



COI QUERY

Country of Origin/Topic	Somalia
Question(s)	<u>1. Security situation in Hiraan Region (January – 15 November 2019):</u> <u>1.1 Short description of the region</u> <u>1.2 Control of territory and presence/activities of non-state armed groups</u> <u>1.3 Recent security trends and impact on the civilian population</u> <u>1.4 Overview of documented incidents with civilians casualties</u>
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The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision making authorities. The answer was finalised on the 2 December 2019. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.



COI QUERY RESPONSE

1. Security situation in Hiraan Region (January – 15 November 2019)

During the observed period of January – 15 November 2019, the following consulted sources reported about the security situation in Hiraan region:

Data by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project (ACLED), suggests that during the observed period of 1 January - 31 October 2019, a total number of 121 security incidents occurred in Hiraan region, including 54 battles, 27 acts of violence against civilians and 35 explosions/remote violence.¹

On 7 October 2019, the UN Security Council reported that:

‘Clan conflicts remain a major concern, particularly in Hiraan region where clan violence costs lives and livelihoods and displaces families. Humanitarian programmes in the affected locations are often suspended until the conflict is resolved. Occasionally, local humanitarian staff belonging to warring clans have been victimised or caught up in the conflict. Clan-related conflicts are mainly recorded in areas in which pastoralist communities reside, owing to competition for scarce resources such as water and pasture, or in areas where farmers clash with nomads or over farmland. Galguduud and Hiraan regions remain the most affected areas with prolonged clan conflicts. While clan elders and the authorities continue to prioritise negotiations to address ongoing clan conflicts, the payment of blood compensation remains the key determinant to the conflict resolution. Even after reconciliation efforts have been successful, conflicts have the potential to reignite quickly over small or perceived provocations’.²

1.1 Short description of the region

Hiraan (also spelled as Hiiraan or Hiran) is located in Central Somalia and borders Galgaduud to the east, Middle and Lower Shabelle to the South, Bakool to the west, and Ethiopia to the north. The population of the region is estimated 329,811 people. The region consists of three administrative districts: Beledweyne, Bulo Burte and Jalalaqsi.³

1.2 Control of territory and presence/activities of non-state armed groups

During the reporting period of January – 15 November 2019, the following different non-state groups reportedly controlled and conducted activities in Hiraan region:⁴

¹ ACLED, Somalia, Hiraan region, October 2019, [url](#)

² UN Security Council, Report of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (S/2019/799), 7 October 2019, [url](#), p. 11

³ OCHA, situation analysis, October 2012, [url](#)

⁴ UN Security Council, report of the Secretary-General on Somalia, 15 August 2019, [S/2019/661], [url](#), p. 3; FranceSoir, ‘l’Etat islamique s’implante en Somalie sur fond de rivalité djihadiste avec les Shebaab’, 22 February 2019, [url](#); Hiiraan online, five Al-Shabaab militants killed in clash with Ma’awisley militias in Hiraan region, 3 October 2019, [url](#)



Al-Shabaab: some sources reported that Al-Shabaab continues to be an important actor and exercises control over large areas in Somalia, including in the Hiraan region.⁵ The UN observed that in various regions of Somalia, including in Hiraan, Al-Shabaab continues to use ‘siege-like tactics’. The same source further noted that ‘Al-Shabaab militants continue to target donkey cart drivers who are driving off-road in an attempt to transport essential supplies into towns. Al-Shabaab often confiscates or destroys the supplies, in addition to carrying out other forms of attack on the transporters, including killing them, subjecting them to physical assault and levying fines’⁶ Security risks caused by armed groups in the Hiraan region have also impacted commercial activities⁷ and hindered the delivery of humanitarian support.⁸

Islamic State in Somalia: The Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) is reportedly based in Puntland where they also train the new recruited fighters.⁹ On 1 February 2019, Islamic State in Somalia killed one soldier and wounded another by detonating an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) in the city of Beledweyne and on 11 February 2019, the group claimed responsibility for the killing of the financial responsible of the Holodag district in the city of Beledweyne.¹⁰

