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UPDATE**

*Somalia, August 26, 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 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 recent political developments in Somalia, Qatar Charity has opened a new health centre at Madina Hospital in Banaadir. The facility aims to benefit 20,000 individuals and provides various departments and services, including emergency care, maternal and child healthcare, reproductive health services, nutrition support, child vaccinations, and laboratory diagnostics.

However, tensions continue to rise between Abdiqadir Ahmed Aw-Cali (Firdhiye), the leader of SSC-Khaatumo, and the President of Somaliland. Firdhiye criticised the President and called for the withdrawal of forces from Las Anod, emphasising non-violence and unity among the people of SSC (Sool, Sanaag, and Cayn).

In another development, peace negotiations between the Wagardhac and Sacad clans have faced a setback as the Wagardhac clan elders announced a cessation of peace talks. This decision came after fraudulent peace delegations were circulating in the media, leading to distrust and the halt of negotiations.

Regarding maritime training, the Head of Operations of EUCAP Somalia visited Berbera to assess the progress of specialised training conducted for the Somaliland Coast Guard. This visit aimed to strengthen collaboration between EUCAP and the Coast Guard, enhancing the effectiveness of maritime security.

On the local front, the Minister of Communications faced controversy after implementing a ban on platforms such as TikTok, Telegram, and 1Xbet. This decision drew discontent from telecommunication companies, and the Prime Minister urged a resolution to address the issue.

In Ceerigaabo, Garxajis youths asserted control over the city and searched for remaining civilians from the Daarood community, symbolising their allegiance to Somaliland. This action, accompanied by the waving of the national flag of Somaliland, demonstrated their support but also raised concerns about potential tensions within the city.

To combat extremist ideologies and improve media relations, the Ministry of Information launched a training program aimed at strengthening the fight against extremist groups. The program also focused on countering the influence of extremist ideologies by promoting accurate information and alternative narratives.

Internationally, the Chinese Embassy in Somalia announced scholarships for Somali students to pursue higher education in China. This initiative highlighted the transformative power of education and cultural diversity in shaping the future of Somalia.

At the national level, the President of Somalia inaugurated the National Consultative Council meeting in Dhusamareb. His address covered various topics including security, ongoing liberation operations, peacekeeping efforts, and the delivery of essential government services in recently liberated areas.

However, concerns were raised about the pending cases and constitutional issues due to the Chairman of the Puntland Constitutional Court expressing an inability to fulfil responsibilities. Speculations of external pressures further complicated the situation.

The enactment of the Environmental Management Bill in Somalia was praised by the Federation of Somali Trade Unions. The bill prioritised workers' well-being, vulnerable communities, and environmental preservation, representing a step towards sustainable development.

In Somaliland, the President conducted a high-profile meeting urging unity and support for defence forces against enemies seeking to harm the nation. Opposition leaders in Somaliland expressed support for the ongoing war in Las Anod and called for unity to address underlying issues.

The 8th meeting of the Central Committee of the Kulmiye Party in Somaliland resulted in the election of a new chairman and senior leadership. President Muse Bihi Abdi also resigned as chairman, marking a significant change within the party.

On the diplomatic front, the Somali Ambassador to Ethiopia and the Secretary to the African Union Commission discussed security concerns and the importance of cooperation among African nations for peace and stability. This dialogue highlighted the regional efforts to address security challenges and foster collaboration.

In the realm of security, several significant incidents took place in Somalia. Al-Shabaab launched an attack on a Somali government forces base in Galgaduud, resulting in casualties the capture of soldiers and military vehicles. Protests organised by General Sheegow Ahmed Ali supporters in Mogadishu were prohibited due to security concerns.

However, the Somali National Army's Danab Commandos successfully neutralised militants in the Jubbada Hoose region, seizing weapons and equipment. Tensions escalated when Abdulqadir Firdhiye announced the takeover of a military base in Laascaanood from Somaliland, leading to vows of revenge from Somaliland's President.

The African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia, known as ATMIS, is winding down, raising concerns about security following its departure.

Somali youths expressed their support for battling tribal militias aligned with al-Shabaab and called for enlistment in the army to combat these groups.

NISA (National Intelligence and Security Agency) carried out a targeted operation against al-Shabaab in Lower Shabelle, disrupting their judicial system and troop movements. The Somali National Army also conducted successful operations in Awdheele District, Lower Shabelle, resulting in militant deaths and the destruction of their hideouts.

Coordinated operations by the Somali National Army and US air support were carried out in the Lower Jubba region to counter al-Shabaab's activities. These operations successfully neutralised terrorists and dismantled their network.

In legal proceedings, the Military Court of the Federal Republic of Somalia handed a death sentence to a former police officer for the murder of another officer, demonstrating the commitment to justice and maintaining the rule of law.

Lastly, the Somali National Army, along with local forces, battled an al-Shabaab attack in the Caws-Weyne area. The offensive against the extremist group continues as efforts are made to ensure the security and stability of the affected regions.

