

RENEWED CLASHES IN BAIDOA TRIGGER THE DISPLACEMENT OF MORE THAN 5,600 CIVILIANS AND CAUSE CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

 Displaced Families	 Displaced Individuals	 Cross-border movement	 Deaths	 Injuries	 Incident Date
934	5,604	0	11	86	28 September – 3 October 2026

Background

On 28 September 2026, armed clashes were reported in Baidoa following repeated tensions between forces associated with the former Southwest State administration and the Somali National Army over control of the town. Clashes and related security incidents continued through 3 October 2026. Security incidents were reported in Howlwadag, Isha, Afar Irdoodka, Mursal, Luga Baxsi, Bonkay, Towfiq, Xanano 2, Bakin, the Livestock Market, and surrounding areas. The situation disrupted electricity and communication services, limiting civilians' movement and access to information and essential services.

The clashes and reported conflict resulted in civilian casualties, damage to residential areas, IDP settlements, farmland, public and institutional buildings, and disrupted access to shelter and essential services. Bay Regional Hospital and Bayhaw Hospital reportedly recorded 11 deaths and 86 injuries, including eight deaths reportedly caused by stray bullets near RP Hotel. Southwest University, RP Hotel, two mosques, and three primary and secondary schools also reportedly sustained significant damage. Damage to community structures and shelters has further reduced access to safe and adequate housing, exacerbating the vulnerability of families already affected by displacement and limited access to essential services. Amid fears of continued fighting, approximately 934 households, comprising an estimated 5,604 individuals, reportedly fled their homes and displacement sites in the Wadajir and Berdale neighbourhoods, while others fled to Diinsoor, Qansaxdhere, Burhakaba, Hudur, and Wajid.

Displaced families sought refuge in Berdale, Isha, and Wadajir villages within Baidoa, indicating that the displacement remained within the town. This marked the second major outbreak of violence in Baidoa in less than two weeks. The recurring clashes disrupted livelihoods and essential services, restricted civilian movement, and increased concerns about further insecurity and displacement. Amid the ongoing uncertainty, some households are reportedly considering relocating to other areas in Bay Region, Banadir and Lower Shabelle.

PSMN monitoring indicates that the displaced population comprised 2,348 males and 3,256 females. Of the 5,604 displaced individuals, 699 were children, and women and children accounting for approximately 81 percent of those affected. Seven persons with disabilities (two women and five men) were also identified, some of whom required family assistance to reach safer areas. Older persons and other individuals with mobility limitations or other support needs also faced additional challenges during displacement.

The displacement disrupted children's access to education. Of the 699 displaced children, 319 were enrolled in school before the clashes and experienced interruptions to their attendance and learning, while 380 were already out of school. Damage to three schools, coupled with continued insecurity, may further constrain children's safe access to education. The security situation in Baidoa remains fragile, and further clashes could continue to affect civilian safety, freedom of movement, and access to essential services.

Protection Risks

Civilian Casualties and Exposure to Armed Violence: The primary protection concern remains the risk of civilian death and injury resulting from armed clashes in populated areas of Baidoa. The reported fighting affected medical facilities, religious buildings, residential neighbourhoods, and other civilian infrastructure, exposing residents and displaced populations to harm. Reported casualties, damage to homes and community facilities, and disruptions to essential services underscore the protection risks faced by civilians during hostilities. Further clashes could increase exposure to violence, force additional displacement, and restrict safe movement and access to essential services, particularly for women, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities.

Protection Risks Linked to Reduced Monitoring and Humanitarian Presence: Reduced funding and protection monitoring capacity across Somalia risk limiting the timely identification of emerging protection concerns and the ability to assess the needs of conflict-affected communities. In Baidoa, where repeated clashes have resulted in civilian casualties, infrastructure damage, and new displacement, limited monitoring and field presence could constrain the collection and verification of protection information, identification of individuals with specific needs, and timely referral to available assistance and services. Maintaining adequate protection monitoring and community engagement is therefore important to identify evolving risks, inform evidence-based humanitarian advocacy, and support timely responses to the needs of displaced and conflict-affected populations.

Forced Displacement and Movement Restriction: Renewed armed clashes and concerns about further violence forced approximately 934 households to flee the Wadajir and Berdale neighbourhoods and seek safety elsewhere within Baidoa. Continued insecurity could trigger further displacement and limit safe movement and access to homes, markets, schools, and essential services. Repeated displacement further strains household resources and weakens community support networks. Women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities and female-headed households face particular difficulties moving safely and accessing assistance. This account highlights concerns about gender-based violence (GBV), particularly for women and girls facing displacement, inadequate shelter, limited privacy, and restricted access to protection services. Safe shelter, confidential GBV response services, and accessible referral mechanisms remain important to mitigate these risks and address the specific needs of affected individuals.

