

*Al-Shabaab*

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**Name:** Al-Shabaab

**Type of Organization:**

- Insurgent
- non-state actor
- religious
- terrorist
- transnational
- violent

**Ideologies and Affiliations:**

- Al-Qaeda affiliated group
- Islamist
- jihadist
- Qutbist
- Salafist
- Sunni
- takfiri
- Wahhabi

**Place of Origin:**

Somalia

**Year of Origin:**

1996-1997

**Founder(s):**

Ibrahim Haji Jaama' Al-Afghani

**Places of Operation:**

Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti

**Overview**

*Also known as:<sup>1</sup>*

- Al Shabab
- Al-Shabaab
- Al-Shabaab al-Islam
- Al-Shabaab al-Islamiya
- Al-Shabaab al-Jihaad al Shabaab
- As-Sa'??b
- Ash-Shabaab
- Hizbul Shabaab
- Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (HSM)
- Harakat Shabaab Al Mujahidin
- Mujahideen Youth Movement (MYM)
- Hezb al-Shabaab
- Hisb'ul Shabaab
- Hizbul Shabaab
- Movement of Warrior Youth
- Mujahidin Al-Shabaab Movement
- Shabaab
- The Party of Youth
- The Popular Resistance Movement in the Land of the Two Migrations (PRM)
- The Youth
- Unity of Islamic Youth
- Youth Wing
- Muhajiroon brigade (division made up of foreign fighters)

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### *Executive Summary:*

Al-Shabaab, or “the Youth,” is al-Qaeda’s formal affiliate in East Africa. Established in the late 1990s, the Somali-based terror group seeks to establish a fundamentalist Islamic state in the country that it hopes will ultimately expand to encompass the whole Horn of Africa. Al-Shabaab controls much of the southern Somalia region and small pockets in Kenya and Ethiopia along the Somali border. In areas under the group’s control, al-Shabaab imposes its strict version of sharia (Islamic law), prohibiting activities like listening to music or shaving one’s beard. The group predominately conducts attacks targeting the Somali government and the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM).

Following the group’s pledge of allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012, al-Shabaab began executing a score of violent attacks in Somalia’s neighboring countries, including the September 2013 Westgate Mall attacks in Nairobi, Kenya, which left 68 people dead and 175 wounded. The group is also responsible for the April 2015 Garissa University attacks, wherein five al-Shabaab fighters stormed the Kenyan university, killing nearly 150 people. Since then, the group has continued to attempt and conduct terrorist attacks outside of its stronghold in Somalia. In al-Shabaab’s first attempt to attack Western targets, an assailant detonated a concealed laptop bomb on a Daallo Airlines flight leaving Mogadishu for Djibouti City on February 2, 2016. The explosion, which killed only the attacker, was not strong enough to down the plane. Al-Shabaab reportedly killed more than 4,200 people in 2016, making it the deadliest Islamic terror group in Africa. In October 2017, al-Shabaab was credited with the worst terror attack in Somalia to date—a truck bomb that killed over 300 people in Mogadishu.<sup>2</sup>

### *Doctrine:*

Al-Shabaab’s ideology is typically described as a brand of Salafism and Wahhabism that supports takfir, the excommunication of apostates or unbelievers. Though it has stated many goals in the past, the group fights first and foremost to create a fundamentalist Islamic state in the Horn of Africa<sup>3</sup> that would include not only Somalia but also Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia.<sup>4</sup>

Under al-Shabaab’s strict brand of sharia, stonings, amputations, and beheadings are regular punishment for criminals and apostates. The group violently persecutes non-Muslims and clashes frequently with humanitarian and international aid workers.<sup>5</sup> Out of an estimated 6,000-12,000 fighters as of March 2016, only a small handful are believed to be ethnically non-Somali.<sup>6</sup>

The precursor to al-Shabaab is Somali rebel group al-Itihad al-Islami (AIAI), which targeted the Siad Barre military regime during the Somali Civil War in the 1990s. After the Barre regime fell, a younger, more hardline group split from the AIAI, seeking to extend AIAI’s mission and establish a “Greater Somalia” ruled under sharia. This group of youths—in Arabic, “al-Shabaab”—joined forces with the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in an attempt to enforce sharia throughout Mogadishu. In December 2006, U.S.-backed Ethiopian forces invaded Somalia and drove the ICU out of the capital. Though the majority of the ICU fled to neighboring countries, al-Shabaab retreated southward and began organizing attacks against the Ethiopian forces. In this way, al-Shabaab transitioned from a rebel group into a guerrilla movement and began seizing territory in central and southern Somalia.<sup>7</sup> Al-Shabaab grew from a few hundred fighters in the 2006 to thousands by 2008, as Islamist-nationalist fighters sought to drive out the Ethiopian occupation.<sup>8</sup> Since the end of the Ethiopian occupation in 2008, al-Shabaab has continued to its efforts to establish sharia domestically and attack government representatives and African Mission forces, while also adapting its foreign targets from Ethiopia to Kenya following a brief Kenyan invasion in 2011. Al-Shabaab views the AMISOM, as well as the Somalia Federal Government, as its primary enemies since they are purportedly influenced by Western countries.<sup>9</sup>

Al-Shabaab formally pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012, though ties between them existed since 2008, when the American-born [al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula](#) (AQAP) cleric [Anwar al-Awlaki](#) released a statement praising al-Shabaab for fighting against the U.S.-backed Ethiopian invasion. In 2010, AQAP deputy leader [Said al-Shihri](#) also released a statement encouraging al-Shabaab to work with his group in its fight against the United States.<sup>10</sup> Following the pledge of allegiance, some al-Qaeda fighters who trained at camps in Afghanistan moved to Somalia to train members of al-Shabaab. The two groups continue to cooperate closely, on everything from indoctrination and basic infantry skills to advanced explosives and assassination training. Al-Shabaab and AQAP partake in the transfer of fighters and weapons between Yemen and Somalia. Al-Shabaab fighters have been able to obtain new weapons and develop new tactics from AQAP, including the use of laptop explosives and more destructive car bombs.<sup>11</sup> Al-Qaeda reportedly plays an important role in al-Shabaab’s leadership, with one count reporting that foreigners comprise over half of al-Shabaab’s executive council and that the group has embraced globalized rhetoric and propaganda.

Analysts cite the early militant Salafi extremist group al-Itihad al-Islami (AIAI, a.k.a. Unity of Islam) as the precursor to al-Shabaab and the incubator for many of its leaders. AIAI peaked in the 1990s after the Siad Barre military regime fell and civil war broke out.<sup>12</sup> A younger,

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hardline group split from the elder AIAI, seeking to establish a “Greater Somalia” ruled under sharia. This group of youths joined forces with the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), a group of sharia courts, to serve as a governance alternative once they overtook Mogadishu. The combined group was eventually pushed out by Ethiopia. Much of the ICU fled to the south of Somalia and al-Shabaab emerged and continued asymmetrical attacks on Ethiopian targets.

This context is important in understanding a key characteristic of the group—it is not monolithic and is prone to internal fissures over strategy and tactics. These conflicts became particularly significant when whole clans broke from al-Shabaab in 2008. Reports highlighted increased leadership conflicts over tactics, clan interests, affiliations with al-Qaeda, and policies toward international aid agencies.<sup>13</sup>

[Ahmed Abdi Godane](#) eventually triumphed over internal opposition with a series of purges in 2011 and a particularly bloody internal battle in June 2013. One of the implications of Godane’s victory is that the core group’s doctrine and affiliation seem to have been settled. Though al-Shabaab has always had a Salafist jihadist orientation, the group’s leadership was once heterogeneous, including nationalist and politically pragmatic figures like Hassan Dahir Aweys and Mukhtar Robow. The al-Shabaab that triumphed arose from the extreme fringe, steeped in the takfiri ethos that legitimizes the killing of other Muslims and a recommitment to global jihad and restoration of the Caliphate.<sup>14</sup>

Godane, no longer faced with internal opposition to aligning with al-Qaeda, officially pledged al-Shabaab’s allegiance to that group in 2012. Afterward, some al-Qaeda fighters who trained at camps in [Afghanistan](#) moved to Somalia to train members of al-Shabaab. The two groups continue to cooperate closely on everything from indoctrination and basic infantry skills to advanced explosives and assassination training. Al-Qaeda reportedly plays an important role in al-Shabaab’s leadership, with one count reporting that foreigners comprise over half of al-Shabaab’s executive council and that the group has embraced globalized rhetoric and propaganda.<sup>15</sup> Out of an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 fighters, 200 to 300 are non-Somali, with a number coming from the Somali diaspora.<sup>16</sup>

Following Godane’s death in 2014, [Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaidah](#), previously known as Ahmed Diriye, was appointed as emir. In November 2019, Ubaidah appeared in a video for the first time and named the United States as the group’s primary target and demanded supporters attack Americans wherever they could.<sup>17</sup>

### *Organizational Structure:*

Al-Shabaab is a hierarchical organization led by its emir (“prince” or “commander”) [Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaidah](#). Answering to Abu Ubaidah are a set of regional commanders who manage the group’s presence in southern Somalia and Mogadishu, Bay and Bokool, Puntland and Somaliland, and Juba Valley.<sup>18</sup>

Abu Ubaidah has also appointed a Shura council of 10 members who oversee al-Shabaab’s regional commanders. The council establishes al-Shabaab’s policy, which is expected to be followed by local administrations within the group’s territory.<sup>19</sup> Aiding the Shura council are junior leaders who are in charge of al-Shabaab’s media branch, law enforcement, and military operations. The group’s media branch, al-Kataib (The Brigade), is responsible for producing video recruitment and propaganda content which is then disseminated for international audiences.<sup>20</sup>

The leader of al-Shabaab’s military operations, previously [Abdullahi Haji Da’ud](#),<sup>21</sup> oversees two separate branches, the Jaysh Al-‘Usr (army of hardship) and the Jaysh Al-Hisbah (army of morality). Led by regional military leaders, the Jaysh Al-‘Usr serves as the group’s major external military apparatus. The Jaysh Al-Hisbah functions as the group’s religious police force, enforcing sharia in areas of al-Shabaab’s control.<sup>22</sup>

### *Financing:*

Al-Shabaab has had several sources of income throughout its history, including varying degrees of support from the Somali diaspora, locals, sponsors, and sustained dawa (proselytizing).

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Domestically, al-Shabaab drew significant revenue from racketeering after seizing the southern port city of Kismayo in 2008. The charcoal trade was essential to the city's economy and the group was able to receive proceeds from exporting charcoal, totaling an estimated \$35-50 million annually.<sup>23</sup> Although AMISOM was able to take back Kismayo in October 2012, the United Nations has reported that al-Shabaab's illicit charcoal trade has continued in areas under the group's control, such as Barawe, and estimates that profits from this city alone amount to millions of dollars monthly.<sup>24</sup> The United Nations banned charcoal exports from Somalia in 2012. In October 2014, as part of an effort to target al-Shabaab's funding, the U.N. Security Council authorized the inspection of ships suspected of carrying Somali charcoal.<sup>25</sup>

According to the U.N., sugar imports grew in late 2012, in connection with the increased production of charcoal, and thereafter increased for transport over the Kenyan border.<sup>26</sup> This cyclical trade, with charcoal exports in return for sugar imports that are eventually sold in Kenya for a lower price, is one way the group has sustained itself, despite losing control of the Kismayo port. Al-Shabaab is also able to facilitate cash flows within Somalia through the rise of mobile money transfer companies subject to less scrutiny.<sup>27</sup> The International Crisis Group also reported in 2014 that al-Shabaab copes with a volatile financial environment and intermittent cash flow by investing in gold.<sup>28</sup>

After the June 2013 purge of Godane's opposition within the leadership, al-Shabaab shifted its attention toward "taxation"—specifically, collecting funds through voluntary support, extortion, and partnership with businesses, humanitarian agencies, and other non-governmental organizations that operate in south-central Somalia.<sup>29</sup> According to the United Nations, al-Shabaab has generated up to \$100 million per year, from fees levied at ports of entry, taxes on goods, taxes on domestic produce, "jihad contributions," checkpoint fees, and extortion for payments of religious obligation.<sup>30</sup>

Central to al-Shabaab's taxation and extortion practices is the use of roadblocks between Baidoa and Mogadishu as well as between Mogadishu and the Lower Shabelle region. Each roadblock along these paths earns al-Shabaab \$5,000 a day extorting merchants. This money largely comes from money distributed to internally displaced persons (IDPs) by the United Nations and associated aid agencies. The United Nations issues IDPs living in refugee camps in Baidoa cash cards of \$80 to \$90 a month, which allows them to purchase necessities from merchants traveling from Mogadishu. On their way to and from Baidoa, these merchants are stopped and taxed at al-Shabaab roadblocks, thereby unwillingly transferring U.N. funds to the terror group. While the regional Somali government and the United Nations have confirmed these practices, the U.N.'s head of country, Michael Keating, has insisted that most of the aid still reaches IDPs.<sup>31</sup>

Al-Shabaab has also reportedly received funding from the governments of Eritrea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Qatar, and Yemen, the majority of which have denied these claims.<sup>32</sup> Al-Shabaab agents have also raised funds internationally. For example, in September 2014, prosecutors in Finland charged four people who allegedly collected "thousands of euros" for al-Shabaab between 2008 and 2011.<sup>33</sup> In October 2016, two women in the United States were convicted for organizing a group of women from eight different countries that funded al-Shabaab.<sup>34</sup>

*Recruitment:*

Al-Shabaab's recruitment efforts take place primarily within Somalia and Kenya, though its online recruitment strategy has targeted the United States as well.<sup>35</sup>

Staying true to its name, which means "The Youth," al-Shabaab seeks to recruit Somali adolescents and young adults.<sup>36</sup> Boys as young as 9 years old have been forced into al-Shabaab's ranks.<sup>37</sup> In January 2017, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres estimated that more than half of al-Shabaab's fighters may be children. A Somali taskforce recorded the recruitment of 4,213 children—almost all boys—into al-Shabaab between April 1, 2010, and July 31, 2016. According to a 2017 U.N. report, children "recruited and used by al-Shabaab were victims of or were exposed to other grave violations including killing and maiming during military operations and air strikes targeting al-Shabaab, and subjected to arrest and detention by Somalia security forces."<sup>38</sup>

According to Somali officials, al-Shabaab needs younger recruits to replace aging fighters. The group has kidnapped children from schools, forcing others to flee al-Shabaab-controlled areas to avoid conscription. In early August 2017 alone, more than 100 children fled from al-Shabaab-controlled areas of Somalia for the safety of government-controlled areas of the country. Officials have estimated that more than 500 children have fled their homes to escape conscription into al-Shabaab.<sup>39</sup>

Al-Shabaab uses children in combat and reconnaissance roles, according to the U.N.<sup>40</sup> A 14-year-old Somali recruit, interviewed by the Institute for Security Studies in September 2014, said, "[W]hen you join, they give you a mobile phone and every month you get \$50. This is what pushes a lot of my friends to join." Another member recalled how during his recruitment experience "[P]reachers delivered sermons for hours about

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destiny and the sweetness of the holy war. They distributed leaflets on Islam [and] showed video recording from other jihadist [sic] in the world.”<sup>41</sup>

While al-Shabaab recruits males, it has also kidnapped Muslim and Christian women in Somalia and Kenya as sex slaves. The group has forced some girls and women to work in brothels while forcing others into marriages with al-Shabaab fighters.<sup>42</sup> Al-Shabaab has regularly killed women and girls who refuse forced marriages to al-Shabaab fighters.<sup>43</sup>

Al-Shabaab has attempted to influence Somali families toward Islamism. The group’s Education and Youth Engagement released its own curriculum in early 2017, focusing only on Quran, math, history, and geography.<sup>44</sup> That April, the group released a statement instructing Somali parents to shun public schooling and send their children to Islamic schools. The group warned of “consequences” for parents and teachers who embrace secular education.<sup>45</sup>

Al-Shabaab has a sophisticated public relations arm that “includes a Twitter account and video production abilities.”<sup>46</sup> The group’s use of social media for propaganda has attracted recruits from around the world. Al-Shabaab also disseminates recruitment videos dubbed in English and Somali. A video released in 2010 depicts a combatant attempting to recruit young fighters: “So what are you waiting for my brothers, why don’t you leap forth for this act of worship? Join us so that we can together fight the forces of kufr [unbelief]...”<sup>47</sup>

Another video includes an English-language rap: “[M]ortar by mortar, shell by shell, only going to stop when they go to hell.”<sup>48</sup>

Within Somalia, recruiters infiltrate remote, rural areas and approach potential recruits. There have been accounts of recruiters threatening the lives of Somali Muslim men who initially resist joining the group.<sup>49</sup>

In 2013, Kenyan human rights lawyer Al Amin Kimathi described al-Shabaab’s recruitment process based on information gathered from interviews with detainees:

“They are given quotations from the Koran, the Hadiths, but they do not have the benefit of a critical mind to look at it in any other context and they trust the people driving them to this. Advantage is taken of the person’s feeling of desperation and that is dangerous enough to drive them over the top. They are given the feeling that they are a very important person and that martyrdom is something to aspire to - the anger over their deprivation is lowered to a feeling of comfort, to a point where the only thing they aspire to is a collective action. Whether that action leads to their survival or death that doesn’t really matter any more [sic].”<sup>50</sup>

### Recruitment in Somalia

Al-Shabaab provides social services to increase its support among Somalis, partaking in infrastructure construction and collecting money to be redistributed to the poor.<sup>51</sup> Somali youths are also offered salaries of up to \$700 a month for joining the militant group, and promised additional payments if they bring a wife and children. Since 2009, al-Shabaab recruiter Sheikh Ahmad Iman Ali has recruited children between the ages of 12 and 16 living in Somalia’s impoverished regions. According to Kenyan authorities, children in those areas reportedly lack basic housing, clothing, and food, which al-Shabaab typically provides in exchange for their recruitment.<sup>52</sup> According to one report from 2012 the primary reason that former al-Shabaab fighters claimed they joined the militant group was for a religious identity, the lack of education and employment, influenced by family or friends, and the need for a collective identity and a sense of belonging.<sup>53</sup>

### Recruitment in Kenya

Al-Shabaab recruiters radicalize young Kenyan Muslims—often converts to Islam—with extremist sermons. Personal accounts reveal that recruiters use psychological manipulation to increase enrollment in the terror group. A disillusioned former recruit said that deceased al-Shabaab member and radical Kenyan cleric Aboud Rogo Mohammed “used to tell us: ‘Instead of sitting in the slum doing nothing, it’s better to go to Somalia and fight for your religion, you’ll go straight to heaven.’”<sup>54</sup>

Once the recruits are prepared to join al-Shabaab, they travel to remote islands off of Kenya’s coast, which are only a couple hours away from Somalia by boat. From these islands, radical preachers guide them to their final destination, Somalia.<sup>55</sup>

### Recruitment in the United States

U.S. Representative Edward Royce (R-CA), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, warned in late 2013 that “al-Shabab has

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demonstrated a unique ability to recruit young members of the Somali diaspora in the United States....<sup>56</sup>

Americans began traveling to Somalia to join al-Shabaab in 2007 when the terror group stepped up its insurgency against Somalia's transitional government. Most American fighters for al-Shabaab have been radicalized in Minneapolis, Minnesota, home to the largest Somali diaspora in the U.S.

