

KEY ASKS SOMALIA

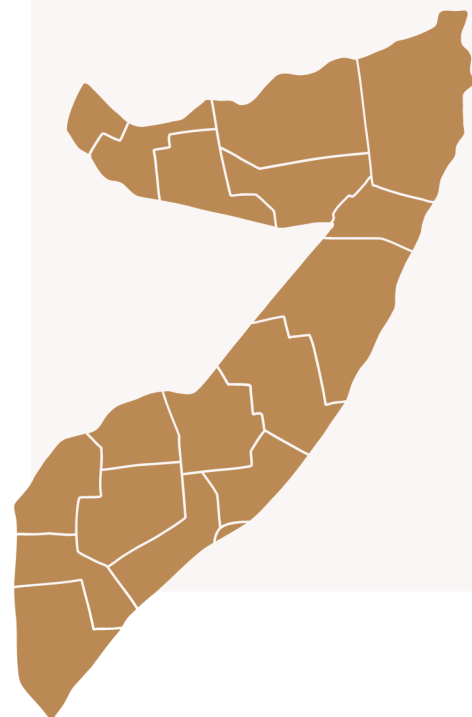
Militant Insurgence and Constitutional Amendments

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Somalia is at a critical juncture where political fractures and security crises are exacting a devastating toll on civilians. In 2026, an estimated 4.8 million Somalis require humanitarian assistance, with 4 million facing severe acute food insecurity. While the Federal Government adopted constitutional amendments in March 2026 extending presidential and parliamentary terms from four to five years to introduce universal suffrage, the lack of consensus has deepened divisions with key Federal Member States (Puntland, Jubaland, and South-West).

Why This Matters to U.S. Policy

This political instability diverts critical attention and resources away from the urgent needs of the population. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab continues to exploit these governance gaps. Controlling or influencing approximately 60% of southern Somalia, the group subjects civilians to parallel governance, extortion, and the blocking of life-saving aid.



Compounding this, climate-induced droughts and floods have displaced millions, creating a severe conflict-climate nexus. Furthermore, women's political representation has regressed to roughly 20%, falling short of the 30% quota and silencing vital voices in peacebuilding.

BACKGROUND

The US funding to the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) has helped to strengthen the civilian side of AUSSOM and the political dialogue process. The political and civilian units usually focus on dialogue with the disagreeing parties and human rights, peacebuilding, gender, which all complement the military component. Withdrawing the US funding after December 31, 2026, threatens to create a deadlock in the political dialogue process and affect the whole peacebuilding efforts.

The Human Cost of the Current Crisis

- **Civilians Bear the Brunt:** Al-Shabaab's resilience and high-profile attacks (IEDs, assassinations) continue to cause many civilian casualties. The recent loss of the strategic town of Teedaan to Al-Shabaab threatens key transport routes, further restricting civilian movement and humanitarian access.
- **A Generation at Risk:** 62% of school-aged children are out of school. Displaced populations (3.3 million) face severe protection risks, including gender-based violence (GBV) and child recruitment.
- **Exclusion of Women:** Despite being the backbone of community resilience, women remain marginalized. The drop in parliamentary representation to 20% undermines inclusive governance and the sustainability of peace processes.
- **Transnational Threats:** Emerging cooperation between Al-Shabaab and Yemen's Houthi movement (in logistics, intelligence, and drone technology) threatens to escalate violence, further endangering civilian lives and regional maritime security.

KEY ASKS U.S. GOVERNMENT

1. Sustain Peacekeeping Funding to Protect Civilians:

Reconsider the proposed withdrawal of support for AUSSOM on the side of political dialogue and peacebuilding, and the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) after December 31, 2026. An abrupt exit will put a dead end to the political dialogue and undermine all peacebuilding efforts. Support the renewal of the AUSSOM mandate at the UN Security Council that fosters political dialogue and peacebuilding. It is important to ensure that the AU, UN, and FGS monitor the situation on the ground to prioritize the protection of vulnerable communities.

- #### 2. Scale Up Humanitarian and Protection Support:
- Increase flexible, life-saving humanitarian and protection assistance for conflict-affected populations, particularly internally displaced persons (IDPs), women, and children. Support must address the worsening food insecurity affecting 25% of the population and mitigate severe protection risks, including GBV and child recruitment, exacerbated by climate shocks and Al-Shabaab violence.

KEY ASKS

UNITED NATIONS AND DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

3. Champion Inclusive Governance and Women's

Leadership: Tie diplomatic and financial engagement to measurable progress on political inclusion. Specifically, increase targeted support to ensure the 30% women's quota is met and exceeded in future electoral processes and political appointments. Elevating women's leadership is not just a democratic imperative, but a proven strategy for building community resilience and sustainable peace.

4. Demand a Credible Electoral Roadmap and Disrupt

Transnational Harm: Press the Federal Government and opposition actors to agree on a clear, time-bound roadmap for credible, inclusive elections to resolve the current constitutional legitimacy crisis peacefully.

