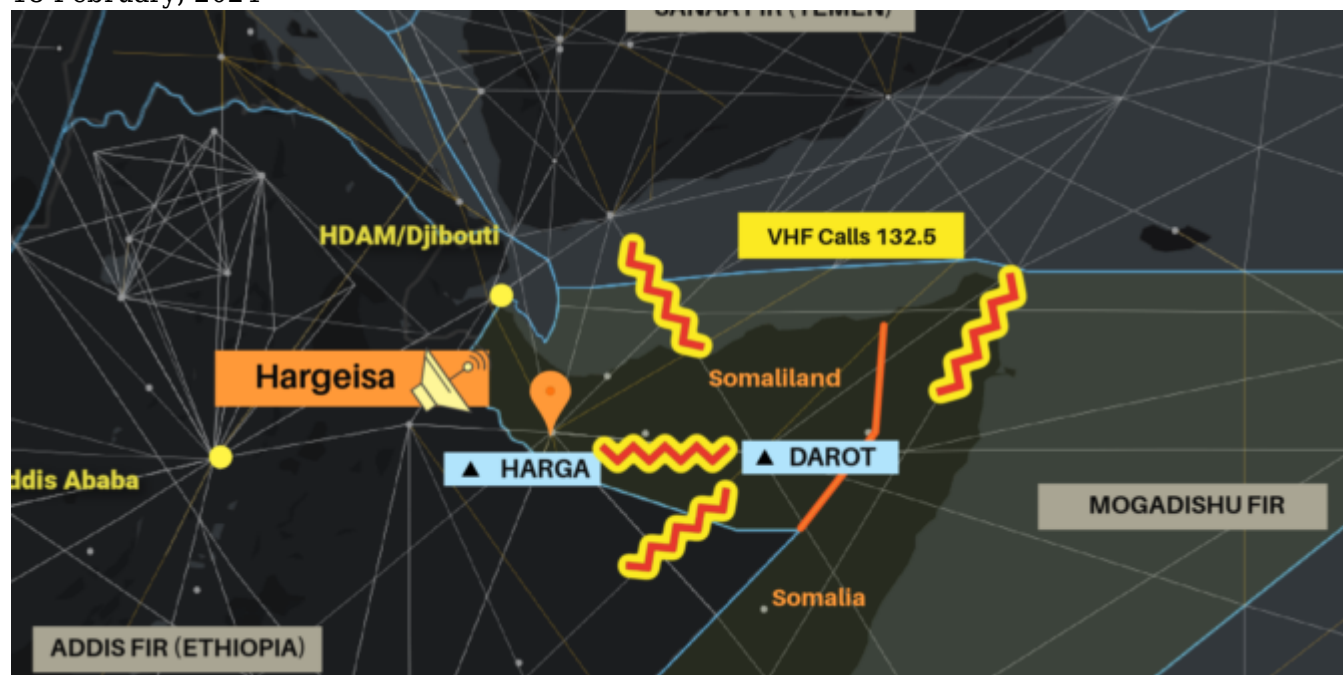


# New RISK WARNING: Somalia ATC Conflict

OPSGROUP Team

18 February, 2024



## Key information for Flight Crew

Over the weekend, OPSGROUP has received at least **10 reports** of aircraft within the Mogadishu FIR being contacted by a **'fake controller'** on the same frequency, issuing **conflicting instructions**.

**Crews have been issued climb and descent clearances** that are not from the sector controller. Incidents have been reported mostly in the northern part of Mogadishu airspace.

The situation emanates from a political **dispute between Somaliland and Somalia**, two different countries, though the former does not have international recognition. Both countries now claim authority over the Mogadishu FIR.



## Quick Summary - ATC Conflict in Somalia

- This affects aircraft transiting the **Mogadishu FIR**
- **Enroute aircraft** are being addressed by **competing ATC units on the same frequency**.
- Numerous aircraft have received climb/descent instructions from **unauthorized ATC units**.
- **Location:** Primarily within radio range of Hargeisa (VHF 132.5), also via HF (11300)

## OPSGROUP Members

In your Dashboard you'll find the full Risk Warning, including Crew Reports, Maps, Analysis, and Guidance. If you can't access, just email the team and we'll send you a copy.