The FBI contends that al-Shabaab has made an "active and deliberate attempt" to recruit American fighters in person and over the Internet. A 2011 U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security investigation found that al-Shabaab recruiters have used mosques and cafes as meeting places to radicalize and recruit.<sup>57</sup> Alabama native Omar Hammami appeared in several online videos in which he urged foreigners in English to "live the life of a mujahid." Al-Shabaab has released a host of other online recruitment videos depicting American foreign fighters.

### Training:

Due to the lack of governance in Somalia, al-Shabaab has been able to manage specialized training camps with little domestic interference. In addition to a hand-to-hand combat camp in Ras Kiamboni and suicide bombing camps in Elberde and Mogadishu, al-Shabaab has managed a hostage training camp in Eel Arfid.<sup>58</sup> Al-Shabaab has also recruited women, although they are reportedly sent to training camps for the sole purpose of being taken as brides.<sup>59</sup>

Core al-Qaeda had an influence on al-Shabaab training since before al-Shabaab formally pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2012. A 2011 report by the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security found that American recruits were receiving training from senior al-Qaeda operatives, some with ties to al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>60</sup> Also as of 2011, Pakistani-born al-Qaeda operative Abu Musa Mombasa was reported to be al-Shabaab's head of security and training.<sup>61</sup> Under the auspices of core al-Qaeda, the group has increasingly focused on its explosives and suicide-bomber training program.<sup>62</sup>

Today, al-Shabaab recruits undergo a six-month training process.<sup>63</sup> According to the FBI, training includes "reading and interpreting the Koran, physical exercise, and weapons handling." Such weapons include AK-47 assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades.<sup>64</sup> At one graduation ceremony open to media, 300 trainees became members. The new graduates were able to choose which sector of al-Shabaab to join. Graduates can sign up for a combat unit, become bomb-makers, or work for the group's security network, the Amniyat. Standout recruits have the special opportunity to join the years-long waiting list for the Istishadyin unit, the group's suicide brigade.<sup>65</sup>

In September 2014, the U.S. conducted a drone attack on an al-Shabaab training camp south of Mogadishu. The attack killed al-Shabaab's leader at the time, Ahmed Abdi Godane.<sup>66</sup> In March 2016, another al-Shabaab training camp was targeted in a U.S. drone strike north of Mogadishu, which killed over 150 militants.<sup>67</sup> A U.S. strike in June 2017 reportedly destroyed an al-Shabaab training camp near Sakow, Somalia, which also functioned as a "key command supply hub," according to the Somali government.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "al Shabaab," Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium, accessed February 4, 2015, <http://www.trackingterrorism.org/group/al-shabaab>.

<sup>2</sup> Jason Burke, "Mogadishu truck bomb: 500 casualties in Somalia's worst terrorist attack," *Guardian* (London), October 16, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/15/truck-bomb-mogadishu-kills-people-somalia>; Jason Burke, "Mogadishu bombing: al-Shabaab behind deadly blast, officials say," *Guardian* (London), October 16, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/16/mogadishu-bombing-al-shabaab-behind-deadly-blast-officials-say>.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified March 13, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.

<sup>4</sup> Abdisaïd M. Ali, "The Al-Shabaab Al Mujahidiin: A Profile of the First Somali Terrorist Organization," Das Institut für Strategie- Politik- Sicherheits- und Wirtschaftsberatung, June 2, 2008, [http://kms2.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ESDP/55851/ipublicationdocument\\_singledocument/1dd66bc5-b0c9-488c-b7e9-d16eeac91018/en/AlShabaab.pdf](http://kms2.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ESDP/55851/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/1dd66bc5-b0c9-488c-b7e9-d16eeac91018/en/AlShabaab.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, March 13, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens and Abdihakim Ainte, "The Return of al-Shabaab," *Daily Beast*, March 15, 2016, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/03/15/the-return-of-al-shabaab.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, March 13, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, March 13, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, March 13, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.

<sup>10</sup> Ty McCormick, "U.S. Attacks Reveal Al-Shabab's Strength, Not Weakness," *Foreign Policy*, March 9, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/09/u-s-attacks-reveal-al-shababs-strength-not-weakness-somalia/>.

<sup>11</sup> Ty McCormick, "U.S. Attacks Reveal Al-Shabab's Strength, Not Weakness," *Foreign Policy*, March 9, 2016, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/09/u-s-attacks-reveal-al-shababs-strength-not-weakness-somalia/>.

<sup>12</sup> Jonathan Masters, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified September 5, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.

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- <sup>13</sup> Ken Menkhaus, "Al-Shabab's Capabilities Post-Westgate," CTC Sentinel 7, no. 2 (February 2014): 4-9, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CTCSentinel-Vol7Iss2.pdf>.
- <sup>14</sup> Matt Bryden, "The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity," Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2014, [http://csis.org/files/publication/140221\\_Bryden\\_ReinventionOfAlShabaab\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf).
- <sup>15</sup> Fred Dews, "Al Shabaab: Background on the Somalia-based Terrorist Group that Attacked a Nairobi Mall," Brookings Institution, September 23, 2013, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/brookings-now/posts/2013/09/al-shabaab-somalia-terrorist-nairobi-mall-attack>.
- <sup>16</sup> Fred Dews, "Al Shabaab: Background on the Somalia-based Terrorist Group that Attacked a Nairobi Mall," Brookings Institution, September 23, 2013, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/brookings-now/posts/2013/09/al-shabaab-somalia-terrorist-nairobi-mall-attack>.
- <sup>17</sup> Harun Maruf, "Al-Shabab Chief Partially Seen on Video for First Time," Voice of America, November 5, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/al-shabab-chief-partially-seen-video-first-time>.
- <sup>18</sup> Abdi O. Shuriye, "Research: Al-shabaab's Leadership Hierarchy and its Ideology," Horn Affairs, May 7, 2012, <http://hornaffairs.com/en/2012/05/07/research-al-shabaabs-leadership-hierarchy-and-its-ideology/>.
- <sup>19</sup> Abdi O. Shuriye, "Research: Al-shabaab's Leadership Hierarchy and its Ideology," Horn Affairs, May 7, 2012, <http://hornaffairs.com/en/2012/05/07/research-al-shabaabs-leadership-hierarchy-and-its-ideology/>;
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- <sup>20</sup> "Mapping Militant Organizations: Al Shabaab," Stanford University, accessed September 12, 2016, <http://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/61>;
- Abdi O. Shuriye, "Research: Al-shabaab's Leadership Hierarchy and its Ideology," Horn Affairs, May 7, 2012, <http://hornaffairs.com/en/2012/05/07/research-al-shabaabs-leadership-hierarchy-and-its-ideology/>.
- <sup>21</sup> Bill Roggio, "US military targets senior Shabaab commander in Somalia," Long War Journal, June 1, 2016, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2016/06/us-military-targets-senior-shabaab-commander-in-somalia.php>.
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**Key Leaders**



**Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaidah**  
Al-Shabaab emir (leader)



**Ahmed Abdi Godane**  
Emir (commander) - deceased



**Mukhtar Robow**  
Former deputy emir



**Abdiasis Abu Musab**  
Military operations spokesman



**Fuad Mohamed Qalaf (a.k.a. Shongole)**  
Senior member



**Ibrahim Haji Jama Mead (a.k.a. Ibrahim al Afghani)**  
Senior member



**Omar Hammami**  
Key leader and member - deceased

## History:

- **February 26, 2021:** The U.N. Security Council designates three individuals—Abukar Ali Adan, Maalim Ayman, and Mahad Karate—who are senior operatives within al-Shabaab.  
Karate allegedly played a key role in the Amniyat, the intelligence wing of al-Shabaab responsible for the 2015 attack on Garissa University in Kenya, which killed over 150 people. Ayman reportedly helped with preparations for the attack on Camp Simba in Lamu County, Kenya on January 5, 2020, and Adan is allegedly associated with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Sources: Mohammed Dhaysane, “UN sanctions 3 top al-Shabaab leaders,” Anadolu Agency, February 27, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/un-sanctions-3-top-al-shabaab-leaders/2159199>; “Security Council Sanctions Committee concerning Somalia Adds Three Entries to Its Sanctions List,” United Nations, February 26, 2021, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14455.doc.htm>.
- **January 20, 2021:** Following the inauguration of U.S. President Joe Biden on January 20, the United States has not launched a single airstrike against al-Shabaab in Somalia.  
On the day of Biden’s inauguration, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan issues a mandate that would limit counterterrorism drone strikes outside of Afghanistan and Syria. According to the order, the U.S. military and the C.I.A. will have to obtain White House permission to launch strikes in countries with minimal American ground troops. Given the tighter controls on U.S. airstrikes, senior Somali military officials express fear that al-Shabaab operatives will gather momentum and “bring their battle wagons out... [and] start to gather in large numbers again.” Sources: Charlie Savage and Eric Schmitt, “Biden Secretly Limits Counterterrorism Drone Strikes Away From War Zones,” *New York Times*, March 3, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/03/us/politics/biden-drones.html>; Harun Maruf and Jeff Seldin, “Somalia Fears New US Airstrike Guidance Is Benefiting al-Shabab,” Voice of America, March 6, 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/usa/somalia-fears-new-us-airstrike-guidance-benefiting-al-shabab>.
- **November 17, 2020:** The U.S. Department of State designates Abdullahi Osman Mohamed and Maalim Ayman as Specially Designated Global Terrorists.  
Osman, a senior al-Shabaab official, is al-Shabaab’s explosives expert who manages the group’s overall explosives operations and manufacturing. Ayman is the leader of Jaysh Ayman—an al-Shabaab unit that conducts terrorist attacks in Kenya and Somalia—and was responsible for preparing the January 2020 attack on Camp Simba in Manda Bay, Kenya. The attack killed one U.S. military service member and two American contractors. Source: “State Department Designates Two Senior Al-Shabaab Leaders as Terrorists,” U.S. Department of State, November 17, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/state-department-designates-two-senior-al-shabaab-leaders-as-terrorists/>.
- **November 12, 2020:** The U.N. Security Council votes to prevent the sale or shipment to Somalia of components used to produce improvised explosive devices that have increasingly been used in attacks by al-Shabaab.  
The Security Council also urges the Somali government to better track the insurgent group’s illegal financing methods as the militants allegedly raised more than \$21 million last year. According to the U.N. panel of expert’s investigation, the extremist group extorted businesses in Kismayo, enforced “taxation” checkpoints in Lower Juba, collected zakat, and collected taxes on imports into the port in Mogadishu. Source: Edith M. Lederer, “UN votes to crack down on Somalia’s al-Shabab extremists,” Associated Press, November 12, 2020, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/votes-crack-somalias-al-shabab-extremists-74183192>.
- **October 30, 2020:** A Kenyan court sentences two men for helping al-Shabaab gunmen in the 2013 Nairobi Westgate shopping mall attack that killed 67 people.  
Mohamed Ahmed Abdi and Hussein Hassan Mustafa were each sentenced to 18 years imprisonment for providing support to assailants, and Abdi was given an additional 15-year jail sentence for possession of materials promoting “terrorism.” Sources: “Kenyan court jails men over 2013 Westgate mall attack,” Al Jazeera, October 30, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/10/30/kenyan-court-jails-two-men-over-2013-westgate-mall-attack>; gEORGE Obulutsa, “Kenyan court jails two men for 2013 Westgate mall attack,” Reuters, October 30, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-attack-court/kenyan-court-jails-two-men-for-2013-westgate-mall-attack-idUSKBN27F263>.
- **September 17, 2020:** A military court in Somalia sentences al-Shabaab member Farhan Mohamud Hassan to life in prison for his role in an attack on the U.S.-Kenyan Manda Bay Airfield on January 5, 2020.  
The attack, which killed three Americans, was the first al-Shabaab attack against U.S. forces inside Kenya. Source: “Al-Shabab militant jailed for attack on US base in Kenya,” BBC News, September 17, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54182011>.
- **August 26, 2020:** A U.S. military airstrike kills six al-Shabaab militants near Darasalam village in the Lower Shabelle region of southern Somalia.  
The operation follows an al-Shabaab attack on Somali forces while U.S. forces were nearby, though no members of either military were wounded. Source: “US says airstrike kills 6 al-Shabab in Somalia after ambush,” Associated Press, August 26, 2020, <https://apnews.com/f7a2ad0d83fbd46d20741c5a8aee85f0>.
- **May 27, 2020:** SNA, African Union, and regional security forces launch an operation in Dinsor town, Somalia.  
The small town has been controlled by the insurgents as they forcefully collect taxes from the town’s civilians. The operation leads to a fierce gunfight among the two sides, leading to an unreported number of regional forces being injured. Source: “Al-Shabaab militants killed in raid as explosion hits military vehicle in Somalia,” Garowe Online, May 27, 2020, <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/al-shabaab-militants-killed-in-raid-as-explosion-hits-military-vehicle-in-somalia>.
- **May 26, 2020:** A federal grand jury in Virginia charges Liban Haji Mohamed, a Somali-born naturalized U.S. citizen, with conspiring and attempting to provide material support to al-Shabaab.  
According to court documents, Mohamed allegedly left the U.S. in July 2012 to join al-Shabaab and attempted to recruit an undercover agent to travel to Somalia to provide combat training to al-Shabaab fighters. Additionally, Mohamad sought to use his media skills to contribute to al-Shabaab’s propaganda. Mohamed was closely affiliated with Zachary Chesser—a convicted terrorist who was sentenced to 25 years in prison for attempting to provide material support to al-Shabaab. In July 2012, Interpol issued a red notice seeking Mohamed as a wanted fugitive, and in January 2015, the FBI added Mohamad to its “Most Wanted Terrorists” list. If convicted, Mohamed faces up to 30 years in prison. Sources: “Alexandria Man on FBI Most Wanted List Indicted on Terrorism Charges,” U.S. Department of Justice, May 27, 2020, <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/alexandria-man-fbi-most-wanted-list-indicted-terrorism-charges>; Tom Jackman, “Alexandria man, on most-wanted terrorists list, charged with aiding al-Shabab,” *Washington Post*, May 26, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/crime-law/2020/05/26/alexandria-man-most-wanted-terrorists-list-indicted-aiding-al-shabab/>.
- Al-Shabaab disregards the global pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus COVID-19 as a Chinese, European, and American problem and calls the disease divine punishment for crimes against Muslims.  
Somalia officials and observers fear al-Shabaab will disrupt the flow of relief and medical supplies to the country during the pandemic. As of April 23, Somalia records 328 cases of COVID-19 in Somalia and 16 related deaths. AMISOM, the United States, Canada, European Union, and other international partners call on al-Shabaab to halt its

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attacks and allow global assistance to Somali communities. Al-Shabaab is suspected of shooting to death two doctors in Somalia in April. On April 24, security forces stop an al-Shabaab attack on an airport in Barawe, Somalia. International security forces report that al-Shabaab's attacks are distracting them from aiding in relief services. In May, al-Shabaab condemns the closure of mosques during the pandemic. On May 13, al-Shabaab announces the formation of a COVID-19 monitoring committee. Sources: Abdullahi Abdille Shahow, "Al-Shabab's Territory in Somalia Is a COVID-19 Powder Keg," *World Politics Review*, May 1, 2020, <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/28726/in-al-shabab-s-territory-in-east-africa-pandemic-could-spread-like-wildfire>; Subban Jama and Ayan Abdullah, "'We Are Used to a Virus Called Bombs,'" *Foreign Policy*, May 12, 2020, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/12/coronavirus-pandemic-somalia-al-shabab/>; "Coronavirus - Somalia: Joint Statement on COVID-19," *AfricaNews*, April 13, 2020, <https://www.africanews.com/2020/04/13/coronavirus-somalia-joint-statement-on-covid-19/>.

