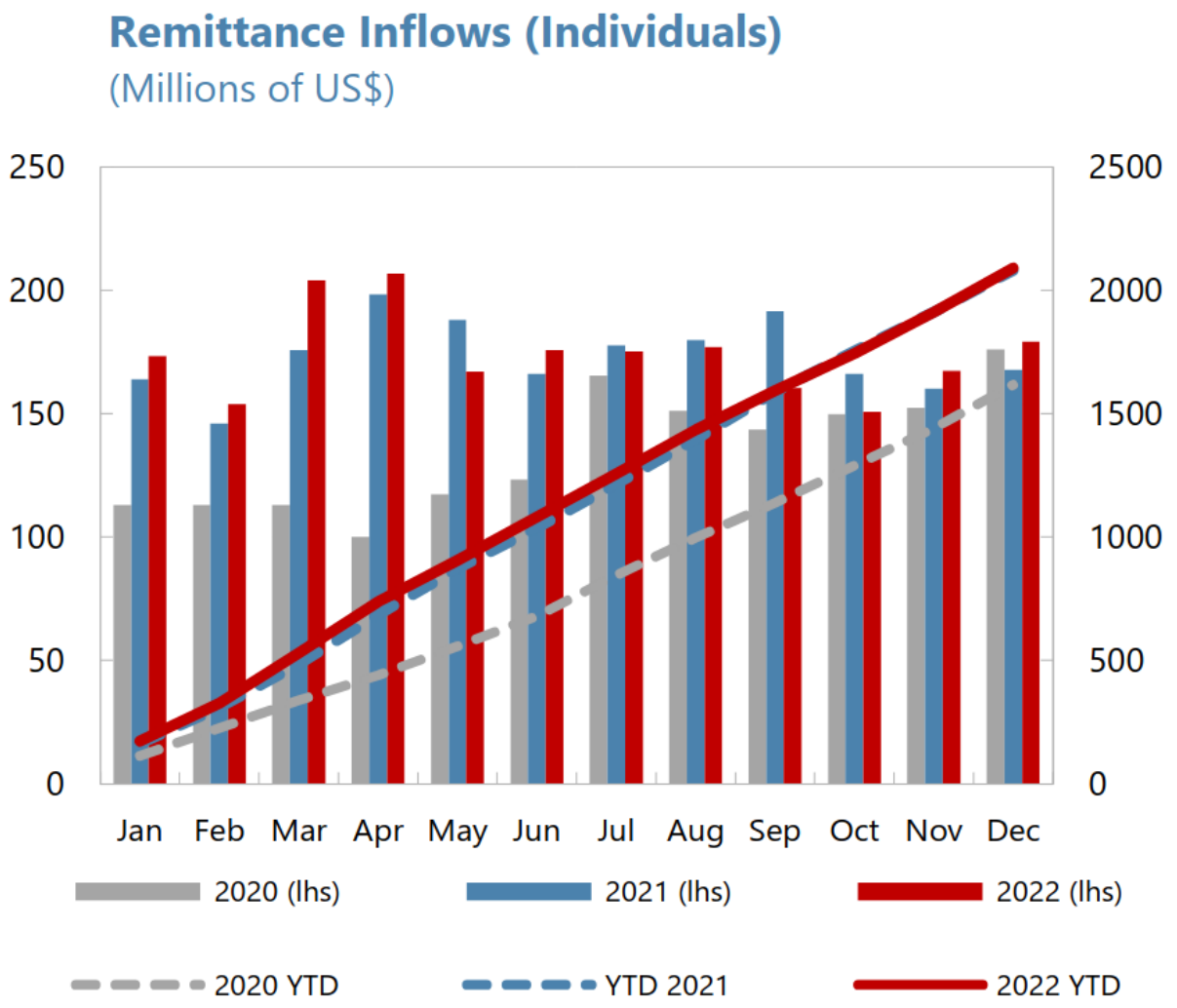
Income – IDPs: In urban areas, accelerated rural-to-urban migration has led to the emergence of peripheral urban communities that are cut off from social services, the formal labour market and political participation (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The majority of IDPs work as day labourers. Women often go from door to door offering their services, for example as laundresses or domestic workers. Men frequently work on building sites – the cities are, after all, being rebuilt, so there is a great need for day labourers. The most sought-after jobs are those on building sites, where pay is higher than in other sectors. There are also many micro-entrepreneurs of both sexes. However, people do not always secure a job; for example, they may only work 2–3 days a week (ACCORD 31/5/2021). Many IDPs also receive support from aid organisations (VOA/Maruf 11/4/2023). According to one source, however, this aid is not sufficient (ACCORD 31/5/2021). People in IDP camps, however – especially if they have been living there for some time – have generally also established a system of neighbourhood support (ACCORD 31/5/2021). It is reported that IDP women in Bossaso earn 3–5 US-Dollars a day by separating chaff from wheat and are also allowed to sell the chaff (VOA/Maruf 11/4/2023).

Income – Financing: In 2019, the *Gargaara Company Ltd.* was successfully established. This institution provides loans to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (WB 6/2021). The EU-funded *Finance for Inclusion in Somalia* (FIG) programme supports financial institutions, amongst other things, in expanding their financing to the agriculture and fisheries sectors – for example, through loans for fishing boats or farm expansion (Halbeeg 27/3/2023). In general, alternative financing channels (mobile money transfers, microfinance) have made it easier for people to access finance (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023).

Income – clan and relatives: According to several sources at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it goes without question that people support one another within the Somali clan system (MBZ 4/4/2025). Overall, traditional law (*xeer*) – and, by extension, the extended family and the clan – provides a fundamental social safety net, a form of social and accident insurance (SEM 31/5/2017; cf. Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA 3/7/2018; BS 2026) or third-party liability insurance. The members of *the qabiil* (also: *jilib*; the group responsible for paying blood money or *diya*) assist one another with internal payments – e.g. medical expenses – and, in particular, with payments to outsiders (Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA 3/7/2018). In addition to the nuclear family, the *jilib* [*Note: lower level in the clan system*] appears to be primarily responsible for covering emergencies. If a person needs support, they turn to the *jilib* or – depending on the scale of the need – to lower levels (e.g. the extended family) (SEM 31/5/2017). Support from the clan system may take the form of accommodation, employment, food or financial assistance.

The duration of this support depends on the wealth of the sub-clan concerned. Wealthy sub-clans can provide support over a very long period (MBZ 4/4/2025).

Income – remittances: Remittances from the diaspora account for approximately 30 per cent of GDP (AFDB 23/6/2023; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024) and thus far exceed the total amount of humanitarian aid entering the country (Sahan/SWT 28/8/2024; cf. SRF 27/12/2021). In the first half of 2022, more than 2.2 billion US dollars flowed into Somalia in this way (AFDB 2023). According to the International Monetary Fund, approximately US$1.6 billion flowed to private individuals in 2020, whilst in 2021 and 2022 the figure was approximately US$2.1 billion in each year (IMF 31/5/2023):



Sources 49: IMF 31/5/2023

In 2023, remittances totalled US$2.4 billion (IMF 31/5/2023). They therefore play a crucial role in reducing poverty (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). For many households, they are one of the main sources of income (BS 2026). Remittances account for a significant proportion of household budgets, particularly for the bottom 40 per cent, where remittances cover 54per cent of all household expenditure (WB 6/2021). These remittances make a substantial contribution to

the social safety net. However, they are unevenly distributed (BS 2026). An estimated 40 per cent of Somali households receive remittances in one form or another (Sahan/SWT 11/10/2023) – IDPs receive them relatively less often (DI 6/2019). A survey conducted in November and December 2020 showed that 22 per cent of urban households, 12 per cent of rural households and 6 per cent of IDP households receive remittances (IPC 1/3/2021). The population in southern Somalia – and particularly in rural areas – also receives relatively less money than those in Somaliland or Puntland. One reason for this is that a higher proportion of marginalised groups and ethnic minorities live there (RVI/Majid/Abdirahman/Hassan 1/9/2018). This is because minorities, too, often lack access to remittances (SPC 9/2/2022).

According to a 2021 study, 67 per cent of remittance recipients are unemployed. For many people, remittances are a lifeline (Sahan/SWT 2/9/2022; cf. OXFAM 15/12/2023, Star 30/8/2022). Remittances are mainly used for general household expenses (e.g. food, water) as well as education and healthcare (UNCDF 4/2023; cf. OXFAM 15/12/2023). At least 65 per cent of households receiving remittances do so regularly (monthly), whilst the remainder receive them on an ad hoc basis or in times of crisis. Remittances can therefore offset fluctuations in income or increased expenditure. This is particularly important in times of humanitarian crisis. Remittances enable households to improve the quantity and quality of the food they purchase, and a very large proportion of remittances is also spent on food. Furthermore, in Somalia, people also share with one another in times of crisis. For example, people ask others, whom they know to be receiving remittances, for help (RVI/Majid/Abdirahman/Hassan 1/9/2018).

Income – Gabooye: Gabooye in Hargeysa still largely earn their living through their traditional trades (e.g. hairdressers, metalworkers, shoemakers). Only a few of them have gained access to public and private sector jobs in the formal economy. They are largely excluded from camel herding; most own a few goats or sheep. By contrast, rental income now represents an important source of income for many Gabooye in Hargeysa (Landinfo 19/1/2026).

Sources

- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AFDB - African Development Bank Group (23/6/2023): Somalia Economic Outlook, https://www.afdb.org/en/countries-east-africa-somalia/somalia-economic-outlook, accessed 15/12/2023
- AFDB - African Development Bank Group (2023): Country Focus Report 2023 - Somalia, https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/somalia_cfr_2023_web_.pdf, accessed 18/11/2024
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (10/2025): Expertengespräche
- BMLV/STDOK - Ministry of Defence [Austria], Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (6/6/2025): Interview der Staatendokumentation mit einem Länderexperten
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026

- DI - Development Initiatives (6/2019): Towards an improved understanding of vulnerability and resilience in Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Report_Towards-an-improved-understanding-of-vulnerability-and-resilience-in-Somalia.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- DRC/Danida - Danish Refugee Council, Danida (2/2024): Labour Market Analysis Somaliland. Understanding sectors for growth in Somaliland and economic opportunities for Migrants, https://drc.ngo/media/japkaaka/labour-market-analysis-somaliland.pdf, accessed 16/7/2025
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2025a): Somalia - Country Focus, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-country-focus, accessed 21/4/2026
- Halbeeg - Halbeeg (27/3/2023): Financing the productive sectors in somalia boosts production and ensures food security, https://en.halbeeg.com/2023/03/27/financing-the-productive-sectors-in-somalia-boosts-production-and-ensures-food-security/, accessed 9/4/2024
- IMF - International Monetary Fund (31/5/2023): Somalia: Fifth Review Under the Extended Credit Facility Arrangement, Requests for Waiver of Nonobservance of a Performance Criterion, Modification of Performance Criteria and Indicative Target, and Interim Assistance-Press Release; and Staff Report, https://www.imf.org/-/media/Files/Publications/CR/2023/English/1SOMEA2023001.ashx, accessed 18/11/2024
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IOM - International Organization for Migration (8/5/2024): Information on the availability of treatment for ICD10-F43.1 in Somalia, requested by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum
- IOM/STDOK - International Organization for Migration (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (21/2/2025): IOM, Antwort per e-Mail, zitiert nach: Anfragebeantwortung der Staatendokumentation zu Somalia - Herzprobleme, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2126460/SOMA_RF_MEV_Herzprobleme_2025_02_24_KE.odt, accessed 7/1/2026 [Login required]
- IOM-D - Internationale Organisation für Migration - Deutschland (12/2025): Somalia - Länderinformationsblatt 2025, https://iompwesagerrfg001.blob.core.windows.net/rfg/bdaab9a6-2526-4e86-a3e3-a1ce0331cf65-CFS_Somalia_2025_DE.pdf, accessed 10/4/2026
- IPC - Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (1/3/2021): Somalia - IPC Acute Food Insecurity and Acute Malnutrition Analysis January-June 2021, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-ipc-acute-food-insecurity-and-acute-malnutrition-analysis-january-june, accessed 15/12/2023
- KGHP/MoHDSL - King's Global Health Partnerships / King's College London, Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (2025): People's Voice Survey: Somaliland Country Brief 2025, https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/67225ec0cf3415e2692725fe/682cca05ebe2ac8982d45b27_country_brief_SO.pdf, accessed 9/1/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (19/1/2026): Somalia - Gaboye (midgan), https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Respons-Somalia-Gaboye-midgan-19012026.pdf, accessed 4/3/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- MMC/IOM - Mixed Migration Centre, International Organization for Migration (19/8/2022): Interactions between local communities and transiting migrants in Hargeisa, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/a70ebc42-0430-4195-a39f-21e2bf8740f5/241_Snapshot_Hargeisa.pdf, accessed 11/7/2024
- NYT - New York Times, The (17/10/2025b): A Somali Hospital Closed After U.S. Aid Cuts. Fired Employees Reopened It Without Pay, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/17/health/somalia-hospital-reopen-employees.html, accessed 28/11/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Omer/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Ahmed Omer (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- OXFAM - OXFAM (15/12/2023): Remittances to Somalia, https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/issues/economic-well-being/remittances-to-somalia, accessed 15/12/2023

- RE - Radio Ergo (3/9/2026): New Kismayo settlement has schools and healthcare for IDPs – but no jobs for income, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/09/new-kismayo-settlement-has-schools-and-healthcare-for-idps-but-no-jobs-for-income, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (29/8/2026): New tax halts lifeline work for displaced sand transporters in Baidoa, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/08/new-tax-halts-lifeline-work-for-displaced-sand-transporters-in-baidoa, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (20/8/2026): Trade in honey sweetens livelihood challenges for poor families in Merka, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/08/trade-in-honey-sweetens-livelihood-challenges-for-poor-families-in-merka, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (17/8/2026): Home schooling in Hargeisa expands opportunity for education, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/08/home-schooling-in-hargeisa-expands-opportunity-for-education, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (12/8/2026): New road brings trade and income to small community in Badhan, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/08/new-road-brings-trade-and-income-to-small-community-in-badhan, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (11/8/2026): Local Somali initiative fills gaps in nutritional support in Mogadishu's IDP camps, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/08/local-somali-initiative-fills-gaps-in-nutritional-support-in-mogadishus-idp-camps, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (17/7/2026): Displaced women carpenters turn the tables and make an independent living in Baidoa, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/displaced-women-carpenters-turn-the-tables-and-make-an-independent-living-in-baidoa, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/7/2026): Radio sews the seeds of success for Mogadishu family man, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/radio-sews-the-seeds-of-success-for-mogadishu-family-man, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (8/7/2026): Clan conflict in Sool destroys family livelihoods and forces hundreds to flee, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/clan-conflict-in-sool-destroys-family-livelihoods-and-forces-hundreds-to-flee, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (3/7/2026): Displaced women in Dollow lose work in a shrinking and overcrowded jobs market, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/displaced-women-in-dollow-lose-work-in-a-shrinking-and-overcrowded-jobs-market, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (2/7/2026): Clan conflict over land in Lower Shabelle leaves families destitute, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/clan-conflict-over-land-in-lower-shabelle-leaves-families-destitute, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (23/6/2026): Bari fishermen's livelihoods destroyed by uncontrolled foreign boats, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/06/bari-fishermens-livelihoods-destroyed-by-uncontrolled-foreign-boats, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (16/6/2026): Diaspora woman's sheep fattening farm brings jobs and skills to livestock communities in Somaliland, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/06/diaspora-womans-sheep-fattening-farm-brings-jobs-and-skills-to-livestock-communities-in-somaliland, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (15/6/2026): Scrap metal collectors in Dusamareb make a hard living for their families, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/06/scrap-metal-collectors-in-dusamareb-make-a-hard-living-for-their-families, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/6/2026): Drought-hit pastoralists turn to fishing in Bari region, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/06/drought-hit-pastoralists-turn-to-fishing-in-bari-region, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (6/5/2026): Women pushing heavy loads support displaced families in Mogadishu, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/05/women-pushing-heavy-loads-support-displaced-families-in-mogadishu, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (20/4/2026): Families in Lower Shabelle get new chance to build up a living, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/04/families-in-lower-shabelle-get-new-chance-to-build-up-a-living, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (15/4/2026): Selling thatching grass in Bari valley provides new income for drought-hit families, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/04/selling-thatching-grass-in-bari-valley-provides-new-income-for-drought-hit-families, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/4/2026): Low income Hargeisa families forced into IDP camp due to rising prices and shrinking income, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/04/low-income-hargeisa-families-forced-into-idp-camp-due-to-rising-prices-and-shrinking-income, accessed 10/9/2026

- RE - Radio Ergo (2/4/2026): Central Somali pastoralists find motorbikes more reliable than livestock, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/04/central-somali-pastoralists-find-motorbikes-more-reliable-than-livestock, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/3/2026): Women in Baidoa set up thriving beekeeping business now supporting their families, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/03/women-in-baidoa-set-up-thriving-beekeeping-business-now-supporting-their-families, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (22/1/2026): Families in Merka flounder as mothers lose house plastering work, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/01/families-in-merka-flounder-as-mothers-lose-house-plastering-work, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (14/1/2026): Peace deal reconciling warring clans enables families to rebuild lives in Hananbure after five years away, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/01/peace-deal-reconciling-warring-clans-enables-families-to-rebuild-lives-in-hananbure-after-five-years-away, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/12/2025): Training and jobs in auto repairs in Baidoa help youth to escape the IDP camps, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/12/training-and-jobs-in-auto-repairs-in-baidoa-help-youth-to-escape-the-idp-camps, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (26/4/2025): 12-year old boy supports his family sharpening knives in Kismayo, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/04/12-year-old-boy-supports-his-family-sharpening-knives-in-kismayo, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (2/4/2025): Skills training gives displaced pastoralists and farmers in Sanag a chance to build new livelihoods, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/04/skills-training-gives-displaced-pastoralists-and-farmers-in-sanag-a-chance-to-build-new-livelihoods, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (1/4/2025): Street cleaning in Baidoa provides stable work for poor and displaced families, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/04/street-cleaning-in-baidoa-provides-stable-work-for-poor-and-displaced-families, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (20/3/2025): New teaching jobs in Galmudug revive education and provide salaries for unemployed teachers, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/03/new-teaching-jobs-in-galmudug-revive-education-and-provide-salaries-for-unemployed-teachers, accessed 5/1/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (13/3/2025): Business at home became a better bet than migration, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/03/business-at-home-became-a-better-bet-than-migration, accessed 9/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (3/3/2025): Craftsman inspires others to make a living from home and garden pottery, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/03/craftsman-inspires-others-to-make-a-living-from-home-and-garden-pottery, accessed 9/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (17/2/2025): Motorbike deliveries in Mudug take off as cost-effective local transport that provides jobs, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/02/motorbike-deliveries-in-mudug-take-off-as-cost-effective-local-transport-that-provides-jobs, accessed 9/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (22/1/2025): Women from farming and herding families hit by climate crises in Lower Juba turn to small businesses, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/01/women-from-farming-and-herding-families-hit-by-climate-crises-in-lower-juba-turn-to-small-businesses, accessed 9/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (12/12/2024): Jobs in waste collection for low income people in Abudwak, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/12/jobs-in-waste-collection-for-low-income-people-in-abudwak, accessed 9/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (13/8/2024): Homes and jobs lift poor Hargeisa families relocated from swampy dam area, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/08/homes-and-jobs-lift-poor-hargeisa-families-relocated-from-swampy-dam-area/, accessed 17/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (6/8/2024): Bereft pastoralists find work on farms in Mudug, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/08/bereft-pastoralists-find-work-on-farms-in-mudug/, accessed 16/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (19/6/2024): Brave woman tuk-tuk driver supports her family single-handedly in Burao, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/06/brave-woman-tuk-tuk-driver-supports-her-family-single-handedly-in-burao/, accessed 16/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (8/5/2024): Displaced women in Hobyo set up businesses selling fish, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/05/displaced-women-in-hobyo-set-up-businesses-selling-fish/, accessed 16/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/4/2024): Mudug salt miners earn a good income but hope for investment, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/04/mudug-salt-miners-earn-a-good-income-but-hope-for-investment/, accessed 17/9/2024

- RE - Radio Ergo (24/3/2024): Motorbikes create jobs for youths and change the face of Mogadishu streets, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/03/motorbikes-create-jobs-for-youths-and-change-the-face-of-mogadishu-streets/, accessed 17/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (19/3/2024): Small business grants set IDP women in Garowe back on their feet, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/03/small-business-grants-set-idp-women-in-garowe-back-on-their-feet/, accessed 17/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (6/3/2024): New skills bring jobs to households in Ainabo, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/03/new-skills-bring-jobs-to-households-in-ainabo/, accessed 17/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (16/1/2024): New road opens up many opportunities in northern Somalia's Sanag, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/01/new-road-opens-up-many-opportunities-in-northern-somalias-sanag/, accessed 16/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (13/1/2024): Small business brings big changes for central Somali family, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/01/small-business-brings-big-changes-for-central-somali-family/, accessed 16/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (26/10/2023): Selling tea leads to bigger things for Mogadishu entrepreneur, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/10/selling-tea-leads-to-bigger-things-for-mogadishu-entrepreneur71535, accessed 19/11/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (19/10/2023): Mudug pastoralists train as electricians in Galkayo, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/10/mudug-pastoralists-train-as-electricians-in-galkayo/, accessed 16/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (18/9/2023): Hardworking IDP women targeted for jobs by Mogadishu cleaning company, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/09/hardworking-idp-women-targeted-for-jobs-by-mogadishu-cleaning-company/, accessed 16/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (28/8/2023): Fast food makes fast track to success for Saudi returnees, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/08/fast-food-makes-fast-track-to-success-for-saudi-returnees/, accessed 13/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (12/7/2023): Households suffer in Beletweyne as jobs and property lost in floods, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/07/households-suffer-in-beletweyne-as-jobs-and-property-lost-in-floods/, accessed 13/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (17/3/2023): Hiran farmers' profits hit by conflict in Somaliland, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/03/hiran-farmers-profits-hit-by-conflict-in-somaliland/, accessed 9/4/2024
- RVI/Majid/Abdirahman/Hassan - Nisar Majid (Author), Khalif Abdirahman (Author), Shamsa Hassan (Author), Rift Valley Institute (Publisher) (1/9/2018): Remittances and Vulnerability in Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1458512/1226_1551782303_remittances-and-vulnerability-in-somalia-by-nisar-majid-rvi-briefing-2018.pdf, accessed 18/11/2024
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (28/8/2024): What's In a Name: The Campaign to Delegitimise 'Somaliland', in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 724, per e-Mail [kostenpflichtig, Login erforderlich] [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (13/12/2023): The billion dollar budget, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 627, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (11/10/2023): Somalia's political economy and debt relief, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 603, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (2/9/2022): The challenge of remittances, a lifeline under pressure, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 446, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Scholar/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Scholar, Hargeysa (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SECEX/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Security Expert (Author) (4/2023):
  Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (31/5/2017): Focus Somalia – Clans und Minderheiten, https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/internationales/herkunftslaender/afrika/som/SOM-clans-d.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- SG/WP - Somali Guardian, Washington Post, The (28/5/2025): How U.S. cuts in Somalia could imperil the fight against al-Shabab, https://somaliguardian.com/news/somalia-news/how-u-s-cuts-in-somalia-could-imperil-the-fight-against-al-shabab, accessed 17/6/2025

- SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somaliland National (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SPC - Somalia Protection Cluster (9/2/2022): Protection Analysis Update, February 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SOM_PAU_Somalia-Protection-Analysis_Feb2022.pdf, accessed 15/11/2023
- SRF - Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen (27/12/2021): Ein Staat ohne Macht - Somalia: Leben im gescheiterten Staat, https://www.srf.ch/news/international/ein-staat-ohne-macht-somalia-leben-im-gescheiterten-staat, accessed 11/10/2023
- Star - The Star (30/8/2022): Diaspora remittances continue to boost Somali economy – Dahabshiil, https://www.the-star.co.ke/business/2022-08-30-diaspora-remittances-continue-to-boost-somali-economy-dahabshiil/, accessed 15/12/2023
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- UNCDF - United Nations Capital Development Fund (4/2023): Regional Harmonization of Remittance Policies in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), https://migrantmoney.uncdf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Somalia-Infrastructure-Assessment-Report-ENG.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- USDOS - United States Department of State [USA] (12/8/2025): 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2128435.html, accessed 11/9/2025
- VOA/Maruf - Voice of America (Publisher), Harun Maruf (Author) (11/4/2023): Displaced Somali Women Utilize Survival Skills, https://www.voanews.com/a/displaced-somali-women-utilize-survival-skills-/7045960.html, accessed 9/4/2024
- WB - World Bank, The (6/2021): Somalia Economic Update. Investing in Health to Anchor Growth, http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/926051631552941734/pdf/Somalia-Economic-Update-Investing-in-Health-to-Anchor-Growth.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- Wissenschaftl. Mitarbeiter GIGA - Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter am German Institute of Global and Area Studies (3/7/2018): Sachverständigengutachten zu 10 K 1802/14A
- YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), YOVENCO Berbera (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

21.4 Cost of living

Last modification 2026-10-05 07:44

Several sources quote the following monthly cost of living figures (in US dollars) for various locations in 2023:

Ort	Spezifika	Kosten	Quelle
Hargeysa	alleinstehende Person in einem WG-Zimmer	100	(Omer 4.2023)
Mogadischu	Minimum	200	(IOM 2.3.2023)
Berbera	alleinstehende Person	200-300	(YOVENCO 5.2023)
Hargeysa	Minimum	300	(IOM 2.3.2023)
Mogadischu	mittlerer Lebensstandard	300	(IOM 2.3.2023)
Hargeysa	mittlerer Lebensstandard	400-500	(IOM 2.3.2023)

(IOM 2/3/2023; Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)

According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, you get more for your money in Somaliland than in Mogadishu (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Another source, however, believes that it is cheaper to live in Mogadishu than in Hargeysa (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to

one source, a family in Hargeysa cannot live on an income of 100 US dollars a month; the sum is therefore not enough to cover food and electricity (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Police officers and soldiers, who [*note: at that time*] earned a wage of around 100 US dollars, can afford three meals a day for their families thanks to the additional provisions issued to them. However, this leaves no money for education or medical care (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). In Somaliland's smaller towns, the cost of living is lower (IOM 2/3/2023).

