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*Somalia, August 22, 2023*

## DAILY SITUATION UPDATE

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As operations against Al-Shabaab in rural areas intensify, the extremist group typically carries out more frequent attacks in the capital city of Mogadishu as a way to make up for their losses. Therefore, it is likely that there will be a rise in the number of attacks in the near to mid future as the operations against the group continue.

In an effort to enhance diplomatic ties, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia to Ethiopia held discussions with the British Ambassador to Ethiopia—the discussions aimed at strengthening diplomatic relations and fostering collaboration in large-scale development projects.

Furthermore, Somalia signed an agreement with Turkish companies to generate electricity through waste utilisation. This showcases a sustainable approach to energy production and highlights efforts to address the energy challenges faced by the country. Such collaborations contribute to the overall development of Somalia's infrastructure and economy.

Additionally, the Auditor-General of Somalia organised a virtual meeting with the Auditor Generals of the Federal Member States. The purpose of this meeting was to review audit reports and emphasise the importance of collaboration in effectively managing public assets. This demonstrates a commitment to transparency and accountability in the governance of public resources.

In domestic affairs, various government officials proactively engaged in strengthening collaboration and addressing vital issues. The Speaker of the House of the People of Somalia visited the Somali Disaster Management Agency to enhance cooperation in managing and responding to disasters effectively.

The Mayor of Mogadishu welcomed a World Food Program delegation to discuss bilateral cooperation and address the issue of food security. These initiatives underline the government's commitment to addressing the welfare and needs of its citizens.

In the cultural realm, the Minister of Information launched the 'Talents and Arts' program, providing a platform for citizens to showcase their abilities. Additionally, poets were mobilised as part of the government's efforts to combat terrorism, utilising their talents to raise awareness and promote national unity against extremist ideologies.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud demonstrated a strong commitment to countering terrorism by directing the Somali National Army (SNA) to focus on liberating the remaining areas in Galmudug State from Al-Shabaab control. The SNA, supported by military aircraft, conducted airstrikes, and ground operations, resulting in substantial territorial gains and the clearing of landmines in the Galgudud region.

Despite these security advances, concerns emerged following a suicide car bomb attack at the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs headquarters in Mogadishu, for which Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility. However, the Somali National Army continued its battle against Al-Shabaab with support from international partners, including surveillance and training assistance.

To weaken the insurgent group, the Somali government offered amnesty to Al-Shabaab militants, encouraging defections, and facilitating intelligence gathering efforts. This strategy reflects a multi-pronged approach to combating terrorism and restoring peace.

In Somaliland, efforts were directed towards community service and addressing environmental issues. Administrative buildings were inaugurated to facilitate better delivery of community services, and a workshop on wildlife and environmental legalities was conducted to promote environmental conservation.

Furthermore, President Musa Bihi Abdi affirmed election plans, emphasising the commitment to democratic processes. However, ongoing territorial disputes with SSC-Khatumo and protests demanding the release of commander Shegow highlighted existing internal conflicts that need to be addressed.

## SUMMARY

**Politics:** In recent developments in Somalia and Somaliland, there has been a focus on strengthening diplomatic relations, fostering collaboration, and addressing key issues such as energy generation, public asset management, and eradicating terrorism. The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia to Ethiopia met with the British Ambassador to Ethiopia to discuss strengthening diplomatic ties and collaboration in large-scale development projects. Additionally, Somalia signed an agreement with Turkish companies to generate electricity through waste utilisation, showcasing sustainable energy production. The Auditor-General of Somalia organised a virtual meeting with the Auditor Generals of the Federal Member States to review audit reports and stress the importance of collaboration in public asset management. In domestic affairs, the Speaker of the House of the People of Somalia visited the Somali Disaster Management Agency to strengthen collaboration, while the Mayor of Mogadishu welcomed a World Food Program delegation to discuss bilateral cooperation and food security. The Minister of Information launched the 'Talents and Arts' program, providing a platform for citizens to showcase their abilities and utilise poets in the fight against terrorism. The Minister of Justice commended the Somali National Army for reclaiming territories from Al-Shabaab and restoring peace. Somalia is also making progress towards joining the East Africa Community, which would enhance trade and collaboration with neighbouring countries. In Jubaland, the opposition expressed support for the President in uniting against terrorism. In Somaliland, administrative buildings were inaugurated to facilitate community services, and a workshop on wildlife and environmental legalities was conducted. President Musa Bihi Abdi affirmed election plans while Somalia's progress towards EAC membership continues despite a maritime dispute with Kenya. Concerns were raised about the Chief Justice of Puntland's international trip following

significant deliberations. The Foreign Minister of Somaliland underlined sovereignty and international recognition efforts. These developments signify Somalia and Somaliland's commitment to collaboration, security, development, and international recognition.