- **April 2, 2020:** U.S. Africa Command launches a drone strike in Bush Madina, about 135 miles west of Mogadishu, targeting al-Shabaab members.  
The strike kills three militants, including Yusuf Jiis—an al-Shabab leader responsible for facilitating al-Shabaab's attacks throughout East Africa. Source: Shawn Snow, "'High-ranking' al-Shabab leader killed in U.S. strike," *Military Times*, April 7, 2020, <https://www.militarytimes.com/flashpoints/2020/04/07/high-ranking-al-shabab-leader-killed-in-us-strike/>.
- **March 21, 2020:** According to U.S. commandos, counterterrorism officials, and intelligence analysts, it is suspected that al-Shabaab recently issued new threats against Americans in East Africa as well as the United States.  
It is reported that al-Shabaab fighters are seeking to acquire Chinese-made anti-aircraft missiles that will threaten U.S. helicopters and other aircraft in Somalia. Due to the impending threat, American commanders are seeking to amplify their defenses in the region. The heightened offensive follows two al-Shabaab attacks in January against U.S. airbases in Manda Bay, Kenya and Baledogle in Somalia. Sources: Eric Schmitt and Abdi Latif Dahir, "Al Qaeda Branch in Somalia Threatens Americans in East Africa — and Even the U.S.," *New York Times*, March 21, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/21/world/africa/al-qaeda-somalia-shabab.html>; "Increased terror attacks in Africa amid coronavirus pandemic," *Deutsche Welle*, April 9, 2020, <https://www.dw.com/en/increased-terror-attacks-in-africa-amid-coronavirus-pandemic/a-53066398>.
- **February 22, 2020:** U.S. Africa Command launches an airstrike in Somalia, killing Bashir Mohamed Mahamoud, a senior leader of al-Shabaab.  
Mahamoud was responsible for conducting terror attacks in Somalia and exporting attacks into Kenya. Mahamoud was also involved in the attack against U.S. and Kenyan forces at Manda Bay Airfield in January 2020 that killed one U.S. service member and two Defense Department contractors. Source: Aishwarya Airy, "Senior al-Shabaab Leader Killed by US Strike in Somalia, Pentagon Says," *Military.com*, March 9, 2020, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/03/09/senior-al-shabaab-leader-killed-us-strike-somalia-pentagon-says.html>.
- The Pentagon reports that U.S. forces destroy two al-Shabaab compounds in Jamaame and Jilib, Somalia.  
U.S. Africa Command carries out the attacks with Somali forces. The exact dates of the attacks are not reported. Source: "Pentagon: US Forces Destroy 2 Terrorist Camps in Southern Somalia," *Voice of America*, February 3, 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/pentagon-us-forces-destroy-2-terrorist-camps-southern-somalia>.
- **December 3, 2019:** U.S. federal investigators are re-upping a \$5 million reward related to the capture of a 37-year-old man on the FBI's Most Wanted Terrorist List whom it calls "the highest-ranking U.S. citizen fighting overseas with a terrorist organization."  
The award for information leading to the arrest of Jihad Serwan Mostafa, formerly of San Diego, came as federal prosecutors announced new charges related to his alleged "critical role" in supporting al-Shabaab. Source: Kim Bellware, "California man now 'highest-ranking' American fighting alongside al-Shabab terrorists, FBI says," December 3, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/12/03/fbi-renews-million-reward-american-explosives-expert-fighting-with-terrorists-overseas/>.
- **November 19, 2019:** The United States launches a drone strike outside the al-Shabab-held town of Kunya Barow in southern Somalia's Lower Shabelle region.  
The strike kills an unidentified senior officer in al-Shabaab who had direct ties with al-Qaeda. Source: Abdi Guled, "US military drone strike kills senior al-Shabab official," *Associated Press*, November 20, 2019, <https://apnews.com/5f6aa01b9f38476e9f51636242a9e0b1>.
- **October 1, 2019:** Kenyan police raid a suspected extremist hideout in the suburbs of Mombasa.  
The raid kills three men, suspected of planning attacks throughout the city. Shoot dead three men suspected of planning militant attacks in the coastal city of Mombasa. It is suspected that the men were members of al-Shabaab. Source: Joseph Akwiri, "Kenya says it kills three militants planning attacks in Mombasa," *Reuters*, October 1, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-security/kenya-says-it-kills-three-militants-planning-attacks-in-mombasa-idUSKBN1WG492>.
- **July 27, 2019:** A U.S. airstrike kills a key facilitator for al-Shabaab in the Golis Mounain region of Somalia.  
Sources: "U.S. air strike kills suspected IS coordinator in Somalia," *Reuters*, July 28, 2019, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-somalia-airstrike/us-air-strike-kills-suspected-is-coordinator-in-somalia-idUKKCN1UN0S5>; "U.S. military kills ISIS terrorist in northern Somalia," *Xinhua*, July 29, 2019, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-07/29/c\\_138265328.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-07/29/c_138265328.htm).
- **July 3, 2019:** A court in Kenya sentences al-Shabaab militant Rashid Charles Mberesero to life in prison for his role in the 2015 Garissa University College attack, which killed over 148 people.  
His two other accomplices Mohamed Ali Abikar and Hassan Edin Hassan each receive a 41 year sentence. Source: "Garissa University attack: Tanzanian and Kenyans get long sentences," *BBC News*, July 3, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48859937>.
- **April 24, 2019:** A Kenyan court finds British national Jermaine Grant guilty of possessing bomb-making materials.  
Grant is believed to be a part of an al-Shabaab linked cell that planned multiple attacks in December 2011. Source: "Kenyan court finds UK man guilty of possessing explosives," *Associated Press*, April 24, 2019, <https://apnews.com/6c6cdd6dd2a4f20bd6d59530bea0bef>.
- **September 15, 2018:** Ethiopia's air force launches strikes against al-Shabaab militants in Somalia.  
More than 70 militants are killed in the strikes. Source: "Ethiopian airstrikes kill 70 Al-Shabab militants in Somalia: report," *Global News*, September 15, 2018, <https://globalnews.ca/news/4453469/ethiopia-airstrike-al-shabab-somalia/>.
- **May 29, 2018:** Federal prosecutors in New York sentence Maalik Alim Jones to 35 years in prison for joining al-Shabaab.  
Jones pled guilty in September 2017 to three charges of conspiring to provide material support to al-Shabaab, conspiring to receive military training from the terror group, and carrying and using an AK-47 machine gun, rocket-propelled grenades, and other destructive devices. Prosecutors have said that Jones traveled to Somalia in 2011 to train, work, and fight with al-Shabaab. Court documents say that he became a member of al-Shabaab's specialized fighting force, known as Jaysh Ayman, and fought against Kenyan government soldiers, and that Jones appeared with other al-Shabaab fighters in at least two videos recovered from another al-Shabaab fighter. Source: Phil Helsel, "Baltimore man gets 35 years for joining Somali terror group," *NBC News*, May 29, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/baltimore-man-gets-35-years-joining-somali-terror-group-n878386>

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- May 23, 2018:** A Nairobi court charges Francis Macharia Karishu, a suspected member of al-Shabab, with planning to attack the Milimani Law Courts among other government buildings. Karishu denies three counts of conspiracy to commit a terrorist act and supporting a terrorist group. Source: "Suspected Al-Shabaab member charged in Nairobi court," Richard Munguti, Nairobi News, May 23, 2018, <https://nairobi.news.nation.co.ke/news/suspected-al-shabaab-member-charged-nairobi-court>.
- March 22, 2018:** SNA troops arrest a Kenyan al-Shabaab commander in the Gedo region. Source: Goldberg, "Kenyan Al Shabaab Commander Arrested By SNA Troops In Gedo Region, 14 AK7 Rifles Recovered," Intelligence Briefs, March 22, 2018, <https://intelligencebriefs.com/kenyan-al-shabaab-commander-arrested-by-sna-troops-in-gedo-region-14-ak7-rifles-recovered/>.
- March 20, 2018:** Two al-Shabaab recruiters are arrested in Kenya as they attempt to enter Somalia. Authorities believe that both men served as key al-Shabaab facilitators in Kenya. Source: Calvin Onsarigo, "Two al-Shabaab recruiters arrested on way to Somalia," *Star* (Nairobi), March 20, 2018, [https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/03/20/two-al-shabaab-recruiters-arrested-on-way-to-somalia\\_c1733163](https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018/03/20/two-al-shabaab-recruiters-arrested-on-way-to-somalia_c1733163).
- On November 8, the African Union begins withdrawing its troops from Somalia as part of the U.N. decision to transition security duties to the Somali government. On November 17, Somali authorities in the city of Afgooye finish a week-long security operation resulting in the arrest of 19 al-Shabab members including the Afgooye unit leader, Aweis Kadar Ahmed, his secretary, Aweis, and a bomb maker. Sources: Ismail Akwei, "AU starts troop withdrawal from Somalia amid rising al Shabaab attacks," Africa News, November 8, 2017, <http://www.africanews.com/2017/11/08/au-starts-troop-withdrawal-from-somalia-amid-rising-al-shabaab-attacks/>; "19 Al-Shabaab suspects arrested in Afgooye- Government," Somali Press Online, November 17, 2017, <https://somalipressonline.com/19-al-shabaab-suspects-arrested-afgooye-government/>.
- October 31, 2017:** A U.S. drone strike kills more than 100 al-Shabaab militants in the Bay region, approximately 200 kilometers northwest of Mogadishu. Source: Carla Bab, "US Military: Drone Strike Kills More Than 100 Al-Shabab in Somalia," VOA News, November 1, 2017, <https://www.voanews.com/amp/us-says-100-al-shabab-militants-killed-in-airstrike/4128607.html>.
- October 14, 2017:** A truck bomb explodes in the center of Mogadishu, killing at least 320 and injuring even more, in Somalia's worst terror attack to date. Authorities attribute the attack to al-Shabaab. Source: Jason Burke, "Mogadishu truck bomb: 500 casualties in Somalia's worst terrorist attack," *Guardian* (London), October 16, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/15/truck-bomb-mogadishu-kills-people-somalia>; Jason Burke, "Mogadishu bombing: al-Shabaab behind deadly blast, officials say," *Guardian* (London), October 16, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/16/mogadishu-bombing-al-shabaab-behind-deadly-blast-officials-say>.
- Al-Shabaab attacks Somali army bases on September 3 and 11, allegedly killing more than 36 soldiers.** On September 27, al-Shabaab militants kill the secretary-general of Somalia's national women's organization and the son of the organization's chairwoman in a drive-by shooting in Mogadishu. Source: "Al-Shabab attacks Somalia army base," Al Jazeera, September 3, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/al-shabab-attacks-somalia-army-base-170903072842617.html>; "Several dead as al-Shabab storms Somali border town," Al Jazeera, September 11, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/dead-al-shabab-storms-somalia-border-town-170911055926717.html>; "Al-Shabab attacks Somalia army base," Al Jazeera, September 3, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/al-shabab-attacks-somalia-army-base-170903072842617.html>; "Several dead as al-Shabab storms Somali border town," Al Jazeera, September 11, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/09/dead-al-shabab-storms-somalia-border-town-170911055926717.html>; Mohamed Olad Hassan, "At Least 7 Killed in Mogadishu Car Bombing," Voice of America, September 28, 2017, <https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-police-say-car-bomb-blast-kills-five-capital/4048297.html>.
- August 13, 2017:** Al-Shabaab's deputy leader, Mukhtar Robow, defects to the Somali regional government in the government-controlled town of Hudur. Robow was one of Al-Shabaab's founders and most senior leaders. Source: "Al-Shabab's Mukhtar Robow surrenders to government," Al Jazeera, August 13, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/08/al-shabab-mukhtar-robow-defects-government-side-170813141245475.html>.
- August 4, 2017:** Al-Shabaab seizes the Somali town of Leego after the Somali military and AMISOM peacekeepers withdraw from the town. Al-Shabaab military spokesman Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab tells Reuters, "The town is now under our control." Source:
- On July 13, Al-Shabaab fighters attack a government convoy in southeastern Kenya, killing two police officers and a civilian while kidnapping public works official Maryam Elmaawy. It is al-Shabaab's highest-profile kidnapping in the country to date. Kenyan forces rescue Elmaawy later in the day. On July 30, al-Shabaab fighters ambush an African Union convoy on a joint patrol with Somalia forces in Somalia, killing at least 23 AMISOM soldiers and one Somali soldier. The same day, Somali military and allied troops claim to kill senior al-Shabab commander Ali Mohamed Hussein, a.k.a. Ali Jabal. Sources: Tom Odula, "Kenya: 3 dead as extremists kidnap top government official," Associated Press, July 13, 2017, <https://apnews.com/5d78cf07e419492a80743a7efc61da7b/Kenya-3-dead-as-extremists-kidnap-top-government-official>; Rodney Muhumuza, "Uganda says al-Shabab kills 12 soldiers in Somalia ambush," Associated Press, July 31, 2017, <https://apnews.com/37e02a7fdbea4d4eb070237d951bca83/Uganda-says-al-Shabab-kills-12-soldiers-in-Somalia-ambush>; "Twenty-four killed in fighting between Somali, AU troops and al Shabaab, official says," Reuters, July 30, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-attacks-official/twenty-four-killed-in-fighting-between-somali-au-troops-and-al-shabaab-official-says-idUSKBN1AF0QG>; Aaron Maasho, "Somalia says kills senior al Shabaab commander in raid," Reuters, July 31, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-security-idUSKBN1AG284>.
- A series of al-Shabaab bombings across Somalia killing at least 112 people. On June 8, al-Shabaab gunmen and suicide bombers attack a military base in Af Urur in Somalia's Puntland state, killing 59 people and wounding 38 others. On June 11, U.S. and Somali forces destroy an al-Shabaab training base near Sakow, Somalia. According to the Somali government, the base was a "key command and supply hub." On June 14, a car bomb explodes at the gates of the Pizza House restaurant in Mogadishu. Five al-Shabaab gunmen storm the restaurant and take customers hostage, ultimately killing 31 and wounding 40. On June 20, an al-Shabaab suicide car bomb disguised as a milk delivery van explodes at Wadajir district headquarters in Mogadishu, killing 15 people and wounding 18. Another al-Shabaab suicide car bomb explodes at a police station in Mogadishu two days later, killing seven and wounding 12. Sources: Abdi Guled, "Nearly 70 dead in al-Shabab attack on Somalia military base," Associated Press, June 8, 2017, <https://apnews.com/463c87ff4f3e436c80bcb9c85867b207/Nearly-70-dead-in-al-Shabab-attack-on-Somalia-military-base>; Abdiqani Hassan and George Obulutsa, "umber of dead in al Shabaab attack in Somalia's Puntland rises to 59: officer," Reuters, June 10, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-attack-idUSKBN1910IR>; Abdiqani Hassan and George Obulutsa, "Number of dead in al Shabaab attack

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in Somalia's Puntland rises to 59: officer," Reuters, June 10, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-attack-idUSKBN1910IR>; Abdi Guled, "Nearly 70 dead in al-Shabab attack on Somalia military base," Associated Press, June 8, 2017, <https://apnews.com/463c87ff43e436c80bc9c85867b207/Nearly-70-dead-in-al-Shabab-attack-on-Somalia-military-base>; "U.S. air strike hits al Shabaab, Somalia says base destroyed," Reuters, June 11, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-attack/u-s-air-strike-hits-al-shabaab-somalia-says-base-destroyed-idUSKBN1920RR?il=0>; Abdi Guled, "Car bomb in Somalia capital kills at least 15, police say," Associated Press, June 20, 2017, <https://apnews.com/56bf173bcfed45cb89a6936cd34d2d87/Car-bomb-in-Somalia-capital-kills-at-least-15-police-say>; Abdi Guled, "Somali survivors tell of restaurant siege by rebels; 31 dead," Associated Press, June 15, 2017, <https://apnews.com/66ab79a75a624fa79e7170cc2901dded/Somali-survivors-tell-of-restaurant-siege-by-rebels-31-dead>; "7 dead in suicide blast at police station in Somalia capital," Associated Press, June 22, 2017, <https://apnews.com/a9fd90fc0431409e834e9f976772fd737-dead-in-suicide-blast-at-police-station-in-Somalia-capital>.