## **SUMMARY**

**Politics:** Qatar Charity has opened a new health center at Madina Hospital in Banaadir, Somalia, with the aim of benefiting 20,000 individuals. The facility provides various departments and services, focusing on emergency care, maternal and child healthcare, reproductive health services, nutrition support, child vaccinations, and laboratory diagnostics. Meanwhile, Abdiqadir Ahmed Aw-Cali (Firdhiye), the leader of SSC-Khaatumo, criticized the President of Somaliland and called for the withdrawal of forces from Las Anod, emphasizing non-violence and unity among the people of SSC. The Wagardhac clan elders announced a cessation of peace negotiations with the Sacad clan due to fraudulent peace delegations circulating in the media. In terms of maritime training, the Head of Operations of EUCAP Somalia visited Berbera to assess the progress of specialized training conducted for the Somaliland Coast Guard, strengthening collaboration between EUCAP and the Coast Guard. The Minister of Communications faced controversy after implementing a ban on platforms such as TikTok, Telegram, and 1Xbet, which drew discontent from telecommunication companies, and the Prime Minister urged a resolution. In Ceerigaabo, Garxajis youths asserted control over the city and searched for remaining civilians from the Daarood community while waving the national flag of Somaliland. The Ministry of Information launched a training program to combat extremist ideologies, improve media relations, and strengthen the fight against extremist groups. Additionally, the Chinese Embassy in Somalia announced scholarships for Somali students to pursue higher education in China, highlighting the transformative power of education and cultural diversity. The President of Somalia inaugurated the National Consultative Council meeting in Dhusamareb, addressing security, ongoing liberation operations, peacekeeping, and the delivery of essential government services in liberated areas. The Chairman of the Puntland

Constitutional Court expressed inability to fulfil responsibilities, raising concerns about pending cases and constitutional issues, leading to speculations of external pressures. The Federation of Somali Trade Unions praised the enactment of the Environmental Management Bill in Somalia for prioritizing workers' well-being, vulnerable communities, and environmental preservation. The President of Somaliland conducted a high-profile meeting, urging unity and support for defence forces against enemies seeking to harm the nation. Opposition leaders in Somaliland expressed support for the ongoing war in Las Anod and called for unity to address underlying issues. The 8th meeting of the Central Committee of the Kulmiye Party in Somaliland elected a new chairman and senior leadership, with President Muse Bihi Abdi resigning as chairman. The Somali Ambassador to Ethiopia and the Secretary to the African Union Commission discussed security concerns and the importance of cooperation among African nations for peace and stability. Finally, Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Bare of Somalia arrived in Dhuusamareeb for a national consultative meeting to address urgent issues and enhance cooperation among federal member states. However, the President of Puntland did not attend due to a political dispute.

### **Key Takeaways:**

1. Qatar Charity inaugurated a health center at Madina Hospital in Banaadir, Somalia, aimed at benefiting 20,000 individuals. The facility includes various departments and services, focusing on emergency care, maternal and child healthcare, reproductive health services, nutrition support, child vaccinations, and laboratory diagnostics.
2. Abdiqadir Ahmed Aw-Cali (Firdhiye), the leader of SSC-Khaatumo, criticized the President of Somaliland and urged him to withdraw forces from Las Anod. Firdhiye emphasized non-violence and called for unity among the people of SSC to stand against Somaliland forces.
3. The Wagardhac clan elders declared a cessation of peace negotiations with the Sacad clan due to fraudulent peace delegations circulated in the media.
4. The Head of Operations of EUCAP Somalia visited Berbera to observe and assess the progress of specialized maritime training conducted for the Somaliland Coast Guard, strengthening collaboration between EUCAP and the Coast Guard.
5. The Minister of Communications in Somalia faced controversy after implementing a ban on platforms such as TikTok, Telegram, and 1Xbet. Telecommunication companies expressed discontent, and the Prime Minister urged a resolution to the issue.
6. Garxajis youths in Ceerigaabo asserted control over the city, waving the national flag of Somaliland and searching for remaining civilians belonging to the Daarood community.
7. The Ministry of Information launched a five-day training program to combat extremist ideologies, improving media relations and strengthening the fight against extremist groups.

8. The Embassy of China in Somalia announced scholarships for Somali students to pursue higher education in China, highlighting the transformative power of education and cultural diversity.
9. The President of Somalia inaugurated the National Consultative Council meeting in Dhusamareb, discussing security, ongoing liberation operations, peacekeeping, and delivering essential government services in liberated areas.
10. The Chairman of the Puntland Constitutional Court announced his inability to fulfill responsibilities, raising concerns regarding pending cases and constitutional issues. Speculations of external pressures surfaced casting doubt on the region's transition period.
11. The Federation of Somali Trade Unions praised the enactment of the Environmental Management Bill in Somalia, highlighting the inclusion of the "Just Transition" principle and prioritizing workers' well-being, vulnerable communities, and environmental preservation.
12. The President of Somaliland held a high-profile meeting to address recent clashes near Las Anod, urging unity and support for defense forces against enemies seeking to harm the nation.
13. Opposition leaders of Somaliland expressed support for the ongoing war in Las Anod, urging unity and addressing underlying issues that led to recent clashes.
14. The 8th meeting of the Central Committee of the Kulmiye Party elected a new chairman and senior leadership, with President Muse Bihi Abdi resigning as chairman.
15. The Somali Ambassador to Ethiopia and the Secretary to the African Union Commission discussed security concerns and the importance of cooperation among African nations to maintain peace and stability.
16. Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Bare of Somalia arrived in Dhuusamareeb for a national consultative meeting to address urgent issues and enhance cooperation among federal member states.
17. President Hassan Sheikh of Somalia inaugurated a national consultation meeting in Dhusamareb, discussing security, military operations against Al-Shabaab, stabilization of liberated areas, and delivering government services. However, the President of Puntland did not attend due to a political dispute.

