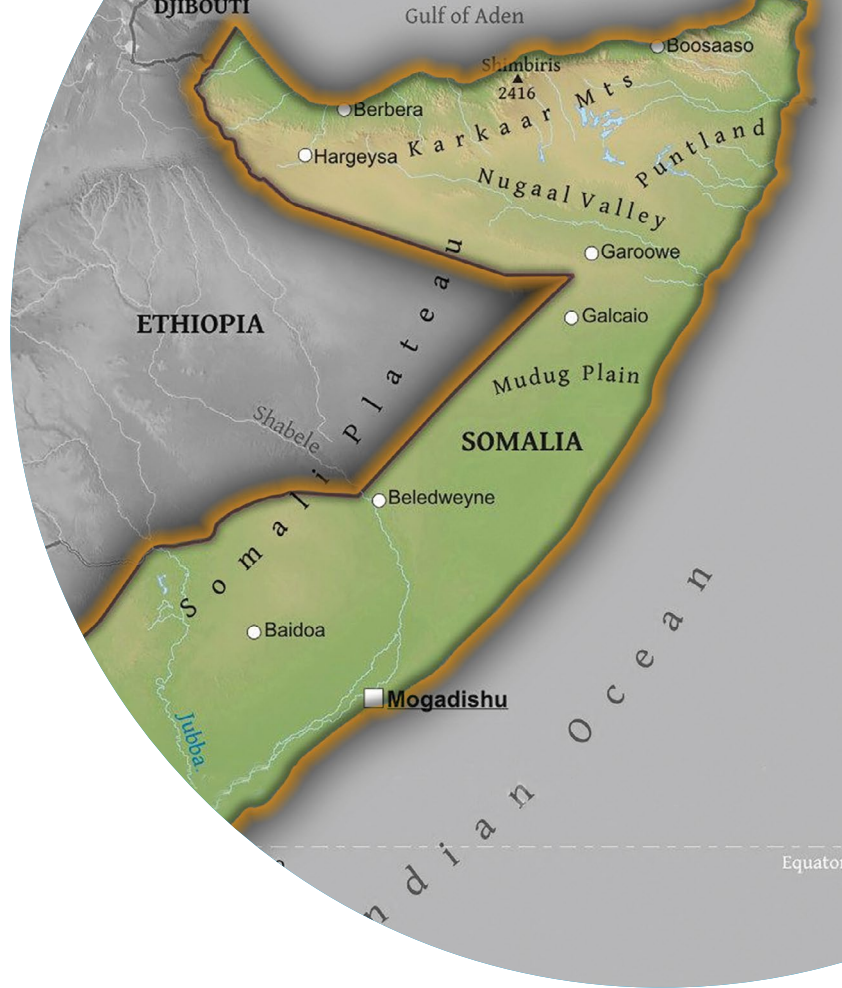




Celebrating 25 years of the Training for Peace programme



From AMISOM to ATMIS

Critical lessons for optimising the transition mission

Adebayo Kareem

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Summary

When the African Union Peace and Security Council and the United Nations Security Council mandated and authorised the African Union Mission in Somalia in 2007, the mission’s main tasks were to recover most of the country from Al-Shabab’s stranglehold, to support the then Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in its efforts to stabilise the country, to foster political dialogue and reconciliation, and to create an enabling environment for Somalia’s long-term stabilisation, reconstruction, and development.

The African Union Mission in Somalia and the African Union essentially completed their designated objectives over the course of 15 years, with the assistance of the United Nations, the European Union, the Somali government, and the Somali people. Despite the tremendous efforts by the Mission, it faced some insurmountable challenges that should not be passed on to the successor operation, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia. The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, as a transition mission with definite departure dates from Somalia, should receive more substantial, consistent, and long-term financial and logistical assistance to carry out its responsibilities.

Key findings

- Resolving complex conflict requires a comprehensive approach where various peace-building activities simultaneously accompany the kinetic activities of the military for more sustainable and enduring peace and stability.
- The African Union, working with its Troop/Police Contributing Countries in Somalia, has demonstrated the political will to deploy multi-dimensional and multi-functional personnel and stay the course in a theatre of high-risk asymmetric conflicts where significant casualties and fatalities are inevitable.
- Compliance with applicable International Humanitarian Law, International Human Rights Law and the highest standard of Conduct & Discipline is a force enabler and multiplier that aids the Mission in achieving its mandated tasks.
- Although there were some teething challenges, the logistical support packages offered to the African Union Mission in Somalia by the United Nations Support Office in Somalia were critical to the Mission achieving its mandates.