- Al-Shabaab claims multiple deadly attacks in Somalia and Kenya against civilian and government targets. On May 8, al-Shabaab claims responsibility after a car bomb kills at least five people in Mogadishu. On May 9, al-Shabaab fighters attack a military base in Goofgaduud, killing at least seven soldiers. Al-Shabaab claims it killed 16 soldiers and captured the entire town of Goofgaduud, which the Somali government does not immediately confirm.  
On May 16, four al-Shabaab gunmen break into the house of Kenyan government official Dekow Abbey Sirat and shoot him dead. The group claims it also killed several of Sirat's bodyguards and took their weapons. On May 24, a car bomb in Mogadishu kills five people and wounds six. Eight Kenyan soldiers are killed in two separate roadside bombings on the Kenyan side of the border. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for all three attacks. On May 31, a Kenyan police armored personnel vehicle runs over an improvised bomb, killing seven officers and one civilian. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility. Source: "Somali militant group al Shabaab claims Mogadishu car bomb attack," Reuters, May 8, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somali-blast-al-shabaab-idUSKBN1841YE>; Aaron Maasho, "Al Shabaab militants attack Somali army base, killing several soldiers," Reuters, May 9, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-security-idUSKBN185132>; Humphrey Malalo, "Al Shabaab gunmen kill official in northern Kenya: police, group," Reuters, May 16, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-security-idUSKCN18C11V>; Feisal Omar, "Al Shabaab bombing in Somali capital kills five, injures six," Reuters, May 24, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-blast-idUSKBN18K2AJ>; Tom Odula, "Police: 7 officers, 1 civilian killed in bombing," Associated Press, May 31, 2017, <https://apnews.com/18b9b0435eb84ddb9d2e7939e343307f/Police-7-Kenyan-officers-1-civilian-killed-in-bombing>. "Al Shabaab claims bomb attack on Somali police station," Reuters, June 5, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-blast-idUSKBN18W1NL>
- On April 6, new Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo declares war on al-Shabaab. He also offers al-Shabaab fighters a 60-day amnesty period. The government offers to provide employment and education to fighters who surrender during this period.  
The group formally rejects the offer and the declaration of war the following day. On April 9, an al-Shabaab suicide bomber kills at least 15 people in an attack near a military base in Mogadishu. On April 27, al-Shabaab gunmen kill national intelligence officer Mohamad Haji Ali while is his sitting in front of his home in Mogadishu. Source: "Al-Shabab fighters offered amnesty as new Somali president declares war," BBC News, April 6, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39513909>; Hussein Mohamed, "Somalia's President Declares War on Shabab Militants," New York Times, April 6, 2017, [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/world/africa/somalia-shabab.html?mcubz=0&\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/world/africa/somalia-shabab.html?mcubz=0&_r=0); "Al-Shabab dismisses Somali president war declaration," BBC News, April 7, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39527226>; Connor Gaffey, "Somalia's Al-Shabab Militants Ramp Up Attacks After Rejecting President's Amnesty Offer," Newsweek, April 10, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/somalia-al-shabaab-farmaajo-581365>; "Somalia's al Shabaab kills senior national security officer: police," Reuters, April 27, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-security-idUSKBN17T19Y>.
- **January 27, 2017:** Al-Shabaab fighters attack a Kenyan military base in the southern Somali town of Kulbiyow near the Kenyan border, killing nine soldiers. The Kenyan military claims to kill 70 militants in repelling the attack.  
Al-Shabaab claims it killed dozens of Kenyan troops Source: Abdi Sheikh and Feisal Omar, "Somalia's al Shabaab says kills dozens of Kenyan troops in raid on base," Reuters, January 27, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-attacks-idUSKBN15B0C9>.
- Al-Shabaab militants kill several government officials in Bosasso in Somalia's semi-autonomous Puntland region. On December 15, gunmen shoot Colonel Jama Sahardiid, second deputy commander of Puntland Police forces, outside a restaurant in Bosasso. Sahardiid dies from his wounds the following day.  
On December 20, militants shoot and kill Aden Huruse, an aide in Puntland's presidential palace, at a restaurant in Bosasso. On December 25, gunmen kill military prosecutor Abdikarim Hassan Firdiye as he is getting out of his car outside a restaurant in Bosasso. Source: Abdiqani Hassan and Feisal Omar, "Al Shabaab militants shoot prosecutor dead in Somalia's Puntland," Reuters, December 25, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-attacks-idUSKBN14E0BJ>.
- Al-Shabaab targets Somali government officials in several attacks in Mogadishu, including the Presidential Palace, and several hotels and a restaurant reportedly frequented by Somali officials. At least 22 people are killed.  
Source: "At least seven dead in al-Shabaab attack on Mogadishu restaurant," *Telegraph* (London), August 26, 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/26/at-least-seven-dead-in-gunmen-attack-on-mogadishu-restaurant-cla/>; Abdi Sheikh and Feisal Omar, "Car bomb outside Somali President's Palace kills at least 10," Reuters, August 30, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-blast-idUSKCN1150TV>; Feisal Omar, "Death toll from Shabaab attack on Mogadishu hotels rises to 22 – police," MSN, August 31, 2016, <http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/death-toll-from-shabaab-attack-on-mogadishu-hotels-rises-to-22-police/ar-AAii7zd?li=AA4Zpp&ocid=spartandhp>.
- A U.S. drone strike kills senior al-Shabaab intelligence official Hassan Ali Dhoore on April 2.  
Al-Shabaab conducts multiple attacks against government officials including members of parliament and the Mogadishu mayor's office in separate attacks later in the month. Sources: "Al-Shabab fighters offered amnesty as new Somali president declares war," BBC News, April 6, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39513909>; Hussein Mohamed, "Somalia's President Declares War on Shabab Militants," *New York Times*, April 6, 2017, [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/world/africa/somalia-shabab.html?mcubz=0&\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/06/world/africa/somalia-shabab.html?mcubz=0&_r=0); "Al-Shabab dismisses Somali president war declaration," BBC News, April 7, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39527226>; Connor Gaffey, "Somalia's Al-Shabab Militants Ramp Up Attacks After Rejecting President's Amnesty Offer," *Newsweek*, April 10, 2017, <http://www.newsweek.com/somalia-al-shabaab-farmaajo-581365>; "Somalia's al Shabaab kills senior national security officer: police," Reuters, April 27, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-security-idUSKBN17T19Y>.
- **March 5, 2016:** A U.S. airstrike hits the al-Shabaab training facility of Camp Raso, 120 miles north of Mogadishu, killing approximately 150 fighters.  
U.S. officials believed the fighters completed "training for a large-scale attack" against American and African Union forces. Source: Helene Cooper, "U.S. Strikes in Somalia Kill 150 Shabab Fighters," *New York Times*, March 7, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/08/world/africa/us-airstrikes-somalia.html>.
- Al-Shabaab conducts its first attack against Western intelligence agents.  
An al-Shabaab militant attempts to bring down a Daallo airbus flight from Mogadishu to Djibouti on February 2, attempting to kill Western and NATO intelligence officials on board. Purported al-Shabaab gunmen and a suicide car bomber attack Mogadishu's SYL hotel on February 26, leaving at least 14 dead and others wounded. Sources: "Foreign Travel Advice: Somalia," U.K. Government, accessed September 8, 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/somalia/terrorism>; Robyn Kriel and Susanna Capelouto, "Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for Somalia in-flight jet blast," CNN, February 13, 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/02/13/africa/somalia-plane-bomb-al-shabaab/>; "Terror attack at Somali hotel leaves at least 14 daed, including 9 civilians," Fox News, February 26, 2016, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2016/02/26/terrorists->

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- **January 21, 2016:** Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for an attack on a beachfront restaurant in Mogadishu, killing at least 26. The terrorist attack—involving suicide bombers and gunmen—lasts for eight hours before Somali security forces are able to restore security. Source: Morgan Winsor, “Somalia Lido Beach Attack: Mogadishu Resident Loses Close Friends In Al-Shabab Violence,” International Business Times, January 25, 2016, <http://www.ibtimes.com/somalia-lido-beach-attack-mogadishu-resident-loses-close-friends-al-shabab-violence-2276408>.
- **December 7, 2015:** The prolific jihadi propagandist and recruiter Mohamed Abdullahi Hassan, a.k.a. “Mujahid Miski,” surrenders himself to Somali authorities. Miski is a Minnesota man of Somali descent who was wanted by the FBI for providing material support to al-Shabaab. Source: Susan Elizabeth Littlefield, “Minn. Man Who Urged Jihad Surrenders In Somalia,” CBS Minnesota, December 7, 2015, <http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2015/12/07/minn-man-who-urged-jihad-surrenders-in-somalia/>.
- **December 2, 2015:** A U.S. airstrike kills senior al-Shabaab leader Abdirahman Sandhere along with two other militants in Somalia. Source: “US killed al-Shabaab senior leader in Somalia airstrike, Pentagon says,” Guardian (London), December 7, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/dec/07/al-shabaab-leader-killed-airstrike-isis>.
- **September 3, 2015:** Al-Shabaab launches an attack in southern Somalia against a remote African Union outpost that kills 37 in total, including 25 Somali and 12 Ugandan soldiers. Source: Robyn Kriel and Briana Duggan, “Al-Shabaab attack in Somalia kills dozens of AU troops,” CNN, September 3, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/09/03/africa/somalia-al-shabaab-attack/>.
- **July 15, 2015:** Al-Shabaab militants launch coordinated attacks on a stadium housing peacekeepers, as well as two hotels, in Mogadishu. According to police, six civilians and five militants are killed in the attacks. Source: “Robyn Kriel, “Al-Shabaab says it is responsible for three Somalia attacks,” CNN, July 15, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/10/africa/somalia-al-shabaab-attacks/>.
- **July 7, 2015:** Al-Shabaab kills more than a dozen in an attack on the village of Soko Mbuz near the Kenyan-Somali border weeks before U.S. President Barack Obama’s visit to Kenya. Source: “Al-Shabaab kills more than a dozen in Kenya attack weeks before Obama visit,” Guardian (London), July 7, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/07/al-shabaab-kills-more-than-a-dozen-in-kenya-attack-weeks-before-obama-visit>.
- **April 2, 2015:** Al-Shabaab gunmen storm Garissa University in Kenya, killing 148 people. The gunmen specifically target Christian students. It is al-Shabaab’s deadliest attack in Kenya to date. The university reopens nine months later. Source: “Who are Somalia’s al-Shabab?” BBC News, December 9, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15336689>; “Kenya’s Garissa university reopens after deadly al-Shabab attack,” BBC News, January 4, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35221137>.
- **January 27, 2015:** Former senior al-Shabaab intelligence chief Zakariya Ismail Hersi claims that he has renounced his membership of the extremist group. Source: Abdi Guled, “Somalia: Al-Shabab leader says he has quit terror group,” Associated Press, January 27, 2015, <http://www.bigstory.ap.org/article/f519f587d9ea44b4b596683543e570d1/somalia-al-shabab-leader-says-he-has-quit-terror-group>.
- **December 30, 2014:** U.S. air strikes kill an al-Shabaab leader known as Abdishakur (a.k.a. Tahliil), reportedly head of the group’s group’s security network, the Amniyat. Source: Abdi Sheikh, “UPDATE 2- Al Shabaab leader killed in U.S. air strike in Mogadishu,” Reuters, December 30, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/30/usa-somalia-airstrike-idUSL6N0UE2BV20141230>.
- **December 25, 2014:** Eight al-Shabaab militants storm an African Union (AU) building and kill three Ugandan peacekeepers and a civilian contractor. Al-Shabab claims that it killed 14 peacekeepers, explaining that it “targeted the enemies at a time they were celebrating Christmas...” Al-Shabab claims the attack is in retaliation for a U.S. strike that killed Godane. Sources: Abdi Sheikh and Feisal Omar, “Islamist gunmen attack African Union base in Somalia,” Reuters, December 25, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/27/us-somalia-security-idUSKBN0K503C20141227>; Omar Nor, Mohammed Tawfeeq, and Susanna Capelouto, “Al-Shabaab: Attack on base was revenge for U.S. airstrike,” CNN, December 26, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/26/world/africa/somalia-violence/>.
- **December 15, 2014:** Al-Shabaab attacks a military base in southern Somalia, killing at least 10 soldiers. Source: Abdi Sheikh, Feisal Omar, et al, “Islamist rebels kill 10 Somali soldiers in attack on base,” Reuters, December 15, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/15/somalia-attacks-idUSL1N0TZ09520141215>.
- **December 12, 2014:** Al-Shabaab kidnaps Quran teacher Mohamed Hussein near the central Somali city of Bulo Berde. Al-Shabaab beheads Hussein after he reportedly refuses to obey al-Shabaab’s order to leave his village. His headless corpse is later found dumped close to his home. Source: Omar Nor, “Al-Shabaab blamed for five beheadings,” CNN, December 15, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/15/world/africa/somalia-violence/>.
- **December 2, 2014:** After identifying non-Muslim workers at a quarry in Kenya, al-Shabaab massacres 36 people, most of whom are reportedly “lined up, and shot in the head, at close range” while others are beheaded. Source: “Al-Shabab massacres non-Muslims at Kenya quarry,” BBC News, last modified December 2, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30288137>.
- **November 22, 2014:** After hijacking a bus heading to Nairobi, Kenya, al-Shabaab massacres 28 civilians. Al-Shabaab reportedly separates “Muslims from non-Muslims by challenging the non-Somali passengers to recite the *shahada*, the Islamic declaration of faith.” Nineteen men and nine women are murdered, shot at close range. Source: Tom Odula, “Somalia’s al-Shabab kills 28 non-Muslims in Kenya,” *Washington Post*, November 22, 2014, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/somalias-al-shabab-kills-28-non-muslims-in-kenya/2014/11/22/d7571d5c-7272-11e4-ad12-3734c461eab6\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/somalias-al-shabab-kills-28-non-muslims-in-kenya/2014/11/22/d7571d5c-7272-11e4-ad12-3734c461eab6_story.html).