In Somaliland, it is often difficult for public sector workers like teachers or others to make ends meet on their salaries alone. Many of them have additional sources of income, forexample as taxi drivers or teaching afternoon classes at a private school (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023), or (in Berbera) as porters in ports (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). People also save money by eating cheap traditional food (e.g. maize with milk or *dashuro*) rather than expensive rice and pasta. In Hargeysa, people who do not belong to the Gabooye move into the Daami district, traditionally inhabited by this group, because rents are cheaper there. Other poor people move to the outskirts, where there are many corrugated iron houses and where accommodation is also cheaper (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). A source from the FFM Somalia 2023 report explains that in smaller towns such as Berbera, it is common practice to run up a tab at shops or, for example, in tea houses. Some people accumulate large debts in this way; yet everyone still manages to survive (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). However, a person finds themselves in a difficult situation if they have no relatives. Often, the only option left is begging, or the person finds a livelihood as an unskilled labourer – particularly if they have no qualifications (Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. IOM 2/3/2023).

In a survey commissioned by the Staatendokumentation of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BFA) and conducted in early 2026 in Hargeysa, Kismayo and Mogadishu, the respondents reported as follows when asked whether they could afford their accommodation (including rent, cooking, electricity and water; in per cent):

	gesamt	**Männer**	**Frauen**	**Hargeysa**	**Kismayo**	**Mogadischu**
ja	17	19	13	23	13	14
es geht sich knapp aus	33	35	30	20	45	33
es geht sich kaum aus	36	35	38	38	30	42
nein	14	11	19	19	12	11

Sources 50: STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Housing situation and impact of housing costs]

Sources

- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IOM - International Organization for Migration (2/3/2023): Information on the socio-economic situation in Somalia/Somaliland; Anfragebeantwortung an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail

- Omer/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Ahmed Omer (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Scholar/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Scholar, Hargeysa (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somaliland National (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (19/6/2026): Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - 1, https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at/at.gv.bfa.coicms-p/services/collection/237-1.pdf, accessed 19/6/2026 [Login required]
- YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), YOVENCO Berbera (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

21.4.1 Housing market

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

Housing situation – survey: In a survey carried out in early 2026 in Hargeysa, Kismayo and Mogadishu on behalf of the BFA's Staatendokumentation Unit, involving 200 people in each location, respondents reported the following proportions regarding their housing status:

Ich lebe...	**gesamt**	**Männer**	**Frauen**	**Hargeysa**	**Kismayo**	**Mogadischu**
alleine	11	10	11	12	8	12
mit „housing partners“	22	21	24	18	23	25
mit der Kernfamilie	19	20	18	16	16	27
mit der Großfamilie	48	49	47	54	52	36

Sources 51: STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Housing situation and impact of housing costs]

Housing search: Only the better properties are advertised on online platforms or Facebook (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023) – and, according to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, this applies only to Hargeysa (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Otherwise, there are no online options for finding accommodation in Somalia or Somaliland (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). If someone is looking for a flat, they usually have to ask around or rely on local networks (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). However, according to one source, at least in Somaliland there are alsoestate agents who know which properties are available on the market and who can help with the search (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). As many people are moving from rural areas to the city, demand is growing. Many of those leaving the countryside live with relatives in the city. Others settle in areas where rents are cheaper (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, it is relatively easy to find a house to rent

in Hargeysa (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to recent reports, the Somaliland police have instructed landlords to require tenants to present identification (AQSOM 9 1/2026).

Types of accommodation: There are various types of accommodation. Common types include brick houses, corrugated iron houses (*sandaqad* or 'iron sheet house') and traditional huts (IOM 2/3/2023; cf. Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). This applies to Mogadishu as well as to Hargeysa and smaller towns across the country (IOM 2/3/2023). In Somaliland, it is common to rent houses with 4–5 rooms (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In Hargeysa, there are no separate two-room flats (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023) or one-room flats (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to the IOM, returnees to Somalia or Somaliland are usually accommodated in corrugated iron houses or traditional huts (IOM 2/3/2023). The vast majority (95 per cent) of IDPs in Mogadishu live in makeshift huts or tents, with only 5 per cent living in houses (EUAA 5/2026b).

In the survey by Staatendokumentation mentioned above, respondents provided the following figures (in per cent) regarding the type of accommodation:

Meine Unterkunft ist...	**gesamt**	**Männer**	**Frauen**	**Hargeysa**	**Kismayo**	**Mogadischu**
Eigentum	38	39	38	52	40	23
angemietet	54	54	52	38	59	64
anderes	8	7	10	10	1	13

Sources 52: STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Housing situation and impact of housing costs]

Clan restrictions: In Hargeysa, people are free to live wherever they wish. All clans are represented in the Somaliland capital (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). However, Somalis typically move to areas where they have relatives on their father's side (Landinfo 5/3/2026; cf. IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Following this pattern, clan neighbourhoods have formed in all major cities – including Mogadishu. There are also some – very expensive – mixed neighbourhoods there, such as those around government buildings and the airport. However, if financial means are limited, people generally move to the district associated with their clan (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In principle, though, there are no restrictions in cities based on clan affiliation (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). For example, if you have no family in Burco, you can still rent a flat there (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to the IOM, there are no restrictions on renting in Mogadishu based on one's clan affiliation either (IOM 2/3/2023). People from the Majerteen and Isaaq clans also live in the city, although these clans do not have their own clan neighbourhoods there (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). However, a source from the FFM Somalia 2023 points out that it can be a challenge to live in a place where one has no family or friends (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Women: According to the IOM, women usually live with their parents until they marry. It is unusual for them to live without a husband or their own family. Nevertheless, there are women who live alone, in corrugated iron houses or flats, depending on their financial circumstances.

In addition, there is the possibility of several single women sharing a flat (IOM 2/3/2023). In principle, renting a property requires a guarantor who is known locally. This is usually a man. If a single woman is looking for a flat, this may raise questions (FIS 7/8/2020b). One woman reports that she has been living in an IDP camp in Hargeysa for years, as some of her children require medical care in the city. Her husband, on the other hand, lives in the countryside with their other children (WDF n.d). According to a 2011 study, only 2 per cent of households in Somalia were single-person households, whilst 14 per cent consisted of a single parent and children (UNDESA 2022).

Returnees: See the chapter on Return

Rental prices – Mogadishu: In general, land prices in Mogadishu have risen sharply (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). More specifically, rental prices in the capital depend, amongst other things, on the security situation in the relevant residential area (IOM 2/3/2023). Furthermore, according to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, housing costs generally fall with increasing distance from the airport (INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Various sources provide the following figures on prices:

(Bewohner) Spezifika	Kosten	Quelle
(männlicher Tumal) Drei-Zimmer-Iron Sheet House in Karaan	25	(RE 30.10.2023)
Miete für eine „Storage Shed“ in Xamar Weyne (als Unterkunft)	30	(BBC 5.9.2023)
(männlicher Tumal) Zwei-Zimmer-Iron Sheet House in Karan	35	(RE 30.10.2023)
(Familie) Zweiräumige „Makeshift Poperty“ (Wellblech) in Helilwaa	40	(BBC 5.9.2023)
kleines Iron-Sheet-Hous	>45	(IOM 2.3.2023)
Drei-Zimmer-Iron Sheet House	50	(RE 26.10.2023)
(Alleinerzieherin) Zwei-Zimmer-Haus	70	(RE 18.9.2023)
Einzimmerwohnung, billige Wohngegend	80-100	(IOM 2.3.2023)
Drei-Zimmer-Haus	100	(RE 28.8.2023)
Zwei-Zimmer-Haus (Wadajir)	100	(RE 10.7.2026)
Einzimmerwohnung, sichere Wohngegend	200	(IOM 2.3.2023)
Drei-Zimmer-Wohnung außerhalb der Green Zone	500	(INGO-F 4.2023)
Drei-Zimmer-Wohnung in Flughafennähe	>1000	(INGO-F 4.2023)

(BBC 5/9/2023; INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; IOM 2/3/2023; RE 10/7/2026; RE 30/10/2023; RE 26/10/2023; RE 18/9/2023; RE 28/8/2023)

Anecdotal rental prices in various cities (in US dollars):

Ort	Region	Spezifika	Kosten	Quelle
Galkacyo	Puntland	Kleine Hütte im Lager Buulo Jawan	10	(RE 1.12.2022)
Afgooye	L. Shabelle	Zwei-Zimmer-Haus	10	(RE 20.4.2026)
Galkacyo	Puntland	Haus	15	(RE 18.12.2022)
Jowhar	M. Shabelle	Zimmer (*rented room*)	15	(RE 18.5.2026)
Merka	L. Shabelle	Zwei-Zimmer-Haus	20	(RE 22.1.2026)
Hananbure	Galgaduud	Haus	20	(RE 14.1.2026)
Baidoa	Bay	Wellblechhaus, IDP-Lager inkl. Wasser/Strom	20	(RE 18.6.2026)
Cadaado	Galgaduud	Haus	25	(RE 3.8.2022)
Godinlabe	Galgaduud	Unklar (Familie mit mehreren Kindern)	25	(RE 20.3.2025)
Baidoa	Bay	Wellblechhütte, zwei Zimmer	30	(RE 1.4.2025)
Merka	L. Shabelle	Zwei-Zimmer-Haus	30	(RE 20.8.2026)
Badhan	Sanaag	Zwei-Zimmer-Haus	30	(RE 12.8.2026)
Dhusamareb	Galgaduud	Zwei-Zimmer-Haus	30	(RE 2.4.2026)
Jowhar	M. Shabelle	2-Zimmer-Wellblechhaus inkl. Küche+Toilette	30	(RE 18.5.2026)
Belet Weyne	Hiiraan	Haus (Familie mit neun Kindern)	35	(RE 17.3.2023)
Jowhar	M. Shabelle	Zwei-Zimmer-Haus	40	(RE 6.12.2022)
Baidoa	Bay	Zwei-Zimmer-Haus mit Küche+Latrine	40	(RE 10.12.2025)
Galkacyo	Mudug	Zwei-Zimmer-Haus	60	(RE 2.6.2026)
Baidoa	Bay	Zwei-Zimmer-Haus mit Wasser+Strom	60	(RE 17.7.2026)
Cadaado	Galgaduud	Drei-Zimmer-Haus	80	(RE 20.3.2025)
Baidoa	Bay	Haus	90	(RE 17.7.2026)
	Somalia	Ein-Zimmer-Haus, städtisches Gebiet	100-150	(IOM-D 12.2025)
Qardho	Puntland	Haus	200	(RE 22.6.2023)

(IOM-D 12/2025; RE 20/8/2026; RE 12/8/2026; RE 17/7/2026; RE 18/6/2026; RE 2/6/2026; RE 18/5/2026; RE 20/4/2026; RE 2/4/2026; RE 10/12/2025; RE 22/1/2026; RE 14/1/2026; RE 1/4/2025; RE 20/3/2025; RE 22/6/2023; RE 17/3/2023; RE 18/12/2022; RE 6/12/2022; RE 1/12/2022; RE 3/8/2022)

Rental prices – Somaliland: In general, urbanisation is well advanced. 53 per cent of the population now live in towns and cities (MoHDSL 1/4/2025). There are significant differences in rental prices between Hargeysa and rural areas (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Hargeysa is very expensive (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023), whilst Borama, Burco and Berbera are cheaper by comparison (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The further east you go, the lower the prices become. It is extremely difficult to buy a plot of land in Hargeysa (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Within Hargeysa, rent depends on the location. The south of the city is cheaper than the north (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Many people on low incomes live on the outskirts of the city and in poor neighbourhoods; some cannot afford accommodation at all and move to IDP camps (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Information on rents in Somaliland (in US dollars):

Ort	Spezifika	Kosten	Quelle
Hargeysa	Ein-Zimmer-Iron Sheet House	20	(SNST-T 5.2023)
Burco	Iron Sheet House	30	(RE 19.6.2024)
Somaliland	Haus	30	(RE 10.4.2026)
Somaliland	Iron Sheet House	45-60	(IOM 2.3.2023)
Hargeysa	Zwei-Zimmer-Iron Sheet House	50	(SNST-T 5.2023) (RE 2.9.2026)
Borama	kleines Zwei-Zimmer-Haus	50	(SNST-T 5.2023)
Hargeysa	WG-Zimmer	Ø 50	(Omer 4.2023)
Hargeysa	Haus	50	(RE 10.4.2026)
Hargeysa	WG-Zimmer	50-70	(Scholar 5.2023)
Somaliland	Zimmer	Ø 100	(IOM 2.3.2023)
Hargeysa	kleines Haus ohne Satellitenempfang und Wasser	40-50	(Scholar 5.2023)
Hargeysa	kleines Haus mit Satellitenempfang und Wasser	60-70	(Scholar 5.2023)
Hargeysa	Unterkunft Einzelperson	100	(IRARA 5.2023)
Burco	Fünf-Zimmer-Haus	100-150	(INGO-F 4.2023)
Hargeysa	Fünf-Zimmer-Haus, niedriger Standard	100-150	(SNST-T 5.2023) (Omer 4.2023)
Burco	Haus mit sehr gutem Standard	120-150	(SNST-T 5.2023)
Hargeysa	Fünf-Zimmer-Haus, billigere Gegend	150	(IRARA 5.2023)
Hargeysa	Fünf-Zimmer-Haus	Ø 200-250	(Omer 4.2023)
Somaliland	Wohnung	Ø 250	(IOM 2.3.2023)
Berbera	Fünf-Zimmer-Haus	250-300	(YOVENCO 5.2023)
Hargeysa	Fünf-Zimmer-Haus, Nordwest-Hargeysa	300-500	(IRARA 5.2023) (INGO-F 4.2023)

(INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; IOM 2/3/2023; IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; RE 2/9/2026; RE 10/4/2026; RE 19/6/2024; Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)

Leased land: Some landlords lease out their land, on which tenants must then build their own hut or house independently. In such cases, a permit must be obtained to build a toilet – as the toilet implies a more permanent settlement. For IDPs living on government-owned land, it is easier to dig a toilet (the *State House* in Hargeysa, for example, is such a government-owned site) (Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, the approximate costs for land lease are (in US dollars):

Ort	Region	Kosten	Behausung
Hargeysa	Somaliland	10-20	traditionelle Hütte
Hargeysa	Somaliland	20-30	Iron Sheet House
Hargeysa	Somaliland	> 30	Ziegelhaus

Sources 53: Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023

Sources

- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- BBC - British Broadcasting Corporation (5/9/2023): Somalis with albinism: Pelted with stones and raw eggs, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-66221755?at_medium=RSS&at_campaign=KARANGA, accessed 13/9/2024
- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2026b): Somalia - Displacement in Mogadishu, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-displacement-mogadishu, accessed 24/9/2026
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020b): Somalia: Tiedonhankintamatka Mogadishuun maaliskuussa 2020, Mogadishun turvallisuustilanne ja humanitääriset olosuhteet, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia_FFM_raportti_maaliskuu_2020.pdf/f58d6cd5-271a-55fd-9b89-b3d32e4ff80b/Somalia_FFM_raportti_maaliskuu_2020.pdf?t=1596797440011, accessed 12/3/2024
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IOM - International Organization for Migration (2/3/2023): Information on the socio-economic situation in Somalia/Somaliland; Anfragebeantwortung an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- IOM-D - Internationale Organisation für Migration - Deutschland (12/2025): Somalia - Länderinformationsblatt 2025, https://iompwesagerrfg001.blob.core.windows.net/rfg/bdaab9a6-2526-4e86-a3e3-a1ce0331cf65-CFS_Somalia_2025_DE.pdf, accessed 10/4/2026
- IRARA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), International Return and Reintegration Assistance (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- MoHDSL - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (1/4/2025): Health Conference Report. Theme of the Meeting: Healthcare expansion and Reform, 19th 20th February 2025, https://somalilandmohd.com/publications/, accessed 12/5/2026
- Omer/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Ahmed Omer (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- RE - Radio Ergo (2/9/2026): Tax rise in Somaliland puts poor Hargeisa shop owners out of business, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/09/tax-rise-in-somaliland-puts-poor-hargeisa-shop-owners-out-of-business, accessed 11/9/2026

- RE - Radio Ergo (20/8/2026): Trade in honey sweetens livelihood challenges for poor families in Merka, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/08/trade-in-honey-sweetens-livelihood-challenges-for-poor-families-in-merka, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (12/8/2026): New road brings trade and income to small community in Badhan, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/08/new-road-brings-trade-and-income-to-small-community-in-badhan, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (17/7/2026): Displaced women carpenters turn the tables and make an independent living in Baidoa, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/displaced-women-carpenters-turn-the-tables-and-make-an-independent-living-in-baidoa, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/7/2026): Radio sews the seeds of success for Mogadishu family man, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/radio-sews-the-seeds-of-success-for-mogadishu-family-man, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (18/6/2026): Shillings turn to trash in the hands of Somali small traders and poor consumers, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/06/shillings-turn-to-trash-in-the-hands-of-somali-small-traders-and-poor-consumers, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (2/6/2026): Jobs sharing group opens opportunity for many workers in Galkayo, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/06/jobs-sharing-group-opens-opportunity-for-many-workers-in-galkayo, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (18/5/2026): Livelihoods support aids displaced households in Middle Shabelle, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/05/livelihoods-support-aids-displaced-households-in-middle-shabelle, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (20/4/2026): Families in Lower Shabelle get new chance to build up a living, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/04/families-in-lower-shabelle-get-new-chance-to-build-up-a-living, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/4/2026): Low income Hargeisa families forced into IDP camp due to rising prices and shrinking income, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/04/low-income-hargeisa-families-forced-into-idp-camp-due-to-rising-prices-and-shrinking-income, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (2/4/2026): Central Somali pastoralists find motorbikes more reliable than livestock, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/04/central-somali-pastoralists-find-motorbikes-more-reliable-than-livestock, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (22/1/2026): Families in Merka flounder as mothers lose house plastering work, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/01/families-in-merka-flounder-as-mothers-lose-house-plastering-work, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (14/1/2026): Peace deal reconciling warring clans enables families to rebuild lives in Hananbure after five years away, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/01/peace-deal-reconciling-warring-clans-enables-families-to-rebuild-lives-in-hananbure-after-five-years-away, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/12/2025): Training and jobs in auto repairs in Baidoa help youth to escape the IDP camps, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/12/training-and-jobs-in-auto-repairs-in-baidoa-help-youth-to-escape-the-idp-camps, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (1/4/2025): Street cleaning in Baidoa provides stable work for poor and displaced families, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/04/street-cleaning-in-baidoa-provides-stable-work-for-poor-and-displaced-families, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (20/3/2025): New teaching jobs in Galmudug revive education and provide salaries for unemployed teachers, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/03/new-teaching-jobs-in-galmudug-revive-education-and-provide-salaries-for-unemployed-teachers, accessed 5/1/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (19/6/2024): Brave woman tuk-tuk driver supports her family single-handedly in Burao, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/06/brave-woman-tuk-tuk-driver-supports-her-family-single-handedly-in-burao/, accessed 16/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (30/10/2023): Mogadishu's blacksmiths worried by cheap imports of metal goods, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/10/mogadishus-blacksmiths-worried-by-cheap-imports-of-metal-goods/, accessed 16/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (26/10/2023): Selling tea leads to bigger things for Mogadishu entrepreneur, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/10/selling-tea-leads-to-bigger-things-for-mogadishu-entrepreneur71535, accessed 19/11/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (18/9/2023): Hardworking IDP women targeted for jobs by Mogadishu cleaning company, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/09/hardworking-idp-women-targeted-for-jobs-by-mogadishu-cleaning-company/, accessed 16/9/2024

- RE - Radio Ergo (28/8/2023): Fast food makes fast track to success for Saudi returnees, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/08/fast-food-makes-fast-track-to-success-for-saudi-returnees/, accessed 13/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (22/6/2023): High school students in heat-hit Bosasso make money selling fruit juice, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/06/high-school-students-in-heat-hit-bosasso-make-money-selling-fruit-juice/, accessed 9/4/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (17/3/2023): Hiran farmers' profits hit by conflict in Somaliland, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/03/hiran-farmers-profits-hit-by-conflict-in-somaliland/, accessed 9/4/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (18/12/2022): Small businesses in Galkayo boosted after eviction from roadside, https://radioergo.org/en/2022/12/small-businesses-in-galkayo-boosted-after-eviction-from-roadside/, accessed 12/12/2023
- RE - Radio Ergo (6/12/2022): Blockade on supply of stones puts builders in Middle Shabelle out of work, https://radioergo.org/en/2022/12/blockade-on-supply-of-stones-puts-builders-in-middle-shabelle-out-of-work/, accessed 19/11/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (1/12/2022): Poor Galkayo IDP families receive land and houses, https://radioergo.org/en/2022/12/poor-galkayo-idp-families-receive-land-and-houses/, accessed 12/7/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (3/8/2022): Cost of living makes tea a luxury in central Somalia's Adado, https://radioergo.org/en/2022/08/a-cup-of-tea-becomes-a-luxury-in-central-somalias-adado/, accessed 19/11/2024
- Scholar/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Scholar, Hargeysa (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SOMEMP/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Employer from Hargeysa dealing with vacancies (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (19/6/2026): Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - 1, https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at/at.gv.bfa.coicms-p/services/collection/237-1.pdf, accessed 19/6/2026 [Login required]
- UNDESA - United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2022): Database on Household Size and Composition 2022, UN DESA/POP/2022/DC/NO. 8, https://popdiv.dfs.un.org/household/?_gl=1*1fat58v*_ga*MTM1MTc2OTA3NS4xNzY1NDQ2MTI0*_ga_TK9BQL5X7Z*czE3NjU0NDYxMjMkbzEkZzEkdDE3NjU0NDYxMzEkajUyJGwwJGgw#/countries/, accessed 11/12/2025
- WDF - World Diabetes Foundation (n.d): I was relieved that diabetes was finally being addressed - Hiba Suleiman Arwale, https://www.worlddiabetesfoundation.org/stories/hiba-suleiman-arwale/, accessed 9/1/2026
- YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), YOVENCO Berbera (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

21.4.2 Examples of living costs

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:24

The following table shows prices for various essentials in several cities across Somalia (in US dollars per month):

Ort	Region	Spezifika	Zeitraum	Kosten	Quelle
Hargeysa	Somaliland	Untersuchung im Spital	Einmalig	100	(Scholar 5.2023)
Mogadischu	Benadir	Flug nach Hargeysa	Einmalig	300	(IRARA 5.2023)
Cadaado	Galgaduud	Strom+Wasser (3-Zimmer-Haus)	Monatlich	40	(RE 20.3.2025)
Galkacyo	Mudug	Strom+Wasser (2-Zimmer-Haus)	Monatlich	10	(RE 2.6.2026)
	Somalia	Strom+Wasser	Monatlich	50-100	(IOM-D 12.2025)
Hargeysa	Somaliland	Strom (2-Zimmer-Haus)	Monatlich	30	(RE 2.9.2026)
Hargeysa	Somaliand	Strom kWh	Einmalig	0,57	(MIATR 11.2025)
Mogadischu	Benadir	Strom kWh	Einmalig	0,46	(MIATR 11.2025)
Burco	Somaliland	Strom kWh	Einmalig	0,6	(Sahan 22.8.2025)
Berbera	Somaliland	Strom kWh	Einmalig	0,8	(Sahan 22.8.2025)
Afgooye	L. Shabelle	Marktstand	Monatlich	25	(RE 20.4.2026)
Hananbure	Galgaduud	Geschäftslokal	Monatlich	25	(RE 14.1.2026)
Hargeysa	Somaliland	Innerstädtische Busfahrt	Einmalig	0,6-0,8	(Omer 5.2023)
Hargeysa	Somaliland	20 Liter Wasser im Kanister (Lieferung)	Einmalig	0,2-0,3	(Omer 5.2023)
Baidoa	Bay	20 Liter Wasser im Degumur IDP-Camp	Einmalig	0,25	(RE 29.8.2026)
Shalanbood	L. Shabelle	20 Liter Wasser	Einmalig	0,2	(RE 9.3.2026)
Madah-Lagu	Sool	20 Liter Wasser	Einmalig	1	(RE 8.7.2026)
Dhusamareb	Galgaduud	Wasseranschluss, IDP-Camp	Monatlich	5	(RE 11.2.2026)
Baidoa	Bay	Treibstoff/Liter	Einmalig	1,5	(MSF 27.3.2026)
	Mudug	Treibstoff/Liter	Einmalig	1	(MSF 27.3.2026)
Kismayo	L. Juba	Fahrt IDP-Camp Halgan nach Kismayo	Einmalig	4	(RE 3.9.2026)
	Somalia	Ausstellung Personalausweis (ID Card)	Einmalig	15	(EUAA 5.2026)

(EUAA 5/2026b; IOM-D 12/2025;IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; MIATR 11/2025; MSF 27/3/2026; Omer/STDOK/SEM 4/2023; RE 3/9/2026; RE 2/9/2026; RE 29/8/2026; RE 8/7/2026; RE 2/6/2026; RE 20/4/2026; RE 9/3/2026; RE 11/2/2026; RE 14/1/2026; RE 20/3/2025; Sahan/SWT 22/8/2025; Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023)

The following table shows the varying costs of education in several cities in Somalia (in US dollars per month):