Recommendations

- Successful implementation of the concept of operations for the African Union Transition Mission and mandated tasks requires an enhanced and predictable logistical support package for the Mission and the Somalia Security Forces. The United Nations Support Office in Somalia should enhance the Mission's logistical support packages, decentralise its logistics bases, and make them as close to the Forward Operating Bases as possible. Logistical support to the Somalia Security Forces must also be predictable and adequate.
- There is a need for enhanced coordination between the leadership of the African Union Transition Mission and the Somalia Security Forces. As a terminal transition mission, the African Union Transition Mission is configured to provide operational support to the Somalia Security Forces. This requires coordination and alignment of planning and execution, and matters pertaining to the conduct of military operations, closure of Forward Operating Bases, reduction of troop numbers etc., must be mutually taken at the highest level of mission leadership and the military and political leadership in Somalia. The Mission must be provided with requisite force enablers and multipliers to support the Somalia Security Forces.
- The AU must begin to conceive a political presence in Somalia post the current Mission to safeguard its legacy and preserve its critical contributions to Somalia. Such a political mission should be adequately resourced to meaningfully implement some of the key pillars of the African Union Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development policy, including Political Governance and Transition, Socio-Economic Reconstruction and Development, and Gender and Women, amongst others.

Lesson 1: Consolidating gains, improving on gaps

The conflict in Somalia has been going on for more than three decades, and thousands of civilians, including many young Africans serving under AMISOM, have lost their lives. While this does not merit congratulatory back-patting, the African Union (AU) should be proud of its deployment in Somalia. Broadly put, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) succeeded in fulfilling the mandate that the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) gave it in 2007.

As has been the case with other long-standing peace support operations (PSOs), the mission's mandate evolved significantly over its 15 years of existence. Yet certain fundamental facets of the mission mandate can be identified across all major AU PSC Communiqués and UNSC Resolutions that pertained to AMISOM. These are found in Paragraph 8 of the mission's inaugural mandate¹, which stated that AMISOM shall:

... (i) provide support to the TFIs [transitional federal institutions] in their efforts towards the stabilization 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 stabilization, reconstruction, and development in Somalia.

Based on the above parameters, it is difficult to contradict the assertion that the mission had achieved its mandates. When AMISOM was first deployed in 2007, the terrorist group, Al-Shabaab (AS), controlled virtually all of south-central Somalia. By the time the mission had ended, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) – with the support of AMISOM troops – had regained control of most AS areas. This occurred through a series of operations, including Operation Mogadishu (2010), Operation Panua Eneo (2011), Operation Eagles (March 2014), Operation Indian Ocean (November 2014), Operation Ocean Build (Nov 2014–July 2015), Operation Juba Corridor (July 2015) and Operation Badbaado (2018–2019). These operations led to the recovery of significant towns and cities, including, Mogadishu, Afgoye, Marka, Barawe, Beletweyne, Kismayo, Baidoa and Doble.

When AMISOM was first deployed in 2007, the terrorist group, Al-Shabaab (AS), controlled virtually all of south-central Somalia.

In terms of enhancing local governance, AMISOM supported the consolidation of federal institutions in the country. From 2015 to 2017, a state-building process took place, which culminated in the creation of five regional administrations. With respect to economic transformation, improved security enabled the FGS to stimulate both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. This spurred many members of the Somali diaspora to return to the country, which in turn improved the local employment context – even if challenges remain. One effect, for example, was that the World Bank restored the country’s access to regular concessional financing under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative in 2020.

With respect to economic transformation, improved security enabled the FGS to stimulate both the formal and informal sectors of the economy.

In terms of political and electoral development, three cycles of general elections have occurred in the country over the last 10 years. These processes culminated in the election of presidents in 2012, 2017 and 2022. There has also been some progress in advancing cultural, gender and human rights in the country, although many challenges persist.



Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed
2004-2008

Sharif Sheikh Ahmed
2009-2012

Hassan Sheikh Mohamud
2012-2017

Mohamed Abdullah Farmaajo
Current President

The last four leaders of Somalia. AMISOM contributed significantly to the electoral process that resulted in the election of former presidents Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Mohamed Abdullah Farmaajo.

