



Somalia: The security situation in Mogadishu and al-Shabaab's influence in the city

- To what extent are civilians affected by violence in Mogadishu?
- Who is behind the violence and who are the victims?
- To what extent does al-Shabaab have influence in Mogadishu?
- To what extent does the Islamic State (IS) have influence in the city?
- What is the “Green Zone”?

Introduction

This query response provides a brief account of the current security situation¹ for the civilian population in Mogadishu, with a particular focus on the period 2021 to July 2022. Security conditions in Mogadishu have been a central theme for Landinfo's work for many years, and this response must be read in the context of previous publications on this topic (see also Landinfo 2021, 2020, 2018 and 2017).

The query response is partly based on information collected during a fact-finding mission to Mogadishu in May 2022, but also on information from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and other open sources. The oral sources are anonymised due to their security and/or work situation.

Source material

There are no institutions in Somalia that register and keep statistics on killings and other violent incidents. The organisation the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) collects information about violent incidents in Mogadishu and Somalia in general from media and local organisations and stores the information in a database. The database (ACLED 2022) provides information about who was involved, the sequence of events and the number of people killed. The degree to which local media and organisations and thus ACLED detect violent incidents probably varies in Somalia as a whole and over time, but in

¹ Security is defined here as freedom from the intentional use of, or threat of, physical violence.

Landinfo's assessment, serious incidents of violence in Mogadishu are normally detected.

Nevertheless, given the challenges associated with information gathering and the fact that there is no complete overview of violent incidents in Somalia, Landinfo believes that ACLED's information provides a good indication of the level of violence in Mogadishu, including the number of people killed, who was behind the violence and who the victims were. Although ACLED provides exact figures and these figures are reproduced in this response, the figures must be viewed as estimates.

The response is also based on information from oral sources that Landinfo met in Mogadishu in May 2022. The sources are mainly Somali resource persons who live in and have their social networks in the city. Landinfo's experience, after having visited Mogadishu almost annually since 2012,² is that local sources provide a more nuanced and exhaustive account of the situation for the local population in Mogadishu than international sources in the city.³

The general picture and development over time

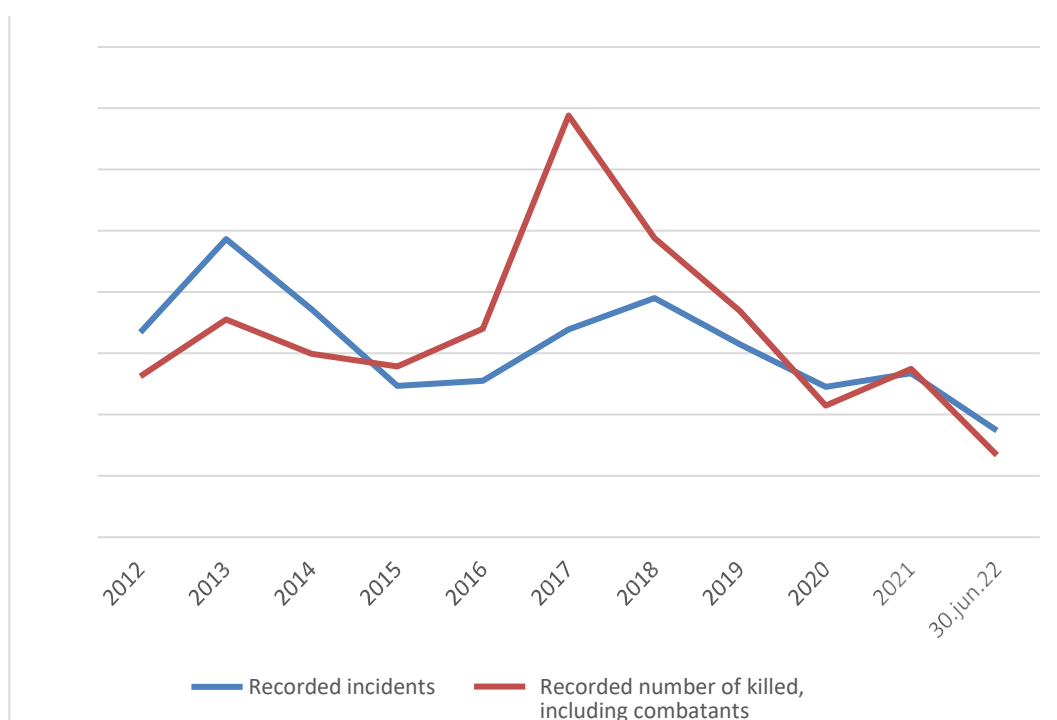
The local sources we met in Mogadishu in May 2022 (sources C, D, E and H) all described the security developments in the city as positive, especially since 2019. When asked follow-up questions on what the sources meant by this, they explained that the number of al-Shabaab attacks, especially bomb attacks, and thus the number of people killed, had been reduced. The sources were unable to quantify this, but their claim is supported by ACLED (2022).⁴ As can be seen in diagram 1, both the number of recorded violent incidents and recorded deaths have decreased somewhat in recent years.

