

## SECURITY SITUATION IN SOMALIA

### 1. Armed conflict and security situation in Somalia<sup>1</sup>

The general security situation is still mainly determined by the resurgent threat posed by Al-Shabaab, primarily but not exclusively in South–Central Somalia. In 2014 Somalia suffered the most attacks and deaths from terrorism in its history and recorded an increase in terrorism for the fourth year in a row. Somalia ranks eighth on the Global Terrorism Index 2015, and second after South Sudan and before the Central African Republic, on the Fragile State Index 2015.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.1. Background

The Somali Republic was created in 1960 by merging the protectorate of British Somaliland with the colony of Italian Somaliland. In 1969, Siad Barre took control of Somalia via a military coup and declared it a socialist state in 1970.

In January 1991 Siad Barre's regime was overthrown and the country was torn apart by clan-based warfare. On 18 May 1991 Somaliland declared itself independent. In August 1998 Puntland also declared itself an autonomous state but, unlike its neighbour, sought recognition as an independent entity within a federal Somalia.

In August 2004, after many failed attempts at peace talks, a new transitional parliament was inaugurated at a ceremony in Kenya and in October of the same year Abdullahi Yusuf was elected president of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG). In February 2006, the parliament met for the first time in Somalia in the central town of Baidoa.

A coalition of Islamic Courts, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), in alliance with other clan militia, took control of Mogadishu and other parts of South - Central Somalia in June 2006. Although the ICU won public support by creating an unprecedented degree of security, Ethiopian forces, backed by Western Governments, entered Somalia and took control of Mogadishu in December 2006.

On 20 February 2007 the UN Security Council authorised a peacekeeping mission called the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), after which a small contingent of African Union Troops landed in Mogadishu in March 2007 to protect the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs). Initially a mandate was given for six months, which has been renewed subsequently, most recently on 24 March 2016 (Until 31

<sup>1</sup> This security update is based mainly on EASO Somalia report which was published in February 2016 (<https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/EASO-Somalia-Security-Feb2016.pdf>). The report covers the period between August 2014 and December 2015 and any events which have occurred during the first months of 2016 are not included in the report nor in this security update. Original sources of information can be found from the EASO report. See the list of sources pages 77 - 93.

<sup>2</sup> EASO 2016, s. 14.



March 2017).<sup>3</sup> After Ethiopia withdrew its troops from Somalia in early 2009, the hard-line militant youth movement of the former ICU, called Al-Shabaab, took control of Baidoa and other parts of South-Central Somalia, including Mogadishu. By August 2010, Al-Shabaab controlled the majority of south and central Somalia, but the group started losing ground at the end of 2011. It had already withdrawn from Mogadishu in August 2011.

From February to October 2012, AMISOM Troops and government forces recaptured key towns in South Somalia, such as Afgooye, Baidoa, Merka and Kismayo. In August 2012 the new Somali Federal Parliament was inaugurated in Mogadishu and elected president Hassan Sheikh Muhamud on 10 September.

In the spring of 2014, 'Operation Eagle', a major joint military operation of AMISOM and the Somali National Army (SNA), was launched and Al-Shabaab was driven out of several strategic towns in the regions of Benadir, Lower Shabelle, Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Hiiraan, Galgaduud and Middle Shabelle. This strategy was continued under 'Operation Indian Ocean' and 'Operation Jubba Corridor'.

In northern Somalia, the border regions of Somaliland and Puntland (Sool and Sanaag) have been contested since both states declared themselves independent and autonomous. In addition, Al-Shabaab's movement northwards poses an increasing destabilising threat in Puntland. Finally, a border conflict between Mudug and Puntland has recently flared up.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2. Actors of the conflict and their aims

### 1.2.1. State's armed forces

#### **Somali National Armed Forces (SNAF)**

The number of SNAF troops is not quite clear. According to a Security Council report of September 2015, a total of 16,780 members of the Somali national army were biometrically registered in the human resources system by the end of August 2015. However, the number of active troops is probably much lower. Other sources estimate the total SNAF troops at about 10,000. The SNAF's composition shows, according to the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), that 'both key positions and the rank and file of the army are dominated by the Hawiye'.<sup>5</sup>

In October 2015, the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea reported that SNAF troops had been unpaid for several months and that senior military commanders had systematically inflated the troop numbers in order to secure greater funding for salaries and rations. As a consequence of poor payment some soldiers sold their equipment, or defected to their respective clan militias or even Al-Shabaab. According to a UNDSS security analysis, some soldiers turned to crime as a source of revenue (e.g. extortion at illegal checkpoints, armed robberies, etc.).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> UNSC 2016.

<sup>4</sup> EASO 2016, s. 14 - s. 15.

<sup>5</sup> EASO 2016, s. 15 - s. 16.

<sup>6</sup> EASO 2016, s. 15 - s. 16.



The allegiances of SNAF soldiers are mostly 'split due to clan loyalties, the interests of loosely incorporated local militias, and inconsistent salaries'.<sup>7</sup>

Overall, there is a lack of SNAF: 'The initial AMISOM aim, as evidenced by the liberated parts of the country, seems to have involved liberating areas controlled by Al-Shabaab and then handing these over to the SNAF. However, this no longer appears to be happening, as the SNAF is neither large nor strong enough to hold and protect the areas currently under the control of AMISOM.'<sup>8</sup>

### **Somali Police Force (SPF)**

The exact number of the SPF is also unknown. A total of 5,200 personnel of the Somali police force were biometrically registered in the human resources system by the end of August 2015. Another source estimated the total at 4,000 to 5,000. Somaliland, Puntland and the Jubbaland Administration have their own police forces in their respective areas of control.<sup>9</sup>

In January 2015 a new police unit was created to fight terrorism. The first squad comprises 150 officers and received training in Djibouti. According to an expert on Somalia, interviewed in Stockholm by Lifos on 2 December 2015, there is a lack of funding and a lack of technology such as computers.<sup>10</sup>

According to one source, the police are 'receiving salaries on a regular basis'. Other sources mention that the government fails to pay the police or maintain proper police stations. In addition, the command and control structures are weak and parts of the police are based on clan militia.<sup>11</sup>

### **National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA)**

Although the SPF created a new counter-terrorism unit, Somalia's national intelligence agency (NISA) still leads responses to terrorist attacks in Mogadishu.<sup>12</sup>

In September 2014, NISA warned the media to refrain from reporting about the government's security operations in Mogadishu and beyond. It also restricted media coverage on stories about Al-Shabaab and interviews with the group's officials. Human Rights Watch reported that 'Somalia's national intelligence agency, NISA, routinely carried out mass security sweeps, despite having no legal mandate to arrest and detain suspects. The NISA has occasionally held detainees for prolonged periods without judicial review and mistreated suspects during interrogations'.<sup>13</sup>

On 21 June 2015 a training base of the NISA in Mogadishu was attacked by Al-Shabaab militants who set off a car bomb before storming inside. During the operation at least seven people were killed, including the attackers.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> EASO 2014, s. 63.

<sup>8</sup> EASO 2014, s. 63.

<sup>9</sup> EASO 2016, s. 16.

<sup>10</sup> EASO 2016, s. 16.

<sup>11</sup> EASO 2014, s. 64.

<sup>12</sup> EASO 2016, s. 16.

<sup>13</sup> EASO 2016, s. 16.

<sup>14</sup> EASO 2016, s. 16.



The Alpha Group (Gaashaan) is another force of 600 security personnel based in Mogadishu. The unit was specially trained and equipped by the CIA and is attached to the NISA. It operates primarily in the Somali capital although raids outside the town can occur. This unit is said to be well disciplined.<sup>15</sup>

### **Somaliland's forces**

Although Somaliland is not internationally recognised, it has its own army and police forces. Exact numbers of these forces are not known, but according to the international service business Adam Smith International, which provided technical advice to the Somaliland Armed Forces, the army consists of 13,000 troops.<sup>16</sup>

A special paramilitary unit, the so-called Rapid Response Unit (RRU), was created in 2012 as a counter-terrorism force, and was trained by the UK Government. The RRU is part of the Somaliland Police Forces (44). In September 2014 another paramilitary unit, the so-called Oil Protection Unit (OPU), was established within the Police Force in order to provide security and protection to oil exploration and extraction.<sup>17</sup>

### **Puntland's forces**

The security forces of the semi-autonomous state of Puntland, estimated at about 4,000, include a state-armed militia/police force known as the Puntland Dervish Force, the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF) and the Puntland Intelligence Agency (PIA). The latter, previously known as the Puntland Intelligence Service, is dominated by the Majerteen subclan of the Darood clan.<sup>18</sup>

### **Galmudug Interim Administration (GIA)**

In July 2015 Abdikarim Hussein Guled, the President of the newly formed Galmudug Interim Administration (GIA), was inaugurated. The GIA consists of one region (Galguduud) and two Mudug districts (Hobyo and Xaradheere). The GIA is dominated by the Hawiye, specifically the Habar Gidir - Sa'ad sub-clan. Numbers of GIA security forces are unknown. GIA troops clashed with Puntland forces regarding a territorial dispute in November 2015.<sup>19</sup>

### **Jubbaland forces**

On 12 May 2015, The National Integration Commission reached an agreement with SFG and the (Interim) Jubbaland Administration on the number of troops to be integrated in SNA in Jubbaland. This was part of a national reconciliation agreement between the autonomous Jubbaland administration and SFG, signed in Addis Ababa on 28 August 2013. In total 2,880 Jubbaland forces (340 from Gedo, 1,000 from Jubba Dhexe and 1,540 from Jubba Hoose) will be integrated into SNA. On 26 July 2015 the first 1,350 troops were officially integrated.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> EASO 2014, s. 65.

<sup>16</sup> EASO 2016, s. 16.

<sup>17</sup> EASO 2016, s. 16.

<sup>18</sup> EASO 2016, s. 17.

<sup>19</sup> EASO 2016, s. 17.

<sup>20</sup> EASO 2016, s. 17.



## 1.2.2. International forces

### **African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)**

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is a regional peace support mission set up in January 2007 by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union with the support of the United Nations. The principal aim is to provide support to the Federal Government of Somalia to stabilise the country and foster political dialogue and reconciliation. AMISOM is also mandated to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and create the necessary conditions for the reconstruction and sustainable development of Somalia. AMISOM is headed by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia (SRCC) Ambassador Mahamat Saleh Annadif. The mission has military, police and civilian components.<sup>21</sup>

The Security Council authorised the Member States of the African Union to deploy AMISOM in line with the Security Council's request to the African Union for a maximum of 22,126 troops. On 24 March 2016, in its Resolution 2275 (2016), the UN Security Council decided to extend the deployment of AMISOM to 31 March 2017.<sup>22</sup> The military element is by far the biggest of the three components of the AU Mission in the country. It comprises troops from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia, which are deployed in six sectors covering South and Central Somalia. Initially, Sierra Leone also contributed but due to the Ebola fears the African Union blocked the West African country from rotating its soldiers. By the end of 2014 Sierra Leone withdrew its troops.<sup>23</sup>

In September 2014 Human Rights Watch published a report titled 'The Power These Men Have Over Us', detailing how some African Union troops have sexually exploited and abused women who had gone to their camps for aid and medical assistance. The African Union appointed a team to investigate the allegations and two cases of sexual abuse were found.<sup>24</sup>

In July 2015 AMISOM was accused of randomly killing civilians in the coastal town of Merka. On 21 July 2015, alleged AMISOM forces killed at least 11 civilians in separate incidents and 10 days later Ugandan army troops allegedly killed six men at a wedding. AMISOM admitted that it was involved in the latter incident. The independent expert reporting to the UN Human Rights Council on the situation of human rights in Somalia (October 2015) noted:

'AMISOM had put in place a number of policies and measures designed to ensure that its uniformed personnel conducted their operations in a manner consistent with its international humanitarian principles. (...) a number of measures had been put in place, including the establishment of an investigation team by the African Union Commission to investigate the allegations and the setting up of an emergency helpline to receive reports of allegations of sexual exploitation abuse and complaints against AMISOM'.<sup>25</sup>

### **UN Guard Unit (UNGU)**

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<sup>21</sup> EASO 2016, s. 17.

<sup>22</sup> UNSC 2016.

<sup>23</sup> EASO 2016, s. 17.

<sup>24</sup> EASO 2016, s. 18.

<sup>25</sup> EASO 2016, s. 18.



In addition to AMISOM, the UN Guard Unit (UNGU) started its duties on 15 May 2014. The task of the unit is to protect UN staff and facilities in Mogadishu. After the Secretary-General decided to increase the troops from 410 to 530, a new UN Guard Unit came from Uganda to Somalia to replace the previous one that was to be rotated.<sup>26</sup>

### **Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF)**

Although the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF) joined AMISOM officially on 22 January 2014, the BBC reported that some Ethiopian troops operated independently in Somalia. This was confirmed in August 2015 by a commander of AMISOM and the Somali Government. According to DIIS, Ethiopia only takes part in AMISOM to legitimise its presence in the country in order to obtain resources and to protect its border with Somalia.<sup>27</sup>

Only about a third (4,500) of the troops Ethiopia has deployed to Somalia is under the umbrella of AMISOM. An expert on Somalia, interviewed in Stockholm by Lifos 2 on December 2015 reported that ENDF has no more than 2,000 men separately deployed from AMISOM. Furthermore, several hundred Somalis are being trained and paid by ENDF to protect the border between the two countries. This group operates independently of AMISOM and SNA.<sup>28</sup>

### 1.2.3. Armed groups

#### **Al-Shabaab**

As mentioned in section 1.1, Al-Shabaab (Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahdeen) started as the hardline militant youth movement of the former ICU. After the ICU was forced out of Mogadishu by Ethiopian forces in December 2006, Al-Shabaab became an independent organisation that controlled the majority of South and Central Somalia by August 2010.<sup>29</sup>

Al-Shabaab's goal is to drive out Somalia's government and allied foreign forces in order to establish an Islamic government of a "Greater Somalia". It also has a global jihadist agenda which has involved launching terrorist attacks in neighbouring countries such as Uganda, Kenya, and Djibouti in the past few years.<sup>30</sup>

#### **Structure**

Although Al-Shabaab has a centralised structure with a powerful leader, the command and control structure has become more and more decentralised in recent years. A special unit within the organisation, the so-called Amniyat, is responsible for the intelligence and the internal security of Al-Shabaab. The UN Monitoring group on Eritrea and Somalia reported in October 2014 that Amniyat had not only

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<sup>26</sup> EASO 2016, s. 18.

<sup>27</sup> EASO 2016, s. 18.

<sup>28</sup> EASO 2016, s. 18.

<sup>29</sup> EASO 2016, s. 19.

<sup>30</sup> EASO 2016, s. 18.



infiltrated the SNAF, but also the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) and various levels within the Presidential Palace.<sup>31</sup>

The number of Al-Shabaab fighters is unclear. Although estimations vary between 3,000 and 15,000, the total number is unlikely to be more than 6,000, as mentioned by the Brookings Institute, a non-profit organisation devoted to independent research and innovative policy solutions.<sup>32</sup>

### Recruitment

Recruitment by Al-Shabaab usually takes place via the established Islamic networks such as madrassas or religious schools. Children and women are also recruited to do chores in Al-Shabaab camps. Women are also forced to marry Al-Shabaab fighters.<sup>33</sup>

According to a security analysis expert interviewed by the Austrian BFA Staaten-dokumentation, forced recruitment has become an exception, although recruitment via clan elders is ongoing. The number of casualties of Al-Shabaab troops is decreasing, so there is less need for new fighters.

### Control of the population

Al-Shabaab imposes a strict and harsh interpretation of Sharia law in areas under its control, which prohibits (a.o.) music, films, sports, and certain clothing. Refusal to obey the law can lead to severe punishments, including amputations and beheadings.<sup>34</sup>

A Humanitarian international NGO, interviewed by DIS (May 2015) commented:

'In the areas they control, Al-Shabaab has full control of all aspects of society. All residents in these areas should follow any given instruction by Al-Shabaab i.e. dressing, living, marriage, tax payment, joining Al-Shabaab operations, shaving, spying, education etc. Failure to obey can result in serious punitive measures which include death'.<sup>35</sup>

The Monitoring Group documented (October 2015) grave violations in Al-Shabaab-held areas such as an increase in child recruitment, forced marriage and a practice called Dumaashi involving the taking of new brides by Al-Shabaab fighters, and especially mentioned ethnic minorities (Bantu/Wagosha) in Middle and Lower Jubba as victims.<sup>36</sup>

### Income

Al-Shabaab obtains its income from different sources such as the lucrative charcoal trade, protection and kidnappings for ransom, and the collection of the Islamic tax

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<sup>31</sup> EASO 2016, s. 18.

<sup>32</sup> EASO 2016, s. 18.

<sup>33</sup> EASO 2016, s. 18.

<sup>34</sup> EASO 2016, s. 18.

<sup>35</sup> EASO 2016, s. 19 - s. 20.