**Security:** In recent news from Somalia, several significant security incidents have taken place. Al-Shabaab launched an attack on a Somali government forces base in Galgaduud, resulting in casualties and the capture of soldiers and military vehicles. Protests organized by General Sheegow Ahmed Ali supporters in Mogadishu were prohibited by the police due to security concerns. Meanwhile, the Somali National Army's Danab Commandos

successfully neutralized militants in the Jubbada Hoose region, seizing weapons and equipment. Tensions arose when Abdulqadir Firdhiye announced the takeover of a military base in Laascaanood from Somaliland, leading to vows of revenge from Somaliland's President Muse Bihi Abdi. The African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia, known as ATMIS, is winding down, causing concerns about security after its departure. Somali youths expressed their support for battling tribal militias aligned with al-Shabaab and called for enlistment in the army. NISA carried out a targeted operation against al-Shabaab in Lower Shabelle, disrupting their judicial system and troop movements. The Somali National Army conducted successful operations in Awdheele District, Lower Shabelle, resulting in militant deaths and hideout destruction. Coordinated operations by the Somali National Army and US air support were carried out in the Lower Jubba region to counter al-Shabaab's activities, with success in neutralizing terrorists and dismantling their network. In legal proceedings, the Military Court of the Federal Republic of Somalia handed a death sentence to a former police officer for the murder of another officer. Lastly, the Somali National Army, along with local forces, successfully thwarted an al-Shabaab attack in the Caws-Weyne area and continues the offensive against the extremist group.

**Key Takeaways:**

1. Al-Shabaab launched an attack on a Somali government forces base in Galgaduud, resulting in a significant number of casualties among soldiers and the capture of soldiers and military wagons.
2. Protests organised by supporters of General Sheegow Ahmed Ali in Mogadishu were prohibited by the police due to security concerns and violations could lead to legal consequences.
3. The Somali National Army's Danab Commandos successfully neutralized around 50 militants belonging to Al-Shabaab in the Jubbada Hoose region, seizing weapons and equipment.
4. The President of SSC-Khaatumo, Abdulqadir Firdhiye, announced their successful takeover of a military base in Laascaanood from Somaliland, leading to tensions and vows of revenge from Somaliland's President Muse Bihi Abdi.
5. The African Union (AU) peacekeeping mission in Somalia, known as ATMIS, is winding down, raising concerns about the security situation after its departure and the readiness of Somalia's own forces to take over security responsibilities.
6. Somali youths expressed their support for the ongoing battle against tribal militia aligned with al-Shabaab in the Sool region and called for enlistment in the army to defend the country against incursions.
7. NISA carried out a targeted operation against Al-Shabaab in Lower Shabelle, disrupting their judicial system and impeding troop movements, resulting in the seizure of assets, and dismantling of a court.

8. The Somali National Army conducted successful operations in Awdheele District, Lower Shabelle, resulting in the death of militants and destruction of their hideouts.
9. Coordinated operations by the Somali National Army and US air support were carried out in the Lower Jubba region to counter Al-Shabaab's activities, resulting in the neutralization of terrorists and the dismantling of their network.
10. The Military Court of the Federal Republic of Somalia handed a death sentence to Zakaria Ali Ahmed, a former police officer, for the murder of another police officer.
11. The Somali National Army, along with local forces, successfully thwarted an Al-Shabaab attack in the Caws-Weyne area and continues their offensive to liberate remaining areas from Al-Shabaab control.
12. The Somali National Army, in collaboration with local forces, successfully entered the historic town of El Bur, which had long been a stronghold for the terrorist group Al-Shabaab. This marks a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to combat extremist elements in the region.
13. The operation in El Bur involved comprehensive security sweeps to neutralize potential threats, including mines and sleeper cells left behind by Al-Shabaab. The Ministry of Defence has assured the public that all necessary precautions are being taken to complete the security operations and prioritize the safety of residents and restoration of peace.
14. In Las Anod, there was intense fighting between the Somaliland army and the SSC-Khatumo forces on August 24, 2023. The SSC-Khatumo forces captured a number of Somaliland soldiers, including Commander Botaan, and gained control of strategically significant military bases in the area. The Somaliland army retreated towards the Goodi regions, marking a setback for them.
15. On the same day, the forces of the SSC administration of Sool achieved a significant victory by capturing the main military base of Somaliland on the outskirts of Las Anod. The operation took less than four hours, resulting in the SSC-Khatumo administration gaining control over Maragga and the Goja'adde base. Somaliland forces regrouped in Dhodida following their retreat.
16. The SSC-Khatumo administration showcased war vehicles, weapons, and ammunition left behind by the fleeing Somaliland forces, highlighting the extent of their triumph. This defeat adds to the ongoing political crisis and violence in Hargeisa and may compel Somaliland to relinquish control of Sool entirely.
17. A high-level security meeting was held in Mogadishu on August 23, 2023, chaired by Somali Prime Minister Hamse Abdi Barre, to address escalating security breaches and attacks in the city. The Banaadir regional administration issued new guidelines to



strengthen security measures in the capital, including property inspections to search for explosive materials and cooperation with security officials during these inspections.