Ma’awisley: The Ma’awisley ‘self-styled militia sprang up in Hiraan and Middle Shabelle regions in 2018 ‘to counter Al-Shabaab rule in the regions’, the group is reportedly backed by the Somali army to fight Al-Shabaab group in the region.¹¹ On 1 October 2018, Al-Shabaab militants killed the leader of the ‘Ma’awisley civilian movement’ near Balcad, Middle Shabelle region.¹²

Somali National Army: SNA (Somali National Army) conducts military operations in Hiraan region against Al-Shabaab militants.¹³ No further information was retrieved on the active presence of the SNA in Hiraan region.

AMISOM: the African Union Mission in Somalia comprises of troops from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia. Djiboutian forces are in charge of Hiraan and Galgaduud regions. AMISOM was deployed in March 2017 to help Somali National Security Forces to push Al-Shabaab group out of southern Somalia.¹⁴ The security responsibility will be transferred to Somali National Security Forces, under the Somali Transitional Plan (STP), ahead of AMISOM’s anticipated exit in 2021.¹⁵

UNSOM: UNSOM (United Nations Mission in Somalia) was established on 3 June 2013 by the UN Security Council Resolution 2102 (2013) to support the Federal Government of Somalia on

⁵ UN Security Council, Report of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (S/2019/799), 7 October 2019, [url](#), p. 11; The Netherlands, (Ministry of foreign affairs of the Netherlands), country of origin information on South and Central Somalia, March 2019, [url](#), p. 10; USDOS, country report on human rights practices 2018 – Somalia, 13 March 2019, [url](#), p. 21

⁶ UN Security Council, Letter dated 7 October 2019 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council, (S/2019/799), 7 October 2019, [url](#), p. 9

⁷ USDOS, country report on human rights practices 2018 – Somalia, 13 March 2019, [url](#), p. 21

⁸ USDOS, country report on human rights practices 2018 – Somalia, 13 March 2019, [url](#), p. 21; NRC, 273,000 now displaced due to flooding in Somalia as more extreme weather looms 1 November 2019, [url](#)

⁹ LWJ, Islamic State trains in Somalia’s Puntland, 22 September 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰ FranceSoir, ‘l’Etat islamique s’implante en Somalie sur fond de rivalité djihadiste avec les Shebaab’, 22 February 2019, [url](#)

¹¹ Hiiraan online, five Shabaab militants killed in clash with Ma’awisley militias in Hiraan region, 3 October 2019, [url](#)

¹² ICG, tracking conflict worldwide, November 2019, [url](#)

¹³ MEM (Middle East Monitor), over 20 Al-Shabaab militants killed in central Somalia, 20 October 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴ AMISOM, AMISOM Military Component, n.a, [url](#)

¹⁵ AMISOM, Somalia is making progress: Transition Plan is on track- Ambassador Francisco Madeira, n.a, [url](#)



‘peacebuilding and statebuilding’.¹⁶ UNSOM is based in Mogadishu and has presence in the capitals of federal member states including Hirshabelle State to which Hiraan belongs.¹⁷

1.3 Recent security trends and impact on the civilian population

The following consulted sources reported on security incidents in Hiraan region:

On **20 May 2019**, OCHA reported that ‘due to the conflict-related incidents, there are humanitarian access restrictions to some regions including to the region of Hiraan.’¹⁸

In **June 2019**, In Hiraan region, clashes between Habar Gidir and Hawadle sub-clans over grazing land and water resources resulted in several fatalities among the members of both clans’.¹⁹

On **7 October 2019**, the UN Security Council reported that ‘Al-Shabaab continues its attacks on trucks using the main supply routes in Hiraan, a situation that has been long-standing because of the group’s enforcement of its economic blockade on government-controlled towns’.²⁰

