



# SOMALIA

## WHAT HAPPENED IN MAY?

Al-Shabaab launched its largest attack on the African Union military mission in a year, leaving **at least several dozen dead**. Meanwhile, Puntland state conducted local elections amid a tense political climate, and political leaders charted a path toward national elections.

## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Al-Shabaab is demonstrating its potency as the government struggles to initiate the second phase of an anti-insurgency offensive. Puntland politics remain tense, while a **deal to overhaul the national election process** (which implies constitutional changes) hangs in the balance.

## APRIL TRENDS

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.

### 1🔴 Al-Shabaab conducted major attacks on military targets

On 26 May, Al-Shabaab launched its **largest attack on the African Union mission since May 2022**. The group claimed killing over 200 soldiers from the mission's Ugandan contingent at Buulo Mareer base, Lower Shabelle region (South West state). Uganda later confirmed losing 54 troops.

Al-Shabaab further attacked Somali forces at Massagaweyne village, Galguduud region (Galmudug state) on 30 May. This was the second major attack there since the government recovered the area in January 2023.

### 2🟢 Puntland held local vote despite tensions

Puntland held much-anticipated local council elections on 25 May. Voting in three districts was postponed due to tensions between the government and some political opposition, who expressed concerns about voting modalities and their implications for future elections.

Election day passed smoothly following a **last-minute agreement** between the government and opposing parties, but the lead-up was contentious. **Clashes** between government and opposition forces on 16 May **killed three** near Garowe airport.

### 3🟡 Leaders agreed to reshape political system

On 27 May, the National Consultative Council (NCC), comprising the leaders of member states and the federal government, issued a communique about moving Somalia toward **universal suffrage elections** from its current indirect system.

The communique includes **contentious aspects** that imply constitutional changes, such as the abolition of the parliamentary system and extension of member state terms so that their elections would be held concurrently in November 2024. President Mohamud later clarified that the NCC agreement is **subject to parliamentary approval**.

## WHAT TO WATCH

The government will likely attempt to push ahead a second phase of offensive operations against Al-Shabaab as the Gu rainy season concludes around the end of June.

**Pressure will mount on Puntland** to announce next steps in its electoral process, following the conclusion of district council elections.

The NCC agreement will be presented in parliament for approval, but has already faced opposition from some key political figures and is likely to **spark fierce political debate**.



## TRENDS TIMELINE