18. The Banaadir administration aims to enhance security protocols and mitigate the risks posed by attacks in Mogadishu and its outskirts, particularly in response to a recent assault by Al-Shabaab on a police station in the Kahda district that resulted in casualties among government defence forces.

## EVENTS LISTED

### Politics

On August 26, 2023, **Qatar Charity inaugurated a health centre at the Madina Hospital in Banaadir, Somalia.** Attended by Somali government officials and members of the Qatari embassy, the inaugural ceremony marked the establishment of a 350-square-metre facility aimed at benefiting 20,000 individuals. The health centre comprises various departments including a maternity ward, doctor's clinics, emergency services, vaccination room, laboratory, pharmacy, and administrative offices. It also features dedicated spaces for health awareness and education. The services provided encompass emergency first aid, maternal and child healthcare, reproductive health services, nutrition support, child vaccinations, and laboratory diagnostics. The centre aims to achieve comprehensive health coverage for mothers and children, thereby contributing to sustainable development and community well-being. Dr. Mohamed Abdirahman Jama, the director-general of Madina Hospital, expressed gratitude for the collaboration with Qatar Charity and emphasized the project's importance in enhancing healthcare services. Somali Minister of Health, Ali Haji Warsame, lauded Qatar Charity's efforts in promoting health awareness and expressed gratitude for their humanitarian initiative, anticipating a significant improvement in the health and humanitarian situation in Somalia.

On August 26, 2023, **Abdiqadir Ahmed Aw-Cali (Firdhiye), the leader of SSC-Khaatumo, criticised the President of Somaliland, Muse Bihi Abdi, and urged him to withdraw his forces from the city of Las Anod.** Firdhiye delivered a lengthy speech affirming that they would respond to any aggression by Somaliland, emphasising their commitment to non-violence and the absence of territorial ambitions. He acknowledged that Muse Bihi's administration seemed inclined towards conflict but assured the public that SSC-Khaatumo's forces and the local residents were prepared for any situation. Firdhiye stated that their movement had around 280 trained soldiers, including senior officers who condemned acts of war, along with 42 casualties. He lamented the continuous unrest but expressed determination to resolve the issues peacefully. Firdhiye called upon the people of SSC to unite and stand against the presence of Somaliland forces in Las Anod. Moreover, he reported the destruction caused by the Somaliland military and requested the intervention of the federal government and the international community to investigate the former barracks used by their forces. Firdhiye also highlighted the prolonged suffering of Las Anod due to the eight-year blockade imposed by Somaliland, urging the federal government to aid in reconstructing the heavily damaged infrastructure.

On August 26, 2023, **the Wagardhac clan elders convened a gathering and officially declared a cessation of peace negotiations with the Sacad clan, until further notice.** This decision was predominantly influenced by the dissemination of fraudulent peace delegations allegedly coming from the Sacad clan, which had been widely circulated in the media.

On August 26, 2023, **the Head of Operations of EUCAP Somalia paid a visit to Berbera, where she was introduced to the ongoing specialized maritime training conducted by EUCAP for the Somaliland Coast Guard.** During her visit, she had the opportunity to meet Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye, the Commander of the Somaliland Coast Guard. The purpose of the visit was to observe and assess the progress of the training program and strengthen the collaboration between EUCAP and the Somaliland Coast Guard. The visit highlights the commitment of EUCAP in enhancing the capabilities of the local maritime security forces and promoting stability in the region.

On August 26, 2023, **the Minister of Communications in Somalia found himself facing a challenging situation after his decision last week to implement a ban on popular platforms including TikTok, Telegram, and 1Xbet.** This move has sparked disagreements within the Somali Council of Ministers, resulting in a growing controversy surrounding the ban. Notably, telecommunication companies in Somalia have expressed discontent, particularly with the prohibition of TikTok. The platform is widely used by Somali influencers as a means to generate income. As pressure mounts, the Prime Minister of Somalia is reportedly urging a resolution to this issue. The future of the ban remains uncertain, leaving observers wondering whether the minister will revise his plan in response to the concerns raised.

On August 26, 2023, **Ceerigaabo saw a significant presence of Garxajis youths asserting their control over the city.** They were observed chanting patriotic songs while proudly waving the national flag of Somaliland. Reports indicated that some of these youths were armed with AK47 rifles. These individuals appeared to be engaged in searching for any remaining civilians belonging to the Daarood community within the city.

On August 25, 2023, **the Ministry of Information launched a five-day training program aimed at combating extremist ideologies by coordinating media relations.** The program involved 50 members from the Federal Government, regional governments, and the Banadir region of Somalia. The primary objective of the training was to connect and unify the media systems across government entities, while also strengthening the fight against extremist groups. The representatives from various government agencies were tasked with enhancing cooperation in terms of media and community relations, with a focus on promoting a unified government message to eliminate extremist groups. Abdullahi Hayir Duale, the Director General of the Ministry of Information, opened the training, emphasizing its significance in sharing discussions, utilizing the teachers' lessons, and understanding the challenges faced by different government agencies.

