

**T.C.
ISTANBUL GEDİK UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**THE EFFECT OF AL-SHABAAB IN SOMALIA AND THE
REGION**

MASTER'S THESIS

Sabirin Farah MOHAMED

**Department of Political Science and International Relations
Political Science and International Relations Master's Program in English**

**FEBRUARY 2025
ISTANBUL**

**T.C.
ISTANBUL GEDİK UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**THE EFFECT OF AL-SHABAAB IN SOMALIA AND THE
REGION**

MASTER'S THESIS

**Sabirin Farah MOHAMED
(221228006)**

Department of Political Science and International Relations

Political Science and International Relations Master's Program in English

Thesis Advisor: Prof. Dr. Suha ATATURE

Istanbul 2025



T.C.
İSTANBUL GEDİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü

Jüri Tez Onay Formu

14/02/2025

LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

Bu çalışma 14/02/2025 tarihinde aşağıdaki jüri tarafından Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Anabilim Dalı, Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler İngilizce (Tezli Yüksek Lisans) Programı Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

TEZ JÜRİSİ

Prof. Dr. Süha ATATÜRE

Danışman

İstanbul Gedik Üniversitesi

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Halime SUVAY EKER

Üye (İmza)

İstanbul Gedik Üniversitesi

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Serra ORKAN

Üye (İmza)

İstanbul Okan Üniversitesi

DECLARATION

I, Sabirin Farah MOHAMED, hereby certify that this thesis is the work from me; I do this work in the department of International Relations for the Award of Master of Science in International Relations with thesis. This work has not been submitted to any University for a similar or other degree award and will not be presented to any university in the future. (13/02/2025).

Sabirin Farah MOHAMED



DEDICATION

This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my mother whose unwavering encouragement, selfless sacrifices, and unconditional support have been my guiding light throughout this journey. Her faith in my abilities has kept me grounded and determined in the face of every challenge.

To my beloved father, who departed this world during this work. Your absence has been profoundly felt in every step of this process. Though you are no longer with us, your strength, wisdom, and dreams for my future have been my guiding star. I hope this work reflect the values you instilled in me and stand as a testament to your love, support, and the indelible impact you had on my life.

This thesis stands as an attribute to you both, for your love and belief in me have made this achievement possible.

FOREWORD

As I prepare to present this thesis on the profound impact of Al-Shabaab on Somalia and East African region, I reflect on the journey that has led to me this point. Somalia, a nation rich in history and culture, remain deeply affected by persistent instability, terrorism, and socio-political challenges that have endured for decades.

This thesis is more than an academic endeavor, it is an effort to understand and address the intricate issue that shape the region's security and development.

It examines the root causes of conflict, the socio-economic and political dynamics at play, and the broader regional implications of Al-Shabab's activities, all while exploring strategies to foster stability and resilience in East Africa.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

During This Journey, I was fortunate to have the guidance of Prof. Dr. Suha Atatur, whose expertise and thoughtful mentorship have greatly Shape my Understanding and approach to This complex topic. His invaluable support and encouragement throughout This process have been instrumental in the successful completio of This thesis.

Conducting research on Somalia, an underdeveloped country, presented significant challenges due to limited Access to reliable data and ressources. Despite these obstacles, This experience deepend my resolve to shed light on the critical issue affecting the region.

Iam especially grateful to the people of somalia and the broader East african region, whose resilliance and determination in the face of adversity continue to inspire me. Their stories and aspiration have fueled me my commitment to advocate for meaningful change and sustainable solutions That Promote stability, prosperity and security.

As I present this work, I hope it contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of peace and development in East Africa. May it inspire further dialogue, research, and action, paving the way for a brighter future for all.

With sincerity and dedication,

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No:
FOREWORD	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
ABBREVIATIONS	ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
ÖZET	xiii
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem.....	3
1.3 Significance of the Study	4
1.4 Research Objectives	5
1.5 Research Questions	5
1.6. Definition of terms	5
1.7 Methodology	6
1.7.1 Data collection.....	6
1.7.2 Data analysis.....	6
1.7.3 Analytical framework	7
1.8 Structure of the thesis	7
2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Contextualizing Terrorism.....	9
2.3 Historical Background and Demography of Somalia.....	10
2.4 Origins of Al-Shabaab	12
2.5 Evolution and Growth of the Organization	13
2.6 Al Shabab’s Operational Concept.....	15
3. AL-SHABAAB’S IMPACT ON SOMALIA	17
3.1 Introduction	17

3.2 Political and Security Impact	17
3.3 Socio-Economic Impact	20
3.4 Humanitarian Impact.....	22
3.5 The Internally Displaced Persons Challenge.....	24
3.6 Factors that contribute to Al-Shabaab being a viable force in Somalia	25
3.7 Al-Shabaab’s Revenue Sources	27
4. AL-SHABAAB’S REGIONAL IMPACT.....	31
4.1 Introduction	31
4.2 Expansion into Neighbouring Countries	32
4.3 Impact to Kenya	33
4.4 Threat to Uganda	38
4.5 Threat to Ethiopia	39
4.6 Threat to Eritrea and Djibouti	39
4.7 Al-Shabaab’s Threat to the Region as Somalia Joins the East Africa Community.....	40
5. REGIONAL EFFORTS TO COUNTER AL-SHABAAB	42
5.1 Introduction	42
5.2 AMISOM.....	42
5.3 Kenya Military Operations.....	44
5.4 Humanitarian Aid and Development.....	45
5.5 Challenges in Dealing with Al-Shabaab.....	45
6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	48
6.1 Summary of Findings	48
6.1.1 Political impact.....	48
6.1.2 Economic impact	48
6.1.3 Humanitarian impact	49
6.1.4 Transnational influence.....	49
6.1.5 Effectiveness of counterterrorism efforts	49
6.2 Implications for Policy and Practice	50
6.3 Recommendations for Further Research	50
6.4 Conclusion.....	51
REFERENCES.....	52
APPENDICES	56
Appendix-1: Key Events in Al-Shabaab's Activities in East Africa (2004-2022)..	56

ABBREVIATIONS

ACLED:	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
AIAI:	Al-Ittihad al-Islami
AMISOM:	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU:	African Union
CIA:	Central Intelligence Agency
EAC:	East African Community
EUAA:	European Union Agency for Asylum
FGS:	Federal Government of Somalia
ICU:	Islamic Courts Union
IDP:	Internally Displaced Person
IED:	Improvised Explosive Device
IGAD:	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IS:	Islamic State
MYC:	Muslim Youth Centre
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
ONLF:	Ogaden National Liberation Front
SSDF:	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
TFG:	Transitional Federal Government
UIC:	Union of Islamic Courts
UN:	United Nations
UNDP:	United Nations Development Program
UNOSOM:	United Nations Operation in Somalia
USC:	United Somali Congress
WHO:	World Health Organization

LIST OF TABLES

	Page No:
Table 2.1: Key Events in the Evolution of Al-Shabaab	15
Table 3.1: Socio-Economic Impact of Al-Shabaab in Somalia.....	21
Table 4.1: Al-Shabaab threat to Uganda	39



LIST OF FIGURES

	Page No:
Figure 1.1: Steps in Content Analysis	7
Figure 2.1: Map of Somalia	11
Figure 3.1 Somalia-Approximate Territorial Control	17
Figure 3.2: An Abandoned Tank from the Siad Barre era, Central Somalia (November 2022).....	20
Figure 3.3: Transport Routes and al-Shabaab Vehicle Taxation Checkpoints	28
Figure 3.4: Example of a Transit Receipt.....	29
Figure 4.1: Major Al-Shabaab Attacks Across East Africa	31
Figure 4.2: Al-Shabaab’s Activity Along the Kenya-Somalia Border	34
Figure 4.3: Civilian Targeting by Al-Shabaab along the Kenyan-Somalia Border....	41

THE EFFECT OF AL-SHABAAB IN SOMALIA AND THE REGION

ABSTRACT

The Al-Shabaab remains a significant threat to national security in Somalia and its neighbouring nations. The stability and security of the region have been jeopardized, particularly with the rise and expansion of this militant group within East Africa. Terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al-Shabaab have claimed numerous civilian, government, and military lives. These attacks, targeting government interests both within and beyond Somalia's borders, have imposed a substantial burden on the affected nations. Despite efforts by various organizations to eliminate Al-Shabaab by curtailing its activities, success has been limited for various reasons. This study evaluated the impact of Al-Shabaab's activities on Somalia and its neighboring countries. The aim was to understand the political, economic, and humanitarian impact of the group. The study used secondary data and content analysis to explore the subject.

The findings confirm that Al-Shabaab has political, economic, and humanitarian effects on Somalia and its neighbours. Politically, the group has caused instability in the country, which has contributed to instability and difficulties in governing. The federal government's ability to rule is severely affected due to the attacks on government officials, infrastructure, and civilians. Al-Shabaab has slowed Somali national growth and increased poverty. For economic impact, the group controls critical territory, where it taxes and extorts businesses and individuals, thereby affecting economic growth. With widespread displacement, food insecurity, and restricted access to healthcare and education, Al-Shabaab's insurgency has significant humanitarian effects. An Internal displacement people (IDP) crisis has resulted from the conflict's enormous exodus. These impacts have extended to the neighboring regions in the Horn of Africa, including Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Al-Shabaab's transnational threat has made border security difficult in these countries.

Thus, Al-Shabaab continues to be a real threat in Somalia and the region. There is a need for significant international aid to stabilize the country. A diverse approach is needed to counter Al-Shabaab, according to this report. Strengthening governance, economic growth, humanitarian relief delivery, and regional collaboration are essential to reducing Al-Shabaab's impact. Deeper insights and better solutions from future study on these areas would help Somalia and the region achieve long-term stability and peace.

Keywords: *Al-Shabaab, Somalia, national security, East Africa, terrorism, Political impact, Economic impact, Humanitarian impact, Governance, Regional cooperation, Counterterrorism.*

SOMALİ VE BÖLGEDEKİ EL-ŞEBAAB'IN ETKİSİ

ÖZET

Şabab/ Al shabab, Somali ve komşu ülkelerdeki ulusal güvenlik için önemli bir tehdit olmaya devam etmektedir. Özellikle bu militan grubun Doğu Afrika'daki yükselişi ve genişlemesiyle bölgenin istikrarı ve güvenliği tehlikeye girmiştir. Al shabab'ın gerçekleştirdiği terörist saldırılar çok sayıda sivil, hükümet ve askeri cana mal oldu. Somali sınırları içinde ve ötesinde hükümet çıkarlarını hedef alan bu saldırılar, etkilenen ülkelere önemli bir yük getirmiştir. Çeşitli kuruluşların faaliyetlerini kısıtlayarak Şabab'ı ortadan kaldırma çabalarına rağmen, başarı çeşitli nedenlerle sınırlandırılmıştır. Bu çalışma, Şabab'ın faaliyetlerinin Somali ve komşu ülkeleri üzerindeki etkisini değerlendirdi. Amaç, grubun siyasi, ekonomik ve insani etkilerini anlamaktır. Çalışma, konuyu araştırmak için ikincil veriler ve içerik analizi kullanmıştır.

Bulgular, Şabab'ın/ Al shabab'ın Somali ve komşuları üzerinde siyasi, ekonomik ve insani etkileri olduğunu doğrulamaktadır. Siyasi olarak grup, ülkede istikrarsızlığa neden olmuş ve bu da istikrarsızlığa ve yönetimde zorluklara katkıda bulunmuştur. Federal hükümetin yönetme yeteneği, hükümet yetkililerine, altyapıya ve sivillere yönelik saldırılar nedeniyle ciddi şekilde etkilenmektedir. Şabab/ Al shabab, Somali'nin ulusal büyümesini yavaşlattı ve yoksulluğu artırdı. Ekonomik etki için grup, işletmeleri ve bireyleri vergilendirip gasp ettiği ve böylece ekonomik büyümeyi etkilediği kritik bölgeleri kontrol eder. Yaygın yerinden edilme, gıda güvensizliği ve sağlık ve eğitime kısıtlı erişim ile El Şabab'ın isyanının önemli insani etkileri vardır. Çatışmanın muazzam göçünün bir sonucu olarak yerinden edilmiş insanlar (iç mekandaki insanlar) krizi ortaya çıktı. Bu etkiler, Kenya, Uganda ve Etiyopya da dahil olmak üzere Afrika Boynuzu'ndaki komşu bölgelere yayıldı. Şabab'ın ulusötesi tehdidi bu ülkelerde sınır güvenliğini zorlaştırmıştır.

Böylece El Şabab, Somali ve bölgede gerçek bir tehdit olmaya devam ediyor. Ülkeyi istikrara kavuşturmak için önemli uluslararası yardıma ihtiyaç var. Bu rapora göre Şabab'a karşı koymak için farklı bir yaklaşıma ihtiyaç var. El Şabab'ın etkisini azaltmak için yönetişimin güçlendirilmesi, ekonomik büyüme, insani yardım sağlanması ve bölgesel işbirliği şarttır. Bu alanlarla ilgili gelecekteki çalışmalardan daha derin içgörüler ve daha iyi çözümler, Somali ve bölgenin uzun vadeli istikrar ve barışa ulaşmasına yardımcı olacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *El Şabab, Somali, Ulusal güvenlik, Doğu Afrika, Terörizm, Siyasi etki, Ekonomik etki, İnsani etki, Yönetişim, Bölgesel işbirliği, Terörle mücadele.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The 21st century has seen a dramatic change in the nature, methods, and conception of war. Apart from a few nations using force to achieve international recognition and self-determination, state-to-state conflicts have significantly decreased, with intranational conflict remaining the most common kind of conflict. There are several reasons why these intra-state wars occur, particularly in Africa, but politics is the most well-established factor. One of the biggest risks to international security, especially in the twenty-first century, is terrorism. In many states and areas throughout the world, the terrorist actions of international organizations like ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab have posed a serious threat to state and human security (Aishatu Bature & Assidiq, 2023).

Somalia is located in the Horn of Africa. It shares borders with Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. It has the longest coastline in the region on the Indian Ocean, stretching 3,025 km. Since the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, the country has faced piracy, internal wars between warlords and clans, and persistent terrorism. According to Lewis (1994) in "*Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society*," each major Somali clan formed its own militia, creating a constant state of terror and prompting migration to refugee camps in neighbouring countries or rural areas where clans provided protection. Maruf and Joseph (2018), in "*Inside Al-Shabaab: The Secret History of Al-Qaeda's Most Powerful Ally*," explain that by April 1991, conflicts among the rebel groups that ousted President Siad Barre had spread across Somalia. The United Somali Congress (USC) led by General Mohamed Farah Aidid in the South and the Somali National Movement (SNM) in the North, which later became Somaliland, expelled Barre's regime. No group was strong enough to seize control, leading the North to declare itself the independent Republic of Somaliland, which has remained peaceful but unrecognized internationally.

Al-Shabaab is an Islamist rebel group in Somalia. It controlled over the capital city of Mogadishu in the late 2000s, but a military offensive directed by the African Union (AU) and supported by the US and other Western allies forced it out of major population centers (Mueller, 2016). Still, the insurgency has shown to be resilient and remains the greatest security danger in war-torn Somalia (Bacon & Muibu, 2019). It continues to occupy large swaths of the country's southern region and conduct deadly attacks against foreign forces and local populations. Al-Shabaab's persistent danger has delayed U.S. counterterrorism efforts, which have been inconsistent in recent years, and caused the AU to reevaluate its pullout (Klobucista et al., 2022).

