

**EPON** 

Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network

# Assessing the Effectiveness

of the African Union Mission  
in Somalia / AMISOM

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Visiting address: C.J. Hambros plass 2d

Address: P.O. Box 8159 Dep.  
NO-0033 Oslo, Norway

Internet: [effectivepeaceops.net](http://effectivepeaceops.net) | [www.nupi.no](http://www.nupi.no)

E-mail: [info@nupi.no](mailto:info@nupi.no)

Fax: [+ 47] 22 99 40 50

Tel: [+ 47] 22 99 40 00

# Assessing the Effectiveness of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

## Lead Author

Dr Paul D. Williams, George Washington University

## Co-authors

Michele D'Alessandro, University of Trento

Dr Linda Darkwa, Training for Peace

Dr Cedric de Coning, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

Amina Helal, Cairo Centre for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA)

Brig. Gen. (retired) James Machakaire, African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)

Natasja Rupesinghe, NUPI

## Data contributors

Ryan Rappa, Center on International Cooperation (CIC), New York University

Andreas Forø Tollefsen and Håvard Mogleiv Nygård, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

## EPON Series Editor

Dr Cedric de Coning, NUPI

## External Reference Group

Dr Linnea Gelot, Folke Bernadotte Academy

Volker Hauck, European Centre for Development Policy Management

Maria Mekri, SaferGlobe

Elisa Norvanto, Laurea University of Applied Sciences

Dr Jide Martyns Okeke, Harvard University

Jyrki Ruohomäki, Crisis Management Centre Finland







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# List of Abbreviations

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| ACLED  | Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project         |
| AMISOM | African Union Mission in Somalia                       |
| AU     | African Union  |
| CAS    | Comprehensive Approach to Security                     |
| CCTARC | Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis and Response Cell |
| C-IED  | Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices                   |
| CIC    | Center on International Cooperation                    |
| CIMIC  | Civil-Military Coordination                            |
| CSO    | Civil Society Organisation                             |
| DRC    | Democratic Republic of the Congo                       |
| EU     | European Union   |
| EUTM   | European Union Training Mission                        |
| FGS    | Federal Government of Somalia                          |
| FMS    | Federal Member States                                  |
| FOB    | Forward Operating Base                                 |
| FPU    | Formed Police Unit                                     |
| IDMC   | Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre                |
| IDP    | Internally Displaced Person                            |



|        |   |
|--------|---|
| IED    | Improvised Explosive Device                                 |
| IGAD   | Inter-Governmental Authority on Development                 |
| IMF    | International Monetary Fund                                 |
| IPO    | Individual Police Officer                                   |
| ISR    | Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance               |
| IU     | Investigation Unit  |
| HIPS   | Heritage Institute for Policy Studies                       |
| NGO    | Non-Governmental Organisation                               |
| NUPI   | Norwegian Institute of International Affairs                |
| OCHA   | Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance      |
| PCC    | Police-Contributing Country                                 |
| PPU    | Personal Protection Unit                                    |
| PRIO   | Peace Research Institute Oslo                               |
| PSC    | African Union Peace and Security Council                    |
| RA     | Regional Administration                                     |
| SEA    | Sexual Exploitation and Abuse                               |
| SIOU   | Security Information and Operation Unit                     |
| SNA    | Somali National Army  |
| SNSF   | Somalia National and Security Forces                        |
| SPF    | Somali Police Force   |
| SRCC   | Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission |
| TCC    | Troop-Contributing Country                                  |
| TFG    | Transitional Federal Government                             |
| TFI    | Transitional Federal Institutions                           |
| UCDP   | Uppsala Conflict Data Programme                             |
| UN     | United Nations  |
| UNHCR  | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees               |
| UNITAF | Unified Task Force  |
| UNMAS  | United Nations Mine Action Service                          |
| UNOSOM | United Nations Operation in Somalia                         |
| UNSOA  | United Nations Support Office for AMISOM                    |
| UNSOM  | United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia                |



|        |   |
|--------|---|
| UNSOS  | United Nations Support Office for Somalia |
| V-BIED | Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device |
| WPS    | Women, Peace and Security                 |





# Executive Summary

This report assesses the extent to which the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has achieved its current strategic objectives and what impact, if any, the mission has had on broader political and security dynamics in Somalia. Now in its eleventh year of operations, AMISOM is part of a wider constellation of international actors trying to stabilise the country. This constellation exemplifies the opportunities and challenges of partnerships in contemporary peace operations. It also puts a premium on ensuring effective coordination between these actors, most notably the Somali authorities, the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), European Union (EU) and some key bilateral partners, including the US and UK. AMISOM is, therefore, in the unenviable position of not being fully in control of its own destiny. Instead, it must rely on and find the right division of labour between these other actors.

This also has consequences for assessing AMISOM's effectiveness because the mission has not played the leading role in responding to Somalia's fundamental problem: a political crisis characterised by disagreements over governance structures, a lack of reconciliation, and numerous, often interrelated armed conflicts fought over a variety of issues. Nevertheless, looking back on the situation in Somalia in early 2007, AMISOM has clearly made considerable progress in a very difficult environment. Deployed to Mogadishu when al-Shabaab controlled most of the city and much of south-central Somalia, AMISOM has always been an under-resourced mission. Despite suffering extremely high numbers of casualties, the AU force pushed the militants out of the capital city in August 2011 and expanded its operations.



Over the next few years, al-Shabaab forces were ejected from the major population centres across south-central Somalia. In doing so, the mission played a major role in protecting two transitional governments, two federal governments, and two national electoral processes. AMISOM has therefore succeeded in creating political space for Somalia's leaders to address their key internal problems related to governance and a lack of reconciliation. The mission also helped create the conditions for numerous international actors to return to Somalia, including the UN. Even some of AMISOM's harshest critics concede that these positive developments would not have been possible without its efforts.

In this sense, AMISOM has made progress on its three current strategic objectives, namely, reducing the threat posed by al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups; providing security to enable Somalia's political process and efforts at reconciliation; and handing over its security responsibilities to the Somali security forces. However, the mission continues to face difficult challenges and limitations which mean that, on its current trajectory, implementing an effective transition to Somali forces will neither be straightforward nor happen quickly.

First and foremost, while AMISOM could do more to degrade al-Shabaab's forces, it cannot defeat the militants. This cannot be achieved by military means alone but requires Somalia's federal and regional leaders to reconcile and implement a decisive strategy either to prioritise the defeat of al-Shabaab or to engage in a political dialogue that could produce a settlement to end the war. At present, concerns are evident across some civil society groups and international partners that AMISOM's momentum and progress in this area has been stalled and that al-Shabaab has regained power and influence over the last few years.

Second, unfortunately, Somali elites have not taken full advantage of the political space that AMISOM has helped facilitate. Long delays in finalising the national constitution and the details of federal governance—both of which remain works-in-progress—have made it impossible to build an effective and genuinely “national” set of Somali security forces and institutions. Although the Somali Federal Government and regional administrations ostensibly agreed on a new national security architecture in April 2017 and a Somali Transition Plan in early 2018, the detailed political and financial arrangements required to make these structures work have not been finalised. As a result, key elements remain unimplemented. The Somali National Army (SNA) and police forces also continue to languish in a dire state, as demonstrated by the two operational readiness assessments that were conducted during 2017. An ongoing operational readiness review of Somalia's “regional forces” is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2018. AMISOM has therefore been forced to operate without effective local partners that could deliver stabilisation and a peace dividend in the settlements recovered from al-Shabaab. This challenge has recently been exacerbated by the unhelpful policies pursued by several Gulf states which have deepened divisions and increased conflict between the Federal Government and regional administrations across Somalia.



Third, AMISOM remains an under-resourced mission with important gaps in its capabilities. At the strategic level, since 2012, the mission has struggled to be more than the sum of its national parts. This is due to a lack of unified command and control between its force headquarters and the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) that control the mission's sectors. At the more operational level, two particularly salient gaps are predictable and sustainable financial resources, which have left AMISOM contingents receiving considerably less reimbursement allowances than their counterparts in UN peacekeeping operations, and the failure to generate the mission's aviation component of twelve military helicopters that were authorised by the UN Security Council in 2012. AMISOM's three military helicopters were only deployed in December 2016 and have severe operational limitations. Although helicopters would not have defeated al-Shabaab, they would have offered a means to rapidly strike militant forces, provide air cover for friendly troops, escort convoys, enable rapid response to attacks, and potentially even airdrop forces. In light of such limitations and a general reluctance to undertake sustained offensive operations, our assessment is that AMISOM has now effectively culminated militarily, that is, it cannot achieve additional major results in its current configuration.

Taken together, these three challenges highlight that AMISOM alone is unable to resolve Somalia's fundamental problem: the country's crisis of governance that has spawned al-Shabaab and other forms of opposition to the government. This can only be solved by Somalis and those external actors who have the leading role in supporting Somalia's political transition, which falls to the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and those states that can exercise most leverage over local leaders. This has left AMISOM suffering from a persistent gap between its activities on the military track and broader political progress among Somalia's federal and regional leaders.

Going forward, AMISOM needs to reconfigure its presence and operations to support the Somali Transition Plan effectively. This will include a new Concept of Operations document developed in light of the AU's internal assessment of AMISOM's capabilities conducted jointly with the UN in August and September 2018. The restructuring of the mission's force headquarters and the ongoing attempts to develop multinational sectors should also be geared to supporting the overall state-building agenda in Somalia, including the Transition Plan. With the mission's contributing countries showing signs of fatigue and a reasonable desire to limit further casualties, priority tasks should focus on providing perimeter security at the major population centres (at a minimum, Mogadishu and the regional capitals), securing the main supply routes between these centres, and dealing with al-Shabaab defectors.

In order to conduct effective offensive operations against al-Shabaab, AMISOM forces would need to move away from a static and defensive posture and become more agile, ideally with the ability to outpace the militants' forces and strike them from depth. But there should also be consistent cooperation and coordination with offensive operations launched by the Somali Danab advanced infantry units, which operate with US support.

In terms of defensive operations, AMISOM should focus on its two main vulnerabilities: major al-Shabaab attacks on some of its forward operating bases (FOBs) and convoys, and the more frequent challenge of countering improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which account for the majority of recent casualties. This would almost certainly mean reducing the number of AMISOM FOBs. Here, relations between AMISOM and the Somali security forces and the UN Support Office for Somalia (UNSOS) are particularly crucial. If AMISOM is tasked with playing a greater role in the stabilisation of settlements recently recovered from al-Shabaab beyond the regional capitals or priority areas for the Somali Transition Plan, then its civilian component should be enhanced in order to exploit the mission's potential comparative advantage of deploying civilians in areas where UN personnel could not be deployed.

Whatever set of priorities is adopted by the AU and UN, it is crucial that AMISOM, the Somali authorities, and the mission's international partners work in close, coordinated partnership. To that end, the division of labour outlined in the five strands of the Comprehensive Approach to Security (CAS) is sensible. But their effective implementation will require firm and sustained political leadership as well as sufficient resources from the Somali authorities, the AU, UN, and the mission's international partners. If these are not forthcoming, some of AMISOM's gains over the last decade could be reversed.









# Introduction

Peace operations are among the most important international mechanisms for contemporary conflict management. But their effectiveness often remains the subject of confusion and debate in both the policy and academic communities. Various international organisations, including the UN, AU, and EU, have come under increasing pressure to justify the effectiveness and impact of their peace operations. In response, various initiatives have been developed to improve the ability of these organisations to assess their peacekeepers' performance. However, there remains a distinct lack of independent, research-based information about the effectiveness of these operations.

To address this gap, in 2017, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), together with more than 40 researchers and institutes from around the world, established the Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON). The network aims to undertake collaborative research into the effectiveness of specific peace operations using a shared methodology across case studies. This report on AMISOM is one of the first studies conducted by the EPON network.

Somalia is a particularly complex case because AMISOM is just one, albeit crucial, player in a broader constellation of actors trying to stabilise the country. Furthermore, the conditions that drive Somalia's numerous armed conflicts make it a very difficult environment in which to conduct a peace operation. Since the early 1990s, the country has become synonymous with state collapse, corruption, clan conflict, and warlordism. Following the collapse of the central government in 1991, Somalia entered a protracted period of political crisis characterised by disagreements over governance structures, a lack of reconciliation, and numerous, often interrelated armed conflicts fought over a variety of issues,

including national and regional power struggles, clan-based feuds, ideological grievances, as well as communal conflicts over natural resources such as land, water and pasture. Not surprisingly for a country awash with small arms and light weapons, the crisis has generated a large number of armed groups, which have formed a bewildering array of shifting alliances of convenience before reconfiguring once again. According to information from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), for instance, there were 150 distinct armed groups operating in Somalia during 2016.<sup>1</sup>

In 2007, AMISOM became the first peace operation to deploy to Somalia since the ignominious withdrawal of the UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) II in 1995. When the UN peacekeepers departed, most international actors went with them. Only a small residue of UN and humanitarian aid agencies remained engaged to stem some of the country's worst humanitarian problems, and they operated mostly from Nairobi via proxies in Somalia. Initially authorised by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) on 19 January 2007, AMISOM was subsequently also authorised by UN Security Council resolution 1744 on 20 February 2007.

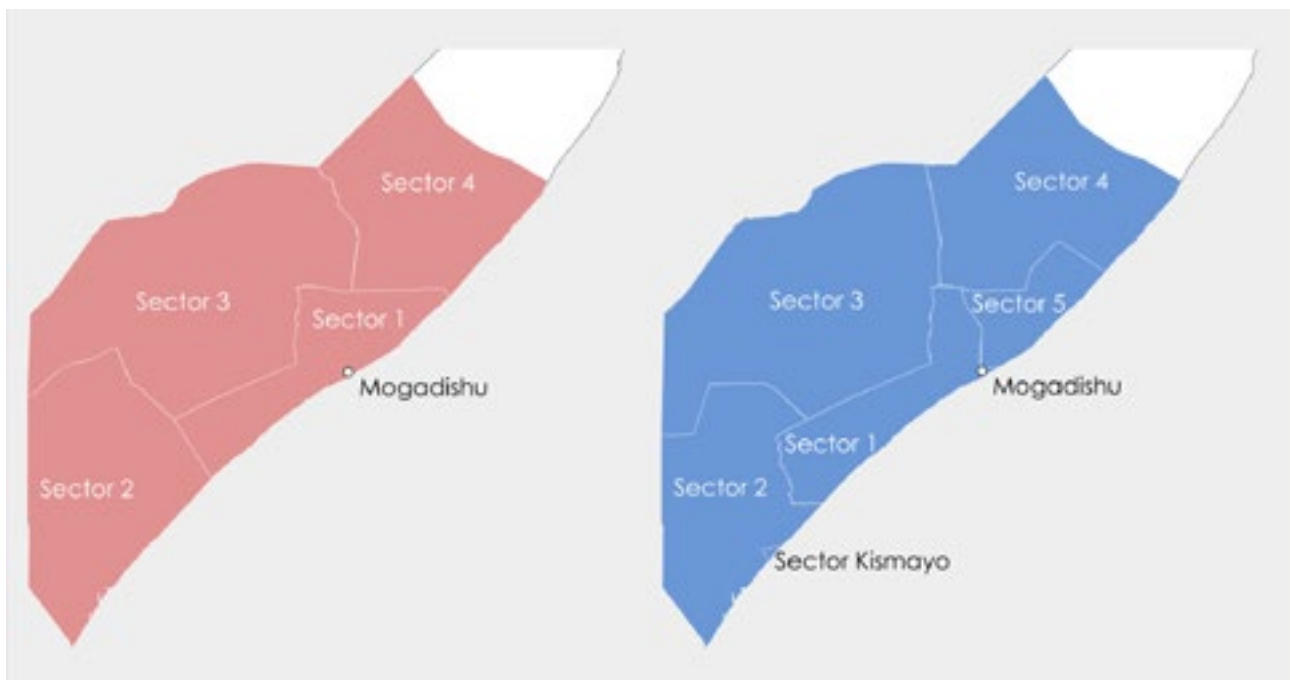
Over the next eleven years, AMISOM's mandated tasks would evolve from protecting the Somali authorities and facilitating a political process to war-fighting and then to counter-insurgency and stabilisation with an admixture of state-building. In order to execute its responsibilities, the AU and UN tried to alter the character and nature of the mission accordingly. Between 2007 and 2011, almost all AMISOM personnel were soldiers deployed solely in Mogadishu, with the few civilian and planning personnel operating out

of Nairobi and Addis Ababa. However, during 2012, the mission expanded beyond Mogadishu and saw contingents from Kenya and Djibouti join those from Uganda and Burundi. From this point on, AMISOM adopted a deployment footprint based on sectors: initially four land and two maritime sectors. These have been revised over time and, by 2018, AMISOM operated with six land and two maritime sectors that were first established in 2014 (see figure 1). Most operations undertaken in the mission's sectors have been led

by the particular TCC that dominated that sector. As of late 2018, Uganda leads in Sector 1; Kenya in Sectors 2 and 6/Kismayo; Ethiopia in Sectors 3 and 4 (with Djibouti also deployed in Sector 4); and Burundi in Sector 5.

This EPON report aims to produce a more comprehensive picture of AMISOM's overall effectiveness and impact.

1 <https://www.acleddata.com/dashboard/#706>



**Figure 1: AMISOM Sectors: Boundaries established 2012 (left) and 2014 (right)**

Source: Paul D. Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia: A history and analysis of the African Union Mission (AMISOM), 2007–2017* (Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 9.

Existing reviews of AMISOM’s effectiveness paint a mixed picture of successes, failings, and ongoing challenges. These reviews have come in various forms. There have been assessments and benchmarking reviews undertaken by the mandating authorities (AU and UN) and various partners, sometimes by one organisation and sometimes jointly. The UN Monitoring Group on Somalia has published various assessments of aspects of AMISOM’s activities.<sup>2</sup> There have also been reports that pronounce on specific aspects of AMISOM’s performance by civil society organisations (CSOs), think tanks and academics.<sup>3</sup> While the official reviews have tended to focus either on assessing mission

2 The Monitoring Group’s reports are available at <https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/751/work-and-mandate/reports>

3 For example, various Human Rights Watch documents at <https://www.hrw.org/tag/amisom>; Solomon A. Dersso, *Somalia Dilemmas: Changing security dynamics, but limited policy choices* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, Paper 218, October 2010); Walter Lotze and Yvonne Kasumba, “AMISOM and the Protection of Civilians in Somalia,” *Conflict Trends*, Issue 2 (2012): 17–24; Cecilia Hull Wiklund, *The Role of the African Union Mission in Somalia* (Sweden FOI, June 2013); Cedric de Coning et al., *The Role of the Police in the African Union Mission in Somalia* (Training for Peace, 2014); International Crisis Group, *Somalia: Al-Shabaab – It Will Be A Long War* (International Crisis Group, Africa Briefing No. 99, 26 June 2014); Bronwyn E. Bruton and Paul D. Williams, *Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Lessons Learned from the African Union Mission in Somalia, 2007–2013* (Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) Press, Report 14–5, 2014); Noel Anderson, “Peacekeepers Fighting a Counterinsurgency Campaign: A Net Assessment of the African Union Mission in Somalia,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, 37:11 (2014): 936–58; Journalists for Justice, *Black and White: Kenya’s Criminal Racket in Somalia* (Journalists for Justice, November 2015); Sunil Suri, “Barbed Wire on our Heads:” *Lessons from counter-terror, stabilization and statebuilding in Somalia* (Saferworld, January 2016); Walter Lotze and Paul D. Williams, *The Surge to Stabilize: Lessons for the UN from the AU’s Experience in Somalia* (International Peace Institute, May 2016); David Mastro, *Expert Opinion on AMISOM Contributing Countries Continued Provision of Troops* (Brookings Institution, October 2016); Peter Albrecht and Cathy Haenlein, “Fragmented peacebuilding: The African Union in Somalia,” *RUSI Journal*, 161:1 (2016): 50–61; Tobias Hagmann, *Stabilization, Extraversion and Political Settlements in Somalia*

performance in order to revise the mandate or on the progress on benchmarks to determine whether AMISOM would be transitioned into a UN peacekeeping operation, most studies from civil society and research institutions have focused on particular dimensions of AMISOM's activities—such as civilian protection or stabilisation—rather than trying to produce an overall assessment.

This EPON report aims to produce a more comprehensive picture of AMISOM's overall effectiveness and impact. We do so by evaluating AMISOM using a framework explicitly designed to facilitate comparative analysis across missions that will be applied in subsequent EPON case studies. In particular, we examine the extent to which AMISOM achieved its strategic objectives and what impact, if any, the mission had on broader political and security dynamics in Somalia. Our analysis also includes a substantive focus on eight key dimensions of activities that are important in most contemporary peace operations, namely, the need to ensure the “primacy of politics”; protect populations and stabilise territories; encourage an appropriate degree of national and local ownership; promote constructive international support; ensure coherence both within missions and across their various international and local partnerships; enhance the legitimacy and credibility of the mission with international and local audiences; actively implement the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda; and adopt a people-centred focus (see Section 5 below). To that end, we briefly analyse AMISOM's major achievements and weaknesses historically but focus on the mission's activities over the last three years and its current trajectory in order to generate findings and recommendations about areas for improvement.

In order to provide a thorough assessment of AMISOM's effectiveness and impact, the rest of this report is organised in six parts as follows:

- Section 1 summarises the EPON analytical framework as well as the principal research questions and methodology used in this study.
- Section 2 provides a brief historical and contextual conflict analysis of Somalia, an overview of international engagement with the country, and where AMISOM fits within these broader efforts. It also presents some country-specific data related to trends in conflict dynamics, governance, development, displacement and corruption in Somalia. This information is relevant for understanding the context in which AMISOM was deployed and the extent to which the mission's activities have influenced Somalia's conflict dynamics and systems of governance. The data contained in this section of the report was compiled by researchers at New York University's

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(Rift Valley Institute, 2016); Noel Anderson, “Why victories in battle have not yet finished the war against al-Shabaab,” *Survival*, 58:4 (2016): 51–62; Dawit Y. Wondemagegnehu and Daniel G. Kebede, “AMISOM: Charting a new course for African Union peace missions,” *African Security Review*, 26:2 (2017): 199–219; International Refugee Rights Initiative, “*They Say They're Not Here to Protect Us.*” *Civilian perspectives on the African Union Mission in Somalia* (IRRI, May 2017); Omar S. Mahmood and Ndubuisi Christian Ani, *Impact of EU funding on AMISOM* (ISS East Africa Report 16, December 2017); and Paul D. Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia: A history and analysis of the African Union Mission (AMISOM), 2007–2017* (Oxford University Press, 2018).



Center on International Cooperation (CIC) and the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO).

- Section 3 summarises the evolution of AMISOM's mandate, focusing on the period since 2016, and gives a concise account of the actions undertaken by the mission's military, police and civilian components. It also outlines the major debates and challenges currently facing the mission.
- Section 4 then turns to assessing the impact of AMISOM's activities. It starts by summarising existing conclusions about the mission's performance before turning to examine how AMISOM has fared in relation to its three current strategic priorities, namely, (1) to reduce the threat from al-Shabaab and other opposition groups, (2) transitioning security responsibilities to Somali forces, and (3) securing the political process in its area of operations.
- Section 5 summarises our analysis and findings about AMISOM's effectiveness and impact across the eight dimensions selected by EPON. These are political primacy; protection and stabilisation; national and local ownership; international support; coherence and partnerships; legitimacy and credibility; women, peace and security; and a people-centred focus.
- Section 6 summarises our overall conclusions about AMISOM's effectiveness at the strategic and operational levels.





## SECTION 1.

# Framework and Methodology

The EPON network is a consortium of more than 40 research institutions, peacekeeping training centres, and think tanks from across the globe collaborating to study the effectiveness of peace operations (see Appendix A). The network aims to analyse the effectiveness of contemporary peace operations, especially a mission's strategic-level effects on the political process and armed conflict dynamics in the host country. EPON's plan is for a multinational research team comprised of members of the network to study several AU, EU, UN and other peace operations each year.