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- **October 19, 2014:** Kenyan and Somali soldiers kill five suspected al-Shabaab members.  
The suspects were attempting to cross into Kenya from Ethiopia in a car filled with 220 pounds of explosives and six suicide vests. Source: Tom Odula, "Kenya: 5 suspected bombers killed," Associated Press, October 19, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/ac07e34b824c485e86e799f998d387c4/kenya-5-terrorists-killed-car-bomb-recovered>.
- **October 5, 2014:** African Union and Somali troops capture Barawe, a key coastal town 135 miles southwest of Mogadishu and the last of al-Shabaab's major strongholds.  
According to the Somali military, al-Shabaab militants flee by land and sea. Al-Shabaab has used the port to import troops and weapons while exporting millions of dollars' worth of Somali charcoal. Source: Abdi Guled, "Pro-Somali troops secure last al-Shabab bastion," Associated Press, October 5, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/ff42269eb581420db323295647940620/pro-somalia-troops-secure-last-al-shabab-bastion>.
- **September 24, 2014:** An Egyptian court sentences telecommunications engineer Mahmoud Abdel Aziz to life in prison for working as a bomb-maker and communications specialist for al-Shabaab.  
According to the prosecutor, Abdel Aziz, also known as Hakeem al-Masry, helped al-Shabaab communicate with al-Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Source: "Egypt sentences al-Qaeda member to life," Associated Press, September 25, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/3b34d0f830b542a388ef3946210c57f0/egypt-sentences-alleged-al-qaida-member-life>.
- **September 8, 2014:** Al-Shabaab pledges allegiance to a new leader, Sheikh Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaidah, stating that their enemies would reap the "bitter fruits" of revenge.  
Abu Ubaidah comes from a branch of Somalia's Dir clan, originating in the south. Godane was also a member of the clan but from a northern branch. It is suggested that the new leader is related to Godane maternally. Just hours after the pledge, the group claims responsibility for two car bomb attacks that targeted African peacekeepers and a TFG convoy, killing 12 civilians. Sources: Paul Crompton, "Somalia's Islamist al-Shabaab at risk of splintering," Al Arabiya News, September 9, 2014, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/analysis/2014/09/09/Somalia-s-Islamist-al-Shabaab-at-risk-of-splintering.html>; "Al-Shabaab pledge allegiance to new leader," Al Arabiya News, September 8, 2014, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2014/09/08/Somalia-s-al-Shabaab-pledge-allegiance-to-new-leader.html>.
- **September 5, 2014:** The U.S. confirms al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Abdi Godane was killed in the September 1, 2014 airstrike.  
Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud calls on al-Shabaab to renounce violence and embrace peace. Source: Robert Burns and Lolita C. Baldor, "US confirms death of Somalia terror group leader," Associated Press, September 5, 2014, <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/pentagon-confirms-death-somalia-terror-leader>.
- **September 1, 2014 - September 6, 2014:** On September 1, U.S. airstrikes kill al-Shabaab leader Ahmed Abdi Godan in southern Somalia.  
On September 6, al-Shabaab reaffirms its allegiance to al-Qaeda and promises revenge for Godane's death. The Somali government braces itself for an undoubtedly violent backlash. Government intelligence reveals that al-Shabaab is planning retaliatory attacks. Source: Farouk Chothia, "Ahmed Abdi Godane: Somalia's killed al-Shabab leader," BBC News, September 9, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-29034409>; Abdi Sheikh, "Somali Islamist rebels pledge allegiance to new leader," Reuters, September 8, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/09/08/us-somalia-islamist-idUSKBN0H30CH20140908>
- **February 21, 2014:** Following a series of suicide bombings over a few weeks, al-Shabaab attacks Somalia's presidential palace with a combination of car bombs and engages in a gun battle with palace guards.  
Fourteen people are killed, including five Somali officials and soldiers and nine attackers. The interior minister confirms that two government officials are among the dead. Source: "Al-Shabab attacks Somali presidential palace," Al Jazeera, February 22, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/02/somali-presidential-hq-attacked-al-shabab-201422112586270319.html>.
- **January 1, 2014:** Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for a suicide car bombing that kills at least 12 people and injures several others at the Jazeera Hotel in Mogadishu.  
Source: "Al-Shabab claims Somali hotel bombings," Al Jazeera, January 2, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/01/al-shabab-claim-somali-hotel-bombing-20141292311985982.html>.
- **November 19, 2013:** Al-Shabaab insurgents launch a complex attack against the central police station in Beledweyne, killing 24 Somali police officers and one Djiboutian AMISOM soldier, and injuring several others.  
Source: United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia," S/2014/140, March 3, 2014, <http://unsom.unmissions.org/Portals/UNSOM/SG%20Report%20March%202014.pdf>.
- **November 8, 2013:** The group attempts to detonate a sophisticated IED embedded in a laptop at Maka al Mukarama, a popular hotel in Mogadishu frequented by high-level government and security officials.  
The attack kills six and injures 15. A secondary VBIED detonates in the parking lot. Source: "Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa Overview," *Country Reports on Terrorism 2013*, U.S. Department of State, April 30, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/224820.htm>.
- **September 21, 2013 - September 24, 2013:** Al-Shabaab militants, including a Norwegian citizen of Somali origin and three Somali nationals, raid Westgate Shopping Centre in Nairobi, Kenya.  
In the deadliest attack in Kenya in 15 years, the attackers kill 67 people over four days and wound more than 200 people. Source: Matt Bryden, "The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity," Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2014, [http://csis.org/files/publication/140221\\_Bryden\\_ReinventionOfAlShabaab\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf).
- **September 12, 2013 - November 5, 2013:** Al-Shabaab twice targets the convoy of Interim Juba Administration President Ahmed Madobe with a car bomb outside of Kismayo's airport.  
Madobe is slightly injured in the first attack. Civilians are killed in both attacks. Source: "Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa Overview," *Country Reports on Terrorism 2013*, U.S. Department of State, April 30, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/224820.htm>.
- **July 27, 2013:** The group attacks the Turkish embassy housing complex in Mogadishu using a car bomb and small weapons, killing eight and injuring 13.  
Source: "Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa Overview," *Country Reports on Terrorism 2013*, U.S. Department of State, April 30, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/224820.htm>.

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- **Al-Shabaab's bloodiest internal battle ever destabilizes the group, leading to a major purge.**  
The purge is thought to have removed 200 members. Top leaders who opposed Godane meet varying fates, with Ibrahim al-Afghani and Maa'lim Hashi executed, Mukhtar Robow escaping, and Hasan Dahir Aweys fleeing but being captured by government militias and handed over to Somalia's Transitional Federal Government. Godane consolidates control over the weakened, smaller group and implements a headline strategy and tactics. Source: Ken Menkhaus, "Al-Shabab's Capabilities Post-Westgate," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 2 (February 2014): 4-9, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CTCSentinel-Vol7Iss2.pdf>.
  - **June 19, 2013:** Al-Shabaab attacks the U.N. compound in Mogadishu.  
The attack follows a similar pattern as the Supreme Court plans, with a VBIED exploding at the main entrance, allowing a small team of gunmen to enter. A total of 22 people are killed, including four U.N. personnel, four local security guards, and all attackers. Source: Matt Bryden, "The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity," Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2014, [http://csis.org/files/publication/140221\\_Bryden\\_ReinventionOfAlShabaab\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf).
  - **April 14, 2013:** Al-Shabaab attacks the Supreme Court in Mogadishu using a VBIED to breach the main entrance.  
Gunmen, some wearing explosive vests, then enter the building to carry out a killing spree. All of the attackers are reportedly killed and more than 35 people perish in the attack. Source: Matt Bryden, "The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity," Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2014, [http://csis.org/files/publication/140221\\_Bryden\\_ReinventionOfAlShabaab\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf).
  - **March 28, 2013:** Al-Shabaab detonates a car bomb aimed at Somali intelligence chief Kahlif Ahmed Ereg near the National Theater in Mogadishu.  
The bomb kills 10 civilians and injures 15. Source: "Chapter 2. Country Reports: Africa Overview," *Country Reports on Terrorism 2013*, U.S. Department of State, April 30, 2014, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2013/224820.htm>.
  - **August 24, 2012:** Al-Shabaab attempts a complex attack, targeting the Muna Hotel in Mogadishu.  
Al-Shabaab gunmen, disguised as government security personnel, lay siege to the building and a two-hour gun battle ensues before one of the assailants detonates an explosive vest. The attack kills 32 people, including several members of parliament. Although the attack was deemed successful by al-Shabaab, the group did not attempt another operation of such complexity until two years later, when they attempted to kill Somalia's newly elected president at Mogadishu's Jazeera Hotel. Source: Matt Bryden, "The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity," Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2014, [http://csis.org/files/publication/140221\\_Bryden\\_ReinventionOfAlShabaab\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf).
  - **February 1, 2012:** Ayman Al-Zawahri, Osama bin Laden's successor as al-Qaeda leader, formally announces al-Shabaab's alignment with al-Qaeda.  
Godane's request to unite with al-Qaeda was originally opposed by bin Laden, who told Godane that it would not be in al-Shabaab's best interests. However, al-Zawahri, in an apparent bid to assert his power over the strong al-Qaeda chapters in Syria and Yemen, moved quickly to grant Godane's request. Sources: Jonathan Masters, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified September 5, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>; Fred Dews, "Al Shabaab: Background on the Somalia-based Terrorist Group that Attacked a Nairobi Mall," Brookings Institution, September 23, 2013, <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/brookings-now/posts/2013/09/al-shabaab-somalia-terrorist-nairobi-mall-attack>.
  - **August 1, 2010:** AMISOM and TFG forces take control of Mogadishu and other major urban centers, taking significant territory from al-Shabaab.  
Less than two weeks later, Godane replaces two influential and independently minded deputies, Mukhtar Robow and Ibrahim Haji Jaama' al-Afghani, with staunch loyalists Mahad Warsame and Qaley Karatey. Sources: Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified March 13, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>; Matt Bryden, "The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity," Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2014, [http://csis.org/files/publication/140221\\_Bryden\\_ReinventionOfAlShabaab\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf).
  - **July 11, 2010:** Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for several near-simultaneous bombings that kill dozens of people in sports bars in Uganda.  
The three coordinated blasts, which detonate just seven minutes apart, kill 76 people watching the World Cup in Kampala. A fourth bomb left at a discotheque failed to go off. This is the group's first attack on foreign soil. The group's spokesman proclaims, "We are sending a message to every country who is willing to send troops to Somalia that they will face attacks on their territory." This attack brought together several of the elements from the 2009 bombings—near simultaneous attacks, employing PBIEDs, VBIEDs, and mobile-phone trigger. Sources: In prison with al-Shabab: What drives Somali militants? BBC News, last modified October 4, 2013, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24379013>; Jonathan Masters, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified September 5, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.
  - **September 17, 2009:** Two VBIEDs penetrate the security perimeter of an AMISOM Force Headquarters, killing 17 peacekeepers, including the deputy force commander.  
Source: Matt Bryden, "The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity," Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2014, [http://csis.org/files/publication/140221\\_Bryden\\_ReinventionOfAlShabaab\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf).
  - **June 19, 2009:** Somalia National Security Minister Omar Hashi Aden is killed in a large-scale suicide car bomb attack in Beletwyne.  
Over 30 people are killed in the attack. The group seeks to intensify its strategy to strong-arm the Somali population, focusing on high-target assassinations and clan elders. Source: United Nations Security Council, "List of Individuals and Entities Subject to the Measures Imposed by Paragraphs 1, 3, and 7 of Security Council Resolution 1844," March 11, 2014, [http://www.un.org/sc/committees/751/pdf/1844\\_cons\\_list.pdf](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/751/pdf/1844_cons_list.pdf).
  - The group successfully launches the use of explosive vests in a sophisticated attack against African Union (AU) military bases in Mogadishu. They employ a mix of person-borne improvised explosive devices (PBIEDs) and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs), followed by indirect fire. Similar tactics were used in a September bombing at an AU military base. Source: Matt Bryden, "The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity," Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2014, [http://csis.org/files/publication/140221\\_Bryden\\_ReinventionOfAlShabaab\\_Web.pdf](http://csis.org/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf).
  - **January 13, 2009:** Ethiopia pulls out of Somalia after a series of setbacks and AMISOM forces, comprised mostly of troops from Uganda and Burundi, move in.  
Source: Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified March 13, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.
  - **October 29, 2008:** The first known U.S. suicide bomber for al-Shabaab, Shirwa Ahmed, is part of an attack in Hargeisa that kills 24 people.
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Ahmed was a Somali-American from Minnesota who trained with al-Shabaab. Source: Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified March 13, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.

- **February 26, 2008:** The U.S. State Department designates al-Shabaab a Foreign Terrorist Organization. Source: Department of State, Public Notice, "In the Matter of the Designation of al-Shabaab, aka al-Shabab, aka Shabaab, aka the Youth, aka Mujahidin Al-Shabaab Movement, aka Mujahideen Youth Movement, aka Mujahidin Youth Movement, aka MYM, aka Harakat Shabab al-Mujahidin, aka Hizbul Shabaab, aka Hisb'ul Shabaab, aka al-Shabaab al-Islamiya, aka Youth Wing, aka al-Shabaab al-Islam, aka al-Shabaab al-Jihaad, aka the Unity of Islamic Youth, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization pursuant to Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as Amended, Public Notice 6136," *Federal Register* 73, no. 53 (March 18, 2008): 14550, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2008-03-18/pdf/E8-5444.pdf>.
- - : Al-Shabaab is able to garner support from local Somalis and the Somali diaspora. Galvanized by the Ethiopian invasion, al-Shabaab becomes the most powerful Somali guerilla group, receiving funding and recruits. Source: Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified March 13, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.
- **December 6, 2006:** Somalia's transitional government requests an intervention from neighboring countries to quell tension caused by the ICU in Mogadishu. Ethiopia, a majority Christian country, invades Somalia and takes Mogadishu with little opposition from the ICU. Much of the ICU flees to neighboring countries and al-Shabaab retreats to the south, where it begins organizing asymmetric attacks on conventional Ethiopian forces. Source: Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified March 13, 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.
- The Islamic Courts Union (ICU), supported by al-Shabaab militants, grabs control of Mogadishu after a battle against a coalition of warlords. Source: Jonathan Masters, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified September 5, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.
- Al-Itihad al-Islami (AIAI) splits over goals and strategy, with the old guard creating a new political front and the youth members seeking to establish a "Greater Somalia" ruled by sharia. These latter hardliners join the ICU. Source: Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified September 5, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.
- - : A coalition of 11 sharia courts forms the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). Sharif Sheikh Ahmed is named leader. Source: Jonathan Masters and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified September 5, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650>.

### **Violent history:**

As al-Shabaab lost control of urban centers, its tactics shifted to asymmetrical attacks, with greater reliance on suicide bombs, IEDs, hit-and-runs, political threats, assassinations, and grenade attacks.<sup>69</sup> The group's new tactics emphasized collaboration with its historical enemies in Somalia, resulting in alliances and deals that make it difficult for external actors to dismantle the group.<sup>70</sup> Godane's suppression of internal opposition allowed him to drive al-Shabaab towards more indiscriminate modes of violence similar to al-Qaeda's.

Al-Shabaab was reportedly responsible for more than 4,000 fatalities in 2016, according to the U.S. Department of Defense-affiliated Africa Center for Strategic Studies, based on data collected from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). As a result, al-Shabaab reportedly overtook Boko Haram as Africa's deadliest terror group. ACLED attributed 3,499 fatalities to Boko Haram in 2016, while ISIS killed 2,350 people.<sup>71</sup> A *Washington Post* analysis disputed the findings, however, claiming that al-Shabaab actually killed 432 people in 2016, while Boko Haram killed 790. The *Washington Post* explained the discrepancy because ACLED included all acts of violence without specifically labeling which were acts of terrorism. The *Post* also counted only incidents where al-Shabaab was the primary actor involved.<sup>72</sup>

The majority of the group's attacks are retaliatory against perceived injustices against Muslims and against al-Shabaab's mission in Somalia. Targets includes the U.S. and other Western countries, as well as those states, such as Uganda and Kenya, who have contributed to troops to AMISOM.

In April 2017, new Somali President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo declared war on al-Shabaab while offering al-Shabaab fighters a 60-day amnesty period. The government offered to provide employment and education to fighters who surrendered during this period. The group formally rejected the offer and the declaration of war the following day. On April 9, an al-Shabaab suicide bomber killed at least 15 people in an attack near a military base in Mogadishu.<sup>73</sup>

As outlined below, al-Shabaab has engaged in both guerrilla and terror tactics since its inception. A key differentiator and contributor to its sustainability as an organization is al-Shabaab's adaptability. This military and political flexibility is assisted by the leadership's lack of direct accountability to a constituency,<sup>74</sup> enabling them to carry out any number of attacks on whatever targets they choose. One of the major developments within the organization has been its tactical shifts and hybridization of violent attacks, combining both suicide bombers and suicide infantry.<sup>75</sup> According to Matt Bryden at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the Westgate Mall attack was the culmination of successfully tried and tested tactics, techniques and procedures honed back home in Somalia.<sup>76</sup> Specifically, al-Shabaab understood from past experience that breaching the perimeter of the mall would be necessary to overtake it, so their typical suicide-bombing tactic would not work there. Consequently, the group used hand grenades to penetrate the structure.