On August 25, 2023, **the Embassy of China in Somalia hosted an event in Mogadishu to announce scholarships for Somali students.** The scholarships, fully sponsored by the Chinese government, will enable selected students to pursue higher education at prestigious universities in China. The event saw officials from the Ministry of Education in Somalia come together to mark the occasion and bid farewell to the inaugural batch of scholarship recipients. The Director for Higher Education emphasized the significance of the program and expressed optimism about the positive impact the students will have on their homeland upon their return. Dr. Hodan, an advisor to the Prime Minister of Somalia, encouraged the recipients to embrace the cultural diversity of China and highlighted the transformative power of education based on her own experiences. Chinese Ambassador Fei Shen Chao reiterated his country's commitment to expanding the scholarship program and urged the scholars to seize the opportunity for a brighter future.

On August 25, 2023, **the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, inaugurated the National Consultative Council meeting held in Dhusamareb, Galmudug State.** The purpose of the meeting was to discuss various important issues, including the security situation in the country, progress on the ongoing liberation operations, maintaining peace in the areas that have been liberated, and delivering essential government services to those regions. Among the attendees were the Prime Minister, Hamza Abdi Barre, Deputy Prime Minister, Salah Ahmed Jama, as well as the Presidents of Galmudug State, Jubaland State, Southwest State, and Hirshabelle State. Additionally, the Governor of Banadir Regional Administration was also present.

On August 25, 2023, **Hassan Yusuf Noor, the Chairman of the Puntland Constitutional Court, announced that he was too ill to fulfil his responsibilities, which has raised concerns within Puntland.** The timing of his announcement has sparked speculation due to the court's involvement in several significant cases. Noor has allegedly faced pressure from individuals close to President Said Deni to delay opening these pending cases, which include lawsuits filed by members of parliament, opposition parties, and the Politicians' Forum, all pertaining to constitutional issues and the fairness of local council elections. The absence of the court's president has disappointed other judges, leading to internal discord, particularly regarding constitutional amendments. Sources suggest external pressures influenced Noor's decision to seek medical treatment in Norway, a country that funded the local elections and where the President of the Supreme Court holds citizenship. Individuals associated with Deni, such as Attorney General Ahmed Yusuf Taran, are said to have influenced Noor's decision. Noor's medical trip has raised doubts among the people of Puntland, adding to the uncertainty surrounding the region's transition period.

On August 25, 2023, **the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU) expressed its praise for the enactment of the Environmental Management Bill in Somalia.** The labour body commended the parliament for their efforts in passing the bill, which represents a significant step towards a sustainable and fair future for the country. FESTU highlighted the inclusion of the "Just Transition" principle in the bill, which aims to protect workers and their families from the disproportionate impacts of climate change-induced environmental crises. The incorporation of this principle into Somalia's legal framework positions the nation as a trailblazer in Africa. FESTU further acknowledged the proactive commitment of the Federal

Government of Somalia and the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change in crafting an inclusive and progressive bill, emphasizing the importance of environmental protection, fundamental rights, and the welfare of working people. The labour body also extended gratitude to various organizations such as the Olof Palme International Centre, the International Labour Organization, the International Trade Union Confederation, and the African Regional Organisation ITUC-Africa for their financial support and assistance throughout the legislative process. FESTU emphasized that the bill aligns with the aspirations of organized labour to prioritize the well-being of workers, vulnerable communities, and environmental preservation. With Somalia's transition towards a cleaner and more sustainable economy, the country can expect job opportunities as well as job transformations, losses, and replacements, necessitating coherent policies to maximize opportunities and mitigate social costs.

On August 25, 2023, **the President of the Republic of Somaliland, H.E. Musa Bihi Abdi, convened a crucial high-profile meeting with top leaders in the country to address the recent clashes near the city of Lasanood.** The meeting aimed to discuss the implications of the losses incurred and explore ways to unify the people of Somaliland in their collective effort to defend the nation. The President, accompanied by his deputy and Senate Speaker, engaged in dialogue with members of the cabinet and the leadership of the Kulmiye party. During the meeting, both the President and the Waddani presidential candidate, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Irro, spoke to the nation, urging unity and support for the defense forces. Emphasizing the solidarity of the people, Irro expressed the importance of uniting the nation. The President conveyed his condolences to the families of the fallen soldiers and assured the nation and the international community that the defense forces remained intact and in high spirits. He called for resilience and unity, highlighting the need to review and articulate the nation's integrity. The President also reassured the international community of Somaliland's commitment to peace and warned against efforts to harm their unity. The meeting concluded with a consensus and unified stand against any enemies seeking to destroy the nation.

On August 25, 2023, **the chairmen of two opposition parties in Somaliland, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi (Irro) of the National Party (Waddani) and Faisal Ali Warabe of the Welfare Party (UCID), expressed their strong support for the ongoing war in Las Anod.** The war is being waged by the Somaliland Army against a tribal militia and Al-Shabaab terrorists. The opposition leaders voiced their solidarity with the military during a press conference in Hargeisa, urging the people of Somaliland to unite in support of the operations to eliminate tribal militants and curb the presence of Al-Shabaab in the Sool region. They also called for a national conversation to address the underlying issues that led to the recent ambush on a Somaliland Army base. Dr. Mohamed Abdi Gaboose emphasized the need for a thorough investigation to determine the causes of the army's defeat in Las Anod. The chairmen of the Kaah, Horseed, and Rajo associations further appealed to the community to rally behind the National Army.

