

CCA 2021 – Country Context Update

The Common Country Analysis (CCA) is a joint UN analytical document underpinning the UN Cooperation Framework for Somalia. It provides an analysis of changes in the development landscape vis-à-vis the SDGs. An annual update of the CCA is mandatory. But there is flexibility in the approach used to make it as useful as possible for the UN country team. The 2021 CCA update consists of an update of the country context (chapter 3 in the 2020 CCA) with contributions from relevant UN agencies and UNSOM based on key internal and external sources. The country context update captures significant developments in the overall context and includes newly available data.

Political Dynamics

There have been consecutive delays in the indirect parliamentary and presidential elections, which has affected the country's broader stability, security, and developmental trajectory. The electoral process has been mired by controversy. Further delays and tensions are therefore not unlikely.

- * The country faced an unprecedented constitutional crisis early this year when the President and Federal Member States (FMS) leaders were unable to agree on the terms of a vote before his term lapsed in February. Tensions were mounting following the House of the People's attempt in April to extend the current administration's term by two years. This triggered a political backlash, including tensions with the Somali National Army (SNA) along clan lines and the mobilization of associated clan militia. With international efforts, the situation was de-escalated and led to a political agreement on 27 May, which transferred leadership of the process for the indirect elections to the Prime Minister.
- * Elections to the Upper House were held between 27 July and 13 November 2021 in which women were elected to 14 of 54 seats, representing 26 per cent. This marks a slight increase in women's representation from 24 per cent in 2016. The elections for the House of the People commenced on 1 November 2021. As of 31 December 2021, 34 of 275 seats including nine seats for women were elected. The latest iteration of the electoral calendar aims to conclude the House of the People processes by 25 February 2022, with the presidential election then anticipated shortly after. However, the electoral process has been mired by controversy. Further delays and tensions are therefore not unlikely. Forty-eight per cent of the Upper House seats were filled uncontested after challengers withdrew immediately before the vote, while elections for the House of the People have faced numerous allegations of political interference.
- * Despite the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and FMS leaders' public commitment to safeguarding the 30 per cent quota for women in parliament, such as the 27 September 2020 Dusamareb agreement and followed by the 27 May 2021 Benadir summit, there is no mechanism in place to ensure its implementation in the House of the People elections. International and national advocacy efforts are ongoing, urging leaders to reserve 30 per cent seats in both the houses for women.

Conflict Dynamics

Efforts by the Somali government to strengthen security and stability, in cooperation with international partners, have been hampered due to a number of factors including: the slow progress in Somalia's electoral process; challenges with capacity building, force generation, and internal cohesion of the Somali Security Forces (SSF) as well as key public services; disagreements over the nature and scope of the AMISOM post-2021 mission; an increasingly active Al-Shabaab; and intermittent violent clan clashes.

- * Offensive joint SNA-AMISOM operations against Al-Shabaab have overall declined since the recovery of Janale in Lower Shabelle in March 2020 as part of Operation Badbaado I. Disagreements between the key parties led to delays in the finalisation of AMISOM's reconfiguration post-2021.¹
- * With regards to the SSF, they continue to lack sufficient capacity to clear and hold towns under Al-Shabaab control, as well as to halt Al-Shabaab expansion, especially in south and central Somalia (South-West, Galmudug and Hirshabelle). Implementation of the revised Somalia transition plan, to handover full security responsibilities to the SSF and ensure public service delivery such as the provision of justice, remains significantly behind schedule mainly due to force generation challenges and limited public service capabilities.
- * In 2021, there was an increase in child recruitment compared to 2020 by Al-Shabaab – and to a lesser extent by clan militias. Al-Shabaab's illicit taxation of services, goods, transportation, trade, and land is continuing – if not growing, facilitated by the group's partial control and influence over critical main supply routes connecting Mogadishu to other key cities. Al-Shabaab also made attempts to expand influence, control, and territory in south and central Somalia,² including by exploiting political fragilities at different levels and providing some level of predictability and consistency in terms of illicit taxation, justice provision, and security, albeit often with coercion.³
- * Furthermore, clashes between Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) and FGS and Galmudug security forces in October 2021 ended with a negotiated withdrawal of ASWJ from the central town of Guriel, but only after large numbers of civilians had been displaced and homes destroyed. The underlying issue of power sharing remains unresolved and could lead to renewed fighting in absence of political dialogue. It has also enabled Al-Shabaab's expansion to the vicinity of Galmudug's capital Dhusamareb and neighbouring parts of the Hiran region.
- * In addition, armed clashes between rival factions of the Puntland security forces broke out in Bossaso on 21 December 2021. Scores of combatants and civilians were killed, with many more injured, causing population displacement. Tensions had been building since the commander of the Puntland Security Forces had refused to vacate his post following President Deni's appointment of his replacement. Efforts to resolve the dispute through dialogue failed and violence ensued. By month's end, the security situation stabilized, and dialogue resumed. Concerns increased that the situation would distract from efforts to deny operational space to Al-Shabaab and ISIS.

Human Rights

The protection of civilians remains a significant human rights concern in Somalia due to continued armed conflict and insecurity, with Al-Shabaab as the main perpetrator of civilian casualties in the country. The prolonged political stalemate over the electoral process has also impacted the SSF and its capacity to provide protection and security to the civilian population.

