

Waging Peace, towards an Africa Union Stabilisation Strategy for Somalia

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Abstract

Over the last few years, successful military operations across Somalia have helped to unshackle towns south of Mogadishu from al Shabaab, demonstrating the capacity of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) to achieve parts of its mandate. However, friction between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States have heightened tensions and rifts over elections, state management and overall security, despite significant international support. Despite AMISOM's efforts, the legacies of the 1990s civil war have remained unresolved, and state restoration has been disrupted by political, clannish, environmental and structural challenges. In contrast, al Shabaab remains adaptable, resilient and exploits grievances, local dynamics, and competition over resources. This paper argues, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council needs to re-mandate and reinforce AMISOM in conjunction with an AU stabilisation strategy for Somalia which exploits experiences from the AU's Regional Stabilisation Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin.

Keywords

Somalia – AMISOM – Africa Union – al Shabaab – stabilisation – peace support operations

1 Introduction

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)¹ is a unique African Peace Support Operation (PSO) deployed in 2007, led by the African Union (AU) and designed to provide support and protection to civilians of Somalia, with provision from the United Nations (UN).² The UN was mandated to provide logistical support to AMISOM through its then UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) with its mandate for support coming into effect in 2009. Thus, between 2007 and 2009, there was a gap in logistical support that was provided directly by “development partners” like the US through Private Military Companies such as DynCorp and Bancroft Global. This meant AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) were “self-sustenance” during this period. The later outcome of a 2010 AMISOM TCC Military Operations Coordination Committee (MOCC) meeting held in Kampala, Uganda at the level of Ministers of Defence influenced a critical AU PSC decision in July 2010 to adjust the AMISOM’s mandate. The adjustment gave the Mission projection in the form of “pre-emptive strike” capability. From this point onwards, AMISOM became publicly and informally seen as an enforcement mission. The AU had initially planned for a six-month mission, to be followed by a UN mission. However, a lack of buy-in from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meant the UN could not deploy multidimensional UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKO).³ Despite AMISOM’s challenges, such as the lack of initial investment, resources and initial reluctance to deploy from some African Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs).⁴ AMISOM made significant gains and has succeeded in areas where neither the UN nor the United States (US) was able to achieve success during the early 1990s under the United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) (1992–1993), the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) (1993–1995), and the US-led Unified Task Force (1992–1993) Operation Restore Hope.

1 On 1 April 2022, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) replaced the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and was authorised by the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU-PSC) at the 1068th meeting on 8 March 2022 and mandated by the United Nations Security Council on 31 March 2022 under Resolution 2628 (2022), with an initial mandate for 12 months.

2 African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). ‘AMISOM Background’, 2021, available at <https://amisom-au.org/amisom-background/> (accessed on 25 July 2021).

3 Abid I. Samatar, ‘Ethiopian Invasion of Somalia, US Warlords and AU Shame.’ *Review of African Political Economy*. Debates on the Left in Southern Africa 34: 111, 2007, pp. 155–165.

4 Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/interview-ghana-wary-over-sending-peacekeepers-somalia> *Thomas Reuter Foundation*, ‘Interview - Ghana wary over sending peacekeepers to Somalia’, 2007. (accessed on 25 July 2021).

Troops from Burundi and Uganda were amongst the first to be deployed as part of AMISOM to fight *Harakat al Shabaab al-Mujahideen (al Shabaab)* in Mogadishu without essential logistical support or the training required for close-quarter urban fighting,⁵ resulting in a steep learning curve for the two TCCs. AMISOM working with allied armed groups, succeeded in prolonged urban combat against local militia forces, demonstrating a high degree of adaptability. This resulted in the creation of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the liberation of areas across the south⁶ from al Shabaab's through a clear-hold-build strategy.⁷ Despite this success, the current international fixation and support aimed at building military capacity, to an extent, has led to AMISOM becoming the AU's "longest, most expensive and most deadly peace operation".⁸ AMISOM's strength and logistical supply chain has become overextended⁹ and the mission's ability to achieve continued success has been made hollow by the lack of political cohesion and agreements. This is further impeded by the complexity of interlocked issues like historical disagreement, local conflicts and justice challenges.¹⁰ Although AMISOM's success forced al Shabaab to reformulate its modus operandi—from a military threat to mostly terrorist attacks in cities.¹¹ Al Shabaab has demonstrated its ability to win hearts and minds through community support, remaining resilient and versatile while establishing a semi-territorial presence in government-held

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- 5 Paul D. Williams, *UN Support to Regional Peace Operations: Lessons from UNSOA International Peace Institute*, 2017, pp. 4–5. Somalia, available at <https://www.ssrn.com/abstract=2969338>. (accessed on 25 July 2021).
- 6 Paul D. Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia: A History of the African Union Mission (AMISOM), 2007–2017*, Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 179–80.
- 7 Bronwyn E. Bruton, and Paul D. Williams, *Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Lessons Learned from the African Union Mission in Somalia, 2007–2013*, (JSOU Report 14–15. Defence Technical Information Centre 2014).
- 8 Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia*, p. 342.
- 9 The Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network (EPON), *Assessing the Effectiveness of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)*, 2018, available at <https://effectivepeaceops.net/publication/amisom/> (accessed on 25 July 2021).
- 10 Cedric De Coning, 'From Peacebuilding to Sustaining Peace: Implications of Complexity for Resilience and Sustainability', *Resilience* 4: 3, 2016, p. 168; Cedric De Coning, John Karlsrud and Paul Troost, 'Towards More People-Centric Peace Operations: From 'Extension of State Authority to 'Strengthening Inclusive State-Society Relations', *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 4:1, 2015, pp. 1–13.
- 11 Joanne Crouch, 'Counter-Terror and the Logic of Violence in Somalia's Civil War: Time for a New Approach' Saferworld, 2018, available at <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1191-counter-terror-and-the-logic-of-violence-in-somaliaas-civil-war-time-for-a-new-approach> (accessed on 23 March 2021).

towns, exploiting grievances and expanding its influence.¹² While the SNA and other militarised approaches have a role in assisting Somalia to achieve stability, there is a need to focus on broader non-military approaches that lay the foundation for long-term stability.¹³

This paper argues that a re-mandated and reinforced AMISOM is currently the best option for Somalia but postulates that the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) needs to adopt a cohesive stabilisation strategy in conjunction with this option. The paper is structured as followed; section one touches on the formation of AMISOM, the mission's ability to deal with al Shabaab and highlights a few of AMISOM's achievements, failures and challenges. Section two examines three possible options available to the UNSC and AU ahead of AMISOM mandate renewal in December 2021. Section three explores why a stabilisation strategy for Somalia is essential; maintaining a stabilisation strategy should draw on lessons from the AU's Regional Stabilisation Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin. The section then provides priority areas for this strategy. The final section provides closing thoughts.