On August 25, 2023, **the 8th meeting of the Central Committee of the Kulmiye Party concluded in Burco, the capital of Togdheer Region.** During the meeting, the senior leadership and presidential candidates were elected. After over ten years of leading the party, President Muse Bihi Abdi officially resigned as the chairman, and Hon. Mohamed Kahin

Ahmed, previously the first deputy chairman, was elected as the new chairman of the party. Hon. Mohamed Kahin Ahmed expressed gratitude for the trust placed in him and emphasized Kulmiye's role in nationalism and development. President Muse Bihi Abdi highlighted the importance of rejuvenating the party's leadership. Additionally, Abdiaziz Mohamed Samale won the position of 1st Deputy Chairman, with 168 votes, while Mohamed Adan Ilkacase received 55 votes. President Muse Bihi Abdi was re-elected as the presidential candidate, with Mohamud Hassan Saad Sajin, the Minister of Trade and Tourism, as the vice-presidential candidate.

On August 24, 2023, **the Somali Ambassador to Ethiopia, Abdullahi Mohamed Warfaa, and the Secretary to the African Union Commission (AUC), Ms. Dalitso Dikirani Bonongwe, held a noteworthy meeting in Addis Ababa.** Joined by the Communication Officer, Laura Harivola Rakotonandrasana, they discussed pressing security concerns affecting the African continent. The discussions revolved around various regional and broader security challenges impacting Africa's stability. Emphasising the importance of cooperation and collaboration among African nations, both parties highlighted the significance of a unified approach to maintain peace and stability within the region and across the continent. Secretary Bonongwe reiterated the African Union Commission's commitment to fostering a safer environment through collective efforts and strategies. Ambassador Warfaa expressed Somalia's dedication to working closely with African counterparts to find solutions that ensure the well-being of all nations. The meeting also touched upon the African Union's agenda, focusing on initiatives to promote development, economic growth, and political stability. The engagement between the Somali Ambassador and the African Union Secretary showcased the diplomatic ties and shared goals of African nations in their pursuit of a prosperous and secure future. Both parties expressed optimism about the outcomes of their talks and emphasised the continuation of collaboration to address future security challenges, strengthen diplomatic relations, and foster unity among African countries.

On August 24, 2023, **Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Bare of Somalia, accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister Salah Ahmed Jama, arrived in Dhuusamareeb, the capital of Galmadug State, to attend a national consultative meeting.** The meeting aims to address urgent issues and enhance cooperation among federal member states. Upon their arrival, the delegation was warmly received by President Ahmed Abdi Karie of Galmudug State and Vice President Ali Dahir Eid. Led by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of the Federal Republic of Somalia, the meeting brings together leaders from various federal member states to confront the Al-Shabaab insurgency. The presence of the Governor of Banadir Region further emphasizes the importance of these discussions.

On August 24, 2023, **President Hassan Sheikh of Somalia inaugurated a national consultation meeting in Dhusamareb, bringing together several Somali leaders including those from Jubaland, Southwest, HirShabelle, and Galmudug.** Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre and the mayor of Mogadishu were also present. The purpose of the talks, as stated by the presidency, is to discuss crucial matters such as security, the progress in military operations against the extremist group Al-Shabaab, the stabilization of liberated areas, and the delivery of government services to the people. However, the President of

Puntland, Said Abdullahi Deni, did not attend the meeting due to an ongoing political dispute with Villa Somalia. President Hassan Sheikh has been stationed in Dhusamareb for several weeks as part of efforts to combat Al-Shabaab, with plans underway for the second phase of the operation involving the participation of frontline countries' armies. Notably, the Somali government has successfully ousted Al-Shabaab from significant territories, including Elbur.

## Security

On August 26, 2023, **the extremist group Al-Shabaab launched a daring attack on a base of Somali government forces located in the Cows Weyn village of the Galgaduud region in central Somalia.** The attack began with suicide car explosions, followed by armed militants descending upon the base. Ali Abdi Wardheere (Ali Yare), the former Deputy Governor of Security for the Banadir region, estimated that the toll of the attack resulted in the deaths of approximately 130 to 150 soldiers, including 43 officers. The exact number of injured soldiers remains unknown. During the assault, Al-Shabaab reportedly captured 22 soldiers and seized 23 military battle wagons. The attack continued until 09:45 AM and, according to military sources, the newly arrived forces fought bravely despite lacking essential ground troop support or air cover. Al-Shabaab claims to have eliminated 178 soldiers and overrun three military bases, each housing 1,500 soldiers. The Somali military command and Ministry of Defence have not yet issued official statements on the incident. Critics of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's regime have expressed suspicions of potential traitor involvement and called for a thorough investigation into the attack.

On August 25, 2023, **police in Mogadishu issued a warning against protests and stated that they would take action against organizers amid planned street demonstrations by supporters of General Sheegow Ahmed Ali, who is currently incarcerated.** The police command released a statement citing security reasons as the basis for prohibiting protests that do not follow proper procedures in accordance with the General Security Act. The statement emphasized that anyone found violating the decree would face legal consequences. These measures came in response to previous protests held by factions allied to General Sheegow following his arrest the previous week after a fatal clash with security forces. General Sheegow remained in police custody at the time of the report.