Ort	Region	Spezifika	Kosten	Quelle
Mogadischu	Benadir	Schulgebühr (Regierungsschule)	0	(RE 30.10.2023)
Cadaado	Galgaduud	Schulgebühr (Omar al-Faruq Schule)	0	(RE 20.3.2025)
Kismayo	Lower Juba	Schulgebühr (Dayax School)	0	(RE 26.4.2025)
Kismayo	Lower Juba	Schulgebühr (IDP-Lager Halgan)	0	(RE 3.9.2026)
Hargeysa	Somaliland	Hauslehrer pro Kind	<1	(RE 17.8.2026)
Hargeysa	Somaliland	Gebühr (Koranschule)	2	(RE 10.4.2026)
Doolow	Gedo	Gebühr (Koranschule)	3	(RE 3.7.2026)
Mogadischu	Benadir	Gebühr (Koranschule, IDP-Lager)	3	(RE 6.5.2026)
Baidoa	Bay	Schulgebühr	5	(RE 1.4.2025) (RE 9.2.2026)
Merka	L. Shabelle	Schulgebühr	5	(RE 20.8.2026)
Afgooye	L. Shabelle	Gebühr (Koranschule)	5	(RE 20.4.2026)
Baidoa	Bay	Schulgebühr (Volksschule)	5	(RE 10.3.2026) (RE 10.12.2025)
Merka	L. Shabelle	Schulgebühr (Mittelschule)	6	(RE 20.8.2026)
Afgooye	L. Shabelle	Schulgebühr	6	(RE 20.4.2026)
Shalanbood	L. Shabelle	Schulgebühr	6	(RE 9.3.2026)
Sayn	Bari	Schulgebühr (Volksschule)	7	(RE 12.6.2026)
Baidoa	Bay	Schulgebühr	7	(RE 17.7.2026)
Cadaado	Galgaduud	Gebühr (Koranschule)	7,5	(RE 20.3.2025)
Mogadischu	Benadir	Schulgebühr	7,5	(RE 10.7.2026)
Garoowe	Nugaal	Schulgebühr	8	(RE 19.3.2024)
Madah-Lagu	Sool	Schulgebühr (Volksschule)	8	(RE 8.7.2026)
Dhusamareb	Galgaduud	Gegühr (Koranschule)	8,5	(RE 11.2.2026)
Baidoa	Bay	Schulgebühr al-Marifa School	10	(RE 1.4.2025)
Badhan	Sanaag	Schulgebühr	10	(RE 12.8.2026)
Galkacyo	Mudug	Schulgebühr	10	(RE 2.6.2026)
Hananbure	Galgaduud	Schulgebühr	10	(RE 14.1.2026)
Baidoa	Bay	Schulgebühr	10	(RE 29.8.2026) (RE 18.6.2026)
Baidoa	Bay	Schulgebühr (Privatschule)	10	(RE 3.3.2026)
Madah-Lagu	Sool	Gebühr (Koranschule)	10	(RE 8.7.2026)
Baidoa	Bay	Gebühr (Koranschule)	12	(RE 10.3.2026)
Baidoa	Bay	Schulgebühr (Hilal Primary)	12	(RE 17.7.2026)
Hargeysa	Somaliland	Schulgebühr	12,5	(RE 13.8.2024)
Baidoa	Bay	Schulgebühr (Sekundarschule)	20	(RE 10.3.2026)
Mogadischu	Benadir	Berufsschule	20	(IOM-D 12.2025)
Garowe	Nugaal	Berufsschule	20	(IOM-D 12.2025)
Bossaso	Bari	Berufsschule	20	(IOM-D 12.2025)
Mogadischu	Benadir	Schulgebühr weiterführende Schule	20-30	(TANA 9.3.2023)
Hargeysa	Somaliland	Berufsschule	20-50	(IOM-D 12.2025)
Mogadischu	Benadir	Schulgebühr weiterführende Schule	21	(RE 13.3.2025)
Hargeysa	Somaliland	Schulgebühr kuwaitische Privatschule	80	(Scholar 5.2023)
Hargeysa	Somaliland	Schulgebühr (Privatschule)	100	(SNST-T 5.2023)
Baidoa	Bay	Medizinstudium, Zamzam Uni, jährlich	600	(RE 10.3.2026)

(IOM-D 12/2025; RE 3/9/2026; RE 29/8/2026; RE 20/8/2026; RE 17/8/2026; RE 12/8/2026; RE 17/7/2026; RE 10/7/2026; RE 8/7/2026; RE 3/7/2026; RE 18/6/2026; RE 12/6/2026; RE 2/6/2026; RE 6/5/2026; RE 20/4/2026; RE 10/4/2026; RE 10/3/2026; RE 9/3/2026; RE 3/3/2026; RE 11/2/2026; RE 9/2/2026; RE 14/1/2026; RE 10/12/2025; RE 26/4/2025; RE 1/4/2025; RE 20/3/2025; RE 13/3/2025; RE 13/8/2024; RE 19/3/2024; RE 30/10/2023; Scholar/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023)

Examples of the cost of living:

- A woman who fled from the Afgooye district to Mogadishu in December 2025 reports that she earns a living as a porter at the Bakara market. She also earns money on the side by doing laundry. With the 20–25 US dollars she earns each week, she is able to feed her six children (RE 6/5/2026).
- Another IDP woman working as a porter says she earns 3.5–4 US dollars a day. With this income, she is able to provide two meals a day for her household of 11, buy water and pay for education. The family lives in temporary accommodation in an IDP camp near Mogadishu (RE 6/5/2026).
- A 42-year-old former farmer from Bay, who lives as an IDP in Doolow (Gedo), reports that in recent years she has been able to provide for her seven children with the US$3–5 she earned as a laundress and cleaner. Food aid has also helped. Now she no longer has any work because Ethiopian women work for lower wages. The food aid has been stopped. She and her family now have only one meal a day. They can barely afford drinking water either, which is why they have to resort to river water (RE 3/7/2026).
- A divorced IDP woman with six children used to live on the three US dollars a day she earned from doing laundry. This allowed her to provide her children with just one meal a day. The woman was trained as a carpenter by relatives and others. She now earns 8–9 US dollars a day. This enables her to afford the rent for a two-bedroom house in Baidoa with water and electricity (US$60 per month), send two of her children to school (US$24 per month) and provide sufficient food (RE 17/7/2026).
- A woman lives with her seven children in an IDP camp on the outskirts of Dhusamareb. For two years, the family had been living on US$110 in humanitarian cash aid. This has been withdrawn and now the woman has to go and beg for even water. The children have been taken out of school (RE 11/2/2026).
- A former farmer from Middle Juba lived in a camp in Kismayo for twelve years. From there, the family of twelve was relocated to the Halgan camp on the outskirts of Kismayo. There are schools there with no school fees, the land has been transferred to the family, and there are free services at a mother-and-child centre. The man earns four US dollars a day doing odd jobs in Kismayo, but cannot afford the transport costs to the camp and therefore only visits his family on days when he has no work. With this income, the family can only afford one meal a day; the younger children are malnourished. The family lives in a one-room hut made of corrugated iron (RE 3/9/2026).
- A former farmer in Bakool, now an IDP and construction worker in Galkacyo (Mudug), earns US$15 a day working 3–4 days a week. He earns enough to feed his wife and nine children and to pay the rent and school fees for five of the children (RE 2/6/2026).
- A man has opened a men’s clothing shop in Mogadishu and, with the profit of US$500–700 per month he makes there, is able to provide his mother and four siblings with three meals a day, as well as cover their rent and school fees (RE 13/3/2025).

- A 45-year-old former baker in Mogadishu now makes colourful flower pots out of clay. This earns him 200–300 US dollars, which he uses to cover the rent and household expenses for his wife and two children, whilst also supporting his mother, aunts, uncles and other relatives (RE 3/3/2025).
- A widow with a family of ten has opened a greengrocer's in Gobweyn (Jubaland) with the help of a US$500 loan from an NGO. There, she earns US$6–7 a day, which enables her to provide for her family (RE 22/1/2025).
- Another woman from Gobweyn reports that she opened a clothes shop with a loan of 400 US dollars. There, she makes a profit of 10–25 US dollars a day. This enables her to support her family of 12 and send six children to (Koranic) school (RE 22/1/2025).
- A 29-year-old man in Cabudwaaq (Galgaduud) supports his family of nine on a monthly salary of US$220, pays the school fees for four siblings (US$33), supports his parents, has managed to save US$500 in seven months, and pays for a computer course for himself at US$20 per month (RE 12/12/2024).

Sources

- EUAA - European Union Agency for Asylum (5/2026b): Somalia - Displacement in Mogadishu, https://www.euaa.europa.eu/publications/coi-report-somalia-displacement-mogadishu, accessed 24/9/2026
- IOM-D - Internationale Organisation für Migration - Deutschland (12/2025): Somalia - Länderinformationsblatt 2025, https://iompwesagerrfg001.blob.core.windows.net/rfg/bdaab9a6-2526-4e86-a3e3-a1ce0331cf65-CFS_Somalia_2025_DE.pdf, accessed 10/4/2026
- IRARA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), International Return and Reintegration Assistance (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MIATR - Millî İstihbarat Akademisi (11/2025): Türkiye-Somali Ilişkileri: Çok Boyutlu Bir Ortaklik Modeli, https://mia.edu.tr/uploads/f/topic_6.pdf, accessed 9/12/2025
- MSF - Doctors Without Borders (27/3/2026): Somalis struggle to reach healthcare amid overwhelming fuel prices, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138678.html, accessed 29/4/2026
- Omer/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Ahmed Omer (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- RE - Radio Ergo (3/9/2026): New Kismayo settlement has schools and healthcare for IDPs – but no jobs for income, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/09/new-kismayo-settlement-has-schools-and-healthcare-for-idps-but-no-jobs-for-income, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (2/9/2026): Tax rise in Somaliland puts poor Hargeisa shop owners out of business, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/09/tax-rise-in-somaliland-puts-poor-hargeisa-shop-owners-out-of-business, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (29/8/2026): New tax halts lifeline work for displaced sand transporters in Baidoa, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/08/new-tax-halts-lifeline-work-for-displaced-sand-transporters-in-baidoa, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (20/8/2026): Trade in honey sweetens livelihood challenges for poor families in Merka, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/08/trade-in-honey-sweetens-livelihood-challenges-for-poor-families-in-merka, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (17/8/2026): Home schooling in Hargeisa expands opportunity for education, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/08/home-schooling-in-hargeisa-expands-opportunity-for-education, accessed 11/9/2026

- RE - Radio Ergo (12/8/2026): New road brings trade and income to small community in Badhan, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/08/new-road-brings-trade-and-income-to-small-community-in-badhan, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (17/7/2026): Displaced women carpenters turn the tables and make an independent living in Baidoa, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/displaced-women-carpenters-turn-the-tables-and-make-an-independent-living-in-baidoa, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/7/2026): Radio sews the seeds of success for Mogadishu family man, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/radio-sews-the-seeds-of-success-for-mogadishu-family-man, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (8/7/2026): Clan conflict in Sool destroys family livelihoods and forces hundreds to flee, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/clan-conflict-in-sool-destroys-family-livelihoods-and-forces-hundreds-to-flee, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (3/7/2026): Displaced women in Dollow lose work in a shrinking and overcrowded jobs market, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/07/displaced-women-in-dollow-lose-work-in-a-shrinking-and-overcrowded-jobs-market, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (18/6/2026): Shillings turn to trash in the hands of Somali small traders and poor consumers, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/06/shillings-turn-to-trash-in-the-hands-of-somali-small-traders-and-poor-consumers, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (12/6/2026): Worst drought in memory affects farmers in Sayn, Bari regon, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/06/worst-drought-in-memory-affects-farmers-in-sayn-bari-regon, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (2/6/2026): Jobs sharing group opens opportunity for many workers in Galkayo, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/06/jobs-sharing-group-opens-opportunity-for-many-workers-in-galkayo, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (6/5/2026): Women pushing heavy loads support displaced families in Mogadishu, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/05/women-pushing-heavy-loads-support-displaced-families-in-mogadishu, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (20/4/2026): Families in Lower Shabelle get new chance to build up a living, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/04/families-in-lower-shabelle-get-new-chance-to-build-up-a-living, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/4/2026): Low income Hargeisa families forced into IDP camp due to rising prices and shrinking income, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/04/low-income-hargeisa-families-forced-into-idp-camp-due-to-rising-prices-and-shrinking-income, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/3/2026): Women in Baidoa set up thriving beekeeping business now supporting their families, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/03/women-in-baidoa-set-up-thriving-beekeeping-business-now-supporting-their-families, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (9/3/2026): Farmers in Lower Shabelle caught between war, drought, and encroaching sand, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/03/farmers-in-lower-shabelle-caught-between-war-drought-and-encroaching-sand, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (3/3/2026): Drought-displaced Bay villagers fear a bleak future without education for their children, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/03/drought-displaced-bay-villagers-fear-a-bleak-future-without-education-for-their-children, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (11/2/2026): Aid cuts and lack of jobs leave displaced mothers in Dusamareb camp unable to feed their children, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/02/aid-cuts-and-lack-of-jobs-leave-displaced-mothers-in-dusamareb-camp-unable-to-feed-their-children, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (9/2/2026): Cooperative business brings steady income to IDPs in Baidoa camp, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/02/cooperative-business-brings-steady-income-to-idps-in-baidoa-camp, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (14/1/2026): Peace deal reconciling warring clans enables families to rebuild lives in Hananbure after five years away, https://radioergo.org/en/2026/01/peace-deal-reconciling-warring-clans-enables-families-to-rebuild-lives-in-hananbure-after-five-years-away, accessed 10/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (10/12/2025): Training and jobs in auto repairs in Baidoa help youth to escape the IDP camps, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/12/training-and-jobs-in-auto-repairs-in-baidoa-help-youth-to-escape-the-idp-camps, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (26/4/2025): 12-year old boy supports his family sharpening knives in Kismayo, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/04/12-year-old-boy-supports-his-family-sharpening-knives-in-kismayo, accessed 11/9/2026

- RE - Radio Ergo (1/4/2025): Street cleaning in Baidoa provides stable work for poor and displaced families, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/04/street-cleaning-in-baidoa-provides-stable-work-for-poor-and-displaced-families, accessed 11/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (20/3/2025): New teaching jobs in Galmudug revive education and provide salaries for unemployed teachers, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/03/new-teaching-jobs-in-galmudug-revive-education-and-provide-salaries-for-unemployed-teachers, accessed 5/1/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (13/3/2025): Business at home became a better bet than migration, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/03/business-at-home-became-a-better-bet-than-migration, accessed 9/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (3/3/2025): Craftsman inspires others to make a living from home and garden pottery, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/03/craftsman-inspires-others-to-make-a-living-from-home-and-garden-pottery, accessed 9/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (22/1/2025): Women from farming and herding families hit by climate crises in Lower Juba turn to small businesses, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/01/women-from-farming-and-herding-families-hit-by-climate-crises-in-lower-juba-turn-to-small-businesses, accessed 9/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (12/12/2024): Jobs in waste collection for low income people in Abudwak, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/12/jobs-in-waste-collection-for-low-income-people-in-abudwak, accessed 9/9/2026
- RE - Radio Ergo (13/8/2024): Homes and jobs lift poor Hargeisa families relocated from swampy dam area, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/08/homes-and-jobs-lift-poor-hargeisa-families-relocated-from-swampy-dam-area/, accessed 17/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (19/3/2024): Small business grants set IDP women in Garowe back on their feet, https://radioergo.org/en/2024/03/small-business-grants-set-idp-women-in-garowe-back-on-their-feet/, accessed 17/9/2024
- RE - Radio Ergo (30/10/2023): Mogadishu's blacksmiths worried by cheap imports of metal goods, https://radioergo.org/en/2023/10/mogadishus-blacksmiths-worried-by-cheap-imports-of-metal-goods/, accessed 16/9/2024
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (22/8/2025): Somaliland's Battle to Break the Energy Cartels, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 863, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Scholar/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Scholar, Hargeysa (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024

22 Medical care

22.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

Somalia spends less than 5 per cent of its total budget on the public health sector (AI 21/4/2026; cf. Sahan/SWT 8/7/2024), which amounted to US$52 million in 2024 (Sahan/SWT 13/12/2023). The national budget covers only around 4 per cent of healthcare costs. A further 60 per cent is covered by foreign donors, with patients bearing the remainder (NYT 17/10/2025a). According to other sources, donors cover 95 per cent of the costs invested in the healthcare sector. As donor countries are currently transferring less money to Somalia, the system is suffering from a lack of resources. Healthcare staff in Mogadishu report dwindling stocks of medicines, whilst in rural areas services have been scaled back or suspended (FTL 13/11/2025). In the first half of 2025, more than 150 healthcare facilities were affected by cutbacks (UN OCHA 6/7/2025). For example, in March 2025, *Save the Children* closed 47 out of 128 facilities across Somalia,

leaving 300,000 people without medical care (NYT 17/10/2025a).In South West State (SWS), 40 medical facilities were closed, and the number of mobile teams fell from 74 in 2024 to 25 in 2025. In Puntland, 79 facilities were forced to cease operations (UN OCHA 6/7/2025). In total, 200 healthcare facilities were closed nationwide in 2025 (UN OCHA 27/1/2026).

Health situation: Overall, the health situation is among the worst in the world (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024), and Somalia ranks last globally in terms of health security (WHO 4/3/2026). Nevertheless, average life expectancy has risen from 47 years in 1990 to 59 years in 2023 (WB 2026d). According to data from the World Bank and the UNDP, average life expectancy for men in 2023 was 56 years (WB 2026e; cf. UNDP 2025), whilst that for women was 61 years (WB 2026f; cf. UNDP 2025). According to another source, however, life expectancy for men is 51.7 years and for women 56.3 years (AA 9/3/2026). Significant sections of the population have no access to safe drinking water or adequate sanitation. Maternal and infant mortality rates are among the highest in the world (AA 9/3/2026). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that one in 20 women dies as a result of complications during pregnancy or childbirth (global average: one in 450) (TBP 22/10/2023). More than 14 per cent of children die before their fifth birthday (WHO 2024). According to other figures, the under-five mortality rate has fallen from 180 per 1,000 in 1990 to 104 in 2023 (WB 2026g). Infant mortality fell over the same period from 107 per 1,000 live births to 68 (WB 2026h). Malnutrition is a contributing factor in two-thirds of child deaths (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). 68 per cent of births take place without medically trained staff present (TBP 22/10/2023; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). In Somaliland and Puntland, the figure is slightly higher (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Insecurity, logistical hurdles and inadequate health infrastructure pose obstacles to vaccination campaigns. Somalia is among the countries with the highest number of unvaccinated children worldwide and consequently struggles with outbreaks of preventable diseases such as measles, diphtheria and polio. According to estimates, 70 per cent of children are fully vaccinated – an increase of 28per cent between 2012 and 2024 (WHO 4/3/2026). The Somali Red *Crescent Society* (*SRCS*) alone administered more than 450,000 vaccinations to children under the age of two in 2024 (including against measles) (SRCS 2025).

The most commonly diagnosed chronic diseases are diabetes and high blood pressure (WB 6/2021).

Access to healthcare: The Somali healthcare system is the second most fragile in the world (WB 6/2021). Healthcare provision is extremely inadequate throughout the country (AA 9/3/2026). A large proportion of the population (BS 2026) – 6.6 million people according to one source – has no access to quality healthcare (FTL 28/2/2024). According to UNICEF, only 27 per cent of the population can access medical services without facing a significant financial burden (DIS/UNICEF 3/2024). Many public facilities, particularly in rural areas, are not operational or lack the necessary resources, which makes access to care difficult for a large proportion of the population (IOM-D 12/2025). Consequently, patients often have to travel long distances to access medical care, and the majority of hospitals do not offer the full range of tertiary care services (HIPS 5/2020). Emergency and basic care are available in the large state-run hospitals

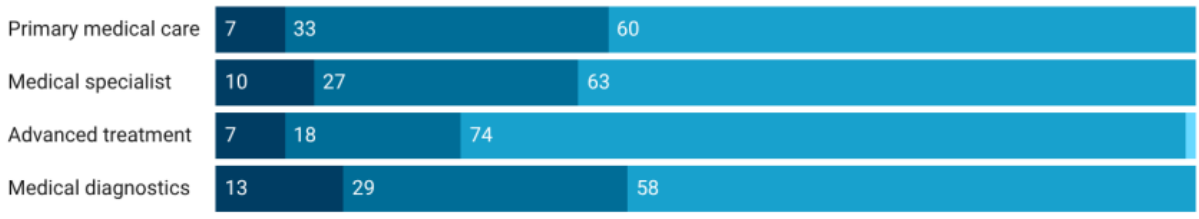
and some private clinics (AA 23/6/2025). Most people in rural areas rely on basic community health workers or mobile clinics (IOM-D 12/2025).

Private hospitals and clinics offer higher-quality services, but at a high cost (IOM-D 12/2025). The (profit-oriented) private healthcare sector accounts for 60 per cent of all healthcare services in urban areas and still 40 per cent in rural areas (DIS/WHO 3/2024; cf. WVI 7/2023). According to other sources, the figure is as high as 80 per cent nationwide (SDC-Health 30/9/2025).

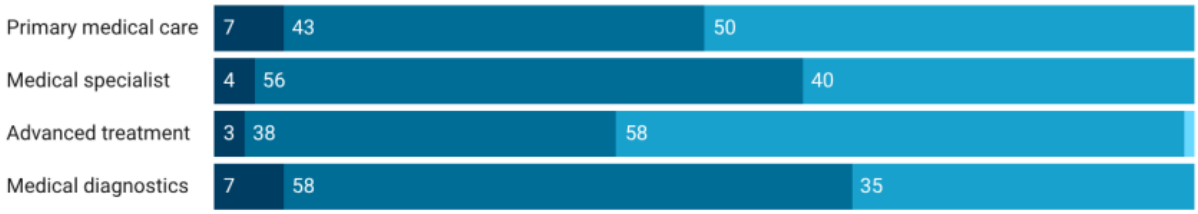
Healthcare provision is fragmented. Most hospitals and clinics are located in Mogadishu. There has also been an increase in the number of private, profit-oriented clinics there (DIS 2/2025). However, there is a shortage of qualified medical staff both outside and within the major centres (AA 23/6/2025). According to the World Bank, in 2021 there were 4.28 medically trained personnel per 10,000 inhabitants (Sub-Saharan Africa: 13.3; WHO target: 25) (WB 6/2021; cf. Sahan/SWT 8/7/2024). According to government figures, however, the nationwide figure for 2023 was 7.9 – albeit with an uneven distribution: In Mogadishu, the figure was 17.0, whilst in Galmudug, which ranked last, it was only 2.6 (MoHSom 10/2024; cf. AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

The World Bank is strengthening the healthcare system with a programme worth US$100 million (DIS/UNICEF 3/2024). The *Improving Healthcare Services in Somalia Project / Damal Caafimaad* aims to improve healthcare provision for approximately 10 per cent of Somalia's total population, specifically in areas of Nugaal (Puntland), Bakool and Bay (SWS), Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle (WB 22/7/2021). According to recent reports, the Covid-19 pandemic has also led to improvements in the healthcare system (DIS 3/2024). Thanks to international aid and investments by returnees in private clinics, the availability of and access to healthcare facilities has improved in recent years; however, there are significant differences across population groups (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023).

In a survey of 200 residents in each city, respondents gave the following answers regarding availability in Mogadishu and Kismayo (dark blue: accessible and affordable; medium blue: accessible but not affordable; light blue: neither accessible nor affordable):



Sources 54: STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Access to medical services] (Mogadishu)



Sources 55: STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Access to medical services] (Kismayo)

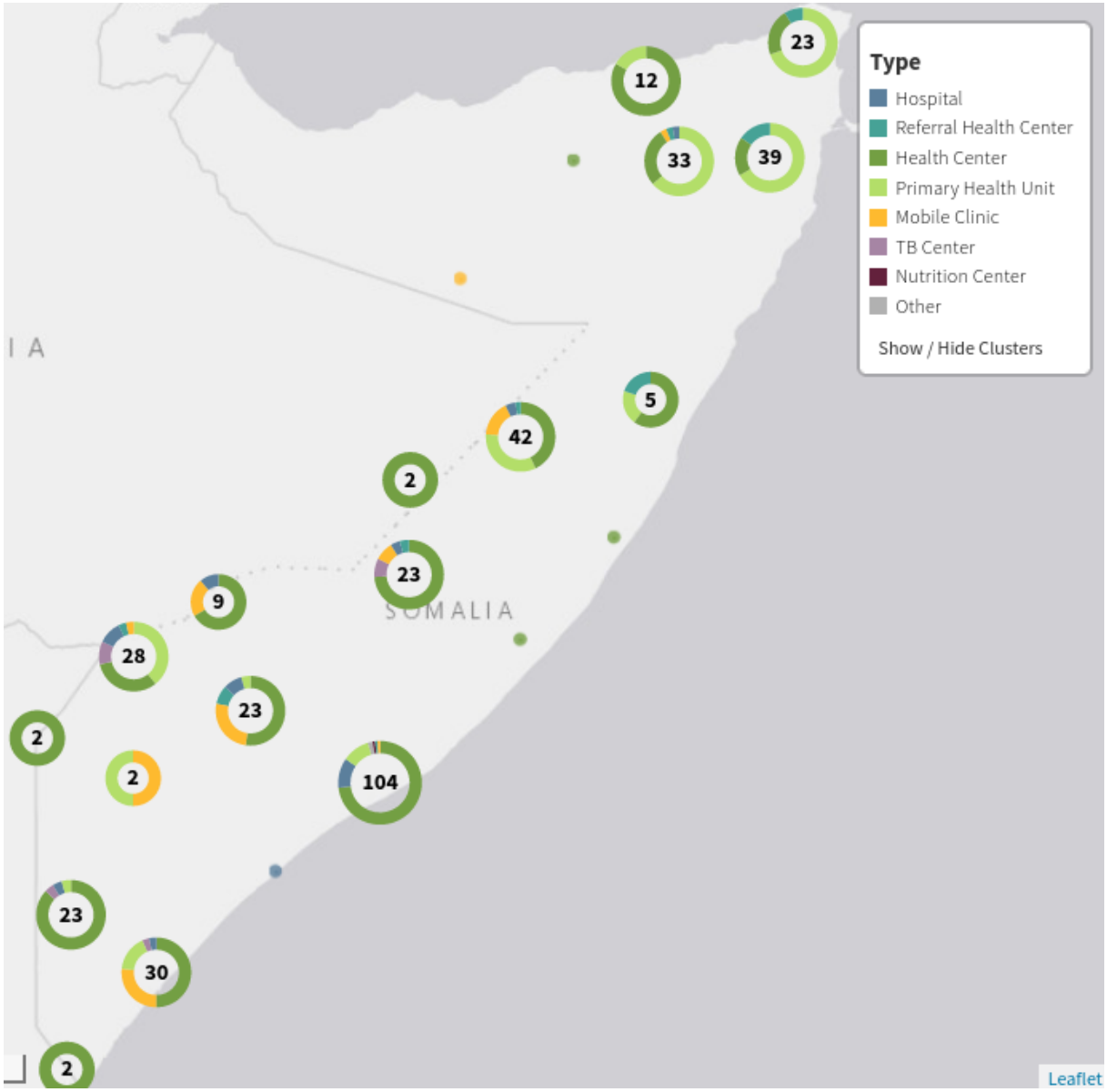
In areas controlled by al-Shabaab, there is a general lack of healthcare facilities – with the exception of pharmacies (UNSC 10/10/2022).

Infrastructure: The public health sector in Somalia is fragmented, underfunded, heavily reliant on international aid and NGOs, and suffers from a significant shortage of qualified healthcare professionals (IOM-D 12/2025). According to the Ministry of Health, the health system nominally comprises five hierarchical levels (DIS 3/2024):

1. Regional/National Hospital
2. District Hospital
3. Health Centre
4. Primary Health Unit (PHU),
5. Community Centre

These facilities are supplemented by mobile clinics, which are intended to reach the population in remote areas and among nomadic communities (DIS 3/2024). Primary healthcare is mostly provided by international organisations. These are often so-called *Mother Health Clinics*, of which there are a relatively large number in Somalia. These are used by the population as general health centres because diagnoses are provided free of charge there (ACCORD 31/5/2021). The SRCS operates its own inpatient clinics as well as mobile health teams to provide primary medical care (SRCS 2025). According to the Ministry of Health, there are a total of seven hospital beds per 10,000 inhabitants; in Benadir there are 18.3, whilst Galmudug, at the bottom of the list, has 4.1 (MoHSom 10/2024).