2 The Formation of AMISOM

In 1991 President Said Barre regime had fallen, and the proliferation of clan militia, including the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), took control over central Somalia. Famine soon followed alongside three attempts to restore peace and state authority by the UN and US; UNOSOM I (1992–1993), US-led Unified Task Force (1992–1993), Operation Restore Hope and UNOSOM II (1993–1995).¹⁴ Despite failed international attempts to reinstate peace, a “governance without government”¹⁵ emerged across parts of Somalia, often involving ad hoc systems led by alternative but local security providers.¹⁶ Before the formation of AMISOM, in December 2006, Ethiopian troops—with US backing—invaded

12 At the time of writing, the group controlled Middle Juba and Tayeglow.

13 Stig Jarle Hansen, *Horn, Sahel and Rift: Fault-Lines of the African Jihad* (London: Hurst Publishing, 2019).

14 Tim Murithi, ‘Between reactive and Proactive Interventionism: The African Union Peace and Security Council's Engagement in the Horn of Africa’, *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 12: 3, 2012, pp. 87–110.

15 Kenneth Menkhaus, ‘Governance Without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building and the Politics of Coping’, *Quarterly Journal: International Security* 31: 3, 2007, pp. 75–106.

16 Mary Jane Harper, *Getting Somalia Wrong? Faith, War, and Hope in a Shattered State*. (London: Zed Books, 2012).

Somalia to defeat the ICU. This warlord group-controlled Mogadishu and expanded its influence across the south and central Somalia. For Somalis, the intervention by Ethiopia was viewed as a reoccupation by the enemy since Ethiopians, and Somalia had previous history—the Ogaden War and the Ethio-Somali War, a Somali military offensive between July 1977 and March 1978 in Ethiopian occupied Ogaden. Ethiopia's eventual reluctance to continue its intervention in Somalia led to the creation of AMISOM in 2007 and one can argue, designed as a clear exit strategy for Ethiopia. AMISOM was designed to support and facilitate the international process led by the UN and assist the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) to regain control from al Shabaab and other militia groups.¹⁷ AMISOM's deployment in 2007 included 1,400 troops from Uganda and Burundi, authorised by the AU PSC as a six-month-long “bridging operation”.¹⁸ The Mission was tasked with protecting Somalia's Transitional Federal Institutions, this covered the TFG and the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP). AMISOM took over security responsibilities in its initial deployments in the towns of Jowhar and Baidoa as well as the city of Mogadishu (Kilometre four—a strategic cross road; Villa Somalia—seat of government housing the President and Prime Minister; the Somali Parliament; and most importantly Aden Abdulle International Airport also known as Mogadishu International Airport) from the Ethiopian military. Uganda and Burundi troops focused on urban warfighting against al Shabaab without adequate logistical support,¹⁹ resources or the training required for close-quarters urban fighting but made significant gains against al Shabaab—almost immobilising the group.²⁰ As violence raged on, AMISOM grappled with several capacity shortfalls, partially due to TCC objectives, broader western insouciance and political turmoil within Somalia, but continued to defeat al Shabaab.²¹

Initially, the UNSC and African Union Commission had prohibited the exclusion of neighbouring states from the mission, but this was later dropped, and in 2012 a revamped peace enforcement effort—involving Ugandan with support from Burundian forces—effectively retook Mogadishu in large part due to Ugandan contingent who are located in Sector one which is under Ugandan Area of Responsibility (AOR). While Ethiopia troops officially joined in 2014,²²

17 Bruton and Williams, *Counterinsurgency in Somalia*.

18 Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia, The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group* (London: Hurst and Company, 2013).

19 Williams, *UN Support to Regional Peace Operations*, pp. 4–5.

20 Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, p. 99.

21 Ibid.

22 Matt Freear and Cedric De Coning, ‘Lessons from the African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) for Peace Operations in Mali’, *Stability* 2: 2, Art. 23, 2013, pp. 1–11.

memories of the Ogaden war and the invasion against the ICU in 2006 diminished Ethiopia troops credibility and led to a temporary surge in al Shabaab's popularity when the group blended religious discourse with pan-Somali nationalism and anti-Ethiopian demagoguery.²³ Kenyan and Ethiopian forces became fused fixtures of ongoing operations, acting as TCCs to AMISOM and autonomous participants embroiled in an increasingly regionalised conflict.

Over the next three years, key towns across the south were seized, and their inhabitants liberated from al Shabaab. As the situation on the ground evolved, so did the characteristics of AMISOM operations, adapting into an AU led peace support operation (PSO) focused on counterterrorism and working across the countryside and in urban communities.²⁴ AMISOM's evolution reflected the situation on the ground, which meant the missions scope, structure and purpose persistently changed, with AMISOM taking on more of the burden and assuming greater responsibilities. AMISOM reach included an extensive network of forward bases with militants often retaining control over rural areas and critical road connections. The mission's area of coverage increased from around 100 square kilometres to over 400,000 square kilometres in 2012, relying on sectoral coverage with each TCC occupying one of six zones across South and Central Somalia.²⁵ Some argue that this structure disrupted the harmonisation and efforts of AMISOM, frequently leaving each sector working as its own "separate mission".²⁶ Still, similarities in sectoral coverage have been deployed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), allowing TCCs to deploy their military doctrine in line with each nation's priority.²⁷ However, in Somalia, where AMISOM lacks resources, this can adversely affect the mission objectives. For Williams, this has resulted in AMISOM working as a "monolithic entity" strategically, operationally or politically. Internal mechanics are often incoherent, lacking coordination across the military, policing and civilian

23 Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*.

24 Bruton and Williams, 'Counterinsurgency in Somalia'; Najum Mushtaq, 'AMISOM: Challenges of Influence, Impartiality and Disengagement', in Michael Keating and Matthew Waldman ed., *War and Peace in Somalia: National Grievances, Local Conflict and Al Shabaab* (London: Hurst Publishing, 2018), p. 360.

25 Bruton and Williams, 'Counterinsurgency in Somalia'.

26 Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia*, pp. 120–123.

27 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). 'NATO Standard, Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations'. Edition C version 1, 2019, available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/797323/doctrine_nato_conduct_of_ops_ajp_3.pdf (accessed on 12 July 2021).

components, creating a structure more akin to “AMISOMs in the plural” than a unified entity.²⁸

Since 2015, the size of AMISOM operations have been decreasing, although a series of smaller operations (Leopard Hunt and Badbaado) carried out in Lower Shabelle have continued. While a pause in offensive operations saw al Shabaab take the initiative and attack and destroy four forward operating bases between 2015–17. In August 2017, AMISOM’s mandate was renewed, and the mission was directed to reduce its troop numbers by 1,000,²⁹ this was followed by the AU’s decision to consider and adopt the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) in 2018.³⁰ The UNSC Resolution 2372 (2017), which was re-authorised by Resolution 2520 (2020), endorsed AMISOM to carry out the following priority tasks,³¹ 1. Reduce the threat posed by al Shabaab and other armed opposition groups; 2. Enable the gradual handing over security responsibilities from AMISOM to the SSF contingent on the SSF’s abilities and political and security progress in Somalia; 3. Provide security to enable the political process at all levels and stabilise efforts, reconciliation and peacebuilding in Somalia. By mid-2018, the Somali Transition Plan was endorsed and stipulated a phasing of AMISOM based on a transfer of security responsibility to SSF and institutions between 2018–2021.³² The reduction of AMISOM forces was intended to phase in and increase effective SNA as part of the broader SSF efforts. However, due to political disagreement between the FGS and FMSs, progress has been limited and AMISOM has been working in an ad hoc manner to accommodate a growing suite of demands.