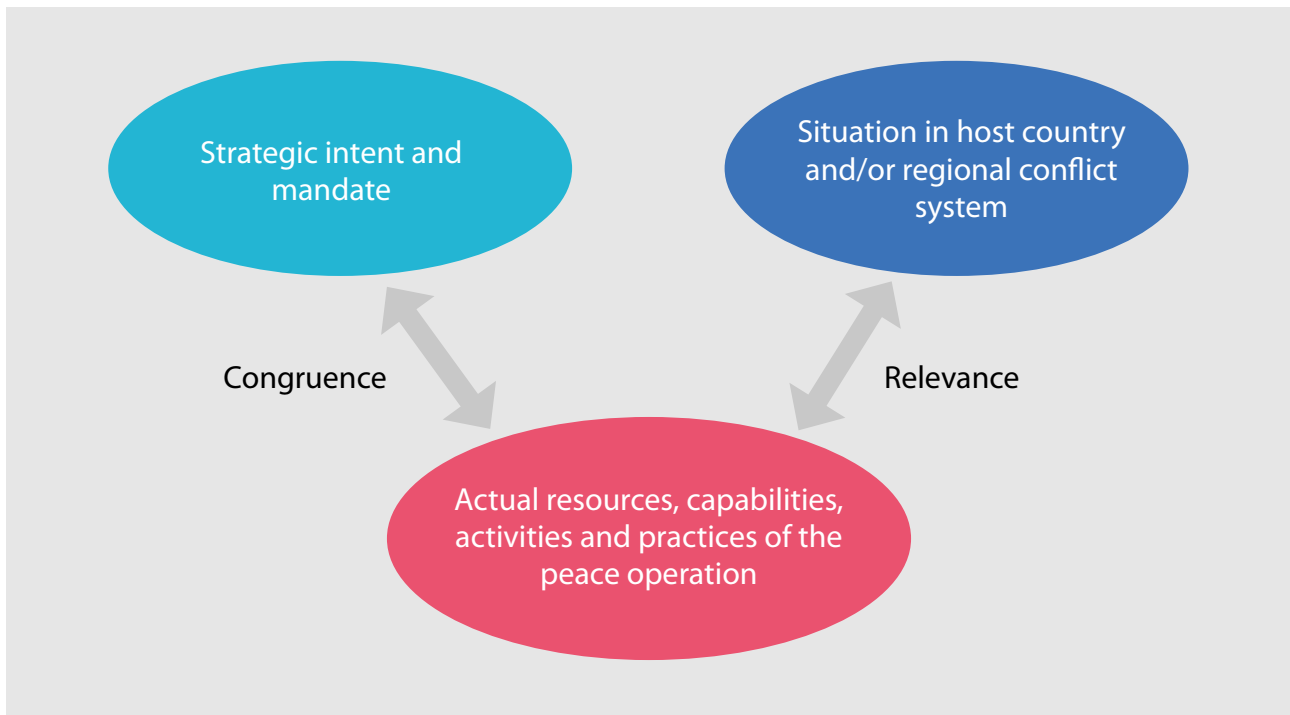
To do so, EPON has developed a methodological framework to understand two central issues: first, whether a mission has achieved its mandated tasks and the extent to which there was consensus about this among various stakeholders; and, second, the extent to which the mission had a positive impact on broader political and security dynamics in the host state and/or regional conflict system.<sup>4</sup> Defined in this way, the EPON framework is focused on addressing two principal research questions:

1. How far is there congruence between a mission's mandate, its resources and capabilities, and its actual activities?

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<sup>4</sup> *Theoretical and Methodological Framework for the 2018 Pilot Studies* (Unpublished document, EPON, May 2018).

2. What effect have the mission's activities had on the political and security situation in the host country, and/or regional conflict system, especially for the people most affected by the crisis?



**Figure 2: EPON Analytical Framework**

Assessing *congruence* entails analysing the actual resources, capabilities, activities and practices of a peace operation across various substantive dimensions (e.g., stabilisation, civilian protection, security sector reform, and facilitating humanitarian relief) and to what extent they match the intentions and objectives expressed in the mission's strategic documents (and those of the organisation(s) that authorised it). The degree of congruence between intent and execution would shed light on how far the operation was able to fulfil its mandated tasks, within the context of the resources and capabilities at its disposal.

Assessing *relevance* entails analysing the impact a peace operation's activities had on the political and security situation in the host country and/or regional conflict system, and the people who are most directly affected by the conflict. The aim is to enhance understanding of a peace operation's ability to change the behaviour of key stakeholders as well as its influence on critical conflict drivers. The scope of the assessment has to be adapted for peace operations that have narrow mandates, or mandates that don't explicitly address important areas of the host country's conflict dynamics.

Applying this framework to the pilot case study of AMISOM required us to understand whether the mission had achieved its mandated tasks and how far its activities influenced



armed conflict and political dynamics in Somalia and the wider region. This generated four subsidiary research questions:

- What are AMISOM's most important mandated goals and strategic objectives?
- Does AMISOM have the necessary resources and relevant capabilities to implement its mandated goals and strategic objectives?
- What activities have AMISOM undertaken to implement its mandated goals and strategic objectives?
- What impact did AMISOM's activities have on the political and security situation in Somalia and how did these activities change the behaviour of key stakeholders or influence critical conflict drivers?

Each peace operation will have a unique configuration of stakeholders but, in generic terms, EPON identified the following as relevant stakeholders:

- Members of the peace operation, including senior leadership, senior managers and representatives of its troop- and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs);
- National, regional and local authorities in the host state;
- International and regional organisations, including those authorising the mission or engaged in its theatre of operations;
- External partners of the mission, multilateral and bilateral;
- Neighbouring states to Somalia;
- Members of the UN Security Council and equivalent bodies within the AU, Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and EU;
- Local and international CSOs;
- Local populations in the conflict-affected areas; and
- Other groups, institutions or companies with a special interest or stake in the country or affected region.

The team interviewed 65 individuals and engaged an additional 18 members of Somali civil society in two focus groups.

A fully comprehensive assessment would, therefore, involve ascertaining the views of all stakeholder groups. Practical limitations of time, resources and access, however, meant that our study was only able to interview and engage (via focus groups) with some of these stakeholders who had a presence in Mogadishu.

Specifically, this report is based on years of accumulated desk research analysing relevant primary and secondary sources, as well as conducting semi-structured interviews, and participating in focus group discussions. Most recently, six of the authors of this report visited Mogadishu in late June 2018. We interviewed a range of AMISOM and AU officials; UN representatives in Somalia (including personnel from UNSOM, UNSOS and UNMAS); external (bilateral and multilateral) partners; officials from the Somali authorities; and representatives of local and international CSOs. In total, the team interviewed 65 individuals and engaged an additional 18 members of Somali civil society in two focus groups.<sup>5</sup> The 65 individuals included 11 women and 54 men; 17 from AMISOM; 31 from the UN system; ten from international partners; and seven Somalis, including three government officials. Interviews were carried out with the explicit consent of the subjects on a not-for-attribution basis in order to encourage frank discussion and to adhere to international ethical research guidelines.

As part of our desk research, however, we incorporated the results of several years of unpublished AU-UN public opinion surveys (usually of more than 1,000 respondents) conducted in Somalia dating back to 2010.<sup>6</sup> These took account of local views mainly from five major towns across south-central Somalia: Mogadishu, Baidoa, Beledweyne, Garowe and Kismayo. Views expressed in the focus groups organised for this report were triangulated and checked for relevance with these surveys.

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5 The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS) acted as a local partner to facilitate interviews with Somali officials and convene focus groups with members of CSOs.

6 See Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia*, especially chapter 11.









## SECTION 2.

# Historical and Contextual Analysis of Somalia

This section provides some important historical and political context for understanding AMISOM's activities. In particular, it highlights some of the key conflict dynamics into which AMISOM deployed and provides a brief overview of the main forms of international engagement with Somalia, including AMISOM's various partners. It also presents country data for Somalia from various institutions that help measure trends related to armed conflict, governance, development, displacement and corruption. Where available, we present this data to cover the period since 1997 in order to capture trends from a decade before AMISOM's deployment. Unfortunately, the high levels of insecurity in Somalia since the 1990s complicate the collection of accurate data and, in this report, we have taken the available data as indicators of trends and patterns rather than as verified facts.

## 2.1 Conflict Analysis

Rather than attempt a detailed conflict analysis for Somalia, this section briefly summarises the salient characteristics and different types of organised violence in Somalia that have had a direct bearing on AMISOM's overall mandate to stabilise the situation.

For nearly three decades, Somalia has been the archetypal example of a failed state where organised violence has become endemic. Since 1991, with the collapse of Siad Barre's government, Somalia's conflicts have fragmented into numerous distinct local armed conflicts. It therefore makes little sense to analyse the conflict as a country-wide civil war with a common set of conflict dynamics. Instead, one can think of organised violence in Somalia as an archipelago of armed conflicts, each dominated by its own distinct dynamics but often interconnected with others in complicated and fluid ways. Although it may appear chaotic and random to many outsiders, it is not. There is a degree of order and hierarchy, but the relationships involved are complex and change frequently. These dynamics in Somalia have tended to support the World Bank's conclusion that the risk of organised violence is likely to rise when "stresses"—notably the lack of security, justice and employment—are found in areas where official institutions are weak and where local trust in the perceived "rules of the game" is low.<sup>7</sup> Struggles for security, justice and jobs characterised south-central Somalia during AMISOM's deployment, and state institutions are absent or deliver few benefits and services.

In this sense, it is important to emphasise that Somalia remains a fractured state. In the northwest, Somaliland retains its demand for recognition as an independent state and does not see itself as part of the Somali federal project. Puntland has endured as an autonomous region in many respects but has remained part of the federal project, with its armed forces now joining the SNA. However, Puntland remains outside AMISOM's area of operations. In south-central Somalia—AMISOM's area of operations since 2012—fundamental issues of governance, especially the division of roles and responsibilities between federal and regional institutions, remain unresolved. This is most clearly reflected in the failure to finalise the country's constitution. The political project of state-building in Somalia thus remains a contested work in progress, and hence the political contours of AMISOM's operating environment are characterised by uncertainty, fragmentation and instability.

At the macro-level, these dynamics have generated three dimensions of armed conflict that are particularly salient across south-central Somalia. Each dimension has directly impacted upon AMISOM's operations. They involve power struggles, identity politics, and the political economy of organised violence.

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<sup>7</sup> World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2011), pp. 73-95.

## Power Politics

The first dimension relates to armed struggles fought over and for political power. Since Somalia's central government collapsed in 1991, there has been a series of explicitly political power struggles to resurrect state and regional institutions and, crucially, to control them. This dimension of conflict intensified significantly from the early 2000s when the period of international neglect of Somalia ended, and many more external resources began flowing into the state-building project.

In AMISOM's area of operations, these political power struggles have principally revolved around gaining control of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and later the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). Since late 2012, these power struggles expanded to the emerging regional administrations or Federal Member States (FMS).<sup>8</sup> These relatively recent power struggles over control of new developing state institutions in Mogadishu, and Somalia's other regions ran up against the interests of the non-state armed groups who had benefited from the state's absence and provided alternative forms of security, justice and employment to the people in the areas under their influence. Indeed, since at least 1991, arguably the dominant characteristic of Somalia's political landscape was that it was populated mainly by what Ken Menkhaus called "non-state security providers"—armed groups that portrayed themselves as providing security, but also other forms of governance, especially justice, for their members and/or clients in the absence of state governance.<sup>9</sup>

There is wide consensus among stakeholders that al-Shabaab cannot be defeated by military means alone.

## Identity Politics

A second important dimension of the armed conflict in Somalia revolves around identity politics or, more broadly, the socio-cultural dimensions of Somali society. This is often most obviously connected to clan dynamics and struggles for relative power and influence between Somalia's many clans, sub-clans, sub-sub-clans, etc., as providers of security, justice and employment. But identity politics is also prevalent beyond clan politics and the question of who is considered in or out of specific groups. In particular, who gets to speak

<sup>8</sup> In AMISOM's area of operations, the most important regional entities are the Interim Jubaland Administration (formed in August 2013), the Interim South West Administration (formed in June 2014), the Interim Galmudug Administration (formed in July 2015), and the Interim Hiraa and Middle Shabelle Administration (formed late in 2016).

<sup>9</sup> Ken Menkhaus, *Non-State Security Providers and Political Formation in Somalia* (Gerda Henkel Foundation, CSG Papers, No. 5, April 2016). These included clan militias, clan paramilitaries, district commissioners' militias, business security guards, personal protection units, local private security firms, international private security firms, and neighbourhood watch groups.

with authenticity on key issues, such as interpreting religious beliefs or notions of local justice, is relevant to all groups attempting to build constituencies that straddle multiple clan identities. Any actor wishing to influence broad constituencies of Somalis—from al-Shabaab to Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa to AMISOM—must contend with the challenge of how to develop group affinities across multiple clan identities. Conflicts around identity politics have therefore played an important role in determining which groups might support or resist AMISOM’s activities in particular places and at particular times.

## Political Economy

A third key dimension of the armed conflict in Somalia revolves around the political economy of violence in its many forms. In south-central Somalia, many forms of organised violence have regularly displayed an intimate relationship with economic issues, from the trading of khat, charcoal and sugar to taxation, extortion and the privatisation of security,

as well as the struggle to control key commercial hubs such as seaports, airports, and roadways. In the absence of effective state governance, numerous armed actors emerged in Somalia that used instruments of coercion and violence to make money. Some of them would be considered by the Somali authorities to be illegal and criminal, including various Islamist organisations such as al-Shabaab.<sup>10</sup> But these licit/illicit taxation/extortion lines become blurred considering the personalities who have occupied Somalia’s state and political institutions, many of whom retain

their business identities and connections. This is a long-standing practice in Somalia.<sup>11</sup>

The political economy of armed conflict in Somalia has given rise to various terms, but two stand out as particularly salient. First, “violence entrepreneurs”—individuals in positions in the government or diaspora who stoke communal tension and incite violence to advance their own political and economic interests.<sup>12</sup> And, second, “moneylords”—a play on Somalia’s infamous warlords which refers to powerful individuals who benefit economically from decades of chaos in Somalia and for whom enforcing the rule of law would mean returning stolen property, paying taxes, or enduring government restrictions.<sup>13</sup>

The most frequently targeted main supply routes are those from Mogadishu to Barawe, and Mogadishu to Baidoa.

10 See, for example, Aisha Ahmad, *Jihad and Co. Black Markets and Islamist Power* (Oxford University Press, 2017) and *The Al-Shabab Finance System* (Mogadishu: Hiraal Institute, 2018).

11 See, for example, Roland Marchal, *A Survey of Mogadishu’s Economy* (Nairobi: European Commission/Somali Unit, August 2002), [http://www.ceas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/somalia/documents/more\\_info/mogadishu\\_economic\\_survey\\_en.pdf](http://www.ceas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/somalia/documents/more_info/mogadishu_economic_survey_en.pdf)

12 Ken Menkhaus, *Conflict Assessment 2014: Northern Kenya and Somaliland* (Danish Demining Group, March 2015).

13 Fred Ngoga Gateretse, Adviser to the AU Special Representative for Somalia, Amb. Nicholas Bwakira, Statement before the House Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, Washington DC, 25 June 2009, p. 1.



Mogadishu in particular has become a city where economics, identity politics, and national power politics coexist in ways that are highly confusing to outsiders.<sup>14</sup>

During AMISOM's period of deployment, these characteristics of Somalia's political landscape have given rise to at least five different types of armed conflict, as described below. Each of them involves an economic, identity, and power dimension and all of them have affected the mission's attempts to implement its mandate to a greater or lesser degree.

1. The war conducted by AMISOM and the FGS against al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups, including the so-called Islamic State in Somalia. The war against al-Shabaab and the violent extremism these militants have promoted has extended well beyond Somalia, most notably into eastern Kenya.
2. Conflicts arising because of national and regional political power struggles, notably those to win and hold national office by appointing key supporters and weakening opponents, as well as those to establish and then control regional administrations. These have sometimes involved significant organised violence.
3. Identity-based conflicts, particularly those arising from clan politics, but also other forms of identity differences.
4. Communal violence, usually concerning access to resources, especially disputes over land, access to water, and livestock issues. These have sometimes been exacerbated by environmental degradation brought on by climate change.
5. Organised, violent criminal activity. This includes piracy and kidnapping, but more commonly using instruments of violence to benefit from commercial activities in the grey and black markets, including especially trade in charcoal and khat.

For AMISOM's mandate, the most important are the first two types of conflict, although all five variants affect the mission one way or another. It is also clear that there is wide consensus among stakeholders that al-Shabaab cannot be defeated by military means alone, and that ending the first and second of these conflicts will require some form of solution involving political and governance reforms. This, in turn, will affect the consolidation of the Somali state and thus contribute to managing the remaining conflicts.

There is also broad consensus that al-Shabaab remains a potent foe. Its forces continue to dominate significant terrain, including around Saakow, west and east of Kismayo, the border between Bakool and Hiiran, the border between Lower Shabelle and Bay, and north and east of Jowhar towards Galmudug. Al-Shabaab fighters retain a considerable degree of freedom of movement, are often able to blend in with the local population, and

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Fritz Schaap and Christian Werner, "The Business of Fear in Boomtown Mogadishu," *Der Spiegel*, 27 October 2017, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-business-and-violence-driving-the-boom-in-mogadishu-a-1174243.html>

they possess the financial and organisational capabilities to strike AMISOM and Somali targets on a regular basis. Al-Shabaab forces regularly attack AMISOM and Somali government targets, as well as targeting local civilians. Between October 2017 and April 2018, for example, al-Shabaab claimed to launch 418 attacks (with 16 of these, or 4%, in Kenya).<sup>15</sup> The locations of these claimed attacks are depicted in figure 3. Most of these were military assaults (166 incidents, or roughly 40%) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) (101 incidents, or 24%), with assassinations (67 incidents), grenade attacks (43 incidents), and suicide attacks (10 incidents) accounting for the remainder. Nearly 54% of al-Shabaab attacks targeted the SNA and aligned militias, with 28% against AMISOM (117 incidents).

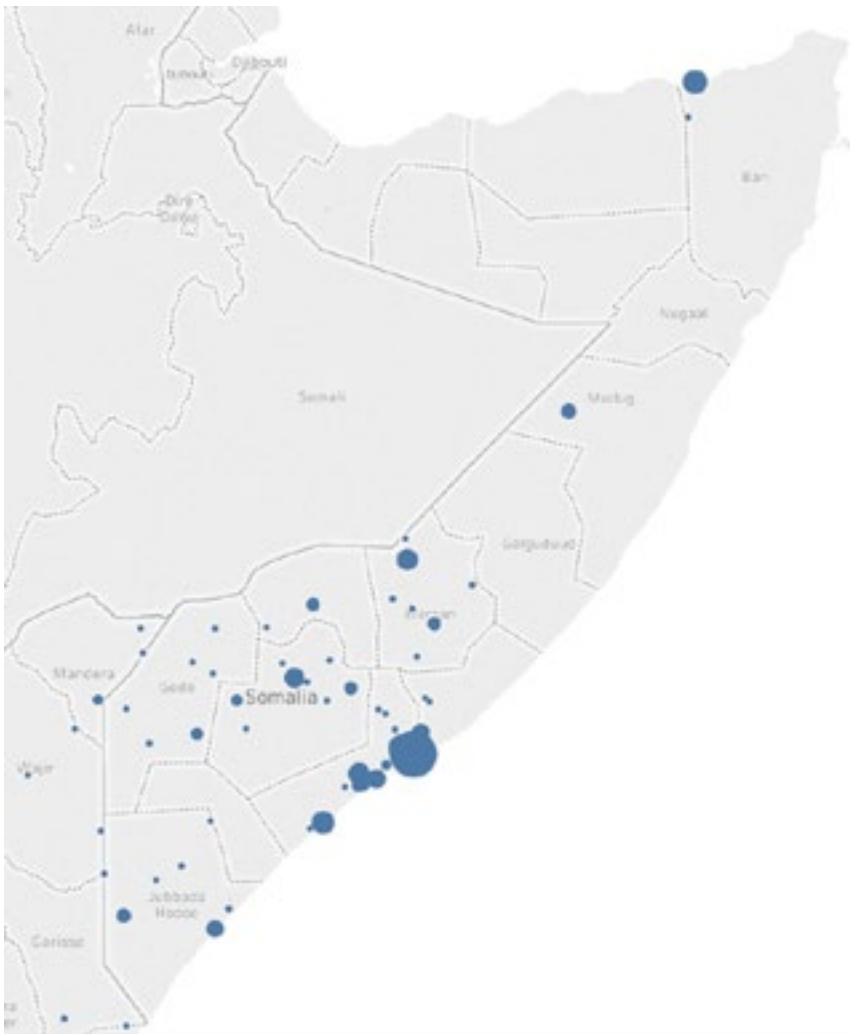
AMISOM's principal security role is to reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab and provide a degree of stability within which Somalis can pursue their state-building project.

The location of the attacks was most frequently in Mogadishu and its suburbs (125 incidents), with the next highest number occurring in Afgoye (28 incidents), followed by Bosaso (22), Baraawe (19), Qoryoley (17), and Beledweyn (16). This data is broadly compatible with AMISOM data that suggests al-Shabaab averages more than one attack against the mission per day. The most frequently targeted main supply routes are those from Mogadishu to Barawe, and Mogadishu to Baidoa. Al-Shabaab has also launched large-scale conventional assaults on AMISOM and SNA FOBs and even conducted mortar attacks on the main international com-

pound at Mogadishu Airport. The successful assaults on bases and convoys have allowed al-Shabaab to loot considerable amounts of equipment, weapons, ammunition and uniforms from both AMISOM and the SNA.

In addition to their military capabilities, al-Shabaab continues to collect considerable amounts of revenue through various forms of extortion of local populations and illicit trading in a wide range of commodities. In certain parts of the country, al-Shabaab also maintains sophisticated systems of governance which are based on coercion and generating fear in the local population, while also providing a modicum of justice that is sometimes considered more reliable than the Somali state. In Mogadishu, al-Shabaab continues to exercise significant influence through fear of its ability to infiltrate and tax state institutions and even senior government ministers as well as extorting local businesses through protection rackets.

15 Only 167 claims (or roughly 40%) were verified by independent sources, meaning that 60% cannot be confirmed. Bill Roggio and Caleb Weiss, "Shabaab attacks focus on Somali military, African Union forces," *Long War Journal*, 3 September 2018, <https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/09/shabaab-attacks-focus-on-somali-military-african-union-forces.php>

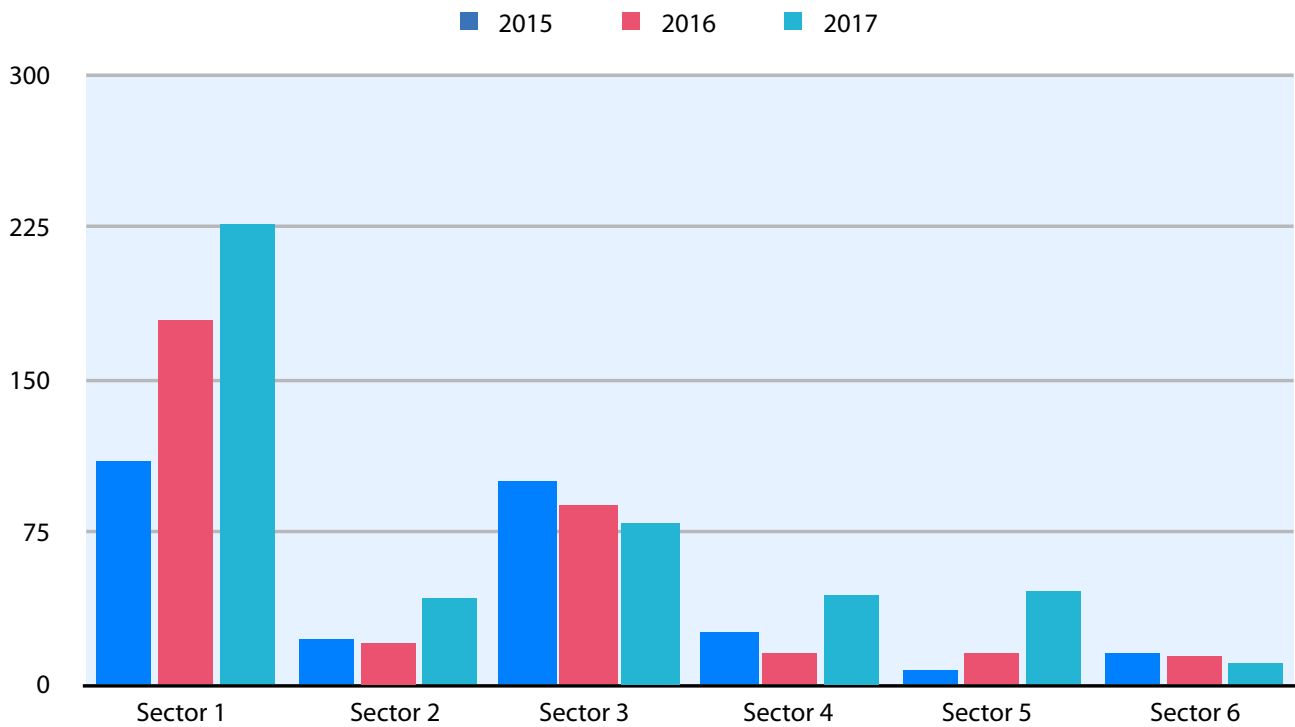


**Figure 3: Claimed al-Shabaab attacks, October 2017 to April 2018**

Source: Bill Roggio and Caleb Weiss, “Shabaab attacks focus on Somali military, African Union forces,” *Long War Journal*, 3 September 2018.