² Landinfo visited Mogadishu more or less annually from 2012 until the pandemic put a temporary stop to such trips in 2020. The trip in May 2022 was therefore the first time we visited the city since February 2019.

³ International sources in Mogadishu are mainly located in an area by the airport, which is physically separated from the rest of the city. Such sources have very limited freedom of movement and their depiction of conditions in Mogadishu is often characterised by a form of "bunker mentality" focusing on the security situation for representatives of international organisations rather than the local population. As can be seen below, local sources that Landinfo met during the trip in May 2022 also pointed this out. Local sources may have difficulty entering the airport area due to strict and time-consuming security measures. The conversations with the sources consequently took place outside the airport area in Mogadishu.

⁴ Figures for July and August were not available when this response was prepared.

Diagram 1: Violence in Mogadishu over time



Prepared by Landinfo based on data from ACLED (2022).

If we look at developments since 2012, when the authorities formally regained control over the whole of Mogadishu,⁵ the number of incidents and fatalities has remained fairly stable at between 500 and 1,000 annually,⁶ but it is important to keep in mind that the population in Mogadishu has increased significantly during this time. While in 2012 there were probably only a few hundred thousand people living in the city (Landinfo 2020, p. 9), Mogadishu is currently believed to have a population of around two million (Store norske leksikon 2021).⁷ Looking at the number of people living in the city, the trend in violence has therefore been far more positive than what diagram 1 suggests.

⁵ Al-Shabaab took control of large parts of Mogadishu in 2009 but was unable to take control of the entire city because forces from the African Union (known as the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) until 31 March 2022 but thereafter as the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS)) protected the internationally recognised authorities. Al-Shabaab withdrew its army from central parts of Mogadishu in August 2011, and in February 2012 was also pushed out of the city's outer areas.

⁶ The exception is 2017, when almost 1,500 people were killed. This is due to the truck bomb attack on 14 October 2017, which alone killed more than 500 people (BBC 2017; Landinfo 2018).

⁷ There are no reliable figures on how many people live in Mogadishu. A population survey from 2014, conducted by Somali authorities with support from i.a. the United Nations Population Fund, estimated 1.65 million inhabitants (UNFPA 2014, p. 31).

Sources D and E (meeting in Mogadishu, May 2022) indicated in this context that international media often provided a false and purely negative picture of the security situation in Mogadishu because non-Somali journalists have limited freedom of movement in the city and only talk to the local population to a less extent.

All sources that Landinfo met in Mogadishu in 2022 also expressed that the security challenges in the city have not changed significantly in recent years in terms of who is behind the violence and who are the victims. This is also substantiated by ACLED (2022). As shown below, the security situation in Mogadishu continues to be characterised by al-Shabaab conducting attacks against the authorities and their supporters, including civilians and civilian locations. The sources are clear that the civilian population is generally not a target of attacks but emphasise that al-Shabaab pays little attention to random passers-by when they attack. Government forces, the Islamic State (IS) and unknown perpetrators are also behind the violence in Mogadishu.