While AMISOM has achieved success, more progress was observed under President Hassan Sheikh (2012–2017),³³ but setbacks between FGS and FMS under President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed “Faarmajo” have made the situation precarious for AMISOM. Under Faarmajo’s, security arrangements have been slow. The president has acted against stipulations in the Provisional

28 Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia*, p. 13.

29 African Union Mission in Somalia Strategic (AMISOM) *Concept of Operations (CONOPS) 2018–2021*, 2018, available at <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/the-827th-meeting-of-the-au-psc-on-the-consideration-and-adoption-of-the-concept-of-operations-conops-of-the-african-union-mission-in-somalia-amisom-for-2018–2021> (accessed on 12 June 2021).

30 Ibid.

31 African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), *AMISOM Mandate as per UNSC Resolution 2372(2017)*, 2017, available at <https://amisom-au.org/amisom-mandate/> (accessed on 10 June 2021).

32 Ibid.

33 Matt Bryden and Theodore Murphy, ‘Somalia’s election impasse: A crisis of state-building,’ *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 2021, available at <https://ecfr.eu/article/somalias-election-impasse-a-crisis-of-state-building/> (accessed on 12 April 2021).

Constitution, leading to fears from FMS of a return to Said Barre's regime and political turmoil that led to a crisis and the unconstitutional dismissal of a Somalia's Prime Ministers. Even though Somali politicians reached agreements on the National Security Architecture in 2017 for a military construction and reorganisation plan to reach the FGS and FMS.³⁴ Tensions have slowed AMISOM efforts, hindering operations against al Shabaab and extending the disconnect between the strategic goals of AMISOM and the AUs attempts to stabilise the country.

AMISOM accomplishments include facilitating a series of peaceful government transitions following national elections in 2012 and 2017, establishing elementary security structures, reducing al Shabaab's territorial control since 2010,³⁵ dislodging militants from key urban centres and reclaiming several strategic "bridge-towns" south of the capital in 2019 and 2020.³⁶ While AMISOM's performance appears to vary, assessments have continually shown that the benchmarks enumerated in the mission's mandate and exit plan—a sustainable political settlement, the degradation of al Shabaab, and a viable peace dividend for local populations—have been achieved.³⁷ Nevertheless, al Shabaab remains a robust force capable of "reinventing" itself to maintain relevance,³⁸ while groups like Islamic State are a thorn for Puntland's authorities. Despite the deaths of senior leaders and US drone strikes,³⁹ AMISOM's effort to clear zones in coordination with the SNA has not necessarily reduced the groups' movement across Lower and "Middle Juba, Lower and Middle Shabelle, Hiraan, Gedo, Bay and Bakool, Mudug, Galguddud and Puntland".⁴⁰ The group

34 United Kingdom Government, 'London Somalia Conference 2017: security pact', 2017, available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/london-somalia-conference-2017-security-pact> (accessed on 25 July 2021).

35 Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*.

36 Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/amisom-troops-and-somali-national-army-successfully-liberate-jannale-extremist-group> Relief Web, *AMISOM Troops and Somali National Army Successfully Liberate Jannale from the Extremist Group, Al-Shabaab*, 2020. (accessed 23 June 2021).

37 EPON, 'Assessing the Effectiveness of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)', 2018, available at <https://effectivepeaceops.net/publication/amisom/> (accessed on 25 July 2021).

38 Matt Bryden, 'The Reinvention of Al Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity?', *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 2014, available at <https://www.csis.org/analysis/reinvention-al-shabaab> (accessed on 12 May 2021).

39 Mary Jane Harper, *Everything You Have Told Me Is True, The Many Faces of Al Shabaab* (London: Hurst, 2019).

40 Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Developments in Somalia, Testimony to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development of the House of Commons*, Brookings Institute, 2018, available at <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/FAAE/Reports/RP10517514/faaerp25/faaerp25-e.pdf> (accessed on 12 May 2021).

has also increased the rhythm of its operations in Mogadishu and conducts terror attacks across regional capitals.⁴¹

It is argued that part of AMISOM weaknesses is due to the AU not receiving UN assessed contributions, enhancing the predictability and sustainability of AMISOM's financing. Even though the European Union (EU) supports the mission with financing, EU cuts have led to salaries drops of 20 per cent in 2016, resulting in threats to remove troops.⁴² While the cuts did not affect the entire Civilian Component like Senior Military Staff (Force Commander, two Deputy Force Commanders and Military Chief of Staff) and the Police Senior Leadership Team (SLT), it did impact on the salary to TCCs, Staff Officers, Formed Police Units (FPU) and Individual Police Officers (IPO). The sectoral approach used by AMISOM means the missions TCCs are lumbered with huge responsibilities and disproportionately low number of troops than in conventional UN peacekeeping operations, leaving AMISOM overstretched, exposed and without necessary equipment and means to completely defeat al Shabaab. This, in turn, can constrain troops to withdrawal from various settlements, creating local security vacuums, allowing al Shabaab to embed in communities that have already been liberated.⁴³ In addition, the lack of military enablers like aviation and logistical equipment hampers the missions force generation and operational command. Most of the enablers currently being utilised by AMISOM are from TCCs outside the AMISOM mandate. The use of these enablers falls in a grey area that is hard to distinguish and thus is applicable to the Ethiopian air assets and Kenyan air and naval assets.⁴⁴

The readiness of the national security sector described in a 2017 Operational Readiness Assessment (ORA) of the SNA identified a lack of consistent recruitment standards, essential equipment, logistics, a centralised control structure and morale.⁴⁵ The army's coverage was also limited geographically to Benadiir

41 International Crisis Group (ICG), *Blunting Al Shabaab's Impact on Somalia's Elections*. Briefing Number 165, 2020. available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/b165-blunting-al-shabaabs-impact-somalias-elections> (accessed on 12 May 2021).

42 International Crisis Group (ICG), 'How to Spend It: New EU Funding for African Peace and Security', Africa Report 297, 2021, available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/african-union-regional-bodies/297-how-spend-it-new-eu-funding-african-peace-and-security> (accessed on 12 May 2021).

43 EPON, 'Assessing the Effectiveness of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)', 2018, available at <https://effectivepeaceops.net/publication/amisom/> (accessed on 25 July 2021).

44 Available at <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/amisom-hard-earned-lessons-somalia/> Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 'AMISOM's Hard Earned Lesson in Somalia', 2018. (accessed on 1 July 2021).

45 Paul D. Williams, 'Building the Somali National Army: Anatomy of Failure, 2008–2018', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 43: 3, 2020, pp. 366–391.

and FGS satellite administrations in South-West State, Hirshabelle, Galmudug and Gedo.⁴⁶ Local units displayed little leadership, logistics and administrative support. While a lack of air and ground transportation and durable communication systems were absent and up to sixty per cent of army personnel lack “real military capacity”. The SNA is frequently described as more a conglomeration of local militias than a nationally inclusive body⁴⁷ and alongside manpower challenges, much of its weaponry is supplied by clans⁴⁸ creating a series of informal and dangerous dependencies, reinforcing the SNA as a partisan force. Finally, segregation remains common, and conditions of soldiers’ salaries and responsibilities is inept.