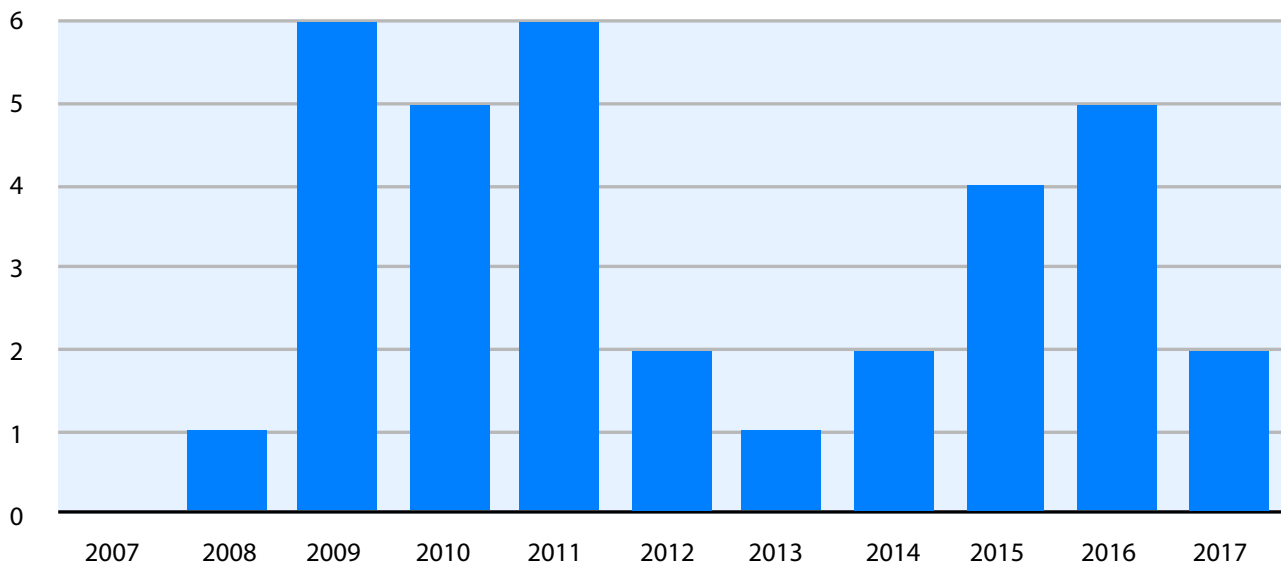
In this context, AMISOM’s principal security role is to reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab and provide a degree of stability within which Somalis can pursue their state-building project. This has drawn a direct response from al-Shabaab. Specifically, al-Shabaab has concentrated its attacks on AMISOM across Sectors 1, 2 and 3, with attacks on AMISOM’s main supply routes most often occurring between Mogadishu and Barawe, and then Mogadishu to Baidoa. Over the last couple of years, al-Shabaab has attacked AMISOM forces on average at least once a day.

With regard to IEDs, between 2015 and 2017, there were 1,066 recorded incidents in AMISOM’s area of operations with the mission targeted by just under half of these attacks. Approximately 80% of these attacks were roadside IEDs and about half of them occurred in AMISOM Sector 1 (see figure 4).



**Figure 4: IED Attacks by AMISOM Sector, 2015-2017**

In a related variant, al-Shabaab has conducted 34 suicide bomb attacks targeting AMISOM since the mission deployed in 2007.<sup>16</sup> This was out of a total of 214 suicide attacks between 2007 and October 2017 (see figure 5). 28 of the 34 al-Shabaab suicide attacks on AMISOM took place in Sector 1.



**Figure 5: Al-Shabaab Suicide Bomb Attacks Targeting AMISOM, 2007-October 2017**

<sup>16</sup> Data provided by Jason Warner and Ellen Chapin, *Targeted Terror: The Suicide Bombers of al-Shabaab* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2018).



With regard to al-Shabaab assaults on AMISOM's FOBs, these have met with mixed results. On occasion, al-Shabaab forces have been decimated by the defenders, as occurred at Halgan (2016) and Bulo Mareer (2018). At other times, al-Shabaab forces temporarily overran AMISOM bases at Leego (2015), Janaale (2015), El Adde (2016), and Kulbiyow (2017), killing many of the garrisoned troops and stealing considerable amounts of equipment.<sup>17</sup>

With regard to ambushes on convoys, these have varied from attempts to slow down or damage AMISOM vehicles, notably water bowzers, to outright assaults intended to destroy an entire convoy and its personnel. Particularly deadly examples of the latter occurred at Jame'ada (2015), Golweyn (2017) and Bal'ad (2018).

## 2.2 International Engagement

AMISOM cannot be understood in isolation from broader international efforts to stabilise Somalia dating back to the early 1990s, a decade before the AU was established. Today, AMISOM is part of a wider ecosystem of more than 40 international actors operating in Somalia.<sup>18</sup> The key actors in this ecosystem, including the regional administrations, are shown in figure 6. Most of these actors are explicitly attempting to support the Federal Government on the assumption that state-building is a critical element for any strategy aimed at stabilising the country. To that end, they provide various forms of political, economic and military support. Some of them are directly engaged as partners to the mission, while others play an indirect role by supporting the state-building project in Somalia in other ways. For example, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) now play significant roles in providing financial support to the FGS, but do not work with AMISOM directly.<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that some bilateral donors to the UN trust funds are clearly supporting

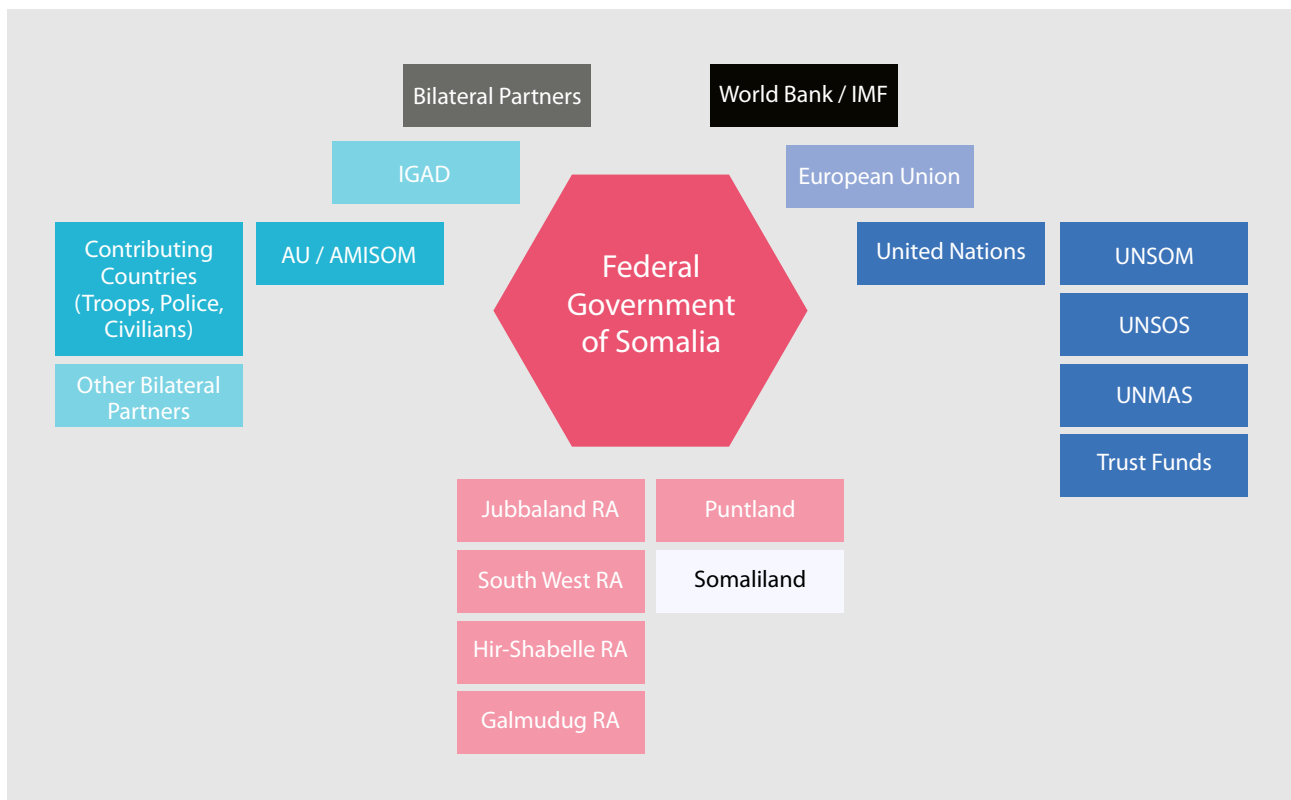
AMISOM is part of a wider ecosystem of more than 40 international actors operating in Somalia.

17 See Paul D. Williams, *The Battle of El Adde* (International Peace Institute, 2016); Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia*, pp. 195-202; and Eric G. Berman, Mihaela Racovita, and Matt Schroeder, *Making a Tough Job More Difficult: Loss of Arms and Ammunition in Peace Operations* (Small Arms Survey, October 2017).

18 The International Contact Group on Somalia established in 2006 included Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda, UAE, UK, US, African Development Bank, AU, EU, Islamic Development Bank, IGAD, League of Arab States, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, NATO, UN, and the World Bank.

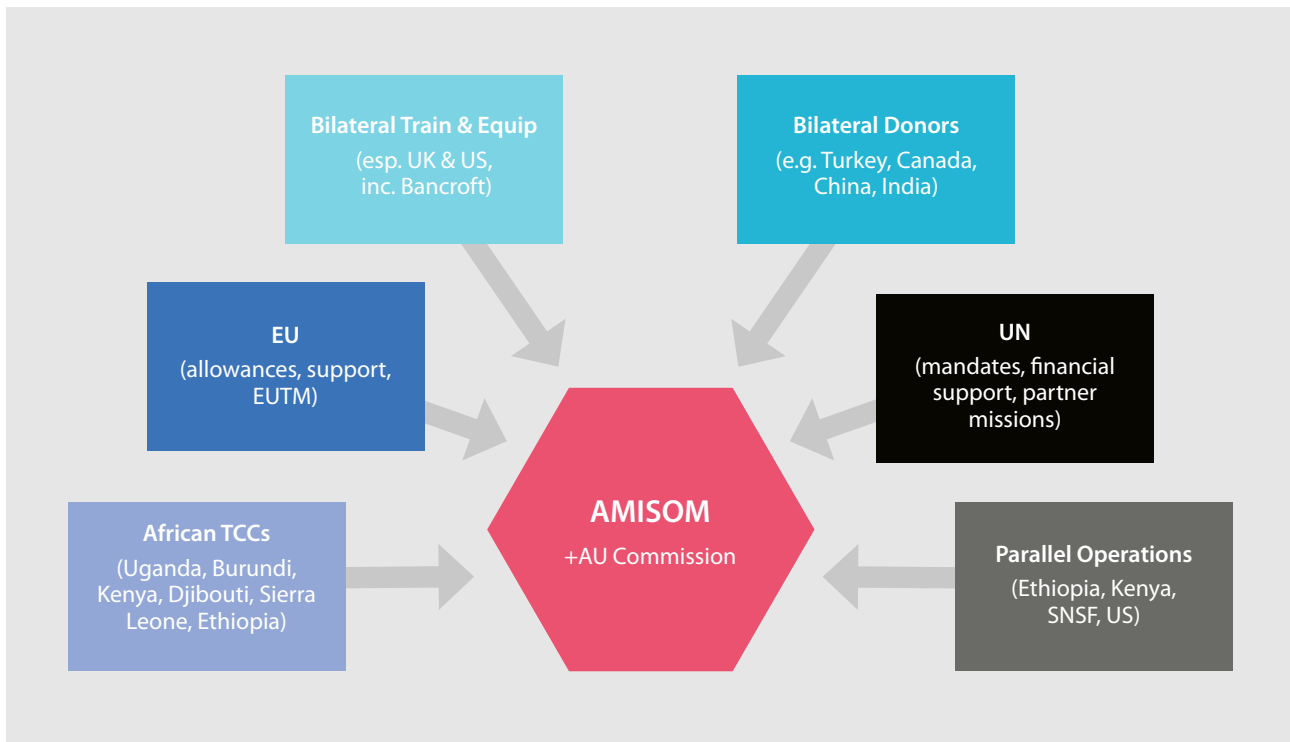
19 Somalia's relationship with the international financial institutions proved very difficult, even after the FGS was established in September 2012. The main frameworks being the Somali Compact for 2014-2016 and the New Partnership for Somalia in 2017, following the transition of power to a new president in February. As a result, the largest form of external financial assistance came from the Somali diaspora, whose contributions dwarfed the amounts of official development assistance, often totalling well over \$1 billion per year.

Somalia, but not directly working with the mission. AMISOM's principal partners are shown in figure 7.



**Figure 6: Key International, Regional and Local Actors in the Stabilisation of Somalia**

The presence of other actors both supports and complicates AMISOM's ability to implement its mandate. While AMISOM receives crucial logistical and financial support—notably from the UN and EU—the proliferation of external actors engaged in Somalia has often led to political tension over the most appropriate division of labour among them. Trying to coordinate all the international partners has proven to be impossible. At best, some of the key stakeholders, including multilateral institutions like the AU, EU, World Bank and UN, have been able to agree with the government on a core vision for the political, security, governance and development dimensions of the Somali state-building project. Even then, the coherence achieved seems to peek ahead of donor conferences, and to haemorrhage soon thereafter, which suggests that these compacts reflect a shared interest in generating funding more than they represent a common political-strategic vision. It is important to note that AMISOM does not have the leading role in supporting Somalia's political transition. That role falls to the UNSOM, which was established in June 2013.



**Figure 7: AMISOM's Principal Partners**

Among the most notable of AMISOM's partners is the EU, which has provided financial assistance that paid for personnel allowances, death and disability payments, and other forms of support. The EU also established a training mission (the EUTM) in 2010 to support the Somali security forces. Since 2007, the EU has provided more than €1.5 billion to support AMISOM via its African Peace Facility.<sup>20</sup>

Also crucial has been the UN's provision of various support packages. The UN Security Council has directly authorised AMISOM since early 2007. It has established several trust funds to coordinate financial assistance to the mission. Since 2009, the UN also provided logistics support for AMISOM through its UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA), which was converted into the UN Support Office for Somalia (UNSOS) in late 2015. Finally, the UN has the leading role in several sectors, such as supporting the political transition, security sector reform and the rule of law, through UNSOM. The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) conducts traditional mine action activities of locating and disposing of mines and explosive remnants of war, in addition to its principal role in Somalia of training and equipping AMISOM contributing countries to counter the

It is important to note that AMISOM does not have the leading role in supporting Somalia's political transition.

<sup>20</sup> European Commission, *African Peace Facility: Annual Report 2017* (EU, 2018), p. 14.

threat of IEDs. Of course, other actors are also mandated to engage with political aspects of stabilising Somalia, including the AU, IGAD and the EU. Notably, these actors have mandates that cover the whole of Somalia, not just AMISOM's area of operations. In recent years, the political dimension of stabilising Somalia has been complicated by the divisive actions of several Gulf states, which have intensified rifts between the Federal Government and several regional administrations.<sup>21</sup>

Bilateral partners have played a wide range of roles across different sectors in Somalia. Those of most direct relevance to AMISOM have been countries such as the US and UK that provided security assistance, equipment and training to AMISOM's TCCs, and states such as the US, UK, Turkey and the UAE that have established military training and security assistance programmes for the Somali security forces.

In the humanitarian sector, it was the UN and EU, as well as a large number of states, notably Turkey and the US, and NGOs that provided relief and aid in order to limit the toll of Somalia's recurrent famines, droughts and floods. All these state actors encountered major challenges in trying to pursue such activities, while simultaneously supporting the fight against al-Shabaab. International NGOs tried to maintain their independence but have generally been regarded by al-Shabaab and other extremists as proxies for the West. One of AMISOM's original mandated tasks was to "facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance", and later to help provide "the necessary security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance".<sup>22</sup>

Parallel military operations have also sometimes had a direct bearing on AMISOM. Since 2007, Ethiopia, Kenya and the US have conducted various types of military operations in AMISOM's area of operations. These actions were not under AMISOM's command, nor did these countries always seek prior clearance, or even necessarily coordinate their actions with AMISOM. Ethiopia has consistently conducted military operations inside Somalia between late 2006 and early 2009, and again since late 2011. Since 2011, these often involved several thousand troops (ground and air), in addition to those Ethiopian troops deployed as part of AMISOM. In Kenya's case, most of its unilateral operations in Somalia, since the end of Operation Linda Nchi in 2012, have been in the form of airstrikes in areas that AMISOM would regard as Sectors 2 and 6. The US has engaged in airstrikes and a small number of commando raids conducted by special forces. The number of strikes in Somalia conducted by US forces has increased significantly, particularly since the change of rules of engagement adopted in March 2017. During 2017, for instance, the US conducted more strikes in Somalia than the period from 2006 to 2016 combined. So far, it has conducted an estimated 33 strikes as of 26 November 2018.<sup>23</sup>

21 International Crisis Group, *Somalia and the Gulf Crisis* (ICG: Report No.260/Africa, June 2018).

22 PSC/PR/Comm. (LXIX), 19 January 2007, para. 8, and S/RES/1744, 20 February 2007, para. 4.

23 For details see The Bureau of Investigative Journalism's "Drone Warfare" database at <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/projects/drone-war>



It is unclear how often, if at all, these strikes are conducted in coordination with AMISOM. After 2014, some of these were subsequently undertaken in collaboration with the SNA's Danab advanced infantry units. It is also unclear how many, if any, of these parallel operations were coordinated with AMISOM in advance. While these strikes have produced tactical and operational gains against al-Shabaab forces, they have at times generated significant controversy over the scale of unintended civilian casualties, and they have strengthened the association between AMISOM and the broader "war on terrorism", thereby increasing resentment and opposition towards the mission among segments of the local population.

Finally, although not directly connected to AMISOM's activities, since late 2008 there have been a number of anti-piracy operations conducted by three parallel NATO, EU and international maritime coalitions involving states from all over the world.

## 2.3 Country Data

One way of assessing AMISOM's effectiveness involves examining potential correlations between its activities and relevant indicators in Somalia. This section therefore briefly summarises some of the data collected by institutions that are relevant to understanding trends in armed conflict, governance, and population displacement in Somalia.<sup>24</sup> AMISOM is not mandated to address all of these issues, but they shed some light on the extent to which the mission's activities have had a transformational impact on political and security dynamics in the country. Where possible, we have tried to present data on the decade before AMISOM's deployment as well. Potential comparisons across these periods must be made carefully because of the enormous difficulties in gathering accurate data about Somalia. Indeed, AMISOM's presence and expansion have been some reasons why data collection has improved since 2007. Our assessment of AMISOM's performance does not place great weight on the following data, but they provide some useful points of comparison and contextual knowledge.

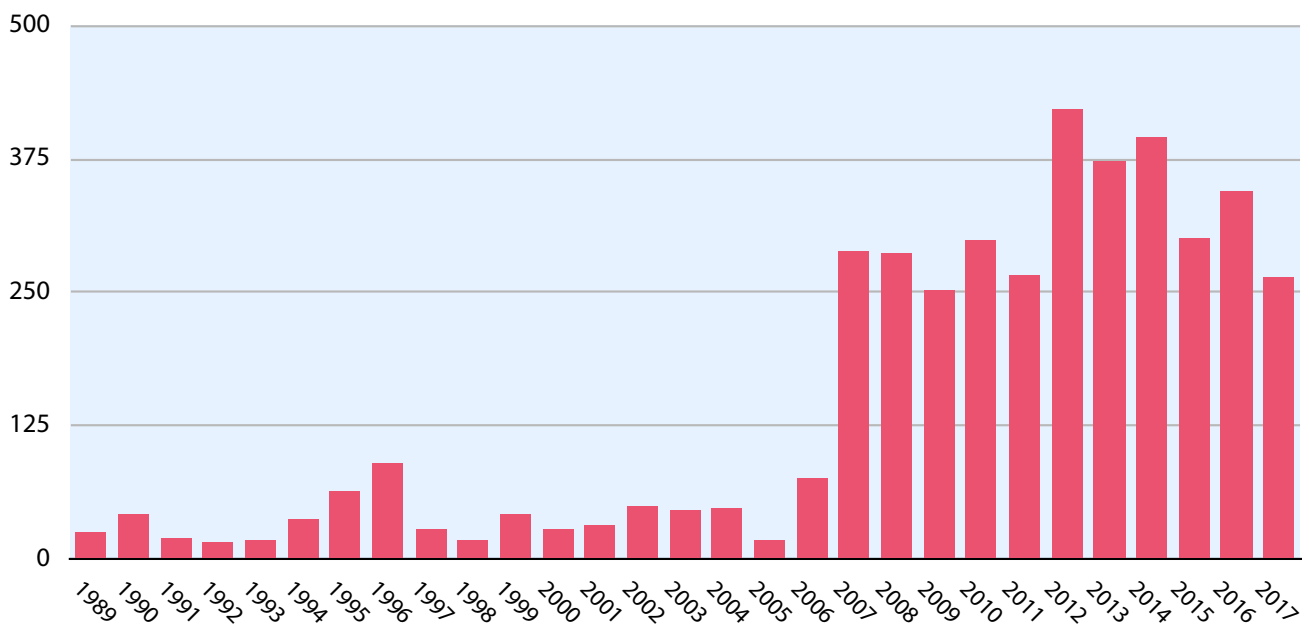
### Conflict Trends

Here we present data on Somalia gathered by the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (UCDP) and the ACLED Project. Specifically, figures 8 to 15 below present the available data on conflict events, sometimes focusing only on AMISOM's area of operations in south-central Somalia (i.e., excluding Puntland and Somaliland). The UCDP events all involve some battle-related deaths whereas ACLED data includes a much broader

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<sup>24</sup> Figures 10 to 12 were created by Andreas Forø Tollefsen and Håvard Mogleiv Nygård at PRIO. The rest were created by Ryan Rappa at CIC.

category of events related to conflict that do not necessarily include fatalities or even violence.<sup>25</sup>



**Figure 8: UCDP Conflict Events in South-Central Somalia, 1989-2017**

Figure 8 shows a relatively consistent number of conflict events since AMISOM's deployment in 2007 up until 2017, with increased numbers apparent between 2012 and 2014. There are much higher numbers of conflict events across this entire period than the decade before AMISOM's deployment and considerably more than the number of conflict events recorded while UNOSOM I and II and the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) were deployed from 1992 to 1995. The reasons behind this increase are unclear. The major increase in the number of conflict events begins in December 2006 with the Ethiopian intervention that brought the TFG to Mogadishu and precipitated the subsequent rise of al-Shabaab.

Figure 9 shows that the ACLED data presents a broadly similar trend with the numbers of conflict events from 2007 to 2018 being consistently higher than in the previous decade. The 2013-2014 and 2016-2017 periods witnessed the highest number of conflict events, according to the ACLED database.

Figure 10 uses UCDP's georeferenced event data to depict the location of conflict events in Somalia between 1989 and 2006 (left) compared to the period from 2007 to 2018 (right). This also shows the increased number of conflict events after AMISOM's deployment and the fact that the vast majority of them remained concentrated in south-central Somalia (AMISOM's area of operations since 2012).

<sup>25</sup> ACLED collects data on nine event types including three types of battles, violence against civilians, remote violence, rioting (violent demonstrations), protesting (non-violent demonstrations), and three types of non-violent events (non-violent takeover of territory, headquarter and base establishment, and strategic developments).