Al-Shabaab seeks to remove the central government, expel foreign soldiers, and build a sharia-based Islamic state (Yeşiltaş & Shihundu, 2024). The gang uses its protection racket to provide dispute settlement services that the government has struggled to fulfill to create legitimacy among Somalis. Katherine Zimmerman of the American Enterprise Institute believes Mogadishu can't compete with al-Shabaab in its strongest areas. Moreover, Al-Shabaab has transnational goals, but factions disagree on what they are. A smaller minority of militants seeks expansion outside East Africa and greater coordination with al-Qaeda, while a majority seek an Islamic state that unites all ethnic Somali territories (Klobucista et al., 2022; Hummel, 2024). In places it controls, al-Shabaab enforces its own severe interpretation of Islam, banning movies, music, khat sales, smoking, and beard shaving. Accused adulterers and thieves have been stoning and amputated. While facing catastrophic droughts, the organization restricts humanitarian agency cooperation, creating a terrifying situation (Alfano & Görlach, 2022).

Al-Shabaab is a dynamic, complex organization whose identity reflects its diversity (Hummel, 2024). Leaders and members of al-Shabaab maintain many identities at the same time, with varying degrees of prominence (EUAA, 2023). Al-Shabaab is a Sunni Salafist group influenced by Wahhabism. Wahhabism claims to employ scripture to build a virtuous state based on Muhammad's teachings, ignoring any other "false" Islamic doctrine. Later, Wahhabist bases in Somalia would spread to Kenya, Djibouti, and Ethiopia. The movement is more sophisticated than an ideological business, and it has had considerable success by using nationalist rhetoric

rather than teaching about an Islamic Caliphate to attract members (Mueller, 2016; Yeşiltaş & Shihundu, 2024).

Beginning in 2007, the UN Security Council gave the African Union permission to take command of AMISOM, the multinational peacekeeping force stationed in Somalia. Guarding the nation's transitional administration, which had recently relocated to Mogadishu, was its main duty. Under AMISOM, Uganda was the first country to send troops into Somalia, and it has continued to commit the most troops (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023). Additionally, there are military units from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Burundi, and Kenya (Mueller, 2016). The mission had over twenty thousand soldiers on it as of 2022. When Al-Shabaab carried out its first attack outside of Somalia in 2010 employing a series of well-coordinated suicide bombers, it killed 74 people in Kampala, the capital of Uganda (Williams, 2023). Al-Shabaab terrorists have taken credit for two attacks: one in 2013 that killed 67 people in a Nairobi, Kenya retail mall, and another in 2015 that left 148 people dead at a university in the city of Garissa (Hesse, 2015).

This deadly militia has perpetrated grave crimes against humanity, and if the gains made by AMISOM forces are not preserved and protected, there will likely be more violent skirmishes and confrontations between them and the forces of the organization. The continued state of lawlessness continues to claim the lives of women and children via rape, murder, and displacement (Yeşiltaş & Shihundu, 2024). Those who are beheaded by al Shabaab are often journalists, charity workers, and hostages. The group has extended its tentacles into the region, recruiting jobless youth, whom it radicalizes and convince to participate in its agenda. The complicated situation in Somalia today has put the region's relative peace and stability in jeopardy (Kheyre , 2022). Terrorist attacks and the spread of small arms and light weapons throughout the region are just two of the spillover effects. If the situation is not resolved, Somalia as a whole could be in danger.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Globally, there is a great concern over the threat of terrorism in terms of deaths, losses, physical destruction, economic loss, and suffering to humanity. Terrorism is a transnational crime that goes beyond state security. Due to its pervasive impact on nation-states and civilizations, terrorism has drawn attention

from throughout the world. Its negative social and political repercussions have had extremely serious economic repercussions because they have compelled governments worldwide to fund counterterrorism measures, which have weighed down the economy mainly by having a negative impact on defense and overall budgetary figures. The effects of terrorism have been seen not just in home economies but also globally. According to the UNDP (2018), globally the economic impact of terrorism has reached US dollars 52 billion annually.

There is a substantial knowledge vacuum on the precise effects and tactics used by Al-Shabaab in Somalia and its surrounding nations, despite the wealth of research on international terrorism. A significant vacuum exists in our understanding of the socio-political, economic, and humanitarian impacts of Al-Shabaab as a result of previous research that has mostly focused on ISIS and Al-Qaeda. By thoroughly analyzing Al-Shabaab's impact in the area, assessing the efficacy of local, national, and international counterterrorism initiatives, and making suggestions for improving these tactics, this research seeks to close this oversight.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This research is significant since terrorism is a persistent phenomenon in Somalia and its adjacent states. This research aims to understand the menace posed by the Al-Shabaab group in Somalia and its neighbouring countries. The information gathered from this study will be utilized to enhance the existing preventive tactics. Despite the continual danger to peace, there have been limited studies that have elucidated the actions of Al-Shabaab. The majority of research on terrorism focus on militia organizations such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda. Thus, this thesis aims to reduce an existing knowledge gap.

This study is also important for Horn of Africa counterterrorism and peacebuilding policymakers, security agencies, and international organizations. The study will improve policymaking by examining Al-Shabaab's operations, strategies, and effects. It will also highlight socio-economic and humanitarian issues encountered by affected communities, leading targeted recovery and resilience efforts. The findings will also add to academic discourse on terrorism by providing new insights and perspectives for regional and global use.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To analyze the political impact of Al-Shabaab's activities on Somalia
2. To assess the socio-economic effects of Al-Shabaab's actions on Somalia.
3. To evaluate the humanitarian consequences of Al-Shabaab's insurgency in Somalia.
4. To investigate the transnational influence of Al-Shabaab, particularly its impact on neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Djibouti, and Tanzania.
5. To examine the effectiveness of regional and international efforts to counter Al-Shabaab.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the political impact of Al-Shabaab's activities on Somalia
2. What are the socio-economic effects of Al-Shabaab's actions in Somalia?
3. What are the humanitarian consequences of Al-Shabaab's insurgency in Somalia?
4. How does Al-Shabaab's transnational influence impact neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Djibouti, and Tanzania?
5. How effective are the regional and international efforts to counter Al-Shabaab?

1.6. Definition of terms

Al-Shabaab: This is an Islamist militant group based in Somalia, aiming to establish a strict interpretation of Sharia law across Somalia and the Horn of Africa.

AMISOM: The African Union Mission in Somalia, a regional peacekeeping mission operated by the African Union with the approval of the United Nations to stabilize Somalia.

Counterterrorism: Activities and strategies implemented to prevent, respond to, and mitigate the threat and impact of terrorism.

Insurgency: An active revolt or uprising, often involving irregular armed forces that challenge established authority or government.

Terrorism: The unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives.

Transnational Crime: Crimes that have actual or potential effects across national borders, involving multiple countries in their planning, execution, or impact.

1.7 Methodology

The study will use a qualitative research approach, through the examination of secondary data. In order to gain understanding of the political, socioeconomic, and humanitarian implications of Al-Shabaab's operations, a thorough and critical analysis of the body of available literature, reports, and other pertinent materials is provided. To accomplish its research goals, the study will make use of a critical review approach and content analysis.

1.7.1 Data collection

This study relies on academic journals, books, government reports, NGO publications, policy papers, and reliable web resources for secondary data. Reports from the UN, AU, and think tanks that have studied Horn of Africa terrorism and security will be prioritized. News stories and media reports will also be examined for Al-Shabaab news.

1.7.2 Data analysis

Content analysis will find patterns, themes, and biases in qualitative data by coding and categorizing. Content analysis quantifies and analyzes secondary data words, ideas, and concepts. This approach works well for sophisticated and lengthy text-based data analysis, making it ideal for this study. A critical analysis of literature will be done. It will involve the assessment of sources, comparative analysis, and contextual analysis. The steps used in data analysis are summarized in Figure 1.1.

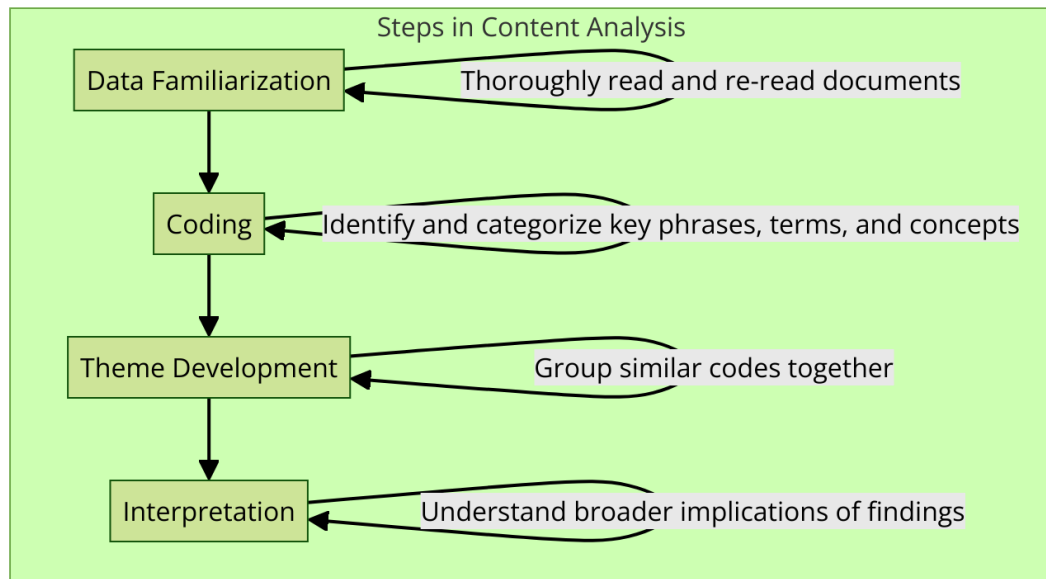


Figure 1.1: Steps in Content Analysis

Source: (Own Representation)

Even if secondary data was used in this study, ethical issues are still quite important. To protect against plagiarism and provide credit to the original writers, all sources will be appropriately mentioned. Furthermore, great care will be taken to present the data impartially and objectively, guaranteeing fair and balanced analysis and interpretation.

1.7.3 Analytical framework

The analytical approach utilized in this paper has two concepts. The first one is based on Stathis Kalyvas's *logic of violence in civil war*. According to the concept, "Each actor in a civil war, however cruel and irrational it may appear, has its own perceptions of the world and of history, and its own experiences and rationality, all of which it uses to interpret threats, pursue its objectives and survive." The second framework is the *pathology of violence*. This explains how the actions on an actor in a conflict impacts the actions and behavior of others. This research explores if al-Shabaab's acts are part of a larger violence pattern linked to war economy and power struggles in civil wars.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

This thesis analyzes Al-Shabaab's impact on Somalia and the region. Chapter 1 introduces the topic, followed by a detailed historical setting in Chapter 2. Al-

Shabaab's political, socio-economic, and humanitarian effects on Somalia are examined in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 addresses regional effects, particularly on neighbours. Chapter 5 addresses the efforts that have been put in place to counter Al-Shabaab. The final chapter summarizes findings, examines policy implications, and suggests future research. Supplemental information is in appendices and references.



2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

One of the biggest issues that African nations are dealing with is terrorism, which has a profound effect on people's lives. It is linked to terrible outcomes and jeopardizes both physical integrity and the right to life. Terrorism imperils social and economic advancement, erodes civic society, and puts peace and security in peril. Moreover, terrorism has the power to topple governments. This section provides a critical analysis of the historical context and evolution of Al-Shabaab. It sets stage for the subsequent chapters which will explore the impacts of Al-Shabaab in Somalia and the region.

2.2 Contextualizing Terrorism

Terrorism is the use of violence or threats by opposition groups to gain power and instill fear or anxiety in a wider target group to force them to accept their political demands (Wardlaw, 1982; Bature & Assidiq, 2023). Bread and Freedom (2014) defines terrorism as using violent threats to instill fear, devastation, or death in defenseless individuals, property, or infrastructure to force the government to comply. These demands may aim to change the state's political, economic, intellectual, religious, or social status quo or policies and activities.

Hoffman (2004) defines terrorism as any action that violates state criminal laws, endangers lives, physical integrity, or freedom, or damages property, natural resources, or cultural heritage. Such activities are intended to intimidate, coerce, or force governments, institutions, or the public to take or abandon certain actions or positions, disrupt public services or emergency responses, or provoke revolutions. Additionally, terrorism includes sponsoring, helping, inspiring, or plotting these crimes.

Simon (2013) defines terrorism as deliberate actions or threats to instill terror, provoke demonstrations, or inflict civilian deaths to persuade governments to comply

with terrorists' demands and gain popular support. Garrison (2004) calls terrorism a tool for spreading fear to attain social aims. One-sided aggression to challenge a greater opponent to change politics, according to Stepanova (2008).

Abdullahi (2015) calls terrorism crooked warfare that uses ambushes to attain political, economic, or religious goals. This strategy has allowed terrorists to challenge Britain, France, and the US. Fighting terrorism involves well-articulated, armed, and trained individuals. Terrorists desire political control to achieve their political, economic, ideological, and religious goals, according to Gompert and Gordon (2008).

2.3 Historical Background and Demography of Somalia

On July 1, 1960, the union of Italian and British Somaliland became the Republic of Somalia, and Aden Abdullah Osman became its first president. A communist state was founded in 1969 by a coup headed by Major General Mohamed Said Barre (Bayeh, 2024). Barre was toppled by rebel forces in 1991 as a result of the authoritarianism of his rule and its persecution of political opponents. Since then, Somalia has been seen as a failed state due to its hunger, conflict, and lack of a strong central authority. Although it is not recognized internationally, northern clans proclaimed Somaliland to be an independent republic in May 1991. The autonomous Puntland State of Somalia was established in 1998 by the country's northeastern districts; it has no desire to become a breakaway nation (Mwangi, 2012).

Somalia borders Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean (Figure 2.1). At ten million (2012), Somalis make up 85% of the population, followed by Bantus (15%) and other ethnic groupings (5%). Somali and Arabic are the official languages, but English and Italian are also spoken. The majority religion is Sunni Islam, while Sufi Islam is also practiced. Remittances, cattle, fishing, charcoal, banana farming, and leather production are the main drivers of the economy (Hills, 2021).

Strong kinship networks centred on clans, which offer support and safety, are the foundation of Somali society. The main clans are the Isaaq, Hawiye, Dir, and Darood, each of which has smaller clans dispersed throughout various areas. The agropastoralist Mirifle, Digil, and Rahanweyn clans are among the others (Bayeh,

2024). Discrimination is experienced by minority populations like the Bantus and other coastal communities. Claiming Hebrew ancestry, the Yibr reside in Mogadishu, Basasso, and Borama, which are coastal towns (Aishatu Bature & Assidiq, 2023).



Figure 2.1: Map of Somalia

Source: Hummel (2024)

Following President Siad Barre's overthrow in 1991, Somalia plunged into chaos. The Somali people and the international community have attempted more than fifteen times since then to remove the despotism that the nation has experienced from power in Somalia. However, despite numerous tries, no new government has been able to forge a lasting framework of governance for a unified nation over an extended period of time (Bayeh, 2024). Rather, an increasing number of new militia factions have emerged and are fighting a civil war with one another over control of their territories and potentially the entire nation. Regions in the Horn of Africa and East Africa will have to deal with the effects of Somalia's instability on regional security for a considerable amount of time until it passes. Security issues in the surrounding states will persist due to Somalia's ongoing conflicts and instability. The region as a whole now faces a security concern due to the conflict system that the Somalia issue has brought forth.