AMISOMS 2019 ORA, based on an exercise conducted in the FMS of Jubbaland, South West, Galmudug and Puntland between March 2018 and January 2019, found Galmudug had the highest number of regional fighters, followed by Jubbaland, Puntland, South West and HirShabelle. The ORA report concluded that most fighters have basic military training; however, they were poorly housed and lacked equipment and administrative structures. The assessment suggests that while regional forces have improved military capacity, the SSF is cosmetic in structure, hindering a transfer security arrangement and creating uncertainty over the mission’s departure from Somalia. Similarities can be drawn from other African states whose armies have adopted western military doctrine through colonialism, training assistance and interactions with PSOs or PKOs, but are not modified in conjunction with interwoven and emerging threats or non-state armed groups, which exposes rural communities to infiltration and indiscriminate violence between conflict parties.⁴⁹

Figures demonstrate that Somalia has received over \$1 billion in international financial assistance and military training since 2012; nonetheless, the FGS, and in some cases, the FMS depend on AMISOM to maintain some level of territorial control.⁵⁰ Somali’s institutional security structures are besieged

46 Aisha Ahmed, *Jihad and Co: Black Markets and Islamist Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

47 Felbab-Brown, ‘The Problem with Militias in Somalia’ in Adam Day, ed., *Hybrid Conflict, Hybrid Peace: How Militias and Paramilitary Groups Shape Post-Conflict Transitions*, available at <https://cpr.unu.edu/research/projects/hybrid-conflict.html#articles> (accessed on 23 June 2021).

48 Joanne Crouch, *Counter-Terror and the Logic of Violence in Somalia’s Civil War*.

49 Forthcoming Andrew E. Yaw Tchie, *Ghana’s Armed Forces and the Inadvertent Influence of Peacekeeping and Peace Support Operations*. 2021.

50 Felbab-Brown, ‘The Problem with Militias in Somalia, in Adam Day, ed., *Hybrid Conflict, Hybrid Peace: How Militias and Paramilitary Groups Shape Post-Conflict Transitions*, available at <https://cpr.unu.edu/research/projects/hybrid-conflict.html#articles> (accessed on 23 June 2021).

with interagency rivalries, disorganisation, under-resourced capacity, where the institutions function as commodities and an extension of people's interests underpinned by the threat of violence with shifting social and political processes.⁵¹ Despite this, the Somali Transition Plan has continued and included the gradual handover of critical assets and buildings like Mogadishu Stadium.⁵² In practice, the SNA is an immediate exigency of patch up work to ensure the military is sufficient for containing al Shabaab at a "tolerable level".⁵³ The divergence of training and the interests of foreign partners means that there is a lack of coordination, discrepancy in military doctrine and operational processes, which impact AMISOM's ability to depend on and transfer security arrangements. Fragmented configurations leave the SNA susceptible to foreign influence⁵⁴ and recent evidence from a UN investigation claims Somalia troops were involved in operations in Tigray.⁵⁵ While AMISOM has rolled out technical training schemes to SNA personnel, this training tends to be limited in scope and omits key inputs like "combat mentorship" and co-location.⁵⁶ The lack of a coherent national architecture or steps toward the London Agreement in 2017 means that AMISOM cannot meet its deadlines and handover responsibilities.⁵⁷ Even before the National Security Council's suspension, state institutions remained disconnected from their paternal institution(s) at the national level compared with informal paramilitaries preferred by FMS.

3 What Next for AMISOM

AMISOM is now at a crossroads where the SSF cannot deliver on force projection, intelligence and counterintelligence, preventing and countering IED, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting and the SNA's command and

51 Alice Hills, 'Security Sector or Security Arena? The Evidence from Somalia', *International Peacekeeping*, 21: 2, 2014, pp. 165–180.

52 EPON, 'Assessing the Effectiveness of the African Union Mission in Somalia'.

53 Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia*.

54 International Crisis Group, 'Somalia and the Gulf Crisis', Report No. 260, 2018, available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/260-somalia-and-gulf-crisis> (accessed on 11 June 2021).

55 Available at <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/the-americas/un-report-reveals-presence-of-somali-fighters-in-ethiopia-s-tigray-region-1.1237552> The National News, 'UN Report Reveals Presence of Somalia Fighters in Ethiopia's Tigray Region', 2021 (accessed on 28 June 2021).

56 EPON, 'Assessing the Effectiveness of the African Union Mission in Somalia'.

57 Alex De Waal, 'Somalia Synthesis Paper', Conflict Research Programme, London School of Economics, 2017, available at <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/100162/> (accessed on 10 March 2021).

communications and civil-military coordination, which are vital for a transfer of security from AMISOMs to SSF are weak. Thus, AMISOM should be restructured to reflect the conditions on the ground and help phase out the mission.⁵⁸ Consequently, the AU and UNSC have three options available ahead of AMISOM mandate termination, an UN-AU hybrid mission, an ad hoc security initiative (coalition of the willing) and a re-mandated and reinforced AMISOM. The following section outlines these options and discusses the benefits and limitations.

An UN-AU hybrid mission would involve bringing together AMISOM, UNSOM, UNSOS, and the UN country team under a unified structure and command, drawing on the advantages and resources from all organisations. An UN-AU would allow the mission to be centred as a multidimensional PKO, drawing on political, civilian and logistical expertise and humanitarian, development, and recovery experts, coordinated by a Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). This would help to facilitate humanitarian coordination, enhance AMISOM with additional and diverse TCCs and provide it with better civilian capacity outside of the capital through logistic bases. The other benefit of this option is the missions would have predictable funding through assessed contribution, which has been a constraint for AMISOM. AMISOM's current framework has left the mission dependent on various ad hoc arrangements, including AU states, UN trust funds, and direct donor contributions like the EU through the African Peace Facility (APF).⁵⁹ A hybrid mission would relieve the pressure on the EU and AU—redirecting peace funds elsewhere—and shortfalls would be the responsibility of the UN PKO with broader responsibilities under the UNSC. However, while the UN does well in implementing peace agreements and consolidating peace processes, it is not well suited for enforcement actions.⁶⁰ On the other hand, the AU has demonstrated that it can undertake stabilisation and counterterrorism operations; therefore, the UN and AU have reinforcing capabilities that serve as a basis for a strategic partnership that complement each effort.⁶¹ This option also means

58 See UN Security Council Resolution 2372 (2017), 2017, available at <https://amisom-au.org/amisom-mandate/>.

59 Available at <https://au.int/en/peace-fund> African Union, 'Peace Fund', 2018 (accessed on 2 July 2021).

60 Louis Riis Anderson, 'The HIPPO in the room: the pragmatic push-back from the UN peace bureaucracy against the militarisation of UN peacekeeping', *International Affairs* 94: 2, 2018, pp. 343–361.

61 Cedric De Coning, 'African and UN peace Operations: Implications for the Future Role of Regional Organisations', in: Cedric De Coning and Mateja Peter, eds., *United Nations Peace Operations in a Changing Global Order*. (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-99106-1_11.

that policing and justice activities could be done through one singular organisation once SSF has grappled with crucial hurdles. Finally, an UN-AU hybrid mission provides room for joint analysis, planning and simplified coordination with the government through the SSF, reducing overlap between the different organisations like AMISOM, UNSOM and UNSOS.