On August 26, 2023, **reports emerged of an operation by the Somali National Army's elite unit, known as the Danab Commandos, in the Yaaq Dabey area of Jubbada Hoose region.** The operation resulted in the successful neutralisation of approximately 50 militants belonging to the Al-Shabaab extremist group. Taliye (Colonel) Carab Dheeg Axmed, the commander of the 5th Battalion of the Danab Commandos, confirmed the operation and stated that 47 Al-Shabaab fighters were among those killed. The troops also reportedly seized weapons and equipment left behind by the militants. Taliye Carab Dheeg Axmed emphasised that the Danab Commandos' mission was crucial in eliminating the threat posed by Al-Shabaab and safeguarding the Somali population. This operation marks a significant blow to the Al-Shabaab insurgency and reflects the increased efforts of the Somali Federal Government to counter the extremist group's activities throughout the country.

On August 26, 2023, **the President of SSC-Khaatumo, Abdulqadir Firdhiye, officially announced that his administration had successfully taken control of a well-equipped military base in the town of Laascaanood, which was under the control of Somaliland.** Firdhiye expressed gratitude towards the SSC forces for their commendable efforts in setting up the base, while also acknowledging the deployment of Somaliland troops, whom he referred to as intruders. In summarizing the recent conflict, Firdhiye declared that SSC forces had inflicted significant damages on Somaliland, resulting in the destruction of 218 military vehicles and the loss of 42 vehicles. A total of 260 soldiers, including combat-experienced commanders, were reportedly involved in the operation. Firdhiye further emphasized that their military actions had solely targeted the invading Somaliland forces and not the civilian population, in contrast to the claims made by Somaliland President Muse Bihi Abdi.

On August 26, 2023, **Somaliland's President, Muse Bihi Abdi, vowed revenge on the alliance responsible for the attack and capture of the Somaliland military base located on the outskirts of Las Anod.** Despite the losses inflicted on the army, President Abdi assured the public that the army remains intact and urged them not to fear an escalation of the situation. Reports indicate that the city of Las Anod, claimed by both Somaliland and the neighbouring autonomous region of Puntland, is relatively calm, although there is significant military mobilization. Tensions have been escalating since February, with hundreds of casualties and significant displacement. The region, with a population of 4.5 million, has its currency, passports, and government but lacks international recognition, which has hindered its development.

On August 25, 2023, **Shebelle Media published an article reporting on the African Union (AU) winding down of its peacekeeping mission in Somalia, known as the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).** The mission, established in 2007, aimed to assist Somalia's federal government in its fight against the al-Shabab militant group. Over the years, AU forces, in collaboration with Somali security forces, succeeded in pushing al-Shabab out of major urban areas, although the group still maintains control in rural parts of the country. The mission has faced challenges and received mixed assessments regarding its success in achieving its objectives. Concerns are now arising about the future security situation in Somalia after the departure of AU forces. The Somali National Army is expected to take over security responsibilities, but there are doubts about its readiness and effectiveness due to the lack of a professional army and internal conflicts within the Somali security forces. Funding and resource constraints further complicate the situation, as Somalia heavily relies on external support. The UN Security Council's timetable for the transition is seen as ambitious, and it is unlikely that Somalia's forces will be fully autonomous by then or that al-Shabab will be defeated militarily. Uncertainty remains about whether Somalia can establish an effective country-wide security presence and effectively address human rights abuses during the transition.

On August 25, 2023, **in various towns of Somaliland, the youths expressed their support for the nation's ongoing battle against tribal militia in the Sool region.** The show of solidarity arose following an ambush directed at the Somaliland Army on the outskirts of Las Anod by tribal militants aligned with the al-Shabaab terrorist group. The women in the Gebilay region also actively supported the national forces on the front lines, emphasizing

their commitment to defending the country's borders. These sentiments were shared during encounters with journalists in Hargeisa and Burao. The impassioned youths appealed to the government, urging them to enlist them in the army, thereby enabling them to play an active role in safeguarding their homeland against incursions by tribal militants and al-Shabaab terrorists. Furthermore, the youths expressed their readiness to sacrifice their lives in defense of their nation. In response to the attack perpetrated by a tribal militia aligned with al-Shabaab on the outskirts of Las Anod, thousands of youths from various parts of the country have rallied in support of the Somaliland Army's mission to defeat the tribal militia in the Sool region, which is affiliated with the al-Shabaab terror group.

On August 26, 2023, **the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) carried out a targeted operation in the Jambalul area of Lower Shabelle against the extremist group Al-Shabaab.** The operation, as stated by NISA, had the objective of disrupting Al-Shabaab's judicial system and impeding their ability to quickly move troops. A key achievement of the operation was the successful dismantling of an Al-Shabaab-operated court that played a significant role in the group's parallel governance structures. This court had previously caused tensions with the formal legal system in the region. Additionally, the operation resulted in the neutralisation of a site utilized by Al-Shabaab to extort money from local residents and road users, serving as a major revenue source for the group. The raid also led to the seizure of five operational FEKON motorcycles, which Al-Shabaab used for rapid troop movements and hit-and-run attacks. Presently, these motorcycles are under the possession of government forces. Importantly, this operation was part of a larger ongoing offensive campaign against Al-Shabaab in various Somali regions, including Shabelle, Hiiraan, Galgaduud, and Mudug. The government forces are conducting multiple operations actively to combat the militant group.