On **31 October 2019**, International Displacement Monitoring Centre data suggested that ‘1,264 people were displaced during the observed period of 21 – 31 October 2019, from Lower Shabelle and Hiraan regions to Mogadishu as a result of insecurity’.²¹

On **1 November 2019**, Norwegian Refugee Council reported that ‘the entire Hiraan region has not received sufficient humanitarian support due to the ongoing security risks and the prevalence of armed actors in the area’.²²

In **2019**, UNHCR data suggested that ‘five thousand people reportedly displaced from Hiraan region due to conflict/insecurity’.²³

1.4 Overview of documented incidents with civilians casualties

Human Rights Watch reported that during 2018, ‘civilians were targeted or faced indiscriminate attacks during clan violence, notably in Ceel Afweeyn in Sanaag region, Galgaduud, and Hiraan.’²⁴

During the observed period of January – 15 November 2019, limited information could be found on documented incidents with casualties in the Hiraan region.

¹⁶ UN Security Council, Resolution 2102 (2013), (S/RES/2102), 2 May 2013, [url](#)

¹⁷ UNSOM, Mandate, n.a, [url](#)

¹⁸ UN OCHA, Drought Response Plan Somalia, 20 May 2019, [url](#)

¹⁹ UN Security Council, report of the Secretary-General on Somalia, 15 August 2019, [S/2019/661], [url](#), p. 3

²⁰ UN Security Council, (S/2019/799), 7 October 2019, [url](#), p. 9

²¹ IDMC, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 31 October 2019, [url](#)

²² NRC, ‘273,000 now displaced due to flooding in Somalia as more extreme weather looms’, 1 November 2019, [url](#)

²³ UNHCR, Somalia, Internal Displacement, 2019, [url](#)

²⁴ HRW, World Report 2019 – Somalia (Events of 2018), [url](#)



In **September 2019**, Goobjoog news²⁵ reported that ‘armed militias from Matabaan district opened fire on a well and killed five civilians and wounded several others in Qabno village under Matabaan district in Hiraan region.’²⁶ In addition, International Crisis Group reported that in **October 2019**, three civilians were killed by Al-Shabaab in continued attacks in Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Bay and Hiraan regions.²⁷

The following consulted sources reported some documented incidents in Hiraan region with casualties:

On **5 March 2019**, ACLED, in its report on regional overview - Africa, reported that ‘last week, at least 110 fatalities were reported across the country. Al-Shabaab militants attacked military and AMISOM forces on several occasions, including in the area of Beledweyne (Hiraan)’.²⁸

Additionally, International Crisis Group reported the following documented incidents in Hiraan region:

In **February 2019**, ‘90 Al-Shabaab militants were reportedly killed in five U.S airstrikes in Lower Shabelle and Hiraan regions’.

During the period of **17 - 23 April 2019**, ‘Al-Shabaab allegedly killed dozens of Kenyan soldiers of African Union Mission (AMISOM), 7 Somali soldiers and 1 local official in Lower Juba, Hiraan, Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle regions’.

During the period of **8 - 17 September 2019**, ‘at least seventeen Burundian and five Djiboutian soldiers reportedly died in attacks against AMISOM in Middle Shabelle and Hiraan regions’.

During the period of **17 - 27 September 2019**, ‘80 Al-Shabaab militants were reportedly killed in army operations in Hiraan, Lower Juba and Lower Shabelle regions’.

In **October 2019**, at least sixteen Somali and International soldiers and three civilians were killed by Al-Shabaab in continued attacks in Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, Bay and Hiraan regions.

During the period of **15 - 19 October 2019**, ‘security forces reportedly killed several dozen Al-Shabaab militants in Gedo and Hiraan regions’.²⁹

²⁵ Goobjoog news describes itself as an ‘independent private media network in Somalia’. [url](#)

²⁶ Goobjoog news, civilians killed in Hiraan region, 26 September 2019, [url](#)

²⁷ ICG, tracking conflict worldwide, October 2019, [url](#)

²⁸ ACLED, regional overview – Africa, 5 March 2019, [url](#)

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