The following map shows some of the health facilities currently in operation in Southern/Central Somalia and Puntland:



Sources 56: WHO/HeRAMS 5/2024

According to another source, in 2022 there were 61 public facilities, 105 private institutions, 49 licensed clinics and nine hospitals managed by the Benadir Regional Administration (BRA) in Mogadishu. There are also mobile clinics in the capital, catering, for example, to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and street children. In addition, there are at least eleven tuberculosis centres and four nutrition centres (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). The Somali government reports the number of medical facilities for the years 2022 and 2023 as follows:

Table 1. Number of facilities by health facility type and state

	National referral hospital	Regional hospital	District hospital	Health centre	Primary health unit	Speciality hospital	Private clinic	TB centre	Total
Banadir	6	1	4	73	0	34	86	1	205
Galmudug	0	3	15	63	49	7	9	0	146
Hirshabelle	0	2	8	76	5	4	17	6	118
Jubaland	0	1	12	82	38	1	26	0	160
Puntland	2	6	23	140	116	6	20	3	316
South West	0	5	10	172	23	5	42	13	270
Total	8	18	72	606	231	57	200	23	1,215

Sources 57: MoHSom 10/2024

According to one source, pharmacies provide the majority of healthcare throughout the country (Sahan/SWT 18/6/2025).

The meagre public health infrastructure is largely supported by international organisations (e.g. UNICEF, WHO, Médecins Sans Frontières) (Sahan/SWT 18/6/2025; cf. DIS/WHO 3/2024). Generally speaking, private non-profit organisations, such as those run by NGOs, are commonly perceived as public institutions because they often collaborate with the government (DIS/WHO 3/2024). One example of this is a health centre opened by *Qatar Charity* (QC) in Bossaso, which is intended to serve 10,000 underprivileged people from Bossaso and the surrounding area. The centre has departments for maternity, A&E and vaccinations, as well as a laboratory, radiology department and a pharmacy. By 2021, QC had already opened health centres in Puntland, Galmudug, the SWS and in Mogadishu (Gulf Times 5/6/2022). The SRCS operates 21 permanent and 5 mobile clinics nationwide (ICRC 1/2025), including the *KeysaneyHospital* in Mogadishu. In addition, the SRCS runs rehabilitation centres in Mogadishu and Galkacyo. In 2024, the SRCS alone treated almost 1.5 million patients at its facilities (SRCS 2025). AUSSOM also provides medical services to the public, for example in Baidoa, where the Ethiopian contingent treats hundreds of patients free of charge (AUSSOM 1/11/2025). In January and February 2026, Médecins Sans Frontières carried out 42,765 outpatient consultations in facilities it supports and through its mobile teams (MSF 27/3/2026).

Quality of medical care: Even in hospitals in Mogadishu, there are no standards whatsoever that meet international requirements. Pharmacies, laboratories and clinics have no accreditation whatsoever. Hospitals in Mogadishu run by international donors are the ones that come closest to meeting international standards (DIS 3/2024). Somalia's best-equipped hospitals are located in Mogadishu (SPA 31/8/2022). The best-equipped and best-staffed is the Erdoğan Hospital, which is run jointly by Turkey and Somalia (DIS/WHO 3/2024). Public hospitals, by contrast, are often poorly equipped (AA 9/3/2026; cf. DIS 3/2024) in terms of facilities, medical equipment, medicines, trained staff and funding (AA 9/3/2026). However, all public hospitals in Mogadishu – with the exception of Medina, SOS, Keysaney and Banadir – have been restored or built over the past 15 years (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023).

Aid and healthcare initiatives by international aid organisations are repeatedly disrupted due to fighting or orders from local authorities (AA 9/3/2026; cf. UNICEF 21/4/2024). Furthermore, there is a shortage of emergency services (AI 29/3/2022a), and only 28 per cent of healthcare facilities have a reliable electricity supply. According to one source, medical staff sometimes have to rely on paraffin lamps during operations (Dawan 12/5/2025).

Costs: According to the Ministry of Health, treatment at all public facilities is free of charge. In reality, however, there are 'informal fees' and other costs incurred (DIS 3/2024; cf. DIS/WHO 3/2024). A consultation fee is payable as soon as a patient enters a healthcare facility (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026). According to government surveys, 13 per cent of national hospitals, 33per cent of regional hospitals and 13 per cent of district-level hospitals charge treatment fees (MoHSom 10/2024). In Mogadishu, there are two hospitals that can be described as public and are wholly state-owned: Banadir Hospital and De Martino Hospital. These hospitals are accessible to everyone, and patients are treated free of charge (DIS 3/2024; cf. DIS/WHO 3/2024; HO 25/6/2024b). However, they lack the facilities to treat many specific medical conditions. At Erdoğan

Hospital, some services are offered free of charge (DIS 3/2024; cf. DIS/WHO 3/2024), whilst fees are charged for specialist services (DIS/WHO 3/2024). According to other sources, both state and private healthcare services are subject to charges. These sources indicate that a treatment fee of 5–12 US dollars is levied (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). [*Note: Relevant prices for various treatments in Mogadishu can be found in this source:*DIS 2/2025.] Overall, one source states that 54 per cent of healthcare expenditure is spent on medicines (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

In contrast, facilities run by aid organisations are free of charge, although patients may have to cover the cost of medicines themselves (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Another source reports that hospitals or other medical facilities run by NGOs or local communities sometimes offer certain services free of charge (DIS 3/2024). The newly renovated *Sheikh Zayed Hospital* in Mogadishu offers free treatment – particularly for the poor and internally displaced persons (IDPs) (GN 25/1/2024). The services provided by the mobile clinics operating in Mogadishu are also offered free of charge. In addition, some private clinics treat patients free of charge, for example once a week or during the first month after opening. Others organise 'medical tents' or mobile clinics in order to provide free healthcare services to orphanages, street children or IDPs (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023). UNHCR provides access to medical care for refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs and, in some cases, members of the host communities (UNHCR 23/6/2024). An internally displaced person in Garowe reported in January 2025 that free healthcare and medicines were available at a clinic in her settlement (RE 16/1/2025). Another source reports that – even in life-threatening situations – no operations are carried out unless payment has been arranged in advance (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Overall, only a few healthcare facilities are able to offer their services free of charge (BS 2026). In most cases, healthcare services in Somalia are not free of charge; they are often only available in major cities and must be paid for out of pocket (IOM 8/5/2024). Consequently, the system is fragmented: wealthier people are more likely to be able to afford adequate care, whilst poorer

people must rely on free or low-cost support provided by the state or charitable organisations (DIS 3/2024).

Insurance: Somalia has no formal public health insurance system (IOM-D 12/2025; cf. DIS/UNICEF 3/2024; DIS/WHO 3/2024), and even outside this framework, very few people are insured (IOM-D 12/2025). In February 2024, the *Baraka Kaaliye Care* health insurance scheme was launched in Mogadishu. It cooperates with several hospitals in the city (GN 2/2/2024). There are also smaller initiatives, for example in Mogadishu, where more than 2,600 tuk-tuk drivers pay US$5 a year into the *Bajaj Kaabe Initiative*, thereby receiving partial cover for medical care (SDC-Health 30/9/2025). At the same time, patients are often supported by their family and clan, who play an important role in 'fundraising' for medical treatment (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023).

Traditional methods: Many people consult traditional healers. Herbal medicine is sometimes regarded as part of Somali identity. Some people consider this approach to be more 'holistic', whilst, for example, antibiotics are given lower priority even in cases of serious illness (presumably also due to the poor quality of available antibiotics) (M. Jayte 30/9/2025). [*See also the section on Ilaaj in*psychiatry and psychology]

Medicines: Most medicines must be purchased out of pocket from private pharmacies (IOM-D 12/2025). Basic medicines are dispensed free of charge in public hospitals. These include, for example, fever-reducing medicines or vitamins. More complex medicines must be paid for (DIS/WHO 3/2024). Relevant prices for medicines in Mogadishu can be found in this source: DIS 2/2025. Medicines can generally be purchased without a prescription (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). In general, there are often cases of incorrect prescriptions and medicine misuse (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

25 per cent of those surveyed state that they have access to medicines and can also afford them (Mogadishu: 16 per cent , Kismayo: 13 per cent), 57 per cent have access but cannot afford them, whilst 18 per cent have neither access nor the means to afford medicines (Mogadishu: 25 per cent, Kismayo: 11 per cent) (STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Medikamente]).

The availability of medicines in Somalia varies greatly: essential medicines are more readily available in urban centres such as Mogadishu, whilst rural and conflict-affected areas frequently suffer from shortages and supply disruptions (IOM-D 12/2025). Most of the medicines surveyed by the DIS were available in three pharmacies in Mogadishu (DIS 2/2025). According to other sources, pharmacies stock only a limited standard range (AA 23/6/2025). Shortages occur from time to time (DIS/WHO 3/2024; cf. IOM/STDOK 21/2/2025), so the constant availability of medicines is not guaranteed. Restocking can sometimes take a very long time (IOM/STDOK 21/2/2025). A government study carried out in 2022 and 2023 found that hospitals within the healthcare system (levels 1 and 2) had just under 50 per cent of the 29 most relevant medicines in stock, whilst health centres (Level 3) held 29 per cent and the PHUs (Level 4) 14 per cent. Private hospitals and clinics held between 56 per cent and 63 per cent (MoHSom 10/2024).

There is no local production of medicines; all medicines are imported – either as donations or, primarily, from India, Turkey, Egypt and the People's Republic of China (Sahan/SWT 12/9/2022). There is a regulatory framework to govern registration, licensing, manufacture, import and other aspects; however, enforcement of these regulations is lacking. Anyone can obtain a certificate to open a pharmacy (Sahan/SWT 3/6/2022). The market is dominated by sub-standard, counterfeit and expired medicines. Furthermore, many everyday health products are contaminated with banned pharmaceutical ingredients (Sahan/SWT 30/4/2025; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; AA 23/6/2025). In a study conducted by the Ministry of Health, almost a third of the antibiotics examined failed basic quality tests; some of them contained no active ingredients at all (Sahan/SWT 30/4/2025).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (23/6/2025): Somalia – Reise- und Sicherheitshinweise (Reisewarnung), unverändert gültig seit 4.11.2024, https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/service/laender/somalia-node/somaliasicherheit/203132#content_1, accessed 23/6/2025
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AI - Amnesty International (21/4/2026): The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2025, https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia, accessed 21/4/2026
- AI - Amnesty International (29/3/2022a): Amnesty International Report 2021/22; The State of the World's Human Rights - Somalia 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2070229.html, accessed 29/4/2024
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- AUSSOM - African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (1/11/2025): AUSSOM Ethiopia troops give lifeline to Somali communities, https://au-ssom.org/aussom-ethiopia-troops-give-lifeline-to-somali-communities, accessed 8/1/2026
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (12/5/2025): WHO, Saudi Arabia Power Somali Health Centers with Solar Energy to Combat Child Mortality, https://www.dawan.africa/news/who-saudi-arabia-power-somali-health-centers-with-solar-energy-to-combat-child-mortality, accessed 7/1/2026
- DIS - Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (2/2025): Somalia - Health care services in Mogadishu [Version 2.0], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2122503/medcoi-report_somalia_health-care-services-in-mogadishu_20.pdf, accessed 8/1/2026
- DIS - Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (3/2024): Somalia; Health care services in Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105661/medcoi-somalia-til-upload-ny-forside.pdf, accessed 14/5/2024
- DIS/UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (3/2024): Online meeting with UNICEF Somalia Country Office; in: Somalia, Health care services in Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105661/medcoi-somalia-til-upload-ny-forside.pdf, accessed 14/5/2024
- DIS/WHO - World Health Organization (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (3/2024): Online meeting with WHO Country Office Somalia; in: Somalia, Health care services in Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105661/medcoi-somalia-til-upload-ny-forside.pdf, accessed 14/5/2024

- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (13/11/2025): Somalia's Health System Struggles as Donor Cuts Deepen Crisis, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/somalias-health-system-struggles-as-donor-cuts-deepen-crisis/, accessed 18/11/2025
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (28/2/2024): Over 6.6 Million Somalis Lack Access to Healthcare - Somali News today Live, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/over-6-6-million-somalis-lack-access-to-healthcare, accessed 8/5/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (2/2/2024): Somalia Launches First Innovative Community-Based Health Insurance Targeting Mass Market, https://en.goobjoog.com/somalia-launches-its-first-health-insurance-scheme, accessed 8/5/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (25/1/2024): Prime Minister Barre Inaugurates Renovated Sheikh Zayed Hospital in Mogadishu, https://en.goobjoog.com/prime-minister-barre-inaugurates-renovated-sheikh-zayed-hospital-in-mogadishu, accessed 25/1/2024
- Gulf Times - Gulf Times (5/6/2022): Qatar Charity opens health centre in Somalia, https://www.gulf-times.com/story/718606/Qatar-Charity-opens-health-centre-in-Somalia, accessed 1/7/2024
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (5/2020): Somalia's Healthcare System: A Baseline Study & Human Capital Development Strategy, http://www.heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Somalia-Healthcare-System-A-Baseline-Study-and-Human-Capital-Development-Strategy.pdf, accessed 1/7/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (25/6/2024b): IDPs in Mogadishu have to choose between caring for sick children and working, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Jun/196839/idps_in_mogadishu_have_to_choose_between_caring_for_sick_children_and_working.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 27/6/2024
- ICRC - International Committee of the Red Cross (1/2025): Somalia - Facts & Figures 2024, https://blogs.icrc.org/app/uploads/sites/99/2025/02/ENG-Facts-and-Figures-2024.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- IOM - International Organization for Migration (8/5/2024): Information on the availability of treatment for ICD10-F43.1 in Somalia, requested by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum
- IOM/STDOK - International Organization for Migration (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (21/2/2025): IOM, Antwort per e-Mail, zitiert nach: Anfragebeantwortung der Staatendokumentation zu Somalia - Herzprobleme, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2126460/SOMA_RF_MEV_Herzprobleme_2025_02_24_KE.odt, accessed 7/1/2026 [Login required]
- IOM-D - Internationale Organisation für Migration - Deutschland (12/2025): Somalia - Länderinformationsblatt 2025, https://iompwesagerrfg001.blob.core.windows.net/rfg/bdaab9a6-2526-4e86-a3e3-a1ce0331cf65-CFS_Somalia_2025_DE.pdf, accessed 10/4/2026
- M. Jayte - Mohamed Jayte (30/9/2025): A qualitative study of patient choices between herbal and hospital care for infectious diseases in Somalia, Scientific Reports 15, 33945 (2025), https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-025-11167-8, accessed 9/1/2026
- MoHSom - Ministry of Health [Somalia] (10/2024): Somalia Harmonised Health Facility Assessment 2022-2023, National Report, https://moh.gov.so/so/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Somalia_HHFA_National.pdf, accessed 8/1/2026
- MSF - Doctors Without Borders (27/3/2026): Somalis struggle to reach healthcare amid overwhelming fuel prices, https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/2138678.html, accessed 29/4/2026
- NYT - New York Times, The (17/10/2025a): America's Retreat From Aid Is Devastating Somalia's Health System, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/17/health/somalia-children-malnutrition-usaid.html, accessed 28/11/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- RE - Radio Ergo (16/1/2025): New houses and amenities for 1,000 IDP families in Garowe, https://radioergo.org/en/2025/01/new-houses-and-amenities-for-1000-idp-families-in-garowe/, accessed 7/1/2026
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (18/6/2025): Somalia's Fractured Healthcare Economy, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 835, per e-Mail
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (30/4/2025): Silent Killers: Counterfeit Drugs in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 816, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (8/7/2024): Inequality and Underfunding in Somalia's Healthcare Sector, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 702, per e-Mail [fee required]

- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (13/12/2023): The billion dollar budget, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 627, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (12/9/2022): The risks of Somalia's unregulated pharmaceutical industry, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 450, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (3/6/2022): After insurgency – Somalia's next war will be against drugs and illicit trade, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 398, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SDC-Health - Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation - Health (30/9/2025): Treating Somalia's Fragmented Health System, https://www.sdc-health.ch/en/power-of-networking, accessed 9/1/2026
- SPA - Somali Public Agenda (31/8/2022): Decentralization of Essential Public Health Services to the Benadir Regional Administration: Status, Achievements and Challenges, https://somalipublicagenda.org/decentralization-of-essential-public-health-services-to-the-benadir-regional-administration-status-achievements-and-challenges/, accessed 1/7/2024
- SRCS - Somali Red Crescent Society (2025): Annual Report 2024, https://data-api.ifrc.org/documents/SO/Annual Report_Somalia_2024.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (19/6/2026): Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - 1, https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at/at.gv.bfa.coicms-p/services/collection/237-1.pdf, accessed 19/6/2026 [Login required]
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- TBP - The Borgen Project (22/10/2023): Maternal Health in Somalia, https://www.borgenmagazine.com/maternal-health-in-somalia, accessed 23/4/2024
- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme (2025): Human Development Report 2025, https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2025reporten.pdf, accessed 19/9/2025
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (23/6/2024): Operational Update (May 2024) - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/unhcr-somalia-operational-update-may-2024, accessed 11/7/2024
- UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (21/4/2024): Somalia Humanitarian Situation Report No. 3, https://www.unicef.org/media/155626/file/Somalia-Humanitarian-SitRep-No.3-March-2024.pdf, accessed 8/5/2024
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (27/1/2026): Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026, https://www.unocha.org/attachments/edea4204-0921-4741-862f-203c6f75a631/Somalia_HNRP_2026.pdf, accessed 23/3/2026
- UN OCHA - UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (6/7/2025): Somalia: Monthly Humanitarian Update, June 2025 - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/attachments/81d65809-4360-430a-99c9-49765869e71d/Monthly Humanitarian Update - June 2025.._corr.pdf, accessed 10/7/2025
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (10/10/2022): Letter dated 10 October 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council: Letter dated 1 September 2022 from the Panel of Experts on Somalia addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia [S/2022/754], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2081261/N2263844.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023
- WB - World Bank, The (2026d): Life expectancy at birth - total - Somalia, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=SO, accessed 20/3/2026
- WB - World Bank, The (2026e): Life expectancy at birth - male - Somalia, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.MA.IN?locations=SO, accessed 20/3/2026
- WB - World Bank, The (2026f): Life expectancy at birth - female - Somalia, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.FE.IN?locations=SO, accessed 20/3/2026
- WB - World Bank, The (2026g): Mortality rate - under-5 (per 1,000 live births) - Somalia, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.MORT?locations=SO, accessed 20/3/2026
- WB - World Bank, The (2026h): Mortality rate - infant (per 1,000 live births) - Somalia, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.IMRT.IN?locations=SO, accessed 20/3/2026
- WB - World Bank, The (22/7/2021): Somalia's Women and Children are Among the 1.84 Million to Benefit from Improved Healthcare Services, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/202

1/07/19/somalia-s-women-and-children-are-among-the-1-84-million-to-benefit-from-improved-healthcare-services, accessed 25/10/2024
- WB - World Bank, The (6/2021): Somalia Economic Update. Investing in Health to Anchor Growth, http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/926051631552941734/pdf/Somalia-Economic-Update-Investing-in-Health-to-Anchor-Growth.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- WHO - World Health Organization (4/3/2026): Somalia - Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA), https://reliefweb.int/attachments/07986a16-85f6-48ab-842a-8751a528cf3c/PHSA Somalia 040326.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- WHO - World Health Organization (2024): Health data overview for the Federal Republic of Somalia, https://data.who.int/countries/706, accessed 14/11/2025
- WHO/HeRAMS - World Health Organization (Publisher), Health Resources and Services Availability Monitoring System (Author) (5/2024): World Overview - Somalia, https://herams.org/project/41, accessed 23/5/2024 [Login required]
- WVI - World Vision International (7/2023): Global Fund Tuberculosis Control Programme, World Vision Partnership with Global Fund in Somalia and Somaliland 2023, https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/World Vision Partnership with Global Fund in Somalia and Somaliland 2023.pdf, accessed 9/1/2026

22.1.1 Specialist treatments (diabetes, dialysis, cancer, etc.)

Last modification 2026-08-13 16:56

There is a shortage of specialists. According to government figures, in 2022 and 2023 there were only 0.18 anaesthetists, 0.21 obstetricians, 0.17 paediatricians and 0.33 surgeons per 10,000 inhabitants(MoHSom 10/2024). The private sector has helped to improve the availability of specialised services such as MRI scans and dialysis machines (TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023).

- **Diabetes:** As of 2024, around 378,000 adults (aged 20–79) in Somalia were living with some form of diabetes (IDF 2025). Follow-up care following a diagnosis can also be provided by lower-level healthcare facilities (DIS/WHO 3/2024). According to the Ministry of Health, 28 per cent of all healthcare facilities are able to diagnose and treat diabetes. 62 per cent of public hospitals and 65 per cent of private facilities offer diabetes treatment (MoHSom 10/2024). All diabetes medicines requested by Tana Copenhagen were available in pharmacies in Mogadishu, with the exception of intermediate-acting insulin. Rapid-acting insulin costs 7–10 US dollars (100 units) (DIS 2/2025). According to the WHO, patients must pay for the medicines themselves (DIS/WHO 3/2024).

- **Dialysis:** Several DIS sources – including UNICEF and the WHO – report the existence of dialysis centres in Mogadishu (DIS 3/2024; cf. DIS 2/2025). Dialysis is available at two hospitals analysed in more detail; these also have nephrologists and specialists in internal medicine. Generally, dialysis is provided in the private sector, although there is also a public hospital that offers dialysis free of charge. Capacity at this hospital is limited (DIS 3/2024). One of the hospitals contacted by Tana Copenhagen offers both consultations and follow-up appointments with a nephrologist (DIS 2/2025). A dialysis session costs 38.5 US dollars at Erdoğan Hospital and 35 US dollars at Shaafi Hospital (TANA/DIS 18/1/2024).

- **Heart conditions:** Overall, there are very few cardiologists in the country (IOM/STDOK 21/2/2025). At the two hospitals analysed in more detail by Tana Copenhagen, patients suffering from heart complications and high blood pressure can be treated by a specialist in internal

medicine or a cardiologist. All relevant medicines requested are available in Mogadishu (DIS 2/2025). A consultation with a cardiologist costs 30–50 US dollars, plus the cost of, for example, an ECG, blood tests, etc. (IOM/STDOK 21/2/2025). In Mogadishu, Qatar Charity has facilitated operations on children with heart conditions at the Somali Sudanese Hospital (HO 24/3/2025). The Hormuud Salaam Foundation, in collaboration with Italian doctors and local partners, also facilitated open-heart surgery in Mogadishu in 2025. These were carried out at Kalkaal Hospital (GN 27/5/2025). According to one source, there are three cardiology centres in Mogadishu where, amongst others, Sudanese and Indian cardiac surgeons work (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

- **Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease:** Patients can be treated by a pulmonologist at Erdoğan Hospital. All relevant medicines requested are available in Mogadishu (DIS 2/2025).
- **HIV/AIDS:** 32 per cent of all healthcare facilities offer HIV testing and counselling, 6 per cent provide HIV care and support services, and 7 per cent offer antiretroviral therapy for the lifelong treatment of HIV (MoHSom 10/2024). According to older data, there are centres scattered across the country where antiretroviral medicines are dispensed free of charge (DIS/UNFPA 25/6/2020; cf. DIS/MoHSom 27/8/2020). Overall, the prevalence rate for the year was just 0.1 per cent (WHO 4/3/2026).
- **Cancer:** There are no oncologists in Mogadishu and treatment options are extremely limited. Chemotherapy is available only to a very limited extent (DIS 2/2025; cf. IOM-D 12/2025), whilst radiotherapy is not available at all. A few private hospitals offer diagnosis and treatment for some forms of cancer. Those who can afford it seek treatment abroad (DIS/WHO 3/2024).
- **MRI:** Magnetic resonance imagingis available in Mogadishu, but according to one source it is very expensive (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).
- **Orthopaedics:** The Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) runs orthopaedic rehabilitation centres, including physiotherapy, in Hargeysa, Mogadishu and Galkacyo. At these centres, prostheses, orthoses, physiotherapy, wheelchairs and walking aids are provided, maintained and repaired. The centres operate beyond the cities – for example, through referrals or mobile services (SRCS 2025). Support is also provided by other organisations; for instance,Qatar Charity distributed 700 wheelchairs in 2025 (HO 24/3/2025).
- **Transplants:** According to older reports, these are not possible in Somalia, as there is no blood bank. Patients are usually referred to India, Turkey or Qatar (DIS/UNFPA 25/6/2020).
- **Tuberculosis:** Somalia is one of the 30 countries worldwide with the highest burden of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (WHO 4/3/2026). There are dedicated tuberculosis centres (MoHSom 10/2024). Their number has risen from 7 in 1995 to 109 in 2023 (WHO 4/3/2026). World Vision has been running a programme to combat the disease since 2005, which is funded by the *Global Fund*. As part of this programme, there are a total of 108 tuberculosis facilities across 78 of the 90 districts, where testing, diagnosis and treatment take place. There are dedicated tuberculosis hospitals in Mogadishu and Galkacyo. During

treatment, each patient receives US$50 per month to cover transport costs (WVI 7/2023). Médecins Sans Frontières has also been operating mobile clinics and supporting hospitals in this regard since 2002. However, the fight against tuberculosis is also affected by cuts in funding from international donors. At the same time, the number of people infected with a multi-drug-resistant form of tuberculosis is rising (MSF 25/3/2025); more than 8 per cent of new cases are of this type (HIPS 5/2020). Overall, the incidence rate stands at 246 per 100,000 inhabitants (MSF 25/3/2025; cf. WHO 4/3/2026); in 2010, the figure was 286 (WHO 4/3/2026). Treatment success rates vary: In Bossaso, the success rate is 88.5 per cent; in Galkacyo, 85 per cent; and in Mogadishu, 81.8 per cent (A. Ibrahim Farah/et al. 18/9/2025). According to other sources, the success rate nationwide is 90 per cent (WVI 7/2023).

- **Pain management:** Pain relief medication is available in Mogadishu, but palliative care is generally poorly organised (DIS/WHO 3/2024; cf. DIS 3/2024).