### **Key Takeaways:**

1. **Somalia and Britain:** The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia to Ethiopia, Mr. Abdullahi Mohamed Warfaa, met with the British Ambassador to Ethiopia, Amb. Darren Welch, to discuss strengthening diplomatic relations between Somalia and Britain. They emphasised mutual interests and areas of collaboration, including ongoing large-scale development projects in Somalia by the British Government.
2. **Somalia-Turkey Agreement on Electricity Generation:** Two companies from Somalia and Turkey signed an agreement to generate electricity through waste utilisation in Mogadishu. This signifies Turkish business investment in the energy sector of Somalia and aims to showcase a sustainable approach to energy production.
3. **Auditor General's Meeting:** The Auditor-General of Somalia organised a virtual meeting with the Auditor Generals of the Federal Member States (FMS-AGs). They discussed recent progress, reviewed audit reports, and emphasised the importance of collaboration and transparent processes for effective public asset management at both federal and regional levels.
4. **Visit to Somali Disaster Management Agency (SoDMA):** Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nur, Speaker of the House of the People of the Federal Government of Somalia, visited SoDMA in Mogadishu. He expressed appreciation for the agency's contributions to addressing challenges like droughts, floods, and climate change. The visit aimed to strengthen collaboration between the Parliament and the agency.
5. **Meeting with World Food Program (WFP):** The Mayor of Mogadishu, Yusuf Hussein Jim'ale, welcomed a delegation from the World Food Program (WFP) to discuss bilateral cooperation, food security, and nutritional support for children. The Mayor acknowledged the WFP's collaboration with the Banadir Administration, benefiting the Somali community in Mogadishu.
6. **Launch of the 'Talents and Arts' Program:** The Minister of Information of the Federal Government of Somalia, Daud Aweis Jama, launched the 'Talents and Arts' program in Mogadishu. The program aims to provide a platform for citizens to showcase their talents and artistic abilities, with a focus on utilising poets in the fight against Al-Shabaab terrorists.
7. **Minister of Justice Commends Somali National Army (SNA):** The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of Somalia, Hassan Moalim Mohamud, commended the Somali National Army (SNA) for their achievements in eliminating Al-Shabaab terrorists and reclaiming control of previously held territories. He urged residents of recently liberated

areas to trust the army and government, emphasising the commitment to restoring peace and stability.

8. **Somalia's Progress towards East Africa Community (EAC) Membership:** Somalia is on the verge of joining the East Africa Community (EAC) as the eleventh member after a decade-long application process. Negotiations for admission took place in August 2023, focusing on the integration process and aligning Somalia's rules and laws with EAC pillars. Membership would foster trade and collaboration with neighbouring countries.
9. **United Opposition in Jubaland against Terrorism:** The opposition in Jubaland held a meeting with President Ahmed Madobe to unite against terrorism in the region, particularly Al-Shabaab. The opposition expressed unconditional support for the President, setting aside political differences for the goal of eradicating Al-Shabaab. This signifies a major boost to President Madobe's administration.
10. **Inauguration of Administrative Buildings in Hargeisa:** The Mayor of Hargeisa, Abdikarim Ahmed Mooge, inaugurated new administrative buildings in the Da'arta district of the Marodi-Jeeh region. These offices were established to facilitate the district administrator's service to the community, funded through residents' tax contributions.
11. **Workshop on Wildlife and Environmental Legalities:** The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Somaliland closed a workshop on wildlife, environmental, and habitat legalities attended by judicial officials and coordinators from the Ministry of Environment. The workshop aimed to enhance knowledge and collaboration in addressing environmental protection and wildlife-related legal issues.
12. **President Musa Bihi Abdi Affirms Election Schedule:** President Musa Bihi Abdi of Somaliland announced that the upcoming elections would proceed as planned, emphasising the achievements of the Kulmiye Party during its tenure. He stressed adherence to constitutional procedures and election timelines to ensure security, democracy, and stability.
13. **Somalia's Progress towards EAC Membership Despite Maritime Dispute:** Somalia is on track to become the eighth member of the EAC, with negotiations ongoing despite its maritime dispute with Kenya. Although the dispute remains, Somalia's application for membership has been confirmed, and legislative changes will be required to align with the EAC's common external tariff.
14. **Chief Justice of Puntland's Trip Abroad:** The Chief Justice of Puntland's Constitutional Court embarked on an international trip, the purpose of which remains uncertain. The Constitutional Court has recently concluded significant deliberations, and concerns have been raised regarding the issuance of a crucial constitutional decision.
15. **Somaliland's Foreign Minister Emphasizes Sovereignty and International Recognition:** Somaliland's Foreign Minister emphasised the sovereignty of Somaliland and the need for increased international engagements to attain international recognition. They stated

that the UN seat occupied by Somalia rightfully belongs to Somaliland, reflecting their ongoing pursuit of recognition as an independent state.

