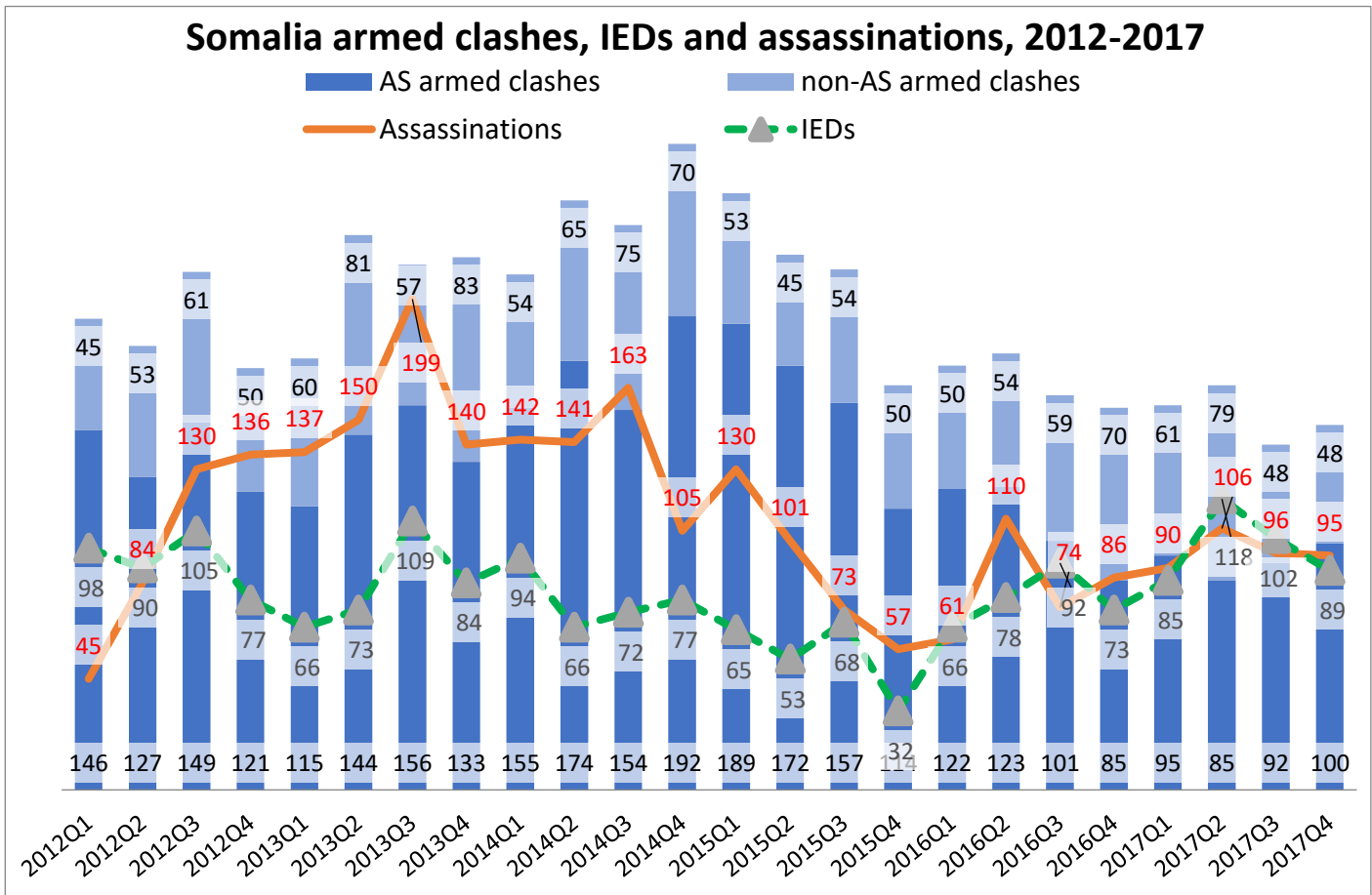


# Quarterly Report on Somalia – October-December 2017

## 1. Main political and security developments

### Trends of Violence

As this report is the last of 2017, it allows us to analyse some trends in yearly data.

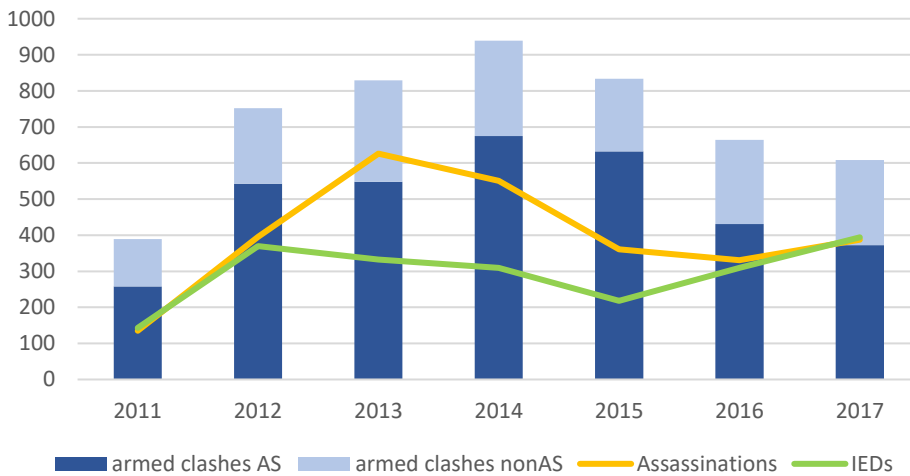


Overall levels of violence remained relatively stable in Somalia and Somaliland over the last quarter. There was an increase in armed clashes involving **Al Shabaab**, which as noted previously had been at a low level since the last quarter of 2016, hovering at about 1 clash per day. Of the 100 clashes involving AS in this quarter, 85 were initiated by AS (one of these clashes was between two AS groups, the others were against government forces, their local allies and AMISOM/international supporters) while they were defending in the other 15 cases. This rate clearly indicates that AS is still on the offensive. Still, overall armed clashes involving Al Shabaab have been on the decline since 2014, with a 13.7% decrease since last year; their impact on humanitarian operations is mostly that they reduce or cancel access.

The rate of **non-AS related clashes** stayed constant at 48 cases. These are mostly clan-related clashes, which tend to take place in areas not controlled by AS; there are also clashes between security forces and criminal gangs, or

between different units of the armed forces – this happens mainly in the capital, where the Mogadishu Stabilisation Force still occasionally faces stiff resistance from other armed units and where conflict between such

Trends in main violence types, Somalia 2011-2017



Variation 2016-2017	
AS armed clashes	-13.7%
Non-AS armed clashes	1.3%
Assassinations	16.9%
IED attacks	27.5%

groups about land ownership notably intensified in the last quarter.

The massive 14 Oct truck bomb at Zobe intersection Mogadishu that killed more than 500 people, was the deadliest incident ever registered in Somalia (see Box 3). Nine aid workers died and seventeen were injured; more than

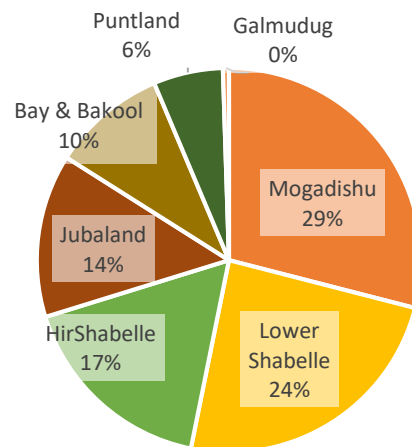
half of them were Red Crescent (Bisha Cas) volunteers whose office was very close to the blast location; the others were off-duty staff ‘at the wrong place, wrong time’.

The 600-800 kg bomb (according to estimates of the government committee that investigated the attack) shows that AS IED-making capacity is on the rise. From 2016 to 2017 **IED attacks** have risen by 27.5% and most, if not all of these can be attributed to Al Shabaab. But the trend is not so clear when looked at over a longer period, as in 2012 the number of IED attacks was almost as high as in 2017. Moreover, the peak in IED attacks in 2017 occurred in the second quarter, with 118 IED incidents compared to the third quarter’s 102 and this quarter’s 89. The second quarter of 2017 included the month of Ramadan, which always entails a spike in operations. In 2017 one IED attack targeted a UN convoy in the Afgooye Corridor, but none targeted NGOs.

In 2017, of the 395 IED incidents, 114 took place in Mogadishu, 95 in Lower Shabelle and 67 in HirShabelle, showing a clear concentration of IED attacks in and around the capital. The targets of the IED attacks are most frequently the government (134 cases) and AMISOM (91 cases), followed by civilians (71 cases).

The third complex attack of the year in Mogadishu took place on 28 October, when AS stormed Nasa Hablood 2 hotel with 5 gunmen after a VBIED attack. More than 20 people were killed, including some high government officials, and others were wounded, among whom 2 UN staff members. The first complex attack happened at the Dayah Hotel on 25 January, leading to 20 deaths, and the second was the 14 June attack on Posh Treats and Pizza House, with a tally of 23 deaths. This is a sharp decline relative to the number of complex attacks on hotels and restaurants in 2016, when the dramatic rise in complex

IED incidents, Somalia 2017



attacks on hotels in Mogadishu was defined as one of the year's major trends. Nevertheless, NGO staff should still avoid hotels and restaurants that attract large numbers of government representatives.

The **assassination** rate has also decreased since the second quarter, although here the change is much more modest, down from 106 to 95 now. Compared to 2016, 2017 saw a 17% rise in assassinations, although here again, if one contemplates a longer period, the assassination rate of just over one per day in 2017 is considerably lower than that of 2013 and 2014, which stood at 1.5 murders per day and higher.

In this quarter there was no assassination attempt on people related to NGO work. Nearly half of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 95 (attempted) assassinations took place in Mogadishu. Half of these 43 incidents targeted security forces, the other half civilians, either retired security personnel, or elders who had participated in the electoral process of 2016-2017, while many murder cases remain entirely unsolved. Although many assassinations are not claimed, it is reasonable to suspect AS involvement in half the cases in the capital, and one in three outside the capital (ref ACLED data, notably the identity of victims and the *modus operandi*).

### **Other indicators of violence**

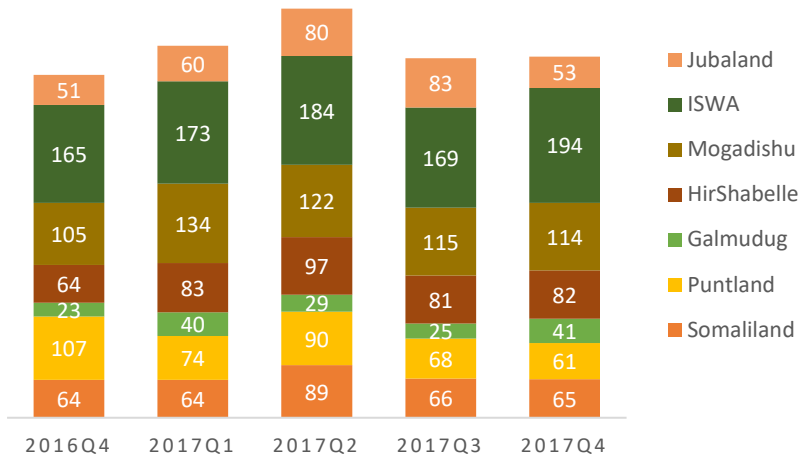
Overall, levels of violence (including the main indicators mentioned above) remained stable in Somalia – see chart below.

There was a marked increase in **airstrikes** in the last quarter of 2017, confirming a trend already noticed late 2016, of increased 'remote' engagement by the US and other international forces. See Box 1 for more details. One purported result of the increased rate of air bombings is that groups of AS fighters are seeking safe havens; movements of militants through regions of Hirshabelle and Galmudug where they previously had no presence seem to support the theory that some of these groups are moving North, to the relative shelter of Galmudug and Puntland (Cal Madow mountains) where it is easier to hide. Nonetheless, drones that are presumably operated from the USA have attacked AS positions in Galgala and IS positions in Qandala a total of five times this quarter, and Puntland has not registered a massive influx of militants seeking shelter.

There was also a relatively large number of **abductions**, 18, up from 11 in the past two quarters. Of these, 10 were perpetrated by Al Shabaab, 1 by Islamic State and 7 by clan militants. However, there were no abductions of aid workers, which was such a dominant theme in the first nine months of 2017, presumably because aid workers have become much more cautious.

A trend more concerning for NGOs is the increased rate in **carjackings**. In the last quarter, 21 carjackings took place, compared to an average of 14 for the first nine months of the year and 11 per quarter in 2015 and 2016. Five of these 21 carjackings directly concerned INGOs, the vehicles having been rented to them or transporting humanitarian aid, but as noted above, none of them led to an abduction. The NGO itself never seems to be the target, instead it's usually the owner of the vehicle who is the intended victim of the carjacking.