Sources

- A. Ibrahim Farah/et al. - Ahmed Ibrahim Farah, et al. (18/9/2025): Tuberculosis treatment outcomes and their determinants among patients attending Hargeisa TB Hospital: a five-year retrospective study. In: PanAfrican Medical Journal 52(27) 18 Sep 2025, https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12617455/pdf/PAMJ-52-27.pdf, accessed 9/1/2026
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- DIS - Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (2/2025): Somalia - Health care services in Mogadishu [Version 2.0], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2122503/medcoi-report_somalia_health-care-services-in-mogadishu_20.pdf, accessed 8/1/2026
- DIS - Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (3/2024): Somalia; Health care services in Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105661/medcoi-somalia-til-upload-ny-forside.pdf, accessed 14/5/2024
- DIS/MoHSom - Ministry of Health [Somalia] (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (27/8/2020): Somalia - Health System, S.72-75, https://www.nyidanmark.dk/-/media/Files/US/Landenotater/COI_report_somalia_health_care_nov_2020.pdf?la=en-GB&hash=3F6C5E28C30AF49C2A5183D32E1B68E3BA52E60C, accessed 1/7/2024
- DIS/UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (25/6/2020): Skype-Interview des DIS mit UNFPA, in: DIS (11.2020): Somalia - Health System, S.79-84, https://www.nyidanmark.dk/-/media/Files/US/Landenotater/COI_report_somalia_health_care_nov_2020.pdf?la=en-GB&hash=3F6C5E28C30AF49C2A5183D32E1B68E3BA52E60C, accessed 12/3/2024
- DIS/WHO - World Health Organization (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (3/2024): Online meeting with WHO Country Office Somalia; in: Somalia, Health care services in Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105661/medcoi-somalia-til-upload-ny-forside.pdf, accessed 14/5/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (27/5/2025): Hormuud Salaam Foundation Sponsors First-Ever Open-Heart Surgery for Somali Children in Somalia, https://en.goobjoog.com/hormuud-salaam-foundation-sponsors-first-ever-open-heart-surgery-for-somali-children-in-somalia/, accessed 7/1/2026
- HIPS - Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (5/2020): Somalia's Healthcare System: A Baseline Study & Human Capital Development Strategy, http://www.heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Somalia-Healthcare-System-A-Baseline-Study-and-Human-Capital-Development-Strategy.pdf, accessed 1/7/2024
- HO - Hiiraan Online (24/3/2025): Qatar Charity launches humanitarian initiatives in Somalia, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200832/qatar_charity_launches_humanitarian_initiatives_in_somalia.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 7/1/2026
- IDF - International Diabetes Federation (2025): Data by Location - Somalia, https://diabetesatlas.org/data-by-location/country/somalia/, accessed 9/1/2026

- IOM/STDOK - International Organization for Migration (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (21/2/2025): IOM, Antwort per e-Mail, zitiert nach: Anfragebeantwortung der Staatendokumentation zu Somalia - Herzprobleme, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2126460/SOMA_RF_MEV_Herzprobleme_2025_02_24_KE.odt, accessed 7/1/2026 [Login required]
- IOM-D - Internationale Organisation für Migration - Deutschland (12/2025): Somalia - Länderinformationsblatt 2025, https://iompwesagerrfg001.blob.core.windows.net/rfg/bdaab9a6-2526-4e86-a3e3-a1ce0331cf65-CFS_Somalia_2025_DE.pdf, accessed 10/4/2026
- MoHSom - Ministry of Health [Somalia] (10/2024): Somalia Harmonised Health Facility Assessment 2022-2023, National Report, https://moh.gov.so/so/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Somalia_HHFA_National.pdf, accessed 8/1/2026
- MSF - Doctors Without Borders (25/3/2025): What It's Like to Be a Patient with Tuberculosis in Somalia?, https://msf.lu/en/articles/quoi-ressemble-la-vie-dun-patient-atteint-de-tuberculose-en-somalie, accessed 9/1/2026
- SRCS - Somali Red Crescent Society (2025): Annual Report 2024, https://data-api.ifrc.org/documents/SO/Annual Report_Somalia_2024.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- TANA/DIS - Tana Copenhagen (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (18/1/2024): Medical Country of Origin Information (Medcoi) from Mogadishu, Somalia; Annex zu: Somalia, Health care services in Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105661/medcoi-somalia-til-upload-ny-forside.pdf, accessed 14/5/2024
- WHO - World Health Organization (4/3/2026): Somalia - Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA), https://reliefweb.int/attachments/07986a16-85f6-48ab-842a-8751a528cf3c/PHSA Somalia 040326.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- WVI - World Vision International (7/2023): Global Fund Tuberculosis Control Programme, World Vision Partnership with Global Fund in Somalia and Somaliland 2023, https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/World Vision Partnership with Global Fund in Somalia and Somaliland 2023.pdf, accessed 9/1/2026

22.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-09-17 10:31

Healthcare provision is extremely poor throughout the country (AA 9/3/2026), it has numerous shortcomings. However, it has improved substantially over the last few years (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. BS 2026). Overall, the situation in Somaliland is better than in southern and central Somalia. The fertility rate in Somaliland stands at 5.7 children per woman, whilst the average for Somalia as a whole is 6.9. In Somaliland, 40 per cent of children are born under medical supervision (institutional delivery), whilst the Somali average is only 21 per cent (WB 6/2021). Whilst 732 out of every 100,000 mothers died in childbirth in Somaliland in 2016, the figure has fallen to 396 by 2020 (KGHP n.d). Life expectancy is 52 years for women and 49 for men. These low figures are partly attributable to the high infant mortality rate (91 out of every 1,000 children under five) (MoHDSL 2022). According to other figures, life expectancy is 54 years for men and 57 years for women (MoFASL 1/1/2021). 13 per cent of children are fully immunised (MoHDSL 2022). In 2023, the state spent approximately 5.5 per cent of its total budget on healthcare – that is approximately 16.4 million US dollars (MoFDSL n.da).

Infrastructure: The Somaliland health system comprises five levels: the community level; the Primary Health Care Units (PHU); the *Health Centres*(HC); the Referral Health Centres (RHCs) or district hospitals; and the regional hospitals (Hagos et.al. 30/11/2023; cf. MoHDSL 1/4/2025).

In addition, there are mobile clinics, tuberculosis centres and psychiatric hospitals (MoHDSL 1/4/2025). In 2024, one source puts the total number of healthcare facilities at 336, of which 296 are PHUs and HCs (Odero 4/2024). The Ministry of Health itself states the figure as 515 facilities in April 2025 (MoHDSL 1/4/2025).

	Awdal	Sanaag	Sool	Togdheer	Woqooyi Galbeed		GESAMT
					Saxil (Berbera)	Maroodi Jeex (Hargeysa)	
PHU	27	23	15	11	32	42	**150**
HC	54	44	42	65	17	84	**306**
RHC	1	1	1	1	1	1	**6**
Bezirksspital	5	3	4	2	1	8	**23**
Spital	1	2	1	3	1	3	**11**
TB-Zentrum	6	3	1	4	2	2	**18**
Referenzlabor	0	0	0	1	0	0	**1**
GESAMT	**89**	**76**	**63**	**75**	**54**	**143**	**515**

Sources 58: MoHDSL 1/4/2025

Access to essential medical care is particularly difficult for nomads (MoHDSL 2022). The state operates at least seven mobile clinics to facilitate their access (MoHDSL 1/4/2025). NGOs also run mobile clinics; for example, one NGO operates five such facilities for children to serve various IDP camps on the outskirts of Hargeysa (MedAcross 2024a). The World Bank is supporting the expansion of the healthcare system through the *Damal Caafimaad* project. This provides support to 49 healthcare facilities, which treat more than 400,000 outpatients each year (WB 24/11/2025).

Most public facilities are underfunded or inadequately equipped – particularly those in rural areas (BMC/Yussuf/et al. 2020; cf. SJ 16/10/2023). The health sector is only weakly regulated. The majority of medical care is provided by the UN and NGOs (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The health system faces challenges due to a lack of financial resources and staff, limited infrastructure and dependence on donors (Hagos et.al. 30/11/2023).

In addition to state-run facilities, there are also those run by NGOs and private healthcare providers (Hagos et.al. 30/11/2023). Since 2010, many new healthcare facilities – including hospitals, dental practices and clinics – have opened in Hargeysa, many of which are privately run (STDOK/SEM 2017). In January 2021, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) opened two hospitals in Berbera and Burco (MoFA-VAE 20/1/2021). Another was opened in July 2021 by an NGO in Ceerigaabo (Sanaag) (FTL 28/7/2021). Sources from EASO [*Note: now EUAA*] report: In Hargeysa, in addition to the Hargeysa Group Hospital (HGH), there are several private hospitals (Edna Adan, Hargeysa International Hospital, Gargaar Hospital, Haldoor Multispeciality and Teaching Hospital, Amal Grand Hospital, Arab Medical Union Hospital); each of which has between 50 and 100 beds. There are also numerous smaller facilities, most of which specialise in a particular field, as well as private practitioners (EASO 9/2021). The HGH has 250 beds (SJ

16/10/2023). Overall, the density of healthcare facilities in Somaliland is higher than in southern and central Somalia:

Sources 59: TANA/ACRC 9/3/2023

In a survey of 2,500 people, just under 73 per cent of respondents stated that, in the event of a serious illness in Somaliland, they would be able to access high-quality healthcare quickly. However, only 53 per cent believe that they would be able to both access these services and afford them. 42 per cent of respondents state that the healthcare system has improved in recent years, whilst 19 per cent believe it has deteriorated. Fifty per cent consider the quality of public facilities to be good or very good, whilst 62 per cent rate that of private facilities as good or very good (KGHP/MoHDSL 2025).

In a survey of 200 residents of Hargeysa, the following responses were given regarding the availability of medical services (dark blue: accessible and affordable; medium blue: accessible but not affordable; light blue: neither accessible nor affordable):

Sources 60: STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Access to medical services]

Costs: There is no free healthcare whatsoever, nor is there any health insurance (Höhne/ ACCORD 9/4/2021). Sources from EASO [*Note: now EUAA*] report that even at the country's largest hospital, the HGH, which is described as 'public', patients must pay for medical services. Admission costs approximately 10 US dollars; a bed in a shared ward costs 10 US dollars per

night as well. Operations cost 350–1,000 US dollars, and a caesarean section costs approximately 400 US dollars. In the other hospitals in Hargeysa, admission and bed fees are around 30 per cent higher, whilst operations cost roughly the same as at the HGH. As virtually no one has health insurance, medical care must be paid for privately. Normally, family members support one another here; typically, the costs are covered by relatives living abroad. If a person is completely destitute, they can also turn to a mosque and sometimes to successful businesspeople (EASO 9/2021). Some NGOs offer free examinations and treatment; for example, MedAcross provides this via mobile clinics for children in IDP camps in Hargeysa (MedAcross 2023). UNHCR provides access to healthcare for refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs and, in some cases, members of host communities (UNHCR 23/6/2024).

Medicines: There is a national list of essential medicines *(Essential Medicines List*) as well as national standards. Nevertheless, counterfeit and substandard medicines sold by unlicensed and unprofessional traders remain a major problem. At the same time, access to essential medicines is not always guaranteed (MoHDSL 2022). Whilst in a survey in Mogadishu only 15 per cent of respondents stated that they had access to medicines and could afford them, the figure in Hargeysa was 45 per cent. By contrast, 18 per cent have no access and cannot afford them (STDOK 19/6/2026 [Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - Medikamente SL]).

Specific treatments and techniques: Dialysis patients are treated at HGH (as of April 2025: 150 patients) (SOCOM 8/4/2025). In January 2021, the UAE opened a dialysis centre in Hargeysa with the capacity to treat 30 patients per day (ENA 23/1/2021). NGOs have also built hospitals; for example, *MedAcross* established a children's hospital in Hargeysa in 2013. This hospital treated more than 55,000 patients in its first three years alone (MedAcross 2024b). The Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) rehabilitation centre in Hargeysa provides physiotherapy and orthopaedic services. It also organises, maintains and repairs prostheses, orthoses, wheelchairs and walking aids (SRCS 2025). Across the whole country (as of 2023), there are only 2–3 MRI scanners – all in private hospitals. Ultrasound machines are available, partly thanks to private initiatives. In the private sector, an ultrasound scan costs 30 US dollars and a CT scan 120 US dollars (SJ 16/10/2023).

Diabetes: According to one source, amputations and deaths due to diabetes are common. This is reportedly due to a lack of awareness and the high cost of treatment. Insulin for one month costs around 5 US dollars. At a new clinic in Hargeysa, patients receive insulin and other medicines free of charge (SJ 16/10/2023).

Tuberculosis: This disease is widespread in Somaliland and remains one of the biggest health problems. However, the incidence rate has been reduced from 286 per 100,000 in 2010 to 258 per 100,000 in 2020. The treatment success rate stands at 85per cent. There are 21 treatment centres for people with tuberculosis (MoHDSL 2022). Médecins Sans Frontières operates mobile clinics in this regard and provides support to hospitals accordingly (MSF 25/3/2025).World Vision, is also active in this field and runs tuberculosis facilities. Each patient receives US$50 per month during treatment to cover transport costs (WVI 7/2023). In Hargeisa, tuberculosis isdiagnosed

and treated exclusively at the Hargeisa TB Hospital. The hospital is treating thousands of patients, with a success rate of 81.2 per cent (A. Ibrahim Farah/et al. 18/9/2025).

Cancer: There is no state-run institution capable of treating cancer. There are a few private hospitals that offer chemotherapy, including, since June 2022, the Needle Hospital. The HGH has established a dedicated pathology department. There is no radiotherapy available anywhere in the country (Hagos et.al. 30/11/2023).

Sources

- A. Ibrahim Farah/et al. - Ahmed Ibrahim Farah, et al. (18/9/2025): Tuberculosis treatment outcomes and their determinants among patients attending Hargeisa TB Hospital: a five-year retrospective study. In: PanAfrican Medical Journal 52(27) 18 Sep 2025, https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12617455/pdf/PAMJ-52-27.pdf, accessed 9/1/2026
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- BMC/Yussuf/et al. - BMC Health Services Research (Publisher), et al. (Author), Mohamed Yussuf (Author) (2020): Exploring the capacity of the Somaliland healthcare system to manage female genital mutilation / cutting-related complications and prevent the medicalization of the practice: a cross-sectional study, https://www.orchidproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/exploring-the-capacity-of-the-somaliland-healthcare-system-to-manage-female.pdf, accessed 25/6/2024
- BS - Bertelsmann Stiftung (2026): BTI 2026 Country Report - Somalia, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_SOM.pdf, accessed 26/3/2026
- EASO - European Asylum Support Office (9/2021): Somalia – Key socio-economic indicators, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2060581/2021_09_EASO_COI_Report_Somalia_Key_socio_economic_indicators.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- ENA - Emirates News Agency (23/1/2021): UAE opens kidney dialysis centre in Hargeisa, Somaliland, https://wam.ae/en/details/1395302903692, accessed 3/7/2024
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (28/7/2021): Somaliland's Sanaag Specialty Hospital Officially Opened, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/somalilands-sanaag-specialty-hospital-officially-opened, accessed 19/6/2024
- Hagos et.al. - Gebrekirstos Hagos, Nazik Hammad, Susannah Stanway, Abdikani Yusuf, Tekleberhan Hailemariam (30/11/2023): Cancer care in Needle Hospital, Hargeisa, Somaliland. In: ecancermedicalscience, https://ecancer.org/en/journal/article/1642-cancer-care-in-needle-hospital-hargeisa-somaliland/pdf, accessed 3/7/2024
- Höhne/ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (Publisher), Markus Höhne (Author) (9/4/2021): Expertenauskunft zu Somalia: Somaliland: Psychiatrische Versorgung und Kosten; ambulante Versorgung, Verfügbarkeit von Medikamenten [a-11539], https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2049708.html, accessed 3/7/2024
- KGHP - King's Global Health Partnerships / King's College London (n.d): King's Global Health Partnerships, https://www.kcl.ac.uk/ksp, accessed 19/6/2024
- KGHP/MoHDSL - King's Global Health Partnerships / King's College London, Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (2025): People's Voice Survey: Somaliland Country Brief 2025, https://cdn.prod.website-files.com/67225ec0cf3415e2692725fe/682cca05ebe2ac8982d45b27_country_brief_SO.pdf, accessed 9/1/2026
- MedAcross - MedAcross Onlus (2024a): Fifth refugee camp outreach in Somaliland, https://en.medacross.org/where-we-work/somaliland, accessed 3/7/2024
- MedAcross - MedAcross Onlus (2024b): Somaliland Pediatric Hospital, https://en.medacross.org/what-we-do/pediatric-hospital-somaliland, accessed 3/7/2024
- MedAcross - MedAcross Onlus (2023): A year in Hargeisa, https://en.medacross.org/where-we-work/somaliland, accessed 3/7/2024
- MoFASL - Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Somaliland] (1/1/2021): Republic of Somaliland, Country Profile 2021, https://somalilandchronicle.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Country-GUIDE-March-2021.pdf, accessed 3/7/2024

- MoFA-VAE - Ministry of Foreign Affairs [VAE] (20/1/2021): UAE opens two hospitals in Somaliland, https://www.mofaic.gov.ae/en/mediahub/news/2021/1/19/19-01-2021-uae-somal, accessed 19/6/2024
- MoFDSL - Ministry of Finance Development [Somaliland] (n.da): Central Government Budget FY 2023, https://cdn.sanity.io/files/e0lpub15/production/6e9f92baedf12e6b528cb9f7a3a0248db4817540.pdf?dl=, accessed 16/10/2024
- MoHDSL - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (1/4/2025): Health Conference Report. Theme of the Meeting: Healthcare expansion and Reform, 19th 20th February 2025, https://somalilandmohd.com/publications/, accessed 12/5/2026
- MoHDSL - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (2022): National Health Policy III 2022, https://somalilandmohd.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Somaliland_New_HP_Final-1.pdf, accessed 2/7/2024
- MSF - Doctors Without Borders (25/3/2025): What It's Like to Be a Patient with Tuberculosis in Somalia?, https://msf.lu/en/articles/quoi-ressemble-la-vie-dun-patient-atteint-de-tuberculose-en-somalie, accessed 9/1/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Odero - Vitalis Okoth Odero (4/2024): Mental Health: A Situational Analysis of Somaliland 2023, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380792721_MENTAL_HEALTH_A_SITUATIONAL_ANALYSIS_OF_SOMALILAND_2023, accessed 3/7/2024
- SJ - Sahan Journal (16/10/2023): Minnesota doctors bring life-saving equipment and training to Somaliland's poor, https://sahanjournal.com/health/ultrasound-devices-somalia-hospitals-minnesota-doctors-abdirahman-madar-max-fraden, accessed 23/4/2024
- SOCOM - Somaliland.com (8/4/2025): Somaliland Presidency Delivers 10 Vital Dialysis Machines to Hargeisa Group Hospital, https://www.somaliland.com/health-fitness/somaliland-presidency-delivers-10-vital-dialysis-machines-to-hargeisa-group-hospital, accessed 9/1/2026
- SRCS - Somali Red Crescent Society (2025): Annual Report 2024, https://data-api.ifrc.org/documents/SO/Annual Report_Somalia_2024.pdf, accessed 5/1/2026
- STDOK - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (19/6/2026): Socio-Economic Survey 2026 - SOMALIA - 1, https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at/at.gv.bfa.coicms-p/services/collection/237-1.pdf, accessed 19/6/2026 [Login required]
- STDOK/SEM - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (2017): Informationen aus den Protokollen der FFM Somalia 2017
- TANA/ACRC - Tana Copenhagen (Publisher), African Cities Research Consortium (Author) (9/3/2023): Understanding Systems in Mogadishu City, https://tanacopenhagen.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ACRC-Tana-Mogadishu-City-System-Analysis.pdf, accessed 23/5/2024
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (23/6/2024): Operational Update (May 2024) - Somalia, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/unhcr-somalia-operational-update-may-2024, accessed 11/7/2024
- WB - World Bank, The (24/11/2025): Improving Access to Maternal and Child Healthcare in Somaliland, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2025/11/24/improving-access-to-maternal-and-child-healthcare-in-somaliland, accessed 9/1/2026
- WB - World Bank, The (6/2021): Somalia Economic Update. Investing in Health to Anchor Growth, http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/926051631552941734/pdf/Somalia-Economic-Update-Investing-in-Health-to-Anchor-Growth.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- WVI - World Vision International (7/2023): Global Fund Tuberculosis Control Programme, World Vision Partnership with Global Fund in Somalia and Somaliland 2023, https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/World Vision Partnership with Global Fund in Somalia and Somaliland 2023.pdf, accessed 9/1/2026

22.3 Psychiatry, Psychology

The most common mental health problems in Somalia include psychosomatic disorders, depression, stress, psychoses and substance abuse. However, the stress caused by conflict has also led to new conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder(PTSD), bipolar disorder and various anxiety disorders (WHO 4/3/2026). Mental illness is one of the country's biggest health problems, but has long been neglected (MoHDSL 2022; cf. Odero 4/2024). According to estimates, 30 per cent of the population is affected (DIS/WHO 3/2024; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). According to other figures (as at 2020), 4.3 per cent of the population had been diagnosed with a mental health condition by a doctor, prevalence is estimated at 14 per cent (WB 6/2021). A study of 713 people in three conflict-affected districts, however, found that as many as 77 per cent exhibited mental health problems (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024; cf. Halqabsi 10/10/2023). Only 5 per cent of those affected seek psychiatric help (Halqabsi 10/10/2023). Approximately 95 per cent of those who would need treatment do not receive it. However, most sufferers (85 per cent) seek help from traditional or spiritual healers (*aas-shefa*) (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024). According to the WHO, awareness of mental health disorders has grown amongst the population in recent years. Nevertheless, only certain conditions – such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder – are actually recognised and diagnosed as mental illnesses; by contrast, people with depression sometimes suffer for decades without ever receiving a correct diagnosis (DIS/WHO 3/2024).

Causes: Mental healthproblems are exacerbated by the decades-long conflict and its resulting impact on society (DIS/WHO 3/2024; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The associated burden is presumably higher in, for example, Mogadishu than in Somaliland or Puntland. The ongoing humanitarian crises are certainly also a contributing factor. According to other sources, the drug *khat* is the most significant cause of mental health problems. The prevalence varies, with the highest rates found in Somaliland. There, 60 per cent of men and 5per cent of women chew this drug. However, psychiatric institutions in other parts of the country also report that 90 per cent of their patients are there due to drug abuse. Among women, meanwhile, steroids used as skin-lightening agents contribute to mental health problems. According to one source, approximately 30 per cent of women in Somalia use such products (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024).

Availability: Despite all the shortcomings, there are some facilities in Somalia and Somaliland that offer good-quality psychiatric treatment (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024). Overall, according to government figures, services for mental and neurological disorders are offered in only 12 per cent of all healthcare facilities in southern and central Somalia (MoHSom 10/2024). Overall, the availability of psychological services is inadequate in terms of the number of facilities, qualified staff and geographical coverage (WHO/Rizwan 8/10/2020). In 2022, there were only 82 mental health professionals for 16.8 million inhabitants across Somalia (including Somaliland), only four of whom were psychiatrists (UNSOM 24/8/2022). Another source reports three psychiatrists and 25 trained nurses, and states that the health system is unable to provide even the most basic care to those affected (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Another source reports that there are approximately six psychiatrists and 25 psychologists across the whole country (M.M.

Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024). In mid-2023, the WHO completed the training of 50 specialist staff at the hospitals in Xudur and Dhusamareb; they are now also able to provide psychiatric care (Halqabsi 10/10/2023). Psychiatric consultations are available in both public and private facilities in the capital Mogadishu as well as in several other cities such as Hargeysa, Borama, Berbera, Bossaso and Baidoa (IOM 8/5/2024).

There are only two psychiatric hospitals, both in Mogadishu; in addition, there are three specialist departments in other hospitals and four further facilities (WHO/Rizwan 8/10/2020). According to recent information, only Habeeb Hospital and Forlanini Hospital in Mogadishu offer inpatient care (TANA/DIS 18/1/2024). Psychiatric services are also provided in the capital at Erdoğan Hospital and Shaafi Hospital, for example. Furthermore, there are charitable organisations in Mogadishu that offer support to drug addicts (DIS/WHO 3/2024). According to one source, there are psychiatric wards in hospitals in Bossaso, Mogadishu, Baidoa and Belet Weyne (Ibrahim 2/et al. 2022). According to other sources, there is also a psychiatric ward on the outskirts of Garoowe (EASO 9/2021).

Availability in Somaliland: Since 2009, mental health care has been expandedin Hargeysa, Berbera, Borama, Gabiley and Burco (Ibrahim 2/et al. 2022). In 2020, the following facilities for the treatmentof mental health conditions were known to exist: one psychiatric hospital each in Berbera and Gabiley; psychiatric wards at the hospitals in Hargeysa, Burco and Borama; and the Sahan Clinic (WHO/Rizwan 8/10/2020). In June 2023, a new clinic was opened in Ceerigaabo (Sanaag) (MoHDSL 3/6/2023). According to one source, there are now up-to-date services operating in four of the [*note: according to the source's own classification*] six regions of the country (Odero 4/2024).

The Hargeysa Group Hospital (HGH) has a psychiatric ward staffed by four psychiatrists trained abroad. The ward has a capacity of up to 150 beds for in-patient admissions (Höhne/ACCORD 9/4/2021). According to other sources, the psychiatric ward at HGH has 100 beds and is staffed by two of the five psychiatrists practising in Somaliland (EASO 9/2021). In total, there are approximately 250 psychiatric beds in the country (Ibrahim 2/et al. 2022; cf. EASO 9/2021). In a regional context, the psychiatric services in Hargeysa are relatively well-equipped. In addition, there is a relatively well-functioning hospital in Borama with a psychiatric ward. This has capacity for approximately 26 inpatients. However, the staff there are not permanently qualified psychiatrists, but general practitioners with some knowledge of psychiatry. The psychiatric unit in Burco is (as of 2021) in a poor state. It lacks both staff and equipment (Höhne/ACCORD 9/4/2021). According to recent reports, the existing hospitals for mental health conditions have been renovated. To ensure care is provided outside hospitals, around 450 nurses and doctors have been trained nationwide to deal with the challenges of managing mental health conditions. In addition, all regions have outreach services, whose teams consist of doctors or psychiatrists, nurses, and social or community workers. These teams travel through the hinterland to provide care for patients discharged from hospitals, for example (Odero 4/2024).