However, the pitfalls of this model for Somalia are that the UN peacekeeping is not “operationally, doctrinally or politically” ready to take on counterterrorism tasks, making up the bulk of AMISOM work.⁶² While AU and UN have complimenting abilities, reaching agreements, in practice, means learning lessons from Darfur and ironing out what each organisation strengthens and contributions beforehand. Lessons from the African Union-United Nations hybrid operation in Darfur found that the mission challenges included incoherency and contradictory objectives and a weak capacity to protect civilians and internally displaced persons. The mission lacked resources, had a flawed strategic vision, minimal space for the mission to play a direct political role in the peace process, and limited opportunities to craft a mission-wide political strategy.⁶³ While a hybrid mission would seek to remedy inadequacies, it could also create supplementary inefficiencies since the international focus, AU and UN’s attention from AMISOM to UN-AU would be focused on trying to establish this new mission, dealing with bureaucracy over who leads where and how and not on helping Somalia achieve self-sustainable stability. This shifts the focus away from Somalia to UN-AU disagreements, resulting in missed opportunities to support critical matters that play into the hand of al Shabaab, hindering wider development assistance, thus losing legitimacy in Somalis’ eyes. A hybrid mission would require similar assets to any standard UN PKO, which is unlikely given the decline in large scale UN PKOs.⁶⁴ Finally, the current dynamics between the UN and AU, which recently resulted in criticism from the A3—over the AU’s role, the mandate being given due regard and the delegation not

62 John Karlsrud, ‘Towards UN counterterrorism operations?’ *Third World Quarterly*, 38: 6, 2017, pp. 1215–1231; Arthur Boutellis and Naureen Chowdhury Fink, ‘Waging Peace: UN Peace Operations Confronting Terrorism and Violent Extremism’, *International Peace Institute*, 2016, available at <https://www.ipinst.org/2016/10/un-peaceops-confronting-terrorism-extremism> (accessed 12 March 2021).

63 EPON, ‘Assessing the Effectiveness of the United Nations-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)’, 2020, available at <https://effectivepeaceops.net/publication/unamid/> (accessed 17 March 2021).

64 Govinda Clayton, Han Dorussen, and Tobias Böhmelt, ‘United Nations Peace Initiatives 1946–2015: Introducing a New Dataset’, *International Interactions* 47: 1, 2020, pp. 161–180/ <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2020.1772254>.

being adequately consulted—would add another layer of complexity for both organisations.⁶⁵

An ad hoc security initiative (ASI)—identified as a “coalition of the willing” could fall under the auspices of AU PSC, IGAD or the Eastern African Standby Force (EASF). Coalition of the willing has been visible in West Africa as early as the 1980s. More recently, these have included Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin, MNJTF (2015—ongoing)⁶⁶ and the G5 Sahel Joint Force (Force conjointe du G5 Sahel—FC-G5S (2017-ongoing)).⁶⁷ ASIs are a collective of joint security arrangements by countries with a specific sub-region, national border, and a shared transnational threat, requiring collaborative and coordinated responses. The combined response and arrangements are coordinated and managed by a command structure or a joint secretariat with member states contributing troops.⁶⁸ ASIs allow flexibility to respond across state borders to pursue militia, armed groups, or insurgents deemed a threat. In some incidents, this has resulted in arrangements that allow one country’s security forces to cross over the border into a neighbouring territory to pursue the aggressors. While in other situations, states have formed a joint force, authorised to cross national boundaries. In each case, divisions of labour emerged based on the different actors’ needs and abilities and comparative advantages on the ground. The formation of an ASI falls under the AU’s collective security and is mandated by the AU PSC, which authorises the use of force.⁶⁹ Thus, ASIs allow for longer-term engagement in affected states by countries within a regional body.

Nevertheless, given that neighbouring countries like Ethiopia and Kenya are already deployed as part of and outside of AMISOM, an ASI will be challenging to get buy-in and could exacerbate existing regional dynamics. Kenya and Ethiopia troops under AMISOM have previously financially benefited from trade and exploited local resources.⁷⁰ The challenge of funding such

65 The United Nations, ‘Security Council Reauthorizes African Union Mission in Somalia, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2568’, 2021, available at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14467.doc.htm> (accessed on 28 June 2021).

66 African Union, *Multinational Joint Task Force*, 2021, available at <https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en/projects/multinational-joint-task-force-mnjtf-against-boko-haram> (accessed on 2 July 2021).

67 African Union, *G5 Sahel Joint Force*, 2021, available at <https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en/projects/eu-support-g5-sahel-joint-force> (accessed on 2 July 2021).

68 [Forthcoming De Coning, C, Tchie, Y.E.A; et al. ‘Ad Hoc Security Initiative, an African Response to Insecurity’] *Africa Security Review*, 2022.

69 The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (2000): Article 4(d); 2002: Article 3(e) and Article 7.

70 Katherine Petrich, ‘Cows, Charcoal, and Cocaine: Al-Shabaab’s Criminal Activities in the Horn of Africa’, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 2019. doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2019.1678873.

a force without guaranteed access to either UN funding or external support would be a problem. While the EU has supported AMISOM through the APF,⁷¹ its new funding model, the European Peace Facility (EPF),—€5 billion from 2021 to 2027—provides funding through two successor global funds: military and defence operations and development aid. If funding cannot be sourced from the EPF or alternative sustainable sources, then this option would need to be funded by nation-states. However, given the impact of COVID-19 on states economies in the region and the current recession, this option looks less likely. Funding was previously a problem for the proposed IGAD regional Peace Support Mission to Somalia, which later led to IGAD shelving its plans in 2005. The proposed mission aimed to “provide security support to the TFG and guarantee the sustenance of the IGAD peace process and assist with the re-establishment of peace and security, including training the police and the army”.⁷² The proposed IGAD Forces for Somalia (IGASOM) was approved by the Ministers of Defence to deploy up to 10,000 peacekeepers throughout Somalia—at US\$413 million per annum.⁷³ IGASOM was not deployed because IGAD member states like Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda supported the mission, but Djibouti, Eritrea, and Sudan showed strong reservations. The proposal also lacked financial support from backers like the US.

The final option well situated for Somalia’s current situation is a re-mandated and reinforced AMISOM. This would give AMISOM a chance to adopt a new CONOPS and planning elements (PLANELMS), enabling additional TCCS and the broader mission to modify and adjust to evolving threats with joint SSF input, creating greater training and cohesion for the SSFs. This option would afford AMISOM time to transfer proven qualities and skills in counterterrorism and enforcement operations in urban areas to the SSFs. Across the humanitarian, development, and reconstruction sectors, the UN and AMISOM (specifically the AU) would continue to carry out humanitarian and civil-military

71 From 2007 to 2019, more than €1.94 billion in APF funding was channelled through the AU into just one operation, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the majority covered troop stipends. ‘African Peace Facility, Annual Report 2019’.

72 Available at <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/communiqu%C3%Ag-issued-extra-ordinary-summit-igad-heads-state-and-government-somalia> Heads of State and Government of Member States of *The Intergovernmental Authority on Development* (IGAD) communiqué (2006) (accessed on 10 July 2021).