### Timeline of Violent Activities:

- **October 29, 2008:** The first known American suicide bomber for al-Shabaab, Shirwa Ahmed, is part of attack in Hargeisa that kills 24 people. Ahmed was a Somali-American from Minnesota who trained with al-Shabaab.<sup>77</sup>
- **February 2009:** Al-Shabaab successfully uses explosive vests in a sophisticated attack against African Union (AU) military bases in Mogadishu. They employ a mix of person-borne improvised explosive devices (PBIEDs) and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs), followed by indirect fire. Similar tactics were used in a September bombing at an AU military base.<sup>78</sup>
- **June 19, 2009:** Somalia National Security Minister Omar Hashi Aden is killed in a large-scale suicide car bomb attack in Beletwyne. Over 30 people are killed in the attack. The group seeks to intensify its strategy to strong-arm the Somali-population, focusing on high-target assassinations and clan elders.<sup>79</sup>
- **September 17, 2009:** Two VBIEDs penetrate the security perimeter of an AMISOM Force Headquarters, killing 17 peacekeepers, including the deputy force commander.<sup>80</sup>
- **July 11, 2010:** Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for several near-simultaneous bombings that kill dozens of people in sports bars in Uganda. The three coordinated blasts, which detonate just seven minutes apart, kill 76 people watching the World Cup in Kampala.<sup>81</sup> A fourth bomb left at a discotheque fails to go off. This is the group's first attack on foreign soil. The group's spokesman proclaims, "We are sending a message to every country who is willing to send troops to Somalia that they will face attacks on their territory."<sup>82</sup> This attack brought together several of the elements from the 2009 bombings—near simultaneous attacks, employing PBIEDs, VBIEDs, and mobile-phone trigger.
- **August 24, 2012:** Al-Shabaab attempts a complex attack, targeting the Muna Hotel in Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab gunmen, disguised as government security personnel, lay siege to the building and a two-hour gun battle ensues before one of the assailants detonates an explosive

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vest. The attack kills 32 people, including several members of parliament. Although the attack was deemed successful by al-Shabaab, the group does not attempt another operation of such complexity until two years later, when they attempted to kill Somalia's newly elected president at Mogadishu's Jazeera Hotel.<sup>83</sup>

- **March 28, 2013:** Al-Shabaab detonates a car bomb aimed at Somali intelligence chief Kahlif Ahmed Ereg near the National Theater in Mogadishu. The bomb kills 10 civilians and injures 15.<sup>84</sup>
- **April 14, 2013:** Al-Shabaab attacks the Supreme Court using a VBIED to breach the main entrance. Gunmen, some wearing explosive vests, then enter the building to carry out a killing spree. All of the attackers are reportedly killed and more than 35 people are killed in the attack.<sup>85</sup>
- **June 19, 2013:** Al-Shabaab attacks the U.N. compound in Mogadishu. The attack follows a similar pattern as the Supreme Court plans, with a VBIED exploding at the main entrance, allowing a small team of gunmen to enter. A total of 22 people are killed, including four U.N. international personnel, four local security guards, and all attackers.<sup>86</sup>
- **June 2013:** Al-Shabaab's bloodiest internal battle ever destabilizes the group, leading to a major purge. The purge is thought to have removed 200 members. Top leaders who opposed Godane meet varying fates, with Ibrahim al-Afghani and Maa'lim Hashi executed, Mukhtar Robow escaping, and Hasan Dahir Aweys fleeing but being captured by government militias and handed over to Somalia's Transitional Federal Government.<sup>87</sup> Godane consolidates control over the weakened, smaller group and implements a hardline strategy and tactics.
- **July 12, 2013:** Al-Shabaab attacks an AMISOM convoy en route to Mogadishu International Airport. The group publicly admits they had tried to target U.S. intelligence officers.<sup>88</sup>
- **July 27, 2013:** Al-Shabaab attacks the Turkish embassy housing complex in Mogadishu using a car bomb and small weapons, killing eight and injuring 13.<sup>89</sup>
- **September 3 and 4, 2013:** Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's convoy strikes a roadside bomb as he travels to Merka, Lower Shabelle. No casualties are reported, though one Somali soldier is injured.<sup>90</sup>
- **September 7, 2013:** Eighteen civilians are killed at the popular Villa Restaurant in Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab employs a two-part VBIED and suicide attack.<sup>91</sup>
- **September 12 and November 5, 2013:** Al-Shabaab twice targets the convoy of Interim Juba Administration President Ahmed Madobe with a car bomb outside of Kismayo's airport. Madobe is slightly injured in the first attack. Civilians are killed in both attacks.<sup>92</sup>
- **September 21 - 24, 2013:** Al-Shabaab militants, including a Norwegian citizen of Somali origin and three Somali nationals, raid Westgate Shopping Centre in Nairobi, Kenya. In the deadliest attack in Kenya in 15 years, the attackers kill 67 people and wound more than 200 over four days. The victims include six Kenyan security personnel.<sup>93</sup>
- **November 8, 2013:** The group attempts to detonate a sophisticated IED embedded in a laptop at Maka al Mukarama, a popular hotel in Mogadishu frequented by high-level government and security officials. The attack kills six and injures 15. A secondary VBIED detonates in the parking lot.<sup>94</sup>
- **November 19, 2013:** Al-Shabaab insurgents launch a complex attack against the central police station in Beledweyne, killing 24 Somali police officers and one Djiboutian AMISOM soldier, and injuring several others.<sup>95</sup>
- **December 5, 2013:** A suicide car bomber hits a convoy of the Puntland security forces in central Boosaaso, killing three police officers and four civilians, while injuring several others.<sup>96</sup>
- **January 1, 2014:** Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for a suicide car bombing that kills at least 12 people and injures several others at the Jazeera Hotel in Mogadishu.<sup>97</sup>
- **January 15, 2014:** Al-Shabaab attempts to launch an attack on Somali National Army (SNA) positions but proves unsuccessful.<sup>98</sup>
- **January 21, 2014:** Two roadside explosions kill three civilians and injure 13.<sup>99</sup>
- **February 13, 2014:** A U.N. convoy is hit by a suicide car bomber en route to the Mogadishu International Airport, killing several Somali bystanders.<sup>100</sup>
- **February 21, 2014:** Following a series of suicide bombings over a few weeks, al-Shabaab attacks Somalia's presidential palace with a combination of car bombs and engages in a gun battle with palace guards. Fourteen people are left dead, including five Somali officials and soldiers and nine attackers. The interior minister confirms that two government officials are among the dead.<sup>101</sup>

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- **September 8, 2014:** A suicide bomber attacks Somalia's Lower Shabelle region, killing 12 civilians and wounding two soldiers. Later, a second suicide attacker rams his car into the convoy escorting Somali intelligence commander Abdifatah Shaweye to the scene of the first attack. Shaweye is lightly wounded. No further casualties are reported.<sup>102</sup>
- **October 12, 2014:** A car bomb explodes outside a café in Mogadishu, killing 11 and wounding eight. Al-Shabaab is suspected.<sup>103</sup>
- **October 15, 2014:** A car bomb explodes near the presidential palace in Mogadishu, Somalia, killing five and wounding seven, mostly children. Al-Shabaab is suspected.<sup>104</sup>
- **November 17, 2014:** Al-Shabaab militants open fire on the car of a 60-year old Somali-American in Mogadishu. Separately, militants shoot and kill a freelance journalist in central Somalia.<sup>105</sup>
- **November 22, 2014:** Al-Shabaab hijacks a bus heading to Nairobi, Kenya, and separates Muslims from non-Muslims by challenging the non-Somali passengers to recite the shahada, the Islamic declaration of faith. The hijackers kill 28.<sup>106</sup>
- **December 2, 2014:** After identifying non-Muslim workers at a quarry in Kenya, al-Shabaab massacres 36 people, most of whom are reportedly "lined up, and shot in the head, at close range" while others are beheaded.<sup>107</sup>
- **December 3, 2014:** Al-Shabaab carries out a car bomb attack on a U.N. convoy near Mogadishu airport, killing four Somalis, including a policeman and a contractor, and wounding 13 others.<sup>108</sup>
- **December 5, 2014:** Al-Shabaab suicide bombers kill up to seven people and wound dozens more in a restaurant in the northwest town of Baidoa in Somalia.<sup>109</sup>
- **December 12, 2014:** Al-Shabaab kidnaps and beheads Quran teacher Mohamed Hussein near the central Somali city of Buldo Berde because Hussein reportedly refused to obey al-Shabaab's order to leave his village. His headless corpse is later found dumped close to his home.<sup>110</sup>
- **December 15, 2014:** Al-Shabaab attacks a military base in southern Somalia, killing at least 10 soldiers.<sup>111</sup>
- **December 25, 2014:** Eight al-Shabaab militants storm an African Union (AU) building and kill three Ugandan peacekeepers and a civilian contractor. Al-Shabaab claims that it killed 14 peacekeepers, explaining that it "targeted the enemies at a time they were celebrating Christmas..."<sup>112</sup>
- **December 26, 2014:** In claiming responsibility for the African Union attack on December 25, al-Shabaab state that it is in retaliation for a U.S. strike that killed its leader, Ahmed Godane.<sup>113</sup>
- **January 2, 2015:** Al-Shabaab confirms it was responsible for killing at least seven Somali soldiers in an attack on a military base outside Baidoa.<sup>114</sup>
- **January 4, 2015:** Al-Shabaab detonates a car bomb that kills four civilians and injures seven more in the Somali capital of Mogadishu.<sup>115</sup>
- **March 12, 2015:** Al-Shabaab militants attack government administration offices in Baidoa, Somalia. At least nine people, including four gunmen, die in the attack.<sup>116</sup>
- **April 2, 2015:** Al-Shabaab gunmen storm Garissa University in Kenya, killing 148 people. The gunmen specifically target Christian students. It is al-Shabaab's deadliest attack in Kenya to date. The university reopens nine months later.<sup>117</sup>
- **April 20, 2015:** Al-Shabaab bombs U.N. workers in Garowe, Somalia, killing nine.<sup>118</sup>
- **May 22, 2015:** Al-Shabaab fighters attack the village of Yumbis in Kenya until security forces drive them out.<sup>119</sup>
- **July 7, 2015:** Al-Shabaab kills more than a dozen in an attack on the village of Soko Mbuzi near the Kenyan-Somali border weeks before U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to Kenya.<sup>120</sup>
- **July 15, 2015:** Al-Shabaab militants launch coordinated attacks on a stadium housing peacekeepers, as well as two hotels, in Mogadishu. According to police, six civilians and five militants are killed in the attacks.<sup>121</sup>
- **September 3, 2015:** Al-Shabaab launches an attack in southern Somalia against a remote African Union outpost that kills 37 in total, including 25 Somali and 12 Ugandan soldiers.<sup>122</sup>
- **November 1, 2015:** Al-Shabaab attacks the Sahafi Hotel in Mogadishu, killing at least six and injuring 10. The siege ends when Somali security forces kill the five perpetrators.<sup>123</sup>
- **January 15, 2016:** Al-Shabaab launches attack against an African Union military base, killing dozens of Kenyan soldiers. Kenyan soldiers

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abandon the camp 11 days later.<sup>124</sup>

- **January 21, 2016:** Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for an attack on a beachfront restaurant in Mogadishu, killing at least 26. The terrorist attack—involving suicide bombers and gunmen—lasts for eight hours before Somali security forces are able to restore security.<sup>125</sup>
- **January 31, 2016:** Al-Shabaab militants kill three men in a village in Kenya’s coastal Lamu county.<sup>126</sup>
- **February 2, 2016:** A suicide bomber detonates an improvised explosive device on a Daallo airbus flight from Mogadishu to Djibouti. There are no fatalities except the bomber, who is sucked out through a hole in the plane created by the bomb. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack.<sup>127</sup>
- **February 26, 2016:** Purported al-Shabaab gunmen and a suicide car bomber attack Mogadishu’s SYL hotel, leaving at least 14 people dead and others wounded.<sup>128</sup>
- **April 11, 2016:** A car bomb detonates outside the Mogadishu mayor’s office, killing five people and wounding five more. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>129</sup>
- **April 12, 2016:** Suspected al-Shabaab fighters attempt and fail to assassinate the District Commissioner of Beled Hawo in Somalia’s southern Gedo region, wounding three of his guards.<sup>130</sup>
- **April 14, 2016:** Suspected al-Shabaab militants attempt to assassinate a Somali member of parliament in the town of Balad Hawo near the Kenyan border using explosive devices, injuring four people.<sup>131</sup>
- **April 17, 2016:** Suspected al-Shabaab militants conduct a drive-by shooting in Mogadishu, killing a woman working for the U.N. High Commission on Refugees office and wounding at least one more.<sup>132</sup>
- **April 19, 2016:** Al-Shabaab abducts between 10 and 12 children from a school in central Somalia’s Harardheere district.<sup>133</sup>
- **April 21, 2016:** Al-Shabaab militants attack an AMISOM convoy in Somalia’s Baay region, killing six Ethiopian soldiers.<sup>134</sup>
- **April 27, 2016:** Suspected Al-Shabaab fighters seize the town of Janale in Lower Shabelle region from Somali and African Union troops. According to residents, Somali and African Union troops allegedly withdraw from the town for an “unknown reason,” allowing al-Shabaab to take control without resistance.<sup>135</sup>
- **June 25, 2016:** Militants detonate a car bomb outside of a hotel in central Mogadishu and storm the building, killing at least 15 people, including a Somali cabinet minister, and wounding at least 34 more. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>136</sup>
- **July 26, 2016:** Two suicide bombers detonate car bombs near AMISOM’s headquarters at an airport in Mogadishu, killing 13 people. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>137</sup>
- **August 25, 2016:** Two militants detonate a car bomb and open fire at the Banadir Beach Restaurant near Lido beach in Mogadishu, killing 10 people. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>138</sup>
- **August 29, 2016:** Suspected al-Shabaab fighters attack AMISOM military housing outside Mogadishu, killing at least one soldier.<sup>139</sup>
- **August 30, 2016:** A car bomb is detonated outside the presidential palace and two hotels reportedly frequented by government officials in Mogadishu, killing 22 people and wounding 50 others. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>140</sup>
- **December 2016:** Al-Shabaab militants kill several government officials in Bosasso in Somalia’s semi-autonomous Puntland region. On December 15, gunmen shoot Colonel Jama Sahardiid, second deputy commander of Puntland Police forces, outside a restaurant in Bosasso. Sahardiid dies from his wounds the following day. On December 20, militants shoot and kill Aden Huruse, an aide in Puntland’s presidential palace, at a restaurant in Bosasso. On December 25, gunmen kill military prosecutor Abdikarim Hassan Firdiye as he is getting out of his car outside a restaurant in Bosasso.<sup>141</sup>
- **January 25, 2017:** Al-Shabaab fighters attack a hotel in Mogadishu. A policeman dies of his wounds the following day.<sup>142</sup>
- **January 27, 2017:** Al-Shabaab fighters attack a Kenyan military base in the southern Somali town of Kulbiyow near the Kenyan border, killing nine soldiers. The Kenyan military claims to kill 70 militants in repelling the attack. Al-Shabaab claims it killed dozens of Kenyan troops.<sup>143</sup>
- **April 27, 2017:** Al-Shabaab gunmen kill national intelligence officer Mohamud Haji Ali while he is sitting in front of his home in Mogadishu.<sup>144</sup>
- **May 8, 2017:** A car bomb in Mogadishu kills at least five people. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>145</sup>

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- **May 9, 2017:** Al-Shabaab fighters attack a military base in Goofgaduud, killing at least seven soldiers. Al-Shabaab claims it killed 16 soldiers and captured the entire town of Goofgaduud, which the Somali government does not immediately confirm.<sup>146</sup>
  - **May 16, 2017:** Four Al-Shabaab gunmen break into the house of Kenyan government official Dekow Abbey Sirat and shoot him dead. The group claims it also killed several of Sirat's bodyguards and took their weapons.<sup>147</sup>
  - **May 24, 2017:** A car bomb in Mogadishu kills five people and wounds six. Eight Kenyan soldiers are killed in two separate roadside bombings on the Kenyan side of the border. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for all three attacks.<sup>148</sup>
  - **May 31, 2017:** A Kenyan police armored personnel vehicle runs over an improvised bomb, killing seven officers and one civilian. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>149</sup>
  - **June 5, 2017:** A bomb planted at a police station in the southern Somalia city of Kismayu kills one policeman and wounds several others. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility and alleges the bomb killed four policemen and wounded 27.<sup>150</sup>
  - **June 8, 2017:** Al-Shabaab gunmen and suicide bombers attack a military base in Af Urur in Somalia's Puntland state, killing 59 people and wounding 38 others. The attackers shoot and behead victims, including civilians. Authorities does not immediately release exact casualty numbers.<sup>151</sup>
  - **June 14-15, 2017:** A car bomb explodes at the gates of the Pizza House restaurant in Mogadishu. Five gunmen storm the restaurant and take customers hostage. The gunmen kill 31 and wound 40. Security forces kill the gunmen after an overnight standoff. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>152</sup>
  - **June 20, 2017:** A suicide car bomb disguised as a milk delivery van explodes at Wadajir district headquarters in Mogadishu, killing 15 people and wounding 18. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>153</sup>
  - **June 22, 2017:** A suicide car bomb explodes at a police station in Mogadishu, killing seven and wounding 12. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>154</sup>
  - **June 27, 2017:** A roadside bomb in Kiunga town in Kenya's Lamu County kills four policemen and four children. Police suspect al-Shabaab of planting the bomb.<sup>155</sup>
  - **July 5, 2017:** Gunmen attack a village in Kenya's Lamu County, killing three police officers and wounding seven others during a seven-hour gun battle with police. Authorities suspect al-Shabaab.<sup>156</sup>
  - **July 8, 2017:** About 15 al-Shabaab militants attack Jima village in Kenya's southeastern Lamu County. The attackers behead nine men from the village.<sup>157</sup>
  - **July 13, 2017:** Al-Shabaab fighters attack a government convoy in southeastern Kenya, killing two police officers and a civilian while kidnapping public works official Maryam Elmaawy. It is al-Shabaab's highest-profile kidnapping in the country to date. Kenyan forces rescue Elmaawy later in the day.<sup>158</sup>
  - **July 23, 2017:** A roadside blast targeting a security convoy kills four soldiers near the town of Baidoa in southwestern Somalia. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>159</sup>
  - **July 30, 2017:** Al-Shabaab fighters ambush an African Union convoy on a joint patrol with Somalia forces in Somalia, killing 23 AMISOM soldiers and one Somali soldier. Al-Shabaab claims it kills 39 soldiers, though there is no official verification of the claim.<sup>160</sup>
  - **August 2, 2017:** Militants open fire on a bus in Kenya's Kamu county, killing three people. Police suspect al-Shabaab of responsibility.<sup>161</sup>
  - **August 3, 2017:** Al-Shabaab militants attack the Lafey police station in Kenya near the border with Somalia. One officer is killed and two vehicles are burned.<sup>162</sup>
  - **August 4, 2017:** Al-Shabaab seizes the Somalia town of Leego after the Somali military and AMISOM peacekeepers withdraw from the town. Al-Shabaab military spokesman Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab tells Reuters, "The town is now under our control."<sup>163</sup>
  - **August 18, 2017:** Three men are beheaded in an attack in the Maleli village in Kenya. Authorities suspect that Al-Shabaab is responsible.<sup>164</sup>
  - **September 1, 2017:** A bomb planted in a market in Af-Urur, near the Galgala hills area controlled by al-Shabaab, kills at least 12 people. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility, alleging it killed five soldiers and wounded 10 others.<sup>165</sup>
  - **September 2, 2017:** Al-Shabaab attacks a Somali army base in Bula Gudud near the southern port town of Kismayu. The group claims to kill
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26 soldiers, though the Somali government does not immediately offer casualty figures. On November 13, 2017, al-Shabaab releases a video of the attack alleging that at least 20 Somali soldiers were killed.<sup>166</sup>