Costs: The cost of psychiatric consultations and psychotherapeutic treatments starts at 6.50 euros in public institutions and can be as high as 37 euros in private institutions (IOM

8/5/2024). According to another source, a session with a psychotherapist costs 25–40 US dollars (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024). Inpatient psychiatric care for crisis situations is available in public facilities such as the Forlanini Public Hospital in Mogadishu at a cost of between 186 and 279 euros per month (IOM 8/5/2024). In Garoowe, a monthly stay costs 100 US dollars (EASO 9/2021). Another source puts the monthly cost of an inpatient stay at 100–150US dollars (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024). In Somaliland, according to an older source, the cost of an inpatient stay in the psychiatric ward of a hospital is approximately 5 US dollars per night. On top of this come the costs of food and medication. In total, a month in hospital costs at least US$200, but can be significantly more expensive depending on the medication required or any other treatments that need to be carried out. Both the HGH and the hospital in Borama, as well as the few private psychiatric facilities, offer outpatient care. This is generally considerably cheaper than inpatient stays. However, fees of between 5 and 10 US dollars are charged for each consultation with a doctor. Medication must then be paid for separately (Höhne/ACCORD 9/4/2021). The high costs of conventional medicine are often (one of) the reasons why patients turn to traditional or spiritual healers (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024). Relevant prices for treatments in Mogadishu can be found in this source: DIS 2/2025

Stigmatisation: Mental health conditions are generally subject to significant stigma (WHO 4/3/2026). The few psychiatrists and psychologists available struggle to find patients, as even those who could afford treatment tend to turn to neurologists when facing mental health issues (DIS/WHO 3/2024). This stigma deters trainee doctors from pursuing a career as a psychiatrist. Those affected do not seek professional help for fear of stigmatisation (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024). According to other sources, many of those affected do not know where to turn (DIS/UNICEF 3/2024). According to the IOM, people with mental health conditions are not generally stigmatised. However, a lack of public awareness can lead to stigmatisation (IOM 8/5/2024). According to several other sources, however, people with mental health conditions are usually subject to a stigma associated with discrimination, which is linked to social isolation (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. Ibrahim 2/et al. 2022; Sahan/SWT 2/6/2022; WHO/Rizwan 8/10/2020; Sahan/SWT 9/7/2025; MoHDSL 2022; Odero 4/2024; M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024). The WHO also refers to a widespread stigma. People suffering from mental health problems often try to conceal their suffering (DIS/WHO 3/2024). Families are often left to cope on their own with their relatives who have mental health conditions (Odero 4/2024).

The fundamental problem is that, socially speaking, the only distinction made is between ‘seriously ill’ and ‘healthy’ or ‘mad’ and ‘normal’. Intermediate states or changes are not recognised (DIS/WHO 3/2024; cf. DIS 3/2024; Sahan/SWT 9/7/2025; M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024). In the context of *waali* (madness), the terms used are *qof kala dhiman* (incompetent), *maangaab* (slow-witted), *qof jiran* (sick) and *qof waalan* (mad). Consequently, ‘madness’ also encompasses autism, PTSD or depression (Sahan/SWT 9/7/2025). This radically limits the scope for understanding, let alone for treatment and support. This is exacerbated by the prevailing spiritual interpretations, in which mental and developmental disorders are generally

attributed to possession by jinn, the so-called ‘evil eye’ (black magic) or divine punishment for misbehaviour (Sahan/SWT 9/7/2025; cf. M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024).

Overall, however, it is unclear how widespread this stigmatisation actually is. After all, in a 2010 study in Hargeysa, 21 per cent of the families surveyed stated that they were caring for a relative with a severe mental illness. The government in Somaliland, at least, is making numerous efforts to combat the stigma associated with mental illness (Odero 4/2024). For example, a tax has been introduced there on the drug *khat*, the revenue from which is used to provide care for people with mental health problems (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024).

Abuse: Abuse also occurs on occasion (Odero 4/2024). According to older reports, patients are often chained up during psychotic episodes (DIS/UNFPA 25/6/2020; cf. Höhne/ACCORD 9/4/2021). This applies even in psychiatric institutions – for example, in Garoowe, Berbera or Hargeysa (WHO/Rizwan 8/10/2020). The WHO estimates that 90 per cent of people with severe mental illnesses have been chained at some point in their lives (Ibrahim 2/et al. 2022). According to more recent reports,the confinement and shackling of people with mental illness no longer occurs (DIS/WHO 3/2024); however, according to another source, it can happen that they are occasionally kept in chains at home, but it is reported that chains are now often avoided (Odero 4/2024).

Traditional ‘methods’: In the case of mental illness, most Somalis rely on support from their family and community. The services of traditional and spiritual healers are often sought; other patients resort to self-medication or drugs (Ibrahim 2/et al. 2022). It is particularly poorer people who turn to traditional healers (DIS/WHO 3/2024), as they charge less. According to other reports, even educated people turn first and foremost to these *aas-shefa* or to a *sheikh* (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024). Spiritual healing centres or programmes are known as *ilaaj* (Ibrahim 2/et al. 2022) (‘healing’ in Arabic). The majority of mental health support is provided through this network of informal private institutions, which operate using unregulated practices. In the *ilaaj*, attempts are made to cure, for example, people with autistic traits using ‘traditional’ methods (Sahan/SWT 9/7/2025). Anyone can open such a centre – without any qualifications. Many are run by pseudo-religious healers who use ‘traditional’ remedies. Even from the diaspora, young people suffering from mental illness or drug addiction are sent to Somalia for treatment (Sahan/SWT 2/6/2022). There, they are sometimes held against their will and occasionally chained up, for example to keep them away from drugs or to prevent them from committing suicide (M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik 9/9/2024; cf. Sahan/SWT 2/6/2022). In Somaliland, around 1,600 people (of whom about one-tenth are women) are receiving treatment in *ilaaj*. There are 16 such facilities in Hargeysa, two in Borama, five in Burco and one in Laascaanood. In *ilaaj*, violations of patients’ rights occasionally occur, including detention without consent, confinement in cramped rooms or being chained up. Patients are usually treated with medication only and do not receive psychotherapy. Only a small proportion of the staff there have received training (Odero 4/2024).

Medication: Of the 12 per cent of all healthcare facilities in Southern/Central Somalia that offer any services at all for mental and neurological disorders, 67 per cent have medication for

epilepsy, 55 per cent have medication for depression and 46 per cent have medication for psychosis or bipolar disorder (MoHSom 10/2024). According to a study, almost all the relevant medicines surveyed are available, at least at the pharmacies surveyed (Ramadan, Shaafi, Shifaa) in Mogadishu. These include, amongst others, olanzapine, chlorpromazine, haloperidol, risperidone, clozapine, quetiapine, sertraline, diazepam and lorazepam. Further information on this and prices can be found in this source: DIS 2/2025. In Somaliland, PTSD, schizophrenia and severe depression are treated with medication and therapy, at least at the HGH. However, the supply of medicines is limited (Höhne/ACCORD 9/4/2021).

Sources

- DIS - Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (2/2025): Somalia - Health care services in Mogadishu [Version 2.0], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2122503/medcoi-report_somalia_health-care-services-in-mogadishu_20.pdf, accessed 8/1/2026
- DIS - Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (3/2024): Somalia; Health care services in Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105661/medcoi-somalia-til-upload-ny-forside.pdf, accessed 14/5/2024
- DIS/UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (25/6/2020): Skype-Interview des DIS mit UNFPA, in: DIS (11.2020): Somalia - Health System, S.79-84, https://www.nyidanmark.dk/-/media/Files/US/Landenotater/COI_report_somalia_health_care_nov_2020.pdf?la=en-GB&hash=3F6C5E28C30AF49C2A5183D32E1B68E3BA52E60C, accessed 12/3/2024
- DIS/UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (3/2024): Online meeting with UNICEF Somalia Country Office; in: Somalia, Health care services in Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105661/medcoi-somalia-til-upload-ny-forside.pdf, accessed 14/5/2024
- DIS/WHO - World Health Organization (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (3/2024): Online meeting with WHO Country Office Somalia; in: Somalia, Health care services in Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105661/medcoi-somalia-til-upload-ny-forside.pdf, accessed 14/5/2024
- EASO - European Asylum Support Office (9/2021): Somalia – Key socio-economic indicators, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2060581/2021_09_EASO_COI_Report_Somalia_Key_socio_economic_indicators.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- Halqabsi - Halqabsi News (10/10/2023): Somalia Commemorates World Mental Health Day 2023 with WHO's Support, https://halqabsi.com/2023/10/somalia-commemorates-world-mental-health-day-2023-with-whos-support, accessed 8/5/2024
- Höhne/ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (Publisher), Markus Höhne (Author) (9/4/2021): Expertenauskunft zu Somalia: Somaliland: Psychiatrische Versorgung und Kosten; ambulante Versorgung, Verfügbarkeit von Medikamenten [a-11539], https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2049708.html, accessed 3/7/2024
- Ibrahim 2/et al. - M. Ibrahim, et al. (2022): Mental health crisis in Somalia: a review and a way forward. In: International Journal of Mental Health Systems 16, Article number 12 (2022), https://ijmhs.biomedcentral.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s13033-022-00525-y.pdf, accessed 27/6/2024
- IOM - International Organization for Migration (8/5/2024): Information on the availability of treatment for ICD10-F43.1 in Somalia, requested by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum
- M.M. Islam/A.A. Siyad/S.M.M.R. Malik - M.M. Islam, A.A. Siyad, S.M.M.R. Malik (9/9/2024): Mental health problems in Somalia after decades of humanitarian crises: a qualitative exploration of perceptions and experiences. Trop Med Health 52, 58 (2024), https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1186/s41182-024-00618-z.pdf, accessed 9/1/2026
- MoHDSL - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (3/6/2023): New Mental Health Clinic Cut It's Ribbon, https://somalilandmohd.com/new-mental-health-clinic-cut-its-ribbon, accessed 3/7/2024
- MoHDSL - Ministry of Health Development [Somaliland] (2022): National Health Policy III 2022, https://somalilandmohd.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Somaliland_New_HP_Final-1.pdf, accessed 2/7/2024

- MoHSom - Ministry of Health [Somalia] (10/2024): Somalia Harmonised Health Facility Assessment 2022-2023, National Report, https://moh.gov.so/so/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Somalia_HHFA_National.pdf, accessed 8/1/2026
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Odero - Vitalis Okoth Odero (4/2024): Mental Health: A Situational Analysis of Somaliland 2023, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/380792721_MENTAL_HEALTH_A_SITUATIONAL_ANALYSIS_OF_SOMALILAND_2023, accessed 3/7/2024
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (9/7/2025): Autism in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 844, per e-Mail [fee required]
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (2/6/2022): Editor's Pick – The mental health crisis in Somalia, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 397, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- TANA/DIS - Tana Copenhagen (Author), Danish Immigration Service [Denmark] (Publisher) (18/1/2024): Medical Country of Origin Information (Medcoi) from Mogadishu, Somalia; Annex zu: Somalia, Health care services in Mogadishu, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2105661/medcoi-somalia-til-upload-ny-forside.pdf, accessed 14/5/2024
- UNSOM - United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (24/8/2022): Idil Awil Elmi: 'I'd like to see future generations free from mental problems', https://unsom.unmissions.org/idil-awil-elmi-"i'd-see-future-generations-free-mental-problems", accessed 27/6/2024
- WB - World Bank, The (6/2021): Somalia Economic Update. Investing in Health to Anchor Growth, http://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/926051631552941734/pdf/Somalia-Economic-Update-Investing-in-Health-to-Anchor-Growth.pdf, accessed 15/12/2023
- WHO - World Health Organization (4/3/2026): Somalia - Public Health Situation Analysis (PHSA), https://reliefweb.int/attachments/07986a16-85f6-48ab-842a-8751a528cf3c/PHSA Somalia 040326.pdf, accessed 20/3/2026
- WHO/Rizwan - World Health Organization (Publisher), Humayun Rizwan (Author) (8/10/2020): Mental Health in Somalia, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/mental_health_presentation.pdf, accessed 27/6/2024

23 Return

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:27

According to one source, Somalia is not prepared for a large-scale return of refugees (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The number of migrants leaving Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland has risen again. Many are driven by economic hardship, insecurity and a lack of opportunities (HO 19/6/2025). However, the number of Somali refugees returning to Somalia has also been rising for years – partly due to increasing repatriation efforts (e.g. by Kenya). At the same time, the UNHCR – despite its role in the repatriation of Somalis from Kenya – warns against forcibly returning people to areas in southern and central Somalia, as their safety cannot be guaranteed (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Return from the diaspora: Since 2009, Somalis have alsobeen returning to their homeland from the diaspora, many with an education, skills and an entrepreneurial mindset (Sahan/SWT 27/5/2022; cf. DIPL-X/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Returnees from the diaspora take up, for example, leadership positions in Somaliland within the government, the civil service or as advisers. However, according to a government source, these individuals are not regarded as 'returnees' as they are usually dual nationals and hold, for example, a European passport (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Many local staff members of international NGOs or organisations are also Somalis who have returned from the diaspora. Others come to Somalia on holiday or to set up a business

(STDOK/SEM 2017). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, returnees from the diaspora must find their feet in their new environment. If a person has the means and information, or relatives to support them, they can manage (DIPL-X/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Some parents send their children back to Somalia to familiarise them with their homeland; there is a fear of 'Westernisation' and a fear that the state will take their children away. Some of the children come voluntarily, others are forced. Some come for 'reorientation' if they have consumed alcohol or drugs in the West or become involved in gangs. Some children stay with relatives, whilst others are placed in 'reorientation centres'. There are reports of sexual abuse, being chained up and forced marriages in such facilities (AQ21 11/2023; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025).

Voluntary return: The flow of returnees to Somalia has slowed significantly since 2020. In total, from the end of 2014 to November 2025, more than 141,000 people returned to Somalia, with or without assistance (UNHCR 24/12/2025). The IOM, however, puts the number of returnees in 2022 at approximately 224,000 (MBZ 6/2023). Of the 141,000 returnees cited by the UNHCR, 40 per cent went to Lower Juba (Kismayo), 26 per cent to Mogadishu, 8 per cent to Bay, 4 per cent to Woqooyi Galbeed (Hargeysa) and 2 per cent each to Gedo, Lower Shabelle and Bari (Puntland) (UNHCR 23/6/2025).

A total of 773 people had returned from Djibouti by May 2024 (UNHCR 12/6/2024). In 2025, 557 people were returned to Somalia from Libya with the assistance of the IOM; in total, the IOM supported 1,394 Somalis in returning to their homeland between August 2022 and November 2025 (Dawan 20/11/2025). There is a *Voluntary Humanitarian Return Programme* supported by the EU, the IOM and the UNHCR (GN 6/12/2024). The Federal government is also repatriating young, 'stranded' migrants from Madagascar (MoFASom 7/12/2024) and Algeria (HO 19/6/2025). Those repatriated return not only to southern and central Somalia, but also to Somaliland. For example, in December 2024, of the 161 people repatriated from Libya, 74 went to Hargeysa and 87 to Mogadishu (GN 6/12/2024), and in March 2025, of the 145 people repatriated from Libya, 108 went to Mogadishu and 37 to Hargeysa (GN 24/3/2025).

In total, the IOM provided support for 187 voluntary repatriations from Europe between 2020 and 2022. The returnees came from, amongst others, Belgium (14), Germany (66), Finland (12), Greece (20), the Netherlands (8), Austria (8), Switzerland (22) and Cyprus (14). 33 of those repatriated were female. 141 remained in Mogadishu, whilst the others travelled on to Garoowe (6) and Hargeysa (34) (IOM 2/3/2023). According to the German Federal Foreign Office, 19 Somali nationals were voluntarily repatriated from Germany to Somalia in 2023 and 13 in 2024 (AA 25/4/2025). In 2025, Germany was able to carry out a number of forced returns (AA 9/3/2026). Through the Restart programme (May 2023–March 2026), the IOM supported a total of eight people in their return from Austria to Somalia and Somaliland (IOM 4/2026).

(Forced) returns: Forced returns are a sensitive issue in Somalia. Nevertheless, Somalis are being forcibly returned, notably from the USA (via a charter flight operated by Jubba Air), Norway and the UK. Canada transports returnees to Nairobi, from where they travel on to Mogadishu with Jubba Air (KONS/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Saudi Arabia (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023) and the UAE are deporting Somalis to their home country (NDRA/STDOK/

SEM 5/2023). Germany and Austria also forcibly deported Somalis to their home country in 2025 (Standard 5/9/2025; cf. Dawan 3/9/2025), as did Finland (Horn 5/9/2025) and Sweden (HO 28/10/2025). By November 2025, 25 people had been deported from Sweden to Somalia (PaNy 18/12/2025).

Return programmes: The IOM's *Restart IV* project expired on 31 March 2026. A project application for Somalia may be submitted from early 2026 under Frontex's *EU Reintegration Programme (*EURP) (BMI 11/12/2025). The *European Reintegration Programme* (EURP), in partnership with the organisation IRARA (*International Return and Reintegration Assistance*), offers individual reintegration support to returnees (AA 9/3/2026; cf. IRARA n.d). Support is provided not only to voluntary returnees but also to involuntary returnees from Schengen states. Upon arrival, the following services are offered: collection from the airport; assistance with onward travel; temporary accommodation; urgent medical care; specialised care for vulnerable persons; and financial assistance. IRARA also offers so-calledpost-return assistance. This includes, for example, help with setting up a business; long-term support with accommodation; social, legal and medical support; help with finding work; education and vocational training; and financial assistance (IRARA n.d).

The Somali government, through the *National Commission for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (*NCRI), is working alongside the UNHCR and IOM to repatriate those wishing to return from Yemen. Upon their return, they are provided with food and temporary accommodation (SMN 10/10/2025). Such arrival support is also available to returnees who have returned via the IOM from, for example, Libya (Dawan 20/11/2025). UNHCR supportsreturnees under the *Assisted Spontaneous Returnees Programme* (ASR) – since 2014, this has involved more than 96,000 people. In the first eight months of 2025, UNHCR supported 134 returnees, 60 per cent of whom returned from Yemen and 24 per cent from Libya. In addition, UNHCR supports more than 44,000 so-called spontaneous returnees. Returnees receive a support package to facilitate their reintegration. The package includes, for example, onward transport, cash assistance and support upon arrival (accommodation, food, a mobile phone, a SIM card and counselling) (UNHCR 26/9/2025). Although Somaliland is the main point of arrival for refugees and returnees from Yemen, UNHCR and partner organisations support Somali returnees in travelling on to their areas of origin in other parts of Somalia (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Since spring 2018, the so-called *EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration* has been supporting Somali migrants wishing to return, primarily in Libya and Ethiopia. The services provided include advice on return options and integration into the Somali labour market. Support is also given to the development of standardised repatriation procedures to Somalia. In Jubaland, Germany is supporting a project designed to prepare host communities for voluntary returnees (AA 23/8/2024). The *Elman Peace Centre*, for example, also offers free vocational training for young people (Elman n.da; cf. Elman n.db).

IRARA has previously implemented projects with the EU and Germany relating to Somalia. This is now being carried out through the *Frontex Joint Reintegration Services Project (JRSP)*. As part

of this current project, IRARA (as at early May 2023) has received 13 returnees from Sweden, Germany, Cyprus and Belgium. IRARA meets the returnees at the airport and provides financial support; assists with temporary accommodation and onward travel; and offers counselling and a so-called livelihood package. The JRSP allocates US$2,000 per returnee, plus an arrival grant of 615 euros for the first three days. According to IRARA, this return assistance is set too low; returnees cannot do much with it. Some returnees use the money to pay a year's rent. IRARA estimates that the repatriation grant should be at least twice as high, but ideally should amount to 6,000 euros (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The Somaliland government's National Displacement and Refugee Agency(NDRA) points out that some returnees are traumatised by experiences they had whilst migrating. Some require psychological support, others medical care. This, and the fact that returnees have spent a great deal of money to reach Europe, should be taken into account when drawing up repatriation agreements (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Of the 13 returnees received by IRARA, two went to Somaliland, whilst the others went to southern/central Somalia (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Relationships and networks (family, clan, etc.): Networks comprising family, neighbours and friends are of the utmost importance to returnees. Naturally, clan networks also play a role (EASO 9/2021). The family is crucial for social integration. Without it, it becomes difficult to settle in (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Therefore, returnees to Somalia will generally try to get to where a family member is as quickly as possible. It is highly unlikely that no family exists at all (ACCORD 31/5/2021). Generally speaking, the majority of returnees try to go to a region where at least members of their clan live (ACCORD 31/5/2021; cf. EASO 9/2021), as a successful return and reintegration can depend to a considerable extent on the openness of local communities (IOM 9/2025), on clan affiliation or on the returnee's local connections. Returnees without clan or family ties in the specific place of return find themselves without protection in an environment where they are often regarded as outsiders (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. AQ21 11/2023). When returning, it is less important whether someone has relatives or not. What matters far more is how these personal kinship ties function and whether they are active, whether they have been maintained (ACCORD 31/5/2021; cf. EASO 9/2021). According to the expert Jutta Bakonyi, solidarity is not granted unconditionally. Anyone who has neglected their relationships for a long time, or who has brought a (social) stigma upon themselves or is burdened by one, cannot – despite having relatives – hope for unconditional solidarity and help (ACCORD 31/5/2021). Those returnees supported by IRARA who were backed by their families were significantly more successful than those who had only IRARA to rely on (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). In Mogadishutoo, friendships and clan networks are very important. However, no network is necessary to set up small or medium-sized economic activities (FIS 7/8/2020b).

Some potential returnees feel ashamed because they have not managed to gain a foothold in Europe. Furthermore, the journey to Europe has often incurred high costs; some families have had to go into debt. Consequently, many Somalis do not wish to return voluntarily (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023); they are unable to repay the debts they have incurred. Indeed, some returnees are regarded as failures, leading to stigmatisation (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. IOM 2/3/2023; AQ21 11/2023). It is not uncommon for families not to welcome returnees with

open arms. For this reason, organisations such as IRARA also offer psychosocial support (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to sources from the Norwegian COI unit Landinfo, however, families and relatives do not demand repayment from 'failed' migrants for payments made in connection with migration (Landinfo 5/3/2026).

Income and basic needs [*Note: See also* Basic Needs/Economy / Labour Market]:Somalisfrom the diaspora – from Europe or the USA – who return voluntarily often do not make use of aid packages, but simply return. Many of those returning from Kenya and Yemen head for the major cities of Kismayo, Mogadishu and Baidoa, as they expect better economic opportunities there and perceive these cities as safer (ACCORD 31/5/2021). Most of those repatriated by the IOM from Austria to Somalia and Somaliland invested in retail and taxi services, as these business models are comparatively easy to set up (IOM 4/2026). In 2022, the UNHCR surveyed more than 3,200 households of returnees – primarily from Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen – about their situation; just under 95 per cent of the responses came from returnees to southern and central Somalia. Of these, 57 per cent stated that their household did not have sufficient income. Their disposable income often comes from working as day labourers, as self-employed people or from humanitarian aid. 45 per cent of the households surveyed stated that there was a lack of job opportunities, and 12 per cent said that the available jobs were too far away (UNHCR 9/11/2022).

According to one source, a significant proportion of returnees find themselves as IDPs (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). However, according to the expert Jutta Bakonyi, a person repatriated to Mogadishu need not expect to starve without relatives. Even if someone really did not know anyone at all, that person would go to an IDP camp and receive some form of assistance there. The person is reliant on compassion; help may also be found in a mosque (ACCORD 31/5/2021). This also applies, for example, to Hargeysa: According to IOM staff in Somaliland, a returnee with no connections or contacts in that city would still be provided with water, food and accommodation. This takes place informally and is based on hospitality and other cultural values. However, the availability of such culturally-driven support cannot be planned, nor is it guaranteed in the long term (IOM 2/3/2023).

Returnees who have been educated abroad may – provided they possess better skills – have an advantage in the labour market (EASO 9/2021; cf. AQ21 11/2023). They may well secure good jobs. For example, there are many returnees in the Somali Parliament and the Federal Government. Some of them have received a good education, whilst others – such as one minister – worked as taxi drivers whilst in the diaspora (AQ21 11/2023). Some of the returnees supported by IRARA have successfully reintegrated and run their own businesses – both in Somaliland and in Somalia (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Housing/Accommodation[*Note: See also* Basic Services/Economy / Cost of Living]: According to the IOM,most returnees to Somaliland cannot afford a higher standard of accommodation and make do with corrugated iron huts or traditional dwellings. This applies both to Hargeysa and to smaller towns, such as Ceel Afweyn or Borama (IOM 2/3/2023). There are no dedicated camps for returnees – for example, from Yemen or Kenya – so many of them settle in IDP camps

(ACCORD 31/5/2021; cf. AA 15/5/2023). According to another source, this primarily affects people from less affluent sub-clans and marginalised groups who are unable to provide support (MBZ 4/4/2025). The return assistance organisation IRARA is not aware of any cases where returnees ended up in IDP camps (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). However, in the UNHCR returnee study mentioned above, only 23 per cent of supported returnee households and 42 per cent of unsupported returnee households (sample: 3,200) stated that they were living in an IDP camp. 33 per cent of the returnee households surveyed stated that they lived in corrugated iron shelters, 24 per cent lived in a *'buul'*, and a further 24 per cent in other temporary accommodation. 79 per cent of households stated that, even two years after their return, they were still living in makeshift accommodation (UNHCR 9/11/2022).