73 Terry Mays, ‘The African Union’s African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM): Why Did It Successfully Deploy Following the Failure of IGASOM?’ Presented in partial completion of the requirement of the Certificate of training in United Nations Peace Support Operation, 2005, available at <https://cdn.peaceopstraining.org/theses/mays.pdf> (accessed on 19 February 2021).

operations and build on partnerships and existing relationships in the country developed over the last 13 years.

While some have suggested that a new African mission is needed under this option,⁷⁴ the author diverts from this view for three reasons. First, rebranding a mission is challenging, and civilians often struggle to understand the difference if this is not adequately political communicated. In the past, AMISOM has struggled to get its strategic communication to the Somali people correct, creating further tensions between the mission and those it serves.⁷⁵ Communicating a clear strategy is also proving to be a hurdle in an era of disinformation, especially for PKOs and PSOs. It is not clear how a new African mission would be fair when communicating its objectives and presence to locals outside Mogadishu. Secondly, as highlighted from the hypothesised UN-AU hybrid mission, a new African support mission could result in delays, bureaucracy and years of convincing existing institutions, civil society groups, locals and state institutions of the difference between old AMISOM and the new African Support Mission.⁷⁶ Thirdly, while AMISOM is primarily a military mission, overstrained by those core military tasks, its long-established joint UN humanitarian activities would need to be agreed upon and adopted within a new mission.⁷⁷

However, a re-mandated and reinforced AMISOM mandated would need to focus on politically and military tracks. Politically, AMISOM, through the AU PSC, would need to step up its electoral support, assistance towards the implementation of the various agreements embedded in the Provisional Constitution and London agreement. This requires continued mediation and facilitated dialogue from the AU and IGAD between the FGS and FMS, through a legitimate and accepted AU special envoy. The National Security Architecture (unimplemented for four years); and the long-term negotiations to be handled by the Federalisation Negotiation Technical Committee would need more

74 The United Nations Security Council, 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution', 2021, available at <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/S/2021/243>. (accessed on 3 July 2021).

75 Paul D. Williams, 'Strategic Communications for Peace Operations: The African Union's Information War Against al-Shabaab', *Stability* 7:1, 2018, p. 3. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/sta.606>.

76 Mark Malan and Charles T. Hunt, 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place, The UN and the Protection of Civilians in South Sudan' Institute for Security Studies. ISS Paper 275, 2014, available at <https://media.africaportal.org/documents/Paper275.pdf> (accessed on 28 June 2021).

77 United Nations Secretariat, 'United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines', 2008, available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/principles-of-peacekeeping> (accessed on 28 June 2021).

significant input from the AU. It would also require coordinated, joint support and political buy-in from the AU, IGAD, and UN to facilitate negotiations on pressing matters.

AMISOM under this option would require enablers like military logisticians, medical staff, explosive ordnance disposal, level II hospitals, explosive threat management and intelligence capability.⁷⁸ An increase in force aircraft(s) would be required to help clear paths for forces.⁷⁹ In the short to medium term, further troop support would be needed as AMISOM is currently reliant on SNA to make up the numbers, and the SNA struggles with political divisions, making them difficult to rely on, especially in response to emergencies.⁸⁰ Operations would need to be led by a Head of Mission, and an AMISOM force commander would need to be given operational control of TCCs, with a loop back to the SSF, a striking force and a mandate to seize new objectives and fill major security gaps. From a doctrine perspective, AMISOM would need to align SNA and the broader SSF with AMISOM TCCs. While some work in this area has been done, current doctrines do not align, and the SNA has not been able to learn from AMISOM doctrinal experience. The mission would also need to receive predictable financial arrangements and a continuation of assistance into the AMISOM's trust fund. Support for this could be done through UN support assistance via UNSOS, EU support via EDF and other willing donors. TCCs stipends would need to be aligned to current UN figures as this has been lacking and can impact troops in sustained counterterrorism operations. Finally, AMISOM and international partners support for the SNA and broader SSFs must be reconfigured and synched to avoid mismatch in troop, doctrine and operational configuration.

The most vital military enhancement would be a more effective SSF which depends on developing the political will of Somali leaders to work together against al Shabaab rather than persistent conflict. However, an over-focus on destroying the enemy can be counterproductive. Thus, a renewed focus on analysing al Shabaab's grievances, weaknesses—highlighted in the Joint Threat Assessment—and strengths as part of a broader stabilisation focus must be explored.⁸¹

78 Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia, S/2012/74, paragraphs 33–36.

79 Jake Sherman, Alischa Kugel, and Andrew Sinclair, 'Overcoming Helicopter Force Generation Challenges for UN Peacekeeping Operations', *International Peacekeeping* 19: 1, 2012, pp. 77–92.

80 Williams, *Fighting for Peace in Somalia*, pp. 140–145.

81 The United Nations Security Council, 'Resolution 2520 (2020)', 2020, available at [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_RES_2520\(2020\)%620amisom.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_RES_2520(2020)%620amisom.pdf) (assessed on 26 July 2021).

The idea that AMISOM could play a stabilisation role gained traction with the UN, and in September 2011, the UNSC welcomed the improvement of security in Mogadishu and requested AMISOM to work with the Transitional Federal Institutions of Somalia to develop a stabilisation plan for the capital city.⁸² However, the mission did not develop a definition until 2013, at which point stabilisation was defined as:

“any post conflict or combat activities undertaken in order to facilitate and promote early recovery of the population and institutions in a locality that has been recovered from Al Shabaab”.⁸³

In 2014, the FGS, in anticipation of an expansion in operations, developed a stabilisation plan before the start of Operation Eagle.⁸⁴ The stabilisation plan was intended to be coordinated by Somalia’s Ministry of the Interior and Federal Affairs but did not factor in military operations, resulting in efforts being conducted in isolation from stabilisation planning.⁸⁵

Even though AU has no official doctrine on stabilisation operations or strategy, the current doctrine for peace support operations is yet to account for this concept. The guiding principle of the African Standby Force is focused on multidimensional peacekeeping and humanitarian military intervention⁸⁶ and does not include concepts like ASIs, stabilisation operations or more comprehensive stabilisation strategies. While some aspects of the AU’s policy focus on state-building and broad concepts of stabilisation, the AU’s interventions primarily focus on stabilising regimes. This hinders the AU from consistently taking up a more comprehensive and cohesive stabilisation strategy needed for Somalia. Some scholars argue for a narrow approach that focuses on stabilising state authority, while others back a broad approach to stabilisation operations focused on a comprehensive approach.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, emerging blended stabilisation:

82 The United Nations Security Council, ‘Resolution 2073’, November 7, 2012, UN Doc. S/RES/2073.

83 African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), ‘Provisional Guidelines on Stabilisation Activities’, AMISOM internal document. 2013.

84 Federal Government of Somalia, *Stabilization Project Strategy*, version 30, August 2014.

85 African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), ‘Operation Eagle after Action Review Workshop: Stabilisation of Recovered Areas’, Gender and Human Rights. Report of Working Group 4, 2014.

86 Linda Darkwa, ‘The African Standby Force: The African Union’s Tool for the Maintenance of Peace and Security’, *Contemporary Security Policy* 38: 3, 2017, pp. 471–482.