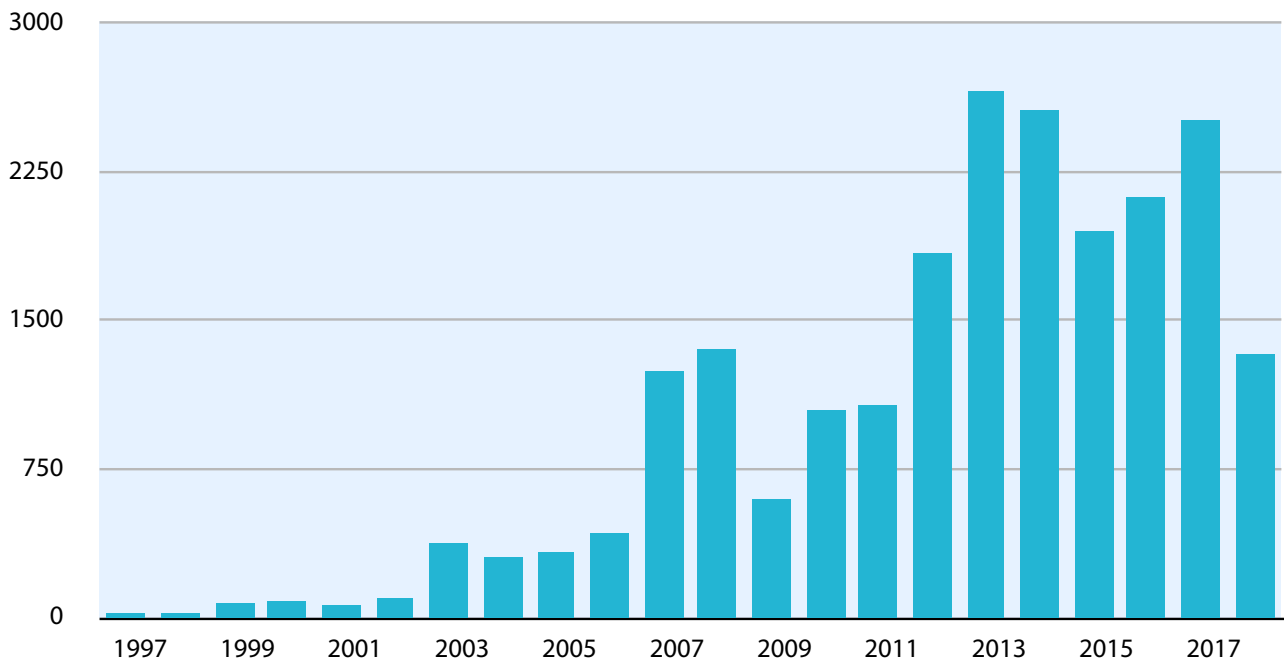


Figure 9: ACLED Conflict Events in South-Central Somalia, 1997-June 2018

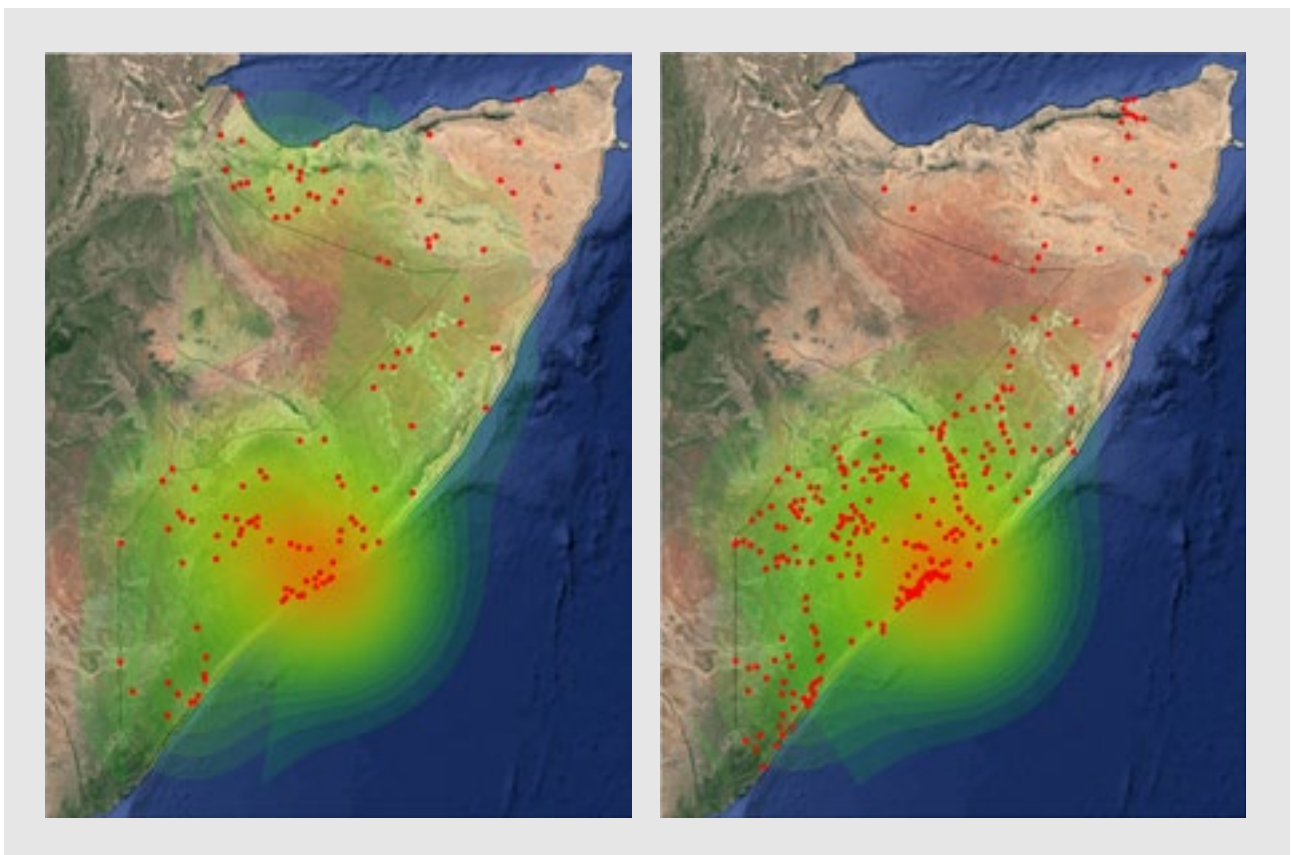
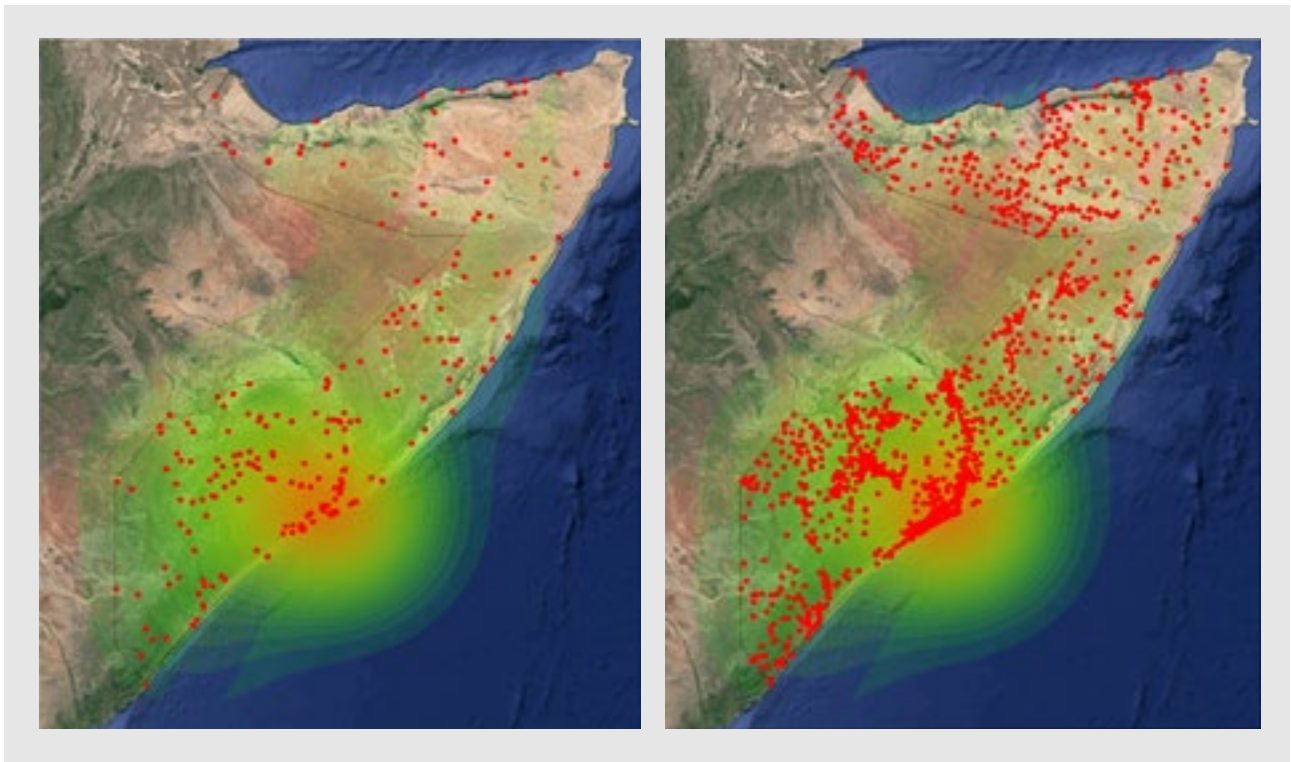
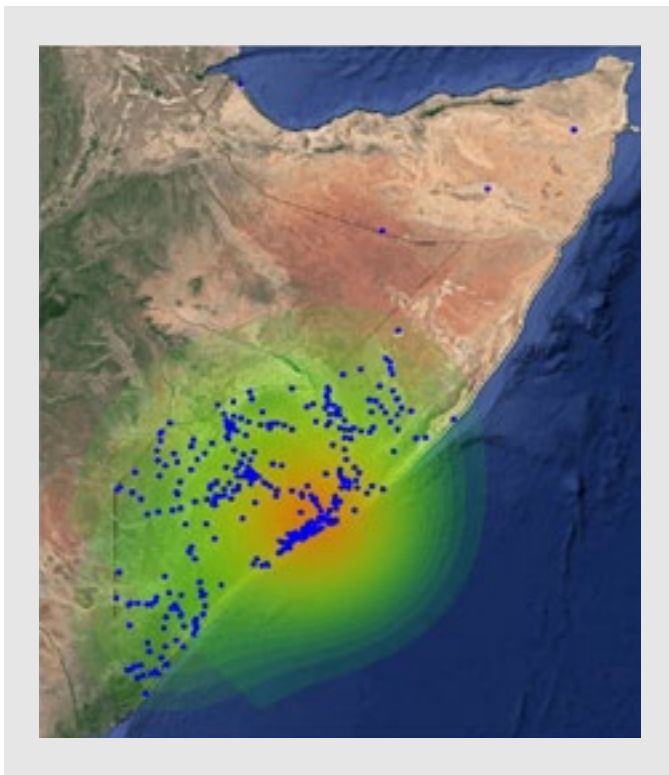


Figure 10: UCDP conflict events for Somalia, 1989-2006 and 2007-2018 compared



**Figure 11: ACLED conflict events for Somalia, 1997-2006 and 2007-2018 compared**

Figure 11 uses ACLED data to depict conflict events in Somalia between 1997 and 2006 (left), and between 2007 and 2018 (right). These maps illustrate how similar conclusions about the increased number of conflict events after AMISOM’s deployment can be drawn, but they show increased conflict in Puntland and Somaliland. However, the majority of conflict events have still occurred in south-central Somalia (AMISOM’s area of operations since 2012).

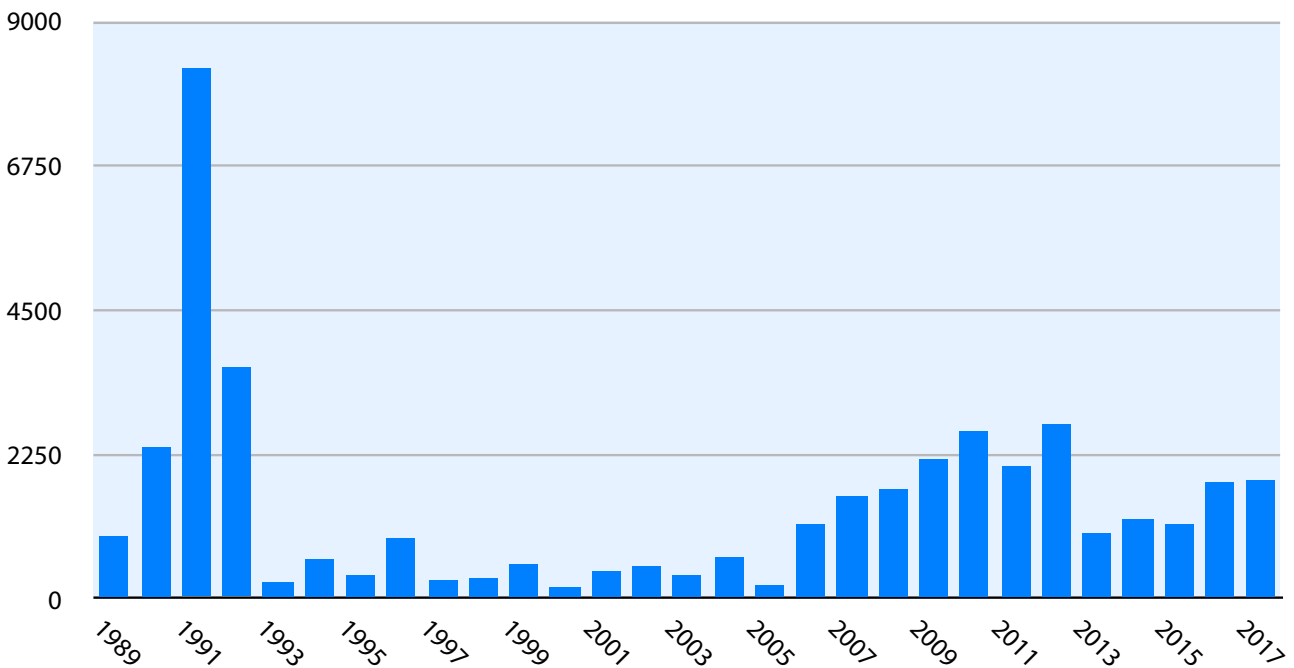


**Figure 12: ACLED conflict events involving AMISOM, 2007-2018**

Figure 12 uses ACLED data to depict all conflict events in Somalia where AMISOM was coded as either Actor 1 or Actor 2 in the event. This highlights the concentration of incidents involving AMISOM in and around Mogadishu and along the major supply routes connecting AMISOM’s bases across south-central Somalia, especially between Mogadishu and Barawe, and Mogadishu and Baidoa.



Figures 13 to 15 below show the fatalities suffered as a result of organised violence in south-central Somalia. Those from UCDP represent the best estimate for battle-related deaths, while those from ACLED depict all reported fatalities, and not only those related to battles. Figure 15 shows the ACLED number of reported fatalities in south-central Somalia between 1997 and June 2018 broken down by region.



**Figure 13: UCDP Battle-Related Deaths in South-Central Somalia, 1989-2017**

In figure 13, the UCDP data shows a relatively consistent level of battle-related deaths between 2007 and 2017, averaging just over 1,800 per year and peaking at 2,745 in 2012. This is considerably higher than the decade before AMISOM's deployment, which saw an average of 462 annual battle-related deaths between 1997 and 2006. However, battle-related deaths during AMISOM's deployment were much lower than the fighting between 1990 and 1992, when approximately 4,750 people were killed in battles each year.

Figure 14 shows that ACLED data on reported fatalities are significantly higher than those from UCDP. Between 2007 and 2017, ACLED recorded an average of nearly 3,100 reported fatalities per year, peaking at 5,180 in 2017 (587 of which occurred in the 14 October vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (V-BIED) attack in Mogadishu). ACLED data also show a considerably lower rate of reported fatalities in the decade before AMISOM's deployment, averaging 349 per year between 1997 and 2006.

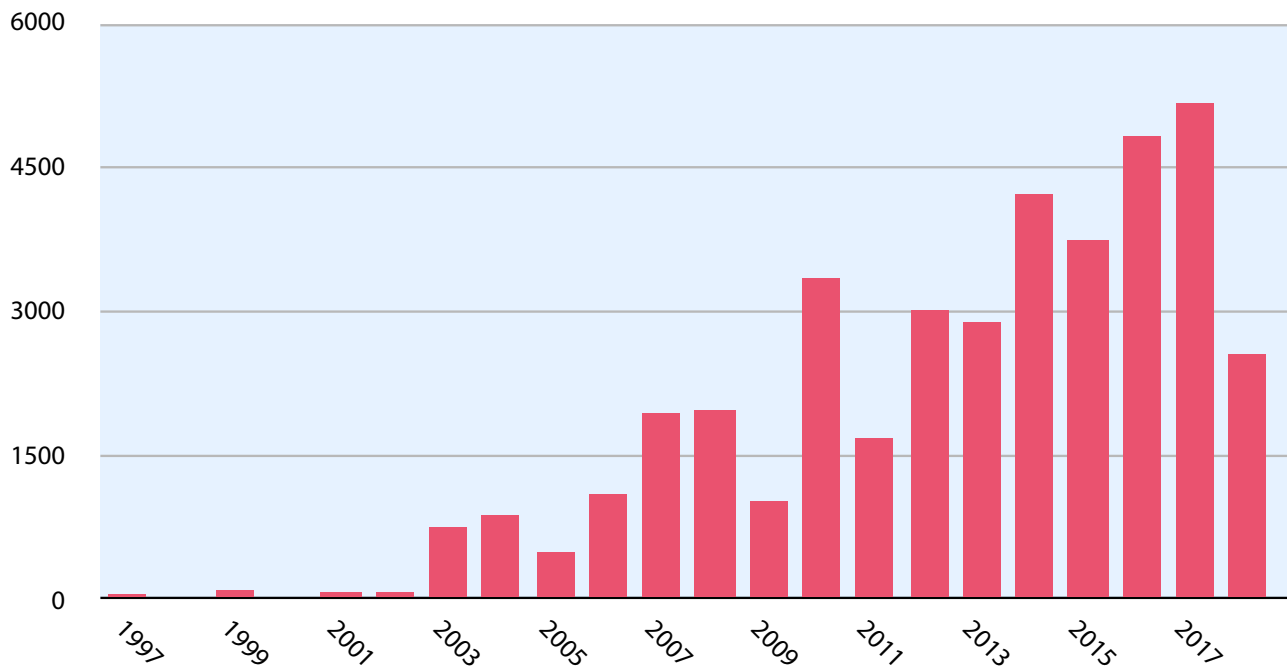


Figure 14: ACLED Reported Conflict-related Deaths in South-Central Somalia, 1997-June 2018

Figure 15, clearly demonstrates that one-third of all fatalities occurred in the Banaadir region, which includes Mogadishu and its environs. The heaviest fighting appears to be in 2010 during the battle for Mogadishu.

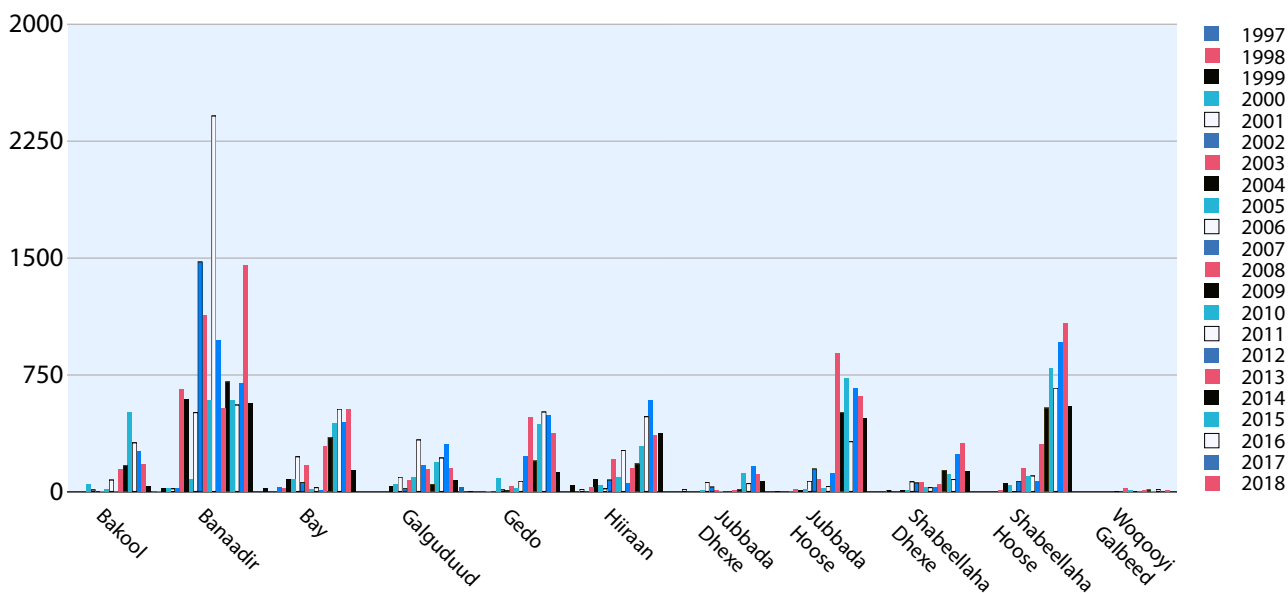
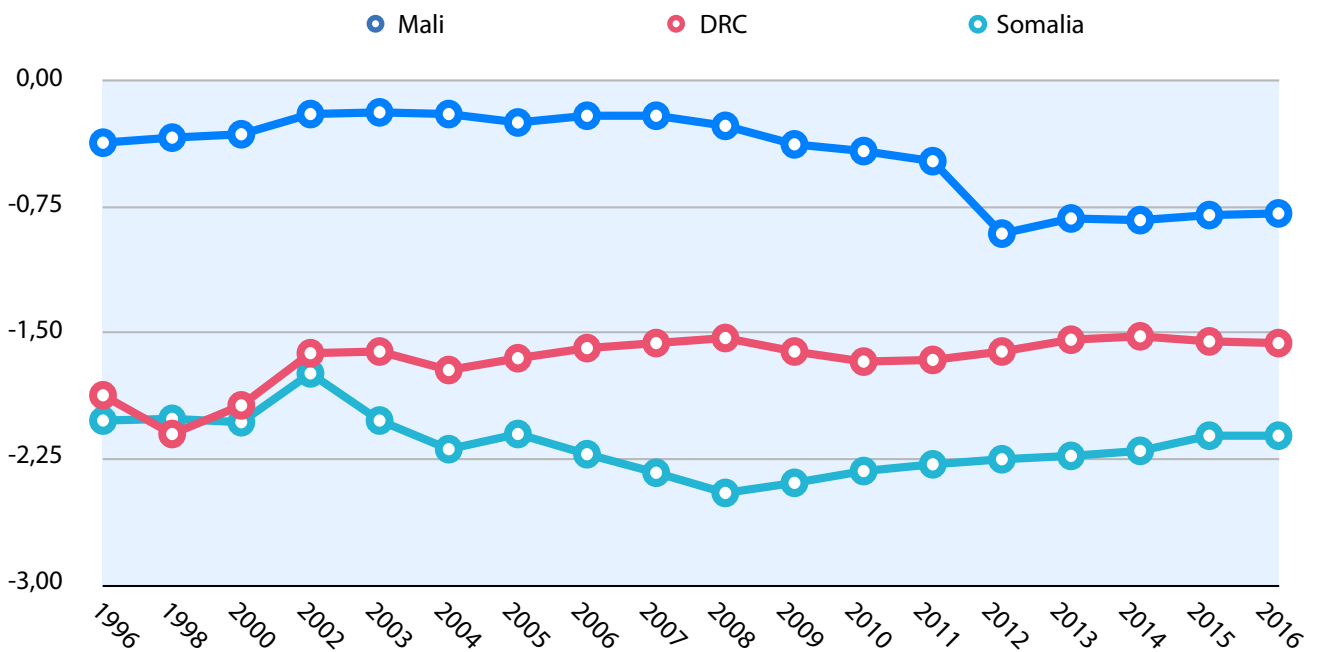


Figure 15: ACLED Conflict-Related Deaths in South-central Somalia by Region, 1997-June 2018

## Governance Trends

Although AMISOM does not have a mandate to transform Somalia's governance structures, data about governance trends provide an insight into the mission's operating environment since they have an important role to play in building state capacity and in countering militant groups like al-Shabaab. In figures 16 to 20, we present data gathered on various indicators of governance by the World Bank, the Failed/Fragile States Index, Freedom House, and Polity IV. We also include data from Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index since it is an important element in understanding how governance works in Somalia. Where possible, we provide a comparison of Somalia data with that of two other countries, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Mali, which have large peacekeeping operations deployed and are the subject of other EPON reports.



**Figure 16: World Bank Governance Indicators Average, 1996-2016**

Figure 16 provides a comparison of an average of the World Bank's governance indicators for Somalia, Mali and the DRC between 1996 and 2016. The World Bank's indicators are based on six dimensions of governance, including political stability, government effectiveness, and control of corruption. It illustrates how poor Somalia's scores are, even compared to two other struggling sub-Saharan African countries with large UN peacekeeping operations. There has been little change with Somalia scoring approximately the same in 2016 as it did in 1996, but there has been steady improvement since AMISOM's deployment.

Figure 17 compares Polity IV data from Somalia, Mali and the DRC from 1989 to 2017. The Polity data examines the qualities of democratic and autocratic authority in governing

institutions to illustrate the potential spectrum of governing authority that spans from fully institutionalised autocracies through mixed, or incoherent, authority regimes (termed “anocracies”) to fully institutionalised democracies. Somalia has shown considerable improvement on this scale since the early 1990s and is now considered an anocracy rather than an autocracy. A significant improvement occurred with the establishment of the Federal Government in 2012.