Despite the abovementioned achievements, AMISOM experienced many challenges. These hindered AMISOM activities and should not be passed on to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). The key challenges are described below.

Force generation

At its inception, the AU and United Nations (UN) both envisioned that AMISOM would only last six months, after which it would become a UN mission. This did not take place, as ongoing volatility in Somalia made it unfeasible to transform AMISOM into a UN mission unfeasible. In 2018, the UNSC decided that instead of AMISOM making way for a UN mission, AMISOM would transfer security responsibilities to the Somali Security Forces (SSF).

To achieve this, the Somali National Army (SNA) had to be recapacitated to become more professional, acceptable to all Somalis, and affordable. The AMISOM 2018 concept of operations (CONOPS)² was predicated on the assumption that as AMISOM troops recovered territories from AS, a commensurate SNA presence would be able to retain control and allow AMISOM to engage in other recovery operations. This did not fully happen. The 2017 Somalia Pact³ was signed by the leaders of the FGS and Federal Member States (FMS), and envisaged a revitalised SNA in which ‘... existing regional forces will become part of SNA or be part of State Police’. This never fully materialised either. Without nationally acceptable and professional SNA members in place, the intended transfer of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the SNA in 2021, as outlined in the 2018 CONOPS, could not occur. It is therefore critical for ATMIS to sufficiently address the issue of force generation. The ATMIS 2022 CONOPs identifies the following key assumptions:⁴

... SSF will generate the appropriate force of personnel in each phase to fill the gap created by the downsizing of ATMIS troops...

and

The SSF, will increase in strength and capability across ATMIS AoRs, over the next thirty-three months to levels adequate for ATMIS to enable drawdown, hand over and exit...

The success of ATMIS, as a transition mission, thus relies on the capacity and capability of the FGS to ensure that the SNA is sufficiently trained and resourced to take over from ATMIS forces.

As Al-Shabaab evolves, ATMIS must also adapt

Since 2014, when AMISOM intensified a series of offensive operations against AS, the terrorist group has reinvented itself to become a mobile insurgency outfit. The group showed little appetite to directly confront AMISOM troops. According to the threat assessment carried out shortly before ATMIS was deployed:⁵

The tactical modus operandi of AS is increasingly to avoid force-on-force combat in favour of complex attacks (often employing a combination of improvised explosive devices [IEDs] and ground assault forces), small-scale raids, ambushes and close-quarter assassinations against government personnel and other individuals challenging their authority. The group continues to rely on asymmetrical warfare tactics. The group mainly operates in small units that conduct raids and IED attacks to reinforce ambushes along Main Supply Routes (MSRs). Additionally, the group carries out complex attacks on both soft and hard targets using Vehicle Borne IEDs (VBIEDs)...

To counter this trend, ATMIS should prioritise the following tactics:

Enhanced force enablers and multipliers

ATMIS is intended to be a nimble and mobile force. As such, it is required to have all necessary enablers and multipliers to carry out its mandates. From time to time, the mission's limited surveillance capability is able to identify AS movements. An appropriate response would require sufficient helicopters with precision attack capabilities. To improve on AMISOM in this regard, ATMIS must be equipped with:

- Sufficient air assets (both attack and utility aircraft), with night vision capability; and
- Sufficient intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, with mission-wide reach, together with armed tactical unmanned aerial vehicles ('drones').

With more sophisticated ISR capabilities and attack helicopters that would enable precision engagement, ATMIS would stand a better chance of fulfilling its mandate.

Improved detection of improvised explosive devices

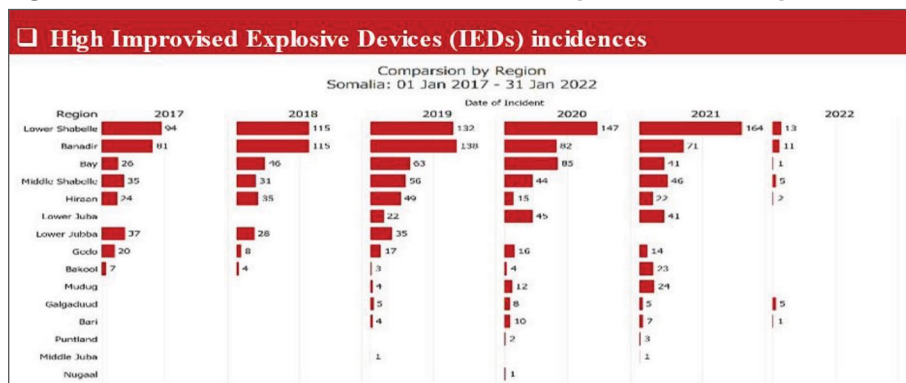
Improvised explosive devices have become a weapon of choice for AS in Somalia. Some of the deadliest attacks perpetrated by AS on the people of Somalia, SSF and AMISOM troops have been with the use of IEDs. Even complex attacks against AMISOM and SNA locations were usually preceded by vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) attacks.

