



SOMALIA

WHAT HAPPENED IN OCTOBER?

The government offensive against Al-Shabaab continued in Hiraan, Middle Shabelle and Galgaduud regions, as the group hit back with a **wave of suicide attacks**, including its most deadly in five years. The federal government and member state leaders pledged better coordination.

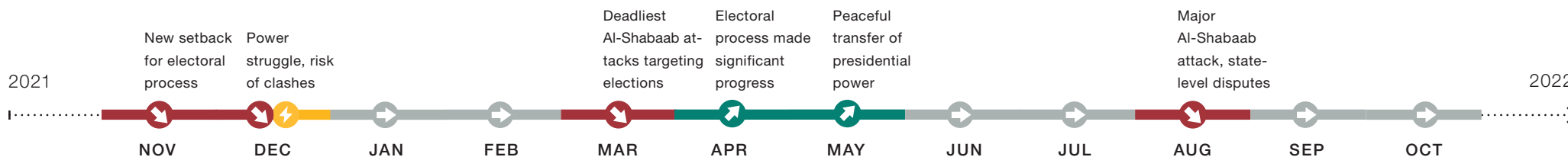
WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The government has made **significant progress** in uprooting Al-Shabaab from parts of central Somalia, but the group's resistance continues to exact a **heavy toll**. In order to maintain momentum against Al-Shabaab, Mogadishu has taken steps toward coordination with member states.

SEPTEMBER TRENDS

As a **large-scale offensive against Al-Shabaab** by local clan militias and government forces gained ground, the UN and others warned of looming famine in the southern Bay region. Tensions between Mogadishu and federal member states persisted over resource-sharing.

TRENDS TIMELINE



1 Government consolidated gains and expanded offensive against Al-Shabaab

A Somali **government offensive against Al-Shabaab**, backed by local clan militias and international partners, expanded from Hiraan to Middle Shabelle and Galgaduud regions in central Somalia. Somali government and local forces focused on clearing towns and supply routes.

Al-Shabaab resistance has varied. Government forces captured Jicibow in Hiraan on 9 October after heavy fighting and Qayib in Galgaduud on 25 October. Masjid Ali Gaduud in Middle Shabelle also became a major flashpoint in late October, before falling to government forces.

2 Al-Shabaab responded with violence in government areas

In Hiraan, militants detonated three car bombs in Beledweyne city on 3 October, and on 19 October destroyed bridges in Buloburte and Jalalaqsi towns. Al-Shabaab attacked a hotel in Kismayo city on 23 October.

On 29 October, Al-Shabaab militants detonated two car bombs in the capital Mogadishu, killing more than 100. This **marked the highest civilian death toll** from an Al-Shabaab attack since 2017. The group afterward blamed the government and offered a rare apology to the victims.

3 Government and member states reached agreement

The federal government and member states met in Mogadishu 27-31 October, the third meeting since President Mohamed Sheikh Mohamud returned to power in May 2022. The federal government has prioritised cordial relations, in order to maintain focus on the fight against Al-Shabaab.

The **leaders agreed** to coordinate military operations, called for relief for drought-affected populations and committed to finalising the provisional constitution and transitioning to a multiparty election system. Importantly, they also agreed to regular future meetings to follow up.

WHAT TO WATCH

The government wants to expand the **current offensive** to areas outside central Somalia, which will require steady cooperation with member states. Al-Shabaab resistance, including large-scale attacks in government-held urban areas, will likely continue.

Ongoing insecurity complicates the **drought response** at a time when hundreds of thousands face starvation. With the government focused on expanding military operations and the prospect of a fifth failed rainy season, the humanitarian situation could deteriorate further, especially in the **Bay region**.

