



SOMALIA

WHAT HAPPENED?

Authorities extended the Lower House elections deadline amid **continued manipulation of the process**, with state and federal leaders manoeuvring to install loyalists in parliamentary seats. Voting moved to **secondary locations** despite localised tensions. Al-Shabaab **increased attacks** to derail the process.

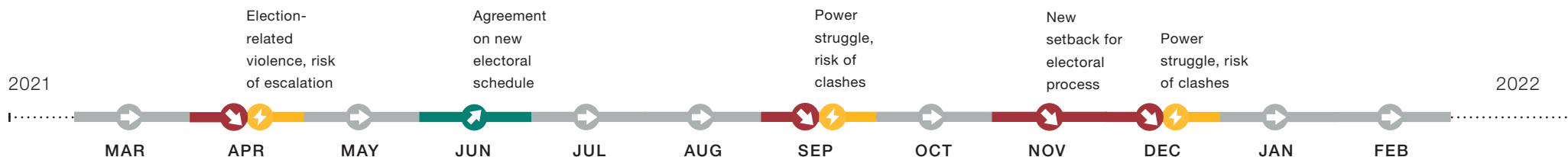
WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Elevated levels of interference and uncertainty over completion of the high-stakes electoral process could lead to **contested results** across several constituencies, fuelling **further political instability**, which Al-Shabaab could exploit.

JANUARY TRENDS

As Somalia's electoral process moved ahead, the **power struggle** between President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmajo" and Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble persisted. Meanwhile, **tensions** ran high in Puntland and Hirshabelle states and **Al-Shabaab** continued to extend its territorial reach.

TRENDS TIMELINE



1 → Lower House elections deadline extended

Authorities extended the 25 February Lower House elections deadline to 15 March as federal and member state leaders focused on installing loyalists as future members of parliament.

Despite the federal electoral commission's decision to suspend voting for a seat in **Beledweyne** (Hirshabelle state), the state commission organised the vote, with former intelligence chief Fahad Yasin winning the contest. The federal commission then nullified the selection, raising questions about the hierarchy between federal and state commissions and their respective responsibilities.

2 → Voting in secondary locations began

The first vote outside state capitals took place on 9-10 February in **Barawe** city in South West state. Voting also began in **Beledweyne** on 20 February despite persistent tensions there: on 17 February, a clash between the federal special police (Haramcad) and local police forces left a **local commander dead**.

On 13 February, Jubaland state officials said elections cannot take place under current conditions in **Garbaharey** city, citing continued political and security interference from Mogadishu.

3 ↘ Al-Shabaab stepped up attacks on electoral premises and officials

Mortar attacks temporarily **disrupted voting in Barawe** on 9 February, while a **suicide blast in Beledweyne** killed at least thirteen people, including three parliamentary candidates, on 19 February.

In the capital Mogadishu, a suicide attack on a convoy of Somaliland election delegates killed eight people on 10 February. Six days later, in its **most coordinated raids in Mogadishu** in at least a year, Al-Shabaab targeted multiple police stations, security checkpoints and government officials, **killing a dozen people**.

WHAT TO WATCH

Meeting the 15 March deadline for Lower House elections may prove difficult. Interference in seat selection is provoking **localised resistance**. A political agreement among Jubaland, federal government and Gedo officials is needed to conduct polls for Garbaharey.

With a **quorum** in the Lower House, some political leaders may want to **select parliamentary speakers and the president** prior to filling all open seats. This would likely spark resistance from communities that have not finalised selections.

