



Cross-Border Violence in Awdal and Urgent Appeal Concerning Civilian Protection

Djibouti has pursued territorial ambitions in Awdal since gaining independence in 1977. The current conflict and security crisis in the region have raised serious concerns that these long-standing ambitions are now being pursued through efforts to destabilize Gadaboursi communities, displace the local population, and ultimately assert control over parts of Awdal.

There are reports that forces acting under the authority of Djiboutian President Ismaïl Omar Guelleh have infiltrated Awdal and carried out attacks in and around coastal communities, including Lughaya, Geerisa, and Sayla. These attacks have occurred in coordination with forces associated with the Hargeisa administration.

These actions are aimed at creating insecurity, forcing civilians from their homes, and facilitating the resettlement of populations from Candhufo and Cadayto in Ethiopia.

Local reports describe civilian casualties, the destruction or contamination of wells and other essential infrastructure, the killing of livestock, and damage to livelihoods. These incidents have contributed to growing insecurity among civilian populations and concerns about forced displacement.

Taken together, these actions raise concerns about a broader strategy of displacement and demographic change: creating conditions that force established communities from their land and replacing them with other populations in order to alter control of the territory and weaken the social fabric of local communities.

The actions of forces operating in the Gadaboursi region are deeply troubling and resemble displacement strategies seen in other geopolitical conflicts, including practices associated with settlement expansion and displacement in the West Bank.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms all coordinated military violence against innocent civilians in Awdal, including actions involving Djiboutian forces and the Hargeisa administration. The targeting, displacement, or endangerment of civilians—particularly women and children—must not be tolerated.

We call upon the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, and international human rights organizations to urgently investigate these violences, condemn any aggression or unlawful displacement directed against the Gadaboursi people, and take meaningful steps to protect affected civilian communities and provide them with humanitarian assistance.

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Awdal State movement