

SOMALIA

WHAT HAPPENED?

Amid an escalating power struggle between President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed “Farmajo” and Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble, rival security forces came close to blows in early September, in scenes that echoed [April’s clash](#) between Farmajo loyalists and opponents.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Tensions between the country’s political leaders complicate the path to long-overdue indirect elections, narrowing prospects for resolving **Somalia’s worst political crisis in years**. The country risks descending into violence if the two leaders continue to undermine each other.

AUGUST’S TRENDS

Somalia’s electoral cycle remained behind schedule, but Upper House elections began, and member states agreed with Roble on a process for the Lower House. Meanwhile, relations between Farmajo and Roble soured. Al-Shabaab launched offensives in Mudug region (Galmudug state).

Farmajo-Roble rift sparked military standoff

Following an intelligence agent’s unexplained murder, Roble **suspended the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) chief**, leading both Roble and Farmajo to appoint their own replacements. When Farmajo’s appointee took control of NISA headquarters on 8 September, rival security forces appeared headed for a showdown.

Even after those forces stood down, further tit-for-tat measures kept tensions high. Roble replaced the security minister – who oversees NISA – and took control over government finances, while Farmajo attempted to suspend Roble’s powers.

Electoral process remained behind schedule

With elections for the legislature’s Upper House still incomplete, authorities **extended the timeline** for the selection of Lower House representatives through November without specifying a new date for the presidential election, which had been scheduled for 10 October.

Upper House Speaker Abdi Hashi Abdullahi and Deputy Prime Minister Mahdi Guled made progress in resolving their dispute over Somaliland’s electoral process, paving the way for Somaliland delegates to elect, in late September, eleven senators to serve in the next federal parliament.

Al-Shabaab continued to launch attacks

Two suspected Al-Shabaab suicide attacks in Mogadishu – one near the Halane compound, which hosts UN and other diplomatic facilities, and the other near the president’s residence – **killed at least twenty people**.

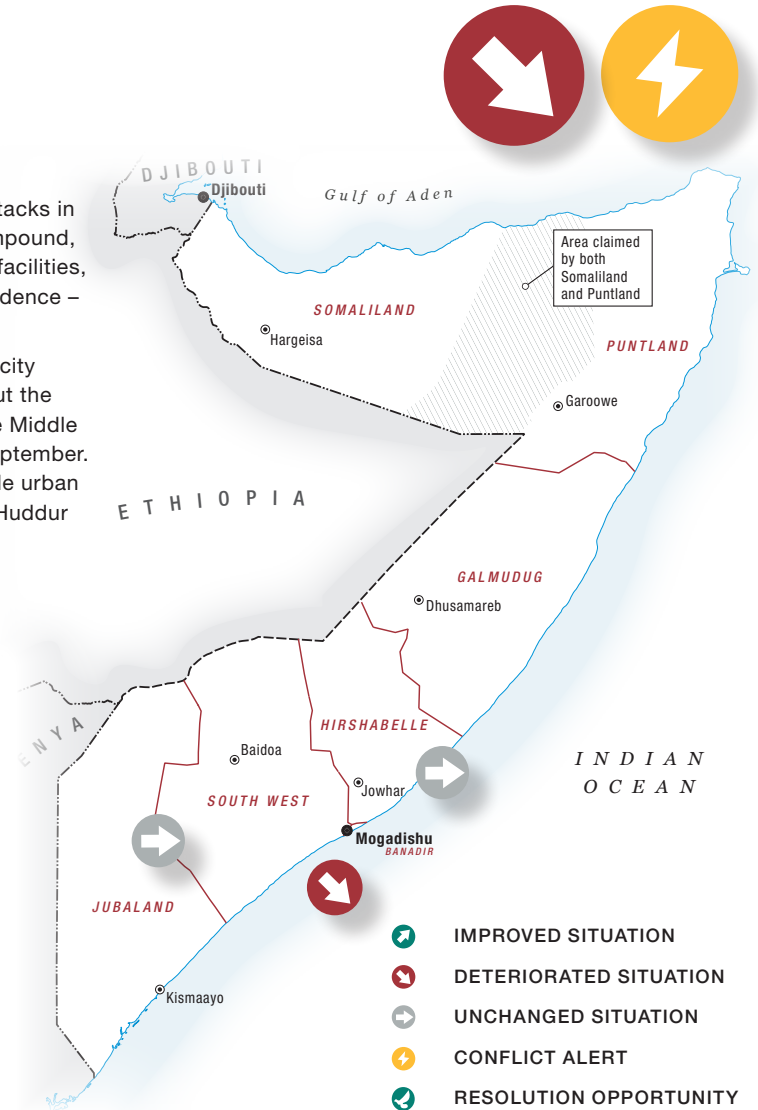
The group also demonstrated its capacity to undertake mortar attacks throughout the country, with incidents recorded in the Middle Shabelle, Gedo and Bari regions in September. Al-Shabaab also continued to blockade urban centres in the Bakool region, notably Huddur and Wajid, causing food shortages.

WHAT TO WATCH

If Farmajo and Roble do not take **de-escalation measures**, they risk dragging the country into further violence.

Delays in initiating the Lower House elections – Jubaland and Galmudug state need to complete their **Upper House selection** first – may also raise tensions.

If not properly addressed before Lower House elections, simmering grievances over local power-sharing arrangements in **Galgaduud, Hiraaan and Gedo regions** could also become flashpoints of conflict.



TRENDS TIMELINE

