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Bombing Somalia, raiding Minnesota: Two fronts of the same war

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January 15, 2026



Homeland Security and ICE agents carry Aliya Rahman after detaining her at East 34th Street and Park Avenue in Minneapolis on Jan. 13, 2026, amid a massive federal operation that community members and city leaders have condemned as an unlawful occupation of the neighborhood. Photo: Chris Juhn/Sahan Journal

The intensified bombardment of Somalia and the assault on Somali communities in Minnesota are not separate policies. They flow from the same source: a capitalist system that requires military domination abroad and uses raids, deportations and the threat of denaturalization to terrorize nationally oppressed workers at home.

In the first two weeks of 2026, U.S. Africa Command launched as many airstrikes in Somalia as it reported in all of 2024. At the same time, 2,000 federal immigration agents deployed to the Twin Cities, where the largest Somali community in the

country has built a life over the past three decades. The timing is not coincidental. Both operations serve the same objective.

The military campaign

The 2025 air campaign in Somalia saw 124 strikes — nearly double the previous record. The Pentagon has stopped providing casualty estimates. The Somali government, dependent on U.S. support, has silenced local journalists. What filters through are fragments: villages bombed near Bosaso, strikes around Godane, and in September 2025, the killing of a clan elder described locally as a peace mediator.

The elder had just met with the president of the Puntland region when a U.S. drone strike killed him. AFRICOM called him an al-Shabaab operative. Somali federal and regional authorities said this was false. He was working to resolve conflicts peacefully — a stabilizing force that cuts against the permanent military presence the United States maintains in the Horn of Africa.

This is imperialism in practice. Critical shipping lanes connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden run along the region's coast. U.S. military control ensures that trade routes remain open on terms favorable to U.S. monopoly capital and its allies. It also positions the United States to counter regional forces — whether Yemen's Ansarullah or others — that challenge this arrangement. The instability created by decades of intervention is used to justify the continued presence of U.S. forces, which in turn perpetuates that instability.

From bombs to raids

People who flee this violence encounter a second front when they reach the United States. The same system that destabilizes their homeland criminalizes their presence here.

On Dec. 26, 2025, a right-wing influencer posted a video claiming Somali-run day

care centers in Minnesota were empty shells defrauding the government. Minnesota's Republican House speaker admitted helping produce it. Local journalists reported the claims were false — the centers were licensed, inspected and operating. But four days later, the federal government froze child care funding nationwide, citing the video as justification.

Federal prosecutors have charged 98 people — 85 of them Somali — with misuse of public funds. These prosecutions function as political instruments. They provide the pretext for freezing funding that serves tens of thousands of working families, deploying about 2,000 ICE agents to immigrant neighborhoods, and threatening to strip citizenship from naturalized Somalis over alleged paperwork discrepancies from years ago.

In early January, those 2,000 agents turned the Twin Cities into an occupied zone. Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey described the scene as chaos and demanded federal agents leave. They did not leave. Instead, on Jan. 7, less than a mile from George Floyd Square, ICE agent Jonathan Ross shot 37-year-old Renee Nicole Good three times in the face through her windshield as she sat in her car.

Good, a mother of three and widow of a veteran, had been dropping off her 6-year-old child at school when she encountered the ICE raid on 34th Street and Portland Avenue. She stopped to support her neighbors. Her wife, Becca Good, was with her. Good's car was blocking the street because federal agents had turned the neighborhood into a militarized zone. When she tried to maneuver around an ICE vehicle, Ross approached her window and fired three shots through the windshield.

Video from Ross's own phone shows Good smiling at another agent seconds before the shooting, telling him, "It's fine, dude, I'm not mad at you." Audio from the scene captures someone muttering "Fucking bitch" after the shots.

Good slumped over her blood-soaked airbag for 15 minutes while agents refused to

provide medical attention. When a man who identified himself as a physician asked to check her pulse, an agent said no. The agent told him, "I don't care," claiming ICE had its own medics. Protesters asking where those medics were got no answer. When emergency responders finally arrived, they carried Good away without a stretcher.