Somalia, a fragile state, with ongoing crises, armed violence, poverty, and reliance on external aid and remittances. During the period of instability, Somalis lived in pastoral democracies, where lineages, clan families, and sub-clans divided

the community. In the Horn of Africa's first democracy, this pattern has led to contemporary social instability. The current situation in Somalia has resulted in internal displacement, deaths, and severe ramifications for neighbouring nations, particularly Kenya and Ethiopia (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023).

2.4 Origins of Al-Shabaab

Somalia, in the horn of Africa (Figure 2.1), one of the poorest nations, has seen armed organizations come and go during its decades of political turbulence.

Al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI, or “Unity of Islam”), a violent Salafi group that peaked in the 1990s after Said Barre's 1969–1991 administration fell and civil war began, is believed to have spawned al-Shabaab and many of its commanders. Osama bin Laden funded and armed a group of Middle East-educated Somali extremists that formed AIAI (Klobucista et al., 2022).

Somalia fell into anarchy after president Siad Barre was expelled in 1991. The SNM ruled the north, while the United Somalia Congress (USC) ruled Mogadishu and southern Somalia. On January 26, 1991, USC established an interim administration led by Ali Mahdi Muhammed, which the SNM rejected. SNM established the Republic of Somaliland in May 1991 by declaring independence in northern Somali territories. The UN intervened after conflict between opposing faction leaders caused relocation, famine, and hundreds of Somali fatalities. In August 1992, UNOSOM I was activated to address political upheaval and humanitarian crisis in Somalia. The endeavor, known as "operation provide relief," created an atmosphere for humanitarian aid delivery. The US initiated Operation "Restore Hope" in Somalia in December 1992. This mission became UNOSOM II in March 1993, with increasing international involvement and the US handing over responsibility on May 9, 1993. US and UNOSOM II soldiers fought Somali militias loyal to Farah Aideed in the Battle of Mogadishu, popularly known as "Blackhawk Down," on October 3-4, 1993. Over 500 Somalis and 18 American soldiers died in this combat. US and UN forces left in 1994 and 1995 due to deteriorating conditions (Anderson & McKnight, 2015).

Aideed proclaimed himself president in June 1995, but he was disregarded. On August 1, 1996, he was slain by an attack by former allies. Ali Mahdi Muhammad served as the president of the United Somali Congress from January

1991 to January 1997. There was no president of Somalia before to Abdiqasim Salad Hassan's Transitional National Government (TNG), which was in place from August 2000 until October 2004. Following a power-sharing arrangement with warlords, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed of the Somalia Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) assumed control in October 2004, establishing a 275-member parliament and requesting the deployment of African peacekeeper (Center for Preventive Action, 2023)s.

In the early 2000s, AIAI's elder guard, which had formed a political front, split with newer members, who wanted a “Greater Somalia” under fundamentalist Islamic government. After joining the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), the hardliners became its young militia. Al-Shabaab and the ICU took control of the city in June 2006, raising worries of Islamist violence in Ethiopia (Klobucista et al., 2022)

Ethiopia, a nation with a sizable Christian population, invaded Somalia in December 2006 and swiftly forced the ICU out of Mogadishu. Analysts claim that al-Shabaab became more radicalized as a result of the action, which was called for by Somalia's transitional government. A significant number of the ICU fled to neighboring countries, while al-Shabaab withdrew to the south. There, it planned bombs and killings in addition to other guerilla actions against Ethiopian soldiers. Some commentators claim that during these years, the organization evolved into a full-fledged insurgency and seized control of significant portions of central and southern Somalia (Center for Preventive Action, 2023).

The Ethiopian occupation “transforming the group from a small, relatively unimportant part of a more moderate Islamic movement into the most powerful and radical armed faction in the country,” noted counterterrorism specialist Rob Wise. Addis Ababa said the action was a “reluctant response” to ICU calls for jihad against Ethiopia and revived territorial claims against Ethiopia and Kenya. It noted that the US, AU, and others supported the action (Klobucista et al., 2022)

2.5 Evolution and Growth of the Organization

Between 2006 and 2008, Islamist-nationalist fighters increased al-Shabaab's numbers from 400 to thousands. This phase revealed the group's al-Qaeda ties. Al-Shabaab leaders praised the terrorist network and denounced U.S. atrocities against Muslims. In 2008, the State Department branded al-Shabaab a foreign terrorist

organization, and in 2012, its leadership pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda. Al-Shabaab has 7,000–12,000 members, according to recent estimates. The gang forces citizens, especially minors, to join, while some join voluntarily for financial gain (Klobucista et al., 2022).

Friend (2021) explained that Al-Shabaab started as a small circle of Somali jihadis who were police in some districts within Mogadishu around 2002. Some of these jihadis were returning mujahidin from Afghanistan who were still connected to the main al-Qaida cell in Kenya as well as the East Africa branch. A series of political killings of military and ex-intelligence officers in Mogadishu during what was called a "dirty war" initially brought them to the notice of the outside world (Center for Preventive Action, 2023). Additionally, they offered sanctuary to a few East Africa al-Qaida individuals who came and went from Mogadishu. This led the U.S. administration to collaborate with regional militias in an effort to capture the members of the East Africa al-Qaida cell. Despite having only a few hundred members at the time, al-Shabaab proved to be a disciplined, skilled, and effective force in the ICU's swift military triumph in Mogadishu in 2006.

After a U.S. airstrike killed Al-Shabaab founder Ahmed Godane in September 2014, emir Ahmed Diriye assumed leadership. The executive council, with 7-14 members, leads the group. A consultative shura gives advice but cannot decide. The group recruits regionally, but its leadership council has generally been Somali, despite a growing Kenyan cadre. This level has clan ties. The executive council follows the 4.5 clan balance formula, which distributes power evenly among the four major Somali clans and limits small clan membership, even though the party rejects clannism (Aishatu Bature & Assidiq, 2023). Despite the current emir and his predecessor coming from a clan not powerful in southern Somalia, the Hawiye clan has over half of the executive council slots, followed by the Darood and Dir clans and the Rahanweyn clan as the least (Hesse, 2015).

Ahmed Diriye (Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaidah) leads al-Shabaab. He was appointed after Ahmed Abdi Godane was killed in a 2014 American drone attack. Some observers first doubted Diriye's ability to oversee the volatile group, but many feel al-Shabaab is still cohesive. About a dozen people make decisions in an executive council, or shura. Al-Shabaab controls central and southern Somalia. Recently, it has extended its presence in the north, where it fights Islamic State for

dominance (Hesse, 2015). Al Shabaab's strengths include quickly organizing fighters, recruiting skilled foreign fighters, blending into civilian populations, and using IEDs. The use of social media for propaganda, information, and recruitment is also effective. Funding from Muslim charitable institutions, the Gulf States, and the Somali diaspora also helps Al Shabaab operate (Aishatu Bature & Assidiq, 2023). The key events in the evolution of Al-Shabaab are summarised in table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Key Events in the Evolution of Al-Shabaab

Year	Key Event	Description
2006	Origin of Al-Shabaab	Al-Shabaab emerged from a small group of Somali jihadis who served as police in two Sharia courts in Mogadishu.
2007-2008	Resistance and Control	After suffering losses during the Ethiopian intervention, Al-Shabaab regrouped and led the insurgency, retaking most of southern Somalia and Mogadishu, establishing itself as a major force.
2009-2012	Period of Stalemate and Decline	Faced with international designation as a terrorist organization, Al-Shabaab's support waned. Their harsh rule and forced recruitment tactics led to internal dissent and reduced public support.
2011	Tactical Withdrawal	Under pressure from AMISOM, Al-Shabaab withdrew from major towns and adopted asymmetric warfare tactics such as ambushes, IEDs, and assassinations.
2012	Affiliation with Al-Qaida	Al-Shabaab officially became an Al-Qaida affiliate.
2013	Westgate Mall Attack	Al-Shabaab conducted a major terrorist attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, marking a significant escalation in its regional operations.
2013-2020	Resilience and Adaptation	Despite setbacks, Al-Shabaab remained resilient through redirection of violence towards Kenya, leveraging fear and extortion, and exploiting clan grievances. The group continued to be a significant terrorist threat in the region

2.6 Al Shabab's Operational Concept

Al-Shabaab is committed to a global jihadist vision, akin to the Islamic Union and Islamic Courts, advocating for religious governance as the solution to Somalia's problems. Mukhtar Robow emphasized adherence to Islamic law at a rally in Marka, illustrating Shari'a's impartiality by referencing the execution of a mujahid in Waajid. Al Shabaab uses Salafi-Jihadi ideology to further its agenda, spreading the myth that America is the primary cause of several catastrophes that befall Muslims. Its early 2012 affiliation with al Qaeda signaled the beginning of its transformation into a well-known terrorist organization with recruits coming from Yemen, the US,

the UK, Kenya, Pakistan, Sudan, Sweden, Uganda, and the Comoros. This denotes its involvement in a multinational Jihadist movement, which may have consequences for international terrorism. With strikes in Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda, Al Shabaab has inflicted a great deal of misery and suffering throughout the Horn of Africa. Thousands of people have died as a result of these attacks, including AMISOM forces (United Nations, 2023).

In southern and central Somalia, the organization has taken control of areas, seaports, and transportation routes, including Kismayo and Baidoa (Ahmed, 2020). They have been able to organize activities, train recruits, and acquire resources thanks to this control. In order to maintain control over these territories, they have erected administrative structures with district commissioners, heads of information, security, finance, and preaching. They also strictly enforce Sharia Law in these areas.

In July 2010, Al Shabaab launched an offensive against regional military involvement in Somalia, targeting places in Kenya like Nairobi and Garissa as well as the capital city of Uganda, Kampala. In an effort to create an Islamic caliphate in Somalia, they apply Sharia Law and incite terror through public executions and floggings. They have abducted government employees in Kenya and taken hostages to press for the release of militants who have been apprehended; however, the Kenyan government has rejected their requests because of its non-negotiation stance with terrorists.

3. AL-SHABAAB'S IMPACT ON SOMALIA

3.1 Introduction

This section examines the impact of al-Shabaab on Somalia. It explores the political, socio-economic, and humanitarian effects of the group's terrorist activities.

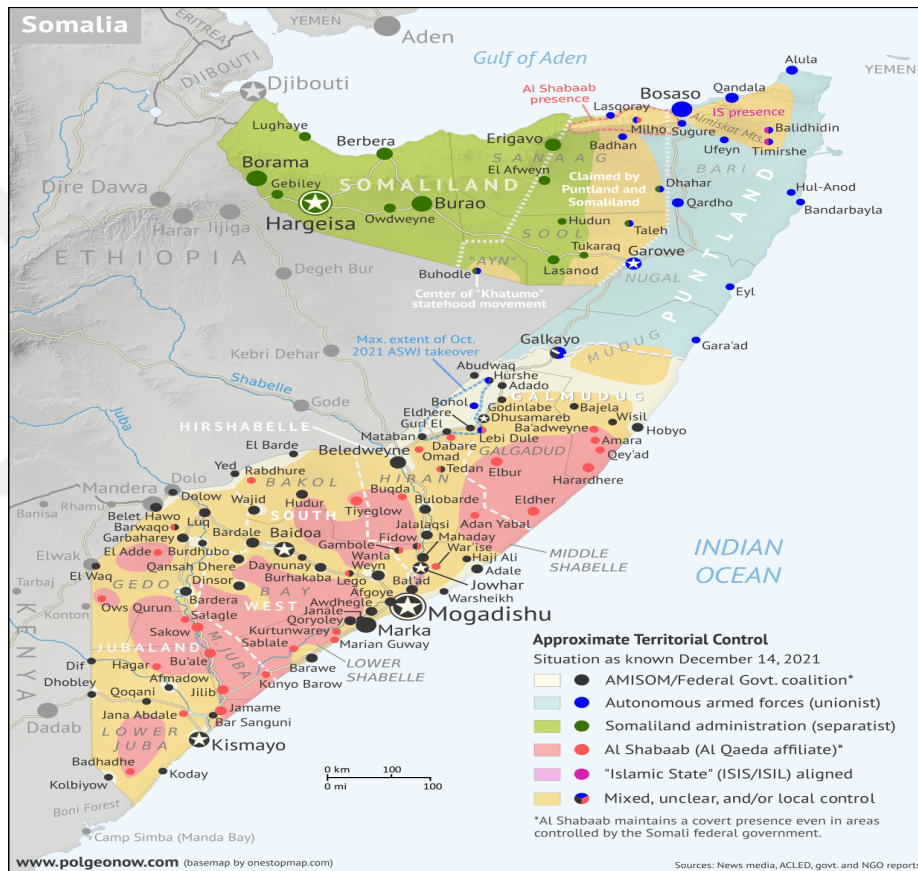


Figure 3.1 Somalia-Approximate Territorial Control

Source: (EUAA, 2023)

3.2 Political and Security Impact

In 2003-2005, Al-Shabaab allegedly killed multinational laborers in Somaliland, a northwestern area of Somalia, and disinterred an Italian cemetery in 2005. Moreover, Al-Shabaab advocated for violent reprisal against Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) officials following the 2005 assassination of ICU members. Al-Shabaab aimed to build an Islamic caliphate and disseminate their

terrorist ideology beyond Somalia. The group also has hundreds of foreign terrorists in its ranks. The possibility of radical Islam promoting political Islam as an alternative government system and Somalia Islamists engaged in terrorism represented a significant security issue (Aishatu Bature & Assidiq, 2023).

Since 2022, Al-Shabaab fighting escalated (ACLED, 2023a). With rises of 19% and 41%, respectively, from the previous year, the group was involved in over 2,400 political violence events, including over 1,700 fighting events and roughly 300 episodes of violence targeting civilians. Having been active in Somalia for almost 20 years, al-Shabaab was particularly active in the Banadir, Lower Shabelle, and Lower Juba regions in 2022, when rebels engaged in combat with both international forces and Somali security forces (refer to the map below). The areas where al-Shabaab targeted civilians the most were Banadir, Lower Shabelle, and Hiraan; these areas saw increases in civilian assaults by 17%, 95%, and 366%, respectively, over the previous year. The group also increased the number and range of civilian attacks, particularly in Lower Shabelle and Hiraan (Ahmed, 2020).

Al-Shabaab's attacks on the legitimacy and stability of the central government have had a major impact on Somalia's political environment. The group aspires to replace the Somali government with a Sharia-based Islamic state (Alfano & Görlach, 2022). The prolonged violence and terrorist operations have hindered Somali administrations' attempts to build stable governments and maintain power. Al-Shabaab attacks on government personnel, infrastructure, and civilians have made it harder for the administration to rule, maintain public trust, and provide services. The group often positions itself as an alternative authority, providing administration and social services in regions under its control, complicating politics. Another factor is its capacity to exploit clan divides and local grievances (Ahmed, 2020).

Somalia's international connections are also affected by Al-Shabaab's operations. Al-Shabaab's cross-border attacks and recruitment have strained Somalia's diplomatic relations, especially with Kenya and Ethiopia. Due to this, military engagements in the region have increased and international peacekeeping forces like AMISOM are always present. Somalia's sovereignty and transition to political stability and self-sufficiency have been hampered by extensive external aid and involvement due to the conflict. Al-Shabaab continues to impede Somalia's democratic progress and regional stability (Anderson & McKnight, 2015).