In addition to human fatalities, remote-controlled IEDs (RC-IED) planted on the main supply routes (MSR) drastically diminished key AMISOM enablers. AMISOM armoured personnel carriers (APCs) and other vehicles used to transport troops and supplies were damaged and destroyed

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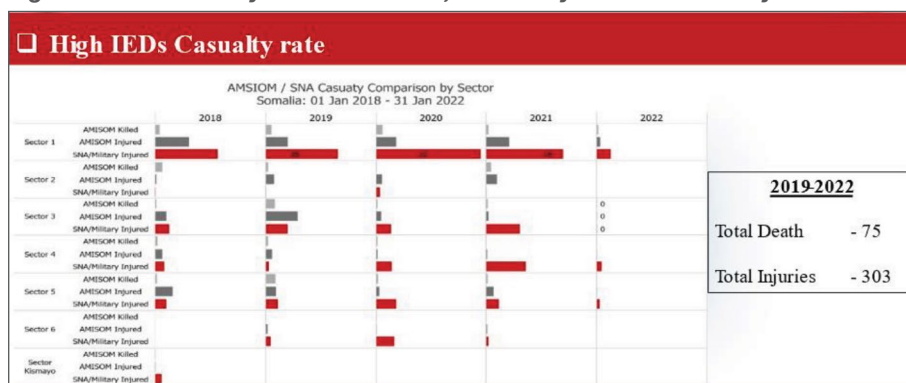
with alarming frequency during the last few years of the mission. This further reduced the mobile capabilities of a mission that already lacked sufficient equipment. It is critical, therefore, that both the ATMIS forces and the SSF must improve on their technical understanding of IED detection. This requires even greater cooperation and coordination with UN Mines Action Service (UNMAS) for enhanced Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) capabilities.

Figure 1: Incidences of IEDs in Somalia, 1 January 2017–31 January 2022



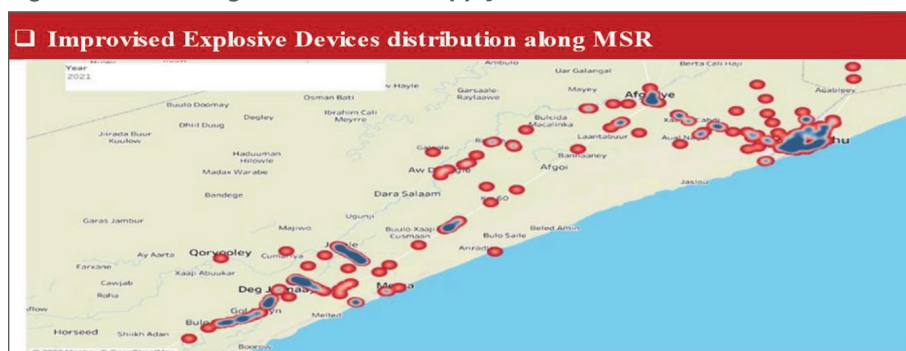
Source: UNMAS Report, Somalia, 2022

Figure 2: IED casualty rate in Somalia, 1 January 2018–31 January 2022



Source: UNMAS Report, Somalia, 2022

Figure 3: IEDs along AMISOM main supply routes



Source: UNMAS Report, Somalia, 2022

Increased and sustained non-military political reconciliation efforts

For sustainable peace, military operations must be accompanied by political reconciliation in Somalia. All stakeholders, including national actors, recognise the reality that the war in Somalia will not be won on the battlefield alone. Indeed, when the idea of Comprehensive Approach to Security (CAS) was launched in 2017, Somali stakeholders agreed that political disagreement was at the root of the conflict, based on clan dynamics and the sharing of power. It was the consensus that military operations in Somalia must be accompanied by non-military efforts towards political reconciliation, good governance, countering violent extremism, women's empowerment, and advancing human rights.