Attacks on and skirmishes between government forces

In 2021, ACLED (2022) recorded 535 incidents of violence and 549 deaths in Mogadishu. In 2022 up to and including 30 June, ACLED recorded 348 incidents and 268 deaths in the city. The number of people killed includes both civilians and combatants, including perpetrators.

As shown in table 1, about 70 per cent of the recorded violent incidents in Mogadishu from 2021 until 30 June 2022 were aimed at military targets. These incidents include attacks on government forces and their allies from al-Shabaab and unknown perpetrators, as well as exchanges of fire between government forces. According to ACLED, the incidents resulted in 507 deaths. It is reasonable to assume that these were mainly military, but civilians are also affected in such attacks.

Table 1: Recorded incidents of violence in Mogadishu from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2022

Target of attack	Recorded violent incidents	Recorded number killed
Military	616	507
Civilians	224	309
Other ⁸	43	1
Total	883	817

Prepared by Landinfo based on data from ACLED (2022).

Al-Shabaab was behind – or is believed to have been behind – the vast majority of the attacks against military targets (537 recorded incidents, which resulted in 425 recorded deaths).⁹ Al-Shabaab attacks against military targets mainly took the form of executions, but also include ambush attacks (often referred to as “hit-and-run” attacks), especially in outlying areas. The attacks mainly took the form of shooting or throwing hand grenades against individual members and smaller groups of government forces but also included the use of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers.

Most of the attacks against military targets seem to take place in the outskirts of Mogadishu, such as the districts/neighbourhoods of Kadha¹⁰ and Daynile, but all districts/neighbourhoods seem to be affected. The most extensive attack took place on 16 February 2022, when al-Shabaab attacked several checkpoints in the outskirts of Mogadishu and temporarily took over a police station in Kadha (Hassan 2022; ACLED 2022). An attack that received considerable international attention took place on 23 March 2022, when two al-Shabaab members attacked security forces inside the eastern entrance (“Marina Gate”) of the airport area (see, for example, Faruk 2022).

According to ACLED (2022), the Islamic State (IS) was or is believed to be behind 11 attacks against security forces in the city (resulting in 16 recorded

⁸ “Other” includes incidents that ACLED categorises as “protests/riots”, “strategic development” and some incidents categorised as “explosions/remote violence” where the attack failed and the target of the attack seems unclear. The category “strategic development” includes arrests and averted or failed attacks.

⁹ According to ACLED, government forces were behind 36 incidents of violence (55 recorded deaths), while 29 incidents (16 recorded deaths) were committed by unknown perpetrators.

¹⁰ The district/neighbourhood of Kadha does not necessarily appear on maps of Mogadishu. The district is fairly new, and a result of Mogadishu expanding into the neighbouring Lower Shabelle region. Kadha is located west of Daynile and north of Dharkenley and thus constitutes the most peripheral part of Mogadishu.

deaths). These attacks mainly took the form of throwing hand grenades at security forces.

According to ACLED (2022), skirmishes between government forces occurred, typically between forces from different clans,¹¹ and, amongst other things, were due to conflicts over land or occurred when passing road checkpoints. The most serious skirmishes between government forces took place on 25 April 2021, when fighting broke out between forces for and against then-President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, known as “Farmajo”.¹² The reason for the fighting was that Farmajo extended his term of office by two years without holding elections. The fighting was limited to 25 April 2021 and did not flare up again after this. Farmajo responded to the opposition by going back on the extension of his term of office, and on 15 May 2022, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud (Hawiye-Abgal) was elected as the new president (Hujale 2022). The local sources that Landinfo met in May 2022 described the conflict that resulted in fighting in April 2021 as having ended.¹³

Attacks on civilians

Of the total 883 recorded incidents of violence during the 18-month period from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2022, ACLED registered 224 of the incidents (approximately ¼) as attacks on civilians.¹⁴ According to ACLED, these attacks resulted in 309 deaths.