Recent analyses, however, show that the Somali government is gaining ground against Al-Shabaab starting 2022, especially in central Somalia. The International Crisis Group (2023) reported that the Somali government launched a new onslaught against Al-Shabaab in August 2022, capitalizing on growing unhappiness with the Islamist insurgency, notably within the politically dominant Hawiye clan. Soldiers and clan militias have driven Al-Shabaab insurgents from large portions of central Somalia, achieving the largest territorial victories since the mid-2010s. Mogadishu wants to send soldiers into Al-Shabaab's southern strongholds with clan and foreign support. It should consolidate its hold over insurgency-recaptured areas as it moves forward. The government should use holding troops to secure reclaimed regions, facilitate local reconciliation, and improve service delivery while moderating locals' expectations. If it doesn't take these steps, Al-Shabaab, which has survived, may rebound (United Nations, 2023).

The Somali army, clan militias, and international partners have reduced Al-Shabaab's central Somalia presence. The government took over the insurgency's regional headquarters at Adan Yabaal in Middle Shabelle in December 2022. The next month, it took Ceel Dheere and Xarardheere in Galgaduud, but militants remained outside. The military may eliminate Al-Shabaab from Ceel Buur and Galhareeri in southern Galgaduud. A successful effort would remove militants from a large area east of the Shabelle River (International Crisis Group, 2023). There are dangers, however, associated with the government's strategy of working with tribal militias to combat Al-Shabaab. Local players will unavoidably try to take advantage of the power vacuum created when the militants are forced out of particular locations (United Nations, 2023). There have already been incidents of militia members abusing people, especially at impromptu roadblocks; in several cases, the government responded to discipline offenders with promptitude, if not brutality.



Figure 3.2: An Abandoned Tank from the Siad Barre era, Central Somalia (November 2022)

Source: International Crisis Group (2023)

A recent report by the Vision of Humanity (2021) shows that Al-Shabaab continues to be a threat in Somalia. Al-Shabaab killed 503 people in 2019, 88% of all deaths. This is 14% lower than 2018. Al-Shabaab bombed individuals and businesses and assassinated government officials. Businesses had 22% of terrorism casualties, while government targets had 20%. Civilians had 36%.

“Al-Shabaab’s presence is predominantly felt in the country’s southern provinces. Most attacks occurred in the capital city of Mogadishu where 44 per cent were carried out. Although the number of attacks on civilians in Mogadishu declined by 22%, civilian deaths more than tripled, highlighting the increase in the lethality of attacks. This increase in lethality was driven by a series of particularly deadly attacks, including a truck bombing by Al-Shabaab in December 2019 which killed more than 84 people at a police checkpoint.” (Vision of Humanity, 2021).

3.3 Socio-Economic Impact

Somalia's economy and infrastructure have suffered from Al-Shabaab's insurgency. Control of major territory, including economic hubs, allows the gang to tax and extort businesses and individuals, diverting resources from productive uses to support its operations. This has stunted economic growth and investment in afflicted areas. Frequent attacks on markets, transport networks, and enterprises have hurt trade and economic stability. Insecurity has forced population displacement,

disrupted agricultural activities and limited food production, which is crucial to the agrarian economy (Marchal, 2019).

The prospect of violence has also deterred local and foreign businesses, worsening unemployment and poverty. Lack of jobs has perpetuated poverty, making youth vulnerable to Al-Shabaab's financial incentives. Infrastructure destruction, including schools and hospitals, has hampered human capital development and limited education and healthcare. Less educated and healthier people struggle to contribute to economic growth, which has long-term effects on the country's social development. Thus, Al-Shabaab's actions have perpetuated Somalia's poverty and underdevelopment, hampering economic recovery and growth.

Al-Shabaab's extortion has created an informal economy where firms operate without government oversight. This parallel economy weakens government institutions by negating tax collection and revenue generation. Informal financial institutions and cash transactions enhance money laundering and corruption, fostering unlawful activity. This makes it hard for the Somali government to adopt successful economic policies and development projects. Al-Shabaab disruption has also affected society. Destroying educational buildings has left many children and young adults without adequate education, leaving them with limited skills and information. Lack of education prevents people from finding better jobs, perpetuating poverty and reliance. Many hospitals have been damaged or made inoperable. Lack of medical care has increased morbidity and death, stressing the country's already frail social fabric.

Table 3.1: Socio-Economic Impact of Al-Shabaab in Somalia

Impact Area	Description
Economic Growth	Stunted due to diverted resources and lack of investment.
Market Stability	Frequent attacks on markets and transport networks disrupt trade and stability.
Agricultural Activities	Disrupted, leading to limited food production and insecurity.
Employment	High unemployment due to deterred businesses and destroyed infrastructure.
Human Capital	Hampered development due to destruction of schools and hospitals.
Government Revenue	Undermined by informal economy and extortion practices.
Social Development	Limited due to lack of education and healthcare services.
Health Sector	Severely affected, leading to increased morbidity and mortality rates.

3.4 Humanitarian Impact

Aishatu Bature and Assidiq (2023), there have been numerous civilian displacements as a result of the armed struggle between Al-Shabaab and the Somali army, as well as related breaches of human rights, both inside and outside of Somalia. One of the main causes of widespread forced migration in Africa continues to be the protracted struggle that Al-Shabaab is waging in Somalia. The spread of small weaponry and the large-scale refugee crisis—many of whom are former soldiers with questionable and horrific intentions—have led to an increase in insecurity in neighboring countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti. Particularly in North Eastern Kenya, banditry is rampant; as a result, there is less freedom of movement and less socioeconomic activity in the area due to insecurity (Aishatu Bature & Assidiq, 2023).

Al-Shabaab's Somalia operations have had devastating humanitarian effects. Many civilians have been killed or injured in terrorist acts and military conflicts. Large parts of the populace have been displaced by the conflict. Overcrowded and filthy conditions are common for internally displaced persons (IDPs), who lack clean water, food, and healthcare. The humanitarian catastrophe has worsened due to rising hunger and disease rates among displaced people. Public executions, amputations, and personal freedom restrictions have resulted from Al-Shabaab's harsh Sharia law enforcement. The group's blockade of humanitarian aid, especially during famine and drought, has harmed vulnerable populations. Al-Shabaab's prohibition on humanitarian organizations and attacks on relief workers have hampered aid distribution, aggravating the humanitarian situation. Because of the turmoil, millions of Somalis need humanitarian aid and live in danger (Marchal, 2019).

Aishatu Bature and Assidiq (2023) noted that the threat of Al-Shabaab has caused rustling and banditry to increase. This situation has spread beyond Somalia to the rest of the Horn of Africa, making many parts to be difficult to govern. Despite the fact that military operations have reduced al-Shabaab's sphere of influence in some areas of Somalia, neither the organization nor the Somali government have been able to alter the fundamental dynamics of the conflict or move it closer to resolution for a while. Political unrest within the government and doubts about the continuation of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) have benefited al-Shabaab. It still maintains the ability to wage war, launch attacks, and expand its

territory somewhat. While this has been going on, the government has found it more and more difficult to seize, hold, and stabilize new territories because they depend on the military operations it conducts to drive al-Shabaab out of the areas it controls, even though it has made progress in improving stability in those areas. The conflict's horrific human cost is only going to increase as neither side is able to win a clear victory (ACLED, 2023a).

Felbab-Brown (2023), in an article titled, “Somalia’s challenges in 2023,” noted that Somalia is currently undergoing major crises, including starvation. Almost half of Somalia's population, about 6.7 million people, suffers from acute food insecurity, and 300,000 are predicted to go hungry this spring. There are more than 500,000 malnourished Somali children, 173,000 more than there were in the 2011 famine. Due to a shortage of food and water, over a million Somalis have been internally displaced and are attempting to transfer to locations where they may obtain humanitarian aid from outside sources. Yet, al-Shabaab’s-controlled territories receive little aid. NGOs worry al-Shabaab will assault aid deliveries. Second, since al-Shabaab wants to manage and tax humanitarian contributions, NGOs worry they may be sued for providing material help to terrorist groups. Before establishing legal exceptions and boundaries, concerns that the Obama administration would prosecute NGOs during the 2011 famine delayed and impeded humanitarian aid for months, perhaps causing tens of thousands of Somali deaths. NGO fears were eased by UN resolution 2664, which exempted humanitarian delivery from sanctions in December 2022 (Felbab-Brown, 2023).

Today, Somalia is one of the worst countries for humanitarian relief workers. Humanitarian activities in regions controlled by al-Shabaab have been severely limited due to security and operational constraints for local and international assistance agencies. Aid organizations limited or halted operations in southern Somalia in response to al Shabaab threats. Most active organizations in Somalia focus on government-controlled territory in Mogadishu, government-aligned territory in central Somalia, and semiautonomous regions in Puntland and Somaliland in northern Somalia. The withdrawal of humanitarian aid organizations in the south has worsened the drought in the Horn of Africa, affecting Somalis.

3.5 The Internally Displaced Persons Challenge

According to Jaspars (2023), terrorism in Somalia has played a major role in the internal displacement of some groups of people. Internally displaced people (IDPs) in Somalia became an economic opportunity during the late 2010s and early 2020s for a range of stakeholders, including local camp management, government officials, landowners, businesses, and aid groups.

In Somalia, the number of internally displaced people rose from 1 million to 2 million between 2011 and 2017, and it eventually reached 3 million in 2021, accounting for 20% of the nation's total population (Jaspers, 2023). Due to their historical denial of economic opportunities, government, and services, a large number of these IDPs are members of marginalized clans that are especially susceptible to starvation. Conflict, drought, and the advantages that various players gain from the relocation itself are the main causes of displacement in Somalia (Amnesty International, 2022).

In addition to supplying necessities, camp gatekeepers often levy taxes on donations intended for internally displaced people and negotiate building and service contracts. The increase in internally displaced people has essentially made displacement a business. The availability of low-cost IDP labor has helped construction projects and commercial agriculture operations. The vulnerability of displaced populations has also been made worse by a number of evictions brought on by the increase in land value brought about by IDP camps.

The "humanitarian rent economy," in which landowners and camp leaders profit from the flow of aid, is a result of this phenomena. As a result, as displaced communities integrate into this system, they frequently lose their possessions, social networks, and health. This kind of exploitation of internally displaced people not only prolongs their suffering but also impedes efforts to address the underlying causes of displacement and promote long-term solutions (Jaspars, 2023).

3.6 Factors that contribute to Al-Shabaab being a viable force in Somalia

1. Socio-economic factors

The study by Ahmed (2020) provides insights about the socio-economic situation in Somalia, which promote the persistence of Al-Shabaab as a viable force. Socioeconomic reasons such as poverty, corruption, lack of education, and clan rivalry play a major role in Al-Shabaab's continued existence in Somalia. These problems provide an atmosphere that encourages Al-Shabaab's influence and hinders the successful reconstruction of the state. Ahmed (2020) contends that because clans are so ingrained in Somali society—from power-sharing to blood money—efforts to form a new government are hampered by power battles within the clans. It is difficult for any political or organized activity to take place without clan involvement because of this deeply ingrained clan system.

In Somalia, clans are founded on genealogy rather than race or social status; the current chiefs of clans can trace their origins to the tenth and eleventh centuries. There are sub-clans within the five main clans of Dir, Darod, Hawiye, Isaaq, and Rahanweyn. Clans used to live apart and settle disagreements using customary methods, such as blood money. But the clan-based system that governs the five states that make up the federal government today was founded during the Arta summit, undermining state governance and encouraging corruption. With the exception of private providers not dependent on public funds, this state failure has had a significant negative impact on key services, especially healthcare and education (Ahmed, 2020).

According to the CIA World Factbook:

“A lack of educational and job opportunities is a major source of tension for Somalia’s large youth cohort, making them vulnerable to recruitment by extremist and pirate groups. Somalia has one of the world’s lowest primary school enrollment rates – just over 40% of children are in school – and one of the world’s highest youth unemployment rates. Life expectancy is low as a result of high infant and maternal mortality rates, the spread of preventable diseases, poor sanitation, chronic malnutrition, and inadequate health services.” (CIA, 2023).

The lack of security and an effective educational system makes it difficult for Somalia to build a sustainable economy, which exacerbates the country's widespread poverty. According Ahmed (2020), 43% of Somalis are now living in poverty. Accessing sufficient healthcare and education becomes difficult due to low money, especially when considering the inadequate administration of the few public services. Poverty exacerbates social problems, which in turn intensifies the poverty crisis and puts the government in a difficult position to spearhead state recovery. This creates a vicious cycle. Al-Shabaab takes advantage of this by stepping in to supply some goods and services, so occupying the space left by the state's shortcomings (Ahmed, 2020). Indeed, corruption is a big contributor to the chaos in Somalia. According to a report by the Transparency International,

“Corruption occurs at all levels in both the public and private sectors, and is a visible and expected form of behaviour. It affects virtually every aspect of the Somali society: from public officials’ misuse of public goods for private gain and the solicitation of bribes in exchange for basic services to the clan-based patronage networks used to obtain employment and political appointments.” (Rahman, 2017)

2. Religious Factors

In his 2011 study on Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Assoweh O. Mohamed states that Islamic terrorism in the Muslim world dates back to the eighteenth century. Religious leaders were the best educated then. Somali religious leaders revolted against colonialism in Sudan. In Sudan, the Mahdist movement evicted the British, while Sayyid Abdallah Hassan's Somalia resistance campaign inspired nationalism. Abdallah's early 20th-century jihad and nationalism inspired Somalis.

Warlords and militias wreaked havoc in Mogadishu after the 1991 Somali state collapse. Warlord kidnappings and extortion made city life dangerous, according to Maruf and Joseph. Mujahedeen, Islamic fighters, began fighting warlords in May 2006. Mogadishu residents hailed the Mujahedeen, who sought Islamic justice based on Al-Sharia law, seeking peace and fairness. The Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) first provided security but was overthrown by Ethiopian forces. From the ashes of the UIC, Al-Shabaab began a new age of terror and intimidation that continues today. Despite widespread support, U.S. Ambassador to Kenya

William Bellamy warned that Islamists' ouster of warlords would have long-term ramifications.

3.7 Al-Shabaab's Revenue Sources

Al-Shabaab lacks diamonds, narcotics, oil, and gas revenue, unlike other militant groups. Instead, it uses a diversified and creative finance approach to monitor and control domestic and external cash flows. Al-Shabaab earned \$70-100 million in 2011 from airport and seaport levies and fees, taxes on products and services, domestic produce, jihad contributions, checkpoints, and zakat-justified extortion, according to the UN. Al-Shabaab relies on taxation, extortion, commerce, trade, contraband, diaspora support, and external aid. Financial discipline depends on governance, procedures, and staff. Al-Shabaab's Ministry of Finance, Maktabatu Maaliya, develops revenue-maximization strategies for local and foreign finances. Al-Shabaab controls local resources, although external sources change with Somalia and geopolitics. Al-Shabaab has used social media to recruit foreign recruits, promote its ideology, and raise funds. Personal fundraising and Somali diaspora recruitment supplement this internet presence (Keatinge, 2014).