<sup>36</sup> EASO 2016, s. 20.



zakat. Other sources reported that Al-Shabaab also receives money from the (Somali) diaspora and other aligned groups such as Al-Qaeda.<sup>37</sup>

#### Recent developments

During the reference period, Al-Shabaab suffered several heavy losses. One major blow was the assassination of its leader 'Amir' Ahmed Abdi Godane in a US drone strike in South Somalia on 1 September 2014. After his death Al-Shabaab named Ahmed Umar, also known as Abu Ubaidah/Ubayda, as his successor.<sup>38</sup>

Another blow for Al-Shabaab was the loss of the important port town of Baraawe in October 2014. The town was a supply route for weapons and food and functioned as a base for a lucrative charcoal business. According to a report of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea (October 2015), Al-Shabaab's overall share of income from the charcoal business has significantly decreased. Throughout 2015, Al-Shabaab has lost control over a number of strategic towns such as Baardheere and Diinsoor.<sup>39</sup>

Despite these losses Al-Shabaab is still a force in Central and South Somalia and controls most of the rural areas.<sup>40</sup>

#### Tactics

Several sources interviewed during the Danish fact-finding mission (DIS) in May 2015 stated that, in general, Al-Shabaab performs its attacks in towns it does not control, mainly on persons or institutions representing the international community including AMISOM and the UN, the Somalia Federal Government (SFG) and those supporting, or perceived to be supporting, them.<sup>41</sup>

Al-Shabaab still successfully carries out targeted suicide bombings, hit-and-run attacks, ambushes on convoys and other violent attacks. Until June 2015, Al-Shabaab continued with its strategy by avoiding large-scale confrontations with a larger, better equipped enemies such as AMISOM and concentrated on asymmetrical warfare. However, during Ramadan (June/July) 2015, Al-Shabaab launched an offensive which showed that it was 'far from defeated' and displayed an 'improved intelligence-gathering'. On 26 June 2015, when hundreds of Al-Shabaab fighters raided an AMISOM military base in Leego, Lower Shabelle, more than 50 Burundian soldiers were killed. Another AMISOM base in Lower Shabelle, located in the town of Janaale, was attacked in a similar way on 1 September 2015 and at least 12 Ugandan soldiers were killed. Large amounts of weapons and uniforms were looted by Al-Shabaab, supposedly to be used in disguised attacks.<sup>42</sup>

In both large-scale attacks, Al-Shabaab introduced a new tactic by destroying possible reinforcement routes. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility, referring to its new

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<sup>37</sup> EASO 2016, s. 20.

<sup>38</sup> EASO 2016, s. 20.

<sup>39</sup> EASO 2016, s. 20.

<sup>40</sup> EASO 2016, s. 20.

<sup>41</sup> EASO 2016, s. 20.

<sup>42</sup> EASO 2016, s. 20 - s. 21.





military unit Abu Zubeyr Battalion, named after the late Al-Shabaab leader. According to a security analysis expert, interviewed by the Austrian BFA Staatendokumentation, this strong battalion is trained by Al-Qaeda trainers from Iraq.<sup>43</sup> Both attacks also displayed a 'weakness in AMISOM's command and control systems', according to analysts.<sup>44</sup>

In its October 2015 report, the UN Monitoring Group noted on Al-Shabaab's tactics:

'Al-Shabaab continues to carry out frequent complex attacks within Mogadishu, typically employing a combination of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices followed by the deployment of suicide gunmen. During the current mandate, Al-Shabaab has displayed a preference for targeting hotels, especially those frequented by Federal Government of Somalia and foreign government officials. The most notable of those hotel attacks include: Jazeera Hotel (26 July 2015); Makka al-Mukarama (27 March 2015); Central Hotel (20 February 2015); and SYL Hotel (22 January 2015). (...) Al-Shabaab terror operatives, both within and outside Mogadishu, frequently carry out their attacks while disguised in Somali National Army or other government military uniforms'.<sup>45</sup>

Al-Shabaab intensified its activities beyond Somali's borders, especially in those countries that supply AMISOM troops. In the reporting period, in Uganda, the top state prosecutor in the trial of 13 men accused of a deadly Al-Shabaab bomb attack in Kampala 2010, was shot at the end of March 2015. In April 2015 the group claimed responsibility for its most deadly attack after killing 148 people, mainly students, at the Garissa University College Campus in north-eastern Kenya. Earlier, in September 2013, Kenya had been targeted in a large-scale attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi.<sup>46</sup>

#### Internal fissure

In July 2015, during a meeting in Jilib, Al-Shabaab officials were considering merging with the Islamic State (IS), with Deputy Chief Mahad Karate pressuring Al-Shabaab leader Abu Ubaidah to agree to allegiance to IS. This led to a split within Al-Shabaab and there were reports of the arrests of senior Al-Shabaab members and a battle between two Al-Shabaab factions near Saakow in November 2015.<sup>47</sup>

In October 2015, a senior Al-Shabaab commander, Abdulqadir Mumin, and about 20 of his followers in the semi-autonomous Puntland region pledged allegiance to IS. In response, Al-Shabaab warned its members against shifting allegiance from Al-Qaeda to IS and reportedly killed a number of pro-IS fighters in Middle Jubba.<sup>48</sup>

#### **Al-Shabaab North-East (ASNE)**

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<sup>43</sup> EASO 2016, s. 21.

<sup>44</sup> EASO 2016, s. 21.

<sup>45</sup> EASO 2016, s. 21.

<sup>46</sup> EASO 2016, s. 21.

<sup>47</sup> EASO 2016, s. 21.

<sup>48</sup> EASO 2016, s. 21.



Armed groups affiliated with Al-Shabaab are operating mainly in the Golis (or Galgala) Mountains in Sanaag region, headed by an 'Amir' from the UK, Abdulqadir Mumin. In October 2014 the UN Monitoring Group reported an increased presence and movement of Al-Shabaab North-East (ASNE) throughout Puntland. Although Puntland Forces launched a renewed offensive at the end of 2014, ASNE's operational capacity does not appear to have been seriously affected.<sup>49</sup>

On 24 December 2015 heavy fighting broke out between Mumin and his followers, who had pledged allegiance to IS, and fighters of Al-Shabaab aligned with Al-Qaeda.<sup>50</sup>

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

Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa (ASWJ) is a pro-government militia that has significantly contributed to the relative security in the areas under its control. However, in November 2014 a conflict erupted between a faction of ASWJ, the so-called Sufa group, and the Somali National Army (SNA) in the regional capital of Galgaduud, Dhuusamarreeb.<sup>51</sup>

On 11 February 2015, at least 16 people were killed and 14 others wounded during an armed confrontation between both parties in the town of Guricel, 400 km north of the capital Mogadishu. On 7 June 2015, ASWJ overran Dhuusamarreeb, the capital of the Galgaduud Region, after SNA troops withdrew from the city. The group refused to pull out despite calls for a peaceful solution and remained in control of Dhuusamarreeb and the northern part of Galgaduud.<sup>52</sup>

### **Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC) and/or Khatumo State militias**

In January 2012 the political elite and elders of the Dhulbahante clan declared the establishment of the so-called Khatumo State. The self-declared state is a follow-up of the Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC) region which never became operational. Its borders roughly correspond to the land of the Dulbahante clan. Although Khatumo State's territorial claims include portions of Sanaag region, it controls little of this territory. The coastal zones of Sanaag are inhabited by the Warsengali clan which has not expressed interest in joining Khatumo State and maintains its own militias. Khatumo State has its own militia as well but its governance structure is not operational yet.<sup>53</sup>

## **2. Armed confrontations and impacts on population**

The period of review was characterised by two major military operations against Al-Shabaab, respectively called 'Operation Indian Ocean' and 'Operation Jubba Corridor'. In both operations AMISOM did not face a lot of resistance due to tactical withdrawals by Al-Shabaab.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> EASO 2016, s. 22.

<sup>50</sup> EASO 2016, s. 22.

<sup>51</sup> EASO 2016, s. 22.

<sup>52</sup> EASO 2016, s. 22.

<sup>53</sup> EASO 2016, s. 22.

<sup>54</sup> EASO 2016, s. 24.



## 2.1. Operation Indian Ocean

Operation Indian Ocean was launched in late August 2014 as a follow-up military offensive to Operation Eagle earlier that year. The purpose of the operation was to end Al-Shabaab's control of coastal towns and to cut off its sources of revenue raised through port operations and taxes on goods.<sup>55</sup>

On 30 August 2014 the SNA, aided by AMISOM, took control of the strategic town of Buulo Marer after a fierce battle. One month later Baraawe was captured without any resistance after Al-Shabaab fled without a fight. As mentioned, this town was vital as it served as a base for a lucrative charcoal business. SNA and AMISOM also drove Al-Shabaab out of Tiyeeglow district, an important logistical hub located approximately 480 km north-west of Mogadishu in the Bakool region.<sup>56</sup>

Although Operation Indian Ocean was initially quite successful, in the first half of 2015 AMISOM lost momentum which led to a resurgence of Al-Shabaab and a number of spectacular attacks in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Garoowe. This was caused, according to DIIS, by the disarray in the AMISOM headquarters, the limitation of troops and the diverging national interests of neighbouring countries Kenya and Ethiopia.<sup>57</sup>

## 2.2. Operation Jubba Corridor

On 19 July 2015, after the large-scale Ramadan attacks at two AMISOM bases, AMISOM announced the resumption of its military operations against Al-Shabaab. This offensive, codenamed Operation Jubba Corridor, aimed to weaken Al-Shabaab further by removing its fighters from their strongholds in the Gedo, Bakool and Bay regions of Somalia.<sup>58</sup>

Three days after this announcement AMISOM and SNA took control of Baardheere, Al-Shabaab's last main stronghold in the Gedo region. On 24 July 2015 another stronghold of Al-Shabaab, Diinsoor in the Bay region, was taken by AMISOM and SNA.<sup>59</sup>

Although in both operations, as in Operation Eagle, AMISOM 'managed to deprive Al-Shabaab of territory, they did not succeed in depriving it of its assets such as fighters and weapons or weaken its military command'. Due to overstretched resources AMISOM could not maintain a presence in every town and village, allowing Al-Shabaab to regroup in the rural areas and concentrate on asymmetrical actions to destabilise the captured towns.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> EASO 2016, s. 25.

<sup>56</sup> EASO 2016, s. 25.

<sup>57</sup> EASO 2016, s. 25.

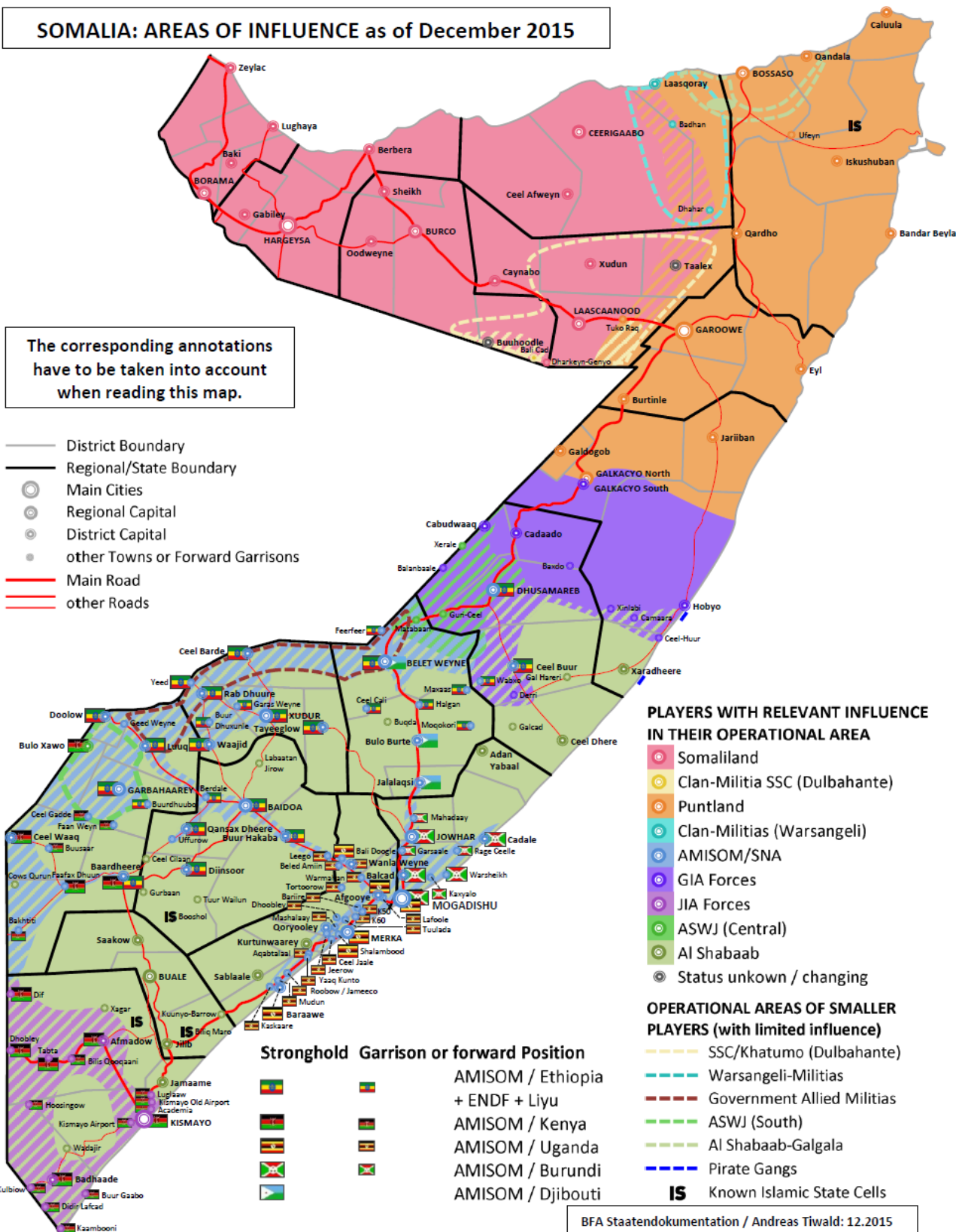
<sup>58</sup> EASO 2016, s. 25.

<sup>59</sup> EASO 2016, s. 25.

<sup>60</sup> EASO 2016, s. 25.



### SOMALIA: AREAS OF INFLUENCE as of December 2015



Source map: BFA Staatendokumentation)/ Andreas Tiwald, December 2015 <sup>(137)</sup>. This map should be read and interpreted in conjunction with the annotations and comments listed below.



### 2.3. Other armed confrontations

Besides these two major operations executed by AMISOM, and Al-Shabaab's Ramadan 2015 attacks, other armed clashes with Al-Shabaab occurred. For example, in October 2014 Jubbaland forces clashed with Al-Shabaab fighters in the outskirts of Kismayo and Puntland forces launched a renewed offensive in the Galgala Mountains in October and December 2014. As a consequence of the ongoing armed conflict with Al-Shabaab, the UN Monitoring Group reported in October 2015: 'As both the fight against Al-Shabaab and the group's grip on populations still under its control intensified, violations against civilians rose, with both sides using weapons and tactics that resulted in large civilian and military casualties.'<sup>61</sup>

Besides the fights with Al-Shabaab, other armed confrontations were reported during the reference period. For example, government troops and ASWJ clashed with each other in Guriceel in February 2015, and Somali militia and Ethiopian paramilitary forces, known as Liyu Police, clashed in the Galgaduud region in May/June 2015. Inter- and intra-clan conflicts over land and water resources were reported in Somaliland, Puntland and most other parts of Central and South Somalia.<sup>62</sup>

### 2.4. Impact on the population

Several sources interviewed by DIS in May 2015 stated that Al-Shabaab performed violent attacks in towns it does not control, mainly on persons or institutions representing the international community including AMISOM and the UN, the Somalia Federal Government (SFG) and those supporting, or perceived to be supporting, them.<sup>63</sup>

UNHCR Somalia and a humanitarian international NGO, interviewed by DIS in May 2015, stated that there was a lack of reports from areas under Al-Shabaab's control due to limited access. As such, it should be noted that the information from these areas is to some extent uncertain. There are reports of infighting, arbitrary arrests, abductions, forced recruitment, forced marriages to Al-Shabaab and accusations of espionage leading to severe punishment.<sup>64</sup>

The COI unit of the Swedish Migration Agency, Lifos, reported in April 2015 that in the areas controlled by Al-Shabaab there were generally fewer armed clashes but that 'conflict in these areas primarily evinces human rights violations, like forced recruitments, forced marriages to Al-Shabaab members and the risk of being accused of espionage'.<sup>65</sup>

Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported on the events of 2015 that:

"Somalia's long-running armed conflict continued to take a heavy toll on civilians in much of south-central Somalia. Warring parties continued to kill, wound, and forcibly displace civilians. Restrictions on hu-

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<sup>61</sup> EASO 2016, s. 25.

<sup>62</sup> EASO 2016, s. 26.

<sup>63</sup> EASO 2016, s. 26.

<sup>64</sup> EASO 2016, s. 26.

<sup>65</sup> EASO 2016, s. 26.



humanitarian access exacerbated the human rights and humanitarian crises.