**Security:** On August 22, 2023, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia demonstrated his commitment to countering terrorism and restoring peace by directing the Somali National Army (SNA) to focus on liberating remaining areas in Galmudug State from Al-Shabaab control. The Ministry of Defence confirmed that SNA forces, supported by military aircraft, conducted airstrikes and ground operations to target Al-Shabaab militants in Galmudug. Substantial territorial gains were made in the Galgudud region, with the capture of multiple towns and villages and the clearing of landmines. The residents of Bacaadweyne expressed their unity in joining the fight against Al-Shabaab. However, the security situation in Mogadishu raised concerns due to a suicide car bomb attack at the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs headquarters, for which Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility. The Somali National Army continued its battle against Al-Shabaab, receiving support from international partners through surveillance and training. In an effort to weaken the insurgent group, the Somali government offered amnesty to Al-Shabaab militants, promoting defections and intelligence gathering. In Somaliland, intense fighting and territorial shifts occurred between the forces of Somaliland and SSC-Khatumo, resulting in casualties. Legal actions were taken regarding the death of a Kenyan engineer, with a soldier being sentenced to prison and compensation ordered for the victim's family. Protests demanding the release of commander Shegow took place, and attacks resulted in the deaths of soldiers in Baidoa. The Somali Journalists Syndicate condemned the continued detention of journalist Moha Bulbul. Additionally, heavy clashes erupted between security forces and Al-Shabaab militants in Kaxda District, Mogadishu. Overall, Somalia was engaged in a multifaceted struggle to combat terrorism, restore peace, and address internal conflicts within different regions of the country.

### **Key Takeaways:**

1. On August 22, 2023, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia directed the Somali National Army (SNA) to focus on liberating the remaining areas in Galmudug State, emphasising the government's commitment to countering terrorism and restoring peace in the region.
2. The Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia chaired a meeting aiming to bolster counter-terrorism efforts, assigning the task of organising personnel to participate in the anti-terrorism campaign to the Director Generals of the Ministries.
3. The Ministry of Defence confirmed that Somali National Army forces, supported by military aircraft, launched operations targeting areas controlled by Al-Shabaab militants in Galmudug, conducting airstrikes and ground operations to liberate territories from the group's control.
4. The Somali National Army, along with local forces, made significant territorial gains against Al-Shabaab in the Galgudud region, capturing multiple towns and villages and clearing areas of landmines.

5. The residents of Bacaadweyne expressed their commitment to joining the fight against Al-Shabaab and aiding in the liberation of Galmudug State, demonstrating a unified effort to restore peace and stability in the region.
6. A suicide car bomb attack took place at the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs headquarters in Mogadishu, resulting in casualties and raising concerns about overall security in the city. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the bombing.
7. The Somali National Army made progress in its fight against Al-Shabaab, aiming to enter strongholds and liberate territories. International partners provided support through aerial surveillance and training.
8. The Somali government offered amnesty to Al-Shabaab militants as part of their strategy to weaken the insurgent group by encouraging defections and gathering valuable intelligence.
9. Intense fighting and territorial shifts were observed in key battlefronts in Laascaanood, reflecting ongoing tensions between Somaliland forces and SSC-Khatumo forces.
10. A prominent Somaliland military commander lost his life during clashes with SSC-Khatumo forces, indicating the persistence of hostilities in the region.
11. A soldier involved in the death of a Kenyan engineer was sentenced to a five-year prison term, and compensation was ordered to be paid to the victim's family.
12. Protests took place demanding the release of commander Shegow, and two soldiers were killed in an attack in Baidoa.
13. The Somali Journalists Syndicate criticised the continued detention of journalist Moha Bulbul, calling for his immediate and unconditional release.
14. Heavy clashes erupted between security forces and Al-Shabaab militants in Kaxda District, Mogadishu.