- **September 11, 2017:** Al-Shabaab detonates a suicide car bomb and storms a military base in the town of Balad Hawo on the Somali border with Kenya. Authorities report at least 10 soldiers killed.<sup>167</sup>
- **September 27, 2017:** Al-Shabaab militants kill the secretary general of Somalia's national women's organization and the son of the organization's chairwoman in a drive-by shooting in Mogadishu.<sup>168</sup>
- **October 14, 2017:** A truck bomb explodes in the center of Mogadishu, killing at least 320 and injuring even more, in Somalia's worst terror attack to date. Authorities attribute responsibility to al-Shabaab.<sup>169</sup>
- **November 16, 2017:** Al-Shabaab attacks a Somali military base near Mogadishu with no reported civilian or military deaths.<sup>170</sup>
- **December 30, 2017:** Al-Shabaab militants set fire to two police camps in the Kenyan town of Ijara, near Somalia's southernmost border with Kenya. No casualties are reported.<sup>171</sup>
- **January 3, 2018:** Al-Shabaab militants kill five Kenyan policemen on patrol around the Kenyan border town of Mandera.<sup>172</sup>
- **January 13, 2017:** Al-Shabaab militants ambush a Kenyan police convoy in Lamu, eastern Kenya, killing one and wounding several other police officers.<sup>173</sup>
- **February 6, 2018:** Al-Shabaab militants injure four policemen in a nighttime attack on a police station in Bosaso, Somalia.<sup>174</sup>
- **February 8, 2018:** At least three al-Shabaab militants are killed in an attempted attack on a police camp in Kutulo, Kenya.<sup>175</sup>
- **February 16, 2018:** Suspected al-Shabaab militants kill three teachers and one of their wives and injure dozens in an attack on a primary school in Kenya. One suspect is later arrested on February 20.<sup>176</sup>
- **February 23, 2018:** Al-Shabaab militants detonate two car bombs near the presidential palace and a hotel in Mogadishu, killing 18 and wounding dozens.<sup>177</sup>
- **March 2, 2018:** Al-Shabaab militants launch three separate attacks across Somalia killing at least 16 AU and Somali soldiers. Militants drive an SVBIED into a military camp near the town of Agooye, killing at least five Somali soldiers. At the same time, an IED kills six more soldiers on the road from Afgooye to Mogadishu. Separately, militants briefly capture the southern town of Bal'ad and kill five Burundi peacekeepers just north of it.<sup>178</sup>
- **March 14, 2018:** Al-Shabaab militants unsuccessfully attempt to raid two AMISOM military bases in southern Somalia staffed by Ugandan and Ethiopian troops. No AMISOM fatalities are reported.<sup>179</sup>
- **March 19, 2018:** Al-Shabaab attacks a Somali military base in the town of Buurdhuubo with small arms and RPGs. There are no casualties.<sup>180</sup>
- **April 1, 2018:** Al-Shabaab attacks a joint Somali and African Union base in the lower Shabelle the morning after Somali and AU forces had attacked al-Shabaab in a nearby village. At least four Ugandan soldiers are killed in the attack, which reportedly included two car bombs.<sup>181</sup>
- **April 9, 2018:** Al-Shabaab militants attack a Kenyan Defence Force base in southern Gedo region of Somali with an unknown number of casualties on both sides.<sup>182</sup>
- **August 13, 2018:** A construction vehicle heading toward the Kenya-Somalia wall drives over a landmine, killing at least three and wounding two. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility through its Radio Onduras station.<sup>183</sup>
- **August 21, 2018:** A vehicle carrying General Service Unit officers runs over an improvised explosive device in Garissa County, killing five and wounding three. Authorities suspect al-Shabaab.<sup>184</sup>
- **August 29, 2018:** An explosion in Lamu County kills five Kenyan soldiers and injures 10 others. Al-Shabaab is suspected to be responsible for the attack.<sup>185</sup>
- **October 13, 2018:** Al-Shabaab carries out two bombings in the town of Baidoa, a financial hub located between Mogadishu and the Ethiopian border. The first blast targets a restaurant and another explosion strikes a nearby hotel, killing 20 people and wounding dozens more.<sup>186</sup>
- **November 9, 2018:** Al-Shabaab militants detonate a series of car bombs near Somalia's Criminal Investigations Department in Mogadishu and the Sahafi Hotel, which is frequented by government officials and security forces. The jihadists attempt to storm the hotel and exchange gunfire

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with police officers. The bombings and gun attacks kill 52 people and injure at least 100 others, according to hospital officials.<sup>187</sup>

- **November 20, 2018:** Six armed men open fire in Kilifi. The gunmen kidnap an Italian charity worker and wound five others. The attack is reportedly the work of al-Shabaab.<sup>188</sup>
- **January 15, 2019:** Four gunmen and one suicide bomber storm a complex in Nairobi. The 19-hour siege claims the lives of 26, including the attackers, and injures 28. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack as it was “a response to the witless remarks of U.S. president, Donald Trump, and his declaration of al-Quds [Jerusalem] as the capital of Israel.”<sup>189</sup>
- **February 28, 2019:** Al-Shabaab militants detonate a bomb that tears the façade from a hotel frequented by government officials on the main street of Mogadishu. Gunmen then charge the hotel, open fire on its occupants, and kidnap hostages to use as human shields. The attack leaves at least 29 people dead and injures 80 others.<sup>190</sup>
- **March 23, 2019:** Al-Shabaab gunmen storm a government building in the Somali capital, killing at least five people, including the country’s deputy labor minister. An hours-long gun fight ensues between the assailants and security forces. Police officials place the death toll at 15 following the battle.<sup>191</sup>
- **April 13, 2019:** Two Cuban doctors working for the Kenyan government are kidnapped by gunmen reportedly affiliated with al-Shabaab. One police officer is shot and killed during the abduction. It is suspected that the gunmen took the doctors to Somalia.<sup>192</sup>
- **May 22, 2019:** Members of al-Shabaab detonate a car bomb at a security checkpoint near the presidential palace in Mogadishu, killing at least nine people and injuring 13 others.<sup>193</sup>
- **June 15, 2019:** Al-Shabaab carries out a series of attacks in Mogadishu. In one incident, a car bomb explodes near the Somali parliament headquarters, killing at least eight people and injuring 16 others. A separate roadside bomb hits a police vehicle, killing 11 officers inside. Another blast explodes at an intersection leading to the city’s airport, but does not cause casualties.<sup>194</sup>
- **June 21, 2019:** Security forces in Kenya kill three suspected al-Shabaab militants following an attack on a police outpost in Garissa county. No security personnel were injured in the operation.<sup>195</sup>
- **July 13, 2019:** A suicide car bomber and gunmen attack a hotel in Kismayo, killing 26 and wounding more than 50. Al-Shabaab members stormed the hotel after detonating a car bomb in an attack that lasted more than 14 hours.<sup>196</sup>
- **July 15, 2019:** Three suspected al-Shabaab extremists detonate an improvised explosive device on the Kenyan-Somali border. The three assailants are killed by border police while two officers are injured in the attack.<sup>197</sup>
- **July 22, 2019:** An al-Shabaab militant detonates a vehicle near a busy junction in Mogadishu. The suicide attacks claims the lives of 17 and injures 28. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack which is believed to be in response to the killing of senior al-Shabaab intelligence officer Mohamed Nur Ikhlās in a U.S. airstrike four days earlier.<sup>198</sup>
- **July 24, 2019:** A member of al-Shabaab detonates explosives during a high-level security meeting at the mayor’s office in Mogadishu. At least six people were killed and another six were seriously injured, including the mayor, Abdirahman Omar Osman—who ultimately dies from his wounds.<sup>199</sup>
- **August 14, 2019:** Al-Shabaab ambushes a newly established military camp in Mogadishu. Troops manage to fend off two car bombs and a gun raid, but three people are killed in the attack.<sup>200</sup>
- **September 14, 2019:** Al-Shabaab launches a series of attacks in Lower Shabelle region. The first attack, in Qoryoley, saw militants using rocket propelled grenades and heavy machines guns. The attack kills nine. The second attack, in Marka, saw militants fire mortars during a visit by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister escapes unharmed, however two civilians are killed. Also on the 14th, in the neighboring Middle Shabelle region, al-Shabaab carries out a roadside explosion. The attack kills five and injures six others. In a separate al-Shabaab raid, three district-administration officers are forced out of their homes in Beled Hawo town near Somalia’s border with Kenya, shot and killed, according to the region’s authorities.<sup>201</sup>
- **September 15, 2019:** Al-Shabaab launches a remote-controlled explosion targeting the convoy of Governor of Lower Shabelle. The attack kills two and injures four others.<sup>202</sup>
- **September 22, 2019:** Al-Shabaab militants and a suicide bomber storm an army base near Mogadishu. Although unconfirmed by Somali military officials, al-Shabaab claims to have killed 23 soldiers.<sup>203</sup>
- **September 30, 2019:** A car bomber and a group of gunmen strike the Bale Dogle airfield in southern Somalia that American forces use in the fight against al-Shabaab. No casualties or injuries are reported. Earlier that day, another car bomb detonates in Mogadishu. The explosion

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misses its apparent target, a group of Italian peacekeeping troops, but injures an unconfirmed number of Somali civilians.<sup>204</sup>

- **October 12, 2019:** A Kenyan police vehicle strikes a homemade bomb near the border with Somalia. At least ten police officers are killed. Al-Shabaab is suspected to have planted the bomb.<sup>205</sup>
- **October 13, 2019:** Several mortar rounds land inside the U.N. and African Union compounds in Mogadishu. The attack injures seven. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack. Also that day, a grenade targets a deputy governor's house in Hirshabele state. The deputy governor and his son are killed in the attack. Al-Shabaab is suspected as being responsible for the attack.<sup>206</sup>
- **December 6, 2019:** Suspected al-Shabaab militants attack a bus in Kotulo, Kenya near the border with Somalia. The attack kills at least 8.<sup>207</sup>
- **December 7, 2019:** Al-Shabaab militants attack a commuter bus between Wargadadud and Kutulo town in Wajir county. At least 10 people are killed and an unconfirmed number are injured.<sup>208</sup>
- **December 10, 2019:** Five heavily armed gunmen overpower security guards and storm the upscale SYL hotel in Mogadishu. The attackers, claimed by terrorist group al-Shabaab, began shooting at responding Somali security forces. Fighting ensues for seven hours before the militants are overpowered by security forces. The attack kills all five attackers and injures 11.<sup>209</sup>
- **December 21, 2019:** Al-Shabaab suicide bombers detonate a vehicle outside Galkayo, Somalia. The attack targeted military commanders as they were leaving a hotel to attend a meeting. The attack killed at least eight people and wounded another 55.<sup>210</sup>
- **December 24, 2019:** Al-Shabaab militants attack the Gofgadud base in southwest Somalia. The attack kills three soldiers before the Somali troops regain control of the base. It is unreported if any soldiers are wounded.<sup>211</sup>
- **December 28, 2019:** A truck bomb explodes at a security checkpoint in Mogadishu. At least 78 people are killed and another 125 are injured in the attack. Al-Shabaab is suspected as being responsible for the explosion. The bombing was the worst attack in Mogadishu since 2017.<sup>212</sup>
- **January 2, 2020:** Suspected al-Shabaab militants attack a bus in Lamu County, Kenya. The attack kills at least three and injures three others.<sup>213</sup>
- **January 5, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants launch an attack on the U.S.-Kenyan shared Manda Bay Airfield, near Kenya's border with Somalia. The attack, which involves indirect and small-arms fire, kills three Americans. Among those killed are U.S. service member Henry Mayfield Jr., and two Department of Defense contractors. Two U.S. military contractors are also injured. The assailants destroy six civilian aircraft and three military vehicles before being repelled by Kenyan Defense Forces and U.S. African Command. The ambush is the first al-Shabaab attack against U.S. forces inside Kenya.<sup>214</sup>
- **January 7, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants open fire in Garissa County, Kenya, near the border with Somalia. The attackers kill four children and wound three others before security forces repel the assailants. The extremists were targeting a telecommunications mast.<sup>215</sup>
- **January 8, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants detonate a bomb that hits Sayidka junction, a security checkpoint near the presidential palace and other government buildings in Mogadishu, Somalia. The attack kills three and injures 11 others.<sup>216</sup>
- **January 13, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants attack a primary school in Kamuthe, northeastern Kenya. The attack kills seven civilians. The assailants also attack a police post and partially damage a telecommunications mast.<sup>217</sup>
- **January 18, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants detonate a car bomb in Afgoye, near Mogadishu. The attack kills at least four and wounds 15 others.<sup>218</sup>
- **February 2, 2020:** Members of al-Shabaab ambush the SNA and African Union troop bases in Qalimow, Somalia. The attack kills eight government soldiers.<sup>219</sup>
- **February 19, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants attack El-Salini and Qoryooley military bases, both near Mogadishu. A suicide bomber detonates at El-Salini and is followed by armed gunmen, leading to the death of 4 soldiers. At Qoryooley, the militants detonate an explosive-laden vehicle and armed gunmen storm the base. At least six soldiers are killed.<sup>220</sup>
- **February 19, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants ambush and open fire on a bus in Lamu Country, Kenya. The attack kills four.<sup>221</sup>
- **March 15, 2020:** An ambulance hits an IED in Garissa County, Kenya. The attack kills two. It is suspected that al-Shabaab is responsible for the attack.<sup>222</sup>
- **March 25, 2020:** A suicide bomber detonates his explosives vest amid a crowd in a tea shop near Somalia's Federal Parliament in Mogadishu.