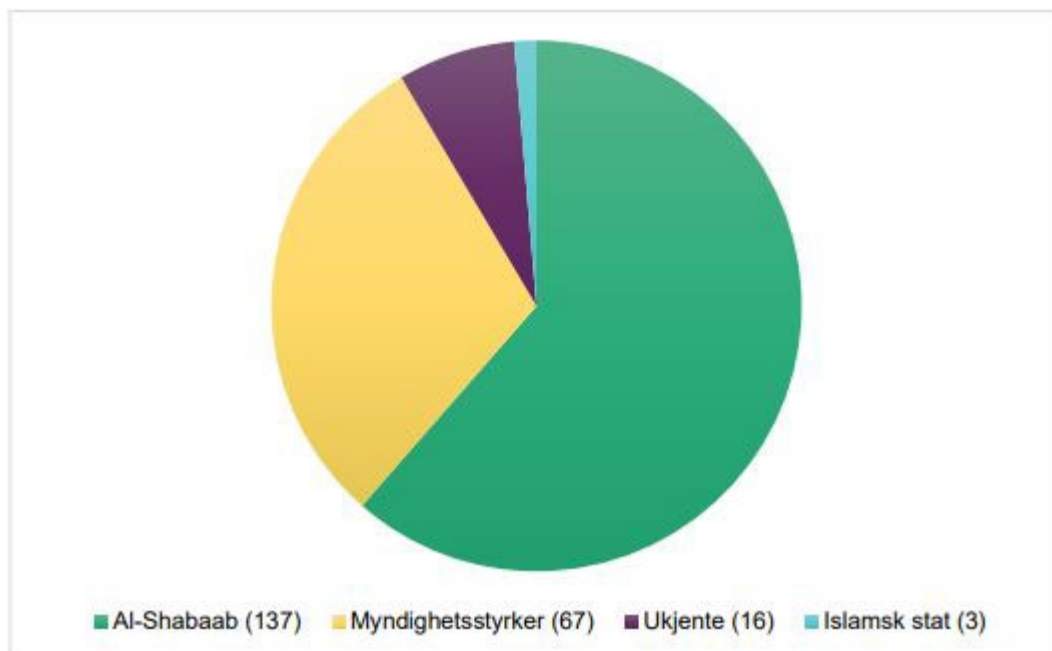
¹¹ The Somali government forces mainly consist of clan-based militias, whose loyalty primarily lies with their own clan.

¹² Landinfo has discussed this incident in a separate response (see Landinfo 2021).

¹³ Landinfo has previously indicated that the fighting in April 2021 had a clear clan dimension because Farmajo is Darod and the opposition consisted of Hawiye clans, but the sources that Landinfo discussed this with during our stay in Mogadishu in May 2022 downplayed the significance of this. According to sources C and G, the fighting did not affect relations between ordinary people from different clans in the city.

¹⁴ Attacks on civilians includes incidents that ACLED categorises as “violence against civilians” and “explosions/remote violence” that affects people who ACLED categorises as civilians. As stated later in the response, this category also covers members of government forces who were not at work when they were attacked.

Diagram 2: Who was behind the attacks on civilians from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2022?



Prepared by Landinfo based on data from ACLED (2022).

Al-Shabaab attacks on civilians

As shown in Diagram 2, according to ACLED (2022), al-Shabaab was behind approximately 60 per cent of the attacks against civilians in Mogadishu during the period in question. This not only includes attacks that al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for but also attacks that al-Shabaab is suspected of being behind without claiming responsibility. These attacks resulted in 245 deaths and mainly took the form of executions through shooting or the use of improvised bombs targeting electoral delegates and government officials, including soldiers and members of other security forces who were not on the job when they were attacked.

According to ACLED (2022), the deadliest attack in Mogadishu during the period in question is included in this category. This attack took place in mid-June 2021, when a suicide bomber (disguised as a recruit) killed at least 40 recruits (who ACLED has defined as civilians) at a training centre for the Somali army south of Mogadishu.¹⁵

Al-Shabaab attacks on civilians also include some attacks against selected hotels and restaurants which are known to attract people associated with the government

¹⁵ Other sources indicate that “at least ten” recruits were killed in the attack (see, for example, Mohamed & Specia 2021 and Kahiye 2021a).

