



# SOMALIA

## WHAT HAPPENED?

Al-Shabaab launched its **deadliest attack yet** to disrupt the election process and **breached Mogadishu's airport perimeter** for the first time since 2014. Authorities failed to conclude Lower House elections despite progress and the African Union started reconfiguring its peacekeeping mission.

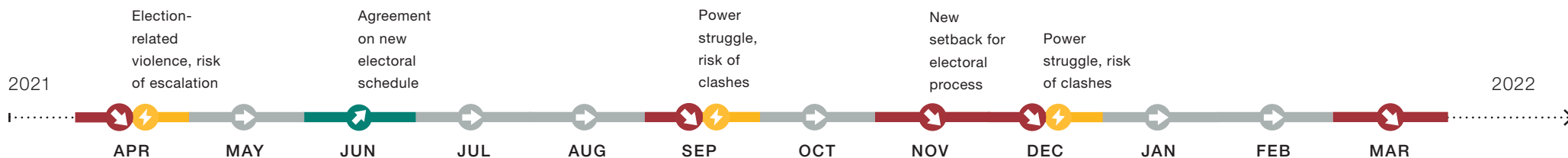
## WHY DOES IT MATTER?

It is unclear how authorities will conclude the protracted electoral cycle as the **federal government is divided** on next steps. Al-Shabaab could exploit the situation to launch **further attacks**.

## FEBRUARY TRENDS

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.

## TRENDS TIMELINE



### 1 ↘ Al-Shabaab launched large-scale attacks on strategic locations

On 23 March, Al-Shabaab's **twin suicide attacks** on an election venue in Hirshabelle state's Beledweyne city killed **at least 48 people** including MP Amina Mohamed Abdi. On the same day, militants breached Mogadishu's Halane Airport perimeter for the first time since 2014, killing at least six people, including five foreign nationals.

On 7 and 15 March, Al-Shabaab also killed two electoral delegates in the Lower Shabelle region (South West State) and in Mogadishu, respectively.

### 2 ↘ Elections missed deadline and security concerns rose

South West, Galmudug and Puntland states concluded Lower House elections, but 26 seats remained unfilled in Jubaland and Hirshabelle states by late March.

Tensions over election security and modalities for completing the electoral cycle reached a fever pitch. The federal electoral body splintered over the procedure to certify state-level parliamentary selections. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble revealed on 30 March that he had received death threats, raising concerns about the targeting of politicians as the election cycle nears completion.

### 3 → African Union Mission transition started

On 31 March, the UN Security Council endorsed the African Union (AU) Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) to replace the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The UN resolution mandated ATMIS to take action against al-Qaeda and the Islamic State and conduct a phased handover of security responsibilities to Somalia's government within 33 months.

The new mission represents the conclusion of complex and difficult negotiations involving the Somali government, the AU and the UN; questions about funding and implementation remain.

## WHAT TO WATCH

The **14 April deadline** to swear in MPs will be challenging to meet. **How to resolve selection issues for the Gedo region** in Jubaland remains unclear, while the Prime Minister and President differ on which institutions have the authority to decide on the next steps. Unilateral action by either the President or Prime Minister could spark clashes.

Recent **Al-Shabaab violence** has further polarised politics, with suspicion between the opposition and government rising to high levels.