Ongoing political infighting and three government reshuffles in three years, along with political maneuvering around implementation of federalism, detracted from justice and security sector reform progress. Tensions over creation of a new interim regional administration in central Somalia led to open conflict between clan militias and government forces, resulting in abuses against civilians.<sup>66</sup>

The UN Security Council reported that the security situation remained extremely volatile, particularly in South and Central Somalia. In October 2015 the UN Monitoring Group reported that the conflict with Al-Shabaab showed an increase of violations against civilians and a large number of civilian and military casualties. Also the conflict between Puntland and Somaliland over the disputed regions in Sool and Sanaag resulted in civilian casualties. According to UNHCR, in November 2015 the number of IDPs in Somalia was estimated at 1,100,000, including an estimated 369,000 in Mogadishu.<sup>67</sup>

### **Transport and food security**

The violence has an impact on travel possibilities: Somalis do travel by road, though the risks are carefully weighed against the necessity of the trip. In December 2015, one million people were in a status of humanitarian emergency and crisis and 3.9 million in food security stress. This situation was aggravated by seasonal flooding in the riverine areas (Hiraan, Lower and Middle Jubba, and Lower and Middle Shabelle), which put 145,000 people in need of food aid. Households in riverine areas were vulnerable to emergency-level food insecurity during the October-to-December Deyr rains, as more than average rainfall resulted in additional flooding while below-average rain caused poor harvests. Flooding in riverine areas prevented harvesting, hindered humanitarian access, and limited trade, resulting in limited food access and increased food prices. The below average Gu harvest in August/September 2015 put especially poor households in these areas in crisis.<sup>68</sup>

## **3. Geographical overview of the security situation and impacts of violence**

As mentioned earlier, the security situation in Somalia is still volatile. Nevertheless, differences can be distinguished among the various regions. Somaliland is considered relatively peaceful, while the situation in Puntland and certain parts of Central and South Somalia is less stable and under threat from inter- and intra-clan fighting and Al-Shabaab attacks. According to DIS, the situation in South/Central Somalia is 'fluid and unpredictable in particular regarding the security situation'.<sup>69</sup>

### **3.1. Lower Jubba**

According to a representative of an international NGO interviewed by DIS (May 2015), Kismayo is one of the most complicated towns in Somalia with regard to clan

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<sup>66</sup> HRW 2016 a).

<sup>67</sup> EASO 2016, s. 26.

<sup>68</sup> EASO 2016, s. 26.

<sup>69</sup> EASO 2016, s. 28.



composition. Due to massive displacement and population movements during the past 25 years, a complex clan composition has been created. As a result, the largest number of clan conflicts in South/Central Somalia take place in Kismaayo.<sup>70</sup>

Although improved, the security situation in Kismayo remains volatile. SNA and AMISOM continue to be targeted by Al-Shabaab attacks, often resulting in civilian casualties. As a main pattern of violence, hit-and-run and ambushes targeting AMISOM and Jubbaland forces were reported; for instance an ambush on a convoy of Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF) in November 2015 killed several KDF soldiers. There were attacks against army bases in Kismayo reported in August and November 2015 and on an army base near Afmadow in October 2015. The Interim Jubbaland Administration and AMISOM forces were targeted by landmines in Lower Jubba in May 2015. There were also targeted killings of public officials in Kismayo in June-July 2015. Airstrikes targeted Al-Shabaab bases in Buulo Guduud, Yontoy, Qaanqaan, Jamaame in February 2015 and two Al-Shabaab camps in Anoolle, Kuday in April 2015.<sup>71</sup>

Troops of the Interim Jubba administration launched several operations to improve security in Kismayo, such as in May 2015 and in August 2015, the latter allegedly resulting in civilian casualties. The military offensive along the Jubba river corridor was expected to resume from September onwards. The towns of Saaxo, Bu'aale, Jilib and Jamaame were targeted for military recovery in Middle and Lower Jubba. The offensive was expected to last until the end of the year and even early 2016. As of December 2015 no information was available in the consulted sources on the actual restart of the operation.<sup>72</sup>

Moreover, fighting occurred between Jubbaland soldiers and Somali National Army. The former troops were accused of destroying two army bases near Kismayo in October 2015.<sup>73</sup>

The main actors in the region are Jubbaland (formerly IJA) troops, while the Ras Kamboni militia of the former warlord, now Jubbaland President Ahmed Madobe, was incorporated into this force. There is an ongoing integration process of troops of the Jubbaland administration to the Somali National Army (SNA); in July 2015, 1,350 troops were officially integrated. Currently, AMISOM troops are drawn from the Kenya Defence Force and Burundi National Defence Force.<sup>74</sup>

The Ras Kamboni militia controlling Kismayo has incorporated many former Al-Shabaab fighters into its ranks, which, according to the representative of an international NGO interviewed by DIS (May 2015), weakened Al-Shabaab in Kismayo. However, there have been several attacks on Kismayo in the reporting period, showing, according to a UNDSS security analyst, that AS maintains an active, albeit covert, presence in Kismayo. Al-Shabaab remains active in the area, mainly in the rural area in the north of the region, along the regional border with Middle Jubba.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> EASO 2016, s. 31.

<sup>71</sup> EASO 2016, s. 31.

<sup>72</sup> EASO 2016, s. 31.

<sup>73</sup> EASO 2016, s. 31.

<sup>74</sup> EASO 2016, s. 31.

<sup>75</sup> EASO 2016, s. 32.



The Marehan militia, led by former warlord Barre Hiirale, is outside Kismaayo, in the Gobweyn area.<sup>76</sup>

As of September 2015, KDF forces deployed under AMISOM held control over Dhobley, Tabta, Dif, Afmadow, Badhade and Kulbiow near the border with Kenya. According to a humanitarian international NGO working in South-Central Somalia interviewed by DIS (May 2015), in Kismaayo, AMISOM and local militias have secured an area of 5 to 10 km from the town centre. Anywhere outside that area is controlled by Al-Shabaab. Another international organisation interviewed by DIS indicated that the Jubbaland administration is supported by Kenyan AMISOM troops and claims control of the town including a 12 km radius around it.<sup>77</sup>

Formal security in Kismaayo is delivered by a combination of the police (from Jubbaland Defense Forces and the military, supported by AMISOM troops. Security threats in Kismaayo come from the possible presence of Al-Shabaab, clan-based fighting, and land and family disputes. There has been a decrease in incidences of conflict and violence in Kismaayo.<sup>78</sup>

Al-Shabaab has managed to exploit clan tension in the city of Kismaayo and gain support within certain minority groups. The city is still very vulnerable to sporadic attacks by the militant group and many surrounding villages are still influenced by Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab is in complete control of Jamaame.<sup>79</sup>

As UNHCR states, the security situation in Kismaayo, although improved, remains volatile. SNA and AMISOM continue to be the target of Al-Shabaab attacks, often resulting in civilian casualties.<sup>80</sup>

In areas held by AS, mainly violence against civilians was reported, with child recruitment, forced marriage and the taking of new brides by Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab also maintained its ban on operations by most humanitarian agencies. In the town of Jamaame, held by Al-Shabaab, a man was publicly executed for insulting the prophet Muhammed in April 2015.<sup>81</sup>

Most of the roads leading to Kismaayo, the epicentre of trade in the region, frequently experience problems as Al-Shabaab extorts an illegal tax from traders and transporters of goods. Access to the villages outside the town and adjacent districts is still limited as most parts are still under the control of Al-Shabaab. In Kismaayo, curfews are imposed for a few hours when security operations are carried out. Al-Shabaab mans checkpoints on all roads out of Kismaayo, with passing trucks charged a toll of about US\$ 1,000 each, which provides a financial lifeline and source of revenue for Al-Shabaab. For instance, there are 5 checkpoints between Kismaayo and Dhobley, 2 of them are manned by Al-Shabaab, while 3 are operated by the SNAF. At Al-Shabaab's checkpoints its fighters conduct searches.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> EASO 2016, s. 32.

<sup>77</sup> EASO 2016, s. 32.

<sup>78</sup> EASO 2016, s. 32.

<sup>79</sup> EASO 2016, s. 32.

<sup>80</sup> EASO 2016, s. 33.

<sup>81</sup> EASO 2016, s. 33.

<sup>82</sup> EASO 2016, s. 33.





The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), a non-profit initiative of a consortium of three international NGOs, in its Global emergency overview, indicated that the current flooding in Lower Jubba was likely to hinder food security, especially for poor households having less resources to survive on. According to WFP information from December 2015, more than 28,000 people affected by the flooding in Middle Shabelle, Hiiraan and Lower Jubba have received emergency relief.<sup>83</sup>

### 3.2. Gedo

In July 2015, Al-Shabaab activity intensified following sustained pressure by AMISOM troops and in particular Ethiopian troops in Bay and Bakool. According to the KDF spokesman, this pressure forced Al-Shabaab to flee to the west into Gedo and to the south towards Lower Shabelle. Advancing to Baardheere, the troops took Tarako in July 2015, an important supply route for Al-Shabaab. On 23 July the SNAF/AMISOM troops took over Baardheere although, according to reports, Al-Shabaab militants fled the towns after offering little resistance.<sup>84</sup>

Pro-government forces clashed with Al-Shabaab in a village near Garbahaarey in August 2015 when government forces launched a heavy attack that killed Al-Shabaab militants and gained control over the village. Another fierce battle between government forces and Al-Shabaab was reported at the end of August in an area between Garbahaarey and Belet Xaawo near the Somalia - Kenya border, with 43 casualties. One hundred heavily-armed Al-Shabaab gunmen launched an ambush attack on Kenyan mobile patrol-surveillance and reconnaissance (MPSRs) units in the Faafax Dhuun area in September 2015. Al-Shabaab militants attacked an army base at the outskirts of Baardheere on 6 October 2015. Further clashes arose following Al-Shabaab presence in various localities around Garbahaarey later in October.<sup>85</sup>

A senior Al-Shabaab member, Zakariya Ismail Hersi, surrendered in December 2014 in Ceel Waaq. On 12 March 2015, a US drone strike killed Adan Garaar, a top official in al-Shabaab's security service, the Amniyat, near Baardheere. Senior Al-Shabaab commanders Ismail Jamhad and Jama Dere and several other militants were reportedly killed mid-July 2015 in a US drone strike near Baardheere.<sup>86</sup>

There are political tensions in Garbahaarey between the Jubbaland -appointed governor of Gedo region and the deposed former governor who was allied to the federal government. In September 2015, media reported on military movements and fighting in the outskirts of Garbaharey town between the forces of Jubbaland Administration and local fighters loyal to the former Governor of Gedo.<sup>87</sup>

In Gedo, clan battles are not a new problem, as there are numerous clan militias pursuing their own interests, according to the Swedish fact-finding mission (April 2015). Clan militias are loyal to those who help them; some are loyal to the Jubbaland administration, others to SFG in Mogadishu, some to Al-Shabaab, although

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<sup>83</sup> EASO 2016, s. 33.

<sup>84</sup> EASO 2016, s.35

<sup>85</sup> EASO 2016, s.35.

<sup>86</sup> EASO 2016, s.35.

<sup>87</sup> EASO 2016, s.36.



loyalty to Al-Shabaab diminished substantially. In October 2015, renewed clan tensions were reported with an ensuing battle between two clan militias in Belet Hawa. There is no further information on the clans involved, nor on the kind of conflict.<sup>88</sup>

In the Gedo region, multiple actors are active. Besides the Somali National Army, supported by troops of ENDF and KDF deployed within AMISOM, there are ENDF troops outside the AMISOM contingent. Moreover, the militia previously known as the Ras Kamboni militia of the former warlord, now Jubbaland President Ahmed Madobe, is being integrated into Jubbaland Security Forces (JSF). There are remnants of the ASWJ in Gedo, concentrated in the area around Luuq. There is also a Marehan militia in Gedo, along the border to Ethiopia and Kenya. Al-Shabaab is present in rural parts in the south-east of the region around Baardheere and Buurdhuubo. There are also cells of Al-Shabaab south of Belet Xaawo.<sup>89</sup>

According to UNHCR Somalia, interviewed by DIS (May 2015):

‘In 2011 allied forces (SNA, AMISOM, Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF)) have taken back control of most major towns in the region’s districts from Al-Shabaab - except for Bardheere. As a result, the region has been able to reestablish some district-level governments. Despite the reemergence of these authorities, Al-Shabaab is still able to operate and execute attacks in towns where it has lost control like Belet Hawa and has a significant presence in rural areas.

Luuq District is enjoying a relatively secure environment as a result of AMISOM/SNAF presence, particularly in close proximity to Luuq town. Nevertheless, Al-Shabaab remains a persistent threat in remote areas of the district where AMISOM and government troops are less present’.<sup>90</sup>

A humanitarian international NGO working in South-Central Somalia, interviewed by the same DIS mission added:

‘Al-Shabaab has easy access immediately outside of town and controls the surrounding villages. AMISOM is able to detect Al-Shabaab and able to confront them. Doolow, near the Kenyan border is considered very safe and is under AMISOM control. AMISOM only controls maybe 2 km around Doolow town. Beyond that AMISOM has no control or access’.<sup>91</sup>

An AMISOM press release reported: ‘Bardheere was liberated during the Operation Jubba Corridor in July 2015 with some other villages of Gedo region such as Tarka, Jungal, Duraned, Eel-elaan, Habakhaluul, Meyon and Magalay’. In Baardheere, the zones of ENDF and KDF are fluid and it is one of a few towns that have doubled

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<sup>88</sup> EASO 2016, s.36.

<sup>89</sup> EASO 2016, s.36.

<sup>90</sup> EASO 2016, s.36.

<sup>91</sup> EASO 2016, s.36.



their AMISOM presence. ENDF is present in the town, while the KDF garrison is outside of the town.<sup>92</sup>

Garbahaarey is officially in the area of influence of AMISOM/ENDF. However, as of October 2015, the presence of Al-Shabaab was reported in the outskirts of the town.<sup>93</sup>

Although most fighting affected armed actors only, it is possible that civilians were among the casualties as well. Kenyan troops were accused of launching airstrikes against residential areas, targeting innocent civilians. In April 2015, Kenyan airstrikes launched against two Al-Shabaab bases in Gedo wounded three civilians and destroyed livestock and wells in an area without an Al-Shabaab presence. In July 2015, residents in Baardheere fled the city in search of safety in expectation of an offensive following the advance of troops from Ethiopia.

According to UNHCR Somalia, interviewed by DIS (May 2015),

'There is a relative freedom of movement inside Luuq town and in its surroundings for ordinary Somali citizens (...) Vehicle movement along main roads is considered to be more dangerous as a result of Al-Shabaab threats. For example the road leading to Garbahaarey, the roads around Shaatalow village, as well as the main road leading to Mogadishu and Bay/Bakool regions are all considered to have considerable amount of risk due to Al-Shabaab presence'.<sup>94</sup>

A security analysis expert, interviewed in November 2015 by BFA Staatendokumentation, explained that Luuq was a very important supply route for the ENDF. A humanitarian international NGO working in South-Central Somalia, interviewed by DIS (May 2015) said that 'the road between Doolow and Luuq is relatively safe'. There were reports on ambushes on AMISOM/SNAF convoys and explosions of landmines along roads.<sup>95</sup>

UN OCHA, in its February 2015 Bulletin, noted that civilian movements, including those for commercial and humanitarian goods, in southern Somalia remain curtailed and this restricted the flow of food and other essential supplies, particularly along the road from Mogadishu via Baidoa to Doolow.

UN assessment teams in Baardheere noted in mid-August 2015 that the increased insecurity during the recent AMISOM/SNA offensive had affected livelihood in every town and that people lacked access to food, safe drinking water and basic services.<sup>96</sup>

### 3.3. Bay

Al-Shabaab remained active in Bay, targeting pro-government forces and regional administration. On 5 December 2014, in Baidoa, attacks targeted a crowd in front of the Dahabshiil money transfer office. After the detonation of a personnel-borne ex-

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<sup>92</sup> EASO 2016, s.36.

<sup>93</sup> EASO 2016, s.36.

<sup>94</sup> EASO 2016, s.37.

<sup>95</sup> EASO 2016, s.37.

<sup>96</sup> EASO 2016, s.37.



plosive, a vehicle parked close to the scene exploded, killing and injuring people who had gathered to assist victims of the first blast. Nineteen people were killed and 37 injured. In January and February 2015, three Muslim clerics who were critical of Al-Shabaab were assassinated in Baidoa. On 12 March 2015, the residence of the President of the Interim South-West Administration in Baidoa was attacked, resulting in the death of three attackers and one AMISOM soldier.<sup>97</sup>

On 11 June 2015, an AMISOM convoy was ambushed by a large number of Al-Shabaab fighters at Jama'a village. A reinforcement of AMISOM troops to Jamaame was ambushed twice by Al-Shabaab on 12 June. On 26 June 2015, more than 100 Al-Shabaab fighters stormed an AMISOM base manned by Burundian troops in Leego, in the district of Buur Hakaba, after detonating a vehicle-borne bomb, resulting in a significant number of AMISOM casualties; several soldiers on the mission were reported as missing in action. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility, citing its Abu Zubeyr Battalion, a new military unit named after the late Al-Shabaab leader. Further attacks on military bases of government forces were carried out by Al-Shabaab in August 2015 in localities outside Baidoa.<sup>98</sup>

Operations against Al-Shabaab were conducted in Bardale in May 2015, in recently liberated Diinsoor in August following attacks by Al-Shabaab earlier in the month, and in Diinsoor again in September 2015. In September, AMISOM fighter jets launched air strikes against Al-Shabaab training bases in Labatan-Jirow area, 20 km from Baidoa town. Further air strikes targeted localities in the Bay region in the beginning of October. As reported in October 2015, Al-Shabaab was present in two places near Diinsoor and pro-government forces/ISWA forces attacked both areas. A recent Al-Shabaab attack was reported at the end of November in Bardale when it ambushed a convoy of Somali government troops. However, the attack was repulsed.<sup>99</sup>

In several areas of Bay region, apart from SNA presence, Ethiopian troops are deployed within AMISOM. Al-Shabaab remained present in rural areas. The Ethiopian special force called Liyu police is also active. Along the border with Ethiopia, government-allied militias are active. The ISWA has its own troops, which carried out operations in, for example, Diinsoor, Bay region.<sup>100</sup>

Tensions were raised by proponents of two different federalism proposals, the so-called three-regions state (SW3) and six-regions state (SW6), with demonstrations taking place in Baidoa in November 2014.<sup>101</sup>

According to several sources interviewed by DIS (May 2015), AMISOM/SNAF had a presence in Baidoa. During Operation Jubba Corridor, which started on 19 July 2015, Ufurow, Eesow, Hasanow-Mumin, Lidaale, Makoon, Dhargo and Manaas were liberated. In a major success, Somalia troops together with AMISOM forces took over Diinsoor town in the Bay region on 24 July 2015. Diinsoor had served as

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<sup>97</sup> EASO 2016, s. 39.