### ALL VIOLENT INCIDENTS PER STATE



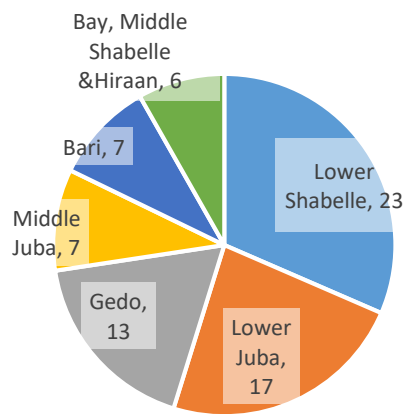
In this past quarter there were 47 incidents of **demonstrations and riots**, compared to 83 in the first quarter, 35 in the second and 37 in the third quarter. 30 of these took place in Somaliland, and these were almost all related to the 13 November elections and the counting process afterwards, which held the breakaway nation in its grip. There were demonstrations against Al Shabaab after the Zobe truck bomb attack in Laas Caanood, Qardho, Garowe, South Galkacyo, Cadaado, Dhusamareeb, Beled Weyne, Jowhar, Baidoa and Kismaayo, besides Mogadishu.

### Box 1: Increasing US airstrikes and its potential impact on aid worker security

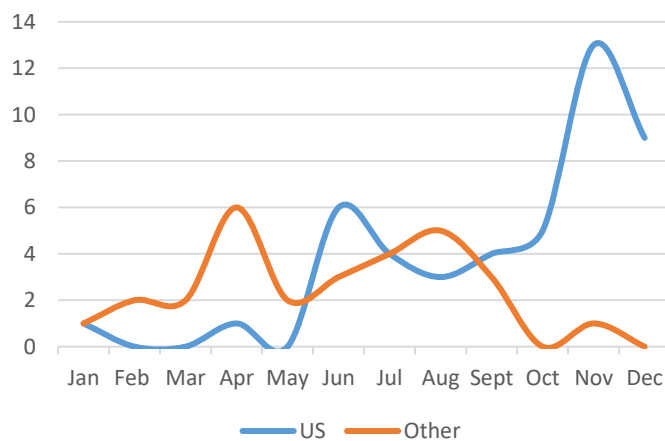
A total of 28 airstrikes targeting AS/IS targets, with all but one perpetrated by US war planes, were recorded in this quarter, more than double the number of US airstrikes in the previous quarter. About half of the 27 airstrikes took place during the month of November, with 7 incidents occurring between 9 and 14/11.

The increased strikes follow the relaxation of the rules of combat in Somalia by US President Trump on March 30 2017, giving [US AFRICOM](#) greater latitude to carry out airstrikes and ground operations against AS/IS targets in Somalia. According to AFRICOM, the airstrikes are executed in close coordination with the SFG and have inflicted a significant number of casualties on AS targets, a claim AS dismisses as mere propaganda.

#### 2017 Airstrikes by region



#### 2017 Airstrike incidents by perpetrator



In terms of geographical distribution, Lower Shabelle experienced the biggest share of US airstrikes, signalling an attempt by the US to help the SFG and AMISOM forces regain the initiative, after a protracted period of stagnation at the frontlines and faced with an increasingly resurgent AS. Of this quarter's 27 US airstrikes, 12 of them targeted AS fighters in Lower Shabelle. Apart from the usual targets of AS bases and vehicles transporting fighters, the last two airstrikes in Lower Shabelle allegedly targeted VBIEDs that were destined for Mogadishu. AS-controlled areas in Lower Shabelle are believed to be the assembling points for VBIEDs destined for Mogadishu, and the SFG, through US air support, might increasingly rely on pre-emptive strikes to lessen the threat of car bomb attacks in the capital.

Lower Juba and Gedo also accounted for a significant number of the incidents, with a cumulative total of 30 airstrikes throughout the year, and 6 in this quarter. KDF war planes were the authors of at least 15 of these airstrikes, while US drones occasionally conducted raids on AS bases and convoys. There were two incidents in Bay region, including the reported killing of 100 AS recruits attending a graduation parade after completing a military training in Bulo Caday village (Diinsoor District) on 21/11. In Middle Juba, the SFG claimed that an airstrike in Jilib town, which serves as the de-facto capital of AS, destroyed an IED factory and killed about 85 fighters on 11/11.

Indicative of the national scope of the US airstrikes, 5 incidents were recorded in Puntland's Bari region this quarter with three of these targeting AS fighters around Galgala while IS was targeted twice in its Qandala hideouts. The IS Somalia leader, Abdiqadir Mumin, was the target of one of the airstrikes, but he is reported to have survived the attack.

#### **AS reaction**

The spike in the airstrikes, especially in the last two months of the quarter, has reportedly caused panic amongst the AS fighters, with some sightings of non-local AS troops with battle wagons in Hiraan and Galmudug amid speculation that they are attempting to resettle in the coastal areas of Mudug and/or in the mountains around Galgala, on the Bari/Sanaag border. The increased threat of airstrikes has caused the group to embark on a purge against perceived spies and informants within their rank and file as well as members of the local population, as evidenced by the increased number of AS executions in several regions, most notably in Bay and Bakool (although that is also related to the defection of Mukhtar Robow and his fighters). AS has little or no anti-aircraft capability, though they claim to have downed one Kenyan fighter jet in December 2014.

#### **Civilian casualties**

Due to the dearth of independent reporting in AS held areas, information relating to the impact of the airstrikes is minimal. Although there were no reports of airstrikes on civilian populated neighbourhoods during the quarter, there were nevertheless three reported instances of civilian casualties, mainly herders caught up in the aerial bombardment in Fardul Cayn settlement in Afgooye district on 16/10, Darasalaam village in Qoryooley district on 11/11 and in Welmaro village in Afmadow district on 01/12. Going forward, if the airstrikes intensify and become more indiscriminate, there are bound to be more civilian casualties and concomitant population displacements, which could impact the work of humanitarian agencies.

#### **Potential impact on aid worker security**

The risk posed by the increasing airstrikes on the security of aid workers is two sided; it directly threatens lives of aid workers and their agency's assets, while at the same time reinforcing the perception held by the target groups, in this case AS/IS, that NGOs are spying agencies for government and coalition forces.

In regards to the first threat, the USAID's Office for Foreign Disaster Assistance suggested that NGOs operating in Somalia to provide coordinates for all fixed locations in Somalia, including warehouses, offices/compounds, hospitals, distribution sites, and IDP settlements for deconfliction with US military activities. The process is voluntary and confidential. When announced in April 2017, the reaction of most within the NGO community was not to cooperate. However, lately some of the larger INGOs have indicated that they are providing coordinates, to avoid being hit.

Although from a 'Duty of Care' perspective it seems logical to provide coordinates of facilities and projects to avoid unnecessary targeting, the sparing of NGO locations and assets during airstrikes might reinforce AS's perception that there is some sort of intelligence sharing between foreign forces and the NGOs. This is bound to create even more hostility and suspicion towards humanitarian agencies. So far, AS has not accused any of the NGO staff it arrested/abducted of spying on its military, but it is possible that such accusations might be made in the case of airstrikes that obviously avoid hitting NGO facilities and programs.

The geographic distribution of violent incidents shows that two states became calmer – Jubaland and Puntland – two more violent – Galmudug and South West State – while Somaliland, Hirshabelle and Mogadishu stayed at levels comparable to the third quarter of 2017.

### **Other developments and impact on NGO safety and access**

The following developments in safety and access may concern NGOs working in Somalia and Somaliland.

1. Peaceful elections were held in Somaliland, resulting in the victory of the ruling party candidate, Muse Bihi. Although there was a nearly complete lockdown on election day (13/11) the elections did not have a major impact on NGO activities, nor is a change in attitude or policy by the new government to be expected. Possible unrest stoked by the runner-up, Wadani party candidate Cirro, seemed to have subsided by the end of the year. Clan conflict has been reduced to very low levels, facilitating access to drought-afflicted populations.
2. The political crisis which rocked Galmudug state came to a breakthrough with the agreement by Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa to form a common administration, moving the state capital to Dhusamareeb and fully integrating the ASWJ controlled areas in the federal state. Concurrently, levels of clan conflict are high, making NGO operations difficult in many areas. It is to be expected that the deal will stabilise Galmudug state. That in turn may encourage authorities to launch an offensive against Al Shabaab, which has avoided any confrontation so far but is consolidating its grip over rural areas of south-eastern and coastal Galgaduud and Mudug.
3. Al Shabaab's determined effort to stamp out the rebellion caused by the defection of Mukhtar Robow has polarized clan relations among the Rahanweyn in Bay and Bakool. NGOs should be cognizant of clan loyalties and obligations of staff members and avoid being seen as 'taking sides'. Operation in the 'grey zones' where government control is contested by Al Shabaab will be even more risky.
4. Airstrikes in South Central Somalia have reportedly caused large casualties among Al Shabaab in Middle Juba and Bay regions. This, added to Robow's defection, has put the militants on edge and it must currently be even more challenging than usual to gain access to populations in AS-controlled areas. It is also possible that some AS groups move to new areas deemed safer, which may be places NGOs are

running projects. Paranoia about informers and spies is higher than normal and staff should avoid traveling through AS-controlled areas.

5. The 14 October Zobe truck bomb attack may have several consequences for NGO activities. On the one hand it consolidated public opinion against Al Shabaab, as demonstrated by the massive demonstrations against AS throughout the country. Despite some attempts to preserve neutrality, the NGO sector is associated with the government and its development agenda, so if this trend persists, it may increase acceptance for NGOs. However the impact the attack had on statistics for humanitarian aid workers – 9 dead, 17 injured – may increase the demand for stronger security measures, particularly by donors and headquarters, as it may place Somalia at the top of the most dangerous countries for aid workers. Thirdly, at a more prosaic level, it has reminded NGOs that their offices better be far from main arteries and possible targets, and that staff avoid places closely associated with the government or foreign agendas.

### **Box 2: Farmajo's first year in office**

Since its establishment on February 8th, 2017, Farmajo's administration faced serious political challenges which nearly toppled the president's proposed reform agenda.

The fallout between Qatar and the other Gulf states, which has strongly affected regional politics, has not spared Somalia. Farmajo's government took a neutral position in the conflict but was faced by unilateral decisions taken by three of the federal members states which publicly sided with Saudi led coalition, presumably to obtain Saudi and Emirati support. Upon the initiative of Jubaland's President Madobe, the state presidents established an Inter State Cooperation Council in October without the participation of President Farmajo, challenging him with their common demand for more consultation and autonomy. This crisis was addressed by increasing the relations between the federal and the state presidents, but it seems the Gulf issue was never settled.

The rendition of the ONLF leader 'Qalbe Dhagax' to Ethiopia on 27th August 2017 dismayed many Somalis. They saw the extradition to Ethiopia of this Somali leader for past crimes as evidence that the current government is not truly independent, while Farmajo had benefited during the elections from his nationalist credentials.

There have also been clan-fuelled tensions. Habar-Gidir have felt themselves side-lined, even though the Abgaal have arguably lost more power with the current government set-up. This sentiment was strengthened by a few developments in the second half of December.

First came the request of the attorney general to parliament on 17/12, to lift the immunity of two opposition MPs, in order to prosecute them for treason. According to the AG's statement, the two MPs were allegedly working for foreign entities to destabilize the Somali nation. In fact, it seems they were planning to impeach the President.

Hours later, NISA arrested Abdirahman Abdishakur, a prominent politician and strong critic of the government, in his residence. The botched arrest led to the death of five SFG soldiers who were guarding the politician. Abdishakur was in a meeting with some of the Federal MPs when the incident happened - his residence doubled up as political headquarters - and was taken in custody after his arrest. Abdirahman Abdishakur is the leader of Wadajir Party, former minister and 2017 presidential candidate.

Then, on 30th December 2017 heavily armed SFG forces broke into the residence of senator Abdi Hassan Awale 'Qaybdiid' over undisclosed reasons. Qaybdiid, who was not at the residence when the incident occurred, is a

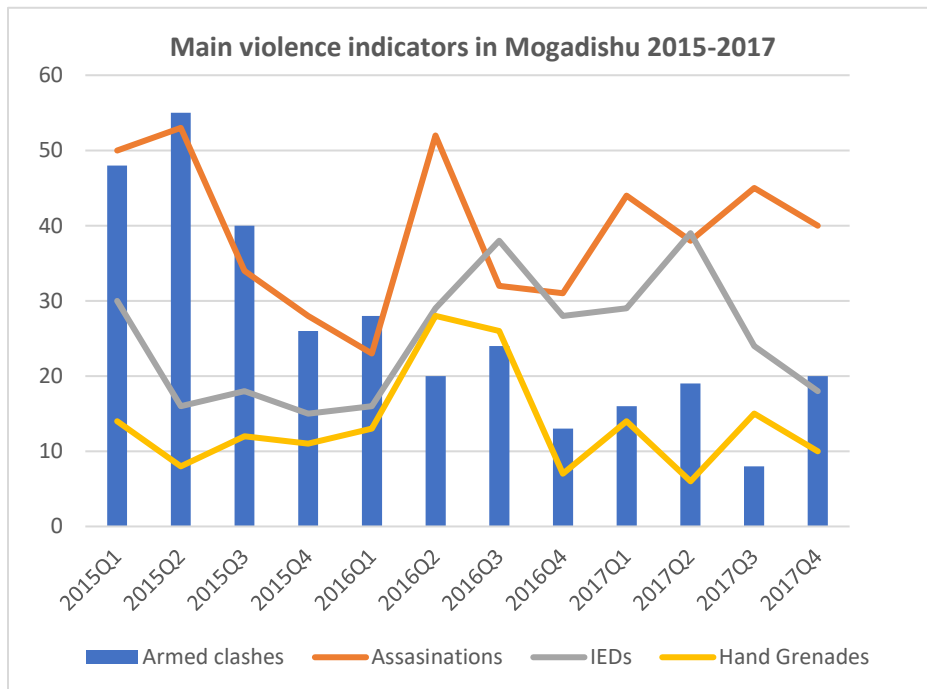
renowned figure in Somalia’s politics, having been a former militia commander, regional president and chief of national police force. He now heads the parliament’s constitutional review committee.