Women: For a female member of a minority group who has no prospect of support from either her family or her clan, returning home does indeed present a threatening situation (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (25/4/2025): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 2025), April 202, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2125924/Deutschland. Auswärtiges Amt, Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (23/8/2024): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, https://milo.bamf.de/otcs/cs.exe/app/nodes/30275841, accessed 4/9/2024 [Login required]
- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (15/5/2023): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2092375/Auswärtiges_Amt,_Bericht_über_die_asyl-_und_abschiebungsrelevante_Lage_in_der_Bundesrepublik_Somalia_(Stand_April_2023),_15.05.2023.pdf, accessed 2/10/2023 [Login required]
- ACCORD - Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (31/5/2021): Somalia - Al-Schabaab und Sicherheitslage; Lage von Binnenvertriebenen und Rückkehrer·innen [sic]; Schutz durch staatliche und nicht-staatliche Akteure; Dokumentation zum COI-Webinar mit Markus Höhne und Jutta Bakonyi am 5. Mai 2021, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2052555/20210531_COI-Webinar Somalia_ACCORD_Mai 2021.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- BMI - The Federal Ministry of the Interior [Austria] (11/12/2025): Information an die Staatendokumentation per e-Mail (liegt in der Staatendokumentation auf)
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (20/11/2025): Over 100 Somali Migrants Repatriated from Libya, https://www.dawan.africa/news/over-100-somali-migrants-repatriated-from-libya, accessed 21/11/2025
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (3/9/2025): Austria Repatriates Somali Nationals to Mogadishu, https://www.dawan.africa/news/austria-repatriates-somali-nationals-to-mogadishu, accessed 7/10/2025
- DIPL-X/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Diplomatic Source X (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- EASO - European Asylum Support Office (9/2021): Somalia – Key socio-economic indicators, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2060581/2021_09_EASO_COI_Report_Somalia_Key_socio_economic_indicators.pdf, accessed 17/5/2022
- Elman - Elman Peace (n.da): Job Creation, Job Placements & Business Start-up Grants, http://elmanpeace.org/our-work/job-creation, accessed 12/11/2024
- Elman - Elman Peace (n.db): Skills Training, Technical und Vocational Skills Training, http://elmanpeace.org/our-work/skills-training, accessed 12/11/2024

- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020b): Somalia: Tiedonhankintamatka Mogadishuun maaliskuussa 2020, Mogadishun turvallisuustilanne ja humanitääriset olosuhteet, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf/f58d6cd5-271a-55fd-9b89-b3d32e4ff80b/Somalia FFM raportti maaliskuu 2020.pdf?t=1596797440011, accessed 12/3/2024
- GN - Goobjoog News (24/3/2025): Somalia Successfully Repatriates 145 Citizens from Libya, https://en.goobjoog.com/somalia-successfully-repatriates-145-citizens-from-libya, accessed 10/4/2026
- GN - Goobjoog News (6/12/2024): Somalia Repatriates 161 Citizens Stranded in Libya, https://en.goobjoog.com/somalia-repatriates-161-citizens-stranded-in-libya, accessed 10/4/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (28/10/2025): Sweden under fire over secret $517,000 payment to Somalia for deportations, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Oct/203449/sweden_under_fire_over_secret_517_000_payment_to_somalia_for_deportations.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 20/11/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (19/6/2025): Somali government repatriates youth migrants detained in Algeria, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jun/201919/somali_government_repatriates_youth_migrants_detained_in_algeria.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 17/10/2025
- Horn - Horn Observer (5/9/2025): Somalia Rejects Deportees from Finland and Switzerland Amid Corruption Scandal, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3477/Somalia-Rejects-Deportees-from-Finland-and-Switzerland-Amid-Corruption-Scandal, accessed 9/9/2025
- IOM - International Organization for Migration (4/2026): AVRR Newsletter 1/2026, per e-Mail
- IOM - International Organization for Migration (9/2025): AVRR-Newsletter 3/2025, per e-Mail
- IOM - International Organization for Migration (2/3/2023): Information on the socio-economic situation in Somalia/Somaliland; Anfragebeantwortung an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- IRARA - International Return and Reintegration Assistance (n.d): IRARA partners with Frontex, https://www.irara.org/irara-partners-with-frontex/, accessed 15/4/2026
- IRARA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), International Return and Reintegration Assistance (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- KONS/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Konsultate von Österreich und der Schweiz (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Gespräche im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (6/2023): General country of origin information report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 29/4/2024
- MoFASom - Ministry of Foreign Affairs (7/12/2024): Repatriation of Somali Nationals Stranded in Madagascar and Commitment to Combating Human Trafficking, https://web.mfa.gov.so/repatriation-of-somali-nationals-stranded-in-madagascar-and-commitment-to-combating-human-trafficking/, accessed 10/4/2026
- NDRA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), National Displacement and Refugee Agency [Somaliland] (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- PaNy - Panorama Nyheter (18/12/2025): Nye anklager om Sveriges Somalia-støtte, https://www.panoramanyheter.no/sida-somalia-sverige/nye-anklager-om-sveriges-somalia-stotte/411376, accessed 21/5/2026

- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (27/5/2022): Somalia's diaspora needs to bring democratisation as well as entrepreneurship, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 394, per e-Mail [fee required, Login required]
- SMN - Shabelle Media Network (10/10/2025): Somalia Repatriates 148 Citizens From Yemen Amid Ongoing Humanitarian Crisis, https://allafrica.com/stories/202510100240.html, accessed 10/10/2025
- Standard - Standard, Der (5/9/2025): 'Hi Bro' ans Innenministerium: Österreichs riskante Abschiebung nach Somalia, https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000286208/hi-bro-ans-innenministerium-oesterreichs-riskante-abschiebung-nach-somalia, accessed 5/9/2025
- STDOK/SEM - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (2017): Informationen aus den Protokollen der FFM Somalia 2017
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (24/12/2025): Somalia - Population Dashboard, November 2025, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2135144/UNHCR Somalia Population Dashboard - Nov 2025.pdf, accessed 15/4/2026
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (26/9/2025): UNHCR Somalia Factsheet, August 2025, https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/118832, accessed 15/4/2026
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (23/6/2025): Somalia - Refugee Returnees, 31 May 2025, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2126469/UNHCR Somalia Refugee Returnees Dashboard - May 2025.pdf, accessed 15/4/2026
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (12/6/2024): Somalia - Refugee Returnees, 31 May 2024, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2110851/UNHCR Somalia Refugee Returnees Dashboard - May 2024_v1.pdf, accessed 10/7/2024
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (9/11/2022): Somalia Post Return Monitoring Snapshot Round 8, September 2022, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2081615/Post Return Monitoring - Snapshot September 2022.pdf, accessed 12/11/2024
- Wria/SEM/STDOK - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Rashid Wria (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

23.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

As at the end of December 2025, there were 158,334 people in Southern/Central Somalia and Puntland classified by the UNHCR as refugee returnees, the majority of whom were in Lower Juba (57,167) and Mogadishu (76,026) (UNHCR 2026a).

Treatment: Responsibilities within the Somali government regarding returning Somali nationals are fragmented, contentious and unclear. There is no evidence of structural discrimination against returnees from abroad. There are no known cases of Somalis living in exile being subjected to repression by government bodies upon their return due to opposition activities (AA 9/3/2026), nor is there any hostility towards them (AQ21 11/2023). IRARA reports that returnees sometimes carry a go-home certificate with them, and sometimes a *laissez-passer*. None of the returnees received by IRARA encountered any major problems with the authorities upon entering Mogadishu. There is no discrimination or harassment. This applies, at any rate, as long as the return is voluntary (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Both voluntary and forced returnees find limited support on the ground. There are no state-run reception centres for returnees. UNHCR and other international partners have been supporting the voluntary return of Somalis since 2014; the IOM, in cooperation with the EU and the Somali

Government, promotes the voluntary return of Somali migrants through the *Voluntary Humanitarian Return Programme* (AA 9/3/2026).

For a representative study conducted between 2018 and 2021, UNHCR surveyed almost 2,900 households comprising more than 17,000 individuals – including, in particular, support-receiving returnees from Kenya, Ethiopia and Yemen – about their situation in Somalia. Just under 95 per cent of those surveyed had returned to southern or central Somalia. Of these, 48 per cent stated that they had returned to Somalia because of the improved security situation. 14 per cent took this step because of better economic opportunities. Only 24 per cent of the households surveyed stated that they were living in an 'IDP camp" [*Note: quotation marks adopted from UNHCR*]. 94 per cent of returnees stated that they had not experienced any form of violence (threats, intimidation, physical violence) since their return. 90 per cent stated that they were able to move about freely within their community and district. 91 per cent of respondents stated that they were not discriminated against as returnees; nor were 88 per cent discriminated against on the basis of their ethnic or clan affiliation. 88 per cent of respondents had not been involved in any disputes. Of those who had been involved in conflicts, 38 per cent cited housing and land disputes as the reason, whilst a further 27 per cent cited family disputes (UNHCR 22/3/2022).

Accessibility: There are regular international flights to Mogadishu from Nairobi (Kenya), Entebbe (Uganda), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Djibouti, Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) and Istanbul (Turkey) (MBZ 4/4/2025). A travel website lists the following airlines as operating flights to Mogadishu: Jubba Airways, Daallo Airlines, FlexFlight, African Express, Air Djibouti, Freedom Airline Express, Ethiopian Airlines, i-Fly Air, Turkish Airlines, Uganda Airlines and Qatar Airways. The foreign destinations listed there are Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Nairobi (Kenya), Entebbe (Uganda), Istanbul (Turkey) and Djibouti, as well as several domestic destinations (FlightCon 18/3/2026a). Another travel website broadly confirms this information (FlightsFrom 18/3/2026a).

According to one source, entry checks are carried out primarily at international airports and at a small number of official border crossings. According to this source, it is unclear to what extent people of Somali ethnicity without valid travel documents are refused entry (AA 9/3/2026). [*Note: For information on the accessibility of locations within Somalia, see* Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland]

Al-Shabaab: According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, returnees are not a target for al-Shabaab (MAEZA/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). There is very little information available on people returning to al-Shabaab-controlled territory. Those perceived as outsiders face the risk of being arrested and executed as spies. Occasionally, a return can be negotiated through the mediation of a clan elder who enjoys al-Shabaab's trust (MBZ 4/4/2025). Another source explains that al-Shabaab is suspicious of new arrivals. Here, elders or so-called fixers play a significant role as mediators or facilitators (AQSOM 4/STDOK 6/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQ21 - Anonyme Quelle 21 (11/2023): Expertengespräche
- AQSOM 4/STDOK - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (6/2026): Expertengespräche
- FlightCon - FlightConnections (18/3/2026a): Flüge ab Mogadischu (MGQ), https://www.flightconnections.com/de/flüge-ab-mogadischu-mgq, accessed 18/3/2026
- FlightsFrom - FlightsFrom (18/3/2026a): Direct (non-stop) flights from Mogadishu (MGQ), https://www.flightsfrom.com/MGQ, accessed 18/3/2026
- IRARA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), International Return and Reintegration Assistance (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MAEZA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Mitarbeiter einer Organisation für bilaterale Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2026a): Operational Data Portal - Somalia, https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/som, accessed 25/3/2026
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (22/3/2022): Somalia, Post Return Monitoring Snapshot, PRM Round 7, February 2022, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2070098/Post Return Monitoring - Snapshot February 2022.pdf, accessed 10/7/2024

23.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

As at the end of December 2025, there were 16,151 people in Somaliland designated by the UNHCR as refugee returnees (UNHCR 2026a). According to government figures, more than 5,500 people returned [Note: with registration] to Somaliland between 2018 and 2023, primarily from Sudan, Libya, Egypt and Yemen (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Requirements: Somaliland only accepts returnees who originate from Somaliland and members of local clans or sub-clans (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023). Permission is only granted if at least one telephone number is provided and the relatives agree to take the returnee in (Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023). In general, organising a return to Somaliland is a challenge that can only be overcome through direct communication between the two organisations involved (the repatriating organisation and the receiving organisation) (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The Somaliland government does not accept [*note: assisted voluntary or deported*] returnees who enter the country by air via Mogadishu – at least not if this is obvious. Consequently, there are only two options: either a charter flight to Hargeysa; or one that first makes a stopover in Hargeysa and only then continues on to Mogadishu. Some countries send returnees directly back to Hargeysa (Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023).

IRARA reports that returnees sometimes carry a go-home certificate and sometimes a *'laissez-passer*'. With these, and their boarding pass, they can also enter the country at Hargeysa airport (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The government states that individuals who return to Somaliland of their own accord holding, for example, a European passport are not regarded by the authorities as 'returnees" nor are they registered as such (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Accessibility: A travel website lists the following airlines operating flights to Hargeysa: Jubba Airways, Daallo Airlines, FlexFlight, African Express, Air Djibouti, Flydubai and Ethiopian Airlines. The foreign destinations listed there are Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), Dubai (UAE), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Nairobi (Kenya) and Djibouti; the only domestic destination listed is Mogadishu (FlightCon 18/3/2026b). Another travel website, however, lists only Ethiopian Airlines, Air Djibouti, Daallo Airlines, FlexFlight and Flydubai as airlines, and Addis Ababa, Dubai, Djibouti, Jeddah and Mogadishu (FlightsFrom 18/3/2026b) as destinations. In 2024, more than 240,000 passengers were handled at Hargeysa Airport (MoPNDSL 2025).

There are a total of 6–7 official border crossings, including those at Wajaale, Loyaada, Berbera (port) and Hargeysa (airport). In Wajaale, the immigration authorities record 100–120 official border crossings every day. In reality, however, thousands cross the border there. That said, there are a further 2–3 checkpoints on the way to Hargeysa, where travellers are checked once again regarding the reason for their presence in Somaliland (Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023). Overall, there are plenty of opportunities to cross the border illegally (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Public transport runs regularly: Hargeysa–Borama bus (hourly/US$5); Hargeysa–Berbera express bus (US$5); Hargeysa–Berbera bus (every two hours/US$3); Hargeysa–Burco (US$8); the Hargeysa–Jijiga (Ethiopia) route is also available (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Arrivals from southern/central Somalia: People from southern/central Somalia require a valid passport at an official border crossing – including at Hargeysa Airport (Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023; cf. NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Entry with a Somali passport is not a problem – not even for Somaliland nationals (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Those travelling on a Somali passport are permitted to enter and stay in the country (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). A fee of 15 US dollars is charged at the airport upon entry with a Somali passport (INGO-C/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). According to other sources, Somaliland treats holders of Somali passports as foreign nationals unless they possess Somaliland travel documents (AA 9/3/2026). According to yet other reports, Somalilanders and Somalis arriving from Mogadishu – exclusively men and boys – are questioned at random at the airport about the reason for their stay in Mogadishu (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. INGO-F/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Treatment: The IOM runs return programmes to Somaliland and therefore considers return there to be entirely feasible (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Returnees are recognised as locals at the airport simply by their accent. Border officials ask for a local telephone number so that an identity check can be carried out. None of the returnees received by IRARA encountered any major problems upon entry. Voluntary returnees are treated as ordinary citizens. There is no political discrimination, nor is there any harassment of returnees (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Another

source also reports that there is no evidence of possible state reprisals against returnees (AA 9/3/2026).

Situation and support: Returnees to Somaliland mainly stay in towns and cities, such as Burco and Borama, the majority stay in Hargeysa (IRARA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Some returnees who had stated that they were from Hargeysa left Somaliland for Ethiopia after their return (Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023).

According to government figures, all returnees registered with the IOM and UNHCR receive support for up to six months, whilst reintegration programmes help them find a source of income (NDRA/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Returnees to Hargeysa and Borama generally find it easier to find work than those returning to Burco. Most returnees decide to set up a small business. Often, their skills are insufficient for the local market (Wria/SEM/STDOK 5/2023). The IOM explains that a returnee with no relatives in Somaliland can usually expect to be provided with water, food and accommodation during the first few weeks, thanks to the traditional culture of hospitality – although this cannot be guaranteed (IOM 2/3/2023).UNHCR and the University of Hargeysa jointly run the *Hargeysa Legal Clinic*. Among other things, the clinic provides returnees with free legal advice and assistance. The organisation can also assist with accommodation (LAW-A/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). There are no reception centres for unaccompanied minors (AA 9/3/2026).

The Somaliland Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a dedicated diaspora department. Among other things, this department supports returnees by providing information. Returnees should therefore feel welcome and supported from the moment they arrive (MoFASL n.d).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- FlightCon - FlightConnections (18/3/2026b): Flüge ab Hargeysa (HGA), https://www.flightconnections.com/de/flüge-ab-hargeysa-hga, accessed 18/3/2026
- FlightsFrom - FlightsFrom (18/3/2026b): Direct (non-stop) flights from Hargeisa (HGA), https://www.flightsfrom.com/HGA, accessed 18/3/2026
- INGO-C/STDOK/SEM - Internationale NGO C (Author), Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- INGO-F/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Internationale NGO F, Senior Aid Official (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- IOM - International Organization for Migration (2/3/2023): Information on the socio-economic situation in Somalia/Somaliland; Anfragebeantwortung an die Staatendokumentation, per e-Mail
- IRARA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), International Return and Reintegration Assistance (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- LAW-A/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Lawyer A (Author) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- MoFASL - Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Somaliland] (n.d): Diaspora Department, https://mfa.govsomaliland.org/article/diaspora-department, accessed 18/3/2026

- MoPNDSL - Ministry of Planning and National Development, Central Statistics Department [Somaliland] (2025): Leading Macroeconomic Indicators, https://mopnd.govsomaliland.org/site/downloadfile/file/MjAyNS8xMS8yMDI1LTExLTA2LTA1LTUzLTM4LTk3NC0xNzYyNDA4NDE4LnBkZg==, accessed 24/3/2026
- NDRA/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), National Displacement and Refugee Agency [Somaliland] (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somaliland National (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2026a): Operational Data Portal - Somalia, https://data.unhcr.org/en/country/som, accessed 25/3/2026
- Wria/SEM/STDOK - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Rashid Wria (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

23.3 Return assistance provided by the Austrian Government

Last modification 2026-10-05 10:10

*[This chapter is based on information provided by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior as **at April 2026** (BMI 7/4/2026). There may be short-notice changes to return assistance. For further information, please refer to the relevant BBU website (https://www.returnfromaustria.at/)].*

Staff at the Federal Agency for Care and Support Services (BBU GmbH) provide personalised advice on the options for voluntary return and the support services available.

Return support comprises the following services:

- Free, personalised advice on voluntary return, including assistance with applying for financial support from the BBU
- Organisational support with travel arrangements
- Coverage of return travel costs
- Financial start-up assistance of up to €900
- Participation in a reintegration programme following return to the destination country

There is no legal entitlement to these support services. Approval is granted by the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA). Further information on the current support services (return assistance, including reintegration support) is availableon the website www.returnfromaustria.at.

The BBU provides support with travel planning and flight bookings, as well as with obtaining travel documents for the return journey, any necessary medical care and covering the costs of the return journey. Organisational support can, in principle, be provided in any procedural context. A prerequisite for the reimbursement of return travel costs is that the returnee is without means.

Financial start-up assistance

The amount of financial start-up assistance is regulated in a degressive model and depends on the moment when the application for assisted voluntary return is submitted:

- During the ongoing asylum or immigration proceedings up to one month after the return decision becomes final: €900.00 per person; from one month after the return decision becomes final: €250.00 per person
- Nuclear families: maximum amount of €3,000 per family
- Special circumstances: For vulnerable returnees who would normally be excluded from financial start-up assistance, a one-off payment of €250.00 per person may be granted following an individual case-by-case assessment by the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA).

Criteria for receiving financial start-up assistance and reintegration support (exceptions may apply in individual cases):

- Voluntary departure
- Financial need or destitution
- First-time receipt of the support payment
- Permanence of departure
- No evidence whatsoever of a security risk arising from the voluntary return
- No serious criminal offences

EEA citizens, persons from the Western Balkan states and nationals of countries with visa-free entry to Austria (e.g. Georgia, Moldova) are excluded from receiving financial start-up assistance. **Special circumstances**: For vulnerable returnees from these regions, who would normally be excluded from financial start-up assistance, a one-off payment of €250.00 per person may be granted following an individual case-by-case assessment by the Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA).

Reintegration support

For 42 countries of origin, voluntary returnees may apply for reintegration support worth up to €3,500 in line with the guiding principle of ‘Return with Prospects’.

The reintegration programme is administered in cooperation with the following partners:

- Frontex (EU Reintegration Programme EURP) https://www.frontex.europa.eu/return-and-reintegration/reintegration-assistance/
- IOM Austria (RESTART IV Reintegration Programme) https://austria.iom.int/de/unterstuetzte-freiwillige-rueckkehr-und-reintegration-0
- Caritas Austria (IRMA plus III Reintegration Programme) https://www.caritas.at/hilfe-angebote/flucht-integration/projekte/irma-plus-reintegration
- OFII (French Office for Immigration and Integration) http://voluntaryreturn.fr/about

As part of the reintegration programmes, returnees receive comprehensive support to help them reintegrate into their country of origin. This includes individual, personalised counselling and, predominantly, benefits in kind, such as economic, social and psychosocial support. The programmes offer a wide range of services to ensure the optimal use of resources (BMI 7/4/2026).

Stand: 10/2026	EU Reintegration Programme (EURP)	French Office for Immigration and Integration (OFII)	Reintegrationsprogramme IOM
Organisation	BMI/FRONTEX	BMI/OFII	IOM/UNHCR
Laufzeit	01.05.2026 - 30.04.2027	01.09.2018 – 31.12.2027	01.04.2026 – 31.12.2029
Zielländer mit einem Reintegrationsangebot[1]	• Afghanistan • Ägypten • Algerien • Armenien • Äthiopien • Bangladesch • Brasilien[5] • El Salvador[5] • Gambia • Ghana • Guinea • Indien • Irak • Jordanien • Kamerun • Kongo RDC • Kolumbien[5] • Kasachstan • Kenia • Kirgistan • Marokko • Mongolei • Nepal • Nigeria • Pakistan • Sri Lanka • Syrien • Tadschikistan • Tunesien • Usbeskistan • Venezuela[5] • Vietnam	• Benin • Burkina Faso • Elfenbeinküste • Gabun • Kongo Brazzaville • Mali • Senegal • Togo	RESTART V • China • Iran • Somalia PARRIS • Syrien (Laufzeit 01.10.2026 - 31.12.2028)
Kriterien *(zusätzlich zu den Kriterien des BFA)*	• Vorliegen einer Rückkehrentscheidung[6] • Personen mit einer Aufenthaltsberechtigung für Österreich (Aufenthaltstitel / Aufenthaltsstatus) sind vom Programm ausgeschlossen • Fallanmeldung 5 Tage vor der Ausreise für den Erhalt des Post-Arrival Pakets unmittelbar nach Ankunft[3]	• Pro Kernfamilie kann nur eine Person eine Unterstützung erhalten[2] • Unbegleitete Minderjährige können nicht teilnehmen	**Für China, Iran, Somalia:** • Pro Kernfamilie kann nur eine Person eine Unterstützung erhalten[2] **Für Syrien:** • **keine Rückkehrentscheidung erforderlich** und Teilnahme auch mit rechtmäßigem Aufenthalt bei Ausreise möglich • Familienmitglieder können auch Unterstützung erhalten (Leistungen analog wie im EURP)
Reintegrationsleistung	**Post-Arrival Paket:** • **€ 630,-** Bargeld oder Sachleistung (Erstkontakt am Flughafen sowie Ausgabe bestimmter Sachleistungen)[4] **Reintegrationspaket:** • **€ 2.450,-** bestehend aus € 200,- Bargeld & € 2.250 Sachleistung für Hauptantragsteller • **€ 1.230,-** Sachleistung für jedes weitere Familienmitglied **Medizinisches Unterstützungspaket** • **€ 490,-** mit medizinischem Zertifikat/Befund von einem Arzt	• **€ 3.000,-** Sachleistung	**Für China, Iran und Somalia:** • € 500,- Bargeld • € 3.000,- Sachleistung • zusätzliche Unterstützung (nach Bedarf) **Für Syrien (Leistungen analog zu EURP):** • **€ 630,-** Post Arrival Paket • **€ 2.450,-** Reintegrationspaket + € 1.230,- für jedes weitere Familienmitglied • **€ 490,-** Medizinisches Unterstützungsapekt • Verweis auf nächstgelegenes UNHCR Community Center[7]
E-Mail	bmi-v-b-10-reintegration@bmi.gv.at	bmi-v-b-10-reintegration@bmi.gv.at	iomviennaop@iom.int

Sources 61: BMI 10/2026

Other countries not currently covered may be included if necessary and following appropriate assessment. Individual consultation with **Department V/B/10** is required.

1. **Nuclear family**: married couples/cohabiting partners, including their minor children.
2. To claim the Post-Arrival Package, the deadlines set out in Frontex's EU Reintegration Programme (EURP) must be met so that benefits can be granted immediately upon arrival.

3. The **Post-Arrival Package,** worth €615, provides short-term assistance to cover immediate needs upon arrival andcan be made available **up to 14 working days** after arrival. It can be paid out in cash or used for the following benefits in kind: airport assistance, onward travel, accommodation.

   When claiming the Post-Arrival Package, the returnee is met at the airport by the reintegration partner and receives a welcome pack. This includes a pre-paid SIM card with a number to ensure they can be contacted, hygiene items (toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, shampoo and feminine hygiene products if required), a bottle of water, a hot meal (or a voucher for one), age-appropriate children's toys.

   Post-return package: Upon arrival in their country of origin, the returnee should contact the reintegration partner. If no contact is made within four weeks of the departure date, the reintegration partner will proactively attempt to establish contact. A total of six months is available for **drawing up the reintegration plan**. Within this period, the reintegration plan must be approved by Frontex and the Member State. If no approved reintegration plan is in place by the end of the six months, further participation in the EURP programme is not possible

   The returnee has a total **of 12 months after arrival in their country of origin to complete the reintegration process and** utilise the approved budget.

4. Nationals from visa-exempt countries such as Brazil, El Salvador, Colombia and Venezuela may only be admitted to the reintegration programme if they can demonstrate vulnerability.

5. Since 1 April 2025, **a return decision** has **been required** for participation in Frontex's EURP reintegration programme. Merely lacking legal residence in Austria is no longer sufficient. The decisive factor is that a return decision has been issued – although it does not need to have become final (BMI 30/3/2026).

Special procedure: Retroactive admission to the EURP reintegration programme

If no return decision has yet been issued, it is possible to participate in the EURP reintegration programme retroactively following arrival in the country of origin and after the Federal Office for Migration and Asylum (BFA) has issued a return decision. The deadline for retroactive inclusion is a maximum of five months after departure to the country of origin. If the BFA is conducting a revocation procedure and a return decision is issued in the course of this procedure, the person concerned must be informed upon departure that they must contact the reintegration partner after three months to submit a retroactive application. Once the application has been approved by the Member State, the case is treated as a standard RIAT case. If an application is rejected on the grounds that the criteria have not been met (reasons documented in RIAT), it may be resubmitted after a certain period to allow the eligibility criteria to be reassessed.

If it is not to be expected that a return decision will be issued by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BFA) following voluntary departure (e.g. in the case of voluntary departure during ongoing asylum proceedings at first instance and the subsequent discontinuation of the proceedings), the possibility of retroactive participation in the EURP should not be pursued (BMI 30/3/2026).