<sup>98</sup> EASO 2016, s. 39.

<sup>99</sup> EASO 2016, s. 39.

<sup>100</sup> EASO 2016, s. 39.

<sup>101</sup> EASO 2016, s. 39.



a sanctuary for Al-Shabaab's top leadership cadre since the fall of Baraawe in October 2014.<sup>102</sup>

AMISOM/ENDF troops are present in Baidoa, Diinsoor and Buur Hakaba, Qansax Dheere and Berdaale. After the large-scale June 2015 attack, the AMISOM outpost in Leego is now manned by Ugandan troops. According to an international organisation, interviewed by DIS (May 2015):

'In Baidoa (Bay) plus its surroundings the situation can be regarded as relatively safe. However, throughout Baidoa district, even close to Baidoa, Al-Shabaab still has a presence and influence in several areas ("pockets") where it is able to force the local population to pay taxes. In these pockets of influence, Al-Shabaab will disappear as soon as AMISOM forces come forward, but will reappear as soon as the AMISOM forces have left the area'.<sup>103</sup>

According to UNHCR Somalia interviewed by DIS (May 2015):

'(...) security still remains unpredictable and SNAF and AMISOM, in particular, continue to be the target of Al-Shabaab attacks, resulting often in civilian casualties. However, a continued focus by AMISOM/SNAF on stabilizing Baidoa has resulted in a steady, though not broad, decline in incidents. Al-Shabaab, while no longer in control of any of Baidoa's administrative zones, retains the capability to carry out asymmetric warfare through guerrilla-style improvised explosive device and vehicle-borne IED attacks, as well as targeted assassinations against prominent individuals. SNA forces and Al-Shabaab continue to engage in recurrent battles, armed confrontations and violent attacks over territory within the immediate outskirts of the city, with certain villages changing hands intermittently in response to retreats and regroupings from both sides'.<sup>104</sup>

Operation Jubba Corridor resulted in the displacement of more than 40,000 people in Bakool, Bay, Galgaduud, Gedo, Hiiraan and Lower Shabelle. Hundreds of IDPs fled their homes in fear of new military offensives against Al-Shabaab militants in Diinsoor town in July 2015. In October 2015 hundreds of residents became internally displaced in Baidoa and its surroundings as a result of a military operation against Al-Shabaab.<sup>105</sup>

Allegations of killing, sexual and gender-based violence and other violations against civilians in Bay and Bakool by the Ethiopian Liyu police have been recorded by the Monitoring Group.<sup>106</sup>

Residents in Diinsoor were reported to be in dire humanitarian need as for many years only limited humanitarian assistance had been provided due to insecurity. Assessments indicated that increased insecurity during the recent AMISOM-SNA

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<sup>102</sup> EASO 2016, s. 39.

<sup>103</sup> EASO 2016, s. 40.

<sup>104</sup> EASO 2016, s. 40.

<sup>105</sup> EASO 2016, s. 40.

<sup>106</sup> EASO 2016, s. 40.



offensive influenced livelihoods in towns and affected access to food, safe drinking water and basic services. As reported in April 2015, the insurgents' control of the major supply roads to Bay (Qansax Dheere) has continued.<sup>107</sup>

According to UNHCR Somalia, interviewed by DIS (May 2015):

'The main roads leading to Mogadishu and Bay/Bakool regions are all considered to have considerable amount of risk due to Al-Shabaab presence. (...) As the epicentre of trade in the region, most of the roads leading to Baidoa experience frequent problems as Al-Shabaab forces illegally tax traders and transporters of goods. AMISOM and SNA forces have put up security blockades around residential parts of the district limiting the freedom of movement for citizens. Curfews are also commonly imposed at night. Many hazards exist along the key supply routes in and out of the city'.<sup>108</sup>

An international organisation working in South-Central Somalia, also interviewed by DIS in May 2015, noted:

'[The] Road between Mogadishu and Baidoa is not open to humanitarian access. (...) Al-Shabaab forces along the road still carry out hit and run attacks as well as multiple unauthorized checkpoints manned by a range of armed actors. Baidoa cannot be reached by road for humanitarian purposes because UN convoys are being targeted by Al-Shabaab [in Mogadishu]. Commercial traffic might be possible to some extent, but it is very risky, lengthy and costly. The road connecting Baidoa and Doolow is considered by sources as too dangerous'.<sup>109</sup>

### 3.4. Bakool

Al-Shabaab remained active in Bakool, targeting pro-government forces and regional administration. Attacks on military bases of government forces were carried out by Al-Shabaab in August 2015 in localities outside Wajid.<sup>110</sup>

Air strikes against Al-Shabaab were targeted at localities in the Bay and Bakool regions in the beginning of October.<sup>111</sup>

Ethiopian troops, apart from SNA presence, are deployed within the AMISOM in several areas of Bakool region. Al-Shabaab remained present in rural areas. In Bakool region, several garrisons of ENDF operate apart from the AMISOM police. The Ethiopian special force (Liyu police) is also active. Along the border with Ethiopia, government-allied militias are active. The ISWA has its own troops, which carried out operations in, for example, Diinsoor, Bay region.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> EASO 2016, s. 40.

<sup>108</sup> EASO 2016, s. 41.

<sup>109</sup> EASO 2016, s. 41.

<sup>110</sup> EASO 2016, s. 42.

<sup>111</sup> EASO 2016, s. 42.

<sup>112</sup> EASO 2016, s. 42.



Security tensions have been exacerbated by proponents of two different federalism proposals, the so-called three-regions state (SW3) and six-regions state (SW6).<sup>113</sup>

According to several sources interviewed by DIS (May 2015), AMISOM/SNAF was present in the town of Xudur.<sup>114</sup>

During Operation Jubba Corridor, which started on 19 July 2015, Ufurow, Eesow, Hasanow-Mumin, Lidaale, Makoon, Dhargo and Manaas were liberated in the Bay region.<sup>115</sup>

In Bakool, only five AMISOM/ENDF garrisons are known: Yeed, Ceel Barde, Rab Dhuure, Waajid and Xudur. However, there are several more ENDF garrisons operating outside the AMISOM contingent and the Liyu police is stationed in several villages. Liyu is known to man the garrison in Tayeeglow and bigger numbers of Liyu are concentrated in Xudur from where they stage search operations in rural areas. Al-Shabaab was repelled from the Ethiopian border area. This zone is described by a security analysis expert, interviewed by BFA Staattendokumentation in November 2015, as being under the control of ENDF, Liyu police and allied (clan) militias. Liyu police are keeping the zone free of Al-Shabaab influence. The Liyu are even based in small villages, patrolling the surroundings, clearing Al-Shabaab remnants and manning checkpoints along the roads. They do this in cooperation with local clan militias.<sup>116</sup>

Al-Shabaab lost many territories in Bakool region to Somali government troops supported by AMISOM but is still able to launch hit-and-run attacks in the region.<sup>117</sup>

An international organisation, interviewed by DIS (May 2015), noted that Xudur was supposed to have been cleared of Al-Shabaab two years ago but in 2014 the insurgent group started attacking AMISOM/SNAF in the town and the security situation was assessed as unstable. In Xudur district, Al-Shabaab conducted attacks in September and November 2015.<sup>118</sup>

Operation Jubba Corridor resulted in the displacement of more than 40,000 people in Bakool, Bay, Galgaduud, Gedo, Hiiraan and Lower Shabelle.<sup>119</sup>

In July 2015, 18 civilians were reportedly killed during operations by the ENDF and the SNA in Bakool region. Allegations of killing, sexual and gender-based violence and other violations against civilians in Bay and Bakool by the Ethiopian Liyu police have been recorded by the Monitoring Group.<sup>120</sup>

Assessments indicated that increased insecurity during the recent AMISOM/SNA offensive influenced livelihoods in towns and affected access to food, safe drinking water, and basic services. Reports from April 2015 noted that the insurgents' control of the major supply roads to Bakool (Xudur and Waajid) had continued. Al-Shabaab enforced economic blockades on towns and key access routes in Bakool,

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<sup>113</sup> EASO 2016, s. 42.

<sup>114</sup> EASO 2016, s. 42.

<sup>115</sup> EASO 2016, s. 42.

<sup>116</sup> EASO 2016, s. 42.

<sup>117</sup> EASO 2016, s. 42.

<sup>118</sup> EASO 2016, s. 43.

<sup>119</sup> EASO 2016, s. 43.

<sup>120</sup> EASO 2016, s. 43.



resulting in the killing of civilians and livestock and the burning of vehicles. The blockade against Xudur was also strictly enforced, although by July 2015 a UN staff member, interviewed by the UN Monitoring Group, reported an improved range and volume of food in the markets.<sup>121</sup>

An international organisation working in South - Central Somalia, interviewed by DIS (May 2015) noted:

'The route to Xudur from Ceel Barde is open, although there are checkpoints; they are manned by people who are aligned to the government.'<sup>122</sup>

In November 2015 Somali troops, with the support of African Union soldiers, launched an operation aimed at opening the main highways in Bakool region blocked by Al-Shabaab. According to the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), roadblocks in Xudur have eased somewhat, facilitating the movement of goods to the town. However, the surrounding areas continue to be affected by violent clashes and cannot be accessed by humanitarian organisations.<sup>123</sup>

### 3.5. Middle Jubba

In November 2015, clashes between two Al-Shabaab factions (pro-Al-Qaeda militants versus IS sympathisers) occurred in Raamo, Saakow district, leaving 9 dead.<sup>124</sup>

Air strikes against Al-Shabaab targets were reported in Middle Jubba. Kenyan fighter jets struck Al-Shabaab bases near Jilib in October 2014. A US airstrike near Saakow killed a top Al-Shabaab leader Abdishakur, also known as Tahliil, on 29 December 2014.<sup>125</sup>

Apart from clashes with Al-Shabaab, clan conflicts also led to violence. According to the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea:

'inter-clan conflict between Dhulbahante (Harti/Darod), Awliahan (Ogaden/Darod) and Sheikhal (Hawiye) clans over pasture lands broke out early in 2015. Al-Shabaab attempts to reconcile the competing groups in Bu'aale were ultimately unsuccessful, suggesting its weakening grip on inter-communal relations in the area ahead of the "Jubba Corridor" offensive led by AMISOM and allied anti-Al-Shabaab forces'.<sup>126</sup>

The main actor within the region is Al-Shabaab which has control over the area. According to AMISOM, Kenyan Defense Forces deployed under AMISOM operate

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<sup>121</sup> EASO 2016, s. 43.

<sup>122</sup> EASO 2016, s. 43.

<sup>123</sup> EASO 2016, s. 43.

<sup>124</sup> EASO 2016, s. 44.

<sup>125</sup> EASO 2016, s. 45.

<sup>126</sup> EASO 2016, s. 45.





in the area, supported by Jubbaland administration forces. As mentioned above, local clans were also involved in violent conflicts over land.<sup>127</sup>

Sources interviewed by DIS (May 2015) agreed that 'Middle Jubba region is Al-Shabaab's main remaining stronghold and there is no government control'. The regional capital Bu'aale and district towns Saakow and Jilib are under the control of Al-Shabaab. After Operation Jubba Corridor, AMISOM acknowledged that some of the Al-Shabaab leadership have fled and would most likely be in or around the towns of Jilib, Bu'aale and Saakow.<sup>128</sup>

Middle Jubba falls nominally under the Jubbaland administration, although in practice this administration does not have any control in the region. In October 2015, forces of Jubbaland administration together with their AMISOM counterparts were reportedly making preparations for an offensive against Al-Shabaab in Middle Jubba.<sup>129</sup>

Between January and October 2015, violence against civilians was reported in the main localities of Bu'aale, Jilib and Saakow, such as abductions, executions because of accusations of spying, and forced recruitment. For instance in June 2015 Al-Shabaab publicly executed three people in Saakow for spying for the CIA. The independent expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Bahame Tom Nyanduga, reported in September 2015:

'In areas under its control, Al-Shabaab maintained its ban against operations by most humanitarian agencies. This denial of access to vulnerable populations along with the threats and attacks levelled against them by Al-Shabaab has made it virtually impossible for humanitarian organisations to reach vulnerable populations and exacerbates an already dire humanitarian situation'.<sup>130</sup>

According to the Monitoring Group, a range of violations in Al-Shabaab-held areas including in Middle and Lower Jubba are taking place, such as child recruitment, forced marriage and the Dumaashhi practice by Al-Shabaab fighters. It especially mentioned ethnic minorities in the region as victims:

'Members of the Bantu/Wagosha farming community who inhabit the riverine villages and key towns have become increasingly subject to systematic violence by Al-Shabaab, including killing, maiming, torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of civilians, and sexual and gender-based violence'.<sup>131</sup>

Several sources interviewed by DIS (May 2015) stated: 'Travelling between Al-Shabaab controlled areas and areas with AMISOM/SNAF presence is considered to be extremely dangerous and challenging due to the many Al-Shabaab check-

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<sup>127</sup> EASO 2016, s. 45.

<sup>128</sup> EASO 2016, s. 45.

<sup>129</sup> EASO 2016, s. 45.

<sup>130</sup> EASO 2016, s. 45.

<sup>131</sup> EASO 2016, s. 46.



points'. UNHCR Somalia added: 'At these checkpoints Al-Shabaab will conduct searches'.<sup>132</sup>

According to some sources interviewed by DIS (May 2015), 'people do travel from Al-Shabaab controlled areas to areas with AMISOM/SNAF presence. However, it depends on the individual's relationship with Al-Shabaab and how those individuals weigh the risks involved against the purpose of the trip'.<sup>133</sup>

A humanitarian international NGO working in S/C Somalia explained:

'any person leaving Al-Shabaab controlled areas would be questioned about the purpose, destination and duration of their travel. (...) Likewise, every time people return to an Al-Shabaab controlled area they risk being accused of spying and collaborating with the government which could lead to execution, severe beatings and detention'.<sup>134</sup>

A news article from June 2015 reported that widespread food shortage in farming areas in the Jubba regions led to high levels of malnutrition among children. In October it was reported from the Middle Jubba region that the river Jubba had broken its banks and flooded the surrounding villages in the riverine areas. This heavy flooding put 145,000 people in South Somalia in need of food aid.<sup>135</sup>

### 3.6. Lower Shabelle

Al-Shabaab is so active in launching attacks in Lower Shabelle that Horseed Media called the region a 'hotbed of Al-Shabaab activity'. It carried out attacks in public places such as the khat market in Janaale in April 2015 and the market in Afgooye in October 2015, resulting in casualties among soldiers but also civilians. In June 2015, militants attacked a police station in Afgooye and later the same month the local police station and the regional administration's offices in Qoryooley.<sup>136</sup>

Targeted assassinations of public figures have been reported, e.g. in August 2015 attackers shot and killed the District Commissioner in Janaale in an overnight raid on his residence. Interim South-West State President Sharif Hassan survived an assassination attempt when his convoy hit a landmine in Lower Shabelle on 18 May 2015.<sup>137</sup>

In May 2015, militants from Al-Shabaab attacked and briefly captured two towns, Mubarak and Awdhegle, resulting in clashes with government troops that left at least 18 dead. On 24 May militants captured the major town Janaale in Lower Shabelle after Somali forces vacated positions. Al-Shabaab launched a large-scale attack on the AMISOM base in Janaale on 1 September 2015. Later that month it took control over various localities in Lower Shabelle (the villages El Salindi and Kuntuwa). Al-Shabaab also claimed to be in control of Buulo Mareer.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> EASO 2016, s. 46.

<sup>133</sup> EASO 2016, s. 46.

<sup>134</sup> EASO 2016, s. 46.

<sup>135</sup> EASO 2016, s. 46.

<sup>136</sup> EASO 2016, s. 48.

<sup>137</sup> EASO 2016, s. 48.

<sup>138</sup> EASO 2016, s. 48.