What these politicians seem to be accused of, is doing the bidding of foreign countries, in particular the UAE. But many observers note that the targets of the government forces are all Habar Gidir, which has stirred up anger among the members of this clan family and makes others worry about an authoritarian and clan-based inclination of the current government. Some MPs and well-known Somali figures termed the new move as an act of dictatorship and repression, violating basic constitutional rights of citizens. On 31/12 Professor Jawari, the speaker of Parliament, rejected the request to lift the parliamentarian’s immunity, citing constitutional and procedural reasons.

On 18 December, the Minister of Internal Security banned public gatherings in Mogadishu without prior approval of the Federal Government, ostensibly to control opposition activities. To calm the situation, the council of Somali Islamic Clerics issued a statement on the worsening political crisis in the country on 31/12, and warned both the government and the opposition against using inflammatory statements that can unravel the fragile peace in the country. The statement also called on the government to respect the rights of citizens and avoid using force.

In general Farmajo’s popularity remains high, not in the least because of an improving economic situation, more regular salary payments for civil servants and some improvements in security as well as other welcome reforms. Part of the criticism towards his government is deflected towards Prime Minister Khayre, who enjoys less popularity. The cabinet reshuffle which took place early January 2018 must have been a response to this criticism, but underlying tensions remain unresolved.

### Context analysis: Mogadishu



Mogadishu experienced the biggest and the most disastrous deadly explosion ever seen on 14th October, which claimed the lives of more than 500 civilians (see Box 3 below). IED attacks considerably decreased from 24 in 2017Q3 to 18 in 2017Q4. Out of the 18 IED attacks reported in the last quarter of 2017, 8 were roadside explosions targeted against AMISOM/ SNA convoys or government soldiers on foot patrol. These roadside explosions were reported within the town as well as the road that links Mogadishu to

Afgooye. Four VBIEDs were reported in this quarter including the Zobe deadly truck bomb.

One complex attack also occurred in Mogadishu in the last quarter of 2017, this attack was launched against Nasa Hablood Hotel on 28th October, when five AS fighters managed to enter the hotel after a VBIED explosion and spend the night there, before the security forces retook the hotel early next morning. One IED prematurely exploded inside a residence in Kaaraan District killing a man believed to be operating in the device. One month after the Zobe truck bomb, a suicide bomber blew himself up in General Kahiye Police Academy (Xamar Jajab District) killing at least 17 police officers. The police were on parade when the incident happened. It is not clear if the attacker, who was in police uniform, was a member of the force or an outsider.

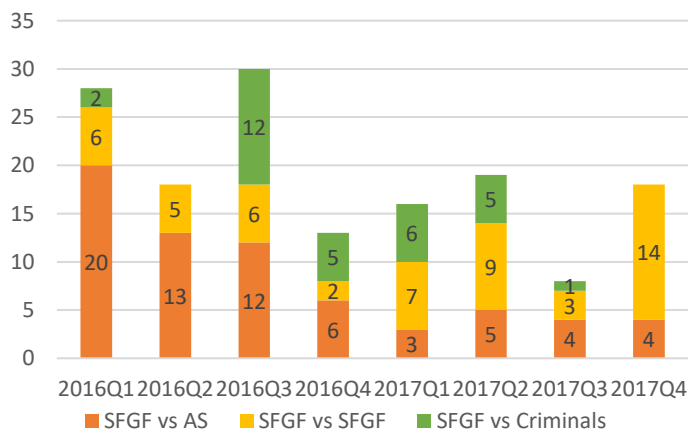
There was slight decline in assassinations from 45 assassinations of 2017Q3 to 40 in 2017Q4. Out of the 40 assassinations, 26 incidents targeted SFG soldiers, local municipality officials and those who associate with the government at different levels. Two victims were delegates in last year’s parliamentary elections. The perpetrators are believed to be AS operatives although the group does not always claim them. 14 assassinations were suffered by civilians over unknown reasons. Ten killings against civilians perpetrated by SFG soldiers were reported from Mogadishu over matters related to personal disputes, extortion and other crime related issues.

Ten hand grenades were reported over the period, the main target being SFG forces outposts, police stations and patrols; they rarely cause significant casualties. Only one mortar attack was reported in this fortnight; it landed on a residential area in Wardhiigleey District, Villa Somalia being the presumed target. The chiefs of NISA and the national police were dismissed on 29th October, probably to assuage the public after the Zobe carnage and the complex attack on the Nasa Hablood Hotel.

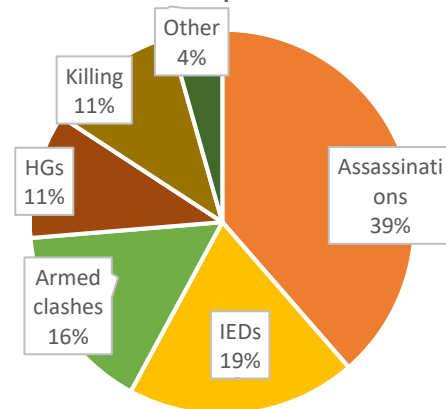
Mogadishu experienced a significant increase in armed clashes, from 8 armed clashes in 2017Q3 to 20 incidents in 2017Q4. Of the twenty armed clashes, 12 of them are intra-SFG forces clashes, mainly triggered by land disputes. One clash occurred between the city stabilization forces and group of gangs who were collecting illegal taxes from Bakara Market small business owners, while eight incidents were AS initiated.

In a nutshell, the overall violent incidents witnessed or suffered by Mogadishu residents slightly increased. The districts most affected by violence are Hodan (18) followed by Dayniile (16), Yaaqshiid (12), Heliwa and Kaaraan (10), Wadajir (9), Dharkenley (8), Hawl-Wadaag (6), Wardhiigleey and Waaberi (4), Xamar Weyne (3) and Xamar Jabjab, Boondheere and Shangaani (1). No violent incident was reported from Shibis and Abdi-Aziz districts in 2017Q4.

**Mogadishu armed clashes by actor**



**2017Q4 Violent Incidents in Mogadishu by Modus Operandi**



### **Box 3: The Zobe truck bomb attack in Mogadishu, Oct 14**

In the afternoon of 14/10, a large truck loaded with explosives detonated at Zobe junction, which is a heavily populated intersection with many vehicles on the road, hotels, business outlets, bus stages and a fuel station. The large explosion led to the killing of more than 500 people and the injury of more than 300 others. The explosion was largest IED attack that ever happened in Somalia and caused the highest casualty tally for a single attack anywhere in the world in 2017. About 30 minutes after the truck bomb exploded, NISA forces pulled over a Toyota Noah vehicle which was also loaded with explosives. The vehicle exploded, killing 3 NISA soldiers, after the driver was arrested.

Of that high number of casualties, 9 humanitarian workers were among those killed in the attack and 17 others injured. All the humanitarian casualties were local Somali staff. Somali Red Crescent Society (Bisha Cas), whose office was located near the ground zero of the explosion, sustained the highest humanitarian casualties. Around 10 compounds of aid organizations were damaged by the explosion. NGOs were fortunate the explosion happened on a Saturday: if it would have been a weekday, it could have caused much higher casualties.

It is not clear what the target of the VBIED was. Possibly, it was heading towards the Turkish Military Training facility at Al Jazeera, or any other major target. It is also possible that the target was the Safari Hotel, which hosts politicians and VIPs, and which was severely damaged by the attack. In any case, the truck was captured on video footage speeding towards waiting traffic and crashing into it before exploding. A nearby fuel truck amplified the explosion, burning many bystanders beyond recognition.

Subsequent investigation revealed that the truck was a regular user of the Afgooye road along which it entered town ferrying construction materials. The driver was known to security forces and, accompanied by a co-driver, he did not arouse suspicion. According to the final report by the government-appointed investigation committee, it carried between 600 and 800 kg of explosives.

AS did not claim or deny the responsibility of the attack, but many commentators, including former AS co-founder Mukhtar Roboow, noted that the attack has all the characteristics of AS attacks. Many also mentioned that the group did not claim the attack due to its bad PR since most of the casualties were civilians.

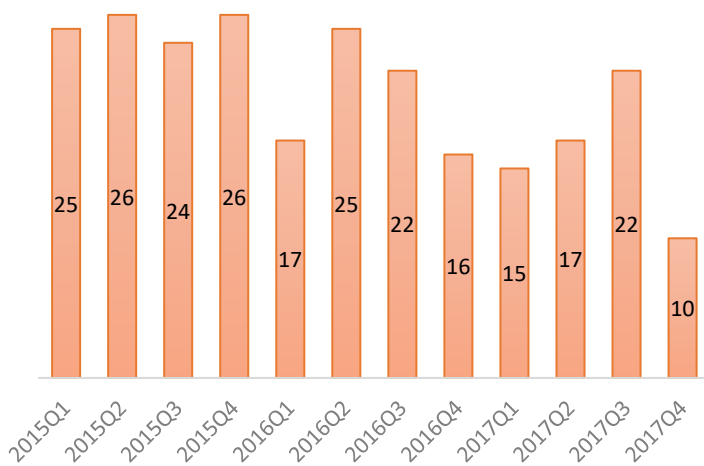
Local Mogadishu residents formed groups of volunteers who dug many injured people out from under the rubble, as well as bodies of many dead victims. Several countries, including Turkey, Qatar, US, Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia evacuated some of the injured for overseas treatments and/or brought medical supplies to help overwhelmed Mogadishu hospitals to treat the injured.

The incident caused public outrage and tens of thousands of people poured in the streets of Mogadishu and other major towns in Somalia chanting anti-AS slogans. Somali government vowed to start a military campaign against the group in Lower Shabelle, moving troops to Afgooye.

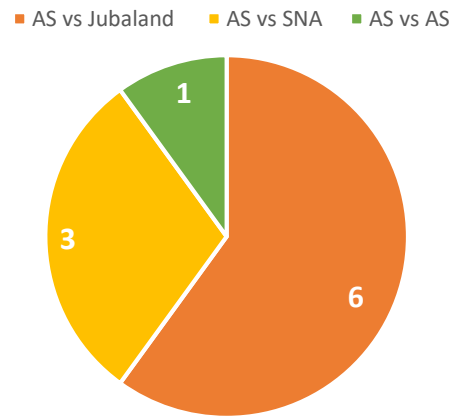
Recommendation for NGOs: avoid renting offices near government offices and in busy areas like markets or near main road junctions, as they might be targets for attacks.

## Context analysis: Jubaland

Armed clashes in Jubaland since 2015



2017Q4 Armed clashes in Jubaland by Actors



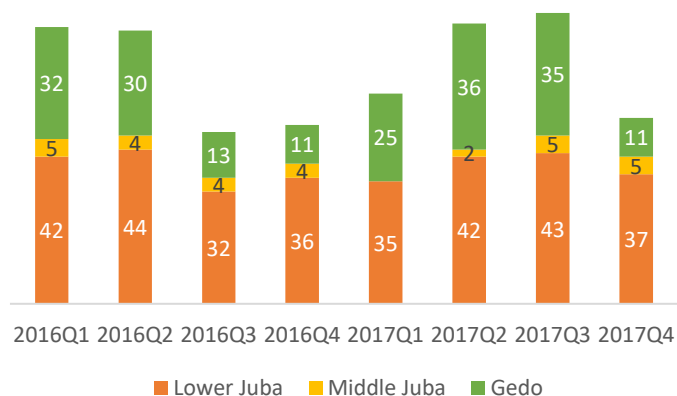
Armed clashes in Jubaland drastically reduced in this quarter to less than half of the previous quarter’s 22 incidents. This can be attributed to a lack of AS initiative in the battlefield, with AS-initiated armed clashes decreasing from 13 in the previous quarter to a paltry 4 in this reporting period. The last month of the previous quarter saw spectacular AS attacks on several government controlled towns along the Kenya/Somalia border, but the group has since assumed a low profile, rarely engaging government forces in an armed clash, until late November when it initiated three skirmishes with government forces, with one of these resulting in the brief take-over of Kulbiyow village in Badhaadhe district.