(see, for example, AFP 2021; Zeit Online 2021; Al Jazeera 2021a & 2021b; Maruf 2021 and BBC 2022). The local sources Landinfo met in Mogadishu in May 2022 were still unanimous that the civilian population in general is not a direct target for al-Shabaab and that al-Shabaab mainly targets government officials and places where government officials travel, including certain hotels and restaurants (sources C, D, E and G, meetings in Mogadishu, May 2022).¹⁶ This is supported by ACLED (2022), which indicates that 80 per cent of the al-Shabaab attacks during the period in question (537 out of a total of 674 attacks) targeted government forces.

At the same time, the sources emphasised that al-Shabaab pays little attention to collateral victims when they attack their targets,¹⁷ and that there is always a “residual risk” by being at the “wrong place at the wrong time”, for example, by a bomb going off before it reaches its intended target. Source A (meeting in Mogadishu, May 2022) highlighted the many road checkpoints in Mogadishu as particularly vulnerable points in this respect, as these could result in, for example, suicide bombers being detected and blowing up before they reach their intended target.

The attack on Hayat Hotel in August 2022

On the evening of 19 August 2022, al-Shabaab attacked Hayat Hotel, located by the KM4 area in southern Mogadishu (see Google Maps).¹⁸ The attack received a lot of international attention, but in Landinfo’s assessment does not constitute a change in the security situation in the city, as described above. Like other hotels that have been attacked by al-Shabaab, Hayat was also known as a hotel where government officials stay (Garowe Online 2022; The Somali Wire 2022). As with previous hotel attacks, this attack also started with a bomb explosion, after which a group of armed people stormed the hotel complex and started shooting at everyone staying there. The last attacker was killed by government forces on the morning of 21 August. By then, more than 20 people had been killed and over 100

¹⁶ As with previous trips, several of the local sources that Landinfo met in Mogadishu in May 2022 expressed awareness of which hotels and other places are associated with the government and therefore constitute a potential target for al-Shabaab attacks. Hotels and restaurants where ministers, parliamentarians and other government officials live, eat and/or meet at are often highly visible because they have extensive security measures in the form of physical barriers and armed guards, amongst other things. Government officials use such sites precisely because of the security measures they offer, but the sites also thus become targets for al-Shabaab attacks.

¹⁷ Al-Shabaab “justifies” collateral civilians being killed in their attacks by claiming that civilians who lose their lives in their attacks achieve martyrdom (The Somali Wire 2022).

¹⁸ Many of the hotels that have been attacked by al-Shabaab over the years are located in this area and along the main roads of Airport Road and Maka al-Mukarama Road, which connect the airport to the presidential palace “Villa Somalia”. The KM4 area is centred around the roundabout that connects these two roads (see Google Maps).

injured (Faruk 2022). The attack thus underscores al-Shabaab's lack of consideration for collateral casualties when they attack.

Attacks on civilians by government forces and others

As shown in Diagram 2, actors other than al-Shabaab were also behind violence against civilians in Mogadishu. According to ACLED (2022), almost 1/3 of such attacks (resulting in 47 recorded deaths) were perpetrated by government forces. These attacks mainly targeted drivers and others in tuk-tuks and other vehicles. According to Landinfo's understanding (and experience), such attacks occur in the context of government forces manning a number of road checkpoints in the city, which, amongst other things, are used to extort money from travellers, and that both conflicts and misunderstandings can arise in this context. Several of the sources indicated that clan affiliation may play a role when encountering government forces. According to source B (meeting in Mogadishu, May 2022), people from strong clans or with connections to powerful individuals in the city are at little risk of reactions from government forces. According to the sources, strong clans in Mogadishu are primarily the Hawiye clans Abgal and Haber Gedir, who dominate Mogadishu and represent the majority of the security forces in the city.