On 18 September 2015, Al-Shabaab fighters attacked an army base in Yaqbari-weyne and held it for a short period, allegedly killing 13 Somali soldiers. The army later recaptured the base. At the end of November Al-Shabaab attacked a military base in the town of Qoryooley manned by SNA; government sources said they repelled the attack and inflicted heavy losses on Al-Shabaab fighters.<sup>139</sup>

The leader of Al-Shabaab, Ahmed Abdi Godane, was killed on 1 September 2014 by a US drone strike in Sablaale district. Air strikes on Al-Shabaab bases Torato and Ambereso were conducted in March 2015. Another drone strike on 21 November 2015 hit an Al-Shabaab base and reportedly killed at least 10 Al-Shabaab members near Balad Amin, Wanla Weyne district.<sup>140</sup>

Besides fighting against Al-Shabaab, clan clashes over ownership of land in Merka were reported in August and over land-grazing rights in Afgooye district in October 2015.<sup>141</sup>

AMISOM and SNAF are actively fighting Al-Shabaab in the area.<sup>142</sup>

Clans are important elements of conflict in Lower Shabelle as well, as clan militias pursuing their own interests resort to violent acts, thus increasing the complexity of the security situation of the area. As an example, there is ongoing conflict between militias of Hawiye (Habr Gedir, Hawadle and Murosade) and the Bantu militia Sa-laax. In 2014, fighting involved militia of the Biyomaal (Dir) and Habar Gedir (Hawiye) and resulted in a reconciliation agreement in Afgooye in January 2015. Several militias are reportedly allied with Al-Shabaab, e.g. Biyomaal and Tunni. However, militia alliances are built upon interests and can be dissolved very fast, as the Austrian Staatendokumentation explained in its security analysis (November 2015). The towns Merka and Afgooye are particularly affected by clan conflict.<sup>143</sup>

AMISOM (Uganda People's Defence Force contingent) along with SNAF is present in the area. These troops operate in the towns of Afgooye, Baraawe, Merka, Qoryooley, Wanla Weyne and Kurtun Warey. They have a presence along supply roads, while bigger outposts are located in Bali Doogle near Wanla Weyne and Shalambood near Merka.<sup>144</sup>

According to a security analysis expert, Al-Shabaab remains active in the area as there is still a significant number of Al-Shabaab sympathisers.<sup>145</sup>

As of May 2015 AMISOM/SNAF had a presence in Qoryooley and Baraawe. Qoryooley was liberated in 22 March 2014 and Baraawe on 6 October 2014. An International organisation, interviewed by DIS (May 2015), explained:

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<sup>139</sup> EASO 2016, s. 48.

<sup>140</sup> EASO 2016, s. 48.

<sup>141</sup> EASO 2016, s. 48.

<sup>142</sup> EASO 2016, s. 48.

<sup>143</sup> EASO 2016, s. 48 - s. 49.

<sup>144</sup> EASO 2016, s. 49.

<sup>145</sup> EASO 2016, s. 49.



'In Baraawe Al-Shabaab has successfully blended in with the local communities (...). Al-Shabaab here is seen as beaten, but it still maintains a military presence which can be called up. Still, this is usually not done. (...) In Lower Shabelle Al-Shabaab has melted back into the civilian communities but maintains a hidden presence all over the region'.<sup>146</sup>

Al-Shabaab remains in control of Sablaale town and the rural areas north and west of the Lower Shabelle region.<sup>147</sup>

As cited by OCHA, the Lower Shabelle region was among the areas most affected by conflict between May-September 2015. Civilian casualties were reported as AMISOM intensified operations in Lower Shabelle in July 2015. In his September 2015 Report to the UN Security Council, the independent expert Bahame Tom Nyanduga noted that, in July 2015, 22 civilians were reportedly killed by AMISOM in two separate incidents in Merka. On 21 July 2015, 15 civilians, including women and children, were reportedly killed and five others injured. On 31 July 2015, seven civilians were killed in Merka.<sup>148</sup>

Multiple roadblocks had been set up along the main road connecting towns in Lower Shabelle, manned by armed men collecting money from vehicles. There were reports of robbery and rape on the road between Afgooye and Mogadishu and Afgooye and Mareerey. The Biyomaal militia is manning checkpoints in the area between K60 and Merka. The Somali security forces carried out several operations to remove roadblocks along the road.<sup>149</sup>

Lower Shabelle was hit by heavy rains during Deyr in 2015; heavy flooding was reported in Afgooye district and in Janaale, Bulo - Mareer and Shalambood, Marka district. Transportation along the main roads has been hampered. The Afgooye - Awdhegale road, as well as the road between Mashane and Waagle in Marka district, has been affected. The floods are reportedly affecting food security in the region.<sup>150</sup>

### 3.7. Benadir - Mogadishu

Some sources reported that the security situation in the capital Mogadishu was improving and it was unlikely that Al-Shabaab would retake the capital. According to an international organisation, interviewed by DIS in May 2015, 'in Mogadishu there is a presence of AMISOM, SNAF, the police and NISA. The town is generally secure, yet there still is a constant threat from AlShabaab'. Improvement was already reflected in a more optimistic perception of safety by Mogadishu residents by the Heritage Institute for Policy Studies in September 2014.<sup>151</sup>

In October 2015 the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior published a security analysis for Somalia, and Mogadishu in particular. The number of incidents showed

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<sup>146</sup> EASO 2016, s. 49.

<sup>147</sup> EASO 2016, s. 49.

<sup>148</sup> EASO 2016, s. 49.

<sup>149</sup> EASO 2016, s. 49.

<sup>150</sup> EASO 2016, s. 50.

<sup>151</sup> EASO 2016, s. 29.



a downward trend in Mogadishu during the reference period. However, there were still attacks on a weekly basis.<sup>152</sup>

The security situation is more volatile in Mogadishu than in other cities. There are more frequent attacks which take place every week in larger or smaller size. In addition, the capital experiences more heavy and complex attacks than other areas. This concerns, for example, major suicide attacks but also car bombs and assassinations.<sup>153</sup>

According to UNHCR in Somalia, interviewed by DIS in May 2015, 'a high number of security incidents continue to take place in Mogadishu, including targeted killings of journalists, judiciary, government officials and others. (...) civilians are injured and killed every week in targeted attacks by gunmen, or attacks involving IEDs and grenades'. Some other sources interviewed by DIS in May 2015 stated that 'Al-Shabaab currently seems to aim for spectacular attacks against high value targets, such as AMISOM, the government and the UN'.<sup>154</sup>

Overall, the number of incidents in Mogadishu – especially bomb attacks – is decreasing, but is still high. According to a security analysis expert, interviewed by BFA Staatendokumentation (November 2015), Al-Shabaab seems to avoid collateral damage in order to improve its own reputation. UNHCR in Somalia, interviewed by DIS (May 2015), explained that 'Al-Shabaab wants headlines and therefore carries out spectacular attacks against high profile targets'. Al-Shabaab frequently targets hotels as prominent places where officials meet, e.g. a suicide attack outside the SYL Hotel in Mogadishu, hosting a meeting of Turkish officials on 22 January 2015 just before the visit of the Turkish President. A double attack on 22 February 2015 hit the Central Hotel in Mogadishu and the hotel mosque, killing 20 people including senior officials, an MP and Mogadishu's deputy mayor.<sup>155</sup>

This trend continued throughout 2015. On 27 March, Al-Shabaab fighters stormed the Maka al-Mukarama Hotel after a suicide car bomb explosion; the attackers held hostages during a 17-hour siege before the Somali national security forces regained control of the location. At least 14 people were killed, including Yusuf Mohamed Ismail, the Somali Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office at Geneva.<sup>156</sup>

On 10 July 2015, 11 civilians were reportedly killed and at least 20 injured in two consecutive complex attacks at two hotels. On 26 July 2015, a truck laden with explosives detonated outside the Jazeera Palace Hotel, killing 15 people, including one member of the Chinese diplomatic mission staying at the hotel. The blast caused significant damage to the hotel and nearby buildings, including United Nations compounds on Airport Road. The last large-scale attack in 2015 took place on 1 November at the Sahafi hotel, killing at least 15 people, including at least one MP and the general who led the 2011 offensive that drove Al-Shabaab out of Mogadishu. A website associated with Al-Shabaab said the group was responsible for the attack, which was allegedly carried out early in the morning to avoid civilian casualties. This seems to imply a change in strategy of Al-Shabaab, according to

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<sup>152</sup> EASO 2016, s. 29.

<sup>153</sup> EASO 2016, s. 51.

<sup>154</sup> EASO 2016, s. 51.

<sup>155</sup> EASO 2016, s. 51.

<sup>156</sup> EASO 2016, s. 51.



BBC journalist Mary Harper. Previously, attacks in Mogadishu have been carried out during the day and evening, killing civilians who happened to be in the targeted area.<sup>157</sup>

Large-scale casualties are caused by targeting popular public places such as bomb attacks on restaurants and hotels. A car bomb attack on a popular restaurant frequented by politicians on 21 April 2015 killed at least 10. Al-Shabaab allegedly targeted officials from government ministries and the presidential palace who used to dine at the restaurant. A popular café was attacked on 12 October 2014 with at least 10 killed and 15 injured.<sup>158</sup>

Among other security incidents are attacks on governmental premises, such as the 21 September 2015 attack on government convoys leaving Mogadishu's presidential palace Villa Somalia, killing 11 and injuring 23, and the 14 April 2015 attack on the Ministry of Education that left at least 17 dead including seven attackers.<sup>159</sup>

Al-Shabaab attacked a high security prison on 31 August 2014, killing 12. It also infiltrated the main AMISOM base Halaane on the edge of the Mogadishu international airport compound on 25 December 2014, killing three AMISOM soldiers and a civilian contractor. On 21 June 2015 a large blast and gunfire hit a training compound near the headquarters of the National Intelligence and Security in Mogadishu; however, Somali authorities claimed to have foiled the attack without any government casualties.<sup>160</sup>

Throughout the reporting period, Al-Shabaab engaged in targeted assassinations of public figures in Mogadishu: a security official was killed by AS in September 2014, a senior military officer was assassinated on 23 April 2015, a former Prime Minister, two city council officials and senior prison officials were assassinated on 25-26 April 2015, a local government official was killed on 6 May 2015, and two police officers were killed on 28 November 2015. At least 10 Members of Parliament have been killed within a year. On 7 November 2015, an MP was shot dead by Al-Shabaab insurgents in Mogadishu. On 3 December 2015 a female journalist was targeted and killed by a bomb planted in her car. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack. A female employee of UNHCR and her driver were killed in a drive-by shooting on 14 December 2015. Another drive-by shooting was carried out on 19 December 2015 allegedly targeting a government official. Subsequently a car loaded with explosives was detonated on a crowded shopping street.<sup>161</sup>

In addition to the conflict between Al-Shabaab and SFG, a number of clans in Mogadishu are allegedly capable of carrying out larger attacks, although their actual involvement often remains unclear. An international organisation working in South-Central Somalia, interviewed by DIS in May 2015, commented on this:

'There may be a tendency to blame all sorts of violent incidents on Al-Shabaab. Nevertheless, many violent incidents in S/C Somalia are also related to clan conflicts or personal scores resulting from political

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<sup>157</sup> EASO 2016, s. 51 - s. 52.

<sup>158</sup> EASO 2016, s. 52.

<sup>159</sup> EASO 2016, s. 52.

<sup>160</sup> EASO 2016, s. 52.

<sup>161</sup> EASO 2016, s. 52.



rivalries, quarrels between warlords, land and criminal disputes. (...) In Mogadishu it could even be small local businesses that are in a fierce competition with each other that could lead to a murder. The business people involved would not oppose having that murder being pinned on AlShabaab and neither would AlShabaab as they would benefit from the fear created by such actions.<sup>162</sup>

Another international organisation, interviewed by DIS in May 2015, noted: 'Most murders in Mogadishu are not related to Al-Shabaab, although Al-Shabaab takes credit for them. The locals will always know if the murder was in fact Al-Shabaab or due to business, politics, ordinary crime or other reasons'.<sup>163</sup>

According to an international organisation, interviewed by DIS (May 2015), in Mogadishu AMISOM, SNAF, the police and NISA are present. The city is generally secure, although AlShabaab poses a constant threat.<sup>164</sup>

Within AMISOM, Ugandan troops are deployed to secure Mogadishu. Burundi also maintains troops.<sup>165</sup>

According to an expert on Somalia, interviewed in Stockholm by Lifos on 2 December 2015, about 40 % of the inhabitants in Mogadishu are said to support Al-Shabaab. The support is clan-based, although it is important to remember that not every individual clan member supports Al-Shabaab. An example is the difference between the Abgal and the Murusade clans in Mogadishu. The Hawiye -Abgal clan has power in Mogadishu. The Murusade feel marginalised and as a consequence support Al-Shabaab. However, some strong individuals in the Ayr clan are influential in the government and have nothing to gain by supporting Al-Shabaab in Mogadishu.<sup>166</sup>

A report of the Austrian BFA Staatendokumentation (October 2015) indicates that, while the whole of Mogadishu is under the influence of AMISOM and SFG forces, Al-Shabaab is still able to conduct asymmetric attacks in suburbs of Mogadishu. This concerns the districts Dayniile, Heliwaa, as well as parts of Karaan, Yaqshiid and Dharkenley. In these districts the influence of Al-Shabaab can be bigger during the night. The remaining parts of Mogadishu are accessible for Al-Shabaab in two ways: firstly, in the form of 'hidden actors', fighters hidden among the inhabitants; and secondly in the form of large-scale operations of special units, so-called complex attacks (which include suicide bombers and remotely ignited explosives as well as a larger number of fighters). It should be noted that Al-Shabaab lacks permanent presence in the center of Mogadishu and visible combat units have only little influence. However, the presence of hidden insurgents and the employment of terrorist activities highly affect the lives of residents.<sup>167</sup>

UNHCR in Somalia, interviewed by DIS in May 2015, noted on the impact of the violence on the population:

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<sup>162</sup> EASO 2016, s. 52.

<sup>163</sup> EASO 2016, s. 53.

<sup>164</sup> EASO 2016, s. 53.

<sup>165</sup> EASO 2016, s. 53.

<sup>166</sup> EASO 2016, s. 53.

<sup>167</sup> EASO 2016, s. 53 - s. 54.



'In Mogadishu the SFG continues to face significant challenges in providing basic security to its populations. Thus the reality on the ground, as reported by observers, remains that civilians are injured and killed every week in targeted attacks by gunmen, or attacks involving IEDs and grenades. The continued high number of security incidents, including targeted killings of journalists, judiciary, government officials and others, and fighting between government forces and affiliated militias still dominant in parts of the city illustrate these challenges. For Somalis in Mogadishu, it is very difficult to survive without a support network, and newcomers to the city, particularly when they do not belong to the clans or nuclear families established in the district in question, or when they originate from an area formerly or presently controlled by an insurgent group, face a precarious existence in the capital. Often, they are forced to settle in IDP settlements where living conditions are deplorable and human rights violations commonly reported – with no durable solutions in sight'.<sup>168</sup>

An International organisation working in South -Central Somalia, interviewed by DIS in May 2015 remarked:

'Mogadishu was officially cleared of Al-Shabaab a long time ago but still attacks occur on a regular basis. Al-Shabaab maintains a clandestine presence in Mogadishu and all towns in S/C Somalia. Al-Shabaab is able to demand taxes in the areas it controls but also in all other areas, including towns with AMISOM/SNAF presence. Even in Mogadishu Al-Shabaab taxes markets and traders. This is particularly the case for businesses that require goods and services from other parts of Somalia, so that a relationship with Al-Shabaab is necessary for the business to be conducted'.<sup>169</sup>

Forced evictions of internally displaced persons in Mogadishu are of concern, as the use of force, violence and harassment is reported. Data from UNHCR indicate that between January and October 2015, 77,314 displaced persons were forcibly evicted from public and private land and buildings in Mogadishu. The independent expert Bahame Tom Nyanduga, reporting to the UN Security Council (September 2015), noted: 'Many of the evicted displaced persons are forced to relocate and settle themselves in areas where they continue to suffer a myriad of human rights violations and where living conditions are deplorable and services limited or non-existent'.<sup>170</sup>

A report by Human Rights Watch (September 2014) documented the involvement of AMISOM personnel in sexual and gender -based violence against Somali women and girls.<sup>171</sup>

The Benadir region was hit by heavy rains in November 2015, affecting mainly internally displaced people's settlements.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> EASO 2016, s. 54.

<sup>169</sup> EASO 2016, s. 53 - s. 54.

<sup>170</sup> EASO 2016, s. 53 - s. 54.

<sup>171</sup> EASO 2016, s. 53 - s. 54.

<sup>172</sup> EASO 2016, s. 53 - s. 54.





