

## LATEST TRENDS

Tensions between the federal government and Jubaland state over district elections scheduled for June continued to rise amid clashes between their respective security forces. The six-month transition to a new AU mission started as Al-Shabaab's insurgency rumbled on. In Puntland, state forces carried out significant operations to degrade the Islamic State in Somalia.

## WHAT TO WATCH IN THE COMING WEEKS AND MONTHS

### 1 Strains between the federal government and the opposition will likely worsen

President Mohamud will probably press ahead with planned electoral and constitutional reforms – including instituting universal suffrage and a direct popular vote for president.

The political opposition is likely to start organising itself to protest the voting reforms in the capital Mogadishu.

Certain member states will remain concerned about what they perceive as Mogadishu's centralisation of power. Two are Jubaland and Puntland, which have suspended relations with the federal government.

Jubaland could see further fighting between state and federal forces, with the Gedo region a potential flashpoint.

**TO WATCH** Whether the June district elections take place; steps in the lead-up to state and presidential polls set for September 2025 and

May 2026; Mogadishu's relations with Jubaland and Puntland; tensions in Gedo; parliamentary discussion of the draft constitution's remaining chapters; progress on and resistance to Mohamud's planned reforms, including the political opposition's response.

### Potential Consequences

Mohamud moving to enact his reforms absent dialogue would lead to heightened political tensions and possibly to further conflict with member states. If Mohamud pursues his plans only in areas under federal control, it could accelerate Somalia's political fragmentation.

### 2 Al-Shabaab's insurgency could intensify amid strained international support

The federal government will attempt to revive operations stalled in 2023 to clear Al-Shabaab from the Shabelle river basin in central Somalia.

Al-Shabaab will devote resources to maintaining its presence there, and it will seek to exploit security gaps in southern Somalia, especially as the new AU mission (AUSSOM) will be spread out over 20–30 sites, down from around 50 under the previous mission.

The transition to AUSSOM will take time as the new mission adjusts its force posture and seeks clarity over how it will be funded.

The U.S. administration could block UN funding for AUSSOM when the Security Council votes on it in May. It might also reduce the size of the U.S. mission that helps train Somalia's special forces.

**TO WATCH** The May UN Security Council vote on AUSSOM funding; successes/missteps in AUSSOM transition; Al-Shabaab attacks,

especially in central Somalia (Hirshabelle and Galmudug); troop contributions by rivals Ethiopia and Egypt to the AU mission; U.S. policy on Somalia.

### Potential Consequences

The Al-Shabaab insurgency – which has dragged on for over 18 years – could extend its influence in areas where AUSSOM draws down in the south, while stymieing government consolidation in central Somalia. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab's continued capability to launch large-scale attacks is likely to result in civilian casualties, including in Mogadishu.

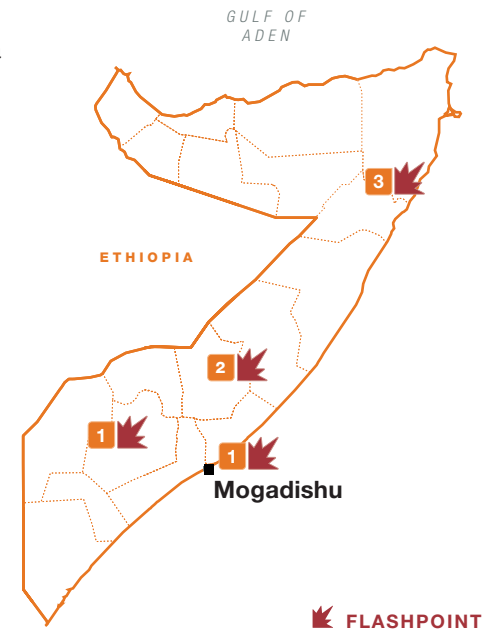
### 3 Islamic State in Somalia could attempt to regroup in Puntland

Puntland's security forces may face challenges in consolidating recent security gains against IS-Somalia in the Bari region's mountains, given the need to keep garrisons in remote areas and retain local support. Communities in this area have traditionally been ambivalent toward the Puntland government.

IS-Somalia could seek to regroup and launch new attacks on military targets to halt Puntland's advances.

Puntland's partners, such as the U.S. and UAE, may order further airstrikes on IS-Somalia, in light of its role as a logistical and financial hub for international jihadism.

**TO WATCH** Sustained operations by Puntland forces in Bari region; level of international backing for Puntland; IS-Somalia's response; IS support for its Somalia branch, including whether additional foreign fighters are dispatched.



### Potential Consequences

If security forces cannot sustain the gains against IS-Somalia, the group could rebound, with implications within and beyond Somalia. Even with increased airstrikes on the jihadists, the group may remain a deadly threat and plan attacks on Puntland in retaliation for its offensive.