



SOMALIA

WHAT HAPPENED IN APRIL?

The second phase of the military offensive against Al-Shabaab, focusing on southern regions, got off to a slow start. **Central regions continued to be the main theatre of operations.** The humanitarian situation remained dire amid **extreme weather events** and conflict.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The offensive against Al-Shabaab has run out of steam, with limited gains in central Somalia and little progress in southern regions. Al-Shabaab continues to mount resistance, while the government is soliciting an **influx of troops from regional partners to regain momentum.**

MARCH TRENDS

President Mohamud officially announced the **second phase of the offensive** against Al-Shabaab, concentrating on the southern states of Jubaland and South West, where the group's **strongholds are located**; militants continued to resist, notably in recovered areas in central regions.

1 ➡ Expansion of anti-Al-Shabaab operations off to slow start

Central regions remained the focus of operations. **In Galmudug state's Galgaduud region, Ceel Buur is the only major town still under Al-Shabaab's control** after government forces recaptured Galcad town and Bud Bud village on 7 and 15 April, respectively.

Progress in the south was limited. Security forces on 17 April recaptured several small villages north of Baidoa city in Bay region in South West state. **Preparations for the offensive continued in Jubaland state** with President Ahmed Madobe's 10 April visit to recently-recovered Janay Abdalle town.

2 ➡ Planning underway to regionally tackle Al-Shabaab's resistance

Al-Shabaab continued to **challenge the government's efforts to project its authority.** In Galgaduud, militants on 19 April launched a raid on a military base near Bud Bud, and on 22 April attacked Masagawaay village, causing an unconfirmed number of casualties.

After Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti in February agreed to support Somali forces in fighting Al-Shabaab, a meeting held in early April focused on detailing **plans for a joint regional offensive.**

3 ➡ UN highlighted humanitarian crisis amid prolonged drought

During a visit to Somalia, the UN Secretary General António Guterres on 11-12 April called for **increased support for the UN's 2023 humanitarian response plan** as the country grapples with the effects of extreme weather events and conflict.

The current rainy season is expected to see **below average rainfall** for an unprecedented sixth consecutive time, while **flooding** in the southern Gedo and Bay regions **displaced 140,000** people between mid-March and mid-April.

WHAT TO WATCH

Government-led anti-Al-Shabaab operations may begin in southern Somalia. Even as government forces close in on Ceel Buur, Al-Shabaab retains a presence in rural areas of central Somalia, and likely will seek to **exploit government vulnerabilities** to continue attacks.

Flooding is likely to affect parts of Somalia as the Gu rainy season continues, even as IDPs elsewhere, notably around Baidoa, continue to suffer from **food shortages.**



TRENDS TIMELINE