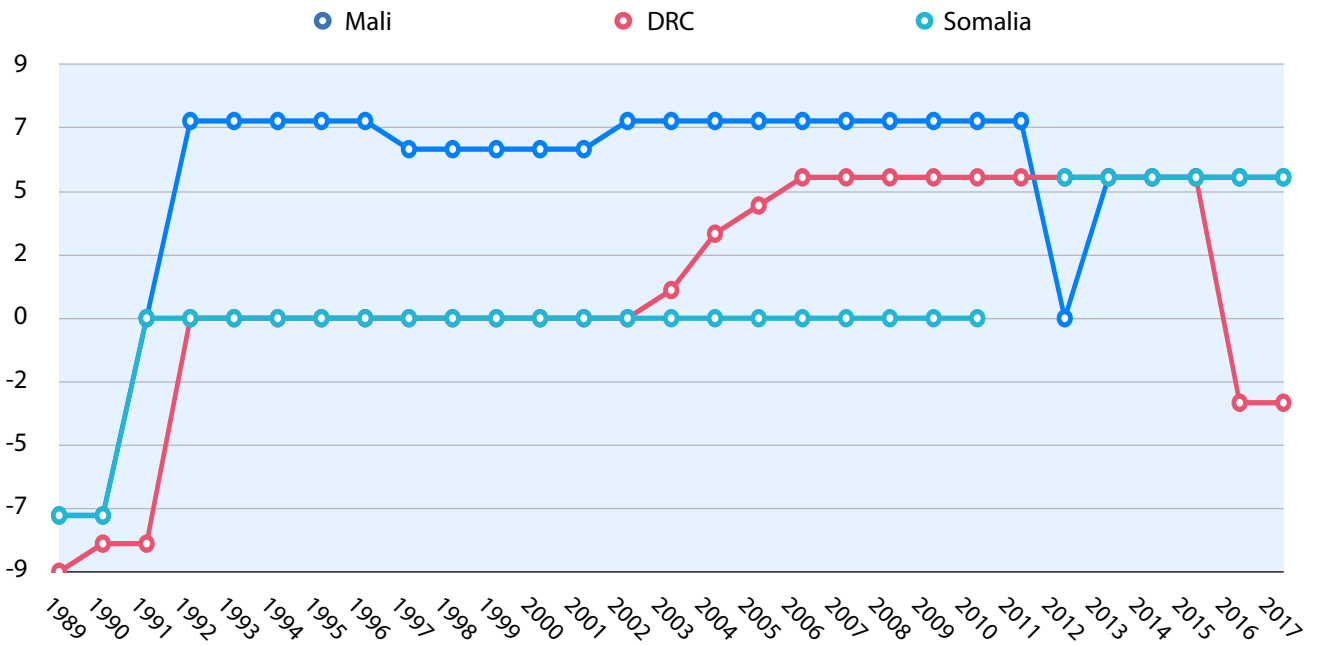


Figure 17: Polity IV Scores, 1989-2017

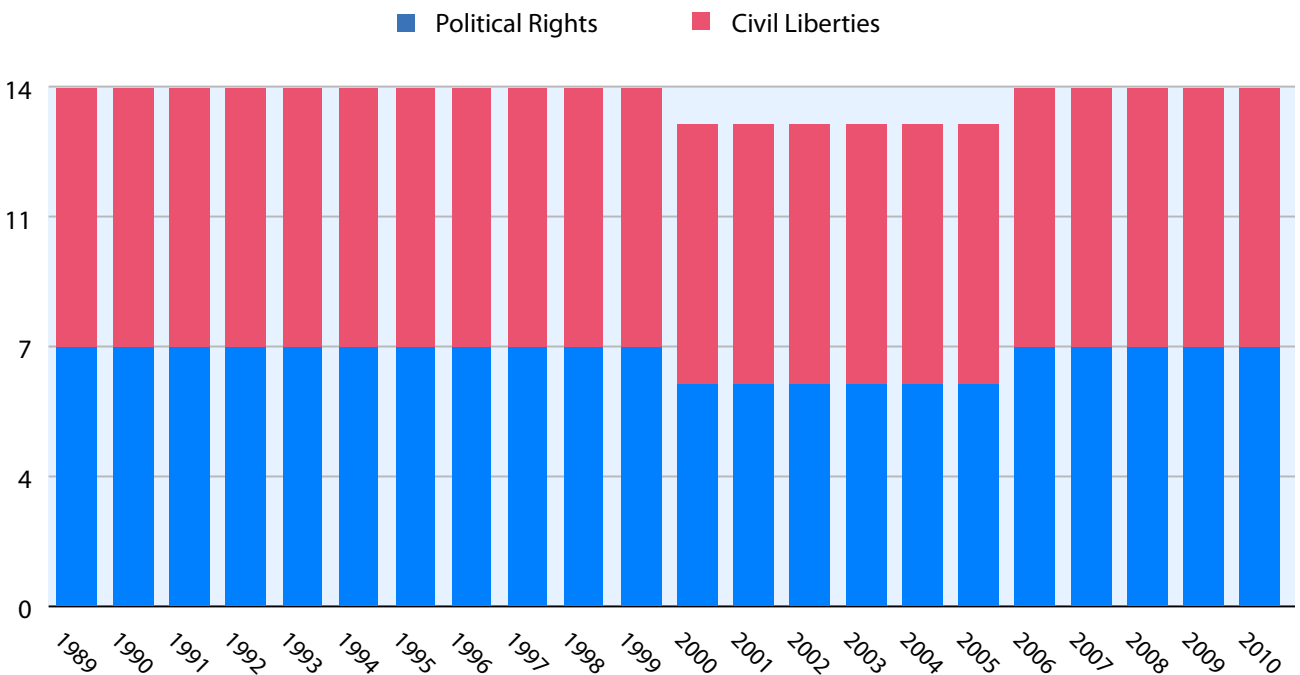
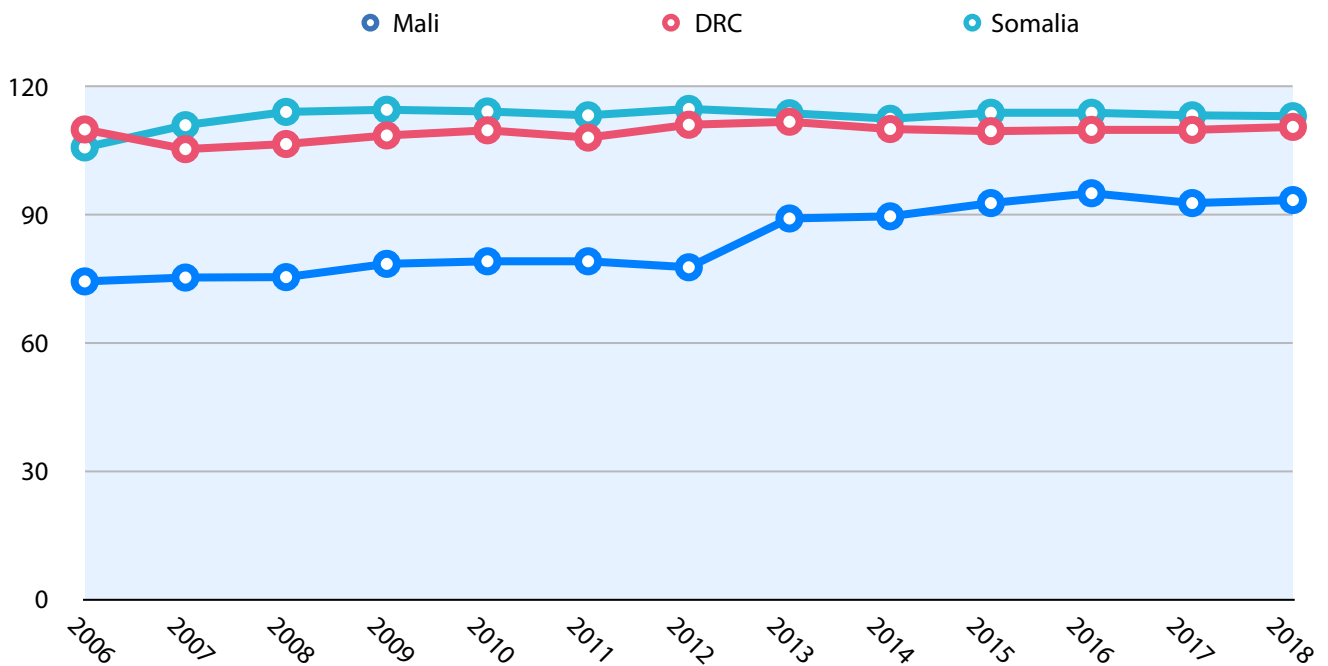


Figure 18: Freedom in the World Scores (1-14), 1989-2017

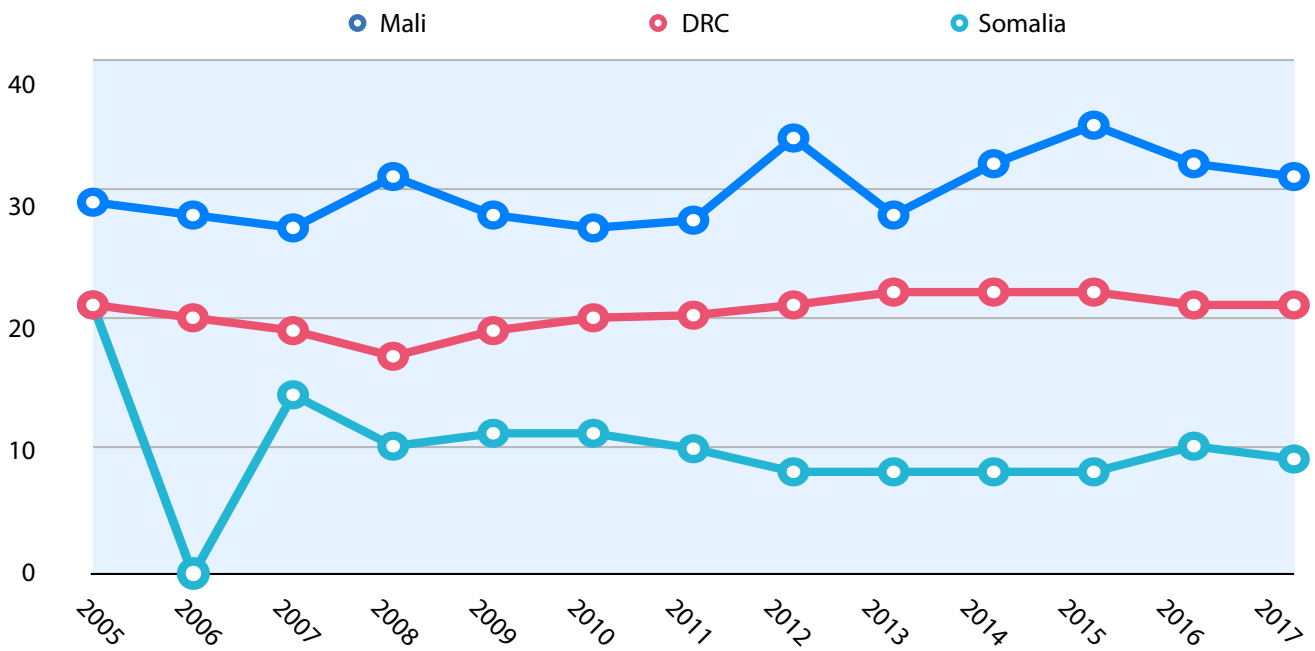


Figure 18 shows that, according to Freedom House data measuring political rights and civil liberties, Somalia has performed consistently poorly over the past three decades. The Freedom House data assesses the real-world rights and freedoms enjoyed by individuals in Somalia. The average of a country's political rights and civil liberties ratings is used to determine the country's status, which can fall into one of three categories: Free (1.0 to 2.5), Partly Free (3.0 to 5.0), or Not Free (5.5 to 7.0). Figure 18 shows that, apart from 2000-2005 when its political rights score was 6, Somalia was awarded the worst scores possible in every other year. AMISOM's presence has seen no significant change in this overall categorisation of Somali individuals as "Not Free."



**Figure 19: Failed/Fragile State Index, 2006-2018**

Figure 19 shows Somalia's performance in the Failed/Fragile States Index compared to Mali and the DRC between 2006 (when the Index began) and 2018. The Index measures performance along twelve political, economic, military and social indicators of instability. The indicators are demographic pressures, refugees and displaced persons, group grievance, human flight, uneven development, economy, delegitimisation of the state, public services, human rights, security apparatus, factionalised elites, and external intervention. Higher scores indicate a greater level of state failure and fragility. The Index has consistently ranked Somalia as one of the world's most failed/fragile states. Since 2008, it has been either the worst or second-worst performing country in the world and has shown no improvement since AMISOM's deployment.

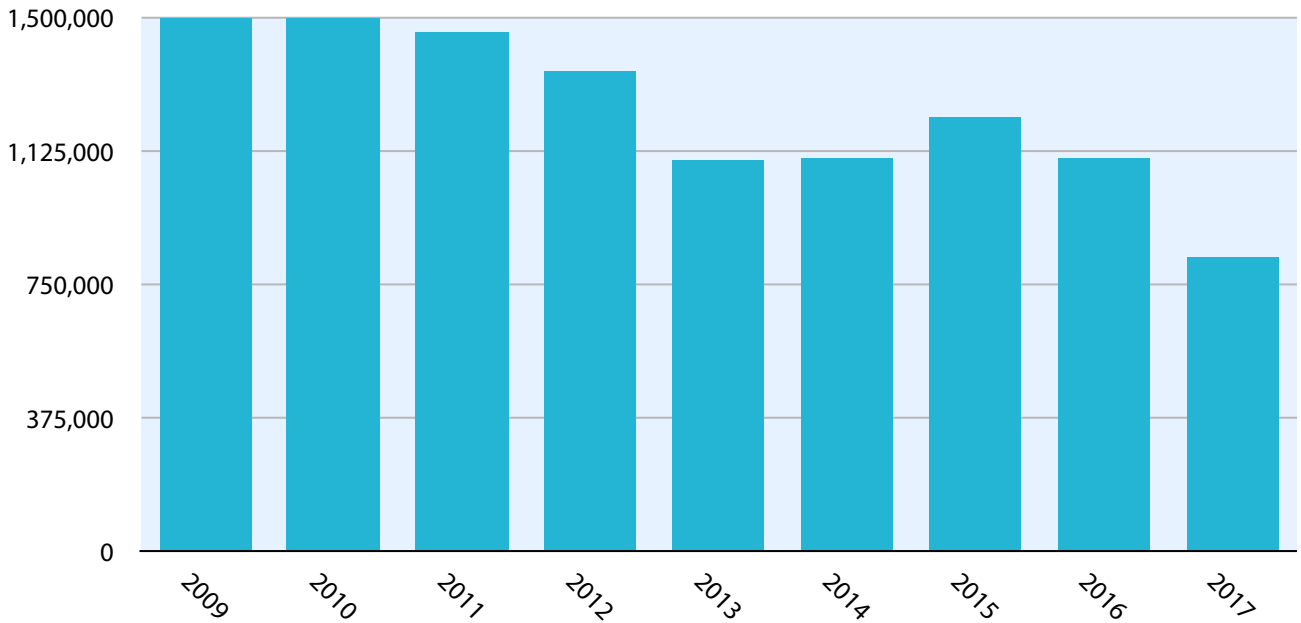


**Figure 20: Corruption Perceptions Index Scores, 2005-2017**

Figure 20 shows scores for public perceptions about the level of corruption in Somalia. The lower the score, the higher the sense of corruption faced by ordinary people in the country. To emphasise just how poor Somalia scores have been, figure 20 plots the results from the Corruption Perceptions Index with comparative scores from Mali and the DRC, sites of two other peace operations studied by EPON in 2018. Somalia has ranked worst in the world for eleven years since 2006, with no significant change during AMISOM’s deployment.

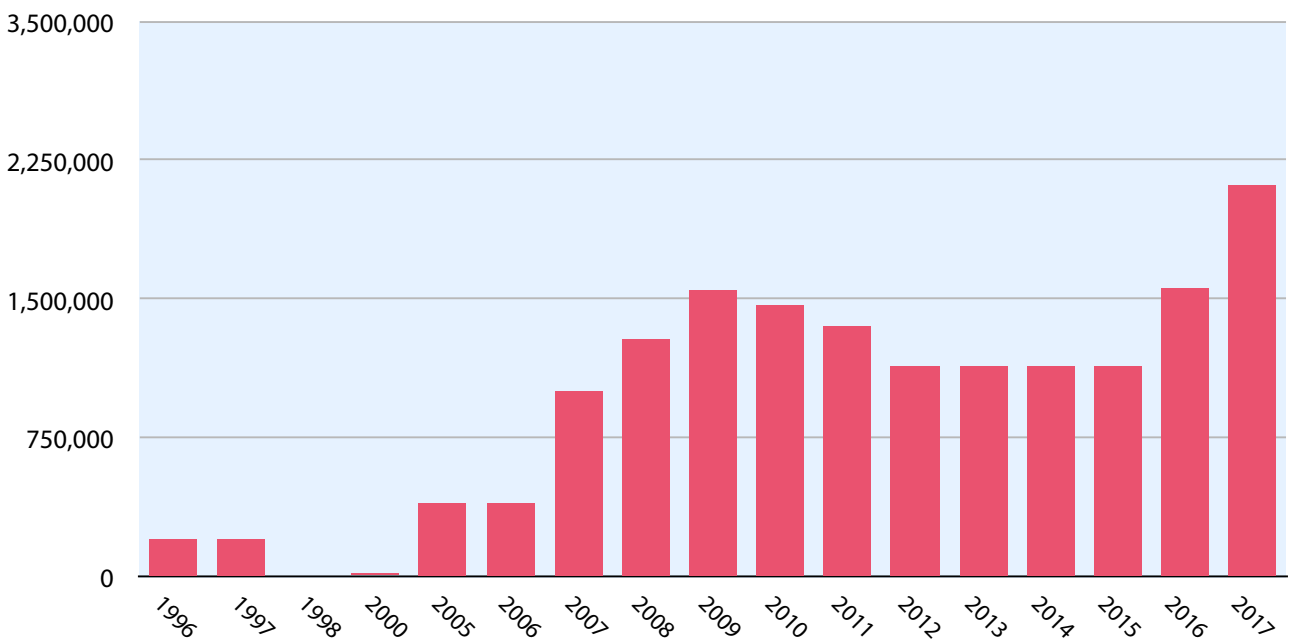
### Displacement Trends

Figures 21 to 23 show trends in population displacement in Somalia using data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).



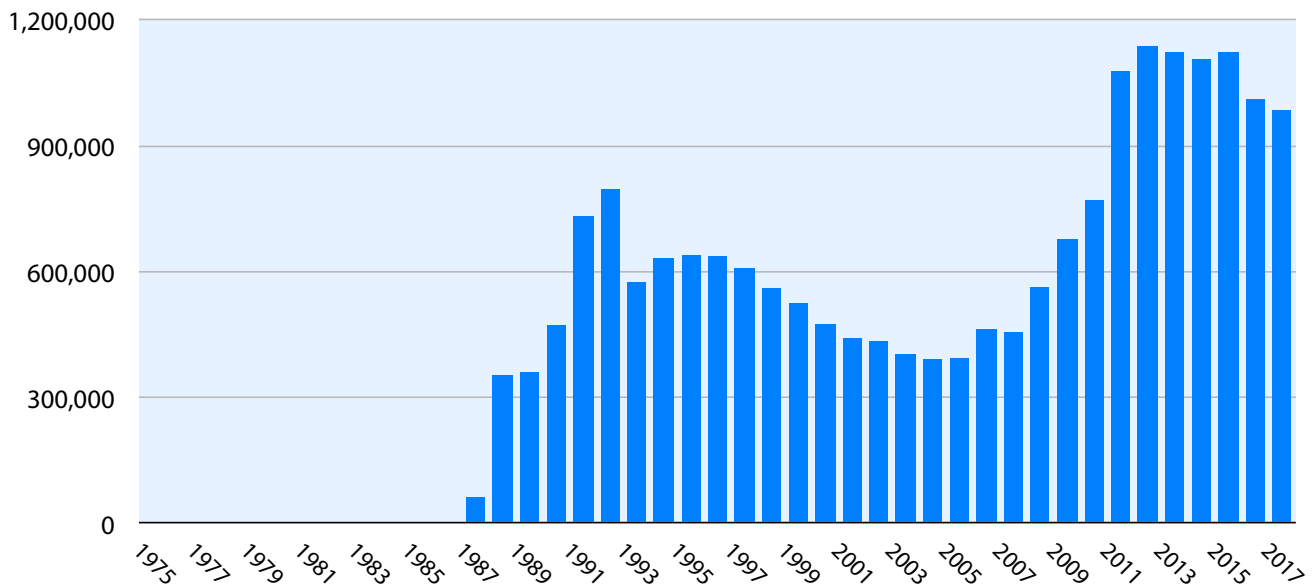
**Figure 21: IDMC Total IDPs in Somalia, 2009-2017**

Based on the IDMC data, figure 21 shows a consistently high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Somalia, although the numbers have decreased from around 150,000 to about 80,000 between 2009 and 2017.



**Figure 22: UNHCR Total IDPs in Somalia, 1996-2017**

Figure 22 from UNHCR data also shows a consistently high number of IDPs in Somalia since 2009. However, in contrast to the IDMC data, it shows a major increase in the number of IDPs in Somalia during 2016 and 2017, which represent the two highest annual levels for the entire period since 1996.



**Figure 23: UNHCR Total Refugees from Somalia, 1975-2017**

Figure 23 shows a consistently high number of Somalis fleeing the country since the early 1990s until about 2010. Since 2010, the numbers have increased significantly, frequently reaching more than one million per year. There are many possible explanations for such an increase, including al-Shabaab's loss of territory with AMISOM's expansion from 2012, which permitted more Somalis to leave those areas, and the persistence of severe droughts and famines, particularly in 2011-12, 2014, and again in 2016-17. Direct correlations between these figures and AMISOM's activities remain unclear.

Taken together, these data sets provide some contextual knowledge about the environment in which AMISOM has operated. Most importantly, south-central Somalia clearly represents a very difficult environment in which to conduct a peace operation: large numbers of armed groups and fighters present; frequent battles and other organised violence; very large numbers of displaced people; and all of this is occurring in a country with very weak state institutions and endemic corruption.









## SECTION 3.

# AMISOM: An Overview

This section provides an overview of how AMISOM’s mandate evolved since early 2007 and what actions the mission has carried out to try and implement its mandated tasks. It concludes with a brief discussion of AMISOM’s contemporary debates and principal challenges.

### 3.1 The Evolution of AMISOM’s Mandate

Having initially been tasked with securing a foothold in Mogadishu to support the TFG and a potential peace process, AMISOM has evolved geographically, politically, and militarily. Geographically, the mission has expanded from occupying just a handful of strategic locations strung across Mogadishu. Politically, AMISOM was initially conceived by the AU PSC as an interim (six-month) bridging operation “with a clear understanding that the mission will evolve to a United Nations operation that will support the long-term stabilization and post-conflict reconstruction of Somalia”.<sup>26</sup> It was also initially mandated to exclude peacekeepers from Somalia’s neighbouring countries. However, this restriction

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<sup>26</sup> PSC/PR/Comm. (LXIX), 19 January 2007, para. 9.

was lifted by the UN Security Council in resolution 1744 (20 February 2007). A UN peacekeeping operation did not take over because conditions on the ground in Somalia were repeatedly deemed too insecure for such a deployment.<sup>27</sup>

Having initially been tasked with securing a foothold in Mogadishu to support the TFG and a potential peace process, AMISOM has evolved geographically, politically, and militarily.

Militarily, AMISOM evolved from a small force comprised of two TCCs<sup>28</sup> operating in parallel with a larger Ethiopian force to protect the TFG in Mogadishu into a considerably more multi-national force with up to six TCCs (see table 1) involved at a time.<sup>29</sup> Its area of operations also expanded from the capital city across the whole of south-central Somalia, an area of more than 400,000km<sup>2</sup>, which is nearly the size of Iraq. Between 2007 and November 2013, AMISOM's authorised army increased from 8,000 to over 22,000 soldiers and other personnel.

| Country      | Joined AMISOM | Army Size | Defence Spending (deployment year) | AMISOM Contribution (est. maximum) |
|--------------|---------------|-----------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Uganda       | 2007          | 45,000    | 232m                               | 6,200                              |
| Burundi      | 2007          | 35,000    | 78m                                | 5,400                              |
| Djibouti     | 2011          | 8,000     | Unknown (2010) 12m                 | 1,800                              |
| Kenya        | 2012          | 20,000    | 942m                               | 4,300                              |
| Sierra Leone | 2013          | 10,500    | 14m                                | 850                                |
| Ethiopia     | 2014          | 135,000   | 375m                               | 4,400                              |

**Table 1: AMISOM TCCs Army Size, Defence Spending (US\$), and Contribution**

Source: Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia*, p. 3.

27 From 2013 onwards, the debate about whether and when to transition AMISOM into a UN peacekeeping operation was framed around a series of "benchmarks". See footnote 40 (below) for details.

28 A Burundian contingent started deploying to Mogadishu from December 2007.

29 Sierra Leone's contingent withdrew in early 2015 as a result of complications arising from the Ebola pandemic back home, leaving today's five remaining TCCs.

AMISOM's initial mandate from the AU PSC was to:

- i. Provide support to the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) in their efforts towards the stabilisation of the situation in the country and the furtherance of dialogue and reconciliation;
- ii. Facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance; and
- iii. Create conducive conditions for long-term stabilisation, reconstruction and development in Somalia.<sup>30</sup>

In February 2007, the UN Security Council authorised AMISOM to take all necessary measures as appropriate to carry out the following mandate:

- a. Support dialogue and reconciliation in Somalia by assisting with the free movement, safe passage, and protection of all those involved with the process;
- b. Provide, as appropriate, protection to the TFIs to help them carry out their functions of government, and security for key infrastructure;
- c. Assist, within its capabilities, and in coordination with other parties, with the implementation of the National Security and Stabilisation Plan, in particular the effective re-establishment and training of all-inclusive Somali security forces;
- d. Contribute, as may be requested and within capabilities, to the creation of the necessary security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance; and
- e. Protect its personnel, facilities, installations, equipment and mission, and to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel.<sup>31</sup>

Since then, AMISOM's mandate was periodically expanded by both the AU PSC and UN Security Council. The main changes involved supporting the building and training of a Somali army and police force and, from September 2012, supporting the newly established FGS to expand its authority across Somalia and help it conduct free, fair and transparent elections by 2016, in accordance with the Provisional Constitution.<sup>32</sup>

The basis of AMISOM's current mandate was set in July 2016 when the UN Security Council authorised the mission to pursue three strategic objectives, four priority tasks, and six essential tasks.<sup>33</sup> The three strategic objectives were to:

1. Reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups;

30 PSC/PR/Comm. (LXIX), 19 January 2007, para. 8.

31 S/RES/1744, 20 February 2007, para. 4.

32 PSC/PR/COMM(CCCLVI), 27 February 2013, paras 8 and 9.

33 S/RES/2297, 7 July 2016, paras 5-7.



2. Provide security in order to enable the political process at all levels as well as stabilisation efforts, reconciliation and peacebuilding in Somalia; and
3. Enable the gradual handing over of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali security forces contingent according to the abilities of the Somali security forces.<sup>34</sup>

AMISOM's four "priority tasks" were to:

1. Continue to conduct offensive operations against al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups;
2. Maintain a presence in the sectors set out in the AMISOM Concept of Operations in order to establish conditions for effective and legitimate governance across Somalia, in coordination with the Somali security forces;

After conducting a series of expansion and consolidation operations between 2013 and 2015, AMISOM has recently struggled to overcome perceptions that its military offensives against al-Shabaab have stalled.