As ATMIS continues operations in Somalia, a stakeholder-wide commitment to engendering good governance, genuine reconciliation and political compromise must also take place.

Lesson 2: Protecting human rights amid hostilities in urban areas

Two significant occurrences were key in shaping the development of AMISOM's protection of civilian (PoC) and human rights trajectories. The first occurred in 2011, while the second took place in 2014. Both led AMISOM to review and strengthen its policies, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and mechanisms to protect civilians during its operations.

The first was the escalation of urban warfare between AMISOM and AS in 2010. After a hiatus of three years, in 2010, AMISOM troops

engaged AS in battles to wrest control of Mogadishu. At the time, the city was largely under AS control. AS fighters were present in densely populated parts of Mogadishu, intentionally blending with civilians. From these crowded areas, they would launch mortars and grenades at AMISOM locations. AMISOM operations in response to AS attacks led to a high number of civilian casualties. The resulting uproar led to AMISOM to adopt an Indirect Fire Policy (IDF), which limits when and how troops may deploy indirect fire in populated areas.

The second incident took place in 2014 when international NGO, Human Rights Watch (HRW), published an article on AMISOM titled *The Power These Men Have Over Us*.⁶ In the article, HRW claimed that there had been widespread incidents of violent sexual abuse perpetrated by AMISOM troops against Somali women and girls. It outlined 21 specific allegations of rape and sexual assault levelled against AMISOM troops.

The publication spurred an in-depth re-examination of the AMISOM compliance regime, and then chairperson of the AU Commission, HE Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, set up a team of independent experts to investigate the allegations. Three of the 21 specific allegations made by HRW were found proven after investigation, while the others remained unproven – with no parties coming forward to substantiate allegations. Nevertheless, the team of international investigators put forward a series of recommendations. The implementation of those recommendations helped to strengthen the mission's human rights compliance regime.

AMISOM's compliance and PoC regimes were shaped by three pillars: preventing misconducts from occurring in the first instance; responding to such misconduct when it occurred; and

taking remedial action to support victims of such occurrences. Personnel deployed into the mission areas were trained to discharge their functions with an increased understanding of applicable international humanitarian law (IHL), international human rights law (IHRL), and conduct and discipline frameworks. When infractions did take place, incidents would be investigated, with appropriate remedial and punitive actions taken. Several mechanisms, frameworks, policies, and SOPs were put in place for this purpose. These include:

Pre-deployment training [level 2]

It is typically the responsibility of troop and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs) to ensure that their peacekeepers have sufficient understanding of relevant IHL and IHRL before they are deployed. However, given the nature of the conflict in Somalia and limited capacity among the T/PCCs, AMISOM – with the support of the UN – decided that AU and UN subject matter experts would design a mission-specific pre-deployment training (PDT) to address broad IHL, IHRL and conduct issues.

From 2011, AMISOM and UN experts embarked on a PDT arrangement whereby experts would visit T/PCCs and train operational commanders on key subject matter prior to their deployment to Somalia. This arrangement was commended by then UN Independent Expert on Somalia, Shamsul Bari. In his 22 August 2012 report,⁷ Bari stated that:

The regular training of AMISOM forces on humanitarian law and human rights law has yielded positive results, including with regards to the prevention of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence...

The AMISOM PDT arrangement is complemented by in-mission trainings that cover technical subjects.

Policies and frameworks

The AU developed both generic and mission-specific frameworks to guide AMISOM in the discharge of its compliance mandates. These included the AMISOM Indirect Fire Policy, the Zero-Tolerance Guidance, the AMISOM Rules of Engagement (RoE), Guidance on the Use of Force, AMISOM SOP on Treatment of Detained Fighters, the Amends SOP, and several Force Commanders Directives (FCD).

Mission-specific mechanisms

The mission developed mechanisms to prevent, mitigate and track allegations of human rights violations. One of the structures put in place, especially in the aftermath of the 2014 HRW report, was the establishment of the CEEBLA (meaning ‘no shame’) Crisis Line. Somali women and girls who experienced physical or sexual violence could seek assistance and support by dialling the CEEBLA toll-free line. The line would then connect them with Somali experts, who were trained to provide immediate psycho-social support and referral services.

Victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were also provided with immediate medical care. Victims of domestic violence were also provided with legal aid assistance, and access to secure shelters and safe houses. In its two years of operation, the CEEBLA crisis line:

- Supported 39 survivors of sexual violence;
- Supported the prosecution of three men for physically assaulting their wives; and

- Handled 28 cases of domestic violence, which were all referred to family care centres in Daynile and Dharkenley for mediation.

Such was the popularity of the line that on five different occasions, women who were in labour called it for support and were taken to Banadir Hospital and Waydow Centre.

AMISOM also developed the Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis and Response Cell (CCTARC), which tracks all incidents of civilian harm and casualties attributed to AMISOM. This includes instances of sexual exploitation and abuse, as well damage to property and livestock. It first became operational in June 2015 and has three core functions. The first is to track incidents of civilian casualties attributed to AMISOM; the second task is to serve as a crucial source of information to inform the planning of the mission's Force Commander; and lastly, CCTARC is also designed to form part of the mechanism for AMISOM to make 'ex-gratia payments' to unintended victims of the mission's lawful activities in Somalia.

Activities of CCTARC- 2020

TABLE 1: CIVILIAN CASUALTIES BY ACTOR, 2019–2020

Category	Killed		Wounded		Event Count	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Al-Shabaab	543	299	841	272	353	244
Unknown armed group	65	229	41	256	75	214.5
SSF	57	68	42	88	76	111.5
Clan militia	31	276	24	257	28	92
AMISOM	05	10	04	20	10	08
Private security	-	01	-	-	-	01
Others	02	06	02	05	03	05
Grand total	703	889	954	898	545	676

Source: AMISOM CCTARC report, 2021

TABLE 2: CIVILIAN CASUALTIES BY EVENT TYPE, 2019–2020

Category	Killed		Wounded		Event Count	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Direct fire	312	501	188	432	314	346.5
Indirect fire	27	18	44	36	19	13
IEDs	238	195	436	224	148	110
Suicide bomber	06	16	06	30	01	05
Hand grenade	10	07	73	70	28	29.5
Complex attack	62	25	195	40	03	03
Road Traffic Accidents	06	03	04	13	09	07
Unexploded ordnance	01	20	05	13	04	09
Torture	-	01	-	03	-	01
Rape related	-	-	-	01	-	02
Public execution	33	39	-	-	13	18.5
Amputation	-	-	-	02	-	02
Robbery	-	09	-	15	-	20
Stabbing	01	08	-	08	01	16
Assassination	-	23	-	-	-	20.5
Drowning	-	06	-	-	-	03
Public lashing	-	01	-	03	-	02
Airstrike	-	02	-	02	-	02
Plane crash	-	02	-	-	-	01
Ambush	05	04	02	03	02	04
Axing	02	-	01	-	03	-
Kidnapping	-	07	-	03	-	43
Arson	-	-	-	-	-	09
Assault	-	02	-	-	-	02
Looting	-	-	-	-	-	04
Car jacking	-	-	-	-	-	03
Total	703	889	954	898	545	676

Source: AMISOM CCTARC report, 2021

TABLE 3: AMOUNT PAYABLE FOR DEATH, INJURY, AND PROPERTY DAMAGE

Harm	Amount	Notes
Death	\$10 000	Women, men, girls and boys
Serious injury	Not exceeding \$5 000	Where available, medical expert may provide guidance
Minor injury	Not exceeding \$3 000	Where available, medical expert may provide guidance
Major property damage	Not exceeding \$4 000	Where available, expert may provide guidance
Minor property damage	Not exceeding \$2 000	Where available, expert may provide guidance

Source: AMISOM Standard Operating Procedures for Civilian Casualty Response, September 2020

TABLE 4: AMOUNT PAYABLE FOR LIVESTOCK

Type of animal	Amount payable
Camel	Not exceeding \$700
Cow	Not exceeding \$400
Sheep/Ram	Not exceeding \$75
Goat	Not exceeding \$75
Donkey	Not exceeding \$200

Source: AMISOM Standard Operating Procedures for Civilian Casualty Response, September 2020

A critical challenge faced by AMISOM since the inception of CCTARC was the lack of funding to make ex-gratia payments. The AU Headquarters was unable to sustainably fund the Mission's amends commitment. This led to considerable reputational damage. The ex-gratia payment arrangement of AMISOM was the nearest thing to the Islamic concept of *diyyah* (blood money). Given that AMISOM operated in an Islamic environment, Somalis perceived AMISOM's failure in this regard to be disrespectful, and an act of impunity. Even in a time of great financial constraints, the AU must prioritise sufficient funding for ATMIS to process ex-gratia payments.

