

BAIDOA · SOUTH WEST SOMALIA · 2026

The Price of Political Power

Independent public documentation of political conflict, the use and misuse of military power for political interests, and its impact on civilians and governance in South West Somalia.

Political power is temporary. — Somali lives are not.

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Independent public-interest documentation examining political conflict, militarization, civilian impact and governance in South West Somalia.

Why we refuse to look away

Somali communities have experienced violence, political conflict and humanitarian suffering that too often disappears from the world's attention.

This project exists because silence can make suffering invisible.

We are documenting the South West Somalia crisis to preserve what happened, distinguish established facts from allegations and uncertainty, and ensure that the people affected are not reduced to statistics.

This is not a campaign for a politician. It is not an attack on a clan. It is a public-interest effort to unveil what can be established, document what remains disputed, and give vulnerable Somali voices a place to be heard.

Because political power is temporary. Somali lives are not.

What happened in Baidoa?

This section sets out what this documentation can describe about the crisis in Baidoa and South West Somalia during 2026. Each part distinguishes what is established from what is reported, alleged, disputed or unresolved. Where the available evidence does not settle a question, this publication says so rather than filling the gap.

A political dispute became a security crisis. The people who paid for it were not the people competing for office.

A contested political process

At the centre of the crisis is a dispute over political authority in South West Somalia and over the terms by which that authority is claimed, extended or transferred.

Competing sides have advanced competing accounts of legitimacy. Each account is presented by its own supporters as lawful, and by its opponents as unlawful. This documentation does not adjudicate which claim is legally correct; it records that the dispute exists, that it is unresolved in public, and that it has had consequences beyond politics.

VERIFIED FACT

A public political dispute over authority in South West Somalia was active during 2026.

DISPUTED

Which political authority is legitimate. Competing accounts exist and are advanced by interested parties.

The actors named in public debate

Public debate around the crisis has repeatedly referenced the federal leadership under President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the South West administration associated with Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen, and figures aligned with Adan Madobe, alongside Jubaland-aligned officials and other regional actors.

Naming an actor in public debate is not the same as establishing that the actor ordered, authorised or carried out a specific act. This publication names actors only as participants in a public dispute, and separately identifies which specific actions the available evidence establishes.

MULTIPLE-SOURCE REPORTING

These figures and administrations are widely referenced by multiple sources as parties to the political dispute.

UNKNOWN / UNVERIFIED

Individual command responsibility for specific incidents. No documentary evidence supplied to this project establishes specific orders.

When political competition acquires weapons

The most consequential feature of this crisis is the movement of political competition out of negotiation and into the space where armed forces operate.

When armed formations become instruments of political positioning, the ordinary safeguards that separate civilians from political conflict weaken. Roads close. Markets empty. Neighbourhoods become terrain. Young men in uniform are placed in positions where they may be asked to use force in a dispute that is not theirs.

This is a structural observation supported by the pattern of events recorded in the timeline. It is not an assertion that any named individual issued a specific military order.

MULTIPLE-SOURCE REPORTING

Armed confrontation accompanied political disagreement on more than one occasion during 2026.

POLITICAL CLAIM / ALLEGATION

Each side has accused the other of deliberately militarising the dispute. These are claims by interested parties.

The confrontations

This documentation records four confrontation dates in 2026 — 30 March, 30 May, 17–18 August and 3 September — together with a separate reported incident in Doolow, Gedo, on 4 September.

The timeline sets out each date individually, with what is established, reported, alleged and still unknown kept apart. Read together, they describe a crisis that recurred rather than resolved.

The civilian consequence

Armed confrontation inside or near a populated city does not remain confined to the people who carry weapons. It reaches households, schools, clinics, markets and transport.

This publication does not publish casualty figures it cannot verify. Inventing numbers would damage the very people this project exists to serve. What it records instead is the category of harm: displacement, interruption of livelihoods, interruption of education, fear, bereavement, and the slow erosion of civilian governance.

VERIFIED FACT

Armed confrontation in populated areas exposes civilians to risk and disruption.

UNKNOWN / UNVERIFIED

Verified casualty totals. This project has not been supplied with independently verified figures and does not estimate them.

