Beat: News

Somalia Crisiswatch Digest August 2022

ReliefWeb Press Release

New York City, 15.09.2022, 17:41 Time

ARAC International Stratcom - Somalia Crisiswatch Digest August 2022
Format: Infographic
Source: ICG | Posted:14 Sep 2022 | Originally published:14 Sep 2022

PDF download:
https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/somalia-august-2022.pdf

WHAT HAPPENED IN AUGUST?

Al-Shabaab killed more than twenty people in its first major assault in the capital Mogadishu since President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's return to power. A new government formed, and tensions rose over possible presidential term extensions in South West and Jubaland states.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

President Mohamud's honeymoon period is over. Al-Shabaab's attack on the capital has eroded the security forces' confidence, while state-level term extensions are straining the relationship between Mogadishu and federal member states, providing an early test for Mohamud's reconciliation agenda.

JULY TRENDS

President Mohamud went on a regional tour to reset foreign policy. At home, a deadly firefight erupted between Puntland state security units, while Al-Shabaab militants targeted Ethiopian police units near and across the border with Ethiopia.

Deadly Al-Shabaab assault hit Mogadishu

On 19 August, Al-Shabaab militants launched a complex attack on Mogadishu's Hayat hotel, killing at least 21 people during a 30-hour siege. Mohamud in following hours declared an "all-out war" against the jihadist group. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab's late July incursion into Ethiopia brought about a swift reaction. In early August, Ethiopian airstrikes targeted multiple locations in Somalia, while an anti-Al-Shabaab operation by Somali government forces in Hiraan region's Mataban and Mahas districts picked up pace.

WHAT TO WATCH

The government will likely accelerate efforts to counter Al-Shabaab militarily, financially and ideologically to demonstrate it can make progress in the security realm. The proliferation of one-year term extensions may become a political challenge if they incite unrest within member states, forcing the federal government to intervene in an issue it has thus far avoided. Somalia's humanitarian situation is growing increasingly dire, with internal displacement on the rise due to four consecutive failed rainy seasons.

Source: ReliefWeb via International Crisis Group

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Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-21601/somalia-crisiswatch-digest-august-2022.html

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619