On August 25, 2023, **the Somali National Army (SNA) carried out successful operations in Awdheele District, Lower Shabelle, resulting in the death of at least 27 members of the militant group Al-Shabaab.** The militants had recently lost control of the district to the national army but had been conducting regular attacks in the area. During the operation, the militants were found gathering on a local farm, allegedly preparing for an attack. The military launched an assault, killing the militants and causing critical injuries to several others. The operation also resulted in the complete destruction of their hideouts. The Somali National Army commanders have announced that sustained operations against Al-Shabaab will continue with the aim of completely crushing the group. The militants still maintain a stronghold in rural central and southern Somalia. The second phase of operations, which will involve the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) soldiers and potentially troops from Kenya, Djibouti, and Ethiopia, is set to be launched in the future.

On August 25, 2023, **the Somali National Army, in collaboration with US air support, initiated a series of operations in the Lower Jubba region.** The objective of these operations was to counter the presence of the extremist group Al-Shabaab and address their disruptive activities aimed at harming the lives and property of the Somali people. As a result of the coordinated efforts, 13 Al-Shabaab terrorists were neutralized, and a network of militants was successfully dismantled.



On August 25, 2023, **the Military Court of the Federal Republic of Somalia handed down a death sentence to Zakaria Ali Ahmed, a former police officer, for the murder of Ali Hassan Siyad, also a police officer.** The incident took place on July 28, 2022, in the Dayniile district of Mogadishu. After committing the crime, Zakaria fled the country, taking both the murder weapon and the victim's weapon with him. However, a joint effort by the Somali police and Interpol led to his capture in South Sudan.

On August 25, 2023, **the Somali National Army, in collaboration with local forces, successfully thwarted an attack by Al-Shabaab terrorists in the Caws-Weyne area, a region recently liberated by the army.** The army had received intelligence about the presence of vehicles loaded with explosive devices aimed at targeting their forces. Currently, the army, along with regional forces, is advancing towards the remaining district of Galhareri in the Galgadud region, which is still under the control of Al-Shabaab. The recent operation follows the successful takeover of Ceel-Buur in their latest offensive.

On August 24, 2023, **the Somali National Army, in collaboration with local forces, successfully entered the historic town of El Bur, marking a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to combat extremist elements in the region.** The Ministry of Defence has confirmed the army's entry into El Bur and their engagement in comprehensive security sweeps to identify and neutralise potential threats, including mines and sleeper cells left behind by the terrorist group Al-Shabaab. El Bur has long been a stronghold for Al-Shabaab, making this operation strategically important. The operation's well-coordinated planning and execution demonstrate the commitment of the national forces to ensuring the safety and security of the local population. The Ministry of Defence has assured the public that all necessary precautions are being taken to complete the ongoing security operations within El Bur, with the safety of the residents and restoration of peace being the top priorities. Further updates will be provided once the security operations conclude, and El Bur is officially declared safe.

On August 24, 2023, **during the ongoing conflict in Las Anod, intense fighting erupted between the Somaliland army and the SCC-Khatumo forces.** As a result, a number of Somaliland soldiers, including Commander Botaan from the 12th Battalion stationed in the Maragga area, were captured by the SCC-Khatumo forces. Commander Botaan, a prominent figure in the Somaliland military during the eight-month-long Las Anod conflict, was presented to the public by the SCC-Khatumo administration along with other prisoners of war. The SCC-Khatumo forces also gained control of strategically significant military bases, Gojacade and Maragga, located on the outskirts of Las Anod. Additionally, they showcased captured military vehicles as evidence of their advancements in the conflict. The Somaliland army, on the other hand, retreated towards the Goodi regions, marking a significant setback for them. This incident represents the largest number of casualties suffered by the Somaliland forces since the beginning of the hostilities in Las Anod.

On August 24, 2023, **the forces of the SSC administration of Sool achieved a significant victory as they captured the main military base of Somaliland located on the outskirts of Las Anod.** This successful operation took less than four hours to complete. The SSC troops managed to gain control over Maraaga, Somaliland's stronghold, as well as the large

Goja'adde base. Following their retreat, the defeated Somaliland forces regrouped in Dhodida in the northwest. The SSC-Khatumo administration, now headquartered in Lasaanood, showcased the war vehicles, weapons, and ammunition left behind by the fleeing Somaliland forces, highlighting the extent of their triumph. Somaliland had previously disregarded calls, including those from the United Nations Security Council, to withdraw from Sool, thereby escalating tensions. Over the course of eight months, Somaliland forces had engaged in artillery fire and bombardment of hospitals and infrastructure near Lasaanood. This defeat further exacerbates the ongoing political crisis and violence in Hargeisa, which has been aggravated by the failure to hold presidential elections under Muse Bihi. Analysts anticipate that Somaliland will face significant challenges in recovering from this blow and may be compelled to relinquish control of Sool entirely.

On August 23, 2023, a **high-level security meeting was held in Mogadishu, chaired by Somali Prime Minister Hamse Abdi Barre, to address the escalating security breaches and attacks in the city.** As a response to this, the Banaadir regional administration has issued new guidelines aimed at strengthening security measures in the capital. The guidelines focus on conducting inspections of properties, including garages and residences, to search for any explosive materials. Homeowners without specific neighbourhood associations and garage owners have been instructed to cooperate with security officials during these inspections. The objective is to identify and remove any potentially dangerous substances. This initiative follows a recent aggressive assault by the Al-Shabaab group on a police station in the Kahda district, resulting in casualties among government defence forces. By implementing these measures, the Banaadir administration aims to enhance security protocols and mitigate the risks posed by such attacks in Mogadishu and its outskirts.



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