## EVENTS LISTED

### Politics

On August 22, 2023, **the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia to Ethiopia, Mr. Abdullahi Mohamed Warfaa, met with the British Ambassador to Ethiopia, Amb. Darren Welch, at the former's office in Addis Ababa.** The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the strengthening of diplomatic relations between Somalia and Britain. Ambassador Warfaa expressed gratitude towards the British Government for their ongoing large-scale development projects in Somalia and emphasised the need further to enhance support and

cooperation between the two nations. The meeting aimed to foster a deepening relationship between Somalia and Britain, highlighting the mutual interests and areas of collaboration.

On August 22, 2023, **two companies from Somalia and Turkey signed an agreement on electricity generation through waste utilisation in the capital city, Mogadishu.** The signing ceremony was attended by various officials, including the Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Ali, the Turkish Ambassador to Somalia, Amb. Ibrahim, members of parliament from both Houses of the Somali Parliament, and the Mayor of Mogadishu, Yusuf Hussein Jim'ale. This agreement signifies the commencement of Turkish business investment in the energy sector in Somalia. The project aims to generate electricity by utilising waste materials, showcasing a sustainable approach towards energy production.

On August 22, 2023, **the Auditor-General of the Federal Republic of Somalia, Avv. Ahmed Isse Gutale, organised a virtual meeting with the Auditor Generals of the Federal Member States (FMS-AGs).** The purpose of the meeting was to discuss recent progress and express appreciation following the release of the 2022 audit reports. Auditor General Gutale emphasised the importance of collaboration and cooperation between government institutions in the effective management of public assets. He called for transparent processes and regulations governing asset management at both the federal and regional levels and highlighted the need for comprehensive reviews of the legal frameworks related to asset management. Gutale expressed satisfaction with the implementation of recommendations from the audit reports and commended the commitment exhibited by government officials. He encouraged ongoing efforts to enhance transparency and accountability in asset management. The meeting showcased the commitment of the Auditor General's Office to advancing transparency, accountability, and responsible governance in Somalia. Continued collaboration between the Auditor General's Office and the Federal Member States' Auditor Generals is expected to lead to further improvements in public asset management, contributing to the nation's development and prosperity.

On August 22, 2023, **Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nur (Madobe), the Speaker of the House of the People of the Federal Government of Somalia, conducted an inspection visit to the Somali Disaster Management Agency (SoDMA) in Mogadishu.** During the visit, he expressed appreciation for the agency's tangible contributions to the Somali people. Mr. Mohamud Moalim Abdulle, the Commissioner of SoDMA, extended gratitude to the Speaker for his visit and provided an overview of the agency's activities, emphasising their efforts in addressing various challenges, such as droughts, floods, and climate change in the country. In response, Speaker Madobe conveyed his gratitude to the Commissioner and the agency's staff for the warm reception, urging the government to extend support to SoDMA, and assuring close collaboration between the Parliament and the agency in their shared objectives.

On August 22, 2023, **the Mayor of Mogadishu, HE Yusuf Hussein Jim'ale (Madale), welcomed a delegation from the World Food Program (WFP) at the Hamar Municipality in Mogadishu.** Led by Deputy head Mr. Baimankay Sankoh, the delegation engaged in discussions concerning bilateral cooperation and the provision of food security, with a specific focus on nutritional support for children. The meeting was attended by



Abdiaziz Osman Mohamed, the Deputy Chairman of Human Resources and Awareness of Banadir, along with other officials. The Mayor expressed gratitude to the WFP for their extensive collaboration with the Banadir Administration, emphasizing that the projects implemented by the organization would greatly benefit the Somali community residing in Mogadishu.

On August 22, 2023, **the Minister of Information of the Federal Government of Somalia, H.E Daud Aweis Jama, launched the 'Talents and Arts' program in Mogadishu.** This program aims to provide a platform for all citizens to showcase their talents and artistic abilities. Minister Daud emphasised the importance of poets in raising awareness in the fight against the Al-Shabaab terrorists and urged them to play an active role. The program aims to foster and encourage young talents within society, with the goal of replacing the older generation of poets, artists, and talented individuals. Scheduled to commence on September 1, 2023, the program will culminate in an awards ceremony where winners will receive their accolades from the President of the Federal Government, H.E Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

On August 22, 2023, **Hassan Moalim Mohamud, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs of the Federal Government of Somalia, commended the Somali National Army (SNA) for their commendable achievements in eliminating Al-Shabaab terrorists and reclaiming control of previously held territories.** Minister Mohamud expressed admiration for the courage and determination displayed by the SNA in defeating the enemy, who are now nearing their end. Moreover, he urged the residents of recently liberated areas to remain in their homes and place their trust in the army and government, assuring them that assistance and support would be forthcoming. The Minister's statement highlights the government's commitment to restoring peace and stability to the region while acknowledging the significant progress made by the SNA in combating the threat posed by extremist organisations.