87 Philipp Rotmann, ‘Toward a Realistic and Responsible Idea of Stabilisation’, *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 5: 1, 2016, p. 5; Cedric De Coning, ‘A Unique Model of African Peace Operations’, *Global Peace Operations Review*, Feb 2016,

“response(s) that combine the predominance and sometimes necessary means of hard-security interventions and soft-security measures associated with political and development responses”, could lend support to renewed efforts in Somalia.⁸⁸

Therefore, a re-mandated and reinforced AMISOM’s can only accomplish success unless it hinges on a cohesive stabilisation strategy that tackles disconnects between political pathways outside of its immediate control. This requires an approach that takes steps towards achieving the London agreement, the 2018 Somali Transition Plan, supporting reforming federal structures that remain Mogadishu-centric to focusing on increasing the capacity of local mechanisms that support the needs of communities. While the AU is yet to outline a stabilisation strategy for the continent, a stabilisation strategy for Somalia can draw on lessons from the AU’s Regional Stabilisation Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin which will be addressed in the next section.

4 Lessons from the Lake Chad Basin Regional Stabilisation Strategy

The Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC)—established in 1964 by the three countries sharing the Lake Chad Basin (LCB),⁸⁹ adopted the Regional Stabilisation Strategy for the Stabilisation, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin (RSS). Developed with the support of the AUC, the RSS seeks to generate policies and programmes geared towards the short, medium and long-term stabilisation and development of the LCB region; to anchor on commonalities while considering the peculiarities of each of the concerned states in the region, and to address the root causes of the crisis to enhance resilience. The RSS provides a common framework for addressing complex and urgent challenges, recognising the

available at [http:// peaceoperationsreview.org/interviews/cedric-de-coning-a-unique-model-of-african-peaceoperations](http://peaceoperationsreview.org/interviews/cedric-de-coning-a-unique-model-of-african-peaceoperations) (accessed on 3 June 2021); Solomon A. Dersso, ‘Stabilisation Missions and Mandates in African Peace Operations: Implications for the ASF’, In Cedric de Coning, Linnéa Gelot and John Karlsrud, eds., ‘The Future of African Peace Operations: From the Janjaweed to Boko Haram’ (London: Zed Books. 2016), pp. 38–51; Walter Lotze and Paul D. William, ‘The Surge to Stabilise: Lessons for the UN from the AU’s Experience in Somalia’, *International Peace Institute*, 2016.

88 Jide Okeke, ‘Blended Stabilisation? Experiences from the Lake Chad Basin region’, *The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)*, 2020, available at <https://www.accord.org.za/analysis/blended-stabilisation-experiences-from-the-lake-chad-basin-region/> (accessed on 20 December 2020).

89 Available at <https://cblt.org/about-us/>. See Lake Chad Basin Commission website, 2021 (accessed on 3 June 2021).

need for a comprehensive, multi-sectoral and coordinated set of national and cross-border efforts. The strategy has nine pillars of intervention and forty strategic objectives focused on political cooperation; security and human rights; disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation, reinsertion and reintegration of persons associated with Boko Haram; humanitarian assistance; governance and the social contract; socio-economic recovery and environmental sustainability; education, learning and skills; prevention of violent extremism and building peace; and empowerment and inclusion of women and youth.⁹⁰

Support for the RSS is provided to the LCBC to strengthen the political and technical relationship in partnership with the AU, The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Regional Coordinator Offices (RC) and UN agencies. Alongside the RSS is the MNJTF, which was authorised in 2015 by the AU PSC against Boko Haram. The RSS allows for an integrated regional approach which has created a political platform for civil-military cooperation formally recognised through the Governors' Forum. It brings together governors from the eight affected territories of the LCB, together with the MNJTF, LCBC, AU and other international partners, who coordinate and jointly examine progress and steps to achieve broader stabilisation initiatives. Part of the strategy has led to forming an RSS Task Force that coordinates local, national, regional and international stakeholders to enhance synergy, coordination, and joint support for the nine RSS pillars. The RSS secretariat ensures regional political buy-in and coherence on policy and interventions, supporting alignment between military operations, political and development tracks. This has led donors to synchronise support for developing a national framework for demobilisation, deradicalization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR) and funded local-level reintegration initiatives and helped restore basic infrastructure and services. The RSS draws its success—political and developmental—from focused assistances targeted at vulnerable communities. Support is designed to improve community safety and security and deliver essential infrastructure and basic services in recovered territories. This means the RSS can evolve from stop-gap humanitarian assistance to longer-term development and resilience of communities.

Notwithstanding the RSS success, it has challenges, including initial set-up and delays in addressing political, financial, and logistical tasks when establishing a multinational institution. While regional cooperation is working, there

90 Available at <http://www.cblt.org/en/news/regional-stabilization-strategy> 'Regional Strategy for the Stabilisation, Recovery & Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas of the Lake Chad Basin Region', Lake Chad Basin Commission and African Union Commission, 2018 (accessed on 23 June 2021).

is still limited political support and reduced national political investment.⁹¹ While the MNJTF has previously done well to capture areas from Boko Haram; there remains a governance and leadership vacuum in towns retaken. In addition, converting military gains into effective and sustainable governance structures is a challenge in some areas but not all. Although there have been renewed political engagements by impacted states, accelerating financing that prioritises the systemic causes of the conflict in the region over the predominance of short-term approaches still needs greater input. The public accounting authorities audit underlines how the limited national political investment has not converted into actions devised from the LCBC. Expanding the LCBC ambitions in policy fields beyond its original focus of water management has meant the LCBC has expanded its policy strategies in the sphere of peace and security but has been overstretched and depleted the core focus of joint water management in the Lake Chad. This has meant the institutional framework for water management are often incomplete with poor coordination of activities on water management in each member state—strategies embedded in law, action plans, performance indicators, and timelines—not always met. Despite these challenges, there are lessons from the RSS that can be adopted for a stabilisation strategy for Somalia, which is developed in the next section.

Moving towards a stabilisation strategy for Somalia requires the AU PSC to adopt a strategy that brings together the views of local communities, traditional stakeholders, FGS and FMS. This section outlines six core pillars that should be part of an AU cohesive stabilisation strategy for Somalia.

The first pillar of a stabilisation strategy for Somalia should include priorities engagement, consultation and coordination with FGS, FMG, IGAD and the wider UN family. Specifically, IGAD has decades of experience operating in the Horn and should be better utilised due to its practical capacities, which is necessary for pursuing political settlement and lasting peace. Part of a stabilisation strategy for Somalia should focus on the AU and IGAD convening and mediating between Somali stakeholders, especially the FGS, FMS, civil society organisation (CSO), elders and religious groups and mobilising greater international support towards supporting community dialogue and governance in the rural areas where the presence of the state is missing. This focus should also aim to forge stronger linkages between the AU, IGAD and UNISOM to supplement contextual knowledge with technical expertise, which can support the FMS and their assistance to communities in both rural and urban areas. This pillar of work would also need to focus on creating synergy between all actors

91 Public accounting authorities audit.

coordinated by a joint national secretariat that helps create cooperation, joint response(s), analysis and sustained efforts that Somalis can own.