After Al-Shabaab was expelled from the capitol in 2011, it moved south, where it exerts control over much of the hinterland. Al-Shabaab's ability to withstand setbacks is largely due to the effective and sophisticated "taxation" system it has set up throughout southern Somalia (Bahadur, 2022). It is estimated that the armed group earns more money than the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and leaves a sizable budget surplus. Consequently, al-Shabaab has sometimes been likened to a shadow government or a mafia group. Al-Shabaab, a mafia group, has deeply penetrated many facets of Somali society, including the government, the security services, civil society, the economy, and clan leadership structures. It uses the systematic gathering of intelligence and the threat of severe violence against individuals who refuse to pay the amounts asked of them to impose its taxing system. But most commercial truckers would rather go through al-Shabaab checkpoints than repeatedly be subjected to extortion by federal and regional security forces, as well as other armed groups manning Somalia's main supply lines.

The study by Bahadur (2022) examined checkpoint taxation by the terrorist group. The study noted that,

“Al-Shabaab maintains dozens of checkpoints across southern Somalia, manned by tax officials falling under the group’s ministry of finance (Maktabka Maaliyada). Vehicles passing through an al-Shabaab checkpoint are typically registered with the tax department; if not, the driver will be required to pay a registration fee and provide details about the vehicle and its owner to tax officials.” (Bahadur, 2022, p. 4)

The amount the driver needs to pay in taxes at the checkpoint will be determined by his destination, the size of his car, and/or the kind of cargo he is carrying. The drivers who participated in this study's survey stated that they only paid taxes in cash (US dollars), despite the fact that mobile money was also mentioned in other studies on al-Shabaab financing. A driver obtains a receipt after paying the assessed amount, which acts as a pass to let him pass through any remaining al-Shabaab checkpoints without having to pay extra money (Bahadur, 2022).

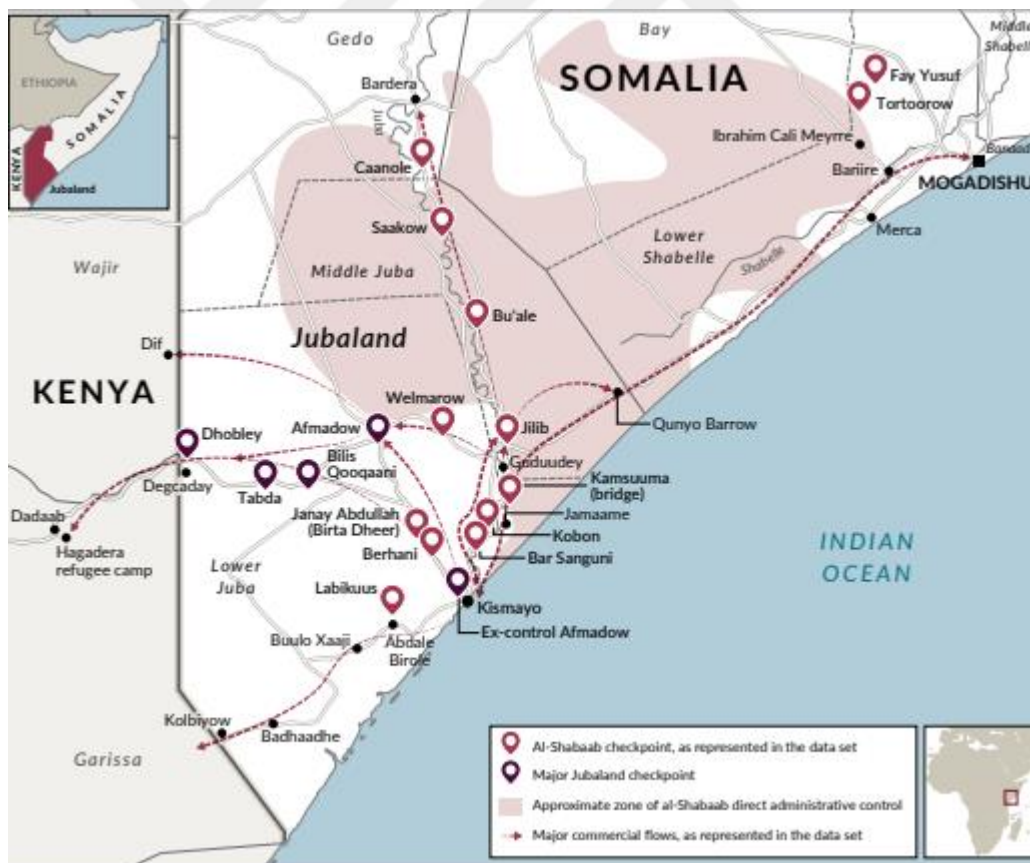


Figure 3.3: Transport Routes and al-Shabaab Vehicle Taxation Checkpoints

Source: Bahadur (2022)

Drivers pay al-Shabaab gadiid, or transit taxes, merely to be able to utilize the route. The route and the vehicle's size are taken into consideration when calculating the tax amounts. Reductions may be calculated depending on whether the car is "full" or "half-full," though al-Shabaab tax officers typically leave this field empty in practice. The average transit fee was exactly \$100, and it varied from \$4 to \$450.



Figure 3.4: Example of a Transit Receipt

Source: Bahadur (2022)

Another significant source of revenue for the terrorist group has been the charcoal business. Southern Somalia's vast woods produce a lot of charcoal for internal consumption and export via Kismayo port. Somalia has exported over 80% of its charcoal to Gulf states and surrounding countries for cooking and smoking. Because al-Shabaab profited from Somali charcoal exports, the UN Security Council prohibited them in 2012. After al-Shabaab left Kismayo that year, the Jubaland administration took over the port and charcoal tax revenue fell. Jubaland exported charcoal for cash against the restriction. By late 2019, UN monitors noticed that al-Shabaab had stopped taxing charcoal and began assaulting and burning shipments to disrupt Jubaland's export income rather than taxing transport to Kismayo (Bahadur, 2022).

According to Menkhaus (2021), Al-Shabaab relies on domestic finance. On November 7, 2018, the Security Council Committee Chair reported that Al-Shabaab's money comes from local taxes on automobiles, goods, enterprises, agriculture, and forced Zakat. The Maktabat Al-Maliyah (Ministry of Finance) and Shura administer money for Al-Shabaab. An NGO manager in Mogadishu said Al-Shabaab expects 5-15% of project costs, leasing fees from international organizations' properties, and 5% of salary. Al-Shabaab's most profitable checkpoint, 160 kilometers northwest of Mogadishu, earns \$30,000 daily. Hormuud Telecom, which transfers funds quickly with mobile money, supports the group's finances. Al-Shabaab taxes farmland, livestock, and enterprises via Zakat. A United Nations Security Council (UNSC) report of 2018 mentions that:

“In letters dated January 29, 2018, February 23, 2018, and August 15, 2018, the Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) informed the Government of Iran that false certificates of origin were being used to transship Somali charcoal through Kish and Qeshm free zones, requested to visit Iran to meet with the relevant authorities and review documentation, provided photographic evidence and copies of Iran certificates of origin for review, identified multiple consignees suspected of transshipping Somali charcoal, requested an update regarding any investigations and sanctions enforcement, and requested copies of documentation.”

Ultimately, Al-Shabaab has been successful in obtaining funding from both local and foreign sources. Trade taxes provide one of Somalia's main sources of income; imports, real estate, telecommunications, and other companies are all subject to these taxes. According to the UNSC assessment, Al-Shabaab actively fights financial corruption within its organizations and collects and manages the group's funds using an advanced system. Strict guidelines prevent people from abusing Al-Shabaab's cash in regions under control; the three images below show Al-Shabaab's admonition against corruption.

4. AL-SHABAAB'S REGIONAL IMPACT

4.1 Introduction

Situated strategically in the Horn of Africa, Somalia has close historical and religious ties to both Arab governments and other African nations, as well as other African nations. It is a part of the AU and the UN. Geographically, because Yemen and Afghanistan are failing states with a large Muslim population, they are vulnerable to foreign Islamic jihadists and combatants from terror-prone countries in the Middle East. The Somalia crisis is strategic and has drawn in all the nations at the Horn of Africa. Countries like Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia have been participating in peacekeeping operations (Friend, 2021).

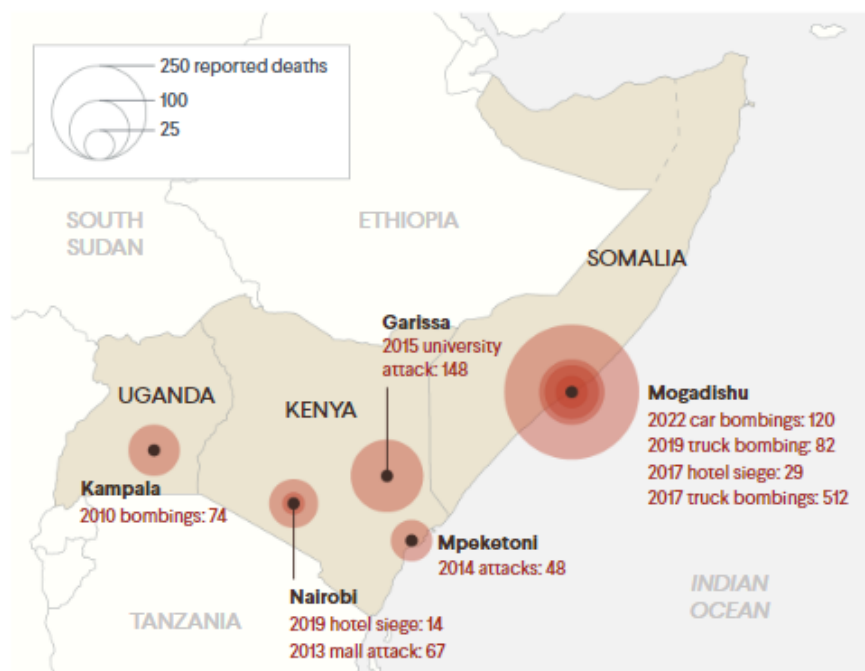


Figure 4.1: Major Al-Shabaab Attacks Across East Africa

Source: (Klobucista et al., 2022)

Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda are IGAD Horn of Africa members. This region has the greatest refugees, IDPs, and human rights violations, according to Shinn (2006). High adult and child mortality and economic disadvantage plague the region. With droughts causing food insecurity, life

expectancy, income, and literacy are among the lowest worldwide. The UNDP 2015 Human Development Index ranks Djibouti (170), Eritrea (182), Ethiopia (173), Kenya (147), Somalia (165), Sudan (166), and Uganda (164). Most of these countries have suffered from Al-Shabaab attack in recent years.

4.2 Expansion into Neighbouring Countries

Al-Shabaab's spread beyond Somalia has harmed regional stability, particularly in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda. The group's capacity to penetrate and target adjacent countries shows its international menace. Al-Shabaab's cross-border actions focus on Kenya. Kenya was used for recruitment, funding, and transit by Al-Shabaab, but not for major attacks. This altered drastically after Kenya invaded southern Somalia in October 2011. The operation to expel Al-Shabaab from the border gave the group an excuse to escalate its violence against Kenya (ACLED, 2023b). The September 2013 Nairobi Westgate Mall attack escalated. The attack, which killed many, revealed Kenya's security forces' weaknesses and elevated Al-Shabaab as a jihadist group (ACLED, 2023b). Al-Shabaab attacked soft civilian targets after Westgate to divide Kenyan Muslims and Christians. To increase sectarian tensions and divide communities, the gang spared Muslims and killed Christians (Anderson & McKnight, 2015). The April 2015 Garissa University attack, which murdered 148 students, shows Al-Shabaab's ferocity and efficacy in Kenya. These attacks provoked widespread anxiety and strained Kenyan government resources and response (Felbab-Brown, 2023).

In Ethiopia, which borders Somalia, has also been hit by Al-Shabaab. The group wants to build a Somali Islamic caliphate in Ethiopia's Ogaden area, where Somalis live. Al-Shabaab has exploited ethnic and political tensions in Ethiopia by partnering with local rebel groups like the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) (Bahadur, 2022). These operations attempt to destabilize Ethiopia and gain a regional presence, complicating security. The Ethiopian military has launched strong counterterrorism operations, frequently with AMISOM, to reduce Al-Shabaab's influence and violence (Hesse, 2015). Al-Shabaab has threatened Uganda owing to its AMISOM deployment. Uganda was the first country to send troops to AMISOM and remains a major contributor. This engagement makes Uganda a target for Al-Shabaab retaliation. Al-Shabaab's first big attack outside Somalia, the 2010 Kampala

bombings, killed nearly 70 people and showed its international reach (Williams, 2023). Uganda's sustained participation in AMISOM has required increased security and counterterrorism measures to combat Al-Shabaab (Hills, 2021).

The expansion of Al-Shabaab threatens regional stability and security. The group's international actions have increased military budget, disrupted diplomatic relations, and cost impacted countries human and economic resources. Al-Shabaab has been fought by military operations, intelligence sharing, and regional collaboration like AMISOM. However, Al-Shabaab's endurance emphasizes the necessity for ongoing and coordinated measures to address the socio-political and economic issues that fuel its appeal (Kheyre, 2022).

4.3 Impact to Kenya

Kenya is democratic and guarantees freedom of movement, association, expression, media, conscience, religion, belief, and opinion. An international financial and banking center in the Horn of Africa. The headquarters and infrastructure of NGOs, INGOs, UN Habitat, UN Refugee Center, and UN Environmental Program help neighboring nations give humanitarian aid and relief. Landlocked Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, and parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo use Mombasa harbor. Kenya draws top tourists.

Al Shabaab has terrorized Garissa and Eastleigh in Kenya. Two babies died in a Nairobi church grenade attack on September 30, 2012. A bus explosion in Eastleigh killed six people on 18 November 2012, and a church attack in Garissa killed seventeen on 1 July 2012. December 6, 2012 saw another grenade attack that killed three, while November 20, 2012 saw three KDF soldiers shot in Garissa. The terror attacks appear to be targeting Eastleigh, a Somali-dominated Nairobi neighborhood, and Garissa, a Somali town in Kenya. Al Shabaab's church attacks show their anti-Christian stance and advance their strategy. The Eastleigh, Nairobi, attacks are expected to scare Kenyan shoppers in the area's busy malls. It tells Kenyan authorities they are vulnerable to profitable targets and unable to protect their people. This obvious issue allows security firms to rethink their strategies.

Al-Shabaab remains a threat in Kenya after Westgate. In mid-2014, the militant group raided villages near Mpeketoni, attacked Garissa University in April

2015, attacked Nairobi's 14 Riverside complex in January 2019, and attacked a US military base in Lamu in January 2020. The group remains dangerous in Kenya, although its ability to recruit, operate, and attack has reduced over the past decade. Realizing that violent extremist organizations require a whole-of-government strategy to prevention, intelligence coordination, and response, the Kenyan security establishment has enhanced its coordination and responses. Despite these improvements, Kenya-Somalia border attacks on telecommunication towers, infrastructure, education, health, and security personnel continue. Over the previous decade, low-level attacks have murdered hundreds of Kenyans, including officers. This hazard continues to hinder economic activities and social services including education and health.