3. Assist with the free movement, safe passage and protection of all those involved with the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia, and ensure the security of the electoral process in Somalia as a key requirement; and

4. Secure key supply routes including to areas recovered from al-Shabaab, in particular those essential to improving the humanitarian situation, and those critical for logistical support to AMISOM, underscoring that the delivery of logistics remains a joint responsibility between the UN and AU.<sup>35</sup>

AMSIOM's six "essential tasks" were to:

1. Conduct joint operations with the Somali security forces, within its capabilities, in coordination with other parties, as part of the implementation of the Somali national security plans and to contribute to the wider effort of training and mentoring of the security forces of the FGS;
2. Contribute, within its capabilities as may be requested, to the creation of the necessary security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance;
3. Engage with communities in recovered areas, and promote understanding between AMISOM and local populations, within its capabilities, which will allow for longer-term stabilisation by the UN Country Team and other actors;

<sup>34</sup> S/RES/2297, 7 July 2016, para. 5.

<sup>35</sup> S/RES/2297, 7 July 2016, para. 6.

4. Provide and assist, as appropriate, protection to the Somali authorities to help them carry out their functions of government, and security for key infrastructure;
5. Protect its personnel, facilities, installations, equipment and mission, and to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel, as well as of UN personnel carrying out functions mandated by the Security Council; and
6. Receive, on a transitory basis, defectors, as appropriate, and in coordination with the UN.<sup>36</sup>

In sum, not only did the number of AMISOM's mandated tasks increase, so too did the political contexts in which it operated.

## 3.2 AMISOM's Recent Actions to Implement its Mandate

How has AMISOM attempted to implement its mandate? This section provides an overview of the mission's recent activities across its military, police and civilian components.

### Military Component

As noted above, the vast majority of AMISOM personnel are soldiers. The military component is deployed across all six of AMISOM's sectors. After conducting a series of expansion and consolidation operations between 2013 and 2015, AMISOM has recently struggled to overcome perceptions that its military offensives against al-Shabaab have stalled. Part of the problem is that it has become increasingly difficult for AMISOM to wage an effective military campaign against an enemy that is unwilling to engage in conventional battles, except on its own terms. Some of AMISOM's most recent military operations bear this out. For example, from late 2015, AMISOM tried several times to complete its Operation Jubba Corridor, a multisector operation designed to target al-Shabaab's major combat forces in the Jubba River Valley. However, after several attempts to extend and complete the operation, it stalled.

Another case was Operation Antelope which began in December 2016. This was conducted by the Burundian contingent, AMISOM's engineering enabling unit, and UNSOS to rehabilitate over 150km of roadways in order to open four key supply routes in the HirShabelle region in AMISOM's Sector 5. Unfortunately, this operation also stalled before completing its objectives after Burundian forces came under repeated attack by

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<sup>36</sup> S/RES/2297, 7 July 2016, para. 7.

al-Shabaab.<sup>37</sup> In July 2017, AMISOM embarked on another joint operation, this time to clear and secure locations along the Lower Jubba River area in order to pressurise al-Shabaab's base in Jilib. Known as Operation Safari Hunter, it involved multiple AMISOM national contingents, as well as troops from the SNA and Jubaland State Force, and support from the US. Although the ability to involve a variety of distinct forces suggests an improved level of coordination, once again, however, the operation struggled to achieve its objectives to disrupt and degrade al-Shabaab's combat capabilities.

Beyond these large operations, AMISOM's military component has been undertaking at least twelve types of activities that are consistent with its broad remit to conduct counter-insurgency and stabilisation operations:

1. A variety of force protection measures, including clearing supply routes and reinforcing base defences, which is mainly done with the UNSOS.
2. Securing main supply routes by deploying troops and FOBs along them in order to ensure logistical support can reach AMISOM's most remote positions (although not all AMISOM FOBs are along major supply routes).
3. Offensive operations against known al-Shabaab elements.
4. Patrols are conducted by AMISOM forces, some of which entail journeys of 40-60km.
5. Resupply missions conducted between AMISOM bases.
6. VIP protection and transportation activities for officials associated with the FGS and FMS.
7. Escorting humanitarian relief supplies to ensure access to stricken areas.
8. Quick Impact Projects, usually focused on renovating infrastructure—such as schools, medical facilities, bridges, etc.—or improving access to water, including through constructing wells, boreholes and sanitation infrastructure.
9. Civil-Military Coordination (CIMIC) operations intended to help win the hearts and minds of local populations, including the purchase of food from local markets and its distribution, such as after flooding occurred in Lower Shabelle.
10. AMISOM's military medical facilities also continue to provide services for local civilians. A range of services is provided, including over 1,000 cleft lip surgeries conducted during 2018 in the mission's level-II hospital in Mogadishu.

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<sup>37</sup> Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia*, p. 195.

11. Some AMISOM troops also continue to provide mentoring and training to SNA units.
12. Finally, the mission's military component engages in structured dialogue with clan representatives and sometimes facilitates dialogue among clan leaders.

In addition to AMISOM's military activities, it is also important to note that, over the last few years, AMISOM has sometimes withdrawn troops from settlements, effectively handing control back to al-Shabaab, and in some sectors it has started transitioning security responsibilities to local forces. This has also been occurring in Mogadishu, where it has generated political controversy over the composition of the particular Somali forces and their command and control arrangements.<sup>38</sup> More broadly, the recent operational readiness assessments of the SNA and Somali Police Force (SPF) have revealed a wide range of severe weaknesses that AMISOM has argued have dramatically undermined its ability to transition security responsibilities to Somali forces.

## Police Component

As indicated above, AMISOM's initial mandate was to protect the TFIs in order to facilitate state-building and political stability in Somalia. This required police and civilian capabilities. However, the extremely volatile situation in Somalia made it impossible to deploy a significant police component into the mission area. It was not until 2010 that AMISOM's first police officers arrived in Mogadishu (34 of the 270 authorised officers). They were tasked with providing training to the SPF in a number of areas, including cordon and search, traffic policing, investigation and demining training. The dire state of the SPF meant that far more AMISOM police capabilities were needed and, in October 2010, the AU PSC authorised the deployment of 1,680 police, comprising trainers, advisers and mentors as well as eight Formed Police Units (FPUs) comprising 140 personnel each. The UN Security Council, however, did not endorse this enhanced police component.

It was only in 2012, following the liberation of Mogadishu, that two FPUs were deployed by Uganda and Nigeria. They provided operational support to AMISOM and the SPF to consolidate security in Mogadishu through joint patrols, stop-and-search operations, public order management, VIP escorts, and providing protection to the individual police officers (IPOs) co-located with the SPF. In 2016, the FPUs were split into platoons and deployed in more locations, including Baidoa, Kismayo, Beletweyne and Jowhar (see Table 24).

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38 At the time of writing, the "14th October battalion"—created after the huge al-Shabaab terror attack in Mogadishu on 14 October 2017—was reported to be taking over responsibilities for securing Mogadishu from the controversial Mogadishu Stabilization Forces.

Following UN Security Council resolution 2372 (2017) authorisation of an increase in the number of AMISOM police from 540 to 1,040, Sierra Leone deployed an additional FPU in April 2018. Today, AMISOM police comprise 233 IPOs (from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia), 480 officers in three FPUs, and five in senior leadership. AMISOM thus remains short of two FPUs but has entered into negotiations with Ghana to see if it can deploy one FPU.

| Individual Police Officers Locations | Formed Police Unit Locations |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mogadishu                            | Mogadishu (Uganda, Nigeria)  |
| Kismayo                              | Kismayo (Sierra Leone)       |
| Baidoa                               | Baidoa (Uganda)              |
| Jowhar                               |                              |
| Beledweyne                           |                              |

**Table 24: AMISOM Police Deployment**

*Source: AU Commission*

The aim of AMISOM police is to support the development of a strong and effective SPF. In this regard, AMISOM now often cooperates with UNSOM's police component (of approximately 20 officers). Together, they are working towards the implementation of a federal policing model, as stipulated in Somalia's national security architecture and adopted in June 2018. To this end, AMISOM police provide support to both the Somali federal and state police structures. AMISOM has provided support for screening, vetting, recruiting, training and mentoring the police at both the federal and state levels. This includes specialised training for the SPF on investigations, anti-terrorism and counter-insurgency.

For example, in collaboration with the UN and the two regional authorities of Puntland and Galmudug, AMISOM police trained 100 police officers for joint patrols for the implementation of the Galkayo Ceasefire Agreement. AMISOM has also trained 600 police officers for Jubaland and South West regional administrations. Support is being provided to Hirshabelle for the recruitment and training of an 800-strong force that will be deployed to Jowhar and Beletweyne. As part of their efforts at supporting sustainable governance in Somalia, AMISOM police provided training on close protection for police offices in Jubaland and Southwest State in 2017 to enable them to provide required training for elected officials of the region and their guests.



In order to support institutional development, AMISOM police have helped to undertake a biometric registration of the SNP. This is to help identify the number of police personnel, their biodata, skill set, location, and areas of deployment. Training on the use of the biometric registration system has also been provided, and it has now been launched in the administrative capitals. Furthermore, AMISOM is supporting the retraining of Somali police to ensure they have the right knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet the country's policing needs. Support has also been provided for the development of Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines for the different aspects of police operations. AMISOM police have supported the development of police infrastructure through the refurbishment of police stations, building new ones, as well as the provision of equipment and furniture. To help with stabilisation, AMISOM is supporting the reactivation of Somalia's National Bureau of Interpol, which will assist in Somalia's fight against organised crime.

Although Somalia has opted for a federal policing model, there is little clarity on the type of federal policing preferred. To assist Somalis in the decision-making process, AMISOM has planned a number of study visits abroad for the senior leadership. The first was a visit by nine senior police officers to Nigeria to obtain first-hand information on their policing model to help determine the type of federal policing model that Somalia should adopt.

AMISOM police have co-located with the SPF in several areas, and IPOs are assigned to support the local police stations where they are able to mentor and monitor the Somali police. This collaboration has helped facilitate election security management for the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2012 and 2016-17 and help their military colleagues provide security during the months of Ramadan in 2017 and 2018.

AMISOM police have promoted gender balance in the SPF, with gender representation being one of the conditions for the training support provided to the various regional administrations. AMISOM police provide the SPF with training on handling sexual- and gender-based violence and helped to establish gender desks in Mogadishu, Baidoa, Beletweyne and Kismayo.

## Civilian Component

AMISOM is authorised to have 70 international civilian personnel. As of September 2018, there were 72 international civilians (two seconded from the AU Commission), 14 consultants, and 58 national staff. Less than half of the international personnel are in substantive roles. The AU's recruitment process for civilians has proven very slow. Almost all of AMISOM's civilians have been based in Mogadishu. Of the substantive national staff, there were two Assistant Political Officers deployed in Galmuduug and three in Mogadishu. Following the joint AU-UN review of AMISOM in May 2018, the Security Council decided not to authorise an increase in AMISOM's civilian component in resolution 2431 (30 July 2018).

AMISOM has adopted a cluster-based approach to its civilian component since 2014. The clusters are Political Processes, Stabilisation and Early Recovery; Protection, Human Rights and Gender; Security Sector Reform; and Mission Support. The clusters comprise personnel from the civilian substantive, support, police and military components, and in some cases representatives from other partners. They are therefore both multidimensional and integrated.

The substantive civilian components of AMISOM are organised into six units: Political Affairs; Public Information; Humanitarian Liaison; Protection, Human Rights and Gender; Security Sector Reform; and Civil Affairs. There is also a Security and Safety unit and a Mission Support component consisting of several units.

- Political Affairs is responsible for operationalising the AU PSC's political decisions on Somalia. Its personnel monitor, analyse and report on political developments in Somalia, and provide advice to the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission (SRCC). (They also assist the Somali government in building its capacity for public service, for instance, by organising training courses for managers in the Somalia civil service.)
- Humanitarian Liaison serves as a bridge between AMISOM and humanitarian agencies. Its personnel coordinate, facilitate and liaise with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) and other UN agencies, as well as Somali and international NGOs. The unit works closely with AMISOM's military component, especially its CIMIC cell, to respond to requests for support from the humanitarian community.
- Protection, Human Rights and Gender is mandated to implement the AU's commitments and policies on human rights and protection as well as gender equality and other related issues. The unit mainstreams human rights, protection and good gender practices in AMISOM and supports the FGS. It has been involved in the pre-deployment training of troops, especially in the domain of adherence to international humanitarian law and human rights law.
- Civil Affairs works at local political levels to facilitate the implementation of AMISOM's mandate and to support efforts at ensuring sustainable peace in Somalia. The unit conducts activities aimed at confidence-building, effective governance management, and support to reconciliation. It also assists the state in restoring and extending its authority.
- Security Sector Reform is the focal point of AMISOM on all security sector matters. It coordinates support in this area from AMISOM and other partners with the host state authorities. The unit's responsibilities include the exchange of information, provision of technical assistance, and negotiating contribution agreements with donors related to the security sector.





- Public Information is responsible for disseminating information on AMISOM's activities through regular interaction with local Somali and international journalists.
- Safety and Security is charged with undertaking relevant programmes and activities in AMISOM to protect civilian staff and property. The unit comprises three sub-units: Security Information and Operation Unit (SIOU), Personal Protection Unit (PPU) and Investigation Unit (IU). It is tasked with the management of mission security and also manages the security for high-level events, conferences and meetings in which the mission is involved.
- Mission Support encompasses the logistics, transport, supply, engineering, information and communications, technology, finance, personnel, procurement, general services, medical, travel and protocol, asset management and verification, and contingent-owned equipment functions of the mission, among others.

Other elements of the civilian component include legal affairs, conduct and discipline, a civilian casualty tracking analysis and response cell (CCTARC), and a mission analysis cell. The civilian component also advises AMISOM's leadership and mission planning

processes, and provides analysis, internal training and guidance. The SRCC, deputy SRCC, mission chief of staff, and their support personnel are also civilians (non-uniformed), but they are not part of the Civilian Component of the mission.<sup>39</sup>

The security situation in Somalia requires that all staff who leave the protected airport area or other AMISOM bases have an armed escort.

Through these civilian components, AMISOM supports the efforts of the Federal Government to strengthen its capacity to provide public services and to extend state authority, especially in newly recovered cities and territories, and with a special focus on the security and judicial sector.

The security situation in Somalia requires that all staff who leave the protected airport area or other AMISOM bases have an armed escort. There is limited escort capacity, and escort needs are thus prioritised. Routine liaison with civilian counterparts is a low priority, which has made coordination more difficult. Visiting civilian counterparts, other than those in the Federal Government's Villa Somalia compounds, with an armed escort in tow can have negative consequences, including putting those counterparts at risk. AMISOM's civilian component thus operates in a highly constrained environment which negatively affects its impact, despite the strategic importance of its contribution towards achieving sustainable peace and stability in Somalia.

39 "AMISOM Civilian Component," <http://amisom-au.org/mission-profile/amisom-civilian-component/>. Accessed 14 May 2014.

### 3.3 Current Debates and Challenges

For the last three years, AMISOM and its partners have discussed several important (often recurring) issues about how to improve its performance and implement its mandated tasks.

One central concern remained as to how the threat posed by al-Shabaab could be further reduced, especially with the militants refining their asymmetric tactics and employing decentralised systems of governance, while retaining considerable freedom of movement and the ability to blend in with the local population. A related challenge for AMISOM was how to reduce the number of al-Shabaab attacks on its FOBs and convoys. With regard to protecting AMISOM's mobility, more effective counter-improvised explosive devices (C-IED) capabilities are crucial, especially along its most targeted supply routes in Sectors 1 and 3. Of course, a key part of disrupting al-Shabaab's ability to use IEDs against AMISOM (and Somalis) is to gain the support of local populations who can report on such activity.

AMISOM was also focused on how to reconfigure its own forces. This is something the mission has done before, including in 2016 when a review of its operational effectiveness and force levels in its FOBs was undertaken following several disastrous attacks on its bases during the second half of 2015 and early 2016.<sup>40</sup> This time around, at the strategic level, the central question was how best to reconfigure AMISOM in order to support the implementation of Somalia's new national security architecture (agreed in 2017) and Transition Plan (agreed in early 2018).<sup>41</sup> In mid-2018, this prompted AMISOM (with some of its partners) to undertake a technical assessment of its own capabilities, which would feed into the development of another new Concept of Operations for the mission. This also necessitated revisiting an old problem for AMISOM, namely, how to generate additional military enabling units, especially aviation assets, engineering and intelligence-gathering capabilities, as well as more forces capable of rapid response to crises.

On 30 July 2018, Security Council resolution 2431 postponed until no later than February 2019 the potential drawdown of an additional 1,000 troops.

<sup>40</sup> This produced a recommendation that the mission's FOBs should be garrisoned by at least two companies of troops.

<sup>41</sup> This topic was the focus of the AU-UN Joint Review conducted in early 2018. It assessed AMISOM's implementation of the tasks set out in UN Security Council resolution 2372, discussed the modalities for implementing the initial phase of the Somali Transition Plan, and examined options for reconfiguring AMISOM in light of the Transition Plan. See *Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the African Union-United Nations Joint Review of AMISOM* (PSC/MIN/RPT(DCCCLXXXII), 27 June 2018).



As part of this reconfiguration, UN Security Council resolution 2372 (30 August 2017) called for the reduction of AMISOM's military component by 1,000 troops and the deployment of an additional 500 police by 31 December 2017. Unfortunately, rather than being done in alignment with an assessment of the threat posed by al-Shabaab, each TCC reduced the number of its soldiers by 4%. Resolution 2372 also suggested that

if the conditions warranted, AMISOM should cut another 1,000 troops by October 2018. After heated debates between AMISOM TCCs and international partners on 30 July 2018, Security Council resolution 2431 postponed until no later than February 2019 the potential drawdown of an additional 1,000 troops. This four-month postponement was done to grant AMISOM some additional time to reconfigure in light of the Somali Transition Plan. A four-month extension, however, was unlikely to see any significant change in the capabilities of the Somali security forces. Hence this issue may well generate more arguments in 2019 if AMISOM TCCs resist further drawdowns.

Financing has also remained a consistently controversial issue, with the AU searching unsuccessfully for new donors to make up shortfalls in the mission's funding.

There was also a growing recognition within AMISOM that the mission's civilian component should be expanded so that its personnel could play a greater role in the non-military aspects of stabilisation initiatives in areas that UN and IGAD personnel could not reach consistently. In order for AMISOM to help the Federal Government and regional administrations stabilise the settlements recovered from al-Shabaab, the provision of basic governance services is critical, including political administration, justice, police and corrections services. AMISOM's police and civilian components could potentially have a critically important role to play in this area. They should provide locally-informed political, governance, rule of law and civil administration advice to AMISOM's leadership.

In addition to the basic support AMISOM can provide directly, the mission's police and civilian staff can serve as a bridgehead for UNSOM, UN agencies, the EU, and other partners and international NGOs who can provide support to these local administrations and populations. AMISOM police and civilian personnel can assist with identifying needs, facilitating joint assessments, monitoring the implementation of projects, and liaising and following-up with local leaders and community representatives. Consolidating the stability of the regional administrations and their key population centres are not only critical for Somalia's overall stability but also for degrading al-Shabaab and providing a measurable benchmark for AMISOM's exit. Strengthening AMISOM's ability to deploy international and national staff to the field offices, and facilitating their work locally, as well as their interlinkages with the Federal Government and international partners, are

thus critically important next steps for AMISOM's progress and the Somali Transition Plan. How this can be done in practical terms will need to be clarified.

Financing has also remained a consistently controversial issue, with the AU searching unsuccessfully for new donors to make up shortfalls in the mission's funding. The most urgent shortfall is in the allowances paid to AMISOM's uniformed personnel. Since the EU decision to cut its financial support for allowances by 20% from January 2016, AMISOM's contributing countries have received about \$800 per month for individuals in their troop and police contingents instead of the agreed \$1,028.<sup>42</sup> This situation was so serious that Security Council resolution 2431 contained a perhaps unprecedented appeal across the UN system for financial support to AMISOM, including a call for private firms and CSOs to make financial contributions to the mission.<sup>43</sup>

There were also important operational discussions about how best AMISOM could help speed up the implementation of Somalia's Transition Plan, including building an effective set of Somali security forces and institutions. Without progress in this area, AMISOM's exit strategy will stall. In practical terms, the discussion focused on how best to reconfigure AMISOM, how to conduct more effective joint operations with Somali forces, and how to transfer security responsibilities by initiating a process of co-location at various operating bases. The initial phase of the Transition Plan identified three pilot issues that would become important barometers of AMISOM's ability to make progress in this area: securing the town of Leego, which had changed hands several times and been the site of numerous battles; securing the Mogadishu to Baidoa supply route; and transferring control of the Mogadishu Stadium to Somali forces. The handover of Mogadishu Stadium to Somali forces was achieved in October 2018.

Finally, debates continued over the optimal division of labour between AMISOM and other actors. The aspiration is for Somali actors to take the lead across all key sectors but, in practice, they do not yet have the leadership and coherent chain of command to do so. As a result, AMISOM and various external actors co-lead on all the key thematic issues. For example, although re-hatting AMISOM into a UN peacekeeping operation is not part of the Somali Transition Plan, the eight benchmarks for transitioning AMISOM into such a force serve as a useful framework for thinking through some related issues, and it is notable that AMISOM is only able to achieve two directly; the others lie in the hands of other actors.<sup>44</sup> This is indicative of just how much AMISOM's exit strategy is

42 See Paul D. Williams, "Paying for AMISOM," IPI Global Observatory, 11 January 2017, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/01/amisom-african-union-peacekeeping-financing>

43 S/RES/2431, 30 July 2018, para. 30.

44 In mid-2015, the UN and AU conducted a second benchmarking review that set out the following eight benchmarks for transitioning AMISOM into a UN peacekeeping operation:

1. Political agreement on the finalisation of a federal vision and formation of administrations and states.
2. Extension of state authority through local administrations in recovered areas, in line with the Provisional Constitution.

reliant upon Somali and some external actors, particularly in the areas of political stability, governance at federal and state levels, the rule of law, and building capacity in Somalia's security sector. AMISOM's senior leadership is thus continuously engaged in motivating Somalis and other partners to uphold their end of the international compact.

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3. Degrading al-Shabaab to the point that it is no longer an effective force through a comprehensive strategy that includes political, economic and security components.
  4. A significant improvement in the physical security situation, with improved control in major cities and access to key urban centres.
  5. Improved capability of the Somali security institutions to hold the majority of territory in the areas of operation of AMISOM with a critical mass of trained and equipped security personnel.
  6. Broad agreement on the major security arrangements, in line with the political process, set by the FGS within the context of the federal vision agreed by major political stakeholders.
  7. Police services with essential training and equipment provide security and basic law and order functions in major population centres, creating an environment conducive to political processes, economic activities, and the delivery of basic social services.
  8. The consent of the Federal Government and the support of important segments of the Somali population for the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation.

*Report of the Joint African Union–United Nations Mission on the Benchmarks for a United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Somalia and recommendations on the next steps in the military campaign* (30 June 2015), para. 42.











## SECTION 4.

# AMISOM's Effects

This section provides a concise summary of AMISOM's main achievements and weaknesses as identified in the existing literature, before turning to examine how far the mission's activities contributed to achieving its three strategic objectives.

## 4.1 Earlier Conclusions About AMISOM's Effectiveness

Ours is not the first study to assess AMISOM's effectiveness. There exists a relatively small body of literature that has made judgments about various aspects of AMISOM's performance, particularly over the last five years.<sup>45</sup> Broadly speaking, our assessment concurs with the findings listed below.

On the negative side, the existing literature identifies a number of AMISOM's failings, where things did not go according to plan, or implementation of its mandated tasks proved especially difficult:

1. Particularly since 2012 when the mission expanded beyond Mogadishu, AMISOM has often been criticised for lacking unified command and control structures. This is a product of several factors, most notably the high-risk operating environment; the

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<sup>45</sup> This section draws from the sources listed in footnote 3 (above).

need to regularly engage in kinetic combat and counterinsurgency operations; the considerable autonomy and operational command exercised by national contingent commanders in their respective sectors; and a relatively weak force headquarters, which struggled to exert more than administrative control and play a coordinating role.

2. Among the most vocal critics of the mission are some local Somalis who accused AMISOM of causing harm to local civilians. In the early years, these complaints focused most prominently on AMISOM's practices of indirect fire, which usually entailed firing into residential or other civilian populated areas after they had come under attack from al-Shabaab. Complaints were also made about AMISOM using excessive force when civilians were mistaken for al-Shabaab. In recent years, the number of these incidents has reduced, but traffic accidents involving AMISOM vehicles, mainly in Mogadishu, have continued to be a source of concern for locals. Among these local critics are government officials who accused AMISOM of abusing the "immunity clause" and failing to sufficiently engage the Federal Government. Such criticisms highlighted the complicated nature of effective host state consent when there is such a fractured host government.