### 3.8. Middle Shabellen

In the reporting period, clan clashes repeatedly occurred in towns in Middle Shabelle region in Somalia, allegedly mainly due to land grabbing. Clashes of clan militias were reported in Jowhar in August 2014, in Warsheikh and Rage Ceelle in June 2015. Renewed clan fighting occurred again in Warsheikh in July 2015. Another clan battle broke out in Baaley and Ali-Muumin areas near Balcad town.<sup>173</sup>

In March 2015 a bomb attack was carried out on government soldiers in Hantiwadag village in Jowhar district, injuring at least four people. Jowhar forces with AMISOM support made several arrests after the onslaught. No group has officially claimed responsibility for the attack, although government officials pointed at Al-Shabaab. The Jowhar administration imposed a night curfew and limited vehicle and people movements.<sup>174</sup>

On 13 July 2015 heavily armed militants from Al-Shabaab attacked a military base in Rage Ceelle town killing at least four soldiers and two civilians. However, the military chief of the area claimed the attack was repulsed.<sup>175</sup>

The Jowhar police station was attacked by a grenade bomb blast on 15 October 2015, allegedly by Al-Shabaab.<sup>176</sup>

SNA forces and AMISOM troops took control of Cadale district in Middle Shabelle region on 1 October 2014, a day after capturing the Rage Ceelle district from Al-Shabaab. The allied forces faced no resistance from Al-Shabaab before taking over the two districts, where they arrested dozens of Al-Shabaab members.<sup>177</sup>

An operation aiming to improve security in Jowhar was conducted in November 2014 and led to the arrest of several suspected Al-Shabaab militants. Another operation by government troops was launched in September 2015 in order to prevent attacks by Al-Shabaab. In addition, government forces conducted operations to restore security, e.g. in Jowhar in May 2015 and August 2015 and in Mahadaay town also in August 2015.<sup>178</sup>

In Middle Shabelle, Burundi National Defence Forces are deployed within AMISOM along with the Somali National Army. Since 2012, AMISOM/SNA have successfully liberated major towns within the region. Al-Shabaab remains in rural areas outside the cities. On 3 February 2015, Somali authorities announced the capture of a senior Al-Shabaab commander in Middle Shabelle region.<sup>179</sup>

Besides these actors, clan militias are active. Land-related conflicts in Middle Shabelle region between the dominant Abgaal (Hawiye) clan and minority Shiidle (Bantu) communities appear to have been superseded by intra-Abgaal clashes in 2015.

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<sup>173</sup> EASO 2016, s. 56.

<sup>174</sup> EASO 2016, s. 56.

<sup>175</sup> EASO 2016, s. 56.

<sup>176</sup> EASO 2016, s. 56.

<sup>177</sup> EASO 2016, s. 56.

<sup>178</sup> EASO 2016, s. 56.

<sup>179</sup> EASO 2016, s. 56.



Al-Shabaab uses these power struggles between clans in the area to its advantage.<sup>180</sup>

Al-Shabaab had been driven out of Balcad on 26 June 2012 and from the town of Jowhar on 9 December 2012. AMISOM and SNAF liberated the city of Warshiiq from Al-Shabaab on 16 March 2014. Two days later the insurgents were driven away from Fiidow. During Operation Indian Ocean, Al-Shabaab was removed from Rage Ceelle on 30 September 2014 and from Cadale on 1 October 2014. On 10 March 2015, after a brief battle with Al-Shabaab fighters, Somali troops together with AMISOM captured the area of Masjid Ali Gadud, which is an important transit hub for vehicles near Jowhar. Al-Shabaab is still present in rural areas outside the cities.<sup>181</sup>

AMISOM/Burundi maintains garrisons in Jowhar, Balcad, Cadale, Warsheikh and smaller garrisons in Rage Ceelle and Mahadaay. Jowhar is Abgaal heartland and there is no backing for Al-Shabaab from the local population. Balcad and Warsheikh are important garrisons securing the outskirts of Mogadishu.<sup>182</sup>

According to reports of 13 November 2015, the African Union troops in Somalia withdrew from Fiidow, a strategic town in Middle Shabelle region, giving Al-Shabaab militants full access to retake it without force. Government officials in the region have described the withdrawal from Fiidow as 'military tactics' and vowed to recapture the city and the remaining Al-Shabaab strongholds in Middle Shabelle region.<sup>183</sup>

In an Assessment by REACH (June 2015) on insecurity within their communities, 64 % of the assessed households reported sources of insecurity, while 36 % did not. The main sources of insecurity reported were actions by community leaders (20 %), inter-clan conflict (14 %), and local militia (12 %). The most significant safety concerns that women and girls were facing in their community were the risk of attacks when travelling outside the community (42 %), sexual violence and abuse (23 %), and inability to access services and resources (23 %).<sup>184</sup>

According to a news article (March 2015) people in towns of the Middle Shabelle region have faced acute food shortages. The federal government, following the liberation of Warsheikh and Adale, provided food aid to families in these towns.<sup>185</sup>

Middle Shabelle accounts for the highest number of displacements due to floods, with more than 11,000 people displaced, mostly in Jowhar, Mahaday and Balcad districts.<sup>186</sup>

The below-average Gu harvest in August/September 2015 put poor households in these riverine areas in crisis (IPC Phase 3).<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> EASO 2016, s. 56.

<sup>181</sup> EASO 2016, s. 57.

<sup>182</sup> EASO 2016, s. 57.

<sup>183</sup> EASO 2016, s. 57.

<sup>184</sup> EASO 2016, s. 57.

<sup>185</sup> EASO 2016, s. 57.

<sup>186</sup> EASO 2016, s. 57.

<sup>187</sup> EASO 2016, s. 57.



### 3.9. Hiiraan

As a result of Operation Indian Ocean, conflict between Al-Shabaab and SNAF/AMISOM was the main source of conflict-related violence in Hiiraan during autumn 2014. In areas that Al-Shabaab does not control anymore, they perform hit-and-run attacks and assassinations.<sup>188</sup>

Most violence in 2014 has been in Buulo Barde and in villages in its surroundings, statistically closely followed by Belet Weyne and Jalalaqsi and their surroundings. There were fewer reports of this kind of violence during 2015. Most of the attacks in 2015 have been carried out in Belet Weyne, but there are also reported attacks in Jalalaqsi and in villages in the surroundings of Buulo Barde and Belet Weyne. There are reports of AMISOM convoys en route being subject to Al-Shabaab ambushes. Al-Shabaab has a blockade on Buulo Burde, which was heavily enforced.<sup>189</sup>

In July 2015, AMISOM and Somali security forces and the Ethiopian and Kenyan Defence Forces launched Operation Jubba Corridor aimed at expelling Al-Shabaab from remaining strongholds in South and Central Somalia. During this operation AMISOM also targeted Al-Shabaab positions in Hiiraan. There are reports of AMISOM troops killing civilians and causing displacement during military operations.<sup>190</sup>

There are reports of beheadings from areas under the control of Al-Shabaab. In September 2015 three young persons, accused by Al-Shabaab for belonging to SNAF, were beheaded in a village west of Fiidow. The same month it was reported that a civilian in Jalalaqsi was abducted and beheaded.<sup>191</sup>

There have been reports of tensions and violence along clan lines. A land dispute between the Dir clan and the Hawadle clan has led to clashes between the clans' militias in Deefow village in October 2014 (20 killed, 45 injured), late December 2014 (20 killed, 35 injured), January 2015 (22 killed, 45 injured), March 2015 (2 killed, 10 injured) and June 2015 (10 killed, 15 injured).<sup>192</sup>

In April 2015, 40 houses in a village north of Belet Weyne were destroyed in a fire by the Dir. There have also been reports of a land dispute between the Galaja'el clan and the Jajele clans, which led to clashes in Belet Weyne in October 2015 and 13 December 2015.<sup>193</sup>

Besides Al-Shabaab, SFG/SNAF, AMISOM, ENDF and Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa (ASWJ), there are also several disputes between different clans in the region. The Djiboutian forces of AMISOM have been in charge of the Hiiraan region since December 2011. AMISOM has Djiboutian and Ethiopian troops in Belet Weyne, and Djiboutian troops in Buulo Barde and Jalalaqsi.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> EASO 2016, s. 59.

<sup>189</sup> EASO 2016, s. 59.

<sup>190</sup> EASO 2016, s. 59.

<sup>191</sup> EASO 2016, s. 59.

<sup>192</sup> EASO 2016, s. 59.

<sup>193</sup> EASO 2016, s. 60.

<sup>194</sup> EASO 2016, s. 60.



As of September 2015, Al-Shabaab still influenced or controlled most of the Hiiraan region, although they are being driven from some towns. Al-Shabaab has been driven away from Belet Weyne (31 December 2011), Buulo Barde (13 March 2014), Maxaas (25 March 2014) and Jalalaqsi (3 September 2014), and these towns are now under the influence of SFG and AMISOM. Further, Al-Shabaab was driven out of Buur Wayne village, south of Buulo Barde (11 May 2015). AMISOM seized Ceel Xoog village, south-west of Belet Weyne (29 July 2015), and AMISOM jointly with allied militia took over Ceel Cali, Ceel Dheere and Buq - Goosaar villages located in Belet Weyne district (30 July 2015).<sup>195</sup>

Al-Shabaab took over Ceel Gaal village, east of Belet Weyne (29 July 2015). Al-Shabaab still has a covert presence, and is able to perform attacks in the towns and villages they are driven out from. In areas from which Al-Shabaab has been expelled, there are also clashes between other actors such as local clan militias, but also infighting between AMISOM and SNAF.<sup>196</sup>

According to the Austrian BFA/Staatendokumentation (October 2015), there is an area in the north, close to the border with Galgaduud region, which is jointly influenced by AMISOM/SNAF and ASWJ. South of that area, but north of Belet Weyne, as well as along the Ethiopian border, there is an area jointly influenced by AMISOM/SNAF and Al-Shabaab. Along the Ethiopian border, there are also militias allied with the SFG operating. The main road from Belet Weyne to Mogadishu, through Buulo Barde and Jalalaqsi, is mainly controlled by Al-Shabaab. However, there is one stretch of the road south of Belet Weyne and another one south of Jalalaqsi, which are jointly influenced by Al-Shabaab and AMISOM/SNAF.<sup>197</sup>

Several sources interviewed by DIS (May 2015) stated that Al-Shabaab performs attacks in towns they do not control, mainly targeting persons or institutions representing the international community including AMISOM and the UN, the Somalia Federal Government (SFG) and those perceived as supporting them. Hiiraan reports attacks on AMISOM and SNAF positions and individuals such as SNAF - soldiers, clan elders and religious clerics.<sup>198</sup>

Clashes and fighting affects civilians, resulting in displacement. In August 2015, about 16 000 people were displaced to Belet Weyne from villages in its proximity. Civilians can be affected by clashes between clans as well, due to violent retaliation actions against clan members.<sup>199</sup>

A humanitarian international NGO, interviewed by DIS (May 2015) stated that there are commercial flights in South and Central Somalia. There is a connection between Belet Weyne and Mogadishu, but connections and schedules change sporadically. There is no operational airstrip for planes in Buulo Barde. Several sources interviewed by DIS (May 2015) stated that people travelling by road are, among other things, exposed to robbery, extortion, questioning, harassment, physical abuse including sexual violence and detention. Somalis do travel by road, but the risks are thoroughly balanced against the necessity of the trip. Civilians' possibilities

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<sup>195</sup> EASO 2016, s. 60.

<sup>196</sup> EASO 2016, s. 60.

<sup>197</sup> EASO 2016, s. 60.

<sup>198</sup> EASO 2016, s. 61.

<sup>199</sup> EASO 2016, s. 61.



to move by road from Belet Weyne to Buulo Burde and further to Mogadishu, are curtailed.<sup>200</sup>

Al-Shabaab enforced an economic blockade on Buulo Barde leading to a food security crisis during the period July 2014 - June 2015. The situation improved in July 2015, as a result of humanitarian assistance.<sup>201</sup>

### 3.10. Galgaduud

The Galmudug Interim Administration (GIA) was established in June 2015 in a state formation process in Caadado and on 4 July 2015 Abdikarim Hussein Guled was elected president. The Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa (ASWJ) boycotted the process, but in August 2015 factions of ASWJ joined the GIA state. The ASWJ Sufa group opposes the formation of GIA. The presidents of the [former] State of Galmudug and the Ximan and Xeeb administration have accepted the formation of GIA, and the transfer of weapons to GIA from their militias is reportedly going 'quite smooth', although there is information stating that the Sa'ad clan of the former Himan and Heeb still have their own capacity.<sup>202</sup>

As Puntland initially denounced GIA, partly because of its claims of territory, GIA revised its constitution on 29 July 2015 removing any claim of northern Mudug.<sup>203</sup>

Although there have been reports of attacks by Al-Shabaab on AMISOM, ENDF and SNAF, the main source of violence in Galgaduud have been armed clashes related to the above mentioned Central state formation process. ASWJ fought SNAF and/or GIA forces, but there was also fighting between factions of ASWJ, and between different clan militias.<sup>204</sup>

In November 2014, armed clashes occurred between pro -Galgadud and ASWJ forces. There was also infighting within ASWJ on 12-13 December 2014 in Guriceel and Dhuusamarreeb. There have been reports of fighting on 19 July 2015 between ASWJ and SNAF troops on the road between Dhuusamarreeb and Caadado. The political tensions between the ASWJ factions and the ASWJ Sufa group and GIA were demonstrated on 10 August 2015 in Dhuusamarreeb when ASWJ arrested 11 SNAF soldiers, as well as in Caadado on 20 August 2015. ASWJ's vice president was arrested by GIA forces, which led to clashes between Hawiye -Habr Gedir -Suleiman militia forces and GIA affiliated police forces. On 8-9 September 2015 in Abudwaaq, a faction of ASWJ clashed with security guards of the GIA which received reinforcement from the Darod -Marehan clan militias.<sup>205</sup>

On 3 December 2014 armed clashes were reported between Al-Shabaab and Habr Gedir clan militia in the Ceel Buur district, as Al-Shabaab was attempting to extort zakat from pastoralists. Al-Shabaab has also launched an attack on ENDF troops in Wabxo, west of Ceel Buur, on 17 October 2014 and on AMISOM and SNAF positions in Ceel Garas, south-east of Dhuusamarreeb, on 29 October 2014.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> EASO 2016, s. 61.

<sup>201</sup> EASO 2016, s. 61.

<sup>202</sup> EASO 2016, s. 63.

<sup>203</sup> EASO 2016, s. 63.

<sup>204</sup> EASO 2016, s. 63.

<sup>205</sup> EASO 2016, s. 63 - s. 64.

<sup>206</sup> EASO 2016, s. 64.



Clashes between pastoralists have been reported as well, such as between the Hawiye-Habr Gedir subclans Suleiman and Duduble in Ceel Buur district 28 October 2015.<sup>207</sup>

Different factions of ASWJ, the Galmudug Interim Administration (GIA), AMISOM, SFG and ENDF are actors of violence in the region. Djiboutian forces had been in charge of AMISOM troops in Galgaduud. As of 30 September 2015, Ethiopian forces have set up new AMISOM bases in Galgaduud Eel-lahelay, between Dhusamareb and Ceel Buur. There are also different clan militias involved in local conflicts.<sup>208</sup>

As mentioned before, the state formation process of the GIA did not go smoothly. On request of Puntland, GIA renounced its claim on northern Mudug. This leaves, in addition to the Galgaduud region, de facto the south of Galkacyo District, most of Hobyo District and all of Xarardheere District in the Mudug region within the GIA territory.<sup>209</sup>

As of September 2015, most of the Abudwaaq district is jointly influenced by ASWJ and AMISOM/SNAF, as well as the western part of Dhuusamarreeb district. The north part of Dhuusamarreeb district, a small part in the north-east Abudwaaq district and Caadado district are controlled by the GIA. The central and southern parts of the Dhuusamarreeb district are jointly influenced by Al-Shabaab and the GIA. The south part of Dhuusamarreeb district, Ceel Buur and Ceel Dheere districts are controlled by Al-Shabaab.<sup>210</sup>

The town of Dhuusamarreeb has been contested by SNAF and ASWJ. The latter seized control of the town on 7 June 2015. By 19 October 2015 the town was still under control of an ASWJ faction, as is northern Galgaduud.<sup>211</sup>

There are few reports of attacks by Al-Shabaab in Galgaduud, and those are mainly about attacks on AMISOM and SNAF positions.<sup>212</sup>

Clashes involving clans, ASWJ and GIA mainly result in casualties among militiamen and soldiers. Clan clashes affect civilians as well due to revenge attacks on clan members, which cause casualties. Fighting also results in civilian displacement, e.g. in Guriceel in February 2015, when fighting between local clans triggered 90 percent of the estimated population to flee to neighbouring villages. Most of them had returned home a month later.<sup>213</sup>

The airport in Dhuusamarreeb is frequented by commercial passenger flights. There have been reports on incidents on roads. In October 2014, Darod-Marehan militia ambushed a UN contracted convoy on the road from South Galkacyo to Abudwaaq. In August 2015 three women were reportedly assaulted at an illegal

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<sup>207</sup> EASO 2016, s. 64.

<sup>208</sup> EASO 2016, s. 64.

<sup>209</sup> EASO 2016, s. 64.

<sup>210</sup> EASO 2016, s. 64.

<sup>211</sup> EASO 2016, s. 64.

<sup>212</sup> EASO 2016, s. 65.