On August 22, 2023, **it was reported that the Federal Republic of Somalia is on the verge of joining the East Africa Community (EAC).** Somalia has been striving to join the regional bloc, which offers member countries opportunities for trade and economic growth through Tripartite agreements. Despite facing challenges such as civil wars and the presence of the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, Somalia has made significant progress towards gaining membership. If admitted, Somalia will become the eleventh member of the summit. The EAC Secretariat confirmed Somalia's progress towards joining the summit and stated that negotiations for admission would take place from August 22 to September 5. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has been actively pushing for Somalia's inclusion, holding meetings with other heads of state. The country applied for membership a decade ago, and verification and assessment processes have been ongoing. The negotiations will cover various aspects of integration, considering Somalia's rules and laws in contrast to the EAC pillars. Once ratified, Somalia will have the opportunity to foster trade and collaboration with its neighbouring countries, although security measures need to be strengthened, especially in dealing with the Al-Shabaab militants.

On August 22, 2023, **the opposition in Jubaland held a meeting with President Ahmed Madobe in Nairobi, Kenya, with the aim of uniting in the fight against terrorism in the**

**region.** Surprisingly, the opposition announced their unconditional support for President Madobe, citing the pressing threat of Al-Shabaab and other crucial factors as their motivation. Led by ex-state minister Abdullahi Elmoge Hersi, the opposition emphasized the need to put aside political differences and focus on eradicating Al-Shabaab from areas it still controls. This unexpected development signifies a major boost to President Madobe's administration, as there have been political realignments and behind-the-scenes agreements among politicians preparing to challenge his leadership. The meeting is the first in a series of consultative discussions planned by the political leaders ahead of a military campaign against Al-Shabaab, aiming to achieve unity of purpose in guaranteeing the peace and stability of Jubaland. The Jubaland election, initially scheduled for August, has been postponed for a year. Jubaland, an autonomous region in southern Somalia, borders the North Eastern region of Kenya and plays a significant role in the politics of the larger Ogaden community. The outcome of the Jubaland election is of interest to Kenyans, as it will serve as a test to assess the impact of the Kenyan Defence Force's involvement in the formation of Jubaland and their efforts to combat Al-Shabaab.

On August 22, 2023, **Hargeisa's Mayor, Cllr. Abdikarim Ahmed Mooge, officially inaugurated new administrative buildings in the Da'arta district of the Marodi-Jeeh region.** These offices were established to facilitate the district administrator's service to the community. The buildings, consisting of three rooms, were funded using tax contributions from the residents. In his remarks, the mayor emphasized the importance of responsible care for these public facilities. He expressed gratitude and commended both the administration and the residents of Da'arta district and its surroundings for their unwavering commitment to nation-building endeavours.

On August 22, 2023, **the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and Chairman of the Justice Committee, Hon. Adam Haji Ali Ahmed, closed a workshop focused on wildlife, environmental, and habitat legalities.** The training, which spanned eight days, was attended by 18 participants, including judges, magistrates, prosecutors, and coordinators from the Ministry of Environment. Notable individuals present at the closing ceremony included the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Hon. Shugri Haji Ismail Bandare, Dr. Mohamud Yusuf Muse from the University of Hargeisa, Dr. Paul Evangelista, an environmental studies expert from the University of Colorado, and Opyene Vincent, the Director of the Environment and Resources Protection Agency. The key lessons from the workshop were summarised and emphasised by prosecutor Faisa. Opyene Vincent highlighted the training's focus on the investigation, prosecution, and trial stages of wildlife cases, despite the short duration. Dr. Paul Evangelista expressed the University of Colorado's willingness to collaborate with Somaliland in environmental protection efforts. Dr. Mohamud Yusuf Muse urged the participants to apply and share the knowledge gained in their respective organisations. Hon. Shugri Haji Ismail Bandare expressed gratitude for the opportunity to receive extensive training in Uganda and Ethiopia. The Chief Justice emphasised the importance of preserving fauna and flora through regulatory measures and announced plans for the establishment of a specialised court for environmental protection. He urged the attendees not to underestimate the value of their acquired knowledge and encouraged its practical application.