What this documentation does not claim

This publication does not claim to know who fired first in each confrontation, who authorised each deployment, or what private calculations preceded each decision.

It does not describe any conduct as a war crime or a crime against humanity, because such conclusions require legal determination by a competent body on evidence this project does not hold.

It does not attribute responsibility on the basis of political benefit. The fact that an outcome advantages a party is not evidence that the party caused it.

The crisis — 2026

Select any date to open the record for that day. Established facts, reported accounts, allegations and unresolved questions are kept separate and are not merged.

30 MARCH 2026 First major confrontation

The first major armed confrontation recorded by this documentation.

WHAT IS ESTABLISHED

- A major confrontation took place on this date.

WHAT WAS REPORTED

- Multiple accounts circulated describing armed exchanges and disruption to normal movement in the affected area.

WHAT WAS ALLEGED

- Each side publicly attributed responsibility for initiating the confrontation to the other.

WHAT REMAINS UNKNOWN

- Which party initiated the exchange.
- The chain of command and any orders given.
- Verified casualty figures, civilian or military.

30 MAY 2026 Second major confrontation

A second major confrontation, two months after the first.

WHAT IS ESTABLISHED

- A second major confrontation took place on this date.

WHAT WAS REPORTED

- Reports described renewed armed confrontation associated with the same unresolved political dispute.

WHAT WAS ALLEGED

- Competing political accusations were repeated by the parties, each presenting the other as the aggressor.

WHAT REMAINS UNKNOWN

- Whether the confrontation was planned or arose from an encounter.
- Verified casualty figures.
- The full extent of civilian displacement.

17–18 AUGUST 2026 Major confrontation

A major confrontation spanning two days.

WHAT IS ESTABLISHED

- A major confrontation took place across these two days.

WHAT WAS REPORTED

- Reporting described a confrontation of greater duration than the earlier episodes, with

consequences for movement and daily life in the affected area.

WHAT WAS ALLEGED

- Political statements issued during and after these days assigned blame to opposing parties.

WHAT REMAINS UNKNOWN

- The sequence of events across the two days.
- Verified casualty figures.
- Whether any agreement or de-escalation understanding followed.

3 SEPTEMBER 2026 **Baidoa confrontation**

Confrontation in Baidoa, the capital of South West Somalia.

WHAT IS ESTABLISHED

- A confrontation took place in Baidoa on this date.

WHAT WAS REPORTED

- Accounts described armed confrontation within the city and consequent disruption to civilian life.

WHAT WAS ALLEGED

- Political actors publicly attributed responsibility to their opponents.

WHAT REMAINS UNKNOWN

- The initiating act and its authorisation.
- Verified casualty figures, civilian or military.
- The extent of damage to civilian property and services.

4 SEPTEMBER 2026 **Reported Doolow incident, Gedo**

A reported incident in Doolow, Gedo region. Attribution is not independently established.

WHAT IS ESTABLISHED

- An incident was reported in Doolow, in the Gedo region, on this date.

WHAT WAS REPORTED

- Reports concerned an incident said to involve General Mahad Abdirahman Aden, known as Taliye Shub.

WHAT WAS ALLEGED

- Jubaland and Laftagareen-aligned officials accused Turkey of carrying out the strike.
- That accusation is a claim by interested parties and is not treated here as established.

WHAT REMAINS UNKNOWN

- Who carried out the strike. Attribution remains unresolved.
- The means used. This publication does not name aircraft or weapons systems.
- Whether the incident bore any relationship to events elsewhere. No such relationship is established.

Who is paying the price?

Political conflict is usually described through the people competing for office. This section deliberately turns the attention elsewhere — to the people who did not choose the dispute and cannot leave its consequences behind.

Civilians

Residents of a city do not stop being residents when a confrontation begins. They shelter, they wait, they move, they lose access to work, water, transport and safety. Their exposure is not incidental to a political dispute; it is its most immediate cost.

Families

Bereavement, injury and displacement are carried by households for years after a confrontation ends. Families absorb medical costs, lost income and the long work of caring for those who survive. This burden is rarely recorded and almost never compensated.