<sup>213</sup> EASO 2016, s. 65.



checkpoint manned by Sa'ad clan militia on the road between South Galkacyo and Guriceel.<sup>214</sup>

In November and December 2014, there were reports of serious malnutrition levels among displaced people in Dhuusamarreeb.<sup>215</sup>

### 3.11. Mudug

The Mudug region is divided between Puntland and Central Somalia. The division follows broadly the principles from the 1993 Mudug Peace Agreement. The border is poorly demarcated, with the exception of the town of Galkacyo which has a clear dividing line separating the Darod -Majerteen dominated north and the Hawiye -Habr Gedir dominated southern part. The initial inclusion of the whole of Mudug region in the Galmudug Interim Administration (GIA) constitution had created tensions between Puntland and the GIA and the SFG. GIA revised its constitution on 29 July 2015 removing any claim on northern Mudug.<sup>216</sup>

According to recent reports, the dispute over geographic and political boundaries between Puntland and the GIA is ongoing. Puntland claims full control over Mudug region, whereas the GIA claims control over Hobyo, Haradhere and South Galkacyo. This led to deadly clashes in November and December 2015. A cease -fire was signed on 2 December 2015, which was, however, violated the next day.<sup>217</sup>

In the reporting period, Al -Shabaab performed attacks by different kinds of IEDs and assassinations, mainly in Galkacyo. For example a well -known Puntland lawmaker and his bodyguard were assassinated when leaving a mosque on 8 May 2015. In November and December 2014 and in January 2015 there were attacks on journalists. A journalist was killed, and two journalists at Radio Galkacyo were injured. Al -Shabaab is suspected to be behind at least two of the attacks.<sup>218</sup>

There have been reports of fighting between pastoralists from different clans. On 28 and 29 November 2014, 17 militiamen were killed and 12 injured in fighting between the Hawiye clans Suleiman and Ayr. There have also been land conflicts escalating between Darod -Marehan and Hawiye -Habr Gedir clans late in 2014 around Saaxo, close to the Ethiopian border. On 13 July 2015 fighting between the Hawiye clans Suleiman and Ayr in the Xarardheere district was reported. In the south of Galkacyo district on 14 July 2015, and again at the end of August 2015, Hawiye -Sa'ad pastoralists were shot dead by Darod -Marehan -Wagardha pastoralists.<sup>219</sup>

Puntland's and GIA's forces fought for control over Galkacyo for about two weeks at the end of November and the very beginning of December 2015, which left approximately 20 dead and 120 injured. There were reports of 90,000 people displaced by the fighting. After a ceasefire deal was signed, both sides withdrew from the battlegrounds on 6 December 2015.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> EASO 2016, s. 65.

<sup>215</sup> EASO 2016, s. 65.

<sup>216</sup> EASO 2016, s. 67.

<sup>217</sup> EASO 2016, s. 67.

<sup>218</sup> EASO 2016, s. 67.

<sup>219</sup> EASO 2016, s. 67.

<sup>220</sup> EASO 2016, s. 68.



Al-Shabaab, Puntland forces, SFG, the GIA and various clans are actors in the conflict.<sup>221</sup>

Piracy and hijacking of vessels have been occurring occasionally again from the coast of Xarardheere. After the peak in 2011 the activity had dropped off thanks to the posting of armed guards on boats and increased patrolling of Somali waters.<sup>222</sup>

The southern part of the town and the district of Galkacyo, a small part of Galdogob district, and Hobyo and Xarardheere districts belong to the part of Mudug which is included in Central Somalia. Except for the Xarardheere district and the southern - most part of the Hobyo district, this territory is controlled by the GIA. The extreme south of the Hobyo district and the north of Xarardheere district are jointly influenced by the GIA and Al-Shabaab. The south of the Xarardheere district is controlled by Al-Shabaab. Pirates or former pirates (and the related clan militias) control various parts of Mudug region, particularly in the Xarardheere and Hobyo districts.<sup>223</sup>

Several sources interviewed by DIS (May 2015) stated that Al-Shabaab performs attacks in towns they do not control, mainly on persons or institutions representing the international community including the UN and Puntland authorities and those perceived as supporting the SFG. The targets of attacks by Al-Shabaab in Mudug are mainly people perceived to be affiliated with Puntland authorities, international organisations and journalists. Clan fighting does not discriminate between militia-men and civilians. There are retaliations against clan members, which may result in civilian casualties.<sup>224</sup>

Commercial flights are operating from Galkacyo Airport. In general, it should be noted that connections and schedules in South/Central Somalia change sporadically. Travelling by road makes one exposed to violence. From the Mudug region there have been reports of extortions at illegal checkpoints in the outskirts of Galkacyo, but also of trucks that have been ambushed on roads in other areas of the region.<sup>225</sup>

High malnutrition levels in settlements of IDPs in Galkacyo were reported in October 2015, as well as in 2014.<sup>226</sup>

### 3.12. Northern Somalia, **Puntland**

Northern Somalia consists of Somaliland, Puntland, and the disputed areas between them: Sool and Sanaag.

The border with Central Somalia divides the Mudug region, of which the northern part belongs to the Puntland territory. The southern part of Mudug region, and of the town Galkacyo, are claimed by the GIA in Central Somalia.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> EASO 2016, s. 68.

<sup>222</sup> EASO 2016, s. 68.

<sup>223</sup> EASO 2016, s. 68.

<sup>224</sup> EASO 2016, s. 68.

<sup>225</sup> EASO 2016, s. 68.

<sup>226</sup> EASO 2016, s. 68.

<sup>227</sup> EASO 2016, s. 69.





Although Puntland continues to be relatively peaceful and stable, Al-Shabaab is pushing up north from South and Central Somalia, exposing Puntland to increased threats.<sup>228</sup>

Puntland security forces carry out security operations across Puntland to prevent Al-Shabaab attacks. These security operations are mainly performed in Bossaso and the surroundings towards the Galgala mountains, and in Garowe, and have resulted in arrests of tens or even hundreds of Al-Shabaab suspects. There is also some violence in North Galkacyo. On 22 September 2014, over one hundred Al-Shabaab suspects were arrested in Nugaal. Two of them confessed their affiliation to Al-Shabaab, but the others were released the following morning.<sup>229</sup>

Puntland's forces also launch attacks against Al-Shabaab's stronghold in the Galgala mountains. There was one attack in October 2014, and another started in mid-December 2014 and continued until mid-January 2015. There was occasionally fierce fighting which led to casualties on both sides. In September 2015 Puntland continued the military offensive against Al-Shabaab in the Galgala mountains. There were reports that 15 Al-Shabaab militants were killed in a drone strike in September 2015.<sup>230</sup>

Al-Shabaab has carried out several terrorist attacks in Puntland. The most extensive was the suicide attack targeting Unicef in Garowe 20 April 2015, when seven people were killed and ten people injured.<sup>231</sup>

Other Al-Shabaab activities have mainly been in Bossaso and the area around the Galgala mountains. On 4 November 2014, a gunman believed to be from Al-Shabaab shot a businessman dead in Bossaso. Police stations have been attacked on 10 January 2015 and 3 February 2015 in Bossaso, injuring three police officers. Further, Al-Shabaab launched three attacks in Bossaso on 5 April 2015 targeting the Al-Dacwa Mosque, the residence of the Mayor and a security check-point leaving eight people injured. Although no casualties were reported, Al-Shabaab targeted Puntland's security forces position in the Galgala mountains on 25-26 November 2015.<sup>232</sup>

Al-Shabaab has also performed several terrorist attacks in Galkacyo.<sup>233</sup>

It has been reported that Puntland's troops are not regularly paid, which have led to protests by soldiers. According to reports, this caused the soldiers in April 2015 to abandon their positions at the frontline in the Galgala mountains and in June 2015 to lock down the Mayor's office in Garowe, but also to man illegal check points to extort money. There are reports of shootouts in this context, for example one person was injured and one died at a check point close to Bossaso in September 2015.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> EASO 2016, s. 70.

<sup>229</sup> EASO 2016, s. 70.

<sup>230</sup> EASO 2016, s. 70.

<sup>231</sup> EASO 2016, s. 70.

<sup>232</sup> EASO 2016, s. 70.

<sup>233</sup> EASO 2016, s. 71.

<sup>234</sup> EASO 2016, s. 71.



In Puntland land conflicts have resulted in clashes between clans, as has been frequently reported since autumn 2014. In October and December 2014 clashes occurred outside Garowe between Reer Shirwa and Reer Farah, two subclans of Darod-Isse Mohamoud. In the Iskushuban district in the Bari region, there have been clashes between Ali Suleiman and Osman Mohamoud. Clashes between Ali Saleeban and Ugaar Saleeban, due to a long-standing land dispute, led to losses on both sides. The conflict was solved by an agreement between the clans, and compensations were paid. In November 2014 in Qardho, a man from Araab Saalax was shot dead by an Osman Mohamoud member in a land dispute. The Hawiye clan Sa'ad and the Darod-Majerteen clan Omar Mohamoud reportedly clashed in Xelo Jaare and Landheere in the end of August 2015.<sup>235</sup>

The death penalty is still applied, and in March 2015 Puntland authorities in Bossaso executed three convicted Al-Shabaab members.<sup>236</sup>

Al-Shabaab, Puntland's forces and local clans are the main actors in Puntland. In addition, a small faction of about 20 former Al-Shabaab fighters is active, who in October 2015 pledged allegiance to IS. Pirates, although not particularly active over the past year, remain a latent threat as well.<sup>237</sup>

Puntland controls the northern part of the town Galkacyo and de facto also the northern part of Galkacyo district. De facto it also controls Jariiban District and most of Galdogob District in the Mudug region as well as the Nugal and Bari regions.<sup>238</sup>

The border with Somaliland is not clearly demarcated. Nevertheless, Puntland de facto controls the very eastern parts of the regions Sool and Sanaag, according to the BFA security analysis. Al-Shabaab controls parts of the Galgala mountains in the north-west of Bari region and north-east of Sanaag region. Al-Shabaab has limited influence over a slightly bigger area around the Galgala mountains.<sup>239</sup>

Al-Shabaab performs attacks in towns they do not control, mainly on persons or institutions representing the international community including the UN and Puntland authorities and those perceived as supporting them. The victims of the clan clashes are, in addition to militiamen, also civilians. Clan clashes may lead to revenge actions against clan members, which can cause civilian casualties.<sup>240</sup>

There has been increased criminal activity by Al-Shabaab and clan militias along the Bossaso-Garowe road, which affects movement by land, including illegal check points where road users are extorted. Civilians reportedly died from stray bullets from Puntland's soldiers at a checkpoint along the road.<sup>241</sup>

The borderlands of Puntland and Somaliland

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<sup>235</sup> EASO 2016, s. 71.

<sup>236</sup> EASO 2016, s. 71.

<sup>237</sup> EASO 2016, s. 71.

<sup>238</sup> EASO 2016, s. 71.

<sup>239</sup> EASO 2016, s. 71.

<sup>240</sup> EASO 2016, s. 72.

<sup>241</sup> EASO 2016, s. 72.



The territories of Sanaag and Sool regions have been contested for decades. While Somaliland defines its eastern border territorially as demarcated in colonial treaties, Puntland defines its western border genealogically according to where the Darod clans live. The border is in neither case demarcated precisely on the ground. This has created an ongoing conflict between Puntland and Somaliland over the borderlands, the regions Sool and Sanaag, part of which recently united into Khatumo state. As explained the self-declared state of Khatumo is a follow-up of the Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC) area. Although Khatumo State's territorial claims include portions of Sanaag region, it controls little of this territory. The coastal zones of Sanaag are inhabited by the Warsengali clan which has not expressed interest in joining Khatumo State.<sup>242</sup>

### **Sanaag**

There are tensions between Puntland and Somaliland in the Sanaag region. However, there are not many reports of violence directly connected to that conflict. The main cause of violence in this region are clan disputes. In December 2014 there was fierce fighting between the Habar Yonis and Dulbahante gunmen south of Ceerigaabo, leaving three dead and five wounded. East of Ceerigaabo, there were clashes between Habar Yonis and Dulbahante. In August and October 2015 there were clashes between Habar Yonis and Habar Jeelo over water resources. The clashes took place in Dogoble, Ceel Afweyn and Darad Weyne. One person was injured and several persons arrested in the clashes in Ceel Afweyn.<sup>243</sup>

In January 2015, 12 Al-Shabaab suspects were arrested in Ceerigaabo. The ineffective government presence in the Sanaag region could provide a safe haven for Al-Shabaab members based in the nearby Galgala mountains. Reports regarding Sanaag indicate that Al-Shabaab's activities in the area are limited.<sup>244</sup>

Puntland's government, Somaliland's government, local clans and to a lesser extent Al-Shabaab are actors in the conflict.<sup>245</sup>

Somaliland's government controls the Ceel Afweyn district and most of the Ceerigaabo district. Both Somaliland and Puntland have influence in the very east of the Ceerigaabo district and the very west of the Laasqoray district. The central and eastern parts of Laasqoray are controlled by Puntland. Darood - Warsengeli clan militias operate in most of the Laasqoray district and the eastern part of the Ceerigaabo district. In the very north-east of the Laasqoray district, in the Galgala mountains, Al-Shabaab are in control and they operate in a slightly wider area.<sup>246</sup>

Clan militias from the Warsengeli clan have some limited influence in the eastern part of the Sanaag region. There are also areas in the border land in the Sool and Sanaag regions where both Puntland and Somaliland have influence.<sup>247</sup>

In addition to militiamen, civilians are also victims of clan clashes. Clan fighting often leads to retaliation against clan members, which results in civilian casualties.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> EASO 2016, s. 72.

<sup>243</sup> EASO 2016, s. 73.

<sup>244</sup> EASO 2016, s. 73.

<sup>245</sup> EASO 2016, s. 73.

<sup>246</sup> EASO 2016, s. 73.

<sup>247</sup> EASO 2016, s. 73.

<sup>248</sup> EASO 2016, s. 73.



## Sool

Most reported conflicts in Sool region are related to the dispute between Puntland, Somaliland and the Khatumo state. In August 2014, the Somaliland forces reportedly attacked the self-declared Khatumo state in Saxdheer and succeeded in taking over Saxdheer. The attack resulted in several casualties. The following week, the Khatumo/SSC militias launched repeated night-time hit-and-run attacks against Somaliland positions. On 2-3 October 2014 pro-Khatumo militias attacked Somaliland bases in Saxdheer. The Somaliland army carried out security operations along the border with Ethiopia in November and December 2014. In September 2014 the Khatumo militias carried out a hit-and-run attack on Somaliland security base in Laascaanood. There was heavy fighting with casualties on both sides. Armed clashes occurred in May and June 2015 between the Somaliland forces and militia affiliated with Khatumo state. On 18 September 2015 Khatumo forces carried out a hit-and-run attack against the Somaliland forces based in Xudun.<sup>249</sup>

There were reports of violent fighting between the Dulbahante subclans Samokaab Ali and Farah Ali at Taleex on 10 December 2014. The Majerteen and Dulbahante clan militias clashed on 22 September 2015 in Qoriley, leaving 13 Dulbahante dead.<sup>250</sup>

Two men, suspected of having ties with Al-Shabaab, were arrested in April 2015. The lack of reports of Al-Shabaab activities in the Sool region seems to indicate that Al-Shabaab does not have a strong presence in the area.<sup>251</sup>

The main actors in the conflict in Sool are Somaliland's government, Puntland's government, the Khatumo state through the Dulbahante dominated SSC militia and local clans.<sup>252</sup>

Somaliland's government has control over the Caynabo and Xudun districts, the very west of Taleex district and the Laascaanood district, except for the eastern part. The central part of Taleex district is jointly influenced by Somaliland and Puntland, and the eastern part is controlled by Puntland. The north-eastern part of Laascaanood district is controlled by Puntland, while the south-eastern part is jointly influenced by Puntland and the Dulbahante clan through the Khatumo State/SSC militia. The SSC militia operates with limited influence in the whole of Sool region, except Caynabo district. There are also areas in the border land in the Sool and Sanaag regions where both Puntland and Somaliland have influence.<sup>253</sup>

In addition to militiamen, civilians are also victims of clan clashes. Clan fighting often leads to retaliation against clan members, which results in civilian casualties.<sup>254</sup>

## Somaliland

The conflict between the Somaliland government and the Khatumo state presently has a low intensity, in the south-east of the Togdheer region. In April 2015, armed

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<sup>249</sup> EASO 2016, s. 74.

<sup>250</sup> EASO 2016, s. 74.

<sup>251</sup> EASO 2016, s. 74.

<sup>252</sup> EASO 2016, s. 74.

<sup>253</sup> EASO 2016, s. 74.

<sup>254</sup> EASO 2016, s. 75.



clashes were reported between the Somaliland army and militias loyal to a former minister of Puntland in Caroweyn in Togdheer. These clashes occurred as Somaliland attempted to stop illegal mineral activities and resulted in four deaths.<sup>255</sup>

There have also been reports of clan disputes in Togdheer region. The Habar Jeelo clan had a dispute with the Abdala Arab clan, which on 18 October 2014 led to shootouts north of Burao with no casualties reported. During the period April-June 2015 there were high tensions between the Habar Jeelo and the Dulbahante clans in the Togdheer region, after a Dulbahante man was killed by Habar Jeelo militia in the beginning of April. Clashes between these two clans were reported on 16, 20 and 24 May 2015 with an unknown number of casualties on both sides. In spite of a peace agreement on 8 June, there were reports of a clash on 20 June 2015.<sup>256</sup>

During the last months of 2014 and the first part of 2015, there were tensions in the Awdal region after the local opposition leader Sultan Abibakar Elmi Wabar declared his support for an autonomous Awdal state. In January 2015, a militia loyal to Sultan Wabar attacked the central police station in Borama. There were brief clashes on 27 March 2015 between the Somaliland army and the Awdal state militia. In the middle of November 2015, mediation talks between the Somaliland government and Sultan Wabar followed. Sultan Wabar's militia surrendered and is planned to be integrated into the Somaliland government security forces.<sup>257</sup>

Somaliland's government applies capital punishment; six persons were executed the first 6 months of 2015. There were no reports of terrorist attacks during September 2014 – October 2015.<sup>258</sup>

The main actors in the conflict in Somaliland are Somaliland's government, Khatumo state, Sultan Wabar's militia and local clans.<sup>259</sup>

The Somaliland government controls the Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed and Togdheer regions. However, the Dulbahante-dominated SSC militia operates in the southern part of the Buuhoodle district and the very south-eastern part of the Burao district in the Togdheer region. The Khatumo state is not a major player, and often stays in Ethiopia where they are not targeted by the Somaliland government. However, the SSC and the Somaliland government jointly influence the very south of the Buhodle district.<sup>260</sup>

The intensity of conflicts in Somaliland is low. In addition to militiamen, clan clashes also affect civilians. Clan fighting may lead to revenge actions against clan members, which affects civilians.<sup>261</sup>

#### 4. State protection

The provisional constitution of SFG provides for a judicial framework that includes the creation of a constitutional court, federal government courts, and federal me m-

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<sup>255</sup> EASO 2016, s. 75.