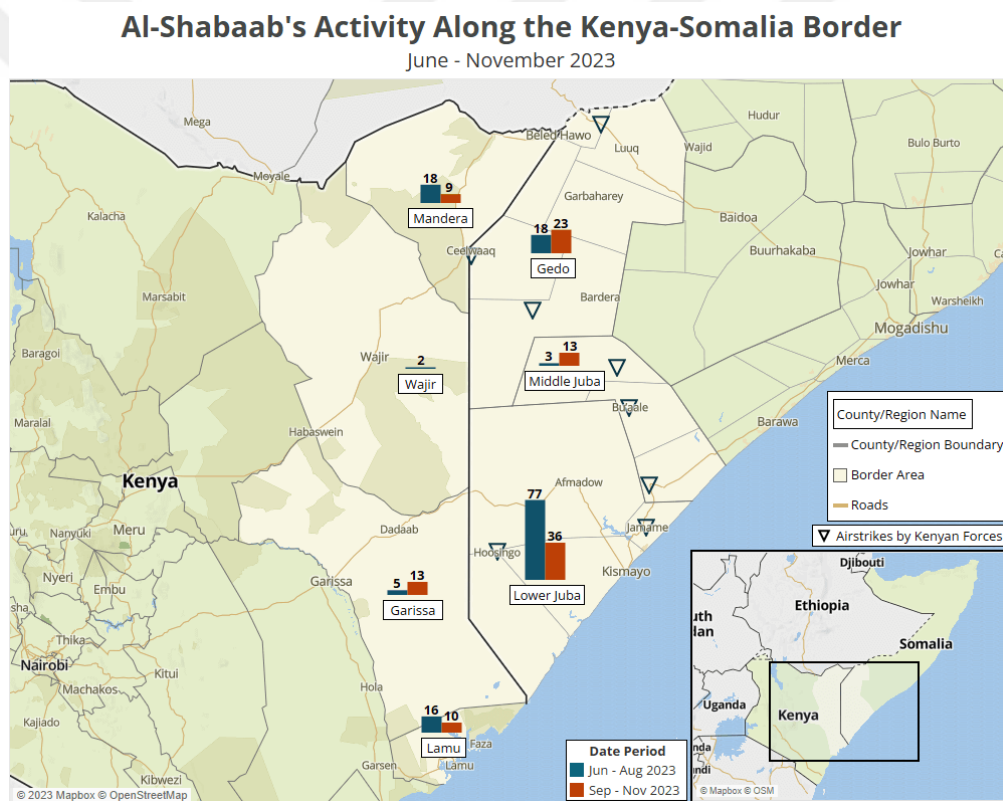


Figure 4.2: Al-Shabaab's Activity Along the Kenya-Somalia Border

Source: ACLED (2023)

Al Shabaab also poses a threat due to a weapon and tactic that they have access to that is vital to causing casualties: improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Al Shabaab will maintain using it in operations against nations that supply troops and against regional peacekeeping forces in Somalia in an effort to exert pressure on these governments and the general public to withdraw their forces from the country.

By exchanging information and intelligence, contributing nations should coordinate and maximize their operations within Somalia and in their own countries.

The absence of governing institutions in Somalia owing to al-Shabaab has fostered pirates who disrupt maritime trade and commerce. The cost of shipping has increased due to higher insurance and security escort costs. This raised import prices, hurting Kenya and the region. Global trade via Indian Ocean routes to and from Asia. Piracy in the Horn of Africa and off Somalia has decreased since AMISOM took Kisumayo and the EU Naval Force launched Operation Atlanta. South and central Somalia's Al Shabaab allowed illegal goods to enter Kenya through Kisumayo, Mandera, Liboi, and Hulugho, then Garissa and Eastleigh in Nairobi. Alternative routes from Garissa to Nairobi include Modogashe, Garbatula, Isiolo, and Meru. The same routes are used to carry light and small weapons. The corrupt and inattentive security forces make these routes popular (Anderson & McKnight, 2015).

The Kenyan economy has suffered greatly from these attacks over the previous decade along the coast. Tourism and business lost large amounts due to foreign travel advisories. Al-Shabaab-affiliated recruiters may use economic collapse to increase public despair and anxieties, which could lead to further recruitment (Zeuthen, 2024). The strategy has always been to view terrorism as a foreign concern, but Kenya is increasingly recognized as more than a "spill over" country. It is now recognized that many recruits and attackers are from Kenya and have been operating in Kenya (Lind et al., 2015).

Like Somalia, Kenya's political scene has evolved substantially in recent months with President William Ruto's victory. Kenya is likely to maintain its domestic security measures, support the Somali military campaign, and contribute to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). President Ruto has not yet stated his position on violent extremism. President Ruto's last election campaign focused on bottom-up trade and economic interests, focusing on individual merchants or 'hustlers' President Ruto's incoming administration may strive to create a more business-friendly climate. This might include Kenyan-Somali trade, which has been difficult since the border closed in 2019. Kenya and Somalia's new presidents offer regional cooperation chances. President Ruto's intention to promote trade and business may signal a new phase in the war against al-Shabaab, even though his manifesto has not mentioned terrorism. If they can overcome historical

differences, the two leaders may want to rethink cross-border management. Fortifying critical border posts and strengthening legal measures to manage illicit activity while establishing licit trade routes may be needed. If border villages trade and normalize their everyday lives, al-Shabaab hostility may increase (Zeuthen, 2024).

According to Lind et al. (2015), the threat of Al-Shabaab in Kenya is often idiomized as “head in Eastleigh and tail in Somalia.” Nairobi's security assessments regularly label Somalis a threat, justifying escalated violence. Political and security leaders in Kenya regard 'external stressors' from Somalia's conflict, such as al-Shabaab's actions, as undermining peace and stability. In 2011, Assistant Internal Security Minister Orwa Ojode compared al-Shabaab to a huge monster with its head in Nairobi and tail in Somalia, emphasizing external concerns. This narrative continuously shapes Kenya's security policies. The World Development Report 2011's "external stresses" concept implies both internal and external forces cause conflict. This approach assumes these pressures are independent, which is wrong. Transnational actors link internal and external pressures (Schultze-Kraft, 2013). Kenya's participation in Somalia is for security and economic reasons, profiting from Somali capital and trade.

Al-Shabaab's Westgate shopping complex attack, which killed 67, brought global attention to Kenyan terrorism. Before this, Kenya saw many attacks, mostly in the north-eastern and coastal districts. In February 2009, suspected Al-Shabaab militants assaulted the Dadajabula police post, injuring many officers and causing severe damage. Militants injured seven paramilitary personnel at a Liboi General Service Unit camp in 2010. In Mandera in July 2011, Al-Shabaab laid mines targeting police and troops. Kenya invaded Somalia in Operation Linda Nchi after a series of kidnappings in late 2011. Between October 2011 and July 2014, Al-Shabaab attacked over 133 times, killing 264 and injuring 923. Nairobi's Gikomba market explosions, Thika superhighway matatus, and village murders were among these attacks. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for popular acts like the 2014 Mpeketoni slaughter and Lamu and Tana River County raids. Al-Shabaab's command, Kenyan terrorist cells, and criminal organizations exploiting insecurity are blamed for several attacks, notwithstanding their assertions.

Al-Shabaab has radicalized some Kenyan youth by exploiting its socio-political and economic concerns. Nairobi, a major business center, hides political, social, and economical issues that render Kenya vulnerable to violent extremism. Since Kenya's 2011 military engagement in Somalia, al-Shabaab and its affiliates have increased violence. The group exploits local grievances such as ethnic conflicts, corruption, and systematic inequalities in education, jobs, healthcare, and infrastructure. This exploitation has increased during interethnic animosity, especially election times.

Al-Shabaab recruits and radicalizes disenfranchised youth utilizing social and economic grievances. Nairobi and Mombasa, where radicalization has been most active, have seen significant recruiting. After dismissing it as propaganda, the Kenyan authorities confirmed al-Shabaab's recruitment of Kenyan youth for violent actions. Al-Shabaab claimed the 2013 Westgate Mall attack and the 2015 Garissa University College massacre. Foreigners and highly educated Kenyans carried out these acts, highlighting radicalism.

Radicalization thrives under inequality, corruption, and a burgeoning youth population with little economic possibilities. These longstanding difficulties persist despite civil society and government attempts to combat violent extremism. Kenya's heavy-handed counterterrorism methods may have fueled radicalization. New constitutional provisions are essential to long-term stability and lowering violent extremism as the Kenyan government addresses these socio-political and economic imbalances.

According to Lind et al. (2015), Kenya's stability is threatened by youth extremism. Since 2006, when the Islamic Courts Union collapsed in Somalia, Al-Shabaab has recruited and allied with Kenyan factions, radicalization has increased. The 2010 UN report named Nairobi's Muslim Youth Centre (MYC) at Pumwani Riyadhha Mosque as an Al-Shabaab recruitment location. After rebranding as Al Hijra in 2012, MYC has recruited around 700 Somali fighters. Salafi-jihadi clerics utilize social media to discuss Muslim suffering in Kenya and advocate for violent retribution, radicalizing and inciting bloodshed. A report into the Westgate attack tabled by a Joint Parliamentary Committee reported:

“Certain segments of Kenya’s Muslim youth are becoming more and more at a risk of radicalization and recruitment into extremist groups for

various reasons. This is visible because it is not Somali nationals behind most of the terrorist incidents outside Somalia's borders but Kenyan nationals. Though Somalia provides a safe haven, training camps and opportunities for extremists to fight the 'enemies of Islam', al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab have executed attacks in the region by relying on Kenyan youth assistance and support. The Government should therefore strive for strategies that address the youth radicalization." (Government of Kenya 2013, p. 16).

4.4 Threat to Uganda

Uganda has helped battle Al-Shabaab by contributing heavily to the African Union Mission in Somalia. Uganda sent the first troops to Somalia to support the interim government in 2007. The US and other nations supported this deployment through the African Union. Thus, Al-Shabaab views Uganda as a major threat. Al-Shabaab's hatred of Uganda led to a July 11, 2010 tragedy. The terrorists bombed a rugby club and a restaurant where World Cup fans were watching in Kampala, Uganda's capital. They killed approximately 70 people and were Al-Shabaab's first big attack outside Somalia. This episode showed the group's ability to launch foreign strikes and Uganda's vulnerability owing to its military involvement in Somalia (Williams, 2023).

Uganda faces threats beyond the 2010 attacks. Since Uganda is in AMISOM, Al-Shabaab has targeted it. Many Somali military actions have involved Ugandan forces, who have suffered heavy fatalities. The large number of Ugandan soldiers killed in action has reinforced Al-Shabaab's thirst for retribution and emphasis on Uganda (Hills, 2021). Uganda has taken extensive security precautions against Al-Shabaab. The Ugandan government has expanded intelligence operations, public venue protection, and border surveillance to combat terrorism. These steps aim to stop assaults and protect Ugandans from terrorism. Uganda has also cooperated and shared intelligence with neighboring nations and international partners to combat terrorism. Collaboration aims to stop Al-Shabaab from growing beyond Somalia. Uganda leads these efforts to promote regional stability and counter terrorism in East Africa (Bahadur, 2022).

The table 4.1 below outlines significant events related to the threat posed by Al-Shabaab to Uganda.

Table 4.1: Al-Shabaab threat to Uganda

Date	Event	Impact
2007	Uganda deploys troops to Somalia as part of AMISOM	Marks the beginning of Uganda's significant military involvement in Somalia
July 11, 2010	Bombings in Kampala at a rugby club and restaurant	Over seventy people killed, marking Al-Shabaab's first major attack outside Somalia
2011-2013	Increased military operations by Ugandan troops in Somalia	High casualties among Ugandan soldiers, reinforcing Al-Shabaab's focus on Uganda as a target
2014	Heightened security measures implemented in Uganda	Enhanced intelligence operations and surveillance to prevent further attacks
2015-2023	Continued regional cooperation and intelligence sharing	Efforts to disrupt Al-Shabaab's operations and prevent the expansion of terrorist activities

Source: Own representation

4.5 Threat to Ethiopia

Al Shabaab targets Somalis in Ethiopia's southeast Ogaden region due to cultural factors and its goal of building a Somali Islamic caliphate. The Ethiopian government would be at risk if the Ogaden Somalis joined al Shabaab and the Ogaden National Liberation Front, a rebel group from the same region that is terrorizing the Ethiopian government to establish a separate state. The TFG urged Ethiopia to help fight ICU from Mogadishu in late December 2006; the war lasted until Ethiopia's 2009 withdrawal. However, others saw Ethiopia as intruders whose main goals were to isolate Eritrea and prevent armed groups hostile to it from hiding in Somalia. The 2011 and 2012 Ethiopian army-pro-TFG militia war to free Somalia from al Shabaab. They drove the terrorist group from central Somalia's Baledweyne Hiran district.

4.6 Threat to Eritrea and Djibouti

Al-Shabaab's expansion and actions threaten Eritrea and Djibouti, despite their different regional security roles. Al-Shabaab targets Eritrea and Djibouti due to their claimed ties to the group and their strategic location and support to AMISOM. Eritrea allegedly helped Al-Shabaab gain resources and skills. The alleged weaponry, training, and financial support expand Al-Shabaab's operations. This relationship has brought Eritrea international notice and sanctions. Eritrea rejects these assertions, but

the perceived backing has strained relations with neighbouring countries and the international community (Bayeh, 2024). These charges reveal a regional support network for Al-Shabaab, which could aid its regional ambitions. The UN and regional authorities monitor and handle these allegations to reduce the group's power and resources.

The strategic location and AMISOM efforts of Djibouti make it vital to the fight against Al-Shabaab. US and French military outposts in Djibouti are vital to regional security and counterterrorism. With its military engagement and backing for AMISOM in Somalia, Al-Shabaab considers Djibouti a viable target. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for a Djibouti restaurant suicide attack in May 2014, killing several people and demonstrating the group's ability to strike outside Somalia (ACLED, 2023a). This attack showed that Djibouti needs stronger security to prevent future attacks. Al-Shabaab targets regional counterterrorism actors and perceived enemies, including Djibouti and Eritrea. Continued attacks and support networks can increase tensions and make Horn of Africa peace and security difficult. Regional actors must cooperate and be vigilant to confront Al-Shabaab and avert destabilization (Friend, 2021).

4.7 Al-Shabaab's Threat to the Region as Somalia Joins the East Africa Community

The East Africa Community (EAC) comprises the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, and Rwanda. It is an intergovernmental organization. Established in 2000, its objective is to construct a Political Federation of East African States through the integration of the economies of its member states. Somalia became an EAC member on November 24, 2023, in Arusha, Tanzania, for the 23rd Ordinary Heads of State Summit. In spite of Somalia's post-decades-long pursuit of economic development, al-Shabaab's presence poses a grave security risk to the East African Community, especially to Kenya, Somalia's southern neighbor (Hesse, 2015).

Somalia's prolonged civil conflict and the emergence of al-Shabaab led to the rejection of its initial bid for EAC membership in 2012. substantial areas of Somalia are under the control of the extremist group, which has also launched substantial attacks in Kenya and Uganda as well as other EAC nations. As a result, Somalia,

which is ranked 21st on the ACLED Conflict Index, continues to be among the world's most dangerous nations. Somalia began a military campaign against al-Shabaab in its center and southern regions in August 2022. This operation did not yield a clear triumph, but it did weaken the group. According to ACLED, Al-Shabaab remains a threat with considerable operational capability and attacks that killed at least 400 civilians between January and November 2023.