In terms of the regional distribution, Lower Juba, as has been often been the case, experienced the biggest share of the armed clashes, with 7 incidents, all pitting Jubaland soldiers against AS fighters, being recorded in the period under review. The first four armed clashes in Lower Juba, occurring between 13<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October, were initiated by Jubaland soldiers, employing the hit-and-run technique characteristic of the ‘Safari Hunter’ operation. This involves attacking AS hideouts and bases, controlling them for a few hours before withdrawing. AS initiated three armed clashes against government forces; in Dhobley on 22/11, Kulbiyow on 28/11 and in Afmadow on 04/12.

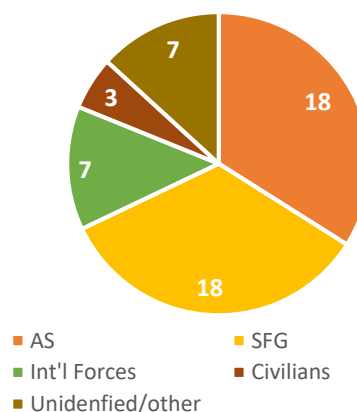
Gedo region, which saw a surge in AS-initiated spectacular armed clashes during the previous quarter, experienced only 3 armed clashes in the period under review, with AS being on the defensive twice, while the third incident involved a rare intra-AS armed clash. SNA soldiers based in Garbahaarey overran two AS camps in Qondho and Buurdhuubo villages (29 and 36km SE of Garbahaarey respectively) on 02/10, reportedly killing about 12 AS fighters in the process. The third incident involved an intra-AS armed clash in Ceel Gadde village (53km SW of Garbahaarey) on 10/12, reportedly resulting in the death of 5 AS fighters. It is not clear what sparked the armed clash between the two AS groups, but the incident was preceded by reports of an impending fall out between the AS command in Jilib and Ali Fidow, a powerful AS leader who hails from Gedo region. However, Fidow made a [rare public appearance](#) in Adan Yabaal, Middle Shabelle, on January 8<sup>th</sup> 2017, while attending an AS function, allaying the rumours of his fallout with AS leader, Ahmed Diriye. Middle Juba, unsurprisingly, registered no armed clashes.

Looking broadly at the violent incidents (see footnote under the Table of Contents for definition), the volume of incidents experienced in Jubaland in this quarter decreased by 36% as compared to the previous reporting period. This reduction is attributable to decreased AS activity, from 42 violent incidents to 18, while violence perpetrated by other actors remained roughly the same.

**Violent incidents in Jubaland**



**2017Q4 Jubaland violent incidents by perpetrator**



AS related violence by modus operandi; 6 IED incidents (of which only 3 were successful), were recorded. These were; an IED explosion targeting a truck carrying fertilizer near Dhobley destroyed the truck and killed the driver on 07/10, an IED explosion at the residence of the chief of Fafax Dhuun village on 13/12, injuring him and his daughter, while the third was an accidental explosion that killed 3 AS fighters who were planting an IED at a grazing area 28km NE of Kismaayo. Of the other three IED incidents, which involved discovery and dismantling of IEDs, the most notable was the arrest of two men suspected to be AS IED experts in Luuq on 10/11 and the seizure of IED making materials including explosives, hand grenades and mobile phones. On 11/11 the US conducted an airstrike on facilities in Jilib which the government described as being ‘an IED factory’, reportedly leading to the death of 85 militants.

Other notable AS perpetrated violence include; three incidents of artillery mortar fire (Bula Guduud on 26/10, Busaar village in Ceel Waaq district on 12/11 and Qamqam village on 27/12), an abduction of a local football team coach near Tuulo Barwaaqo village (21km NW of Garbahaarey) on 10/12, two incidents of executions (of 4 alleged spies in Saakow and a woman accused of prostitution in Bu’ale), two incidents of killing of charcoal burners and two incidents of carjacking of trucks transporting humanitarian supplies in Gedo region.

As for violent incidents perpetrated by government and allied forces, the most prominent were airstrikes targeting AS bases, convoys and hideouts. (See Box 2: Increasing US airstrikes and potential impact on aid worker security). Other notable violent incidents perpetrated by government forces (excluding armed clashes discussed above) include: 4 shooting incidents by Jubaland, all pre-emptive shooting at civilian targets that they perceived to be hostile targets. Two armed guards escorting an INGO vehicle near Dhobley village were the victims of such shooting, both sustaining injuries. NGO vehicles are advised to approach government forces’ checkpoints and posts with caution, as speeding can make them look suspicious, prompting pre-emptive shooting by the soldiers guarding the checkpoints/posts.

The security situation of the port town of Kismaayo, which serves as the hub for most NGOs operating in Jubaland, was generally calm with no major incident taking place within its precinct. Only three violent incidents were recorded in the town during the quarter, with two of these being shooting incidents perpetrated by Jubaland forces against motorists who did not heed orders to slow down at the many checkpoints in the town. The third incident was the murder of a Jubaland State MP, who is said to have been killed by a civilian with whom he was engaged in a land dispute.

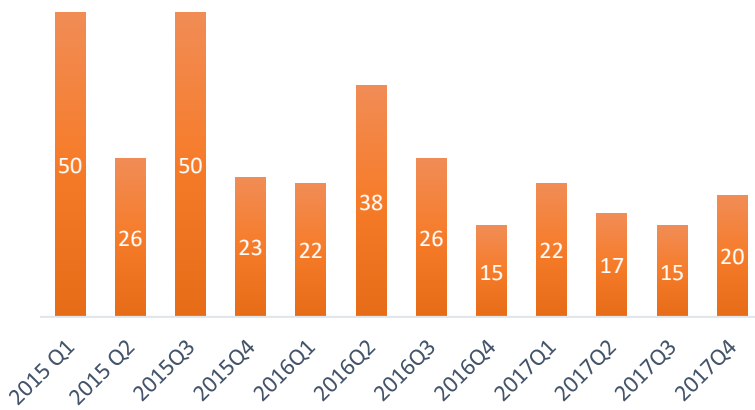
The general security environment in Jubaland is projected to remain the same, at least in the next quarter. There are no indications of major military operations, by either AS or the government and allied forces, in the short term.

The much-touted Juba corridor offensive, aimed at recovering major towns and supply routes in Jamaame and much of Middle Juba, remains a pipe dream. Reports of thousands of Ethiopian troops entering Somalia through Doolow, in Gedo, [were described](#) by AMISOM’s Ambassador Madeira as “a calculated activity, in readiness for the transitioning of security responsibilities to the Somali National Security Forces”.

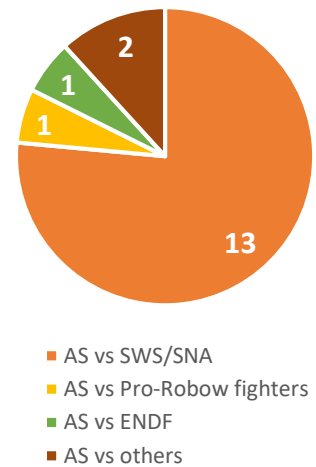
**Quarterly Incident:** An AS court in Sakow town sentenced to death a local female resident on accusations of engaging in prostitution. The woman was stoned to death in a public square with hundreds of residents watching.

Context analysis: South West State

**Armed clashes in Bay and Bakool since 2015**



**2017Q4 Armed Clashes in Bay & Bakool by Actors**



**Bay and Bakool**

The security landscape in Bay and Bakool continued to be mainly shaped by confrontations between AS and SWS forces, supported by Pro-Robow militias in some instances. Compared to the previous quarter, there was an increase in armed clashes as shown in the graph above, owing to increased skirmishes between AS on one side and a coalition of SWS soldiers and Pro-Robow militiamen on the other.

Nine of the 20 armed clashes registered in Bay and Bakool took place in Xudur district, with AS initiating 6 of these and being on the defence thrice. Xudur is Robow’s base and his men, accompanied by SWS forces, took over two villages in the district. The quarter ended with an armed attack by pro-Robow militias on an AS base in Abaal village. Al Shabaab has not been able to suppress the defection of Robow; indeed, it seems he’s gaining traction among some of the Rahanweyn sub-clans, although so far no other component of the mujahedeen movement has defected.

Baidoa district also saw a notable number of armed clashes, with 6 incidents being recorded in the period under review. AS initiated 5 of the 6 armed clashes which occurred in the following locations; Goof Gaduud Buurey, Jiir Gurey, outskirts of Baidoa, Makuudo and on the Awdiinle-Berdaale road. A LNGO was affected by the armed clash in Makuudo (75km SW of Baidoa) on 29/10, after getting caught up in the firefight. All the LNGO staff escaped unhurt but their vehicle was destroyed by a RPG round fired by AS fighters. AS were caught on the defence only once in Baidoa district when on 26/11 SWS forces waylaid and ambushed a group of AS fighters who were fleeing US airstrikes near Daynuunay village, resulting in unknown number of casualties (see Box 2). The remaining five

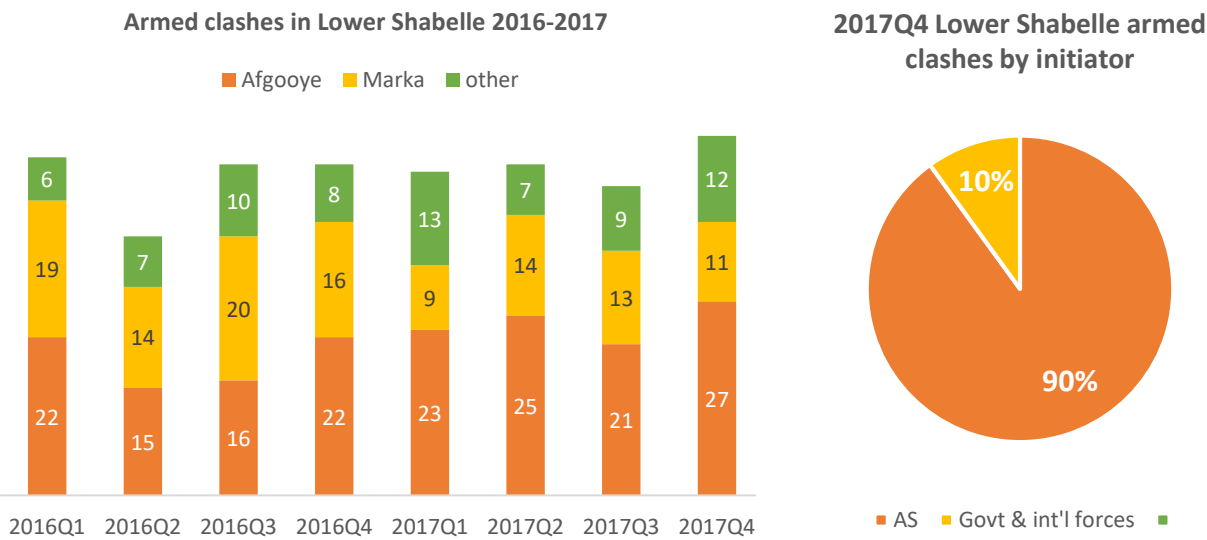
armed clashes in Bay and Bakool regions took place in the following districts; Buur Hakaba (twice), Qansax Dheere (once), Diinsoor (once) and Rabdhuure (once).

The influence of the former AS-deputy-turned-government-ally, Mukhtar Robow, continued to dominate local media headlines during this quarter. According to some reports, at least 50 AS fighters have defected to SWS forces in Bay and Bakool regions since Robow’s defection in August. He has continued to shuttle to Baidoa and Xudur, meeting with military and political leaders, in an attempt to rally them to attack AS fighters in the towns and villages under their control. His militia, reportedly numbering at least a 100 fighters, has also conducted a few raids on AS bases, the latest resulting in the death of his son in Abal village on 15/02.

Al Shabaab has reacted harshly against his perceived sympathizers and reports abound of execution of AS fighters and locals suspected to have favourable views about him. There were four abduction incidents, including one of 15 civilians from Manaas village on 01/12 with 12 of them being executed for being spies. The purge of perceived spies in Bay and Bakool by AS is indicative of the group’s determination to curb inter dissent

According to some reports, AS fighters of Rahanweyn/Leysan and Harin descent, held separate meetings in Labatan Jirow village on 29/11 to discuss their future with AS. It is not clear whether the talks were arranged to by AS loyalists to cement the fighters’ commitment to the group or it was an act of dissension by disgruntled fighters, but it portrays a measure of political instability within the AS ranks in Bay and Bakool regions. In any case, Robow’s influence is expected to have a bearing on the trajectory of the anti-AS developments in the region in the next quarter and beyond.

This situation has made access very difficult for aid workers. Seven of the 18 critical incidents affecting NGOs in Somalia occurred in the South West State, or 39% of the cases of death, serious injury or abduction of staff that occurred in 2017. This makes South West State the most dangerous operating environment for aid workers. It is currently not advisable to try operating in the ‘grey zones’ where AS control is contested. When traveling through AS controlled territory, staff needs to be very careful not to arouse suspicion as spies or informants.



