

# Somalia

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Attacks on education continued, including attacks on schools and universities involving the use of explosive weapons. The military use of schools also continued as well as child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school. Conflict dynamics impacted access to education with more than half of schools in conflict-affected areas closed or no longer functioning and more than three out of five million school-aged children out of school.

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## Context

Ongoing armed clashes between Al-Shabaab and Somali security forces continued during the reporting period, particularly across the Bay, Lower Juba, and Lower Shabelle regions.<sup>1</sup> Somali security forces received counter-insurgency military air support from multiple regional and national partners, including the United States and the African Union.<sup>2</sup> Political agreements, impending state elections, and efforts by both Al-Shabaab and Somali security forces to increase their collaboration with clans contributed to increasing inter-clan conflicts, which spiked in Jubaland, Lower Juba, and Galmudug regions.<sup>3</sup> As reported by ACLED, the Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) increased and expanded activity in the Puntland region, resulting in more than 80,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), while military operations continued.<sup>4</sup> The UN verified 2,568 grave violations against children in 2024, including the recruitment of 768 children; 141 were killed and 454 were maimed.<sup>5</sup>

Tensions associated with Ethiopia's political agreement with Somaliland and amendments to Somalia's provisional constitution contributed to ongoing instability and insecurity in the region.<sup>6</sup> Semi-autonomous Puntland authorities criticized the lack of consultation by the federal parliament and subsequent impacts on existing clan-based power sharing and Puntland subsequently announced its independence from Somalia and withdrew from the federal system.<sup>7</sup>

Humanitarian needs across Somalia slightly decreased during this reporting period; however, around six million people still needed assistance.<sup>8</sup> The UN reported that climate-related disasters, such as floods and droughts, as well as conflict-related violence, and disease outbreaks, including cholera, impacted an estimated 9.1 million people, 47 percent of the population, during this reporting period.<sup>9</sup> Conflict dynamics made the provision of aid challenging, impacting almost 3.7 million people in need, with Jubaland and South West states particularly affected.<sup>10</sup>

More than half of the schools in conflict-affected areas of Somalia were closed or no longer functioning, impacting more than three million school-aged children.<sup>11</sup> Providing

access to education for forcibly displaced children remained a challenge and led to decreased enrollment rates.<sup>12</sup> Lack of access to school-based WASH stations as well as gender disparities in female student enrolments and teacher representation continued during the reporting period.<sup>13</sup>

## Attacks on schools

During the 2024-2025 reporting period, GCPEA identified 44 attacks on schools. This is a similar rate as compared to the previous reporting period, when GCPEA collected at least 26 attacks on schools in 2023 and at least 14 such attacks in 2022.<sup>14</sup>

In 2024, the UN reported 36 school attacks and attributed the majority of incidents to Al-Shabaab.<sup>15</sup> Separately, GCPEA identified two incidents, both of which involved explosive weapons, although this number was not added to the UN count, to avoid double counting.

- On March 18, 2024, at a local primary school in Wirkooy village, Jamaame, Lower Juba, Jubaland, security forces defused an improvised explosive device (IED) which was suspected to have been placed by Al Shabaab, as reported by ACLED.<sup>16</sup>
- On December 2, 2024, an IED exploded at a restaurant near a high school in Afgooye town, Lower Shabelle region, as reported by ACLED.<sup>17</sup> Two people were reportedly killed, including a SNA soldier and civilian, and two were injured, although GCPEA was unable to establish whether any were students, teachers, or staff.