The administration immediately deployed a coordinated lie. ICE officials claimed Good was a "violent rioter" who "weaponized her vehicle" and tried to run over agents. Vice President JD Vance called her "a deranged leftist." President Trump said she "violently, willfully, and viciously ran over the ICE officer." The video evidence, including footage from Ross's own phone, shows the opposite. Good was trying to turn her car around when Ross shot her. He was several feet away and not in the path of her vehicle.

Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O'Hara confirmed there was no evidence connecting Good to any investigation. Representative Ilhan Omar, who was born in Mogadishu, Somalia, and represents the district where the killing occurred, called it state violence.

ICE agents know they can kill with impunity. The administration will defend lethal force regardless of circumstances. The killing of Renee Good is not an aberration. It is what happens when 2,000 armed agents are deployed to terrorize a community and told that their targets threaten national security.

After killing Good, ICE agents moved on to raid a nearby child care center and a high school, tackling people, handcuffing staff members, and firing tear gas until both facilities were forced to close.

One week later, on Jan. 15, another ICE agent shot a man in the leg during what the Department of Homeland Security called a "targeted traffic stop" in north Minneapolis.

President Trump wrote on social media that “reckoning and retribution is coming” to Minnesota.

Minneapolis City Council President Elliott Payne said he was assaulted by ICE officers while observing them, calling it what it is: “This is a military occupation, and it feels like a military occupation.”

The same week, Homeland Security terminated Temporary Protected Status for 2,471 Somali nationals. The administration also ordered a review of every Somali green card in the country, opening the door to mass denaturalization.

The Somaliland strategy

While raids proceed in Minnesota, the administration is moving to recognize Somaliland — a self-declared breakaway region in northern Somalia — as an independent state. The goal is access to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait for expanded U.S. and Israeli military facilities. Recognition would come in exchange for hosting Palestinians relocated from Gaza, according to reports of discussions between President Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Legislation supporting Somaliland independence has been introduced in Congress. The African Union and Arab League have condemned the plan as a violation of Somali sovereignty, but sovereignty in the imperialist system is conditional. It exists when it serves the interests of the major powers and disappears when it does not.

The pattern is consistent across decades and administrations. U.S. military intervention destabilizes regions in the Global South, creating refugee flows. When people from those regions arrive in the United States and form communities, they are subjected to intensified exploitation as low-wage workers and then scapegoated when political conditions require it. The fraud accusations are a pretext. The raids terrorize workers into accepting poverty wages and staying silent about workplace

abuses. The denaturalization threats are a reminder that citizenship, for nationally oppressed workers, is always provisional.

This is not a policy failure. It is how the system distributes costs and maintains control. The arms manufacturers profit from the bombing campaigns. The politicians gain electoral advantage by directing working-class anger away from falling wages and toward immigrant communities. The underlying crisis — a capitalist economy that cannot provide decent jobs, housing, or child care for the working class — remains unaddressed because addressing it would require challenging the power of capital itself.

The defense

Somali organizations in the Twin Cities are organizing legal defense, know-your-rights sessions, and support networks for families facing deportation. Child care workers are resisting the funding freeze. These efforts build the infrastructure needed for sustained resistance.

On Jan. 13, a coalition of faith leaders, union presidents, business owners, and community organizers called for a general strike on Friday, Jan. 23. They are asking every worker in Minnesota to refuse to show up to work and every Minnesotan not to spend money that day. The demand is for ICE to leave the state entirely.

“We are going to leverage our economic power, our labor, our prayer for one another,” said JaNaé Bates, the co-executive director of Isaiah MN, an interfaith organizing network. Dozens of labor unions, faith groups, and businesses have endorsed the action. Organizers are calling for a mass march in downtown Minneapolis at 2 p.m. Faith communities will fast and pray.

The call comes after ICE agents have raided homes, dragged workers from their jobs, pepper-sprayed residents, assaulted high school students and staff, and

continued terrorizing neighborhoods across the Twin Cities. The organizers are framing Jan. 23 as a “Day of Truth and Freedom” — truth about what is happening in Minnesota and freedom from living under military occupation.

This represents what terrifies the state: organized refusal across class, faith, and community lines. When workers withhold their labor, when communities refuse to cooperate with raids, when entire cities say no to federal occupation, the machinery of repression faces a problem it cannot solve with more guns.