Sources

- BMI - The Federal Ministry of the Interior [Austria] (10/2026): Kriterien- und Leistungsvergleich Reintegrationsangebot [stored in the archive of Staatendokumentation]
- BMI - The Federal Ministry of the Interior [Austria] (7/4/2026): Österreichische Rückkehrunterstützung - Übersicht der Leistungen
- BMI - The Federal Ministry of the Interior [Austria] (30/3/2026): Kriterien- und Leistungsvergleich Reintegrationsangebot

24 Documents

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:32

Most archives and registers dating from 1990 onwards have been lost (MBZ 4/4/2025). People born after 1991 were never officially registered. Somalia therefore has one of the lowest registration rates in the world; the birth registration rate for the whole of Somalia (including Somaliland) was estimated at only around 3 per cent in 2014 (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). According to other figures, 6 per cent of children under the age of five are registered (MBZ 4/4/2025; cf. UNICEF 1/2022). At 77 per cent, Somalia has the highest proportion of people worldwide who have no official proof of identity or documents (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. UNSC 10/10/2022; UNHCR 22/12/2021b) which do not appear to play a significant role within the country (MBZ 4/4/2025), as Somalis normally identify themselves by dialect and clan affiliation (LIFOS 9/4/2019).

Sources

- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (9/4/2019): Somalia - Folkbokförning, medborgarskap och identitetshandlngar, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2007147/190423300.pdf, accessed 7/5/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (22/12/2021b): Citizenship and Statelessness in the Horn of Africa, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2065866/61c97bea4.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (1/2022): A statistical update of birth registration in Africa, https://data.unicef.org/resources/a-statistical-update-on-birth-registration-in-africa/, accessed 20/6/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (10/10/2022): Letter dated 10 October 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council: Letter dated 1 September 2022 from the Panel of Experts on Somalia addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia [S/2022/754], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2081261/N2263844.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023

24.1 Southern/Central Somalia, Puntland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

After 30 years of conflict and the near-total collapse of the state, there are no registers in the traditional sense (AA 9/3/2026). InMarch 2023, the *National Identification and Registration Authority Bill* was passed. In theory, this will enable every Somali citizen to have their identity recorded and thereby gain access to government services (Sahan/SWT 31/5/2023). In fact, registers were already being established by the federal states prior to this. The most advanced of these are those in Benadir and Puntland (Landinfo 6/3/2020).

Coverage: Due toweak governance and the fragility of the Somali state, access to civil registration of births, marriages and deaths remains largely restricted to urban centres (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). According to government figures, only around 15 per cent of adults (people over the age of 15) hold proof of identity and only 4.1 per cent hold a passport (GN 28/3/2023b). Very few Somalis can afford the necessary costs to obtain a passport (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). However, due to the need for identity verification – particularly in relation to mobile telephony and mobile money transfers – identity documents are becoming increasingly important overall (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). According to one expert, the most commonly used documents are passports and employee IDs issued by public authorities (AQSOM 4 6/2024). By contrast, very few people have an official marriage certificate; marriage is officially and legally recognised even without one (SOMEN/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). The widespread use of documents is to be encouraged by the requirement, from the start of 2026, to carry an identity card when travelling within the country (Dawan 6/8/2025).

Reliability (identity): (see also freedom of movement / Southern/Central Somalia / registration system) As there is no civil registry in Somalia, documents are issued solely on the basis of the applicant's verbal statements (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. Landinfo 14/6/2018) and, where applicable, from any witnesses or relatives present (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; Landinfo 14/6/2018; LIFOS 9/4/2019). The applicant is interviewed and asked about the village elder, with whom contact may be made if necessary (LIFOS 9/4/2019). This is because, in addition to relatives, identities are often reliably verified by village elders (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). In any case, the data – for example, in the passport – is based on the applicant's verbal statements. There is no evidence to suggest that the information provided by the applicant is actually verified on a systematic basis with the involvement of reference persons (usually clan representatives) (Landinfo 31/3/2022). Even the President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, has confirmed that passports are issued without proper verification of identity (GO 19/9/2025). Often, when documents are issued, they refer to other documents that have likewise not been properly issued. This circular process poses a widespread problem (GN 6/7/2025). Consequently, false information can easily creep in during the document issuance process. Furthermore, weak institutions, low salaries and corruption encourage bribery amongst officials who issue documents. Clan loyalties also play a part here. Consequently, little trust can be placed in the system for identifying individuals (LIFOS 9/4/2019). There is no way of obtaining reliable information about Somali nationals via official registers (AA 9/3/2026). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, it is not possible to verify the content of Somali documents (KONS/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Overall, documents lack verifiable foundations and the information they contain is unreliable. This circumstance opens the door

to fraud and abuse. It is not uncommon to find individuals with five different travel documents, each bearing a different name. This situation is further complicated by the frequent occurrence of identical names or different spellings of the same name (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Even confirmation of a document's authenticity would not allow any conclusions to be drawn regarding the accuracy of its content (AA 9/3/2026). At the same time, the authenticity of documents or the verification of official records cannot under any circumstances be used to verify the accuracy of their content or their truthfulness (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. MBZ 4/4/2025).

Reliability (documents): According to one source, a Somali citizen must budget between 4,000 and 5,000 US dollars to obtain a passport from Djibouti or Ethiopia (Horn/Ubah Ali 12/7/2022). According to other reports, it is generally easy for Somalis to obtain genuine documents containing false information, including forged passports from the neighbouring countries of Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. In Somalia itself, but also, for example, in the Eastleigh district of Nairobi, forged Somali passports, as well as numerous other forged documents, are offered for sale (AA 9/3/2026). With the help of so-called fixers, identity documents can be arranged (MBZ 4/4/2025). Throughout East Africa, there is a substantial black market for illegally produced civil status certificates and travel documents (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). There are allegations that high-ranking officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are involved in people-smuggling, and that government officials are selling official and diplomatic passports. Between December 2024 and March 2025, 145 people were detained at Mogadishu Airport alone for travelling with such passports illegitimately (Horn 20/5/2025).

Ministries and local authorities use legally prescribed stamps to issue officially authorised documents. The use of these stamps is not always properly monitored (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). Identity documents are issued by various municipal authorities, with a wide variety of criteria governing their issuance. A government representative told the UN Panel of Experts that, in Mogadishu alone, it would be possible to obtain twenty different birth certificates within a single day (UNSC 10/10/2022).

Passports: A passport can be issued in Mogadishu within a few weeks without any problems; the cost is 90–100 US dollars. A birth certificate must be presented when applying (FIS 7/8/2020a). From 1 September 2025, an ID card must be presented (Dawan 6/8/2025). Passports are issued in Mogadishu and a few other Somali cities, as well as at some embassies (UNHCR 22/12/2021b). Somali passports are also issued in the border towns with Kenya, Belet Xaawo and Mandera (KONS/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). Somalian passports can also be applied for in Somaliland, although the cost of issue is significantly higher there (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Overall, the issuance of passports is characterised by fraud and corruption, and the integrity of this document is undermined (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). Due to concerns regarding the issuing process and widespread passport fraud, only a few countries recognise the Somali passport as a valid travel document (UNHCR 22/12/2021b; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

ID card: In September 2023, ID cards began to be issued which are intended to be needed for various government services and financial services and guarantee a digital record of identity (VOA/O. Hassan 16/9/2023). There are only a few locations where citizens can register (AQSOM

4 6/2024); these are part of the *National Identification and Registration Authority* (NIRA). Apart from Mogadishu, there is a NIRA office in Baidoa (HO 18/1/2025); in July 2025, one was opened in Jowhar (Hirshabelle) (RD 20/7/2025). Puntland and Jubaland, however, refuse to implement the federal government's ID system (GO 19/9/2025; cf. HO 19/3/2025). In September 2025, the Federal President reaffirmed that the ID card had become indispensable for accessing public services. However, a total of only 500,000 ID cards had been issued by that date (GO 19/9/2025). According to a report from August 2025, theID card is required, for example, in Mogadishu to open a new bank account (FTL 1/8/2025). For internally displaced persons (IDPs) from other parts of Somalia, Puntland issues its own ID cards (LIFOS 9/4/2019).

***Sugnaanta*:** This document serves as a form of proof of identity and is issued by the Mogadishu City Council (SOMEN/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). In Puntland, non-Puntland Somalis do not receive a Puntland identity card; however, they can obtain a personal certificate (*warqadda sugnaanta*) on which their actual place of origin is recorded (LIFOS 9/4/2019).

Civil status documents: There is no clear legal framework governing the issuance of civil status certificates. Documents may be issued by local authorities, local and regional courts, or by the Ministry of the Interior (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). Local authorities are increasingly responsible for issuing birth, death and marriage certificates (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023; cf. SOMEN/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). There is no central birth register. In Mogadishu, the formal requirements have changed frequently, and there is constant uncertainty regarding the authenticity of certificates issued there (GN 6/7/2025). Public and private hospitals are only permitted to issue birth notifications, which are subsequently used to issue birth certificates (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). The vast majority of Somali birth certificates are either forged or otherwise unusable as proof of identity (LIFOS 9/4/2019).

Marriages are contracted and dissolved before a Sharia court. Sharia courts or the *sheikh* may issue marriage and divorce certificates (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024; cf. SOMEN/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). The *sheikh's* certificate forms the basis for the official marriage certificate. Such a certificate may be issued by local courts and certified by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They are issued, for example, by courts in Kismayo, Garoowe or district courts in Mogadishu (SOMEN/STDOK/SEM 4/2023). There is no central register that makes it possible to verify court records (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). There is no such thing as a civil marriage (Landinfo 14/6/2018).

In Somalia itself, no certificate regarding guardianship is required. Sometimes, a declaration of responsibility is required for use outside the country or by foster parents, for example when applying for a passport for a child who is not their own. If the child's biological parents cannot be contacted, the applicants will need witnesses to confirm that they are in fact caring for the child (SOMEN/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

Minorities: It can sometimes be difficult for members of ethnic minorities to obtain a passport. They must 'prove' to the Somali authorities that they originate from Somalia – usually by demonstrating relevant language skills, but also by naming a prominent reference person (e.g. a Member of Parliament). This applies in particular to the Bantu and Bajuni, but not necessarily to the Benadiri (Landinfo 31/3/2022).

Issuance to non-Somali persons: The term 'Somali' in the Somali Citizenship Act of 1962 encompasses all ethnic Somalis. For the issue of a passport, it is not decisive whether a person comes from Somalia or lives in Somalia. Rather, what is relevant is whether the person is ethnically Somali. Ethnic Somalis from Ethiopia, Djibouti or Kenya can also obtain Somali passports. Naturally, the specification of the clan plays a relevant role here (Landinfo 31/3/2022). A source from the FFM Somalia 2023 also emphasises that documents are issued to non-Somali Somalis – for example, from Kenya – (KONS/STDOK/SEM 4/2023).

[*Note:**regarding Somali documents for Somaliland**, see*Documents / Somaliland]

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQSOM 4 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 4 (6/2024): Expertengespräche
- Dawan - Dawan Africa (6/8/2025): Somalia to Require National ID for Domestic Travel and Passport Applications, https://www.dawan.africa/news/somalia-to-require-national-id-for-domestic-travel-and-passport-applications, accessed 10/10/2025
- FIS - Finnish Immigration Service [Finnland] (7/8/2020a): Somalia: Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020, https://migri.fi/documents/5202425/5914056/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf/2f51bf86-ac96-f34e-fd02-667c6ae973a0/Somalia Fact-Finding Mission to Mogadishu in March 2020.pdf?t=1602225617645, accessed 12/10/2023
- FTL - Facility for Talo and Leadership (1/8/2025): National ID Mandatory for New Bank Accounts in Banadir, Says Central Bank of Somalia, https://www.ftlsomalia.com/national-id-mandatory-for-new-bank-accounts-in-banadir-says-central-bank-of-somalia/, accessed 26/11/2025
- GN - Goobjoog News (6/7/2025): A Nation's Identity in Flux: Somalia Seeks to Weave Disparate Records Into a Coherent System, https://en.goobjoog.com/a-nations-identity-in-flux-somalia-seeks-to-weave-disparate-records-into-a-coherent-system/, accessed 14/1/2026
- GN - Goobjoog News (28/3/2023b): Only 4% of Somalis have a form of national identity-report, https://en.goobjoog.com/only-4-of-somalis-have-a-form-of-national-identity-report, accessed 16/1/2024
- GO - Garowe Online (19/9/2025): Somali president vows to overhaul passport system after 10 million issued without clear records, https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somali-president-vows-to-overhaul-passport-system-after-10-million-issued-without-clear-records, accessed 25/11/2025
- HO - Hiiraan Online (19/3/2025): Puntland rejects Somalia's national ID, calls it politically motivated, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Mar/200764/puntland_rejects_somalia_s_national_id_calls_it_politically_motivated.aspx, accessed 12/1/2026
- HO - Hiiraan Online (18/1/2025): Somalia launches National ID Card printing to enhance citizen services, https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jan/199878/somalia_launches_national_id_card_printing_to_enhance_citizen_services.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront, accessed 12/1/2026
- Horn - Horn Observer (20/5/2025): Scandal Erupts as Somalia Sends Fraudulent Delegation to ILO Conference, https://hornobserver.com/articles/3329/Scandal-Erupts-as-Somalia-Sends-Fraudulent-Delegation-to-ILO-Conference, accessed 12/1/2026
- Horn/Ubah Ali - Ubah Ali (Author), Horn Observer (Publisher) (12/7/2022): Opinion: Without Passport Privilege, https://hornobserver.com/articles/1640/Opinion-Without-Passport-Privilege, accessed 21/1/2026
- KONS/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Konsultate von Österreich und der Schweiz (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Gespräche im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (31/3/2022): Somalia – Statsborgerskap, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Respons-Somalia-Statsborgerskap-31032022.pdf, accessed 7/5/2024

- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (6/3/2020): Somalia - Identitets-dokumenter, sivilregistrering og offentlig forvaltning, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Somalia-temanotat-Identitetsdokumenter-sivilregistrering-og-offentlig-forvaltning-06032020.pdf, accessed 20/6/2024
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (14/6/2018): Somalia: Marriage and divorce, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2013990/Report-Somalia-Marriage-and-divorce-14062018-2.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (9/4/2019): Somalia - Folkbokförning, medborgarskap och identitetshandlngar, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2007147/190423300.pdf, accessed 7/5/2024
- MBZ - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs [Netherlands] (4/4/2025): General Country of Origin Information Report on Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2103761/General_COI_report_Somalia_June_2023.pdf, accessed 16/9/2025
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Omer2/ALRC - Ahmed Omer 2, Africa Legal Risk Control Ltd (17/3/2023): Somali Family Law & Practice. An Expert Report (Bericht i.A. der österreichischen und deutschen Botschaften in Nairobi); per e-Mail
- RD - Radio Dalsan (20/7/2025): Hirshabeelle Opens New NIRA Branch in Jowhar to Boost Citizen ID Services, https://www.radiodalsan.com/hirshabeelle-opens-new-nira-branch-in-jowhar-to-boost-citizen-id-services/, accessed 21/10/2025
- Sahan/SWT - Somali Wire Team (Author), Sahan (Publisher) (31/5/2023): Somalia's displaced population: Urban and unidentified, in: The Somali Wire Issue No. 547, per e-Mail
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SOMEN/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Somali Embassy Nairobi [Somalia] (Author), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher) (4/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (22/12/2021b): Citizenship and Statelessness in the Horn of Africa, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2065866/61c97bea4.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (10/10/2022): Letter dated 10 October 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council: Letter dated 1 September 2022 from the Panel of Experts on Somalia addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia [S/2022/754], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2081261/N2263844.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023
- VOA/O. Hassan - Mohamed Olad Hassan (Author), Voice of America (Publisher) (16/9/2023): Somalia's Digital ID Revolution: A Journey From Standstill to Progress, https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-s-digital-id-revolution-a-journey-from-standstill-to-progress/7271250.html, accessed 29/5/2024

24.2 Somaliland

Last modification 2026-10-05 11:30

In Somaliland, there is an administration that functions to a limited extent (AA 9/3/2026; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024). The authorities also issue documents. However, as the Republic of Somaliland is not recognised, these documents have no international validity (AA 9/3/2026).

Reliability: According toone source, document security in Somaliland is generally not much better than in the rest of Somalia (ÖB Nairobi 10/2024).

Passports: The Somaliland passport is recognised by only a few countries, or can be used for entry there: in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya (Landinfo 30/9/2021; cf. SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023), South Africa, the United Kingdom, Taiwan (Landinfo 30/9/2021), Turkey, the UAE (Landinfo 30/9/2021; cf. ÖB Nairobi 10/2024) and Rwanda (Horn/Ubah Ali 12/7/2022). One source adds Uganda, Tanzania, Guinea and Israel to the countries already mentioned (Qaran 4/3/2025). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, passports are not very common in Somaliland (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Somalilanders mainly travel on foreign documents (FT/Wallis 12/3/2026).

ID card: With the ID card, registered individuals are issued with a twelve-digit ID number, which they retain for life. An ID card for Somaliland can be applied for in any regional capital of Somaliland (LIFOS 9/4/2019) – for example, in Berbera. Applications are processed centrally in Hargeysa, where the card is also issued. Whilst the process can be completed within a day when an application is made in the capital – including the issue of the card –, it can take up to a month outside the capital (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf.YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The card can also be applied for online (GovSL 2026b).

Local taxes and public services at municipal level are linked to the ID card. Due to the need for mobile telephony and mobile money transfers, these documents are becoming increasingly important (Omer2/ALRC 17/3/2023). The card is required, amongst other things, for the following services: purchasing a SIM card; registering with the payment services Zaad or eDahab; issuing documents (e.g. a driving licence); notarial deeds; opening a bank account; renting property (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Formal employment is also not possible without an ID card (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). E-government links many aspects, such as the telephone number to the ID number, and this in turn to the Ministry of Finance. If property or vehicles are registered, you automatically receive a notification of taxes due. These can then be paid via mobile phone, and you also receive the payment confirmation on your phone (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to recent information, travellers between major cities must carry identification with them. Furthermore, anyone wishing to access services at government offices must present their passport, identity card or driving licence in order to gain entry. Hotels and landlords have also been instructed to request identification from people seeking accommodation and to scan these documents (AQSOM 9 1/2026).

Prevalence: It is still common for people to live without any documents, although this is changing. There is still no law requiring people to hold identity documents (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The UN Panel of Experts states that Somaliland has succeeded in issuing identity cards to the majority of the population (UNSC 10/10/2022). Due to the link between the ID card and the services mentioned above, according to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, many people – particularly in urban areas – are in possession of one. In rural areas, it is less necessary and therefore less widespread (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Another source also states that an increasing number of people hold an ID card (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Civil status documents: A marriage is first solemnised in a religious ceremony conducted by a *sheikh* registered with the courts. The sheikh issues a certificate (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/

2023). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, the document issued by the *sheikh* is rather informal in nature (handwritten and non-standardised) (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The marriage is then registered at the district court, which issues an official marriage certificate (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, this requires the certificate from the *sheikh* and two witnesses who swear before the court that the applicant is in fact married to the person named. The certificate issued thereafter is forwarded to the Ministry of Justice, where it is certified. If the marriage certificate is to be used outside the country, it must also be certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, it is now common practice in Somaliland for a marriage certificate for a newlywed couple to be issued by the court (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to another source, not all married couples have their marriage certified by the district court. Only those who require a marriage certificate do so (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). The certificate plays a particularly important role in the context of inheritance. In financial transactions, too, the marital status must sometimes be proven by means of a marriage certificate (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). It is also required, for example, for booking a hotel for the honeymoon (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

Children born in a hospital are registered (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Birth certificates are primarily issued for hospital births (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; cf. YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023; SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). In Berbera, the certificates are issued by the municipal administration (YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). There is no state register for births during the 1990s and early 2000s (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, it is primarily people from urban and educated circles – and here, above all, young people – who know their exact date of birth (SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). Another source explains that for children born at home, often only the year of their birth is known (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023).

It is now possible to apply for all civil status documents (birth, marriage, divorce, death) online (GovSL 2026b).

Issuance to non-Somalilanders: According to the Somaliland Ministry of the Interior, it is impossible for members of clans defined as non-Somalilander to obtain an identity card. Only in the case of members of clans living on both sides of the Somaliland–Ethiopian border might Somaliland documents be issued (STDOK/SEM 2017).

Somali and other documents for Somalilanders: As Somalia regards all Somalilanders as Somali citizens, they are also eligible to obtain a Somali passport (UNHCR 22/12/2021b). Applications for the passport can be made without the applicant having to leave Somaliland (Landinfo 5/3/2026). According to a source from the FFM Somalia 2023, many Somalilanders hold a Somali passport. According to this source, there are several offices in the country that can arrange for a passport to be issued. A private company has been authorised by the Somali Federal Government to accept applications and collect biometric data. This data is then forwarded to Mogadishu. To verify identity, a Somaliland ID card or a birth certificate must be presented.

Whilst the passport costs approximately 120 US dollars in Mogadishu, the process in Somaliland costs 300 US dollars (SNST-T/STDOK/SEM 5/2023). It is also not uncommon for Somalilanders to have relatives in Djibouti or Ethiopia who assist them when crossing borders, as well as in obtaining identity documents and passports from those countries (Landinfo 5/3/2026).

Sources

- AA - Federal Foreign Office [Germany] (9/3/2026): Bericht über die asyl- und abschiebungsrelevante Lage in der Bundesrepublik Somalia (Stand: April 16.2.2026), https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2143480/SOM09032026_Lagebericht_VS-NfD.pdf, accessed 5/6/2025 [Login required]
- AQSOM 9 - Anonymisierte Quelle Somalia 9 (1/2026): Bericht zur Sicherheitslage. Bei der Quelle handelt es sich um eine Sicherheitsanalyseorganisation
- FT/Wallis - William Wallis (Author), Financial Times (Publisher) (12/3/2026): The breakaway African state building Coca-Cola plants and Emirati ports, https://www.ft.com/content/74d547fc-90b0-48bd-be5e-af6e4f317130?syn-25a6b1a6=1, accessed 18/3/2026 [fee required]
- GovSL - Government of Somaliland [Somaliland] (2026b): E-Local Governance System Web Portal, https://www.govsomaliland.online, accessed 21/1/2026
- Horn/Ubah Ali - Ubah Ali (Author), Horn Observer (Publisher) (12/7/2022): Opinion: Without Passport Privilege, https://hornobserver.com/articles/1640/Opinion-Without-Passport-Privilege, accessed 21/1/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (5/3/2026): Somalia: Migrasjon mellom Somaliland og Sør-Somalia, https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Somalia-respons-Migrasjon-mellom-Somaliland-og-Sor-Somalia-05032026.pdf, accessed 25/3/2026
- Landinfo - Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre [Norway] (30/9/2021): Somalia/Ethiopia - Søknad om somalisk pass i Nordvest-Somalia (Somaliland), https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Respons-Somalia-Soknad-om-pass-i-Somaliland-30092021.pdf, accessed 21/1/2026
- LIFOS - LIFOS-Migrationsverket [Schweden] (9/4/2019): Somalia - Folkbokförning, medborgarskap och identitetshandlngar, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2007147/190423300.pdf, accessed 7/5/2024
- ÖB Nairobi - Österreichische Botschaft Nairobi [Österreich] (10/2024): Asylländerbericht zu Somalia, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2116331/SOMA_ÖB-Bericht_2024_10.pdf, accessed 22/10/2024 [Login required]
- Omer2/ALRC - Ahmed Omer 2, Africa Legal Risk Control Ltd (17/3/2023): Somali Family Law & Practice. An Expert Report (Bericht i.A. der österreichischen und deutschen Botschaften in Nairobi); per e-Mail
- Qaran - Qaran News (4/3/2025): Countries in the world that recognize the passport of the Somaliland, https://qarannews.com/countries-in-the-world-that-recognize-the-passport-of-the-somaliland/, accessed 21/1/2026
- SNST-T/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somali National Staff T (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- SOMNAT/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), Somaliland National (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023
- STDOK/SEM - Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria], Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (2017): Informationen aus den Protokollen der FFM Somalia 2017
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (22/12/2021b): Citizenship and Statelessness in the Horn of Africa, https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2065866/61c97bea4.pdf, accessed 12/3/2024
- UNSC - United Nations Security Council (10/10/2022): Letter dated 10 October 2022 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council: Letter dated 1 September 2022 from the Panel of Experts on Somalia addressed to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia [S/2022/754], https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2081261/N2263844.pdf, accessed 11/10/2023

■ YOVENCO/STDOK/SEM - Staatssekretariat für Migration [Schweiz] (Publisher), Country of Origin Information Department of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration [Austria] (Publisher), YOVENCO Berbera (Author) (5/2023): Interview im Rahmen der FFM Somalia 2023

25 Imprint

Published by Staatendokumentation, the Country of Origin Information Unit (Staatendokumentation) Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum Vienna (BFA – https://bfa.gv.at), Austria

Phone: +43 59133 98 7271

Mail: BFA-Staatendokumentation@bmi.gv.at

https://www.staatendokumentation.at

https://cloud.staatendokumentation.at

https://coi-cms.staatendokumentation.at

Quality assurance of the machine translation by DeepL was carried out by: Helga Geyer

25.1 Copyright

This publication and all the data therein are protected by copyright. All rights of utilization are reserved to the Country of Origin Information Unit of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum. Reproduction and distribution in any possible way – for commercial and noncommercial usage – are prohibited without prior written permission by the Country of Origin Information Unit of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum.

25.2 Privacy Notice

The Country of Origin Information Unit of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum processes data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR. Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC) and the Austrian Data Protection Act (Federal Act concerning the Protection of Personal Data, Federal Law Gazette I No. 165/1999 as amended). For the purpose of distribution, name, postal and/or e-mail addresses are stored. Recipients have the general right to information, rectification, deletion, restriction, data transferability, revocation and objection. The subscription can be cancelled at any time (e-mail with the subject line 'unsubscribe' to BFA-Staatendokumentation@bmi.gv.at).

Information on e-mail correspondence with the Federal Ministry of the Interior (announcement pursuant to § 13 para. 2 AVG)

https://www.bmi.gv.at/Impressum/email_richtlinien.aspx

Notes for electronic attachments (96,7 KB)

https://www.bfa.gv.at/Kontakt/files/Kundmachung_nach_13_Abs_2_und_5_AVG.pdf

Official signature - figurative mark (117,7 KB)

https://www.bfa.gv.at/Impressum/files/Amtssignatur_Bildmarke_Veroeffentlichungstext_2020.pdf

25.3 Published Versions

- Version 8, Valid from 07-08-2025 to 05-10-2026
- Version 7, Valid from 16-01-2025 to 07-08-2025
- Version 6, Valid from 08-01-2024 to 16-01-2025
- Version 5, Valid from 17-03-2023 to 08-01-2024
- Version 4, Valid from 27-07-2022 to 17-03-2023
- Version 3, Valid from 21-10-2021 to 27-07-2022
- Version 2, Valid from 08-07-2021 to 21-10-2021
- Version 1, Valid from 30-03-2021 to 08-07-2021

© 2026 Country of Origin Information Unit of the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum