

Somalia in chaos: bloody clashes in Baidoa involving drones and suicide bombers, dozens dead

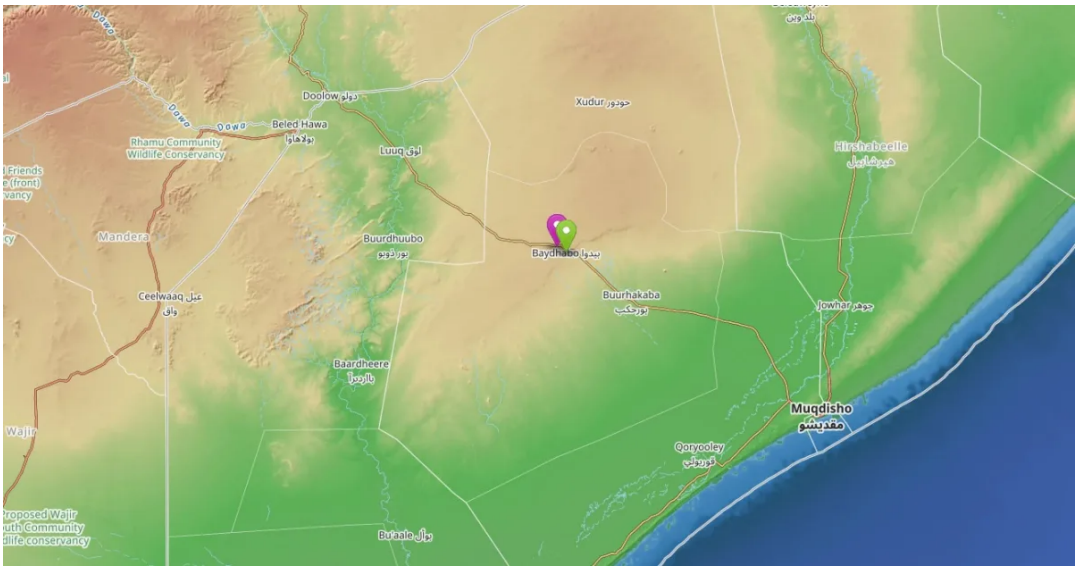
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The spark that ignited the violence lies in the deep political rifts that followed the **removal of Abdiaziz Hassan Mohamed "Laftagareen"** from the presidency of the South-West regional state. The dismissal, which took place in **March 2026**, created a dangerous power vacuum and a dispute over institutional legitimacy between the **federal government in Mogadishu** and loyalists of the former local leader. **Baidoa**, the region's administrative capital, has become the epicenter of this power struggle, turning into a theater of urban warfare.

The dynamics of the attack

According to regional media and international security reports, militias loyal to Laftagareen launched **a large-scale offensive** against bases of the **Somali National Army (SNA)**. Unlike the typical skirmishes between clans or political factions, the attack demonstrated an unusually high level of military capability and terrorist-style tactics:

- **Use of drones:** The use of unmanned aircraft for reconnaissance or attacks signals a troubling evolution in the warfare doctrine of non-state groups in the area.
- **Suicide attacks:** The use of car bombs or suicide bombers has multiplied the lethality of the clashes, striking strategic positions and densely populated areas.
- **Heavy weapons:** Intense exchanges of artillery and mortar fire have been reported, destroying several civilian infrastructure facilities.



The toll and the government's response

The **Somali Ministry of Defense** confirmed the fighting, describing the assault as a subversive act and placing it within a national security narrative. Mogadishu maintains that federal forces managed to **repel the offensive**, inflicting heavy losses on the attackers.In official statements, the federal government also accused Laftagareen loyalists of forging **tactical or operational alliances with al-Shabaab** — the al-Qaeda-linked jihadist group that has controlled vast rural areas of Somalia for years — exploiting the political chaos to further destabilize the region.

On the other hand, local medical and humanitarian sources report a grim toll: **dozens killed and wounded**, including several **civilians caught in the crossfire**, while Baidoa's hospitals are overwhelmed by the influx of seriously injured patients.

The role of Italian and European missions in the country

The violent escalation in Baidoa is a major concern for the international community as well, starting with **Italy** and the **European Union**, which are deeply engaged in stabilizing Somali

institutions:

- **EUTM Somalia (European Union):** This is the EU military training mission, to which **Italy provides the leading contribution in personnel and leadership**. The mission is tasked with educating, training and advising the leadership and units of the Somali National Army (SNA), the same government forces currently under attack in Baidoa.
- **New Italy-Somalia bilateral mission:** Italy has further strengthened its strategic support through a **direct training and logistics mission** focused on cooperation between the Italian and Somali armed forces, alongside the **MIADIT** mission led by the Carabinieri to train police forces.
- **EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta and AUSSOM:** At the multilateral level, the EU maintains its counter-piracy naval presence in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea (Operation Atalanta) and makes a decisive contribution to sustaining the **new African Union mission (AUSSOM)**, which provides operational support on the ground against insurgent threats.

Instability in the Southwest therefore risks severely testing international efforts to train and build Somalia's defense capabilities, raising concerns over how local armed forces will manage the dual pressure of the regional insurgent threat and the ongoing fight against al-Shabaab.

Source: www.ansa.it