<sup>256</sup> EASO 2016, s. 75 - s. 76.

<sup>257</sup> EASO 2016, s. 76.

<sup>258</sup> EASO 2016, s. 76.

<sup>259</sup> EASO 2016, s. 76.

<sup>260</sup> EASO 2016, s. 76.

<sup>261</sup> EASO 2016, s. 76.



ber state courts but these institutions have yet to be established. As a result the judicial system is an amalgam of state law, clan-based customary law (xeer) and Islamic law. Most conflicts and crimes are dealt through xeer, the clan-based customary law system in which payment of compensation (diya) is central. The main challenge is the limitation of qualified staff and the capacity to manage an increasing caseload.<sup>262</sup>

The regional governments of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland and Puntland are in control of their own respective jurisdictions. Although functional courts in Somaliland in Puntland exist, both administrations are facing capacity problems. The Academy for Peace and Development, a research institute in Somaliland, reported that courts in Somaliland are influenced by clan-based nepotism. In Somaliland and Puntland, the judiciary is a mixture of customary law (xeer), Islamic law and formal law, and in Puntland xeer prevails.<sup>263</sup>

The Jubbaland Administration, formerly called Interim Jubba Administration (IJA), and the Interim South-West Administration (ISWA) are partially in control of their respective jurisdictions.<sup>264</sup>

In the areas controlled by Al-Shabaab there is no functioning formal judicial system. In these areas there is strict interpretation of the Sharia law, according to a 2015 US Department of State report. Al-Shabaab carried out public lashings, beheadings, stonings and amputations, and there have been numerous allegations from community members, international experts and Muslim scholars that Sharia law is misinterpreted and executed wrongly in various ways.<sup>265</sup>

According to US Department of State: “Civilian authorities did not maintain effective control of security forces. Security forces abused civilians and often failed to prevent or respond to societal violence. Authorities rarely investigated abuse by police, army, or militia members, and a culture of impunity was widespread.”<sup>266</sup>

Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported on the events of 2015 that the security situation remained volatile in government-controlled towns. Government forces failed to protect civilians, including journalists, clan elders, clerics and lawmakers and other officials from targeted killings by Al-Shabab as well as by unknown gunmen, primarily in Mogadishu, Baidoa, the capital of the Bay region, and Beletweyn, the capital of Hiraaan.<sup>267</sup>

Also according to HRW: “The government failed to protect the capital’s hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people from serious abuses, including sexual violence, and did not adhere to its own new displacement policies by forcibly – and at times violently – evicting displaced people from informal settlements. During the first eight months of 2015, more than 116,000 people were forcibly evicted, the UN reported.”<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> EASO 2016, s. 27.

<sup>263</sup> EASO 2016, s. 27.

<sup>264</sup> EASO 2016, s. 27.

<sup>265</sup> EASO 2016, s. 27.

<sup>266</sup> USDS 2016.

<sup>267</sup> HRW 2016 a).

<sup>268</sup> HRW 2016 b).



The Independent Expert to the UN Human Rights Council concluded in his October 2015 report:

‘Overall, the situation of human rights in Somalia remains dire. Violations of freedom of expression, widespread reports of sexual violence and the continued use of the death penalty remain major concerns. Activities of the militant group Al-Shabaab disproportionately affect the civilian population and pose a threat to sustainable peace in Somalia. Reports of civilian casualties and displacements in the context of military operations conducted against Al-Shabaab persist. Similarly, the humanitarian situation is alarming and yet funding to meet humanitarian needs in Somalia appears to be declining’.<sup>269</sup>

Detention conditions are generally considered to be very poor. In February 2015 the UK Home Office reported: ‘Conditions in most prisons in Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland, including those administered by Al-Shabaab, are harsh with reports of poor levels of sanitation, overcrowding and disease; inadequate medical facilities; extensive use of lengthy pre-trial detention and the use of torture and other forms of ill-treatment’.<sup>270</sup>

The US Department of State concluded in its Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2015 that the conditions in detention centres were harsh and life-threatening, but living conditions in Puntland and Somaliland prisons were generally better than in other parts of the country.<sup>271</sup>

Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland all carry out the death penalty. Amnesty International reported 14 executions and 52 death sentences in Somalia in 2014. Although the exact number of death penalties performed in Puntland is unknown, it continues to happen. Most cases are related to terrorism (i.e. Al-Shabaab members) or clan rivalry. The Human Rights Centre Somaliland reported in its annual report for 2015 that seven people are known to have been executed.<sup>272</sup>

## 5. Vulnerable groups

Somalia has a number of **ethnic minorities and occupational groups** (together forming 15 to 30 % of the total population), many of whom encounter discrimination and violation of human rights. The traditional clan structure formed by the majority clans excludes minorities from political participation, and limits their access to traditional justice (xeer) in cases of abuse or accusations of crime. Minorities are often subject to discrimination in employment, judicial proceedings, and access to public services. Minority groups are militarily weaker than the majority clans, even in places where they outnumber them. They cannot expect redress if their rights are violated.<sup>273</sup>

Minority groups included the Bantu (the largest minority group), Benadiri, Rer Hamar, Brawanese, Swahili, Tumul, Yibir, Yaxar, Madhiban, Hawrarsame, Muse

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<sup>269</sup> EASO 2016, s. 28.

<sup>270</sup> EASO 2016, s. 28.

<sup>271</sup> USDS 2016.

<sup>272</sup> EASO 2016, s. 28.

<sup>273</sup> EASO 2014, s. 101; USDS 2016.



Dheryo, Faqayaqub, and Gabooye. Custom restricted intermarriage between minority groups and mainstream clans.<sup>274</sup>

The US Department of State (year 2016) notes: "Minority groups, often lacking armed militias, continued to be disproportionately subjected to killings, torture, rape, kidnapping for ransom, and looting of land and property with impunity by faction militias and majority clan members, often with the acquiescence of federal and local authorities. Many minority communities continued to live in deep poverty and to suffer from numerous forms of discrimination and exclusion."<sup>275</sup>

Representatives of minority clans in the federal parliament were targeted by unknown assailants, whom minority clan members alleged were paid by majority clan members. For example, on July 25, unidentified gunmen assassinated minority parliamentarian Abdullahi Hussein Muse Bantu in a drive-by shooting in Mogadishu.<sup>276</sup>

**Minority women** face multiple discriminations and violations of their rights - as women and as members of a minority group. Minority women, especially in IDP camps, often suffer gender-based violence (rape), domestic violence, robbery and economic discrimination. Crimes against women, especially amongst women from minority groups, are often perpetrated with impunity.<sup>277</sup>

**Religious minorities** include a very small population of Somali Christians, as well as ethnic minorities within Islam – Ashraf and Sheikhal. Al-Shabaab, based on its strict interpretation of Islam, is targeting those who follow (Sufi) Somali-Islamic, Christian or traditional African (Bantu/Jareer) religious beliefs and practices. Ben adiri, Bantu and Christian minorities are targets of religious persecution by Al-Shabaab. There have been several killings of suspected Christians in 2012 and 2013 in Al-Shabaab controlled areas.<sup>278</sup>

Somalia is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for a **journalist**. The country ranked 176 out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters without Borders Press Freedom index.<sup>279</sup>

According to several human rights reports, **humanitarian workers** or **civilians working for the Somali government, international and national NGOs, UN agencies, or diplomatic missions** are at risk of being targets of attacks and killings by Al-Shabaab. Even in government-controlled areas, targeted killings increasingly occur. The perpetrators are frequently unknown, although Al-Shabaab is often believed to be responsible. Al-Shabaab has also killed **prominent peace activists, community leaders, clan elders, and their family members**, for their roles in peace-building. Furthermore, **politicians, lawmakers and judiciary members** face a serious risk of targeted killings<sup>280</sup>

According to the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **Somalis returning from Western countries** may be suspected of spying for the SFG or SFG-allied troops.

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<sup>274</sup> USDS 2016.

<sup>275</sup> USDS 2016.

<sup>276</sup> USDS 2016.

<sup>277</sup> EASO 2014, s. 103.

<sup>278</sup> EASO 2014, s. 103.

<sup>279</sup> EASO 2014, s. 104.

<sup>280</sup> EASO 2014, s. 105.





They usually try to avoid going back to Al-Shabaab-controlled areas, even when their clan lives in that area. **Somalis returning from the Diaspora** can be at risk of targeted attacks by Al-Shabaab, especially 'those who are visible and do not blend in'.<sup>281</sup>

UNHCR states: 'it is very difficult to survive **without a support network** in Mogadishu. For newcomers to the city, particularly when they do not belong to the clans or nuclear families established in the district in question, or when they originate from an area formerly or presently controlled by an insurgent group, face a precarious existence in the capital. Somalis from the diaspora who have returned to Mogadishu in the course of 2013 are reported to belong to the more affluent sectors of society, with resources and economic and political connections. Many are reported to have a residence status abroad to fall back on in case of need.'<sup>282</sup>

The human rights situation in Al-Shabaab territory has gradually deteriorated. Analysts observed that, in areas where Al-Shabaab has relatively uncontested control over its territory, there are relatively few reports of targeted violence against civilians. In areas where the group is under strain, or does not have full control, an increase in the number of arrests, detention and executions of non-combatants for alleged spying, as well as increased general levels of violence, are reported within the territory under Al-Shabaab's control. Al-Shabaab imposes a strict and harsh interpretation of Sharia law in areas under its control, which prohibits the exercise of several forms of human rights, such as freedom of speech, expression, movement, assembly, and religion.<sup>283</sup>

Many rules by Al-Shabaab affect women in particular, such as those ordering them to wear heavy veils, prohibiting them from wearing bras (bras show bodily forms), forbidding them to work and travel together with non-related men, speaking and shaking hands with men without a male relative being present. Men have to wear beards and trousers showing their ankles and cannot wear jeans or moustaches.<sup>284</sup>

Since 'Al-Shabaab sees spies everywhere', any movement can be viewed as being suspicious and needs to be justified, in particular if the movement is between Al-Shabaab areas and areas controlled by the government and AMISOM. People must ask for permission to travel within Al-Shabaab controlled areas.<sup>285</sup>

In Al-Shabaab areas, the group abducts **girls** from schools and streets and arranges **compulsory marriages** between their fighters and young girls (sometimes not older than 12). Boys are (often initially voluntarily) recruited with the promise of getting married to a girl.<sup>286</sup>

Somalia is one of the world's worst places to be a **woman** (178th place), according to a May 2014 report by Save the Children. Mothers and children face the highest risks of death, and the steepest roads to recovery, in crisis situations that occur in fragile settings. Under Somali customary law, sexual and gender-based violence

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<sup>281</sup> EASO 2014, s. 105.

<sup>282</sup> EASO 2014, s. 106.

<sup>283</sup> EASO 2014, s. 106.

<sup>284</sup> EASO 2014, s. 107.

<sup>285</sup> EASO 2014, s. 107.

<sup>286</sup> EASO 2014, s. 107.



often remains unpunished. In rape cases, elders used to compel victims to marry their perpetrator.<sup>287</sup>

Sexual violence is pervasive in Somalia and 'a fact of everyday life for women and girls'. Perpetrators include government security forces, members of armed opposition groups, militias and private actors. All operate with impunity, according to Amnesty International. Female-headed households (mostly divorced or widowed women with children) in the overcrowded IDP-camps are extremely vulnerable. In 2012 at least 1 700 cases of rape in IDP settlements were reported. Seventy per cent of these were carried out by armed men wearing government uniforms and 30 % of the victims were minors. During the first six months of 2013, 800 cases of sexual and gender-based violence were registered in Mogadishu alone. Many of these acts of violence were committed by 'men in uniform', be they militia, soldiers, police or other.<sup>288</sup>

The practice of **FGM** is widespread throughout Somalia. UNICEF data (2013) indicate that 98 % of women and girls have undergone FGM/C, the majority of whom (63 %) were subjected to infibulation, the most severe and most invasive form of FGM/C.<sup>289</sup>

In Al-Shabaab regions, women and girls face serious risks of being abducted by Al-Shabaab and forced into marriages with Shabaab fighters. They can also be forced to work for Al-Shabaab as cleaners, cooks and porters. In some cases, girls have been used as suicide bombers as well.<sup>290</sup>

Homosexuality is illegal and is punishable by up to three years in prison: 'Whoever has carnal intercourse with a person of the same sex shall be punished, where the act does not constitute a more serious crime, with imprisonment from three months to three years. Where the act committed is an act of lust different from carnal intercourse, the punishment imposed shall be reduced by one third.' The legal practice in South/Central Somalia consists of a variety of local customary law (xeer) and Islamic law. In Al-Shabaab-controlled areas, same-sex contacts and acts are punished according to the Sharia by flogging or stoning. On 15 March 2013, Al-Shabaab stoned to death an 18-year-old man in Baraawe, Lower Shabelle Region, for engaging in a homosexual act.<sup>291</sup>

## 6. Humanitarian situation

Despite having achieved steady progresses with increasing of political stability, the humanitarian crisis in Somalia is among the most complex protracted emergencies in the world. Resurgent conflicts across the country and endemic environmental hazards render the majority of Somalia's 12.3 million inhabitants chronically or acutely vulnerable.<sup>292</sup>

The country suffers from cyclical natural disasters. Flash floods, drought and limited infrastructure exposes many communities to seasonal effects - often with disastrous

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<sup>287</sup> EASO 2014, s. 108.

<sup>288</sup> EASO 2014, s. 109.

<sup>289</sup> EASO 2014, s. 119.

<sup>290</sup> EASO 2014, s. 108.

<sup>291</sup> EASO 2014, s. 113.

<sup>292</sup> UNOCHA 2016, s. 45.



consequences for majority of Somalis who depend on subsistence farming and pastoralism for their livelihoods.<sup>293</sup>

Large gaps remain in the provision of basic services, demanding a humanitarian response across a range of sectors. A chronic lack of development and accountability mean that access to basic services such as health and education are well below internationally accepted levels. Somalia scores extremely low across a range of human development indicators and is consistently at the bottom of development and humanitarian ranking lists. More than 73 percent of the population lives below the poverty line; 1 in 18 women dies during childbirth; some 1.7 million children are out of school; 82 percent of the population does not have access to safe water and basic sanitation.<sup>294</sup>

Some 4.65 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance until June 2016. 950,000 people are facing Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phase 3 and 4) food insecurity between February and June, 68 percent of them IDPs. A further 3.7 million people are in Stressed phase and will require assistance, including livelihood support, to prevent them from slipping into Crisis and Emergency phases. More than 1.3 million people are in need of nutritional assistance. Malnutrition rates remain high - 308,000 children under the age of five are acutely malnourished, and 56,000 children are severely malnourished. The overall burden of acute malnutrition in 2016 is estimated to be more than 800,000 cases. Health conditions are a serious concern. Frequent outbreaks of acute watery diarrhea (AWD)/cholera (some 4,000 cases) and 5,700 suspected measles cases have been reported this year with 85 percent of the cases among children under the age of five.<sup>295</sup>

Over 1.1 million people remain in a protracted internal displacement situation. Many live in terrible conditions and do not have adequate access to basic services and livelihoods. They are marginalised and are at risk of human rights violations including discrimination, pervasive gender-based violence (GBV) and forced evictions.<sup>296</sup>

Family separations, GBV against children, forced recruitment and abductions are among the main violations against displaced children. In addition, GBV is exorbitantly high in IDP settlements. 75 percent of all GBV-survivors are IDPs.<sup>297</sup> Large-scale forced evictions, including by government forces, occurred in Mogadishu, Kismayo, and Baidoa. During the first two months of 2015, over 40,000 people were forcibly evicted in Mogadishu. Government forces forcibly evicted over 21,000 people during one operation in March, beat some evictees, destroyed shelters, and left them without water, food, or other assistance.<sup>298</sup>

Humanitarian agencies faced challenges accessing needy populations due to insecurity, and restrictions imposed by parties to the conflict. Targeted attacks on humanitarian organizations persisted. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for an April 20 2015 attack in which a suicide bomber killed four United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) staff and two security guards in Garowe, Puntland. On November 15

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<sup>293</sup> UNOCHA 2016, s. 45.

<sup>294</sup> UNOCHA 2016, s. 45.

<sup>295</sup> UNOCHA 2016, s. 45.

<sup>296</sup> UNOCHA 2016, s. 45.

<sup>297</sup> UNOCHA 2016, s. 45.

<sup>298</sup> HRW 2016 a).



2015, a contractor for the UN mine action was killed by armed men in Beletweyne.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> HRW 2016 a).



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