**Lower Shabelle**

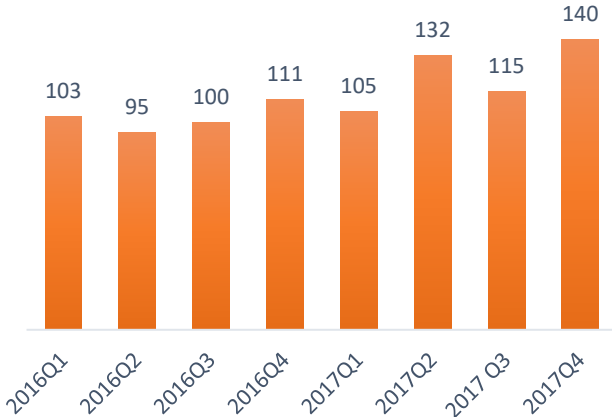
In Lower Shabelle region, armed clashes increased slightly from 43 in the previous quarter to 50 in this reporting period, the highest tally since the second quarter of 2015. Al Shabaab initiated 90% of these, mainly targeting SFG

and AMISOM soldiers. Biimaal clan militias, who are allied to the SFG and AMISOM, have also been occasional targets of AS attacks. Roughly half of the 50 armed clashes occurred in October, with November and December registering about the same number of incidents. The October momentum was halted following the October 24 truck bomb attack in neighbouring Mogadishu that left over 500 people dead, prompting the government to deploy more troops in Afgooye district for what it termed as the beginning of a major retaliatory offensive against AS.

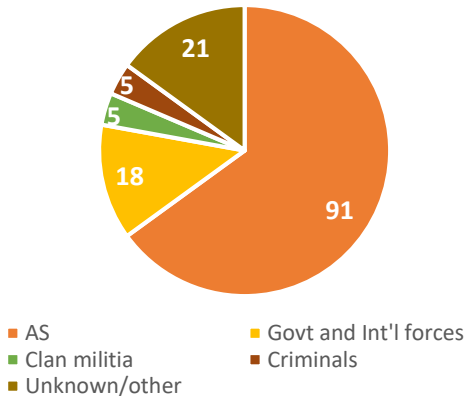
In terms of geographical distribution, Afgooye district, which has been the epicentre of AS armed clashes in Lower Shabelle, experienced more than half of the AS attacks. Afgooye town experienced 8 armed clashes, 7 of these being AS attacks on SNA positions in the town with the eighth being a clash between federal units. The increasing focus of AS on Afgooye town is probably to compensate for their decreased ability to launch armed clashes in neighbouring Mogadishu. In one of those attacks on Afgooye (on 25/12), AS fighters briefly managed to take control of some of the town’s neighbourhoods, before withdrawing. In this regard, NGOs need to monitor the renewed AS focus on Afgooye town and adopt appropriate adaptive measures to ensure the safety of their staff.

Other notable armed clashes included three attacks on a SNA base in Bariire village, which- coming on the heels of the complex attack on the same base that killed over 30 SNA soldiers on 29/09- forced the government forces based there to vacate, allowing AS to regain control of the strategic town. Qoryooley town, controlled by AMISOM and SFG forces, experienced four AS hit-and-run attacks targeting government military bases. The rest of the armed clashes in Lower Shabelle were of a hit-and-run nature, targeting government and AMISOM forces in their bases and on the main supply routes, including the Afgooye corridor and Afgooye-Marka-Baraawe road.

**LOWER SHABELLE VIOLENT INCIDENTS**



**2017Q4 Lower Shabelle violent incidents by Perpetrator**



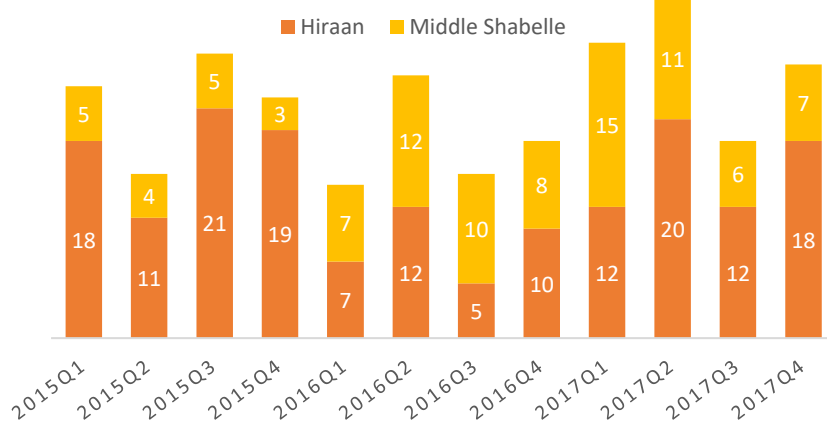
Overall violence levels in Lower Shabelle continued to remain elevated during this quarter, posting the highest incident volumes since the first quarter of 2016. Apart from the 50 armed clashes discussed above, the region also saw 27 IED incidents, the bulk of these targeting AMISOM convoys plying the Afgooye-Marka-Baraawe road. Twelve mortar attacks were also recorded, half of them by AS, and half by AMISOM.

Assassinations in Lower Shabelle, mostly by AS hitmen, rose from 11 in the previous quarter to 19 in this reporting period. Seven of these occurred in Afgooye town, indicative of AS’s renewed influence in the commercial capital of Lower Shabelle. The assassinations mainly targeted government forces, officials and civilians that AS claims to be associated with the government. The most prominent anti-AS violence were the US-perpetrated airstrikes, with 12 incidents recorded in this quarter. As a result of the constant elevated levels of violence in the Lower Shabelle region, NGOs are advised to be cautious and to adjust their standard operating procedures regularly in reference to the short-term violent trends. The Mogadishu-Afgooye road, known as the Afgooye corridor, has seen several

attacks this quarter and reports that it shall be reconstructed using funds and expertise by the Qatari government is expected to raise its profile and induce increased violence by AS and other actors motivated by business and political interests.

Context analysis: Hirshabelle

### 2015-2017 ARMED CLASHES IN HIRSHABELLE



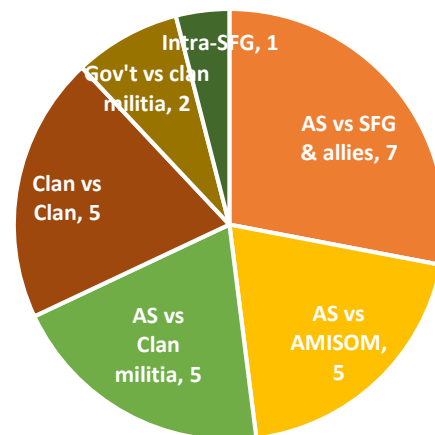
Overall armed clashes in HirShabelle for this quarter increased around 30% over last quarter. AS initiated more than half of the armed clashes that happened during this quarter and they targeted SFG forces, AMISOM and clan militias.

AS attacked SNA bases in Bulo Burde on 29/10 and Ceel Gaalow on 31/12. They also ambushed SNA soldiers in Biyo Cado and Hansheikh on 04/11 and 03/12. In Hees they laid an ambush against Hiraan Governor’s convoy on 01/12 and both sides engaged in fierce

fighting which led the killing of 7 combatants from both sides, but the governor continued his journey safely after the fighting ended. AS also initiated 5 attacks against AMISOM in Cali Fool Dheere, Beled Weyne, Ilbaq and Feerfeer village. Casualties inflicted by both sides are not known.

A key armed violence development during the past three months is the repeated armed clashes between AS fighters and Jajele militias dubbed as Westland militias, since they proclaimed the region West of Beled Weyne inhabited by their clan as an autonomous area called ‘Westland’. The clashes started after AS figured out that some lorries were evading taxes by recruiting Jajele clan militias to protect them while transporting merchandise to Beled Weyne town. AS fighters then attacked Westland militias’ bases in Maroodile village and Ceel Cade village on 21/11 and 05/12, taking over the latter village. They then attacked a convoy of lorries which the Westland militias were guarding in Qurac Joome near Maroodile village on 10/12. The lorries were carjacked and all the commodities they were carrying were burnt.

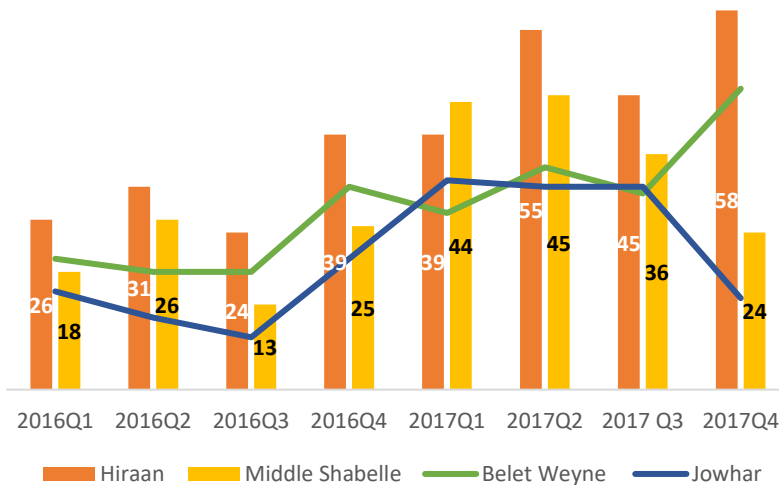
### 2017 Q4 Armed Clashes in HirShabelle by Actors



Clan clashes continued in Hiraan region pitting Hawadle against Habar-Gidir/Cayr and Hawadle versus Galjecel. In Middle Shabelle there were no clan clashes as people were busy on their farms. Between 30/10 and 26/12

there were several clashes north of Beled Weyne between Hawadle and Habar-Gidir/Cayr, in Miir Cad village, Waradheere and Geelkudha. But these clashes were not as bloody as last quarter's, in which 30 combatants lost their lives. South of Beled Weyne Hawadle clansmen also engaged several clashes with Galjecel clansmen. Both Hawadle and Galjecel clan militias also carjacked vehicles from each other.

All violent Incidents in HirShabelle



HirShabelle witnessed 13 IEDs during the quarter, down from 19 in the second and third quarters of 2017. 7 of these targeted SFG and AMISOM forces in Nuurkaay, Garsaale, Saalax Jeele, Buurane, Jalalaqsi and Bulu Burde. Most casualties of the IEDs remain unknown as SFG forces and AMISOM rarely tell their casualties to the media. There was one incident in which 6 AS fighters died as the Toyota Noah they were driving in exploded, presumably because it was ferrying IEDs which prematurely detonated. There was another incident of premature explosion, one disposal, two IEDs targeting civilians and one

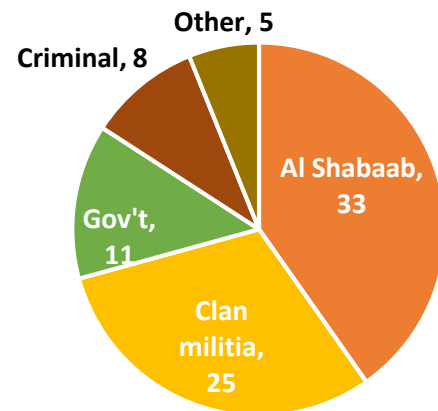
targeting.... streetlamps.

There was a single airstrike against AS fighters' base in Wardhinle village on 13/12. US's Africom command denied the responsibility of the airstrike, whose casualties remain unknown.

Also, there was single attempted assassination which AS hitmen shot and wounded a SFG soldier in Beled Weyne on 21/10.

**Two incidents affecting NGOs** occurred during the reporting period. The first happened after SFG forces manning a checkpoint in Teedan village opened gunfire at a four-wheel drive vehicle rented to an INGO on 19/11. A nurse working for the INGO was killed by the gunshots while a child was also injured. The second incident is AS fighter's carjacking of INGO rented vehicle in an area near Hees town called Oratan on 20/12. There were no INGO staff onboard of the vehicle when the carjacking happened, so AS fighters abducted the driver of the vehicle.

2017Q4 HirShabelle Violent Incidents by Perpetrator

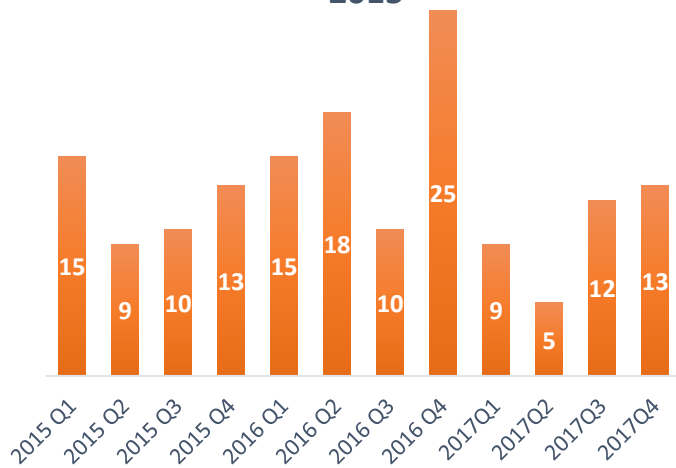


**Quarterly Incident:** Suspected AS operatives attached remote controlled IEDs to 8 solar streetlamps in Howl Wadaag section of Beled Weyne on 05/12. Six of the streetlamps were damaged as the IEDs exploded. The two other IEDs failed to detonate.