According to ACLED (2022), the Islamic State (IS) was behind three attacks on civilians (which resulted in 3 recorded deaths). These attacks took place in the Bakara area and targeted businesspeople who refused to pay them "taxes".

According to ACLED (2022), attacks from unknown actors also largely target businesspeople. Because the perpetrators are unknown, the motives behind these attacks also remain unknown, but according to Landinfo's local sources in Mogadishu, such attacks are often financially motivated or the result of private conflicts.

Al-Shabaab's influence in Mogadishu

Al-Shabaab has not had an open presence in Mogadishu for over a decade. However, as stated above, the organization continues to carry out attacks in the city.

In the outskirts of the city, and particularly Daynile and Kahda, which extend into Lower Shabelle,¹⁹ al-Shabaab conducts attacks with smaller groups of "regular" fighters, who retreat shortly after the attack. This is possible because the

¹⁹ Mogadishu is constantly growing and the city's borders have been expanding outwards for many years.

organisation can move quite freely outside Mogadishu and other government cities (see Landinfo 2019). Attacks in the outlying areas also include mortar attacks against targets in the city (see, for example, Mohamed 2022).²⁰

The attacks in other, more central parts of Mogadishu, on the other hand, are carried out by members who operate covertly and/or do not make themselves known before they strike. According to Landinfo's understanding, those who conduct hotel attacks and other suicide attacks normally arrive from outside the city to carry out a specific attack. However, executions are typically carried out by one or a few attackers, who normally escape (ACLED 2022). Their number and degree of connection to al-Shabaab and Mogadishu are thus unclear.²¹

The local sources that Landinfo met in Mogadishu in May 2022 indicated that al-Shabaab has hidden members and sympathisers in Mogadishu but that no one knows how many there are.

Many informants

However, the sources agreed that al-Shabaab has “many” informants in the city, including in the government apparatus. Several of the sources indicated that precisely the fact that no one knows who is affiliated with al-Shabaab means that many people have the notion that “anyone” could be al-Shabaab and that the organisation can thus be “everywhere”. Landinfo was able to witness this subjective view for itself in that some local sources lowered their voices or took a break in conversations about al-Shabaab when a waiter or other outsiders entered the room.

The sources emphasised that informants are not necessarily members of al-Shabaab themselves, as people may be pressured or threatened to obtain and/or share information about conditions al-Shabaab is interested in, for example, in connection with preparations for an attack (see also Landinfo 2015a, p. 5).

Most people fear them, but al-Shabaab has limited resources

The sources emphasise that most people in Mogadishu fear al-Shabaab and that the organisation thus does not have to be large to influence people living in the city. Source B indicated in this context that most people are also afraid to tip off the authorities about people they suspect of being connected to al-Shabaab

²⁰ Al-Shabaab occasionally attacks targets in Mogadishu with mortars. Mortar attacks are normally carried out by al-Shabaab unloading mortars from minibuses in the outskirts of Mogadishu, firing a handful of grenades, typically at the international bases at the airport or the presidential palace Villa Somalia, and then leaving the area before government forces can react. These attacks are often imprecise and consequently also sometimes hit random civilians.

²¹ During previous trips, some sources have indicated that al-Shabaab (and others) can “outsource” assassinations to criminal individuals/groups who carry out killings for payment.

because suspects often escape through clan connections and corruption and can thus take revenge.²² The source substantiated this by showing that assassinations in Mogadishu often occur in broad daylight and amidst many people, without anyone intervening, trying to stop the perpetrator(s) or wanting to assist the authorities in identifying the person(s). According to the source, this reflects the fear most people in Mogadishu have for al-Shabaab and that al-Shabaab can consequently kill whoever they want without passers-by intervening.

The local sources Landinfo met during the trip in May 2022 also emphasised that al-Shabaab does not have free reign in Mogadishu. The sources substantiated this by pointing out that government forces have a presence in all the city's districts/neighbourhoods and that they are hunting for al-Shabaab members, partly through road checkpoints and various security operations. In other words, al-Shabaab cannot do as they please.