Civilian Safety and Protection Risks: Reported civilian casualties and damage to residential areas and community infrastructure highlight the protection challenges facing Baidoa residents amid ongoing insecurity. People in affected neighborhoods remain exposed to risks associated with renewed clashes and conflict-related incidents. Continued insecurity restricts safe movement, disrupts access to essential services, and complicates the safe return of displaced households to their homes. One displaced man stated: *"We left our homes because of insecurity, but the fear of further violence follows us everywhere."* These concerns are particularly significant for people living near affected areas and individuals who may require additional support to reach safety, including older persons, children, and persons with disabilities.

Psychological and Emotional Distress: Repeated exposure to armed clashes, civilian casualties, displacement, and damage to homes and community infrastructure has increased psychological and emotional distress among affected families. Many households were already facing drought, poverty, and previous displacement, and the recent events have further strained their coping capacities. Affected adults may experience persistent fear, exhaustion, and uncertainty, while children may face anxiety, sleep disturbances, and difficulties resuming their education. One displaced man stated: *"We have lost everything repeatedly. Each attempt to rebuild is shattered by renewed conflict, stripping us of our homes and dignity. What remains is constant fear and exhaustion, leaving us without a sense of safety."* Timely psychological first aid, community-based mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and appropriate referral pathways are important to help affected families cope with ongoing uncertainty and support children's well-being and family functioning.

Urgent Humanitarian Needs

Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs): Approximately 934 newly displaced households require emergency shelter assistance and essential household items, particularly families who fled without adequate belongings or whose homes were damaged. Priority needs include tarpaulins or plastic sheeting, shelter materials, blankets, sleeping mats, cooking sets, and other basic household supplies. Assistance should promote safe, dignified living conditions with adequate privacy, lighting, accessibility, weather protection, and reduced overcrowding.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH): The approximately 5,604 displaced individuals across Berdale, Isha, and Wadajir require access to safe drinking water, gender-segregated sanitation facilities, handwashing stations, hygiene kits, and accessible WASH services. Immediate priorities include water-quality monitoring, hygiene promotion, and disease-prevention measures to reduce the risk of cholera, acute watery diarrhoea, and other waterborne diseases. Particular attention should be given to the needs of women and girls, children, older persons, and persons with disabilities when planning and delivering WASH assistance.

Protection Services: The displaced require continued protection monitoring and access to appropriate services. Women and children account for approximately 81 percent of the displaced population. Seven persons with disabilities, including two women and five men, may face additional barriers to safe movement and assistance. Key priorities include protection monitoring, protection desks, case management, identification of individuals with specific needs, child protection services and GBV risk mitigation and response, and safe referrals. Strengthen community-based protection structures to support community engagement, disseminate relevant safety information, identify emerging protection concerns, and facilitate referrals in accordance with informed consent, confidentiality, and the principle of do no harm.

Education Support: Of the 699 displaced children, 319 were enrolled in school before the displacement, while 380 were already out of school. Immediate support is needed to help the 319 enrolled children resume learning, assess the needs of the 380 out-of-school children, and facilitate their enrolment or access to alternative learning opportunities. Priorities include temporary learning spaces, integration into nearby schools, accelerated or community-based learning programmes, learning materials, school supplies, psychosocial support, and child-safeguarding measures. Coordination with education authorities, schools, and humanitarian partners is essential to minimise prolonged learning interruptions and promote safe, inclusive, and equitable access to education for all affected children.

Dignity Kits and Women's Safety: The displaced population includes 3,256 females, although disaggregated data for women and adolescent girls are not currently available. A rapid assessment should identify those requiring culturally appropriate dignity and menstrual hygiene kits. Assistance should be accompanied by safe, accessible sanitation facilities; adequate lighting; confidential information on available GBV services; and survivor-centered referral pathways to promote safety, dignity, and access to essential services.

Psychosocial Support Services: The displaced, including children, some of whom are reportedly experiencing bed-wetting, restlessness, and fear following repeated exposure to insecurity and displacement. Children and their caregivers require psychological first aid, age-appropriate psychosocial activities, and identification of individuals who may need specialised mental health support. Strengthen confidential referral pathways to ensure timely access to appropriate services, with particular attention to children and other individuals experiencing heightened distress.



Figure 1: Howlwadag School damaged by gunfire



Figure 2: The University of Southern Somalia damaged by the conflict



The PSMN (Protection & Solutions Monitoring Network) is a UNHCR-led project that identifies and reports on displacements, as well as the protection risks and incidents driving such population movements. On behalf of UNHCR and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 10 local partners across Somalia conduct data gathering—primarily through interviews with affected communities and key informants—and monitor displacement trends at strategic locations.

To request further details on displacement, please contact SOMMOPMN@UNHCR.ORG