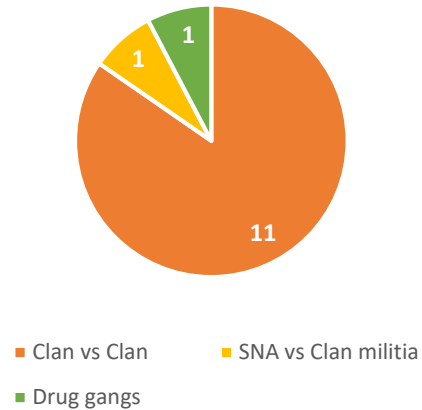
## Clan conflict in Hirshabelle

When	Region	Where	Clan 1	Clan 2	Reason	Violence
3-Oct	Hiraan	Leebow town, Beled Weyne District	Jiidle	Makane	Land Dispute	Killing, 2 dead
5-Oct	Hiraan	Gabodiiir Grazing Area area, Bulo Burde District	Xawadle	Murusade	Land Dispute	Clash, 2 dead
11-Oct	Middle Shabelle	Xawaadley town, Balcad District	Abgaal/ Warsangeli	Jareer/Shiidle and Abgaal/Wacbudan	Stray Bullet	Killing, 1 dead
24-Oct	Hiraan	Beled Weyne town, Beled Weyne District	Hawadle	Hawadle	Personal Dispute	Killing, 1 dead
25-Oct	Middle Shabelle	Buurfuule town, Jowhar District	Abgaal/ Harti/ Agoonyar	Jareer/Shiidle	Land Dispute	Killing, 1 dead
30-Oct	Hiraan	Miir Cad town, Beled Weyne District	Hawadle	Habar-Gidir	Land Dispute	Clash
31-Oct	Hiraan	Bacda town, Beled Weyne District	Hawadle	Galjecel	Clan Revenge	Carjacking, Armed Clash, 2 dead
15-Nov	Hiraan	Geelkudhal town, Beled Weyne District	Hawadle	Habar-Gidir/Cayr	Clan Revenge	Killing, 1 dead
18-Nov	Hiraan	Beer-gadiid town, Beled Weyne District	Hawadle	Habar-Gidir/Cayr	Unclear	Abduction,
21-Nov	Hiraan	Beled Weyne town	Jajele	Hawadle	Unclear	Carjacking
24-Nov	Middle Shabelle	Warsheikh town, Balcad District	Abgaal/ Wacbudan/ Celi	Abgaal/Wacbudan/ Mataan	Personal Dispute	Killing, 2 dead
26-Nov	Hiraan	Beled Weyne town	Hawadle	Jajele	Clan Revenge	Carjacking
3-Dec	Hiraan	Waradheer area, Beled Weyne town	Habar-Gidir/ Cayr	Hawadle	Clan Revenge	2 dead 3 wounded
16-Dec	Hiraan	Beled Weyne town	Hawadle	Jajele	Unclear	Carjacking/ Shooting
23-Dec	Hiraan	Geelkudhal town, Beled Weyne District	Habar-Gidir/ Cayr	Hawadle	Land Dispute	Clash, 4 wounded
26-Dec	Hiraan	Miir Cad town, Beled Weyne District	Habar-Gidir	Hawadle	Clan Revenge	Clash
28-Dec	Hiraan	Farlibaax town, Beled Weyne District	Jajele	Jajele	Taxation	Shooting, 1 killed

**Armed Clashes in Galmudug since 2015**



**2017Q4 armed clashes in Galmudug by actors**



Galmudug State enjoyed relative political stability in the last month of 2017Q4 compared to the internal rift it experienced in the last quarter, which threatened Galmudug State’s weak institutions with demise after President Ahmed Duale took a unilateral decision to side with the Saudi led bloc in their row against Qatar. This part will analyse the most significant incidents that happened in Galmudug State over the period.

Armed clashes *within* Galmudug State drastically decreased from 12 armed clashes of 2017Q3 to 5 armed clashes in 2017Q4, but another 8 clashes took place between clans along the Green Line separating Galmudug from Puntland. None of these clashes, however, was especially bloody or had particularly worrisome consequences. The bloody clashes between Dir/Fiqi and ASWJ forces in Xerale that marked the third quarter subsided entirely, as ASWJ and Galmudug state moved towards a power-sharing deal. In Galkacyo there were no armed clashes between Galmudug and Puntland.

In Cabud Waaq there were two minor armed clashes that only resulted in one injury, and in Cadaado district an armed clash between Saleban and Marehan militias was reported. Meanwhile in Godinlabe (Dhusamareeb District) a gunfight erupted between two groups of militiamen arguing about the proceeds of an illegal checkpoint. Illegal checkpoints erected by freelance militias continue hindering traffic along the Galkacyo-Cadaado road. In October 2017, Galmudug security forces launched two security operations against illegal checkpoints on that road. More than a dozen illegal checkpoints manned by local militias were dismantled. The road is used by NGO staff travelling from Galkacyo to Cadaado and vice versa.

Six vehicle jacking incidents and three abduction cases were reported in Galmudug region over the period especially in Galgaduud Region and all of them were clan driven. The abductees were released while the vehicles were given back to their owners

On 12/12, Militia men, believed to be from Habar-Gidir/Saleban sub-clan, carjacked an INGO rented vehicle, belonging to Habar-Gidir/Sacad clansman, in Beendhaarte (approx. 15km N of Cadaado). An INGO staff and the driver were left on the road unharmed but lost a laptop and other personal belongings. The local elders led efforts to restore the taken vehicles back to its owners. The incident was not against the NGO but it was reportedly clan based.

Nine assassinations, all of them believed to be revenge killings, were reported from Ceel Buur, Dhusamareeb and Cabud Waaq Districts. Three incidents happened between Marehan and Cayr, one incident within Duduble sub clans, and one incident among Cayr sub-clans. The victims of three of these incidents which happened in Cabud Waaq District were Habar Gidir/ Cayr whereby the perpetrators are believed to be Marehan clansmen. It is not clear whether these disputes were settled or if more revenge killings could follow. No IED attack was reported from Galmudug over the period.

**Quarterly Incident:** AS fighters arrested several clan elders, youth and women in Ceel Dheer town on 30/10. The operation came after the arrestees refused to cooperate with AS's recruitment exercises.

Al Shabaab didn't attempt any attack on Galmudug, ASWJ or SFG forces. As in the previous quarterly period, they seem to be 'minding their own business', with rarely any news coming from the areas they control, except related to forced recruitment of youth and other enforcement of their rule. It came as a surprise to most observers that they withdrew from Ceel Buur district centre on 23/12, in an apparently unmotivated move – except, maybe, as a pre-emptive measure against a future military operation by ASWJ and Galmudug.

In general, most security incidents that occur in Galmudug territory are clan-motivated incidents followed by crime like extortion and illegal checkpoints. Therefore, aid agencies operating in Galmudug need to closely monitor clan relations and tensions (revenge killings, vehicle jackings and road blocks) and act accordingly.

#### **Box 4: Agreement between ASWJ and Galmudug**

The agreement signed by ASWJ and Galmudug in Djibouti on 6 December will merge both parties into one political entity. ASWJ and Galmudug agreed that the prime minister's post will be given to ASWJ, the Galmudug state assembly will be expanded to allow for representation from the ASWJ controlled areas, the security forces and judiciary will be merged and ASWJ will receive more state minister's posts. In addition the capital will be transferred as soon as possible from Cadaado to Dhusamareeb.

The Galmudug State President, Ahmed Duale Gelle 'Xaaf', had come under considerable pressure from rebel political forces led by the vice-president and second speaker of the state assembly, who were allegedly supported by the Somali Federal Government, after he had announced Galmudug backed the Saudi-led block against Qatar, thereby interfering in a federal prerogative (deciding on foreign affairs) and embarrassing the government.

Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa, which had previously refused overtures by Xaaf and his predecessors, likewise came under internal pressure with the bloody clashes in Xerale between the Dir clans and ASWJ, and more generally by the economic stagnation which was leading to popular anger, especially after the election of Farmajo raised hopes that Galgaduud would finally benefit from integration into the national socioeconomic tissue.

Now "the issue is implementation" as Farmajo remarked when the deal was signed. It seems that both sides are interested in rapid implementation of the agreement, to bolster their own position and prevent internal opposition to the deal to strengthen and mobilize other disaffected groups. Such groups may include the Habar-Gidir/Saleban, who are losing the advantages associated with providing the capital.

It's hoped that this development will increase the access of humanitarian agencies to vulnerable people in Galmudug, particularly Galgaduud region, plagued by the drought and general lack of development. Until now, the separate administrative status of ASWJ and the lack of connection to national programs discouraged NGOs from working in what are further peaceful areas.

Another result of this agreement may be a renewed military effort by Galmudug and ASWJ forces, supported by the SFG and international forces, to defeat Al Shabaab, who currently fully control three of Galmudug's eight districts (Ceel Buur, Ceel Dheer and Xarardheere) as well as parts of Dhusamareeb and Hobyo districts. Al Shabaab has not undertaken any offensive actions since ousting the ENDF from the region, but that may change if they feel under threat. That could worsen the operating environment for humanitarian organizations.

A more difficult issue to tackle for the joint administration may be clan conflict. This may linger on for quite some time as it's chronic and difficult to eradicate as long as pastoralists compete for pasture and water, thus clashing with each other over scarce resources. It may also be noted that to some, the deal between ASWJ and Galmudug is considered a deal between the Habar-Gidir clans of Sacad and Cayr, to the detriment of the Saleban, Marehan, Dir, Murusade and Duduble clans which also inhabit the region.

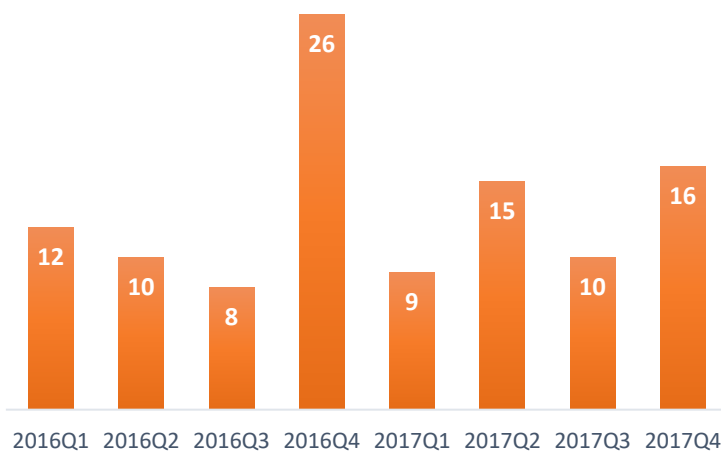
**Clan Conflict in Galmudug** (the incidents highlighted in grey also figure under Puntland, as they occurred on areas contested by both states)

When	Region	Where	Clan 1	Clan 2	Reason	Violence
8-Oct	Mudug	Sarjemale town, Galkacyo	Habar Gidir/ Sacad	Majeerteen/ Umar-Mohamud	Clan Revenge	Clash, 1 dead 1 wounded
10-Oct	Galgaduud	Mirig town, Dhusamareeb	Habar-Gidir/ Cayr/ Yabardhoorakace/ Cayiliwaa	Yabardhoorakace/ Reer Buraale	Clan Revenge	Killing, 1 dead
11-Oct	Mudug	Galkacyo South town	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Tumaal	Clan Revenge	Shooting/ Killing, 1 dead
20-Oct	Galgaduud	Cabud Waaq town,	Marehan/ Hooraarsame	Marehan/ Reer-Dalal	Clan Revenge	Shooting, 1 dead
22-Oct	Galgaduud	Bilcil-tuug town, Ceel Buur	Duduble	Duduble	Unclear	Killing, 1 dead
22-Oct	Mudug	Sangadud town, Galkacyo	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majerteen/ Omar-Mohamud	Clan Revenge	Clash, 6 dead 22 injured
26-Oct	Mudug	Galkacyo North town	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majerteen/ Omar-Mohamud	Clan Revenge	Clash, 5 dead 26 injured
2-Nov	Mudug	Xaaro town, Hobyo	Habar-Gidir	Habar-Gidir	Land Dispute	Shooting/ Killing, 1 dead
3-Nov	Galgaduud	Cabud Waaq town	Marehan/ Hooraarsame	Marehan/ Hooraarsame	Unclear	Clash, 1 injured
7-Nov	Galgaduud	Cadaado town	Habar-Gidir/ Saleban	Marehan	Unclear	Abduction
7-Nov	Galgaduud	Biyo Gaduud town, Cadaado	Marehan	Habar-Gidir/ Saleban	Clan Revenge	Abduction
7-Nov	Galgaduud	Godinlabe, Dhusamareeb	Armed Habar-Gidir/ Saleban	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Clan Revenge	Car Jacking
15-Nov	Galgaduud	Cabud Waaq town	Marehan	Habar-Gidir/ Cayr	Personal Dispute	Killing. 1 dead
23-Nov	Mudug	Galkacyo town	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majerteen/ Omar-Mohamud	Land Dispute	Clash, 1 dead 2 injured
1-Dec	Galgaduud	Balanbal town, Cabudwaaq	Marehan	Habar-Gidir/ Cayr	Clan Revenge	Killing, 2 dead
3-Dec	Mudug	Galkacyo South town	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Rahanweyn	Clan Revenge/ stray Bullet	Shooting/ Killing, 1 dead