- * In 2021, the UN recorded 1,161 civilian casualties (526 killed and 635 injured), which is a 3 per cent decrease compared to 2020 (1,199). Using rounded numbers, 59 per cent was attributed to Al-Shabaab, followed by 16 per cent to unidentified perpetrators, 15 per cent to state security forces, 7 per cent to clan militias, 2 per cent to AMISOM, and 1 per cent to others.
- * In 2021, the UN recorded 622 civilian casualties (246 killed and 376 wounded) caused by Improvised Explosive Device (IED) incidents, which is a 37 per cent increase compared to 2020 (453). This is due to the increased use of Person Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (PBIEDs) in densely populated

¹ ICG, *Reforming the AU Mission in Somalia*, November 2021.

² UNSCR, *Panel of Experts Report*, October 2021.

³ Michael Keating and Matt Waldman, *War and Peace in Somalia*, 2019.

areas. Civilians continue to be disproportionately affected by IED incidents, despite rarely being assessed as the intended target of such attacks.

- * In 2021, the UN verified that 3,340 children were victims of grave violations, which is a 12 per cent decrease compared to 2020 (3,810). This includes children who were victims of recruitment (1,176), abduction (1,046), killing and maiming (808), and rape and other sexual violence such as forced marriage and attempted rape (310).⁴
- * In 2021, Somalia's human rights record was reviewed during the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review. Somalia accepted 246 of 273 recommendations for the protection and promotion of the human rights of all citizens and committed to implementing them. Those not accepted included the death penalty, LGBT rights, apostasy, and blasphemy.⁵
- * In 2021, the Minister of Defence approved a human rights policy for the SNA. However, the behaviour of elements of the SNA continues to raise concerns. For instance, the alleged participation of the SNA in clan conflicts and the use of state-owned resources against specific clans violate the rights of civilians but also endangers the legitimacy of state authority in the eyes of the affected communities.
- * Somalia's Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development launched the National Disability Agency in July 2021.

Humanitarian Situation

Protracted conflict and insecurity in south and central Somalia, compounded by the effects of climate change, is driving displacement while most of the population remains below the poverty line and struggles to meet basic needs.

- * In 2022, an estimated 7.7 million people, out of an estimated total population of 15.7 million,⁶ will require humanitarian assistance and protection with women and children bearing the brunt of the crisis. This is 2.5 million more people than was estimated for 2021.
- * In the first six months of 2022, an estimated 1,415,000 people may be displaced by the historically extreme drought affecting 90 per cent of the country. Conditions are expected to worsen leading to severe water shortages, crop failures, and high levels of livestock migration and deaths.⁷
- * In 2022, an estimated 280,000 additional people will be displaced due to conflict and 450,000 additional people by floods. An estimated 2.9 million people are already internally displaced.
- * In 2022, an estimated 1.2 million children under 5 years of age are likely to be acutely malnourished, nearly 300,000 of whom are projected to be severely malnourished and may be at risk of dying without immediate treatment.
- * In 2022, an estimated 4.6 million people across Somalia are expected to face food insecurity in terms of consumption gaps or depletion of livelihood assets indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) in the absence of humanitarian assistance.⁸
- * An estimated 71 per cent of the population is now living below the poverty line, particularly in rural areas and areas where access remains a challenge, which is slightly higher than in 2020. The combined impact of recurring stress factors has deepened and widened poverty.⁹

Economic Development

⁴ Somalia Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting.

⁵ OHCHR, *Universal Periodic Review Somalia*, May 2021.

⁶ Note that a country-wide census is planned for 2022.

⁷ IOM, *DTM Drought Analysis*, January 2022.

⁸ <https://fews.net/east-africa/somalia/food-security-outlook/october-2021>, accessed in December 2021.

⁹ OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview*, October 2021.

Somalia is facing multiple crises that affect economic development, which include protracted conflict, severe floods and droughts as well as COVID-19. The country also remains highly dependent on remittances and aid. However, private sector growth – primarily in urbanized areas – is a positive sign as well as increased firm’ sales and lending to firms.

- * In 2021, growth projections are 2.3 per cent after a triple crisis of COVID-19, locust infestation and floods caused the economy to contract by 1.5 per cent in 2020, while prices are broadly stable with average inflation of 3.4 per cent compared to 3.0 per cent in 2020.
- * In 2021, a positive development has been the private sector growth, particularly in urbanized areas, supported by rising imports of consumer goods and construction materials as well as higher credit availability.
- * In 2021, compared to 2020, firms experienced an increase in sales, a decline in the temporary closure of businesses, and the share of firms facing liquidity and cash flow issues has reduced from 49 per cent to 37 per cent.
- * In 2021, access to external finance is indicated to be the most desired policy support for the private sector. The share of firms using bank loans to finance cash flow shortages continued to grow, yet, the percentage of firms that have been experiencing constraints in accessing credit has reduced from 68 per cent to 51 per cent.
- * In 2021, over 91 per cent of firms started or increased online business activities, as adjustments to production and ways of delivering goods and services are the most common coping mechanisms to deal with the impact of COVID-19.¹⁰
- * In 2021, livestock exports recovered to pre-COVID-19 levels by the diversification of exports to the Gulf Cooperation Council, but the drought may affect future livestock production – goods exports increased close to pre-COVID-19 levels.
- * In 2021, domestic resource mobilization performance remains sluggish and went up by 7 per cent compared to the same period in 2020. Non-tax revenue in particular is underperforming and has fallen by 14 per cent compared to 2020.¹¹
- * Somalia remains highly dependent on aid and remittances with the diaspora community sending home approximately USD 1.4 billion and aid totalling around USD 2 billion, which combined represents a large part of GDP.¹²

¹⁰ UNIDO/IFC/MoCI, *Impact of COVID-19 on firms in Somalia*, December 2021.

¹¹ World Bank, *Somalia Economic Monitoring Quarter 3*, November 2021.

¹² FGS, *Budget Strategy Paper FY2021*, August 2020.