Young Somali soldiers

Young men in uniform are frequently the instrument through which political disputes are conducted. Many joined to defend the country. Being placed in a confrontation between rival political camps is a different thing entirely, and the risk they carry is real regardless of which side prevails.

Students

Education is one of the first things suspended and one of the last things restored. Closed schools and interrupted university terms are not a footnote — they compound over years and shape what the next generation is able to become.

Businesses

Markets, transport operators, traders and small enterprises depend on predictability. Repeated confrontation destroys it. Capital leaves, supply lines break, prices move against the poorest households, and recovery is slower than the confrontation that caused the damage.

Civilian life and governance

When force becomes a routine instrument of political competition, civilian institutions lose the space in which they function. Public administration, dispute resolution and service delivery weaken. The damage to governance outlasts the confrontation and makes the next crisis more likely.

What do we actually know?

Every significant factual statement in this publication carries an evidence status. The purpose is to let readers see exactly how much weight a statement can bear, and to prevent allegation from hardening into fact through repetition.

The classification

VERIFIED FACT

Supported by available evidence.

MULTIPLE-SOURCE REPORTING

Reported by multiple sources but not necessarily independently verified in every detail.

POLITICAL CLAIM / ALLEGATION

A claim made by a political or interested party.

DISPUTED

Competing accounts exist.

UNKNOWN / UNVERIFIED

The available evidence does not establish the claim.

Where a question is unresolved, this publication states that it is unresolved. It does not estimate casualty figures, reconstruct military orders, or infer motive. An absence of evidence is recorded as an absence, not converted into a conclusion.

Who is responsible for what?

This is the part of the publication that requires the most care. Responsibility is a serious finding, and it must not be inferred from political alignment, from accusation, or from the fact that an outcome benefits someone.

Political responsibility for allowing a dispute to escalate is not the same as legal responsibility for a specific act of violence. The two are frequently confused in public argument, and the confusion is often deliberate.

This documentation therefore separates established facts, reported actions, political accusations, disputed responsibility and unresolved questions — and refuses to merge them.

No individual is accused here of a crime. Where an accusation exists in public debate, it is recorded as an accusation, together with who made it.

VERIFIED FACT

Parties to the political dispute bear political responsibility for the choice to pursue that dispute in an environment where armed force is present.

POLITICAL CLAIM / ALLEGATION

Each side has accused named opponents of ordering or enabling violence. These remain accusations by interested parties.

DISPUTED

Responsibility for initiating each confrontation. Competing accounts exist for every date recorded in the timeline.

UNKNOWN / UNVERIFIED

Whether any specific individual issued an order to use force against civilians. No evidence supplied to this project establishes this.

Doolow — 4 September 2026

A reported incident — attribution not independently established

On 4 September 2026 an incident was reported in Doolow, in the Gedo region. Doolow is the location recorded by this documentation. It is not Beled Hawo.

Reports concerned an incident said to involve General Mahad Abdirahman Aden, known as Taliye Shub.

Jubaland and Laftagareen-aligned officials accused Turkey of carrying out the strike. That is an accusation made by interested parties. This publication does not state, and has not been shown evidence establishing, that Turkey carried out the strike.

No aircraft, weapon system or operating force is identified here, because the available evidence does not establish one. This publication also does not present the incident as retaliation for any other event; no such relationship is established.

MULTIPLE-SOURCE REPORTING

An incident was reported in Doolow, Gedo, on 4 September 2026.

POLITICAL CLAIM / ALLEGATION

Jubaland and Laftagareen-aligned officials accused Turkey of carrying out the strike.

UNKNOWN / UNVERIFIED

Who carried out the strike. Attribution remains unresolved.

UNKNOWN / UNVERIFIED

The means used, and any connection to events elsewhere.

This section will be revised if independently verifiable evidence is supplied. Until then, the attribution question stays open on the record.

Read the complete documentation

The full research publication remains the detailed evidence document. The website carries the essential narrative on its own; the document carries the depth.

Document files are prepared for publication. Where an edition file is not yet attached, the corresponding link is inactive rather than pointing to a substitute.

To those who died.

To those who survived.

To the families who continue to carry the pain.

To the young Somalis asked to fight political battles that are not theirs.

Political power is temporary. — Somali lives are not.

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