On August 22, 2023, **President Musa Bihi Abdi of Somaliland announced that the upcoming elections would proceed as planned, following the schedule set by the National Elections Commission (NEC) and in accordance with a Presidential Decree.** Speaking at the 8th KULMIYE party central committee delegate congress in Burao, the President emphasised the achievements of the Kulmiye Party during its tenure, highlighting the progress made in the country. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to serving the people of Somaliland and stressed the importance of adhering to constitutional procedures and election timelines. The President underscored the democratic nature of the Kulmiye party, emphasising that leadership positions are determined through democratic elections. He also highlighted the government's focus on developing the country's economic infrastructure and emphasised the importance of upholding the law and preventing any disruption to the electoral process. The President made it clear that democracy and elections cannot be manipulated through coercion or forceful demands, and only by following the established procedures can security, democracy, and stability be achieved.

On August 22, 2023, **it was reported that Somalia is on track to become the eighth member of the East African Community (EAC) by the end of the year, despite its ongoing maritime dispute with neighbouring Kenya.** The Secretary General of the EAC, Peter Mathuki, stated that negotiations regarding Somalia's membership terms would continue until early September, paving the way for its accession. Somalia's application was initially confirmed at an EAC summit in Burundi in June. Once a member, Somalia will need to make legislative changes to align itself with the EAC's common external tariff, benefiting regional trade and businesses. A timeline for Somalia to harmonise its regulations with the EAC is expected to be approved at an EAC summit in November or December. It is worth noting that Somalia had previously applied for membership in 2012, but its request was rejected, leading to some grievances. Furthermore, despite a ruling by the International Court of Justice in favour of Mogadishu in October 2021 regarding the maritime dispute, Kenya has rejected the decision, contributing to strained relations between the two nations.

On August 22, 2023, **Hassan Yusuf Nur, the Chief Justice of Puntland's Constitutional Court, embarked on an international trip.** Reports from the Garowe Airport indicate that the Chief Justice boarded a flight towards an undisclosed destination abroad. The purpose of his trip remains uncertain, as the Constitutional Court has recently concluded various significant deliberations without reaching any definitive conclusions. Yesterday, a group of eight newly appointed members of the Puntland Parliament raised concerns and urged Chief Justice Hassan Yusuf to expedite the issuance of a crucial constitutional decision. The Court has also emphasised that it functions independently and is not aligned with Puntland's President, Said Deni.

On August 22, 2023, **Somaliland's Foreign Minister, Dr. Essa Kayd, emphasized the sovereignty of Somaliland and highlighted the need for increased international engagements and the establishment of new alliances to attain international recognition.** Dr. Kayd asserted that the seat currently occupied by Somalia in the United Nations rightfully belongs to Somaliland. This statement reflects Somaliland's ongoing pursuit of recognition as an independent state and highlights their desire to engage with the international community to further their diplomatic efforts.

## Security

On August 22, 2023, **President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of the Federal Republic of Somalia visited an army base in Galmudug State.** As part of his commitment to ensuring a stable and terrorism-free Somalia, President Mohamud directed the Somali National Army (SNA) to focus on their national task, which involves liberating the remaining areas in Galmudug State. During his visit, the President inspected the plans of the armed forces and expressed confidence in their ability to eliminate the Al-Shabaab terrorist group with the assistance of local forces. This directive highlights the government's determined efforts to counter terrorism and restore peace in the region.

On August 22, 2023, **the Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia chaired a meeting that focused on bolstering counter-terrorism efforts.** The meeting was held in response to the Cabinet's previous decision regarding the involvement of government institutions in the fight against terrorism. During the meeting, the Deputy Prime Minister assigned the task of organizing personnel to participate in the anti-terrorism campaign to the Director Generals of the Ministries. Mr. Saleh Ahmed, a prominent figure at the gathering, provided a comprehensive account of the different stages involved in combating the enemy. He emphasized the urgency of bringing an end to terrorist activities and called for unity amongst the Somali people to eradicate the militant group Al-Shabaab.

On August 22, 2023, **the Ministry of Defence of Somalia confirmed that Somali National Army forces, supported by military aircraft, have launched operations targeting areas controlled by Al-Shabaab militants in the Galmudug region.** According to the spokesperson of the Ministry, General Abdullahi Ali Canoole, the Somali forces are conducting airstrikes and ground operations against Al-Shabaab militants who are present in the targeted areas. The spokesperson emphasised the importance of this operation in liberating territories from Al-Shabaab's control and stated that significant gains have already been made. The Somali government aims to intensify efforts and dismantle Al-Shabaab's presence in the country, particularly in smaller towns and villages. The government has urged citizens to collaborate with the security forces and has declared its commitment to combating Al-Shabaab by conducting regular operations against the extremist group. The recent offensive primarily focuses on the Galgaduud region, where Al-Shabaab has a significant presence.