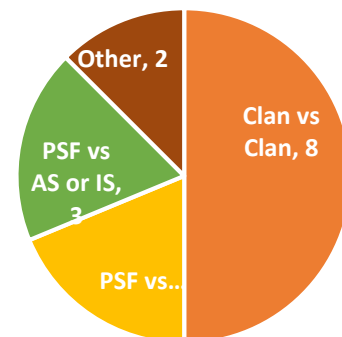
When	Region	Where	Clan 1	Clan 2	Reason	Violence
8-Dec	Galgaduud	Mirig town, Dhusamareeb	Habar-Gidir/ Cayr	Habar-Gidir/ Saleban	Unclear	Car Jacking
9-Dec	Mudug	Laama Faqaaye area, Galkacyo	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majeerteen/ Omar-Mohamud	Clan Revenge	Clash, 1 injured
12-Dec	Galgaduud	Beendhaarte town, Cadaado	Habar-Gidir/ Saleban	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Clan Revenge	Car Jacking
13-Dec	Mudug	Dhaxanyo-cadde town, Galkacyo	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majeerteen/ Reer-Bicidyahan	Clan Revenge	Shooting, 1 dead 1 injured
13-Dec	Mudug	Teerege town, Galkacyo	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majeerteen/ Omar-Mohamud	Clan Revenge	Clash
18-Dec	Mudug	Galkacyo town	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majeerteen/ Omar Mahmoud	Clan Revenge	Clash, 1 dead 4 injured
24-Dec	Galgaduud	Balambale town, Cabudwaaq	Marehan	Habar-Gidir/ Cayr	Clan Revenge	Shooting, 1 dead
25-Dec	Galgaduud	Cabud Waaq town	Marehan/ Reer-Siyad	Marehan/ Reer-Dalal	Personal Dispute	Shooting, 1 dead
29-Dec	Mudug	Galkacyo town	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majeerteen/ Reer-Bicidyahan	Clan Revenge	Clash, 1 dead, 1 injured
30-Dec	Galgaduud	Cabud Waaq town	Marehan/ Reer-Siyad	Marehan/ Rer-Dalal	Clan Revenge	Execution, 1 dead

## Context analysis: Puntland

### ARMED CLASHES IN PUNTLAND 2016-2017



### 2017Q4 Armed clashes by actor, Puntland



Note: the armed clashes occurring between clans straddling the Mudug border are counted under Galmudug too

There were 16 armed clashes in Puntland, of which 8 took place along the border with Galmudug, between Majeerteen and Habar-Gidir. In general, however, violent incidents in Puntland saw a significant decrease.

In Galkacyo the situation is relatively calm and business is back to normal after an armed conflict occurred in the main market (which straddles the 'Green Line' between North and South Galkacyo) on 23/11, following a dispute

over space between traders. The armed militias were removed from the market after a few days of talks and efforts by administration officials, elders and business people from both sides. A positive step for the security along the green line is the joint police force established with officers from both sides of the divided city, and soldiers from both Dhusamareeb and Garowe.

The first batch of 2,400 Darawish troops from Puntland were integrated into the Somali National Army (SNA) in the base of 54th camp in Garowe on 30/11. Each federal state promised to provide 3,000 troops to the SNA to bolster the country's national security. As Puntland is also involved in the selection of troops allocated to Somaliland (which obviously is not interested in participating), choosing mostly Dhulbahante militia from Buuhoodle, it expects to gain quite some influence over national army.

US war planes conducted what are ostensibly the first airstrikes against Islamic State positions in November; in two airstrikes on Nov 2, the IS amir Mumin was reportedly targeted, while in a strike on Nov 27 a senior logistics officer of IS was apparently killed. There were also three US airstrikes against AS positions in the Calmadow mountains, bringing the total for this quarter up to six, compared to two airstrikes during the rest of 2017. There were also two operations by Puntland Security Forces (PSF) against AS positions.

The frequency of attacks by AS and IS in Puntland increased in this quarter. Besides a new attack by AS on Af Urur base, there were several attacks on Golis telecommunications headquarters (none of them very successful) and a suicide attack with a wheelbarrow in central Bosaso on 24/10, claimed by IS, which led to 5 injuries and heightened the sense of insecurity among residents.

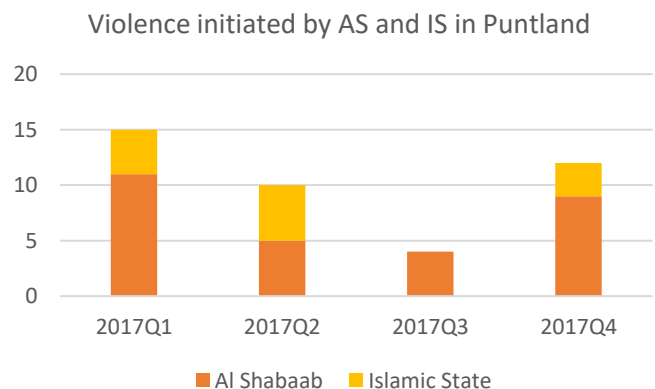
In November 2017 there were reports that AS fighters from South Central Somalia were fleeing to the safety of the mountains around Galgala as a result of increased US airstrikes. There was however no evidence of a massive influx of AS fighters.

Nevertheless, the area of Northern Bari has become a fluid and potentially dangerous environment for NGOs to operate in, as troop movements of AS and IS have been reported and are likely to increase if there are more US airstrikes on their positions. Attacks on security forces, government offices, telecommunications facilities and even banks may be expected, so it is advisable to steer clear of such targets when possible.

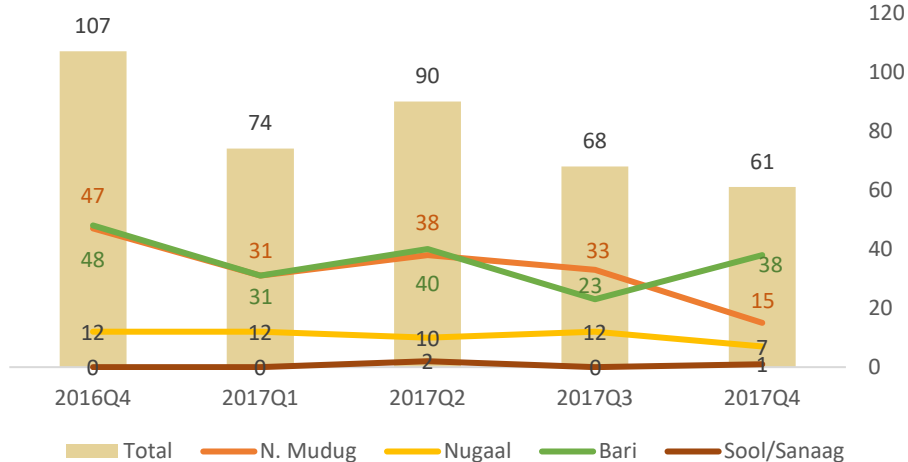
On the other hand, clan conflict was at a very low level this quarterly, down from 12 incidents to 4 (omitting conflict along the Green line separating Puntland from Galmudug); this is beneficial for NGO operations.

**Quarterly Incident:** The Puntland Police Chief reportedly shot and injured his deputy during a regional security meeting at Juba Hotel in Garowe in the evening of 21/10. The incident occurred after the Police Chief got into an escalated argument with the Nugaal region Governor, Omar Abdullahi Farawayne, prompting him to withdraw his pistol and fire in the direction of the Governor. He missed the governor and the bullet lodged itself instead in his deputy's leg.

The simmering dispute about the takeover of Bosaso port by a Dubai Ports World subsidiary (see previous quarterly report) has subsided, after a delegation of Puntland clan elders led by the king of the Darood had a meeting with local businessmen, DP world authorities and members of Puntland government at Hotel Gacayte in Bosaso in the morning of 06/12. After discussions and debate, they succeeded to resolve the dispute and agreed to reduce the port charge fee by 50%.



## Violent Incidents in Puntland, by region, 2017



The Bari coast was also generally quiet this quarter. The only event from this remote area that came to our attention was a boat carrying about 50 alleged IS militants, Somali and Yemeni, that landed near Durdura 28km NE of Bandarbayla. Apparently the militants could land and disperse undisturbed.

Unlike previous quarters, there was not a single case of piracy – reinforcing the impression voiced in previous reports that the lack of success of recent

acts of piracy is discouraging further attempts.

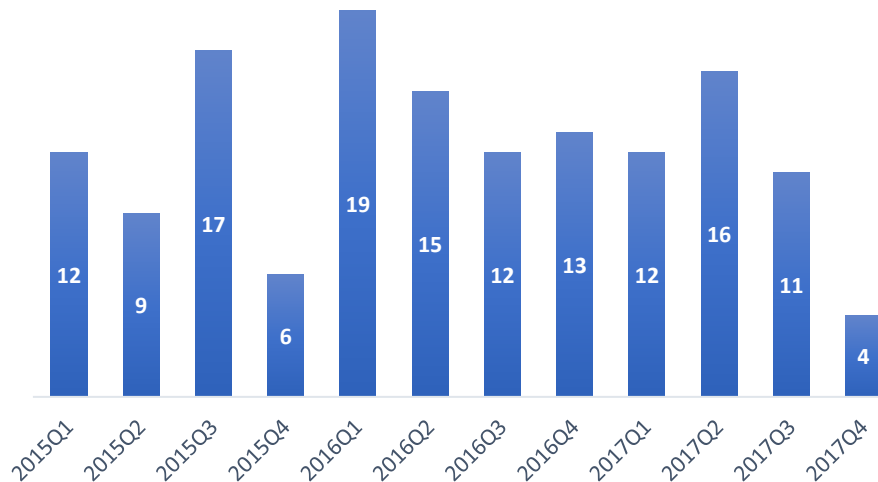
**Clan conflict table.** (The highlighted rows also feature under Galmudug, as they occurred in the areas contested by both states)

Date	Region	Location	Clan A	Clan B	Motive	Results
8-Oct	Mudug	Sarjemale town, Galkacyo	Habar Gidir/ Sacad	Majerteen/ Omar-Mohamud	Clan Revenge	Clash, 1 dead, 1 injured
22-Oct	Mudug	Sangadud town, Galkacyo	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majerteen/ Omar-Mohamud	Clan Revenge	Clash, 6 dead and 22 wounded
26-Oct	Mudug	Galkacyo North town	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majerteen/ Omar-Mohamud	Clan Revenge	Clash, 5 dead and 26 wounded
1-Nov	Nugaal	Garowe town	Majeerteen/ Isse-Mohamud	Majeerteen/ Isse-Mohamud	Land Dispute	Killing, 1 dead 1 injured
10-Nov	Bari	Carmo town, Bosaso	Harti/ Warsangeli	Harti/ Dashiishe	Personal Dispute	Shooting, 1 dead
23-Nov	Mudug	Galkacyo town	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majerteen/ Omar-Mohamud	Land Dispute	Clash. 1 dead 2 injured
9-Dec	Mudug	Laama Faqaaye area, Galkacyo	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majeerteen/ Omar-Mohamud	Clan Revenge	Clash, 1 wounded
13-Dec	Mudug	Dhaxanyo-cadde town, Galkacyo	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majeerteen/ Reer-Bicidyahan	Clan Revenge	Shooting, 1 dead 1 wounded
13-Dec	Mudug	Teerege town, Galkacyo	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majeerteen/ Omar-Mohamud	Clan Revenge	Clash
18-Dec	Mudug	Galkacyo town, Galkacyo	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majeerteen/ Omar Mahmoud	Clan Revenge	Clash, 1 injured 4 wounded
24-Dec	Bari	Netco Area, Bosaso	Harti/ Dashiishe	Darood/ Geri	Unclear	Shooting, 1 injured
25-Dec	Nugaal	Garowe town	Majerteen/ Issa-Mohamud	Rahanweyn	Unclear	Killing, 1 dead
29-Dec	Mudug	Galkacyo town	Habar-Gidir/ Sacad	Majerteen/ Reer-Bicidyahan	Clan Revenge	Clash. 1 dead

## Context analysis: Somaliland

Note: developments that take place in areas of Eastern Sool and Sanaag fully controlled by Puntland are treated under Puntland instead of here. Incidents taking place in contested areas such as Buuhoodle, Badhan and Taleex are treated here.