Concurrently, expand intelligence-sharing, maritime surveillance, and sanctions enforcement to disrupt the emerging, deadly links between Al-Shabaab and external actors (like the Houthi movement) involving arms trafficking and drone technology.

1. Mediate an Inclusive Electoral and Constitutional Dialogue:

Use diplomatic leverage to press the Federal Government of Somalia, opposition leaders, and Federal Member States to resolve the constitutional crisis surrounding term extensions through inclusive dialogue. A negotiated, consensus-based electoral roadmap is urgently needed to restore public trust, prevent further political fragmentation, and halt the exploitation of these divisions by armed groups.

2. Mobilize Sustained, Predictable Funding for

AUSSOM/UNSOS: Lobby UN member states and the international community to secure the financial future of AUSSOM and UNSOS beyond December 2026. Preventing a security vacuum is essential to protecting civilians and allowing Somali security forces the time and space to develop their capacity under a joint, benchmark-based monitoring mechanism.

3. Condition Engagement on Human Rights and Democratic

Inclusion: Ensure that all diplomatic ties and financial support are explicitly conditioned on measurable progress toward democratic governance. This includes respecting fundamental freedoms, advancing the 30% women's quota, supporting independent election observation, and ensuring that constitutional dialogues respect federal autonomy and human rights.

4. Strengthen Regional Cooperation to Protect Communities:

Facilitate robust regional cooperation to dismantle transnational extremist networks. Disrupting the cross-border movement of illicit financing, military equipment, and technical expertise (such as drone technology) is critical to reducing the operational capacity of Al-Shabaab and protecting Horn of Africa communities from escalating violence.

KEY ASKS

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY

1. Advocate for Sustained International Peacekeeping Support:

Leverage faith-based and civil society networks to advocate with US policymakers, Members of Congress, and international donors to maintain support for the AU peacekeeping mission (AUSSOM) and UNSOS. Emphasize that sustained international support is vital to protect vulnerable populations and provide the breathing space necessary for local peacebuilding.

2. Champion Grassroots Dialogue and National

Reconciliation: Call on Somali political leaders to prioritize dialogue over unilateral actions regarding constitutional and electoral disputes. CSOs and faith leaders must bridge the gap between federal and state authorities, promoting community-led reconciliation efforts that heal divisions and deny Al-Shabaab the opportunity to exploit political fractures.

3. Empower Women and Youth in Peacebuilding and CVE:
Advocate fiercely for the protection and expansion of women's political participation, ensuring the 30% quota is realized. Support and scale up community-led initiatives that counter violent extremism (CVE) and prevent radicalization by focusing on social cohesion, youth engagement, and inclusive Islamic religious education that promotes peace.
4. Engage the Diaspora for Peace and Accurate Information:
Mobilize the Somali diaspora in the US and globally to promote peaceful participation in Somalia's political processes. Counter misinformation, support democratic governance, and channel diaspora resources toward community resilience, national reconciliation, and humanitarian relief.

ABOUT THE CONVENERS

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) Salama Hub and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) jointly implement the Horn of Africa Research and Advocacy Joint Project, an initiative established to respond to the complex and evolving peace and security challenges facing the Horn of Africa. The project convenes a diverse coalition of civil society organizations, faith leaders from multiple religious traditions, women and youth-led movements, and academic institutions to promote collaborative research and advocacy on peace and security in the Horn of Africa.

Through this partnership, AFSC and AACC work to address the root causes of violent conflict, militarization, shrinking civic and democratic space, and the humanitarian crises affecting communities across the region. By fostering inclusive dialogue, supporting locally led solutions, and amplifying the voices of affected communities in key policy and advocacy forums, including the United Nations, African Union, and United States Government, the project seeks to advance sustainable peace throughout the Horn of Africa.

ABOUT AFSC

The American Friends Service Committee, AFSC, is a 109-year Quaker international NGO (1917-2026) and a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of all Quakers (1947). AFSC promotes a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression. We work with people and partners worldwide of all faiths and backgrounds to meet urgent community needs, challenge injustice, and build peace. AFSC is particularly active in the Horn of Africa, where we have created the Salama Hub, a research and advocacy program for peace and stability.

The AFSC's Salama Hub, a research and advocacy program, works for peace and stability in the Horn of Africa by strengthening local civil society organizations and faith leaders in influencing policies from research. It also fosters community-led healing and reconciliation. What makes it unique is its African-led research, that connects issues from the communities to the policy level. The program presents an opportunity for civil society organizations (CSOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) capacities to be strengthened. The program works with a wide range of partners—from local groups to regional and international bodies like the African Union, IGAD, European Union, and the U.S. policymakers—to ensure these local insights directly influence policies and social dynamics.

ABOUT AACC

The All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) is a continental ecumenical body that accounts for over 200 million Christians across the African continent. AACC is the largest association of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, and Indigenous churches in Africa, and a member of the worldwide ecumenical network. As an ecumenical body, AACC is a fellowship of more than 215 members comprising of Churches, National Christian Councils (NCCs), theological and lay training institutions, and other Christian organizations in 43 African countries.

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SECOND UNITED STATES ADVOCACY TOUR 2026

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