On August 22, 2023, **the Somali National Army, in collaboration with local forces known as Macawisley, made significant territorial gains against the extremist group Al-Shabaab in the Galgudud region of Galmudug State.** The military officials at the frontlines reported that the joint forces had successfully advanced into large areas previously controlled by Al-Shabaab. Specifically, the location of Cawsweyne was captured without encountering any resistance from the militants. In a show of support, SNA Chief Ibrahim Muhyadin and International Partners also arrived in the region to encourage and expedite the progress of the offensive operation against Al-Shabaab. Furthermore, the Ministry of Defence announced that the Somali National Army had successfully taken control of Jaw,

Dadale, Habarcirir, and Xilin-Fardood. The troops diligently cleared the roads and forested areas of landmines, ensuring safer passages for the local population. Additionally, the statement from the Ministry of Defence conveyed the determination to capture the town of Elbur, highlighting a concerted effort to approach it from multiple directions.

On August 22, 2023, **the residents of Bacaadweyne in the southern region of Mudug, Somalia expressed their commitment to join the fight against the Al-Shabaab terrorist group and aid in the liberation of the Galmudug State.** Colonel Hirsi Ali Quri of the Somali National Army addressed the people of Bacaadweyne, calling for unity among the army, politicians, elders, youth, and scholars to combat the militants. Colonel Quri stated that he and his troops, who previously participated in the liberation efforts a year ago, are prepared to stand at the frontlines and work towards eradicating terrorism from the Galmudug State. The determined involvement of the residents reflects a unified effort to restore peace and stability to the region.

On August 22, 2023, **a suicide car bomb attack took place at the Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs headquarters in the Isgoyska Ifka Xalane compound in Mogadishu, Somalia.** The Federal Government of Somalia released a statement confirming that the attackers used a Toyota Land Cruiser vehicle to breach security and target Layla Calaawi, a prominent activist working for the non-governmental organisation Ifi. The assault resulted in the death of one government employee and injured two civilians present at the scene. Saadiq Aden Ali (Doodishe), the Director-General of the Somali Police Force, expressed the intention to conduct a thorough investigation into the attack to determine its nature, origins, and specific intent. Given the incident and the ongoing extremist threats faced by the government and its personnel, concerns have been raised regarding the overall security situation in Mogadishu. The attack was carried out by a suicide bomber driving a car filled with explosives near the Land Office department, close to the Mogadishu stadium. Tragically, the explosion claimed the life of Harbi Salad Omar, an official of the transport department of the Hamar municipality. Al-Shabaab, a militant group, has claimed responsibility for the bombing. Analysts speculate that the attack may have been aimed at diverting attention from the ongoing offensive by Somali forces against Al-Shabaab in the central regions. Despite this tragic incident, the Somali government has reported retaking control of numerous areas from Al-Shabaab since their full-scale offensive commenced in August 2022.

On August 22, 2023, **the Somali National Army (SNA) made significant progress in its fight against the militant group Al-Shabaab, which controls large parts of central and southern Somalia. Led by General Ibrahim Sheikh Muhiyadin, the SNA forces aimed to enter Al-Shabaab strongholds as part of the second phase of operations against the group.** Troops successfully reached War Xoolo and Wabxo, with their target being Elbur town in western Galgudud. Concurrently, operations were conducted near Cawsweyne in eastern Galgudud. The strategic plan involved storming Galhareri, a major Al-Shabaab stronghold in central Somalia. The first phase of operations in HirShabelle and Galmadug states had already resulted in the deaths of over 3,000 militants. The international community, including the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and the United States Africa Command, provided support to the Somali forces through aerial surveillance and training. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud emphasized the importance of

local participation in degrading Al-Shabaab and expressed the intention for federal forces to remain in the region until locals could assume responsibility for their security. The goal was to prevent Al-Shabaab from reclaiming previously captured areas, and the Somali government aimed to liberate additional territories from the group.