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Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack, which leaves at least two people dead and several others wounded.<sup>223</sup>

- **March 29, 2020:** An al-Shabaab suicide bomber mounts the vehicle of Abdisalan Hasan Hersi, governor of the Nugal region in Somalia's Puntland, as he parks his car near a police station in Garowe. The jihadist detonates his explosive device, killing Hersi and seriously wounding a former police commander and a civilian.<sup>224</sup>
- **April 10, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants ambush and shoot Osman Hussein Haji Farey, a senior immigration official, in Galkayo, Somalia. The attackers targeted the official outside of a mosque, killing him instantly.<sup>225</sup>
- **April 28, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants in El Bur publicly execute three group members accused of spying. An al-Shabaab judge at the execution declares the three men had admitted to working for Western intelligence agencies.<sup>226</sup>
- **May 3, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants attack SNA bases in Ceel-Salini and Barire towns in Lower Shabelle. The SNA repels the attacks and kills 10 al-Shabaab fighters.<sup>227</sup>
- **May 16, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants ambush Jubaland Security Forces stationed in Bilis Qooqani, Somalia. The attack wounds two Jubaland Forces before the forces repel the insurgents.<sup>228</sup>
- **May 17, 2020:** A suicide bomber rams an explosives-filled motorized cycle-taxi into a car carrying Ahmed Muse Nur, the governor of Mudug region, in Galkayo. The attack kills Nur and three of his bodyguards. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility.<sup>229</sup>
- **May 24, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants ambush Jubaland regional forces at a military training camp in Jubaland state, Somalia. The training camp is primarily guarded by Kenyan Defense forces. A gunfight ensues between the two sides for several hours before the insurgents are repelled. No soldiers are killed in the attack. It is unreported if the regional forces suffered any injuries.<sup>230</sup>
- **May 24, 2020:** A bomb detonates outside of an IDP camp north of Baidoa, Somalia. The explosion, which was detonated during Eid al-Fitr celebrations, kills four and wounds more than 15 others. No group claims responsibility for the attack, but it is suspected that al-Shabaab is responsible.<sup>231</sup>
- **May 25, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants attack a camp on the outskirts of Bal'ad district, Shabelle, Somalia. The attack kills two soldiers. The militants immediately flee after taking two AK-47s from the army.<sup>232</sup>
- **May 26, 2020:** Suspected al-Shabaab militants detonate an explosive that hits a military vehicle in Gololey town, north of Bal'ad, Somalia. An unreported number of soldiers are killed and injured.<sup>233</sup>
- **May 27-28, 2020:** On May 27, masked men kidnap seven health workers and a civilian in Balad, near Mogadishu, Somalia. On May 28, the dead bodies of the victims are returned. The victims worked for the healthcare and education focused Zamzam Foundation. It is suspected that al-Shabaab was behind the attack.<sup>234</sup>
- **May 28, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants detonate an explosive that was concealed in a senior official's car in Mogadishu, Somalia. The attack kills the senior police officer and another passenger.<sup>235</sup>
- **June 23, 2020:** An al-Shabaab suicide bomber detonates on a Turkish military base in Mogadishu, as new military cadets perform morning drills. Two people are killed, according to police. It is the first time Turkey's largest overseas military installment has been attacked by al-Shabaab.<sup>236</sup>
- **August 8, 2020:** A suicide bomber drives a vehicle into the gates of a military base in Mogadishu. The explosion, near the newly opened Mogadishu Stadium, kills at least eight people and injures 14 others. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack.<sup>237</sup>
- **August 10, 2020:** Al-Shabaab inmates open fire on guards in Mogadishu's central prison, sparking an hours-long gun battle. General Mahad Abdirahman, commander of the custodial corps, claims the violence began when an inmate grabbed an officer's gun. However, a security official says the inmates obtained three pistols and six hand grenades, which were smuggled into the prison. At least 19 people, including both prisoners and guards, are killed. Several inmates escape, though at least one is immediately captured.<sup>238</sup>
- **August 16, 2020:** A car bomb decimates the security gates leading to the Elite Hotel in the Lido beach area of Mogadishu, allowing five heavily armed Islamist militants to storm the building. Somali security forces end the siege after five hours of fighting, but at least 15 people are killed. The hotel is a popular destination for politicians, journalists, activists, and young people. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack via its radio outlet, Andalus.<sup>239</sup>
- **September 7, 2020:** An explosives-laden pickup truck explodes at a military outpost in the Jana Abdalle area of southern Somalia's Lower Juba region, killing three Somali military officers and injuring two others. One later dies from his wounds. An American service member is also seriously injured. Though there is no immediate claim of responsibility, the attack comes days after Somali forces, with U.S. military

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assistance, reclaimed the area from al-Shabaab.<sup>240</sup>

- **September 9, 2020:** A suicide bombing in the Somali capital of Mogadishu kills at least three people, including one child, and injures seven others. The attacker targets the Blue Sky restaurant, a popular eatery among government troops and located near an army checkpoint that leads to the presidential palace. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack in a statement.<sup>241</sup>
- **September 11, 2020:** A suicide bomber detonates his explosives outside of a mosque as congregants depart, following Friday prayers, in the southern port city of Kismayo. The attack leaves at least six worshippers dead and another 20 people injured. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility via its Radio Andalus.<sup>242</sup>
- **September 14-18, 2020:** Al-Shabaab carries out more than a dozen attacks in Somalia despite ongoing airstrikes by the U.S. military. The attacks are believed to be a part of an effort to thwart the upcoming legislative elections on November 1, and the presidential election expected in early 2021.<sup>243</sup>
- **September 21, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants clash with Somali soldiers in central Galgaduud region. The attack kills two. In Mogadishu, an army vehicle hits a roadside bomb, killing two soldiers. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack via an announcement on Radio Andalus.<sup>244</sup>
- **October 14, 2020:** Al-Shabaab militants ambush a village in Afgoye town, southern Somalia. The attack kills at least 13 Somali soldiers.<sup>245</sup>
- **November 6, 2020:** Al-Shabaab fighters detonate a car bomb that kills an officer of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and four Somali intelligence officers in Gendershe, a coastal village 30 miles southwest of Mogadishu. The attack occurs minutes after Somali and U.S. Special Forces launch a raid targeting a terrorist suspect believed to be responsible for an attack that killed an American soldier in Kenya in 2019.<sup>246</sup>
- **November 17, 2020:** A suicide bomber detonates an explosive outside a police academy in Mogadishu. The attack kills at least five and injures 10 others. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack.<sup>247</sup>
- **December 11, 2020:** An Al-Shabaab suicide bomber blows himself up at the entrance of a stadium in Galkayo, where Somali Prime Minister Mohamed Roble was expected to speak about the upcoming presidential election. The attack kills 14.<sup>248</sup>
- **January 2, 2021:** A suicide bomber detonates an explosive near a Turkish military base outside of Mogadishu. The attack kills at least five and wounds at least 14 others. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack.<sup>249</sup>
- **January 10, 2021:** Al-Shabaab militants detonate a bomb in Dhobley. The militants claim the attack killed at least 17 Kenyan soldiers.<sup>250</sup>
- **January 12, 2021:** A bomb targeting a military vehicle detonates between Dhobley and Hosingow in southern Somalia. The attack kills at least seven. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack.<sup>251</sup>
- **January 19, 2021:** A landmine explodes in Mogadishu. The attack kills four and injures six. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack.<sup>252</sup>
- **January 25, 2021:** A vehicle carrying police hits an IED near Mogadishu. The attack kills two and wounds three others. Al-Shabaab claims responsibility for the attack.<sup>253</sup>
- **January 27, 2021:** Al-Shabaab militants carry out three separate bomb attacks—two in Bal'ad which is just north of Mogadishu, and one in Diinsoor, which is in the southwestern Bay region. The attacks kill at least 16 and injure at least seven others.<sup>254</sup>
- **January 31, 2021:** Al-Shabaab militants launch a suicide car bombing before storming the Afrik hotel in Mogadishu. Following the car bombing, the assailants engage in a shootout with Somali security forces until early morning the next day. The attack kills at least nine and injures 10 others. That same day, a bomb detonates in Merca, near Mogadishu. The bomb kills at least eight and wounds many others.<sup>255</sup>
- **February 3, 2021:** Al-Shabaab militants engage in a gunfight with the Somali army in Doonka, between Afgoye and Wanlaweyn, in southern Somalia. The confrontation kills at least seven.<sup>256</sup>
- **February 8, 2021:** A military vehicle hits a landmine in Dhusamareb, central Somalia. The landmine, planted by al-Shabaab, kills at least eight Somali soldiers and injures two others.<sup>257</sup>
- **March 1, 2021:** A news reporter is shot dead in Galkayo, northern Somalia. The journalist, Jamal Farah, was shot and killed by al-Shabaab militants. One other person was injured in the attack.<sup>258</sup>
- **March 5, 2021:** An al-Shabaab suicide bomber detonates an explosive-laden car in Mogadishu, targeting the Luul Yemeni restaurant. The restaurant was the location of a foiled suicide bombing attempt in August 2020. Media reports claim ten to 20 people are killed in the blast, and

an additional 30 are wounded.<sup>259</sup>

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Australia listed Al-Shabaab as a Terrorist Organization on August 22, 2009.<sup>273</sup>

Canada listed the Al-Shabaab as a Terrorist Entity on March 5, 2010.<sup>274</sup>

The United Kingdom— listed Al-Shabaab as a Terrorist in M 2010.<sup>275</sup>



way listed Al-Shabaab as a Sanctioned Group.<sup>276</sup>

New Zealand listed Al-Shabaab as a Terrorist Entity on February 2010.<sup>277</sup>

ited Nations Security Council Committee designated Al-Shabaab on April 12, 2010.<sup>278</sup>

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The European Union designated al-Shabaab in April 2010.<sup>279</sup>

#### **Designations by the U.S. Government:**

February 26, 2008: The Department of State designates Al-Shabaab as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (under section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act).<sup>260</sup>

February 26, 2008: The Department of State designates Al-Shabaab as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (under Executive Order 13224).<sup>261</sup>

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April 21, 2015: The Department of the Treasury designates Ahmed Diriye as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist on April 21, 2015.<sup>268</sup>

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**Associations:**

*Ties to Entities Designated by the U.S. or Foreign Governments:*

Al-Shabaab publicly praised al-Qaeda between 2006 and 2008, condemning U.S. oppression of Muslims worldwide. In 2010, the group announced that it sought to “connect the horn of Africa jihad to the one led by al-Qaeda.”<sup>280</sup> Al-Shabaab officially announced its union with al-Qaeda in February 2012. Following Godane’s death in September 2014, the group and its new leader reaffirmed the alignment.<sup>281</sup>

*Ties to Other Entities:*

Al-Shabaab has an affiliated network, including al-Hijra (formerly known as the Muslim Youth Center) in Kenya.<sup>282</sup> After the Westgate mall attack in September 2013, evidence emerged that al-Hijra assisted al-Shabaab militants in executing the attacks. Al-Hijra is a group of primarily Kenyan-Somali and non-Somali Muslim followers of al-Shabaab in East Africa.<sup>283</sup>

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**Media Coverage:**

*Arab and African Media*

Arab news outlets have reported on the two-decades-long conflict within the failed state of Somalia and the contagion it has caused in east Africa. Al-Shabab confirmed many media reports stating after the Westgate shopping mall attack was in retaliation for Kenyan support of AMISOM's mission in Somalia, and demanded that Kenya pull out. The group's first reprisal mission for Godane's death in Uganda was ultimately foiled by Ugandan security forces. A few years earlier, the group claimed responsibility for killing 76 people in Kampala, citing Uganda's participation in AMISOM as a motive as well.<sup>284</sup> Militant profiles have emerged in African news media. Al-Shabab defectors are shown as traumatized and pressured victims. One former member told how, at 13 years of age, he joined the group after they took control of his town.<sup>285</sup> In light of Godane's death, several news sources question the viability of Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaidah as a leader and the stability of the organization, and how it would bode for security in the region. Both Arabic and African news outlets show concern for what a splintered group could mean for the movement and the region. *The East African* notes that the group will most likely tap into its cells across East Africa and make a push for recruitment.<sup>286</sup> Though the group's strategic and tactical directions are uncertain, analysts maintain the group will try to position itself as more global in nature. Such positioning could include strengthening ties with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, and ISIS.<sup>287</sup> This direction could be indicated by al-Shabab's recommitment to al-Qaeda shortly after Abu Ubaidah's appointment as the new leader. The group could also potentially splinter and morph into a different structure, especially if internal power struggles recur.<sup>288</sup> To a lesser but significant degree, news outlets have highlighted the 45-day amnesty that the Somali government has extended to al-Shabab fighters who renounce the group.<sup>289</sup> Horn of Africa news website *Sabahi*, sponsored by U.S. Africa Command, highlighted President Mohamud's 60-day extension of the amnesty on October 27, 2014, claiming that after the initial edict, approximately 30 militants surrendered daily. The national amnesty offered, in lieu of punishment, a nine-month rehabilitation program and a subsequent return to normal life.<sup>290</sup> In contrast, Western media coverage put less emphasis on the amnesty program, preferring to focus on al-Shabab's ties to al-Qaeda and now potentially to ISIS. Godane, for example, is believed to have established ties with ISIS militias during their expansion into Syria and Iraq and offered al-Shabab fighters in support.<sup>291</sup>

*Western Media*

Western news outlets focus on U.S. military efforts to stop the group due to its ties to al-Qaeda, including the U.S.'s role in striking al-Shabab militants<sup>292</sup> and in launching the drone strike that killed Godane.<sup>293</sup> Connections to al-Qaeda have also raised concerns about al-Shabaab planning attacks overseas.<sup>294</sup>

<sup>284</sup> "Uganda foils 'terrorist' attack," Al Jazeera English, September 13, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2014/09/uganda-foils-terrorist-attack-201491312302715418.html>.

<sup>285</sup> Shukri Mohamed, "Dozens of al-Shabaab members taking advantage of amnesty 'every day,'" *Sabahi*, September 17, 2014, [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2014/09/17/feature-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2014/09/17/feature-01).

<sup>286</sup> Gaaki Kigambo, "Why splintered al-Shabaab worries security experts," *East African*, September 13, 2014, <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/-/2558/2451684/-/5jmdxez/-/index.html>.

<sup>287</sup> Paul Crompton, "Somalia's Islamist al-Shabaab at risk of splintering," Al Arabiya News, September 9, 2014, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/analysis/2014/09/09/Somalia-s-Islamist-al-Shabaab-at-risk-of-splintering.html>.

<sup>288</sup> Paul Crompton, "Somalia's Islamist al-Shabaab at risk of splintering," Al Arabiya News, September 9, 2014, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/analysis/2014/09/09/Somalia-s-Islamist-al-Shabaab-at-risk-of-splintering.html>.

<sup>289</sup> "Mohamud extends al-Shabaab amnesty offer for 60 days," *Sabahi*, October 28, 2014, [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/newsbriefs/2014/10/28/newsbrief-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/newsbriefs/2014/10/28/newsbrief-01).

<sup>290</sup> Shukri Mohamed, "Dozens of al-Shabaab members taking advantage of amnesty 'every day,'" *Sabahi*, September 17, 2014, [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2014/09/17/feature-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2014/09/17/feature-01).

<sup>291</sup> "SOMALIA: Deceased Al Shabab chief had ties with ISIS, sources," RBC Radio Raxanreeb.com, 30 October 2014, <http://www.raxanreeb.com/2014/10/somalia-deceased-al-shabab-chief-had-ties-with-isis-sources/>.

<sup>292</sup> Ernesto Lodono and Scott Wilson, "U.S. strikes al-Shabab in Somalia and captures bombing suspect in Libya," *Washington Post*, October 6, 2013, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-navy-seals-raid-al-shabab-leaders-somalia-home-in-response-to-nairobi-attack/2013/10/05/78f135dc-2e0c-11e3-8ade-af23cda135e\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-navy-seals-raid-al-shabab-leaders-somalia-home-in-response-to-nairobi-attack/2013/10/05/78f135dc-2e0c-11e3-8ade-af23cda135e_story.html).

<sup>293</sup> Helene Cooper, Eric Schmitt and Jeffrey Gettleman, "Strikes Killed Militant Chief in Somalia, U.S. Reports," *New York Times*, September 5, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/06/world/africa/somalia-shabab.html>.

<sup>294</sup>

**Rhetoric:**

*Muhammed Abdullahi Hassan a.k.a. Mujahid Miski, Tweet, April 28, 2015*

“Don’t buy into the Martin story. This man never gave u freedom. Just mental slavery. #BaltimoreRiots #YouNeedShariah.” (Tweet)<sup>295</sup>

*Muhammed Abdullahi Hassan a.k.a. Mujahid Miski, Tweet, April 28, 2015*

“One individual is able to put a whole nation onto it’s [sic] knees.” (Tweet)<sup>296</sup>

*Muhammed Abdullahi Hassan a.k.a. Mujahid Miski, Tweet, April 23, 2015*

“If only we had men like these brothers in the #States, our beloved Muhammad would not have been drawn.” (Tweet)<sup>297</sup>

*Muhammed Abdullahi Hassan a.k.a. Mujahid Miski, Tweet, April 23, 2015*

“The brothers from the Charlie Hebdo attack did their part. It’s time for brothers in the #US to do their part.” (Tweet)<sup>298</sup>

*Muhammed Abdullahi Hassan a.k.a. Mujahid Miski, Tweet, April 2015*

“Where are the warriors of this Ummah [community]?” (Tweet)<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> “ISIS Fighters, Supporters Hijack #BaltimoreRiots Twitter Hashtag, Discuss Race Issues, Urge Attacks On Policemen,” Middle East Media Research Institute, April 28, 2015, [http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/8541.htm#\\_edn13](http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/8541.htm#_edn13).

<sup>296</sup> Brian Ross, Rhonda Schwartz, Randy Kreider, and James Gordon Meek, “The American Terror Recruiter’s Link to Texas Shooting,” ABC News, May 5, 2015, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/american-terror-recruiters-link-texas-shooting/story?id=30827653>.

<sup>297</sup> Tim Lister, “The cheerleaders and the freelancers: the new actors in international terrorism,” CNN, May 7, 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/07/world/cheerleader-freelancer-terror/>.

<sup>298</sup> Brian Ross, Rhonda Schwartz, Randy Kreider, and James Gordon Meek, “The American Terror Recruiter’s Link to Texas Shooting,” ABC News, May 5, 2015, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/american-terror-recruiters-link-texas-shooting/story?id=30827653>.

<sup>299</sup> Brian Ross, Rhonda Schwartz, Randy Kreider, and James Gordon Meek, “The American Terror Recruiter’s Link to Texas Shooting,” ABC News, May 5, 2015, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/american-terror-recruiters-link-texas-shooting/story?id=30827653>.