For example, sources D and E (meeting in Mogadishu, May 2022) emphasised in this context that al-Shabaab does not recruit new recruits in Mogadishu, even if some people in the city join the organisation, typically through family members or friends,²³ by personally seeking out al-Shabaab outside Mogadishu.²⁴

Landinfo's sources in Mogadishu, both in May 2022 and during previous fact-finding missions, are also determined that al-Shabaab's members, supporters and resources in Mogadishu are limited, and that the organisation must therefore prioritize what it spends resources on. This is supported in part by the fact that there is no information to suggest that al-Shabaab actively seeks out or kills defectors in Mogadishu, even though al-Shabaab does not formally accept members leaving the organisation (see Landinfo 2015b).²⁵ The sources we met in May 2022 all expressed in this context that al-Shabaab in Mogadishu does not normally care about the things that they would crack down on in areas that are under their control. For example, source G (meeting in Mogadishu, May 2022) pointed out in this context that playing football, which al-Shabaab forbids, is a common sight even in the outskirts of Mogadishu. According to the sources,

²² A Landinfo response on reactions against people suspected of having ties to al-Shabaab is being prepared.

²³ As with previous trips, the sources we met this time also emphasised that many families have members on both sides, i.e. both in al-Shabaab and within the government, and that the family members assist each other across these dividing lines.

²⁴ A separate report on recruitment to al-Shabaab is being prepared.

²⁵ An update of the report on defectors is being prepared. The update is largely based on conversations with sources during fact-finding missions to Mogadishu in February 2019 and May 2022. However, the information from these sources does not imply any change to the main content of the report.

however, what al-Shabaab has become more concerned with in Mogadishu in recent years is financial gain.

Collection of “taxes”

The fact that al-Shabaab demands “taxes” from various business enterprises in Mogadishu has been a long-known phenomenon. Even when Landinfo visited the city in February 2012, a prominent businessman in Hamar Weyne, a district that has never been under al-Shabaab’s control, explained that the organisation demanded money from him. Local sources have continued to refer to such money collection in talks with Landinfo during the years after this. During the fact-finding missions in May 2022, all of the local sources also indicated that al-Shabaab demands payment from businesspeople in the city. According to the sources, the collection does not normally take place physically, but through mobile phones, which in turn supports that al-Shabaab does not need to have a physical presence in Mogadishu to influence people who live there.

When asked how widespread the collection of money is, the sources gave the impression that it is primarily companies that transport goods in and out of Mogadishu, as well as larger businesses, that are pressured for money. All of the local sources designated the Bakara area²⁶ as a core area for such collection from al-Shabaab. Panel of Experts on Somalia (2021, p. 20) indicates that it is particularly companies and persons who export and import via the port in Mogadishu who are pressured for money by al-Shabaab. According to source A, many aid organisations with offices in Mogadishu also covertly pay money to al-Shabaab in order to be able to provide aid. Some sources also expressed that some hotels pay protection money to al-Shabaab.

As the organisation does not operate openly, it is difficult to assess how extensive al-Shabaab’s tax collection in Mogadishu actually is (see also the Hiraal Institute 2020). Several of Landinfo’s local sources in Mogadishu have also indicated in this context that other criminal actors can extort money from people by pretending to be al-Shabaab.

The sources agreed that people who refuse to pay al-Shabaab risk reactions, but at the same time explained that in many cases there is room for negotiation with the organisation regarding the size of the payment. Hiraal Institute (2020, p. 6) indicates that people who do not pay risk having to close the business, flee or be killed. The sources emphasise that therefore most people pay. It is unclear to what extent al-Shabaab attacks in Mogadishu are linked to the collection of “taxes”.

²⁶ Bakara is a large commercial area comprising many streets and buildings. Most of this market and business area is in the district/neighbourhood of Hawl Wadag, but a small part extends into Hodan.

Sources G and H also indicated that in recent years al-Shabaab has started investing in real estate and in the rental market in Mogadishu through intermediaries.