Civilian Targeting by al-Shabaab Along the Kenya-Somalia Border

January 2017 - November 2023

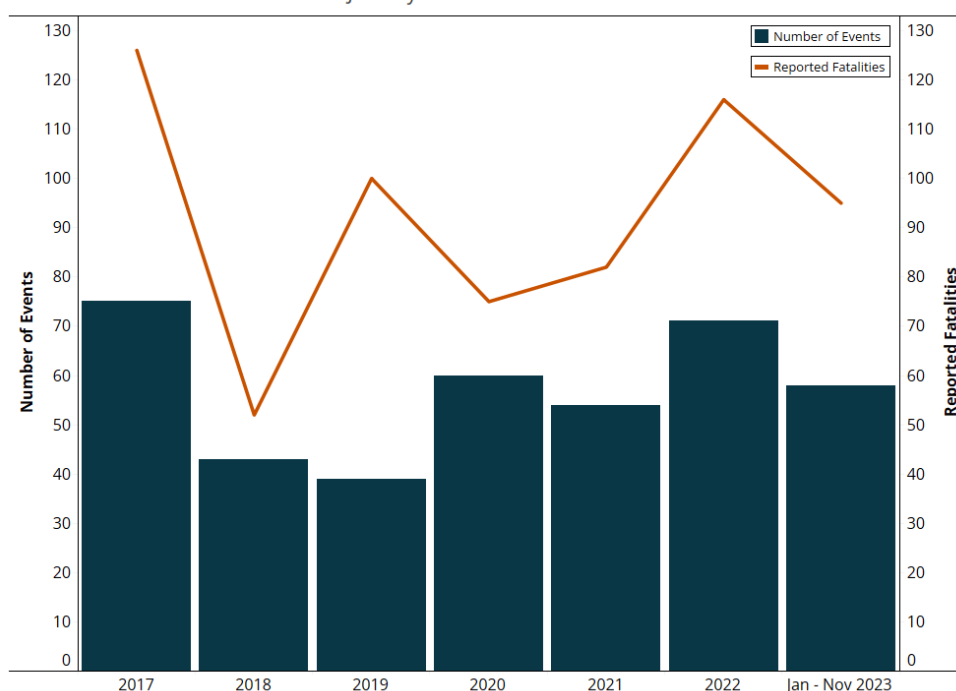


Figure 4.3: Civilian Targeting by Al-Shabaab along the Kenya-Somalia Border

Source: ACLED (2023)

Somalia's EAC membership raises border security issues. Small arms proliferation, al-Shabaab's threat to security forces and civilians, and sea piracy are issues. The Kismayo seaport and Kenya border remain hubs for smuggling. Al-Shabaab's activities in Kenya persist despite Kenya closing its border with Somalia in 2012 to reduce its impact, prompting concerns about heightened dangers after Somalia's EAC entry.

5. REGIONAL EFFORTS TO COUNTER AL-SHABAAB

5.1 Introduction

Since the fall of the Siad Barre government in 1991 and the subsequent fighting between clan leaders, international efforts to address the crisis in Somalia have been carried out in multiple phases. The first chapter of military action came to an end in October 1993 when eighteen US Army rangers deployed as part of the disastrous US-led Operation Restore Hope were killed. This also caused a pause in foreign involvement in the escalating conflict. Later, the 9/11 attacks rekindled interest in Somalia among people worldwide, especially in the US. After being identified by the US government as a possible al-Qaeda safe haven, Somalia was included in the global "war on terror" over the ensuing years. This was accomplished through a variety of means, including direct US-led airstrikes against al-Shabaab leaders starting in 2007 and indirect support for counterterrorism operations provided by regional states, national forces, and other proxies.

5.2 AMISOM

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which is composed of troops from many African countries, including Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti, has been the main regional effort to oppose Al-Shabaab. This investigation explores the regional initiatives to combat Al-Shabaab, elucidating the goals, tactics, and obstacles encountered by the participating nations. Since its founding in 2007, AMISOM has been indispensable in the war against Al-Shabaab. AMISOM's original authorization came from UN Security Council Resolution 1772. Its purpose includes assisting humanitarian operations, lessening the threat presented by armed opposition organizations such as Al-Shabaab, and helping the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (Hesse, 2015). Around 21,564 combat soldiers from Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, and Sierra Leone were part of AMISOM as of 2015 (Hesse, 2015).

For a variety of political, economic, and strategic reasons, Uganda has made a substantial contribution to AMISOM. The deployment aids Uganda in obtaining foreign assistance and support, preserving the operational readiness of its military, and fending off threats to regional security posed by Al-Shabaab (Fisher, 2012). Uganda's engagement strengthens its ties with Western donors and highlights its position as a regional security player. Burundi joined AMISOM for financial and military reasons. AMISOM improves Burundian soldiers' pay and training, maintaining military discipline and cohesiveness. AMISOM helps Burundi improve its military and get international aid, which are crucial for domestic peace (Hesse, 2015).

Ethiopia engages in Somalia for national security reasons. Ethiopia is endangered by Al-Shabaab due to its proximity to Somalia and insurgent past. Ethiopia's military intervention in Somalia aims to eliminate this threat and prevent an antagonistic state (Hesse, 2015). Ethiopia has funded Somali proxy organizations and intervened militarily to achieve its goals. Kenya's 2011 Operation Linda Nchi in Somalia shows its strategic interest in border defense and preventing terrorist infiltration. Kenya has taken severe military action against Al-Shabaab due to its economic and security risks. By joining AMISOM, Kenya seeks to stabilize Somalia and reduce the threat of terrorists and refugees (Hesse, 2015).

Despite its smaller role, Djibouti's role in AMISOM is notable due to its strategic location and logistics base for international military operations. Participating gives Djibouti financial and military support from other nations, boosting its stability and influence in the area. Sierra Leone joins AMISOM to get international support and promote regional peace. Sierra Leonean forces, especially female peacekeepers, demonstrate the nation's commitment to international peacekeeping and provide significant military experience (Hesse, 2015).

AMISOM's principal strategy is reclaiming Al-Shabaab-held territory with Somali soldiers. Critical cities and towns were recaptured during these campaigns. However, Al-Shabaab's asymmetric strikes and guerilla tactics continue to challenge AMISOM. Regional initiatives also support Somalia's democratic process to create a stable and inclusive administration. Encourage Somali groups to communicate and cooperate and help create effective governance frameworks. Political fragmentation and clan-based competition hinder these efforts. To alleviate Somali suffering,

AMISOM and other regional players provide humanitarian help. This includes development projects and aid delivery to improve infrastructure and living circumstances. Fighting and insecurity hinder these efforts, causing long-term humanitarian problems (Hesse, 2015).

Al-Shabaab and other violent groups endanger regional stability and AMISOM personnel. The group's ability to launch well-publicized strikes threatens progress and requires continual strategy adaptation. Contributing nations and AMISOM's resources limit its operations. Due to the financial and logistical demands of lengthy military operations and humanitarian relief, foreign money remains scarce. Somalia's political instability and internal divisions hinder regional efforts. Somali factions' power struggles and the lack of a united national administration make peacebuilding harder and delay long-term stability. (Hesse 2015). AMISOM is the main instrument used by the region to counter Al-Shabaab, showing a dedication to stabilizing Somalia and confronting the militant group's transnational threat. The participating nations' efforts and motivations are a result of a combination of regional security concerns and self-interest (Williams, 2023). These initiatives have been quite successful in spite of the great obstacles they have faced; but, in order to ensure long-term security and peace in the region, continued dedication and international assistance are essential.

5.3 Kenya Military Operations

In October 2011, Kenya started Operation Linda Nchi against Al-Shabaab in response to rising cross-border attacks and kidnappings. The main goals were to protect Kenya's northeastern border, disrupt Al-Shabaab, and create a Somali buffer zone to prevent additional incursions into Kenya. Operation Linda Nchi was Kenya's largest foreign military incursion since independence. Kenyan Defense Forces (KDF) entered southern Somalia to attack Al-Shabaab strongholds, particularly in Kismayo, the group's economic engine. In September 2012, the KDF captured Kismayo, disrupting Al-Shabaab's charcoal exports and other criminal businesses. Kenyan forces joined AMISOM in 2012, allowing Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia, and Djibouti to coordinate and support them. Integration of military, intelligence, and logistical efforts against Al-Shabaab enabled strategic operations. Kenya's military has faced obstacles. Al-Shabaab has retaliated by attacking Kenyan military and civilians. The

2013 Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi killed many and exposed Kenya's security flaws. In 2015, the organization attacked Garissa University College, demonstrating its potential to injure Kenyans. Despite these obstacles, Kenya's military operations have reduced Al-Shabaab's operational and territorial power (Yeşiltaş & Shihundu, 2024). KDF's presence in southern Somalia has interrupted supply routes and hampered large-scale attacks. The activities have also improved East African counterterrorism efforts by strengthening regional and international partnerships.

5.4 Humanitarian Aid and Development

The approach to reduce Al-Shabaab's impact and stabilize Somalia relies on humanitarian help and development. These efforts strive to meet vulnerable groups' urgent needs and promote long-term socio-economic development to prevent extremism. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and conflict-affected communities get crucial humanitarian relief. International institutions and NGOs like the UNHCR and ICRC provide food, water, shelter, and medical assistance (Hills, 2021). These organizations negotiate with local authority structures to get relief to the most vulnerable without being diverted by violent groups like Al-Shabaab. Development programs create infrastructure and boost local capabilities to supplement humanitarian relief. Education, healthcare, and economic development are priorities. Rebuilding schools and hospitals restores conflict-damaged services. By boosting literacy and health, these facilities help communities build resilience. Economic growth is crucial for sustainable livelihoods and aid reduction. Supporting local agriculture, small enterprises, and vocational training helps communities become self-sufficient. Microfinance and market access schemes help small entrepreneurs develop, boosting the economy. These measures help youth who are unemployed and economically disadvantaged avoid extremist recruitment (Zeuthen, 2024).

5.5 Challenges in Dealing with Al-Shabaab

State, regional, and international factors affect terrorism prevention in failed states like Somalia. Effective state control over territory is a major challenge. Failed regimes struggle to control legitimate force, which hinders border security. These states have "administrative incapacity," according to Rotberg (2003), and cannot offer security, efficient government institutions, education, and healthcare. This

deprivation drives political violence and leaves citizens vulnerable to terrorist manipulation, threatening global security. International terrorist organizations target weakly governed states. Non-state actors might easily dispute these nations' authority due to their inability to protect their territory. Thus, civil war and extended armed conflict between the government and non-state actors like guerrillas, rebels, and terrorists are common in these states. Failed states give terrorists area for training, communication, weaponry storage, and attack planning, according to Takeyh and Gvosdev. State sovereignty is another issue. Although all governments are equal in the international order, failed states cannot govern efficiently and prevent or disrupt terrorism. Due of this inability, the international community or directly impacted states typically intervene militarily against terrorist organizations. These actions conflict with state sovereignty and self-defense against internal security concerns. Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq have struggled to govern themselves, allowing Al-Qaeda and its affiliates to infiltrate and flourish. Religion complicates counterterrorism. Some Muslims see Western anti-terrorism efforts as targeting their faith. Propaganda by terrorist groups attracts supporters, recruits, and funding. Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and Al-Shabaab call Western counter-terrorism operations in Somalia, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan imperialistic against Muslims. In ungoverned places, this notion affects counter-terrorism efforts. Thus, failing governments have governance, sovereignty, and religious perception issues that make counter-terrorism measures challenging (Bature & Assidiq, 2023).

According to Menkhaus (2021), Al-Shabaab uses asymmetric warfare tactics. Al-Shabaab used its skills to focus on asymmetric warfare after withdrawing from major Mogadishu towns. This guerrilla warfare has two main methods. Ambushes, improvised explosive devices, grenade or mortar attacks, and assassinations are their first attacks. These daily attacks aim to harass and demoralize the FGS and the AMISOM, often resulting in civilian casualties and local discontent owing to AMISOM's indiscriminate firing. Second, intricate attacks on government buildings, AMISOM bases, Mogadishu International Airport, and protected hotels are used. These usually involve car explosives and suicide fighters. Few attacks succeed, but enough do to affect morale and security (Menkhaus, 2021).

Amniyat, a surveillance and intelligence network rooted in Somali institutions like the government and Somali National Army, is Al-Shabaab's greatest strength

(Menkhaus, 2021). Al-Shabaab gains a strategic edge by anticipating Somali security operations through infiltration. Employment and income monitoring by the *Amniyat* allows systematic extortion from residents and companies in northern Kenya. Nonpayers risk assassination or bombings. Suicide bombings and hit-and-run strikes by the *Amniyat* instil fear and discourage FGS and AMISOM cooperation. After al-Shabaab, its mafia-like techniques might become a criminal extortion network.



6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of Findings

This study analysed the political, economic, and humanitarian impacts of Al-Shabaab's activities on Somalia and its neighbouring countries. The objectives were to understand the group's influence on Somalia's stability, its transnational effects, and the effectiveness of counterterrorism efforts.

6.1.1 Political impact

The findings reveal that Al-Shabaab's persistent attacks have significantly destabilized the Somali government. The group's control over various territories has hampered the government's ability to establish effective governance. The failure to provide essential services and maintain security has further undermined the government's legitimacy. Al-Shabaab exploits clan divisions and grievances to maintain control and legitimacy, presenting itself as an alternative authority in the absence of effective government administration. There have been numerous civilian displacements as a result of the armed struggle between Al-Shabaab and the Somali army, as well as related breaches of human rights, both inside and outside of Somalia. Al-Shabaab's protracted Somalia conflict is a major cause of African forced migration. Small arms proliferation and the refugee crisis—many of whom are former soldiers with unclear and horrible intentions—have increased insecurity in Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti. Insecurity and banditry are common in North Eastern Kenya, limiting movement and socioeconomic activities.

6.1.2 Economic impact

The study found that Al-Shabaab's operations are significant economically. Controlling critical regions helps the gang to tax and extort enterprises, diverting resources from productive uses. This has hampered economic growth and investment, causing widespread poverty. Trade has been hindered by frequent attacks on marketplaces and infrastructure, and population displacement has hampered

agricultural production. Economic instability has exacerbated poverty and made youth vulnerable to Al-Shabaab recruitment.

6.1.3 Humanitarian impact

According to the findings of this study, the humanitarian consequences are severe. Al-Shabaab's attacks have displaced and killed many civilians. IDPs live in overcrowded, unhygienic conditions without clean water, food, or healthcare. Public executions and amputations under Sharia law have instilled dread. Al-Shabaab's embargo of humanitarian aid during hunger and drought has increased starvation and disease in vulnerable populations.

6.1.4 Transnational influence

Al-Shabaab affects Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Djibouti, and Eritrea. Kenya's 2013 Westgate Mall attack was carried out by the organization, which radicalized teens using local frustrations. Ethiopia is threatened by Al-Shabaab because it exploits Ogaden ethnic differences. Uganda, a major AMISOM donor, has been criticized for its military engagement in Somalia. Due to their strategic locations and purported affiliations with Al-Shabaab, Djibouti and Eritrea are also under threat from the group. Al-Shabaab struggled in Somalia before stepping up its attacks in Kenya in the wake of Kenya's 2011 military campaign in southern Somalia. Similar to the horrific tragedy at Garissa University in 2015, the goal of these assaults was to drive a wedge between Christians and Muslims. Al-Shabaab's strategic use of terror in neighbouring countries highlights the group's transnational threat and needs regional cooperation to resist its spread.