AMISOM has achieved considerable results, especially given the very difficult operational environment.

3. A related problem was the allegations that AMISOM personnel had engaged in sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). This issue became particularly prominent following the release of a report by Human Rights Watch in 2014 and the subsequent AU investigation's results that were released in truncated form in 2015.

4. Some AMISOM personnel were accused of corruption and misconduct; most frequently the illicit selling of rations, fuel, equipment and even ammunition, some of which was said to end up in the hands of al-Shabaab. A specific series of allegations about corruption were made against Kenyan forces after they joined AMISOM in 2012. The UN Monitoring Group and several NGOs accused Kenyan Defence Forces personnel of engaging in the illicit trade in charcoal, which was in breach of a UN embargo established by Security Council resolution 2036 (February 2012).<sup>46</sup>

5. Kenya and Ethiopia—which had some of their forces integrated into AMISOM in January 2014—were also regularly accused of pursuing nefarious political agendas in Somalia and using AMISOM as a vehicle to legitimise and camouflage their activities. In addition to the illicit trading noted above, specific accusations involved

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, the reports of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia since 2012, and Journalists for Justice, *Black and White*.

picking winners in the competition to create the new regional administrations and, in Ethiopia's case, acting as the power behind the throne of the FGS.

6. AMISOM's stabilisation efforts since 2013 have been criticised, although it is recognised that a major contributory factor is the dire state of official Somali governance structures and capabilities beyond Mogadishu and of local security forces.
7. AMISOM also drew criticism for displacing rather than destroying al-Shabaab's key combat capabilities during its expansion operations from 2013 to 2015. This was somewhat unfair because al-Shabaab usually refused to fight conventional battles against AMISOM, retained considerable freedom of movement, was usually quicker than AU forces, and could often blend in with the local population. As noted above, AMISOM lacked the capabilities to strike the militants rapidly or from strategic depth.
8. A related criticism was that AMISOM failed to secure the main supply routes and roads, which meant civilians were often still at risk of extortion and taxation by al-Shabaab forces and other armed groups, hence worsening economic hardship.
9. Despite not having an official mandate to protect civilians proactively, AMISOM was accused of not doing enough on this issue by some Somalis.
10. AMISOM was criticised for withdrawing, sometimes unexpectedly, from recovered settlements, thereby allowing al-Shabaab forces to return to the area. Al-Shabaab would often exact harsh retribution on locals whom they accused of collaborating with the AU forces.
11. Finally, some locals expressed the view that AMISOM had overstayed its welcome and should leave sooner rather than later. Such sentiments can be understood, in part, as a general frustration with a foreign military presence and the time it is taking to stabilise and secure Somalia.

On the positive side, AMISOM has achieved considerable results, especially given the very difficult operational environment which deterred the UN and most potential TCCs. According to one academic framework for assessing the difficulty of the strategic environment facing peace operations, Somalia after 2006 is ranked at the most extreme level of difficulty.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, AMISOM was a consistently under-resourced mission which suffered from a persistent gap between its mandated tasks and its authorised capabilities.

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47 George Downs and Stephen John Stedman, "Evaluation Issues in Peace Implementation", in S.J. Stedman et al. (eds.), *Ending Civil Wars* (Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 43-69. The key factors are a high number of warring parties; absence of a peace agreement signed by all major warring parties before intervention and with a minimum of coercion; a high likelihood of spoilers; a collapsed state (i.e., lack of functioning state institutions); high number of armed fighters (cases with +50,000 armed actors are considered particularly difficult); relatively easy access to disposable natural resources; presence of hostile neighbouring states or networks; wars of secession (since these can frequently revert to all or nothing struggles); unwillingness of major or regional powers to engage in conflict management and peacemaking; and operations conducted in remote areas with harsh physical terrain and a lack of basic infrastructure.

This was partly because of force generation problems, but also because of planning assumptions since 2011 consistently over-estimating the abilities of the Somali security forces, which failed to develop as planned. AMISOM suffered from a persistent gap between its authorised capabilities and those deployed in the field, which undermined its operational effectiveness.

Despite these challenges, AMISOM's main achievements have been identified as follows:

1. AMISOM's presence facilitated the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Mogadishu in January 2009. The presence of Ethiopian forces in Somalia had become a major source of al-Shabaab's popularity, and their continued deployment significantly undermined the legitimacy of the TFG.
2. AMISOM forces successfully protected two iterations of the TFG. The first was alongside Ethiopian troops, but the second was protected by AMISOM alone after the Ethiopians withdrew. It is highly likely that the second TFG, led by President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed (2009-2012), would not have survived without AMISOM's presence.
3. Following months of bloody urban warfare, AMISOM is credited with pushing the majority of al-Shabaab's fighters out of Mogadishu and its environs (between August 2011 and May 2012).
4. As AMISOM expanded beyond Mogadishu and incorporated new troops from Kenya and Djibouti in 2012, over the next two years, the mission also succeeded in pushing most al-Shabaab forces out of many of the main population centres in south-central Somalia. This provided respite from the harsh rules of al-Shabaab's governance and opened up the possibility for more local authorities to (re-)emerge.
5. AMISOM's expansion operations after 2012 enabled considerable improvements to be made to several main supply routes emanating out from Mogadishu, although they were not all completely cleared of al-Shabaab activity.
6. A related benefit of these military activities was that AMISOM also provided space for political dialogue and reconciliation to occur between Somali political elites. Unfortunately, Somalia's national and regional leaders did not take full advantage of this opportunity and have spent years haggling over key milestones in the process of establishing a new constitution and federal system of government in Somalia.
7. By providing transportation for participants and security at numerous conferences, AMISOM helped facilitate the process of establishing south-central Somalia's new Interim Regional Administrations, namely, Jubbaland (2013), South West (2014), Galmudug (2015), and Hiraan and Middle Shabelle (2016). Unfortunately, the relatively slow process of establishing these administrations was part of the reason for the lack of progress on forging a political consensus about the federal constitution

and Somalia's new security architecture, which is critical for AMISOM to achieve its mandate and secure its exit strategy.

8. AMISOM has provided the security foundation that enabled most of the international diplomatic and humanitarian communities to operate out of Mogadishu and across south-central Somalia. With few exceptions, it is highly unlikely that the various new or resurrected embassies would have been established without the security provided by AMISOM. Similarly, AMISOM provided security for hundreds of visits by various VIPs that enabled greater attention to be given to Somalia in several international forums.
9. During 2012 and 2016/17, AMISOM played a pivotal role in securing two (s) election processes that established new federal governments in September 2012 and early 2017, respectively.
10. Particularly after 2012, AMISOM has been credited with playing a valuable role in training Somali police and providing capacity-building in several areas.
11. In humanitarian terms, AMISOM provided the local population with significant access to medical facilities and humanitarian relief supplies, including water and rations, as well as facilitating the activities of other aid agencies.
12. Over the last few years, AMISOM has played a useful role in supporting Somalia's growing defections programme for disengaging fighters.

## 4.2 Achieving AMISOM's Strategic Objectives

To what extent have AMISOM's activities contributed to the achievement of its three current strategic objectives?

### **i. Reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups**

Reducing the threat posed by al-Shabaab is not sufficient to achieve sustainable peace in Somalia. But, by reducing the threat, AMISOM can help to create the conditions conducive for a comprehensive political settlement and for the governance and development gains that should flow from such a political transition. Viewed over the longer term, AMISOM has made significant progress in reducing the threat posed by al-Shabaab. However, the recent increase in al-Shabaab activities signals that AMISOM will have limited sustainable impact in this area if the gains are not translated into political stability and peace dividends for local populations by the Somali authorities and their international



partners. In particular, the federal and regional authorities still lack the capabilities to provide effective governance, security and justice.

## Reducing the threat posed by al-Shabaab is not sufficient to achieve sustainable peace in Somalia.

Compared to the situation in 2011, al-Shabaab no longer poses an existential threat to the Federal Government or the regional administrations. AMISOM has usefully disrupted and degraded al-Shabaab by helping to remove several senior al-Shabaab leaders and contributing to the defection of several others. AMISOM has also managed to provide a degree of protection to about two dozen recovered towns, including the capitals of all the regional administrations.

However, AMISOM does not have the resources or mobility, and thus lacks the capability, to destroy al-Shabaab's combat capabilities. For example, AMISOM's initial expansion operations during 2013 and 2015 were focused on capturing territory rather than destroying key al-Shabaab capabilities because AMISOM's lack of enablers and specialised units meant it was difficult to strike al-Shabaab from depth. AMISOM has thus focused instead on containing, disrupting and degrading al-Shabaab in order to create a conducive environment for the political process, the development of Somalia's security forces, and the extension of governance services provided by the Federal Government and administrations. A third salient factor was the poor state of the mission's local partners in this effort, namely, the Somali security forces. Finally, AMISOM has found it very difficult to sustain effective offensive operations against al-Shabaab, as witnessed most recently with the stalling of Operation Safari Hunter during late 2017 and early 2018.

Al-Shabaab thus continues to pose a deadly threat and gains made against the militants could be reversed if certain negative developments occurred. Al-Shabaab retains its ability to infiltrate institutions and enough freedom of movement to conduct regular asymmetric attacks and occasional larger-scale conventional attacks against Somali and AU forces. The militants are also still capable of managing effective systems of governance across large areas of south-central Somalia. A particular strength is al-Shabaab's ability to extort local populations through zakat and protection rackets, including in Mogadishu.

In comparison, AMISOM has done little to stop other armed opposition groups, which is also part of the mission's mandate. The Islamic State in Somalia is probably the main case, but so far this group has mostly operated outside AMISOM's area of operations with the exception of some claimed assassinations in Mogadishu.

## ii. Secure the political process, stabilisation efforts, reconciliation and peacebuilding

With regard to securing the political process, AMISOM has done all that could reasonably be expected of an under-resourced and military-heavy mission. It has secured two presidential electoral processes and a variety of regional conferences as well as provided secure VIP travel around its area of operations. Unfortunately, Somalia's political elites have been slow to capitalise on the opportunities AMISOM has provided for them. They have yet to take some of the key decisions that would allow reconciliation to occur and peacebuilding to really begin. Chief among them are finalising the country's constitution and implementing the operational details of the new national security architecture.

With regard to stabilisation, however, AMISOM and its partners have struggled for the last five years or so. Multiple factors are at play here but most important are the inability of Somali authorities to provide governance and service delivery in the recovered areas, the inability of Somali security forces to take over from AMISOM, and the overall weakness of AMISOM's police and civilian components in this area. These factors often left AMISOM operating in a political vacuum in areas it recovered from al-Shabaab. In too many cases, this proved unsustainable and al-Shabaab eventually re-exerted control. Police and civilian personnel are vital to performing the non-military aspects of stabilisation but AMISOM does not have the lead on political administration and governance issues, nor does it have the capabilities to support those leading these efforts.

With regard to securing the political process, AMISOM has done all that could reasonably be expected of an under-resourced and military-heavy mission.

## iii. Enable the transition of security responsibilities from AMISOM to Somali forces

After a late start, AMISOM has finally started to make some progress in transitioning its responsibilities to the Somali security forces, including by withdrawing 1,000 troops in December 2017. It has also started to implement the first pilot cases of Phase 1 of the Somali Transition Plan. Specifically, in late October 2018, it handed over the Mogadishu Stadium to Somali forces. It has also started preparations to secure Leego and the Mogadishu-Baidoa main supply route, and these two pilot objectives will take considerable planning and coordination with various partners compared to the stadium handover. They will be difficult objectives to achieve given al-Shabaab's considerable presence in these areas. It should also be noted that AMISOM has tried for years to secure the

Mogadishu-Baidoa route and has “recovered” Leego several times before. Nevertheless, it remains too early to assess AMISOM’s progress on both these pilot cases.

On the more technical aspects of the transition, AMISOM has provided some training and equipment to Somali forces. However, it has done much less in the important area of combat mentoring. It has also been slow in conducting co-location; in part because the levels of trust that exist between AMISOM and many SNA units remain low.

Once again, however, it is important to point out that there is only so much AMISOM can do to build a capable set of Somali security forces. The principal responsibility for this lies with the Somali federal and regional authorities and the external partners running the largest training programmes. While Somali elites have failed to achieve political reconciliation, which is the necessary social glue for binding any “national” security forces, roughly a dozen international actors have also failed to coordinate their various training and equipping programmes. The predictable result has been the fragmentation of the SNA units that do exist. It remains to be seen whether a larger AMISOM police component could quickly produce a more effective set of Somali police forces at the federal and regional levels.











## SECTION 5.

# Analysis and Findings

This section summarises our research findings across the eight dimensions of peace operations identified as most salient by EPON.

### 5.1 Political Primacy

It is widely accepted that, in order to be effective at the strategic level, peace operations must be part of a viable political strategy of conflict resolution. This is crucial in Somalia because at the heart of the country's contemporary problems is a political crisis centred around arguments over systems of governance and state-building that go well beyond the threats posed by al-Shabaab. In practical terms, this boils down to the ongoing debate about what federalism should mean in Somalia and how it will be practised.

AMISOM's principal strategic purpose is to secure the space in which the different elements of Somalia's political crisis can be resolved through dialogue and negotiations. AMISOM has achieved this objective by generating conditions conducive for the political transition. It has secured the Transitional Federal Institutions and subsequent state institutions, it has helped to downgrade al-Shabaab from an existential threat to the state,

and it has helped to secure several transitions and electoral processes. However, political progress was complicated by the lack of a Somali Federal Government until September 2012 and the regional administrations in south-central Somalia only formed between 2013 and late 2016. Without these building blocks in place, it was impossible for Somalis to resolve their political crisis. AMISOM makes a significant indirect contribution to this

process through the security and stability it generates, but because AMISOM does not have a leading political mandate, it does not hold much sway over the political process.

**AMISOM's principal strategic purpose is to secure the space in which the different elements of Somalia's political crisis can be resolved through dialogue and negotiations.**

Unfortunately, the opportunity created by AMISOM has been largely squandered by Somalia's leaders. Several critical issues remain unresolved, including finalising the constitution, strengthening loyalties to the state relative to allegiance to clans, developing a professional security sector and rule of law institutions, and providing public goods and social services. Nor has the current administration devoted sufficient attention and resources to promoting political

reconciliation with the regional administrations, let alone reconciliation among ordinary Somalis. Continued infighting among Somali politicians at both the federal and regional levels undermines political consensus and the prospects for reconciliation. In some cases, it has also helped to strengthen allegiance to clans rather than the state and hence may jeopardise the political gains already made. Political consensus among Somalia's elite is, therefore, essential for stabilising the country.

Finalising Somalia's Federal Constitution is crucial. The lack of formal governance structures has encouraged the proliferation of informal governance structures, many of which have been heavily militarised and based on unhelpful clan dynamics. A finalised constitution could also help address conflicts over land and water issues, the division of resources and opportunity, as well as ways to promote transitional justice.

International engagement in Somalia has not always helped to resolve the country's political crisis and prioritise reconciliation. Rather, some external engagement has been driven by partisan national interests, thereby undermining rather than helping to build coherent political structures. The most recent manifestation of this problem has come from the foreign policies of several Gulf states in Somalia.

Since Somalia's political crisis cannot be solved solely through military means, AMISOM finds itself in a difficult situation. It can generate conditions conducive for progress on the political front, but it cannot control that process. Hence, the mission's ability to exit depends on how other actors make use of the political space it has generated. Beyond

reducing the threat posed by al-Shabaab, the mission's principal contribution must be providing support to the Federal Government and helping to develop the country's security sector. Since early 2018, AMISOM's exit strategy has focused on supporting the Somali Transition Plan. This makes sense and, as noted above, this transition is already underway with the immediate focus on securing Leego and the route between Mogadishu and Baidoa.

AMISOM's civilian component, however, has struggled to make a significant contribution to stabilising Somalia, especially in the settlements newly recovered from al-Shabaab. This is despite the fact that AMISOM civilian personnel have fewer restrictions on their movement in Somalia than their UN counterparts and, as such, are better able to interact with Somalis in areas recovered from al-Shabaab. If the Federal Government, regional administrations and AMISOM's partners want the mission's assistance beyond providing physical security, for instance, by using its civilian and police personnel to act as a bridgehead for political administration and governance services in key towns outside Mogadishu, then they should support AMISOM's efforts to expand its civilian and police components. It is now well established in research and policy that stabilisation needs a comprehensive approach, and that physical security is a necessary but not sufficient condition to achieve stable and sustainable peace.

## 5.2 Protection and Stabilisation

There is widespread consensus that AMISOM has protected successive Somali governments and enabled broader international diplomatic presence in Somalia. AMISOM continues to provide protection to key security institutions, including the presidency/Villa Somalia, as well as visiting VIPs. There is no doubt that compared to the situation in 2007, AMISOM has helped stabilise south-central Somalia and it continues to play the leading military role in international efforts today.

Although the mission officially works in support of the Somali authorities, in practice, the AU has led most military activities with the SNA playing a much more limited role, especially on offensive operations. As noted above, the threat posed by al-Shabaab remains serious with regular attacks on government officials, Somali security forces, AMISOM, and the general population. Most attacks occur in recovered areas, some major population centres, along supply routes, and in smaller settlements. Small-scale commando, IED and assassination attacks occur

There is widespread consensus that AMISOM has protected successive Somali governments and enabled broader international diplomatic presence in Somalia.

often in Mogadishu, but al-Shabaab has also conducted larger, more conventional operations, including in late August on Marka and Afgoye, settlements that are close to the outskirts of Mogadishu. Similarly, while the establishment of effective and legitimate state authority in areas liberated from al-Shabaab could help build local trust in the government and provide badly needed public goods and services that could help attract displaced civilians to return home, such progress has been intermittent and prone to reversal.

AMISOM, therefore, continues to face major challenges with regard to its protection and stabilisation efforts in Somalia. In its present configuration and with its current capabilities, AMISOM has already culminated militarily, i.e., it has achieved most of what could reasonably be expected of it, namely, securing the region's major population centres and routes between them. The mission has been unable to stop al-Shabaab's shift to more asymmetric tactics and its continued war of destabilisation and harassment. To do much more in terms of stabilisation and offensive operations, AMISOM would need to significantly reconfigure into a more nimble, mobile and adaptable force with greater capacity to strike al-Shabaab from depth. It would also need to expand its non-military components or have more effective local partners. Militarily, this would mean significant changes to its footprint of bases, the level of mobile and rapid reaction (land and air) units, and its intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. The recent acquisition of a new unarmed ISR capability in mid-2018 has been helpful in that regard, but its information-gathering potential can at best only enable operational and tactical rather than strategic breakthroughs. AMISOM's limited capabilities have hindered its ability to degrade rather than simply displace al-Shabaab's core combat capabilities.

AMISOM's fundamental problem in this area is that it lacks some of the key ingredients required to stabilise territory and protect populations effectively. Most importantly, it has lacked an effective and legitimate set of host state partners to govern the areas recovered from al-Shabaab and deliver a real peace dividend to the populations there. Al-Shabaab has exploited this deficit ruthlessly, either by providing governance themselves or terrorising locals who collaborate with AMISOM and the Somali authorities. Some clan-based and regional actors have also tried to benefit from the Federal Government's weakness. Indeed, insecurity occasioned by struggles for political and economic dominance among clans and regional actors has sometimes been erroneously attributed to al-Shabaab. The Federal Government has few capabilities to stop such activities. In a country where the concept of avenging or compensating for the death of fellow clan members is ingrained, a cycle of attacks and counter-attacks is difficult to stop. Building legitimate and effective institutions that could address these security challenges (initially with AMISOM and then alone) and deliver services and a genuine peace dividend is the only way to provide stabilisation over the long term.

Finally, the multiplicity of armed conflicts and interventionist counter-insurgency measures by other actors have complicated AMISOM's role as a legitimate provider of protection. In Sector 3, for example, local residents in need of protection have found themselves

facing the dilemma of identifying the difference between unilateral Ethiopian offensive operations and AMISOM operations. This has generated suggestions that AMISOM could communicate better with affected communities about the impacts and collateral damage of some operations. This would also suggest the need for more effective CIMIC activities at the sector level to perform their expected functions and use the English language.

### 5.3 National and Local Ownership

National and local ownership of stabilisation efforts in Somalia are mixed. On the one hand, there have been numerous declarations that the Somali authorities want to take responsibility for their own security. This is echoed by some voices in civil society who have also called for AMISOM to leave relatively quickly.<sup>48</sup> To that end, since April 2017, the Somali authorities adopted a new national security architecture, which was endorsed by the London Conference in May 2017—hardly an ideal venue to demonstrate national and local ownership. Today, however, the operational details of that architecture remain incomplete and unimplemented. This has been challenging not only because of political disagreements between the Federal Government and the regional administrations but also because some local actors, including within the SNA, see the new approach as a threat to their established power. In early 2018, the Somali Federal Government adopted its Transition Plan, which is essentially a phased approach to ensuring that Somali security forces and institutions could eventually operate without AMISOM.

On the other hand, however, both government officials and civilians have expressed frustrations over the lack of proper consultation by external actors, partisan agendas being pushed through AMISOM and other external forms of engagement, and top-down approaches wherein external actors wield too much influence.<sup>49</sup> The main reasons why Somali authorities have not exercised greater ownership are the understaffed state of key ministries, the overall inability to independently finance the security sector or public administration and services more generally, as well as the poor state of the Somali security sector.

As part of its exit strategy, AMISOM—in cooperation with UNSOM—is trying to promote greater local ownership of programmes. This has been done, for example, by emphasising its advisory and mentoring roles with the SNA and police forces, helping with the biometric registration of the police, conducting training and joint police patrols, and carrying out more joint operations with the SNA and allied, regional forces. Despite these efforts, many Somalis continue to put allegiance to their clan/sub-clan over allegiance to the

48 Focus group discussions with members of Somali CSOs, Mogadishu, 23 June 2018.

49 Focus group discussions with members of Somali CSOs, Mogadishu, 23 June 2018.



state, and perceptions of exclusion based on clan dynamics negatively affect most aspects of Somalia's peace and security landscape. AMISOM and other international actors have sometimes intensified these dynamics by providing the vast majority of their resources to the Federal Government (and the TFG before that) in Mogadishu, rather than spreading more resources to the regions.

## 5.4 International Support

AMISOM could not have been sustained without considerable international assistance. The mission is the product of a unique and complicated set of partnerships. Specifically, external actors have provided AMISOM with three vital forms of support: logistics, financing, and security force assistance (covering training, equipment and advising for personnel).

AMISOM could not have been sustained without considerable international assistance. The mission is the product of a unique and complicated set of partnerships.

The UN has played the leading role in providing logistics support since 2009, the EU has paid the mission's allowances and provided other forms of support, and bilateral partners, particularly the US and UK, have provided security force assistance to AMISOM's contributing countries. There have also been various parallel military operations in south-central Somalia conducted by Kenya, Ethiopia and the US, all of which claimed to support AMISOM's efforts.

Nevertheless, the failure of the force generation process has meant that considerable gaps remain between AMISOM's mandated tasks and the capabilities available to the mission in the field. Most notably, the persistent failure to generate AMISOM's full aviation component (of twelve military helicopters) and other enabling units, such as engineering, ISR, rapid reaction, and C-IED capabilities.

In comparison to AMISOM, until fairly recently, there had been comparatively little international support provided to the Somali security sector. This has hindered international efforts to build state institutions, deliver humanitarian assistance, as well as promote human rights, the rule of law and development. International actors have regularly debated how best to recalibrate their support to both AMISOM and the state-building project in Somalia. The latest consensus has revolved around the Comprehensive Approach to Security (CAS) (see below).

As noted above, at times, geopolitical rivalry has led some states to instrumentalise their support to particular Somali actors, which has significantly influenced the country's political dynamics, usually with unhelpful consequences for AMISOM.

## 5.5 Coherence and Partnerships

AMISOM is a mission based on partnerships with multiple international organisations and bilateral actors. Coherence among and across these relationships is thus crucial for AMISOM's effectiveness in the field, both within the mission and with its external partners. Some shortfalls in this area persist.

With regard to its internal coherence, AMISOM has always functioned as a loose coalition rather than a unified mission. The challenges of ensuring coherence across this coalition increased as the number of contributing countries grew. AMISOM struggled to ensure unified command and control across its sectors, which have been run by national contingent commanders. This has made it particularly difficult for AMISOM to perform coherent cross-sector operations, such as Operation Jubba Corridor. The difficulty of getting sector commanders to follow the Force Commander's orders was most publicly acknowledged in the Djibouti Declaration of February 2016. This took the highly unusual decision to publicly stress “the need for effective AMISOM Command and Control in order to achieve synergy of the Mission's efforts against Al Shaabab and therefore directs AMISOM contingents to fully support the Force Commander in his exercise of effective and accountable command of all Military units and equipment assigned to the Mission.”<sup>50</sup> During mid-2018, the AMISOM Force Commander oversaw a technical assessment of the mission's military capabilities to provide an accurate baseline and inventory to inform the reconfiguration to support the Somali Transition Plan. Moreover, it was notable that the recent AU-UN Joint Review of AMISOM called for “the gradual formation of multinational sectors [in AMISOM] to enhance command and control and inter-operability.”<sup>51</sup> A new force headquarters structure has been endorsed accordingly.