GCPEA received reports of at least eight attacks on schools in 2025.<sup>18</sup> For example, in April 2025, a primary school in Adan Yabal district, Middle Shabelle region, was partially damaged by crossfire during a conflict between government security forces and Al-Shabaab. As a result, three classrooms at the school were completely destroyed and the administration block was partially damaged. The school served an estimated 250 students who were not in session during the attack.<sup>19</sup>

## Attacks on school students, teachers, and other education personnel

GCPEA identified at least nine reports of attacks on students, teachers and other education personnel in the 2024-2025 reporting period, but fewer were identified than in the previous reporting period, when GCPEA found approximately 27 reports of attacks in 2023 and 25 in 2022.<sup>20</sup> Although the number of reported attacks appears to be declining, teachers and students still faced threats and dangers in the current reporting period, and the lower numbers may also be attributed, in part, to the high number of schools that were closed because of insecurity and climate events.

In 2024, GCPEA identified two attacks on students, teachers and other education personnel.

- On June 25, 2024 in Hargeysa town, Woqooyi Galbeeda, Somaliland, police allegedly fired shots in the air to disperse a group of students throwing rocks at the school in protest of Somaliland national examinations, as reported by ACLED.<sup>21</sup>
- On July 9, 2024 in Buuhoodle town, Togdheer region, Somaliland, police allegedly fired shots in the air to disperse students protesting against 8th grade examinations. One female protester was injured during the incident, as reported by ACLED.<sup>22</sup>

GCPEA identified at least seven attacks on school students and staff in 2025.<sup>23</sup> For example:

- On January 19, 2025, suspected members of an armed group allegedly kidnapped a female student from a school in Mogadishu, as reported by ACLED and an international NGO.<sup>24</sup>
- On 28 June 2025, in Mogadishu, suspected members of an armed group allegedly shot and killed a teacher at Yaaqshid School, as reported by ACLED.<sup>25</sup>

## Military use of schools and universities

During the 2024-2025 reporting period, GCPEA identified at least six cases of the military use of education facilities. This was similar to the previous reporting period, when seven incidents were identified in 2023, and one in 2022.<sup>26</sup>

In 2024, the UN verified three incidents of the military use of schools by the Ethiopian National Defence Forces, government security forces, National Intelligence and Security Agency, and the Somali National Army.<sup>27</sup> GCPEA separately identified one report of military use, which may have been included in the UN tally and therefore was not added to the UN number, to avoid double counting.

- During the night of January 31, 2024, Al-Shabaab threw a hand grenade towards Somali soldiers stationed near Mogadishu school in Mogadishu, who responded with gunfire, as reported by ACLED. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack on the soldiers.<sup>28</sup>

At least three cases of the military use of schools or universities were identified in 2025.<sup>29</sup> For example:

- Between 13 and 19 April, 2025, the military use of one school was recorded in Beledhawa district, Gedo region, by federal security forces. The school was subsequently vacated. The occupation disrupted learning for 350 children.<sup>30</sup>
- On December 30, 2025, in Kismayo town, Lower Juba region, Al Shabaab claimed responsibility for an IED explosion that targeted the Jubaland Intelligence and Security Agency at Horyaal Primary and Secondary School, as reported by ACLED.<sup>31</sup>

## Child recruitment at, or on the way to or from, school

At least two cases of child recruitment were reported during the current reporting period. GCPEA received reports that children had been recruited from schools in 2025, although specific details were not available.<sup>32</sup>

## Attacks on higher education

In the 2024-2025 reporting period, GCPEA identified three attacks on higher education. In the previous reporting period, no such attacks were identified.<sup>33</sup>

Two attacks were identified in 2024:

- On March 3, 2024, armed militia allegedly exchanged fire with Puntland police near Puntland State University in Garowe town, Nugaal region, as reported by ACLED.<sup>34</sup>
- On May 1, 2024, Al-Shabaab detonated a remote-controlled IED near Shabelle University area in Dayniile district, Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack which targeted government security forces passing by the university. In addition to killing four soldiers and injuring two civilians, the IED also damaged a passing vehicle, injuring four passengers, as reported by ACLED.<sup>35</sup>

GCPEA identified at least one attack on a university in 2025: On March 16, 2025, in Jilib town, Middle Juba region, an airstrike allegedly impacted a university, as reported by ACLED.<sup>36</sup>