6.1.5 Effectiveness of counterterrorism efforts

Global and regional counterterrorism efforts have had mixed results. AMISOM has helped reclaim land from Al-Shabaab, despite the group's agility and asymmetric warfare methods. The problems of governmental instability, clan warfare, and resource shortage have grown. Foreign allies have helped the Somali government stabilize, but long-term success requires devotion and collaboration.

6.2 Implications for Policy and Practice

This research recommends numerous policies and practices to combat Al-Shabaab and promote peace and stability in Somalia and the region. Governance must be improved first. The Somali government must prioritize improving security, service delivery, and rule of law. This includes fighting corruption, strengthening governmental administration, and distributing resources fairly. By fixing these governance weaknesses, the government may gain public trust and weaken Al-Shabaab. Economic development must also be promoted. Infrastructure, education, and healthcare investments produce jobs and raise living standards, reducing youth extremist recruitment. Supporting local companies and agriculture will stabilize the economy and offer sustainable livelihoods, promoting regional stability.

Regional cooperation is needed to combat Al-Shabaab's global menace. Intelligence sharing, military coordination, and combating arms smuggling and refugee flows across countries are crucial. The East African Community (EAC) and African Union should lead these initiatives. Al-Shabaab leverages socio-political and economic problems, therefore counter-radicalization methods must address them. Promote inclusive governance, resolve ethnic and clan-based problems, and give youth alternatives. Counterterrorism and peacebuilding require international help. Somali government and regional partners need financial, capacity, and technical support. International actors should promote political solutions and discussion and reconciliation to foster long-term peace and stability in Somalia and the region.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Research

- Future studies should explore specific governance challenges in Somalia and their impact on reducing Al-Shabaab's influence.
- Assess the effectiveness of various economic development initiatives in reducing youth recruitment into extremist groups.
- Investigate mechanisms and strategies for effective humanitarian aid delivery in conflict zones.
- Evaluate the impact of regional security cooperation and international support on counterterrorism and peacebuilding efforts.

6.4 Conclusion

This analysis herein shows that Al-Shabaab has had a major impact on Somalia and its neighbours. The group's terrorism has hindered Somali governance, preventing it from providing critical services, maintaining security, and upholding the law. Al-Shabaab's use of local grievances and clan differences to establish itself as an alternative authority has complicated politics. Al-Shabaab's activities cause widespread poverty, unemployment, and economic instability. The group's taxes and extortion of important areas and resources has depressed economic progress by diverting revenues from productive purposes. Regular attacks on infrastructure and marketplaces have hampered trade and agriculture, worsening food insecurity and displacement. Humanitarian effects include mass relocation, food shortages, and restricted healthcare and education. Al-Shabaab's Sharia law enforcement and humanitarian aid blockade have harmed Somalis' lives. The group's cross-border operations have strained Somalia's relations with neighbours, increasing military incursions and complicating regional security. Al-Shabaab continues to impede Somalia's peace and democracy, threatening regional and international security. The study emphasizes the necessity for multidimensional efforts to combat extremism and promote peace and development in Somalia and the region.

REFERENCES

- Abdullahi, D. E. (2015). *The Boko Haram Phenomenon and Terrorism in Nigeria*. Abuja, FCT, HIIT Plc.
- ACLED. (2023a, March 3). *Context Assessment: Heightened Political Violence in Somalia*. ACLED. <https://acleddata.com/2023/03/03/context-assessment-heightened-political-violence-in-somalia/>
- ACLED. (2023b, December 8). *Special Report | Kenya-Somalia: Assessing Al-Shabaab's Threat to the Region as Somalia Joins the East Africa Community*. ACLED. <https://acleddata.com/2023/12/08/special-report-kenya-somalia-assessing-al-shabaabs-threat-to-the-region-as-somalia-joins-the-east-africa-community/>
- Ahmed, A. D. (2020). *Al-Shabaab's reign of terror in Somalia: Understanding factors contributing to the group's long-term survival in Somalia since 2006* (Master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College). Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.
- Aishatu Bature, E., & Assidiq, H. (2023). Terrorism: the activities of al-shabbab and state failure in Somalia: 2015 -2020. *International Journal of Law*, 27(6), 169. https://www.cambridgenigeriapub.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/CJLPHR_VOL27_NO6_MAR-2023-14.pdf
- Alfano, M., & Görlach, J.-S. (2022). Terrorism, Media Coverage and Education: Evidence from al-Shabaab Attacks in Kenya. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 21(2). <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeea/jvac054>
- Amnesty International. (2022). *Everything you need to know about human rights in Somalia 2020*. Amnesty International. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia/>
- Anderson, D. M., & McKnight, J. (2015). Understanding al-Shabaab: clan, Islam and insurgency in Kenya. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 9(3), 536–557. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2015.1082254>
- Bacon, T., & Muibu, D. (2019). The Domestication of Al-Shabaab. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 10(3), 279–305. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2019.1658986>
- Bahadur, J. (2022). *Terror And Taxes Inside al-Shabaab's revenue-collection machine*. <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/AS-protection-economies.-WEB.pdf>
- Bature, E. A., & Assidiq, H. A. (2023). Terrorism: The activities of Al-Shabaab and state failure in Somalia: 2015-2020. *International Journal of Law, Politics & Humanities Research*, 27(6), 169-189. Cambridge Research and Publications.

- Bayeh, E. (2024). The Somali nation and the hazards of the nation-state model in the horn of Africa: lessons from Somaliland. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2024.2302802>
- Bread and Freedom. (2014). Linking democracy and food security in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Africa Studies Quarterly*, 15(1), 1-11.
- Center for Preventive Action. (2023, June 30). *Al-Shabab in Somalia*. Global Conflict Tracker. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/al-shabab-somalia>
- Central Intelligence Agency. (2023.). Somalia. In *The World Factbook*, from <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/somalia/>
- Council on Foreign Relations. (2023). *Timeline: Al Shabab (2004–2022)*. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/al-shabaab-east-africa>
- EUAA. (2023). *Somalia: Defection, desertion and disengagement from Al- Shabaab Country of Origin Information*. <https://doi.org/10.2847/821510>
- Felbab-Brown, V. (2023, January 27). *Somalia's challenges in 2023*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/somalias-challenges-in-2023/>
- Fisher, J. (2012). Managing Donor Perceptions: Contextualizing Uganda's 2007 Intervention in Somalia. *African Affairs*, 111(444), 404-423.
- Friend, A. H. (2021). The roots of terrorism in North and West Africa. *Routledge EBooks*, 95–104. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003164500-9>
- Garrison, A. H. (2004). Defining terrorism: Philosophy of the bomb propaganda by deed and change through fear and violence. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 17(3), 259-279.
- Hesse, B. J. (2015). Why Deploy to Somalia? Understanding Six African Countries' Reasons for Sending Soldiers to One of the World's Most Failed States. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 6(3-4), 329-352. doi:10.1080/21520844.2015.1089383
- Hesse, B. J. (2015). Why Deploy to Somalia? Understanding Six African Countries' Reasons for Sending Soldiers to One of the World's Most Failed States. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 6(3-4), 329–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2015.1089383>
- Hills, A. (2021). A Quick Guide to Somalia in 2026: Business as Usual. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 12(3), 283–300. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2021.1957347>
- Hoffman, P. (2004). Human Rights and Terrorism. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 26(4), 932-955. John Hopkins University Press.
- Hummel, K. (2024, February 22). *Somalia's Stalled Offensive Against al-Shabaab: Taking Stock of Obstacles*. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/somalias-stalled-offensive-against-al-shabaab-taking-stock-of-obstacles/>
- International Crisis Group. (2023, March 21). *Sustaining Gains in Somalia's Offensive against Al-Shabaab*. www.crisisgroup.org. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/b187-sustaining-gains-somalias-offensive-against-al-shabaab>

- Jaspars, S., Majid, N., & Adan, G. M. (2023). Somalia's evolving political market place: From famine and humanitarian crisis to permanent precarity. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 61(3). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X23000321>.
- Kalyvas, S. (2006). *The logic of violence in civil war*. Cambridge University Press.
- Keatinge, T. (2014). *The Role of Finance in Defeating Al-Shabaab* (Whitehall Report 2-14). Royal United Services Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/whitehall-reports/role-finance-defeating-al-shabaab>
- Kheyre, Z. A. nor. (2022). The evolution of the Al-Shabaab Jihadist intelligence structure. *Intelligence and National Security*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2022.2095599>
- Klobucista, C., Masters, J., & Aly Sergie, M. (2022, December 6). *Al-Shabaab*. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabaab>
- Lewis, I. M. (1994). *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society*. The Red Sea Press.
- Lind, J., Mutahi, P., & Oosterom, M. (2015). *Tangled ties: Al-Shabaab and political volatility in Kenya* (IDS Evidence Report No. 130). Institute of Development Studies. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294482784_Tangled_Ties_Al-Shabaab_and_Political_Volatility_in_Kenya
- Marchal, R. (2019). Motivations and Drivers of Al-Shabaab. *War and Peace in Somalia*, 309–317. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190947910.003.0027>
- Maruf, H., & Joseph, D. (2018). *Inside Al-Shabaab: The Secret History of Al-Qaeda's Most Powerful Ally*. Indiana University Press.
- Mbithi, A. M. (2016). *The political economy of terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa: An empirical analysis from the Horn of Africa* (Master's thesis, KDI School of Public Policy and Management).
- Menkhaus, K. (2021). Al-Shabaab and the Horn of Africa. In J. A. Lewis (Ed.), *Combating Violent Extremism and Insurgency in the 21st Century* (pp. 105-116). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003164500-10>
- Mueller, J. C. (2016). The Evolution of Political Violence: The Case of Somalia's Al-Shabaab. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 30(1), 116–141. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2016.1165213>
- Mwangi, O. G. (2012). State Collapse, Al-Shabaab, Islamism, and Legitimacy in Somalia. *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 13(4), 513–527. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21567689.2012.725659>
- Rahman, K. (2017). *Somalia: Overview of corruption and anti-corruption*. Transparency International. Retrieved from https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/helpdesk/Somalia_2017.pdf
- Simon, J. D. (2013). *Terrorism: Understanding the growing threat*. Cambridge Research and Publications.

- Stepanova, E. (2008). *Terrorism in asymmetrical conflict: Ideological and structural aspects*. Oxford University Press.
- United Nations. (2023, October 19). *As African Union Mission in Somalia Draws Down, Al-Shabaab Remains Threat to Country, Region, Special Representative Tells Security Council | UN Press*. Press.un.org. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15457.doc.htm>
- Vision of Humanity. (2021, January 18). *Country close-up: Terrorism in Somalia*. Vision of Humanity. <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/country-close-up-terrorism-in-somalia/>
- Wardlaw, G. (1982). *Political terrorism: Theory, tactics, and counter-measures*. Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, P. D. (2023). Conventional Insurgents: Understanding al-Shabaab’s Mass Attacks against African Union Bases in Somalia. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610x.2023.2207234>
- Yeşiltaş, M., & Shihundu, F. (2024). From “Roving” to “Stationary” Actors: Understanding the Territorial Logic of Al Shabaab in Somalia. *African Security*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19392206.2024.2327121>
- Zeuthen, M. (2024). *A New Phase in the Fight against al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa*. International Centre for Counter-Terrorism - ICCT. <https://www.icct.nl/publication/new-phase-fight-against-al-shabaab-horn-africa>

APPENDICES

Appendix-1: Key Events in Al-Shabaab's Activities in East Africa (2004-2022)

Year	Date	Event	Description
2004	June	Islamic Courts Union Emerges	A coalition of eleven sharia courts forms the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) with Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as leader.
2004	October	Transitional Federal Government Formed	Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is formed in Nairobi, with Abdullahi Yusuf elected as president.
2006	June	Mogadishu Falls	Backed by Al-Shabaab militants, the ICU seizes control of Mogadishu after clashes with warlords.
2006	December 6	Ethiopia Invades	Ethiopian troops invade Somalia and take Mogadishu with little resistance from the ICU.
2007	January 7	Transitional Government Enters Mogadishu	TFG forces move into Mogadishu from their interim headquarters in Baidoa.
2007	February	Regional Peacekeepers Arrive	The United Nations approves AMISOM to support the TFG in its battle against Al-Shabaab.
2008	February	U.S. Designates Al-Shabaab Terrorists	The U.S. State Department designates Al-Shabaab a foreign terrorist organization.
2009	January 13	Ethiopia Pulls Out	Ethiopian troops withdraw from Somalia, replaced by AMISOM forces.
2010	July 11	A Transnational Terrorist Threat	Al-Shabaab carries out multiple suicide bombings in Kampala, Uganda, killing seventy-four people.
2011	August	AMISOM Turns the Corner	AMISOM and TFG forces push Al-Shabaab out of Mogadishu and other major urban centers.
2011	October 16	Kenya Marches In	Kenya invades southern Somalia in Operation Linda Nchi following kidnappings claimed by Al-Shabaab.
2012	February	Tying the Knot With al-Qaeda	Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri announces Al-Shabaab's affiliation with the jihadi network.
2012	October	The Fall of Kismayo	Kenyan troops sweep into Kismayo, ousting Al-Shabaab from its last major stronghold.
2013	January 17	A New Beginning	The U.S. recognizes the government of Somalia after a hiatus of more than twenty years.
2013	September 21-24	Terror in Nairobi	Al-Shabaab militants kill sixty-seven people in a multiday raid on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya.
2013	December	U.S. Deploys Ground Troops	The U.S. military sends a small team of advisors to assist AMISOM forces in Mogadishu.
2014	September 1	Al-Shabaab Leader Killed	Ahmed Abdi Godane, one of the group's founders, is killed in a U.S. air strike.
2014	October 5	Port City Liberated	Somali and AMISOM troops retake the southern coastal city of Barawe from Al-Shabaab.
2015	April 2	Kenya Again Under Attack	Al-Shabaab militants kill 148 people at Garissa University College in central Kenya.
2017	February 8	A Contentious Election	Mohamed Farmaajo wins the presidency in Somalia amid allegations of election corruption.

2017	October 15	Mogadishu Bombings	Truck bombings in Mogadishu kill more than five hundred people, marking Somalia's deadliest terrorist attack.
2017	November 21	U.S. Escalates Strikes	The U.S. military conducts over 275 air strikes in Somalia authorized by the Trump administration.
2019	January 15	Attack on Kenya Hotel	Al-Shabaab attacks a Nairobi luxury hotel complex, killing at least fourteen people.
2019	October 2	U.S. Embassy Reopens	The U.S. reopens its embassy in Mogadishu after twenty-eight years.
2019-2020	December 28-January 8	Deadly Attacks Signal Resurgence	Al-Shabaab claims several deadly attacks in Somalia and northern Kenya, including a suicide truck bombing in Mogadishu.
2021-2022		A Protracted Leadership Crisis	Disputes among Somali leaders delay parliamentary and presidential elections, hindering counterinsurgency efforts.
2022	April 1	AMISOM Becomes ATMIS	AMISOM transitions to ATMIS, which is set to hand over security responsibilities to Somali forces by the end of 2024.
2022		Incursion Into Ethiopia	Hundreds of Al-Shabaab fighters cross into Ethiopia, marking the group's largest operation inside the country before being pushed back by Ethiopian forces.
2022	October 29	Bombings Target Education Ministry	Double car bombings outside the education ministry in Mogadishu kill at least 120 people, with Al-Shabaab claiming responsibility for the attack.