Residents continue to use al-Shabaab courts outside the city

Although most people fear al-Shabaab, the local sources indicate that residents of the city, even with ties to the government, still go to al-Shabaab courts in Lower and Middle Shabelle to settle property disputes, as the government courts are thoroughly corrupt (see also Landinfo 2018, p. 12-13). For some, al-Shabaab thus represents an alternative to the authorities for obtaining justice in a society where clan affiliation and corruption are of such significance. When asked to what extent al-Shabaab's judgments are followed in Mogadishu, the sources indicated that most people fear reactions from al-Shabaab if they do not do as they are told.

The Islamic State (IS) has very limited influence

As indicated above, IS is or is believed to be behind some attacks against government forces and businesspeople in Mogadishu (a total of 14 recorded attacks in 18 months). The sources Landinfo spoke to in May 2022 agreed that IS is behind some attacks in Mogadishu, but that the organisation has very limited influence in the city.

According to source A (meeting in Mogadishu, May 2022), the IS attacks on government forces are intended to “maintain visibility”, while the attacks against businesspeople are due to IS trying to collect “taxes” from them. The latter is substantiated by ACLED (2022). Source C (meeting in Mogadishu, May 2022) also indicated that IS tries to collect taxes from businesspeople in the Bakara area. The source also indicated in this context that businesspeople in the Bakara area had closed their shops for a few days in January 2022 in protest against the tax collection (see also Keymedia Online 2022). The extent to which IS actually succeeds in collecting taxes from businesspeople in Mogadishu seems unclear.

The “Green Zone” primarily refers to the airport area

Some sources refer to a so-called “Green Zone” in Mogadishu. The term has military origin and usually refers to a perimeter that is considered safer than the area outside it (“red zone”). According to Landinfo's understanding, in Mogadishu this term primarily refers to the airport area, including the ATMIS and

UN camp located there. Source I (email 12 July 2022), source J (phone conversation 15 July 2022) and various news articles share this understanding (see, for example, Jalloh 2020). As mentioned in the introduction, the airport area is blocked off from the rest of the city through a series of road checkpoints and physical barriers, and ordinary Somalis do not generally have access there.

Source C and source G (meetings in Mogadishu, May 2022) indicated that some people in Mogadishu also use the term “Green Zone” for other parts of the city than the airport area. The sources indicated that the government has blocked several minor roads and established a number of vehicle checkpoints to protect various areas from attacks. According to the sources, this has resulted in a decrease in the number of major attacks in the areas in question.²⁷ The sources emphasised that it is only vehicles that are checked for bombs and other weapons. According to the sources, pedestrians are not checked and can freely pass the checkpoints. There is thus no question of being physically separated into different parts of the city, as is the case with the airport area. Landinfo has tried to get clarity on exactly which areas fall under this use of the term “Green Zone”, but the information from the sources does not completely coincide. In Landinfo’s assessment, this substantiates that this is a more informal and fluid use of the term.

²⁷ The sources also explained that the vehicle checkpoints create long and time-consuming queues. Many travellers therefore take a taxi or tuk-tuk to a checkpoint, pass it on foot, then take another taxi or tuk-tuk from there. Several of the sources Landinfo met indicated that they had done precisely this in order to meet us.

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Oral sources

- Source A, representative of an international organisation, meeting in Mogadishu, 29 May 2022
- Source B, local representative of an international organisation, meeting in Mogadishu, 29 May 2022
- Source C, local security officer for an international organisation and former security officer for a hotel in Mogadishu, meeting in Mogadishu, 29 May 2022
- Source D, local representative of an international organisation, meeting in Mogadishu, 30 May 2022
- Source E, local representative of an international organisation, meeting in Mogadishu, 30 May 2022
- Source F, employee at a local hawala office, meeting in Mogadishu, 30 May 2022
- Source G, local resource person, meeting in Mogadishu, 30 May 2022 and phone conversation 14 July 2022
- Source H, local representative of an international organisation, meeting in Mogadishu, 30 May 2022
- Source I, local security officer for an international organisation in Mogadishu, email 12 July 2022
- Source J, local resource person in Mogadishu, phone conversation 15 July 2022

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