On August 22, 2023, **the Somali government made an announcement offering amnesty to al-Shabab militants amidst an ongoing military offensive in central parts of the country.** This move is seen as a strategic approach to weaken the insurgent group by removing its fighters from the battlefield. The government's fight against al-Shabab has involved deploying the military, targeting financial networks, and engaging in an ideological battle. The amnesty offer comes after President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud stated that the al-Shabab leadership was unwilling to negotiate with the government. Security analysts believe that the government's tactic aims to weaken the group further, as there have been reports of discontent among foot soldiers due to a lack of support from top leadership. The federal government, supported by clan militias, has launched a large-scale offensive against al-Shabab in central Somalia. The amnesty offer could potentially provide government forces with valuable intelligence if fighters defect. However, some analysts are cautious, suggesting that while the amnesty offer may have a psychological effect on the war, it may not significantly change its course. Nevertheless, if the amnesty is successful in prompting several militants to defect, it might force al-Shabab to consider negotiation rather than face humiliation. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who has been leading the war campaign, now faces the challenge of an ongoing al-Shabab build-up and difficult terrain as he prepares for the second phase of operations in the south. The outcome of the amnesty offer remains uncertain, but it presents an opportunity for the government to potentially weaken al-Shabab and gain intelligence in their fight against the group.

On August 22, 2023, **the key battlefronts in Laascaanood, Somaliland witnessed intense fighting and significant shifts in territorial control.** The strategic area of Margaaga, located 8km east of Laascaanood, stood on the brink of being lost by the Somaliland forces. At sunset, they were forced to relinquish the vital southern strategic heights above Margaaga. Notably, Margaaga holds immense importance as it lies on the road connecting Laascaanood to Garoowe and serves as one of the two strongholds for Somaliland in Laascaanood. The SSC (Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn) forces have displayed a commitment to opening up the strategic road to Garoowe by capturing Margaaga. Meanwhile, on the western front at Boholaha Xargaga, situated 8km northwest of Laascaanood, another intense battle unfolded throughout the day. Xargaga holds significance as it lies on the vital supply route connecting Laascaanood to Burco, crucial for Somaliland's logistical operations. Furthermore, the proximity of the Laascaanood airport, located approximately 12km north of the city, to this supply route adds further strategic value. Should the SSC forces succeed in capturing Boholaha Xargaga, both Margaaga and Goojacadde would be cut off, leaving Goojacadde vulnerable and an attractive target for the eastward advance of SSC forces.

On August 22, 2023, **Bashe Mohamoud Haji, a prominent commander within the Somaliland military, lost his life during an altercation with the SSC-Khatumo forces on the western front in Lasanod.** The clash resulted in his untimely demise. Bashe Mohamoud Haji held a significant position within the Somaliland military, making his loss a notable

event in the region's ongoing conflict. This incident occurred as part of the continuous fighting between the Somaliland forces and the SSC-Khatumo forces, indicating the persistence of tensions and hostilities in the area.

On August 22, 2023, **a Somali court issued a verdict in the case involving the death of a Kenyan engineer that occurred on July 20, 2023, at the construction site of Aden Abulle International Airport.** The court sentenced a soldier to a five-year prison term for his involvement in the incident. The ruling also included an order for the soldier to provide compensation to the victim's family.

On August 22, 2023, **protests took place in Mogadishu, Jowhar, Beledweyne, and Garowe as the Jareer-wayne community demanded the immediate release of commander Shegow.** This call for freedom stemmed from the government forces detaining the commander, allegedly prompting his guards to seize mobile phones from residents in the Dharkeynley district of Mogadishu. Meanwhile, Jareer community MPs and politicians gathered in Mogadishu and emphasised the need for a thorough investigation and the pursuit of justice in the case of General Shegow Ali and his forces, which the government has held for three days.

On August 22, 2023, **two soldiers belonging to the southwest regional forces were killed in an attack in Baidoa. According to a local source in Baidoa, the soldiers, identified as Isaaq Waarow and Ali Nishow, were deliberately targeted by unknown gunmen.**

On August 22, 2023, **the Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS) strongly criticised the continued detention of their colleague, Moha Bulbul, who has been held incommunicado since August 17.** Bulbul was reportedly forcibly detained, beaten, and harassed by plain-clothed officials from the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) on the university campus in Mogadishu. The SJS revealed that on Monday, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) contacted them, demanding access to Bulbul's phone and laptop logins, as well as information about the sources of his recent investigative news story. However, the SJS firmly refused to comply with these unlawful demands. In the latest development, on Tuesday, CID police officers transferred Bulbul from the police station cells to a CID cell in the Hamar Jajab district, without allowing any legal representation or family member to be present. The SJS condemned these actions as a blatant violation of Bulbul's human rights and called for his immediate and unconditional release. They also urged the authorities to clarify their role in this case.

On August 22, 2023, **heavy clashes erupted between security forces and militants belonging to Al-Shabaab in Kaxda District, located in Mogadishu.** The fighting mainly centred around the district station, Burta Ali Jannaale, as well as multiple checkpoints in the area. The national army was actively involved in repelling the attackers.



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