With regard to its internal coherence, AMISOM has always functioned as a loose coalition rather than a unified mission.

With regard to coherence between AMISOM and its external partners, the record is also mixed. At the strategic level, there have been regular disagreements about the appropriate division of international labour, particularly related to political aspects of AMISOM's mandate, where the Somali authorities and UNSOM have the lead. This has been part of the long-running effort to build an effective strategic partnership between the UN and

50 Djibouti Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the Troop and Police Contributing Countries to AMISOM, Djibouti, 28 February 2016.

51 *Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the African Union-United Nations Joint Review of AMISOM* (PSC/MIN/RPT(DCCLXXXII), 27 June 2018), para. 25f.

AU on matters of peace and security.<sup>52</sup> Importantly, the EU would also like to be part of the strategic-level decision-making about AMISOM, which was an issue raised by the unpublished report on financing AMISOM, written in early 2018 by Ramtane Lamamra and Jean-Marie Guéhenno.

At a more operational level, AMISOM has relied on external partners to provide it with logistical, financial and security force assistance. The most significant contributions have come from the UN, EU and bilateral partners, particularly the US and UK. Unfortunately, these partnerships have left significant gaps in AMISOM's deployed capabilities, most notably a lack of key enabling units. Since January 2016, the mission has also been forced to operate without full financial support, reducing personnel allowances by 20% from their authorised rate. Nor have they delivered an effective set of Somali security forces. Although crucial to implementing its exit strategy, there remain ways in which the mission could work more effectively with the SNA, Somali police, and regional forces to reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab.

There have also been persistent problems related to logistical support. This prompted the AU-UN Joint Review to call for “a new operational logistical support concept” as a matter of urgency.<sup>53</sup> As of October 2018, this was being addressed through the Strategic Review of UNSOS. Finally, many military operations in Somalia continue to be characterised by fragmentation rather than unity of effort, as reflected not only in the struggle of AMISOM's Force Headquarters to implement unified command and control, but also in the varied activities of the SNA and regional forces, as well as parallel operations conducted in AMISOM's area of operations by Kenya, Ethiopia and the US.

In order to build greater coherence among the multitude of actors engaged in Somalia, since 2017, AMISOM and its partners have developed the Comprehensive Approach to Security (CAS). This was intended to clarify an appropriate division of labour across the different areas necessary to stabilise Somalia. The five strands of the CAS, as set out in the London Security Pact, are:

- i. Enabling effective AMISOM operations, including a conditions-based transition with clear target dates from AMISOM to Somali-led security.
- ii. Accelerating the development of Somali national security institutions and forces, in line with the new national security architecture, including disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Report of the UN Secretary-General, *Strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including on the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union* (S/2018/678, 6 July 2018).

<sup>53</sup> *Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the African Union-United Nations Joint Review of AMISOM* (PSC/MIN/RPT(DCCLXXXII), 27 June 2018), para. 13.

- iii. Support to the Somali Government's stabilisation plans and "Community Recovery and Extension of State Authority/Accountability" programmes.
- iv. Countering/preventing violent extremism.
- v. Enhancing the coherence of international partner's support, including by establishing an effective coordination mechanism.<sup>54</sup>

This approach is broadly sensible and highlights how AMISOM is but one part of the international engagement that is required to stabilise Somalia.

## 5.6 Legitimacy and Credibility

AMISOM is accepted as a legitimate actor by the Somali authorities and a wide range of international partners alike. It is also widely accepted that al-Shabaab cannot be defeated by military means alone and hence AMISOM cannot bring peace to Somalia in the absence of broader international engagement and a local political settlement.<sup>55</sup> The mission has an important and legitimate role to contain and reduce the threat from al-Shabaab, help secure the region's main population centres and the routes connecting them, and open space for Somalis to resolve their political crisis. There is, however, a strain of opinion within Somali civil society that holds largely hostile views towards AMISOM. These usually revolve around the duration of the mission, the influence wielded by Somalia's neighbours (all of whom are AMISOM TCCs), the amount of money spent on the mission relative to Somali security forces, harm caused to some Somali civilians with, until recently, little investigatory follow-up, participation in corruption, and the idea that AMISOM is a tool in a Western-led war on Islam.<sup>56</sup>

There is, however, a strain of opinion within Somali civil society that holds largely hostile views towards AMISOM.

Perceptions about AMISOM's credibility also vary. After a bad period during 2009 and 2010, when many locals blamed AMISOM for indiscriminately harming civilians in Mogadishu, perceptions of the mission improved significantly during 2011 until about 2015, as reflected in opinion polls conducted by the AU-UN Information Support Team. However, during 2016 and 2017, similar surveys saw AMISOM suffer from a considerable drop in the levels of support expressed by local Somalis. As summarised by one analysis, in

<sup>54</sup> London Security Pact, 11 May 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Focus group discussions with members of Somali CSOs, Mogadishu, 23 June 2018.

<sup>56</sup> Focus group discussions with members of Somali CSOs, Mogadishu, 23 June 2018.

the mid-2016 survey, “there was a significant overall decline in perceptions of security and AMISOM engaging in less constructive ways with the local population. Overall, support for AMISOM reduced by over half from 64% to 28%, and nearly half of Somali citizens polled (48%) wanted AMISOM to leave immediately.”<sup>57</sup> These trends were confirmed by UNSOM’s internal analysis of citizen perceptions.<sup>58</sup> In the most recent survey of public opinion conducted by Farsight Africa of 1,505 Somalis across six regions, the level of local confidence in AMISOM had dropped from 59% in 2017 to 39% in 2018.<sup>59</sup>

Members of Somali civil society consulted for this report suggested that AMISOM was least credible when over-exaggerating its gains against al-Shabaab, investigating abuses and corruption perpetrated by its own personnel, and when reporting about its own casualties.<sup>60</sup> Sections of Somali civil society who have had negative experiences from interacting with AMISOM’s CIMIC officers over the years are looking forward with cautious optimism to the work of the CCTARC and the mission’s due diligence unit.<sup>61</sup> Scepticism was also raised about AMISOM’s credibility in delivering stabilisation programmes and performing governance and rule of law tasks; the strong preference being for Somali actors to play the leading role instead. In that sense, greater support was voiced for AMISOM’s military activities and facilitating or providing humanitarian assistance than for the mission playing greater roles in upholding the rule of law, policing and governance/administration.

## 5.7 Women, Peace and Security

AMISOM has a mixed record on advancing the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. This is often described in terms of the four pillars it seeks to promote: women’s participation in peace processes, preventing violence against women and girls, and providing protection when this fails, as well as supporting relief and recovery efforts that prioritise women and girls. AMISOM developed a five-year gender strategy in 2013, which sought to implement key provisions of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) by enhancing gender-mainstreaming both internally in the mission and externally in Somali society.

Internally, AMISOM made progress in promoting female participation by deploying greater numbers of women in its military component, from just 10 women in 2007 to

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57 See Paul D. Williams, “Strategic Communications for Peace Operations: The African Union’s Information War Against al-Shabaab,” *Stability*, 7:1 (2018), p. 9.

58 Williams, “Strategic Communications,” p. 10.

59 Farsight Africa, *Somalia Confidence Index Survey* (IPSOS, September 2018), p. 18.

60 Focus group discussions with members of Somali CSOs, Mogadishu, 23 June 2018.

61 Linnéa Gelot, “Civilian protection in Africa: How the protection of civilians is being militarized by African policymakers and diplomats,” *Contemporary Security Policy*, 38:1 (2017), p. 168.



850 by March 2018.<sup>62</sup> Of course, achieving higher numbers of women peacekeepers is largely outside of the control of AMISOM and the AU Commission, and depends on the willingness and capacity of TCCs, which in turn depends on attitudes, cultures and norms about gender in their armed forces. At just under 4% of uniformed personnel as of March 2018, AMISOM is broadly in line with male-to-female ratios in the military component of UN peacekeeping operations, but well below the target of 10% for female troops. It is also far short of the UN's target of 20% women in police components. As of September 2018, AMISOM's civilian component had 15 women out of 72 personnel (nearly 20%).

AMISOM first gender officer deployed to Mogadishu in 2012, and its civilian component currently has two gender officers within the Protection, Human Rights and Gender cluster. In 2014, AMISOM completed training of its new "gender focal points" to work across the mission's sectors. Despite this small capacity, the mission has helped promote women's participation in official political and peace and security processes in a society where women's rights and equality have struggled to make headway. This includes supporting the development of Somalia's national gender policy and advocating for the 30% quota for female representatives as Members of Parliament.<sup>63</sup> AMISOM's police component has promoted women's participation by insisting that 30% of the officers it trains must be women.

The police component has also been active in promoting specific provisions to enhance gender protection by conducting gender-sensitive training and standards, and establishing gender desks in police stations dedicated to addressing gender-specific issues such as conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence. AMISOM has helped raise awareness about the WPS agenda through strategic communications, including disseminating radio packages on Resolution 1325, as well as supporting public education of gender issues. Finally, it has introduced the toll-free CEEBLA crisis line, in collaboration with a Somali NGO, which allows anonymous reporting of cases of SEA. Opinions diverge on whether this crisis line remains effective in practice.

Fundamental to the pillar on "protection", AMISOM has made some progress on tackling instances of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and instituting systems to respond to

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62 In comparison, five years ago, Uganda provided the largest number of female peacekeeping troops to AMISOM, with 193 women out of 6,223 troops (3.1%). All the other TCCs—Burundi, Kenya, Djibouti and Sierra Leone—had less than 1% female troops. Nicolle Chido Manjeya and Olivia Victoria Davies, "AMISOM Troop-contributing Countries and Female Representation," *Conflict Trends*, 2 (2013), pp. 52-53. In 2015, Ethiopia contributed 131 women out of 4,394 troops (2.9%), followed by Uganda with 160 women out of 6,220 troops (2.57%), Burundi with 77 (1.4%), Djibouti with 7 women out of 987 troops (0.7%), and Kenya with only 3 women out of 3,663 troops (0.08%). AMISOM, "AMISOM Gender Unit at a Glance," *AMISOM Review*, 13 (February–April 2015), p. 20.

63 Ingvild Magnæs Gjelsvik, *Women, Peace and Security in Somalia: A Study of AMISOM* (NUPI Policy Brief 16, 2013), p. 3. Despite the advocacy for at least 30% women in all political institutions, this was not finally included in the Provisional Federal Constitution adopted on 1 August 2012. See UNDP Country Office for Somalia, *Gender in Somalia* (Mogadishu: UNDP Brief, 2015), p. 3.

allegations.<sup>64</sup> There are now significantly fewer allegations of SEA than in 2014. Although this is a notoriously under-reported issue, the reduction is probably the result of a combination of remedial actions taken by AMISOM, including adopting Policy Guidance on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2013), a Force Commander's Directive on the Protection of Children's Rights (September 2014), the relocation of civilian shopkeepers outside AMISOM base camp, establishment of the Human Rights and Protection, and Gender units, awareness-raising campaigns about the mission's zero tolerance of SEA, and the establishment of a toll-free hotline to confidentially report complaints.<sup>65</sup>

Nevertheless, the mission is still criticised for its slow progress on enforcing a "zero tolerance" policy and introducing key accountability measures, which would see harsher consequences for TCCs, such as sending home entire contingents if found guilty of sexual abuse.<sup>66</sup> This is not solely an AMISOM issue, but relates to the need for the AU Commission to establish comprehensive records, policies and screening processes for personnel who have been guilty of misconduct and SEA. More follow-up could be done, for instance, on the 2015 AU investigation into SEA perpetrated by AMISOM personnel.<sup>67</sup> It is also unclear whether AMISOM has instituted effective internal mechanisms to enable its own personnel to report cases of SEA by their colleagues. Finally, the fact that AMISOM's mandate does not explicitly address gender issues, and given that it has no explicit, proactive mandate to protect civilians either, have negatively affected its ability to promote the WPS agenda in Somalia. Much remains to be done in this regard.

## 5.8 People-Centred

Ultimately, AMISOM, like all peace operations, must be about improving the lives of people affected by organised violence in Somalia. Being people-centred means engaging with a broad range of stakeholders and prioritising activities that have a positive impact on the lives of ordinary people, including women, youths and other marginalised groups.

As noted above, protection is one element of this agenda, and AMISOM has undoubtedly helped protect many Somali citizens. However, the strategic heart of AMISOM's mandate remains to protect the Somali government and other VIPs, help build the country's state security institutions, and weaken al-Shabaab's insurgency. This is reflected in the fact that AMISOM does not have a mandate to engage in proactive civilian protection

64 Following the release of the Human Rights Watch Report (2014), the AU Commission established an Independent Investigation Team to investigate allegations about AMISOM personnel. The report with the key findings and recommendations was summarised by the AU Commission (but not published in full) in April 2015.

65 Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia*, p. 275.

66 Cheryl Hendricks, "Progress and Challenge in Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the African Union's Peace and Security Architecture," *African Development*, XLII: 3 (2017), p. 90.

67 As recommended in *Implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Africa* (AU Commission, 2016), p. 44.

activities. It must, of course, live up to its responsibilities under the laws of war, but these things are not synonymous.

Engaging with local communities is another way to promote a people-centred approach. But here again, AMISOM has struggled. This is largely due to the constraints imposed by the insecure operating environment and the fact that AMISOM's civilian component has little presence in the sectors and can conduct only a relatively low level of community outreach. The physical bunkerisation of AMISOM in military bases has also created distance between the mission and local civilians.

On the other hand, AMISOM has established a long if uneven track record of providing considerable humanitarian assistance to Somali civilians, including peacekeepers donating water and relief supplies as well as blood and medical supplies to local hospitals. Another initiative has involved AMISOM medical personnel offering free corrective surgery to individuals with cleft lip and palate deformities. AMISOM personnel have also engaged in a range of activities designed to build good relations with local communities, such as water point and borehole construction, and refurbishing schools, bridges and roads. In general, this has been easiest for the Djiboutian contingent because of their linguistic and cultural familiarity with local populations.

Although it was authorised by the UN Security Council in 2012, AMISOM eventually established the CCTARC in 2015, and it is currently supposed to have a staff of six military officers. The CCTARC has an important role to play in building positive relations between AMISOM and local civilians by tracking and analysing various sources of civilian harm and then bringing to the attention of the mission's senior leadership incidents that might require investigation, and potentially boards of inquiry that might lead to reparations for the victim(s). In recent years, AMISOM has caused very few of the civilian casualties in Somalia (with al-Shabaab responsible for the vast majority). Between January 2016 and mid-October 2017, UNSOM estimated that AMISOM was responsible for 4.6% of civilian fatalities and 3.4% of injured civilians, mainly due to indiscriminate fire after some sort of attack on AMISOM personnel.<sup>68</sup> Road accidents have now become the most frequent source of AMISOM inflicting civilian harm with a significant decline in allegations of SEA over the last few years (as discussed above).

The strategic heart of AMISOM's mandate remains to protect the Somali government and other VIPs, help build the country's state security institutions, and weaken al-Shabaab's insurgency.

68 OHCHR and UNSOM, *Protection of Civilians* (OHCHR and UNSOM, December 2017), p. 1.

In sum, after struggling to get up and running, the CCTARC has helped to build a more accurate picture of trends in this area, but this has led to very few compensation payments, which is a source of anger for some local civilians. Another source of resentment is the unresolved issue of how to communicate (in what format and to what extent) the outcomes of board of inquiry decisions to the relevant authorities at the community level.

Despite these various initiatives, as noted above, AMISOM has recently struggled to maintain strong support among the local population, particularly as its offensive operations stalled and local civilians asked for more resources to go to the Somali security forces rather than the AU mission. CSOs also fault AMISOM for the lack of responsive CIMIC structures, and weak accountability frameworks with regard to abusive behaviour by some of its personnel.<sup>69</sup>

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69 Focus group discussions with members of Somali CSOs, Mogadishu, 23 June 2018.









## SECTION 6.

# Conclusions

On the basis of our desk research, interviews and focus group discussions, we submit the following conclusions.

### 6.1 Strategic Level

*Coordination among partners:* As part of a broader constellation of actors trying to stabilise Somalia, AMISOM must take account of the best division of labour between these actors when trying to reconfigure its own efforts. Effective coordination and information-sharing are required to align the activities of the numerous international actors trying to stabilise Somalia, particularly between the AU, UN and EU. All these actors must work more closely in partnership if the Transition Plan is to be successfully implemented. Yet, too often, international activities in Somalia have been characterised by fragmentation rather than unity of effort. This has been the case across a range of issues, from efforts to develop the Somali security sector to parallel military operations, and attempts to forge unity and reconciliation between Somalia's Federal Government and regional authorities.

*Reducing the al-Shabaab threat:* Although al-Shabaab no longer poses an existential threat to the Federal Government, it remains a deadly foe that wields significant political and economic influence. This is partly because AMISOM has struggled to destroy rather than just displace al-Shabaab's core combat capabilities. When AMISOM has tried to recover

al-Shabaab-controlled areas, it has sometimes struggled to genuinely “clear” the area of hostile elements. This is on top of the problems involved in trying to effectively “hold” the territory and “build” governance structures on it without effective local Somali partners. When AMISOM has (sometimes abruptly) departed these areas, it has at times increased insecurity for local civilians who subsequently suffer reprisal when al-Shabaab forces return. While most of AMISOM’s efforts against al-Shabaab have been in the form of military operations, the threat posed by the militants can best be reduced through a combination of military, economic and political initiatives, including community-building and education to reduce radicalisation and increase understanding and dialogue between the different communities. It is up to the Somali authorities to determine when and how they might want to engage al-Shabaab in political dialogue, but much more could be done to provide incentives to weaken al-Shabaab’s forces through economic means, including buying out its fighters.

*Supporting the political process:* AMISOM has succeeded in opening up space for Somali elites to resolve the country’s political crisis. That these elites have failed to do so has placed AMISOM in a difficult position. Without a successful political process, AMISOM has no effective pathway to exit Somalia. Although support for the political process in Somalia must go well beyond AMISOM, the AU and its partners must clarify their political roles moving forward and how those roles will be sufficiently resourced. As an organisation without a leading political role in Somalia, there is only so much AMISOM can be expected to achieve in this vital area.

*Supporting the Somali Transition Plan:* If genuine agreement can be forged for this plan between Somalia’s Federal Government and the regional administrations, then it should be viewed as a shared obligation by all international actors engaged in Somalia. They should then focus their efforts on facilitating reconciliation among Somali political elites and empowering Somalia’s national security forces. This will require the allocation of sufficient resources and recognition that completing the Transition Plan is likely to take another decade, even if it receives sustained high-level political support. In broad terms, the subsequent phases of AMISOM’s operations would be to lead, then support and back-stop, and, finally, train and mentor Somali security forces. The most significant potential game-changer that could speed up the transition would be the conclusion of a political settlement to end the war with al-Shabaab.

## 6.2 Operational Level

*AMISOM’s military component:* In its current configuration, AMISOM’s military component has largely culminated in its efforts to degrade al-Shabaab. Its principal tasks moving forward should be aligned with the Somali Transition Plan and focus on providing perimeter security for the major population centres across the south-central part of the country,



securing the main supply routes between them, and working to manage defectors. Today, the mission's military component is insufficiently resourced, inconsistently motivated, and unsuitably configured to conduct sustained targeted operations against al-Shabaab. Any attempt to have AMISOM lead an offensive against al-Shabaab would require a more nimble and agile force willing to take considerable risks. It should also be coordinated with the ongoing US-supported Danab operations against al-Shabaab. In this context, it would be highly instructive to assess the rationale for each of AMISOM's FOBs to determine which of them are crucial to implementing these priority tasks and which are superfluous.

*Securing supply routes and bases:* AMISOM forces remain vulnerable along several main and alternative supply routes and in some of its more isolated FOBs. Securing the supply routes between the region's major population centres is critical to consolidate existing gains, facilitate the establishment of government authority, and ensure sustained growth of legitimate economic activity. Insecure supply routes will also be a source of negative local opinion about AMISOM's effectiveness. The route between Mogadishu and Baidoa is likely to attract the most attention and resources given its position as a pilot objective in the Somali Transition Plan. However, considerable attention should also be focused on securing the route between Mogadishu and Barawe, which suffers the highest levels of violence from al-Shabaab attacks.

*Securing the next electoral process (2020/21):* If Somalia does undertake an election process during 2020/21, AMISOM will undoubtedly be asked to play a major role in securing the process. Once again, this will present al-Shabaab with numerous opportunities to strike soft targets and use considerable AMISOM resources that might otherwise be deployed against al-Shabaab. Planning for how to secure this process should be finalised as a matter of urgency and include the UN's missions in Somalia.

*AMISOM's police component:* AMISOM's police component has made progress in supporting, training and building capacity in the SPF, but its relatively small numbers of personnel can only do so much. Agreement on the new policing model is also a significant positive development, yet its success or failure will hinge on its practical implementation. Moreover, the AU has experienced difficulties and delays in generating the additional police forces authorised by the UN Security Council in 2017. Additional operations remain hampered by the high levels of insecurity across large parts of south-central Somalia.

*AMISOM's civilian component:* Although very small in number, AMISOM's civilian component has a potential comparative advantage in being able to align their activities with the mission's military and police components in the early recovery phase of stabilisation efforts. They could also act as a "first responder", given the difficulty in deploying civilians from other international agencies to newly recovered areas. However, the AU would have to mitigate the risks to civilian staff before they deploy to highly insecure areas.

*Reducing civilian harm:* Although civilian casualties caused in AMISOM operations have decreased over the last few years, harm caused to civilians—including by road accidents, indiscriminate fire, and SEA—without adequate follow-up or compensation has negatively impacted public perception of the mission. AMISOM must make more effort to reduce the unintended consequences of its actions by, among other things, increasing the speed of its investigation and compensation procedures, its strategic responses to incidents, and in publicising its punishments for those found guilty of breaches of its code of conduct, particularly SEA.

*Threats beyond al-Shabaab:* Al-Shabaab is not the only actor threatening stability in Somalia, but AMISOM is not well-suited to reduce the number of communal conflicts over natural resources, particularly land and water, or to find sustainable solutions to clan-related conflicts. It is also poorly equipped to deal with the threat posed by the Islamic State in Somalia.









APPENDIX A:

# The Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON) Project Summary

Peace operations are among the most important international mechanisms for contemporary conflict management. But their effectiveness often remains the subject of confusion and debate in both the policy and academic communities. Various international organisations conducting peace operations, including the UN, AU and EU, have come under increasing pressure to justify the effectiveness and impact of their peace operations. Although various initiatives are underway to improve the ability of these organisations to assess the performance of their missions, there remains a distinct lack of independent, external research-based information about the effectiveness of these peace operations.

To address this gap, the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), together with over 40 partners from across the globe, have established an international network to jointly undertake research into the effectiveness of peace operations. This network has developed a shared methodology to enable the members to undertake comparative research

on this topic. This will ensure coherence across cases and facilitate comparative research. The network will employ this methodology to produce a series of reports that will be shared with stakeholders, including the UN, AU, EU, interested national government representatives, researchers, and the general public. Over time, this project will produce a substantial amount of mission-specific assessments, which can be used to identify the key factors that influence the effectiveness of peace operations. This data will be made available via a dedicated web-based dataset that will be a publicly available repository of knowledge on this topic.

In 2018, four pilot case studies were undertaken in DRC (MONUSCO), Mali (MINUSMA), Somalia (AMISOM), and South Sudan (UNMISS). The results of these initial research studies will be shared at international seminars in Addis Ababa (AU HQ), Geneva (Peace Week), and in New York (UN HQ). The network partners will review the pilot experiences and refine their research methodology, and in 2019 the project will continue with studies of, among others, the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the G5-Sahel Force, the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in the Lake Chad basin, and the EU Monitoring Mission in the Ukraine (EUMM).

The following EPON partners have directly participated in the 2018 research studies while several others have supported these studies by participating in external reference groups that commented on the draft reports:

- ACCORD, South Africa
- Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation (BIPSOT), Bangladesh
- Cairo International Centre for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA), Egypt
- Center on International Cooperation (CIC), New York University, USA
- Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF), Berlin
- Chinese People's Police University, China
- Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), Sweden
- The George Washington University, USA
- Igarapé Institute, Brazil
- Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS), Ethiopia
- Institute for Security Studies (ISS), South Africa
- International Peace Institute (IPI), USA

- Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), Ghana
- Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI), Norway
- Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), Norway
- Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University, Australia
- Security Institute for Governance and Leadership (SIGLA), Stellenbosch University, South Africa
- Social Science Research Council (SSRC), USA
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Sweden
- Training for Peace Secretariat, Ethiopia
- University of Trento, Italy
- United Nations University, Japan



This report assesses the extent to which the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has achieved its current strategic objectives and what impact, if any, the mission has had on broader political and security dynamics in Somalia. Now in its eleventh year of operations, AMISOM is part of a wider constellation of international actors trying to stabilise the country. This constellation exemplifies the opportunities and challenges of partnerships in contemporary peace operations. It also puts a premium on ensuring effective coordination between these actors, most notably the Somali authorities, the African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), European Union (EU) and some key bilateral partners, including the US and UK. AMISOM is, therefore, in the unenviable position of not being fully in control of its own destiny. Instead, it must rely on and find the right division of labour between these other actors.