**RISK WARNING**  
**SOMALIA ATC CONFLICT**

ISSUED BY OPSGROUP TEAM  
EMAIL: TEAM@OPS.GROUP  
WHATSAPP: +1 747 200 1993  
**19 FEB 2024 Version 1**

 This information covers a developing event: further versions will likely follow. Check Dashboard / Daily Brief for updates. Please report any additional information you have to [team@ops.group](mailto:team@ops.group). Thank you!

TO: ALL OPSGROUP MEMBERS

ATTN: OPERATING FLIGHT CREW, FLIGHT OPS DEPARTMENTS, SAFETY DEPARTMENTS

### Quick Summary – ATC Conflict in Somalia

- This affects aircraft transiting the **Mogadishu FIR**
- **Enroute aircraft** are being addressed by **competing ATC units on the same frequency**.
- Numerous aircraft have received climb/descent instructions from **unauthorized ATC units**.
- **Location:** Primarily within radio range of **Hargeisa** (VHF 132.5), also via HF (11300)

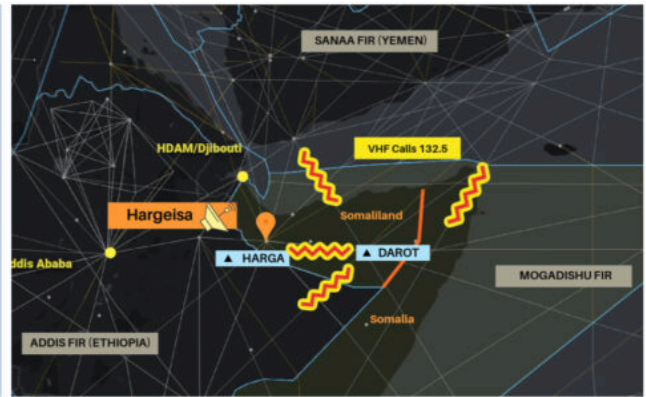


**Download the Risk Warning** (PDF, 9 pages, 2Mb)

## Analysis

(Excerpt from the **Risk Warning** in your dashboard)

The background to the situation is an escalating political dispute between Somaliland and Somalia. Somaliland has been an independent country since 1991, but without international recognition. Somaliland has to date maintained control over its airports, but Somalia controls the upper airspace from Mogadishu.



In January 2024, Ethiopia signed an agreement with Somaliland, essentially exchanging port rights on the Red Sea for recognition of their country. This was met with condemnation by Somalia. Somalia, in response, began restricting movements into Somaliland by way of denying airspace entry to the Mogadishu FIR in some instances. This has led to Somaliland declaring its right to exercise control over their airspace.

The net result is an airspace dispute between the two territories. Both Somalia and Somaliland now claim the right to control traffic. This is why crews have been contacted by other “controllers” on 132.5 (VHF) and 11300 (HF). Although it is likely that these other “controllers” are genuine Air Traffic Controllers, they are operating outside their area of jurisdiction as things stand.

Currently, the authority over the entire Mogadishu FIR is Mogadishu Control. They remain the sole authority to control, coordinate, and provide ATS services in the Upper FIR. The secondary transmissions are coming from Hargeisa in Somaliland. Although the motive for these transmissions can be understood, they present clear danger to enroute traffic. The transmissions appear to attempt to mimic Mogadishu rather than present as “Hargeisa Control”, “Somaliland Control”, or any clear differentiator from Mogadishu.

It would also appear from the reports that we have received, that the control instructions are not being issued to de-conflict traffic, but rather to create confusion. This may be an effort to draw attention to the airspace issue, but could have tragic consequences. For flight crews, we follow with some guidance to mitigate the situation.

The situation is volatile and may escalate. On Sunday, February 18, an AIS Officer from Somaliland, working in Mogadishu, was found dead at his home. His death appears related to this situation.

**Avoidance of Mogadishu airspace would provide ultimate safety, and if the situation continues, would be wise.**

[Excerpt, see full **Risk Warning** for crew reports received, maps, guidance]