Investigation of allegations

AMISOM had in place structures to investigate allegations of violations of wrongdoing levelled against

its personnel. Over the years, the mission relied on its Board of Inquiry (BoI) mechanism to conduct investigations into the validity of allegations. This often entailed travelling to the regions where the alleged violations occurred and obtaining evidence from victims, families of victims, civil authorities of the areas, the local police, the AMISOM unit concerned, and others. Over the period of its existence, AMISOM carried out several investigations, with outcomes forwarded to its strategic headquarters for further action. ATMIS must continue this tradition.

In-country court martial

An uncommon mechanism in AMISOM was the practice of prosecuting, in Somalia, members of AMISOM who had been indicted for committing a grave offence while in the mission area. In provisions of Chapter 6 of the Status of Mission Agreement (SOMA), signed between the FGS and the AU in 2007, the FGS agreed that AMISOM troops could only be prosecuted by their home country for offences committed while in Somalia. If an allegation was lodged against a particular soldier or group of soldiers, the AMISOM BoI would first have to establish whether there was sufficient evidence to suggest that violations occurred. If confirmed, the mission, through its headquarters, would forward the details of the BoI to the relevant TCC for further action against the soldiers involved. It then became the responsibility of the TCC to carry out further prosecutorial or administrative actions against the soldiers. AMISOM took this process of accountability further by, in serious cases, persuading relevant TCCs to carry out the court-martial process in

Somalia. This ensured greater availability of evidence to the court martial, allowing Somali witnesses to testify before the court in their country. It also improved perceptions of the mission's commitment to transparency and accountability.

ATMIS inherits excellent frameworks and mechanisms from AMISOM. It should strive to maintain, and where possible, improve on these. In addition to the issue of the abovementioned matter of ex-gratia payments, the AU should empower ATMIS in the following areas:

- Embark on consultations with T/PCCs about amending the relevant memorandum of understanding (MoU) to mandate in-country court martialing for grave offences like rape and unlawful killing;
- Provide funding support towards certain remedial activities to protect victims of SEA, as had been the case with the CEEBLA crisis line; and
- The Misconduct Tracking System and Database (MTSD) should be operationalised at headquarter and ATMIS levels. This will help to ensure that individuals previously found guilty of human rights violations are not redeployed to the mission.

Lesson 3: The strengths and weaknesses of the 'AMISOM model'

A few years into the deployment of the mission, the so-called 'AMISOM model' was heralded as a quintessential complementary arrangement; an innovative model of cooperation between the AU and UN that gave practical effect to Chapter 8 of the UN Charter. Given the nature of emerging conflicts in Africa and the

reluctance of the UN to get involved in high-intensity, active conflicts, it became clear that invoking the ‘regional arrangement’ provision of the UN Charter (whereby regional organisations, like the AU, would be authorised to resolve conflicts) made a lot of sense.

The same could be said of the decision to put in place a model like AMISOM, where stakeholders’ allocated tasks corresponded to their comparative advantages. Yet as the mission completed its operations in Somalia, it is apt to assess whether the ‘AMISOM model’ indeed served all parties.

AMISOM emerged in a context of uncertainty surrounding logistics, doctrine, and tenure. The UNSC, as per Chapter 8 of the UN Charter, agreed with the AU PSC decision to deploy a ‘peacekeeping’ mission to Somalia in 2007. Yet AMISOM was deployed to an area steeped in warfare, with no peace to keep. This reflected that the doctrine was rooted in a conventional framing of conflict.

Several factors made the AMISOM model unique. In the first instance, it did not neatly fit within the definitional scope of any of the six scenarios anticipated by the African Standby Force (ASF)⁸, even if an argument can be made that the multidimensional operation of Scenario 5 might apply.