### Armed clashes in Somaliland since 2015



The graph illustrates a notable decrease of the armed clashes in Somaliland in comparison to the previous quarter, with only 4 armed clashes compared to 11, and 64 violent incidents altogether against 60. Violence has seen a slight increase in this reporting period, with a notable decrease of clan-related violence, which can be attributed to peace building efforts among warring clans conducted by the Somaliland

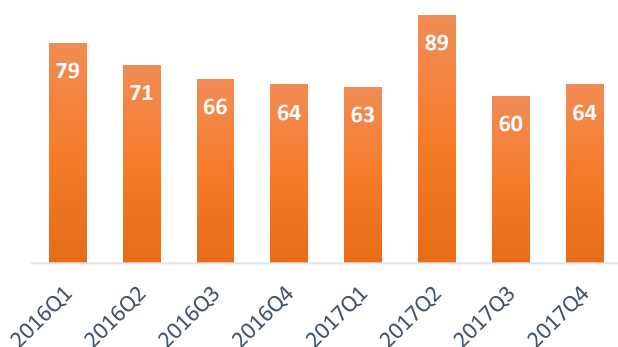
government, in an effort to create a peaceful environment for the elections.

Clashes took place in Buuhoodle (1), Hargeisa (1) and Laas Caanood (2). In Buuhoodle, the hotel that doubled up as Khatumo President's headquarters was attacked on 25/10 in protest over his deal with Somaliland. Ali Khalif Galaydh moved his base to Mansoor Hotel in Hargeisa. The clash in Hargeisa was between youth gangs. The most worrying clashes were those that occurred late December in Qoriley, Laas Caanood district, between Dhulbahante/Baharsame and Majerteen/Omar Mohamud. They resulted in 18 deaths and frenetic efforts by elders on both sides to stop the conflict cycle.

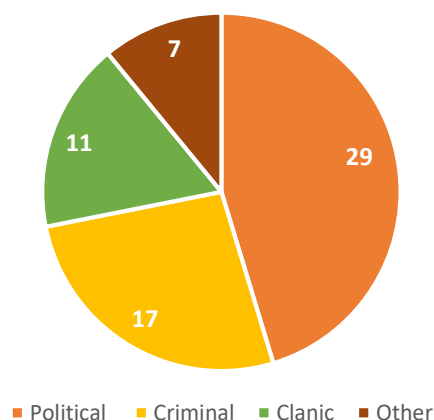
Examining the types of violent incidents, it is remarkable that the assassination rate, at 19 for the previous quarter, declined to 13 this quarter. Most of these killings were clan-related, but there were also more common criminal killings and passion crimes. The rise of common criminality has been commented on before in our quarterlies, and seems related to the lack of job opportunities, a shift in culture towards individualism and political disaffection. The clan-based nature of the electoral competition led to youth gang violence and other clashes between political party supporters. Post-election protests resulted in the killing by the police of four civilians in Burco and Hargeisa.

**Quarterly Incident:** Somaliland Police clashed with khat dealers at the Egal airport on 11/10 after their airplane landed without an authorization from Somaliland's Ministry of Civil Aviation. The police tried to seize the plane but the khat dealers refused to surrender and shot at the Police officers leading to an armed clash and two plane crew members getting injured. The khat dealer and the plane crew were seized later after the clash.

**Violent incidents in Somaliland since 2016**



**2017Q4 violent incidents in Somaliland by Motive**



Due to the elections, the main motive for violence was political, but in general the elections did take place in a peaceful environment. This was largely due to concerted efforts by the Somaliland authorities to resolve simmering conflicts, not between clans but also with the Khatumo Dhulbahante political movement.

After several rounds of engagement, the presidents of Somaliland and Khatumo met in Caynabo on 20/10 and signed a peace accord that will integrate Khatumo into Somaliland. Both sides agreed to defend the integrity and sovereignty of Somaliland, to resolve all conflicts between the two sides through dialogue, to review the Somaliland constitution to include power sharing arrangements based on equity and fairness, to integrate Khatumo forces and militias into the Somaliland security forces and to focus efforts – including those of the UN and NGOs – on development in Sool, Sanaag and Buuhoodle. Some of the senior Dhulbahante politicians and traditional elders allied to Puntland and the Federal Government of Somalia do not back the agreement, further widening the split within the Dhulbahante and reinforcing the Khatumo splinter group based in Boocame.

**Box 5: Presidential Elections in Somaliland**

Somaliland held its third presidential election on 13th November 2017. The election marked a new milestone in Somaliland’s democratic development as it was the first time that the incumbent president did not run. Three candidates vied to replace the country’s fourth president Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo who withdrew after a seven-year term.

The three candidates were former minister of Interior Muse Bihi Abdi of the ruling Kulmiye (Peace, Unity and Development Party); veteran politician Faisal Ali Warabe of UCID (Justice and Welfare Party); and the former speaker of the House of Representatives, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Cirro of Waddani (National Party).

They started campaigning on October 21 and no incidents of violence have been recorded as each candidate was assigned specific days to campaign to avoid clashes. Out of the about 4 million Somaliland population, 704, 089 registered voters could participate – which is less than 50% of the eligible electorate. There were 1,642 polling stations in the 21 electoral districts across the six regions of the country.

A team of 62 international election observers from 27 countries mustered by University College London (with modest DFID support) deployed as an international election observation mission (EOM). There were also many domestic observers, from local civil society and the diaspora. I personally conducted my own electoral

observation, having obtained an accreditation. The commission banned the use of social media from the end of the polling to the announcement of the results, in a hotly debated move.

The impression of all observers was that the polls were well-organized by the National Electoral Commission, and that both citizens and security forces ensured an orderly process. Biometric voter registration cards (a first in Africa) and truly indelible ink ensured multiple voting did not take place. There were some concerns about underage voters and the buying of voter cards, but no evidence of systematic fraud, despite allegations made by opposition candidate 'Cirro' who complained of ballot-boxes stuffing in Gabiley (with no evidence to back this up).

The participation rate of around 80% seems satisfactory, but given that many eligible voters had failed to register, only one in three Somalilanders participated in these elections. This indicates that many clans and youth are increasingly disaffected by the clan-based and, some complain, self-interest driven politics of Somaliland.

The winner of the electoral contest was Muse Bihi, from the ruling Kulmiye Party, whose collected 55% of the vote. Bihi, who started his career in Siyad Barre's Ministry of Defense, was one of the leading figures of the SNM resistance movement; he therefore commands the loyalty of many patriotic Somalilanders. This makes a rapprochement with Somalia both unlikely and feasible, as his patriotic credentials will not easily be questioned. One of Bihi's priorities will be to improve Somaliland's economy and tackle youth unemployment.

The inauguration ceremony of Muse Bihi, the newly elected president took place in Hargeisa on 13/12. Over 2000 people from the community participated, including international delegates from neighbouring countries, IGAD, the EU and the UN. Somalilanders ardently hope that these clean elections will support the country's bid for recognition.

In his inaugural speech, Muse Bihi emphasized good governance, anti-corruption measures, justice and community integration. He announced that "no minister will leave my cabinet with pocketsful of public money". Also, he stated that he is working on solving election-related disputes, and reached out to "all the brothers who have grievances"

If this is Bihi's intention, though, it does not really show in his cabinet appointments. With 5 posts for the Haber-Jeclo, the clan of the outgoing president, and 4 for the Habar-Awal, his own clan, the appointments seem first and foremost to reward his campaign allies. The Haber-Younes, with three cabinet positions, are however not being punished for having sided with the opposition, and the remaining three Isaaq seats went to the Carab and the Cidagale sub-clans. The non-Isaaq clans got 8 seats: The Harti 4 (Dhulbahante 3 and Warsangeli 1) and the Dir also 4 (Gadabuursi 3 and Essa 1).

However clan affiliation was not the only criterium for choosing cabinet positions. The president signalled his desire to start afresh by omitting most of the former cabinet members and appointing some 'technocrats'. Only Sacad Ali Shire (Foreign Affairs), Sheekh Khalil Abdullahi (Religious Affairs) and Shukri Boondare (Environment) retained their position, while Faratoon was shifted from Interior to Education, perhaps a more logical choice for the ex-dean of Laas Caanood University. The Ministry of the Presidency and that of Civil Aviation were suppressed to reduce the size of government, one of Muse Bihi's stated goals.

The electoral transition raised concerns over the privatization of public assets. Police confiscated a number of government vehicles in Burco, Borama and Lughaye that the departing ministers of Health, Education and Public Works were attempting to take with them. In a similar vein, incidents of attempted public land grabbing by local authorities stirred up civil unrest in Sanaag, Saahil and Togdheer and the new President announced a moratorium on the sale of land until land ownership and transfer issues have been resolved.

Other public unrest related to the devaluation of the local currency and the resulting high cost of living, as many

people rely on imported goods. The dollar jumped from 6,500 to 9,000-10,000 Somaliland shillings, a historic high, fuelling civil unrest in several locations. The people anticipate immediate solutions from the newly elected president, since his predecessor failed to control the depreciation of the local currency and fight against inflation. It is not clear how he will be able to meet these expectations.

Finally, there was a political conflict with the federal government over the exploitation of Somaliland’s airspace. The UN International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) returned the management of Somalia’s airspace (including that of Somaliland) to the federal government. Despite an attempt to coordinate this management by Somaliland and Somalia Ministers of civil Aviation’s in a meeting in Addis Ababa on 08/10, the SFG announced that it will officially take over the control of the Somalia airspace during an event held at Mogadishu International Airport on 28/12. Somaliland protested this unilateral move but it is not clear what they can do about it, although it may affect domestic flights between Somalia and Somaliland.

### Consequences for NGOs

In this quarter there were six incidents affecting NGOs, but all of a rather minor nature. A vehicle rented by an INGO was carjacked by the Khatumo splinter group in the contested area of Eastern Sool, but without threat to its occupants. One NGO staffer sustained light injuries during an aid distribution in Burco, there was a looting of plumpy nut supplies and protests during another humanitarian distribution exercise in Ceel Afweyn, the theft of two laptops from an office in Hargeisa and a demonstration in Ceerigaabo by hospital staff and patients due to lay-off plans due to decreased donor funding.

The successful elections, and the pacification of local conflicts between clans and with most Dhulbahante autonomists have created a good environment for further NGO engagement. Access to Buuhoodle and populations in Eastern Somaliland that suffer from the drought has arguably improved, although areas that are contested with Puntland like Taleex and Eastern Laas Caanood district may remain tricky to operate in. It remains to be seen, furthermore, whether the appeal of the government and Khatumo authorities for international assistance to alleviate the underdevelopment in Sool, Sanaag and Buuhoodle will have any practical results.

### Clan conflict in Somaliland

When	Where	Clan 1	Clan 2	Reason	Violence
02-Oct	Xidhixidh village, Buuhoodle District	Dhulbahante/Qayaad	Dhulbahante/Baharsame	Clan revenge	Killing, 1 death
06-Oct	Balihiile village, Burco District	Habar-Awal/Essa Muse	Habar-Jeclo/Reer Daahir	Land dispute	Tension
16-Oct	Ceerigaabo town	Habar-Yonis	Habar-Jeclo	Land dispute	Shooting
18-Oct	Jaamaan village, Ceerigaabo District	Habar-Jeclo/Baho	Habar-Yonis/Jibril Tuurwa	Killing	Killing, 1 death,
19-Oct	Hodan-Qaylo neighbourhood, Burco District	Habar-Jeclo/Reer Raage	Habar-Jeclo/Buraale Mohamed	Killing	Killing, 1 death

When	Where	Clan 1	Clan 2	Reason	Violence
25- Oct	Sahdheer village, Laas Caanood District	Dhulbahante/Baharsame	Dhulbahante/Baharsame	Politics	Shooting,
06-Nov	Maygagle village, Buuhoodle District,	Dhulbahante/Ali-Geri	Dhulbahante/Ali-Geri	Killing	Killing, 1 death,
13-Nov	Taleex	Dhulbahante/Samokaab-Ali	Dhulbahante/Farah-Ali	Clan revenge	Shooting, 1 Death
28-Nov	Damale Xagare village, Ceerigaabo District	Dhulbahante	Warsangeli/Baho-Ugaaslabe	Carjacking	Shooting, 1 injury
28-Nov	Wadaamogoo village, Aynabo District	Habar-Jeclo/Reer-Yonis	Habar-Jeclo/Omar	Killing	Shooting, 1 death
14-Dec	Isa Sarka area near Cadaadkulaale village, Ceel-Afweyn District	Habar-Jeclo/Reer-lidle	Habar-Jeclo/Reer Yonis	Land dispute	Shooting
15-Dec	Laas Caanood town	Dhulbahante/Elmi Naleeye	Dhulbahante/Nuur Ahmed	Killing	Killing, 1 death, 1 injury