The second pillar of a stabilisation strategy for Somalia should work in conjunction with AMISOM, SSF, and other militarily segments to help boost the missions' capabilities to better secure and supply reclaimed territory. TCCs should have the legal authority necessary to exercise preventive force to protect civilians in zones. More force enablers, equipment, aerial assets and a 'Quick Reaction Forces' under AMISOM like UN troops deployed in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic is needed. The mission would require specific intelligence-led units to work with trusted SSF units and local agile forces with rapid mobility and counterterrorism experience to battle al Shabaab in captured and recaptured areas. UNOA support needs to be made proportionate to AMISOM—decreasing the delay between mission expansion and logistical infrastructure. This requires a comprehensive political-strategic approach capable of translating the temporary safety provided by military force into lasting stability. It would also require AMISOM to increase assistance to the Somali Police Force (SPF), who can help to provide a mixture of regional and local security in combination with the local community security as observed in Puntland and Somaliland.

To secure longer-term strategic reconfiguration, re-enforcement and mitigate AMISOM's dependency on regional TCCs, debates over-assessed contribution would provide AMISOM with reliable funding streams and allow the mission to review both the composition and oversight of TCCs and, where possible, assemble troops from other member states. Greater political flexibility and investment across AMISOM's civilian capabilities in conjunction with UNISOM programmes would help to strengthen strategic and operational coordination and maximise comparative advantages between the organisations. A stabilisation strategy should focus on improving its impact on the levels of conventional and human security experiences through recipient communities by ensuring flexible plans are in place to accommodate locally led demands and administrative leadership once clearance sweeps are finished. To improve the current lack of military-civilian coordination, empowering the broader FMS, AMISOM, IGAD and UN to continue to support credible elections, better governance in cleared areas, and joint engagement would help communities.

The third pillar should focus on security provision, prioritising a people-centric approach that moves beyond just national governance structures to implementing local justice and developmental needs necessary for mobilising some semblance of local support, particularly in areas recovered from al Shabaab. Efforts should align to focusing on building the SPF who can help to normalise law enforcement that becomes a common fixture of the community.

One way to achieve this would be to allow AMISOM's training to be synched with community-designed solutions that offer provisional security systems to support the emergence of locally SPF and building feedback circles to the community and drawing lessons from the LCBC and everyday contextual realities. For example, temporary civilian-driven initiatives such as the Waberi neighbourhood watch scheme, which involve voluntary committees, could be trialled and encouraged into pilot projects to improve residential safety and promote development.⁹² The model is replicable and could be bolstered by performance-based practical training and discussion sessions, creating a feasible, low-cost, politically and locally acceptable framework.⁹³ While concerns are often raised over local policing initiatives and clan-based influence, drawing on community policing cases where young volunteers accompanied SPF patrols on checkpoints can also help improve daily interactions between youth and the state. However, funds must be attached with active supervision via AMISOM trainers, ensuring operations meet local needs and subscribe to a people-centric strategy that delivers some degree of certainty for recipient communities.

As observed from the LCBA experience, DDR will be required to avoid spoilers—not just Shabaab defectors—in the short term and appease stakeholders unwilling to integrate into formal stabilisation efforts. This is crucial because locally designed infrastructure helps create legitimacy, public support and contextual relevance than outside imposed solutions, which allow good technical practices in policing to be filtered and reinterpreted through a Somali lens to increase sustainability. Efforts should be made to avoid Western policing approaches that are neither sensitive nor appropriate to the Somali setting and often collapse as soon as funding ends. Crucial to locally efforts is the need to prioritise effectiveness and ability over formality by underscoring the value of strengthening the force's ability to capture and hold territory irrespective of their genealogy or inclusion London Agreement.

The fourth pillar of a stabilisation strategy for Somalia should focus on exploiting lessons on engaging and compromising with al Shabaab from other contexts across the LCB. Here shared lessons from across conflict zones such as Mali and the broader Sahel have argued that talks can help move things forward.⁹⁴ Although al Shabaab has consistently refused to negotiate with the FGS, mapping key entry points and preferences—information that

92 Alice Hills, *Making Mogadishu Safe, Localisation, Policing and Sustainable Security* (London: Routledge, 2018).

93 Ibid.

94 Alex Thurston, *Jihadists of North Africa and the Sahel: Local Politics and Rebel Groups*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

requires continual monitoring and updating as indicated in the Joint Threat Assessment—cannot be understated in future dialogue with al Shabaab and other jihadist groups. Localised agreements between Shabaab and specific clans or FMSs should be permitted. This approach should be used in conjunction with local leverage to maximise engagement with al Shabaab and jihadist militias. However, they risk being disrupted or undermined by Mogadishu if the FGS is not a party to negotiations. Thus, FMS, local communities, IGAD, UN, FGS, international stakeholders facilitated by the AU should support these efforts.

The Fifth pillar should include strategies to bridge historical gaps between TCCs and development actors beyond just humanitarian responses to more traditional stakeholders that have either been unable or reluctant to collaborate with AMISOM. This boost could bring immediate benefits given local activists, CSOs and elders often have ties to critical communities living in territory under al Shabaab's control, allowing them to identify relevant social dynamics and support SSF units. Winning communities' trust through community speakers increases the relevance of relief efforts—transforming substitute measures led by AMISOM into more durable forms of Somali-owned peacebuilding efforts. The involvement of elders and traditional authorities are essential in this context, lending greater credibility and receptiveness. This allows pre-existing systems to be utilised and provides a way for securing grassroots buy-in, which is more acceptable than dominance from Mogadishu. This will require both AMISOM and UNSOM through the proposed stabilisation strategy to structure operations in a way that encourages more people-centred participation.

The sixth pillar should include building capacity through training to diverse stakeholders, including youth, women, clan elders, and practitioners, helping to mitigate deficiencies in the current system and provide a diverse set of actors with tools to complement local, traditional, formal and state-oriented processes. The AU can begin to map community-led initiatives to understand what resources are available, who the key stakeholders are, what gaps exist and remain, the roles they play, what support these actors need to help restore the Somali state. Such an effort can draw on AMISOM for logistics and infrastructure and access to rural and marginalised communities. This would build AMISOM's civil capabilities and create better buy-in for a wider AU stabilisation strategy, helping to sustain and transfer this stabilisation strategy to civilians.

5 Conclusion

AMISOM was set up as an under-resourced and a military mission and not a multidimensional PKO, resulting in temporary fixes, which try to create long-term

social and institutional infrastructure conducive to peacemaking. This means AMISOM will always struggle to focus on building resilient communities through a people-centred systems. In addition, the current misalignment of security, political, civilian, and humanitarian activities create a lack of synergy across the AU, UN, IGAD and international partners, which hampers AMISOM's efforts to provide coherent support to Somalia. As AMISOM tries to engage at the local level without the necessary linkages to the regional and federal political processes; reclaimed areas from al Shabaab will continue to experience a resurgence in disputes and weak governance structures if broader efforts do not address conflicts and better attempt to stabilise the country. The African Union Peace and Security Council needs to re-mandate and reinforce AMISOM in conjunction with an AU stabilisation strategy for Somalia. An AU stabilisation strategy for Somalia should combine AU efforts, those of the regional economic body and international partners; working towards a cohesive but agile people-centred approach.

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