The model also relied on a unique, multilateral arrangement for its sustenance. In 2009, UNSC resolution 1863 established the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA). In 2015, UNSOA was renamed the United Nations Support Office for Somalia (UNSOS), following UNSC resolution 2245. A key UNSOS function was to provide logistical supports to AMISOM. The European Union (EU), through its Africa Peace Facility (APF), also agreed to provide financial support to the AU for the payment of stipends to AMISOM uniformed personnel, and salaries to its civilian component. Various partners provided a range of assets to AMISOM TCCs. In this context, the AMISOM model was a potpourri arrangement whereby the AU provided troops and personnel; the UN provided logistical support; and the EU provided financial support. Given this multiplicity of key stakeholders, it seemed inevitable that

The model also relied on a unique, multilateral arrangement for its sustenance.

each ‘cook’ would have a different recipe for the ‘broth’ of AMISOM.

This arrangement of AMISOM resulted in three centres of power in the mission, namely operational, logistical, and financial. Although the power centres managed to work together in the fulfilment of their respective mandates, there was latent and sometimes open friction amongst the trilateral stakeholders. This needs to be well managed in ATMIS.

The financial power centre

The financial centre of power of AMISOM was the EU, who pulled the purse strings of mission. The EU was resolute in its support to AMISOM right from the onset, using the instrumentality of its APF. According to Professor Paul D Williams of George Washington University:

Paying AMISOM’s monthly allowances has become the EU’s single largest development project in Africa. The EU first started providing financial support to AMISOM in 2007. The monies came from the EU’s African Peace Facility (APF), which is part of the European Development Fund. The APF is the EU’s main source of funding to support the efforts of the AU and the African Regional Economic Communities in the area of peace and security. Since 2004, it has disbursed more than €2 billion.

With such extensive outlay, the EU provided AMISOM with the financial oxygen to discharge its mandates. Yet, despite this commendable commitment, the relationship was not without occasional hiccups. One significant incident was a decision by the EU to cut financial supports to AMISOM by 20% in 2016. The EU said at the time that:⁹

The reduction in funding is caused by the financial constraints on the EU African Peace Facility which funds AMISOM, and reflects the huge demands placed upon it to support African peace and security efforts...

The AU was unable to fill the subsequent gap. The adverse consequence was borne by the troops, who saw their monthly stipends reduced from \$1 028 to \$828.¹⁰

The logistics power centre

The UN was the logistical power centre for AMISOM. The saying that ‘an army marches on its stomach’ underlines the critical importance of logistics in the success of military operations. Logistical supply is an integral part of an army and should ideally be controlled by the commander. This was not the case in AMISOM. The establishment of UNSOA in 2009 was meant to ensure predictable, adequate, and sustainable lines of logistical supplies to AMISOM. Yet the establishment of UNSOA meant that logistical supplies to AMISOM became largely a function of what the UN could make available to the commanders and did not necessarily correspond to actual requirements.

This was largely a doctrine issue since UNSOS, as a UN Mission, was obliged to implement its support to AMISOM by following the UN policies, frameworks, rules, and regulation – all of which are designed for benign peacekeeping operations. UNSOS was thus not configured to support a war-fighting mission like AMISOM, although New York and UNSOS leadership came to recognise this disconnect in time, and did their best to bridge this gap.

To serve as a statutory underpinning for the AU-UN logistical arrangement, several quasi-legal

documents were signed by the stakeholders involved. In early 2016, an MoU was signed between the AU and the UN. The MoU spells out the duties and responsibilities of the two organisations. A tripartite MoU on modalities for the ‘reimbursement of eligible items of contingent-owned equipment’ was also signed in 2016 by the AU, UN and T/PCCs. The Support Implementation Agreement (SIA), which outlines the extent and limits of the support UNSOS would provide, was also later prepared.

As the logistics power centre, UN and UNSOS were partners in progress of the AU and AMISOM throughout the latter’s existence. Although UNSOS’ hands were often tied by both doctrinal constraints and a paucity of funds, the support of the UN (together with the EU and other partners) was critical to AMISOM’s existence and its successes. As ATMIS’ deployment progresses, it is important to revisit some of the challenges endured by AMISOM and put measures in place to address them.

Agility for ATMIS

While it is accepted that UNSOS, as a UN entity, is required to operate under UN rules and regulations, allowance must be made for the uniqueness of the conflict in Somalia, in the implementation of its support to ATMIS.

A challenge that endured throughout AMISOM’s existence was the near centralisation of logistical supports hubs to the mission. At the height of its operations, AMISOM’s six sector headquarters had close to a hundred forward operating bases (FOBs) across its area of operations. UNSOS provided supplies to five of the AMISOM six sector headquarters, and AMISOM sector commands were then expected to move the supplies by road to the various FOBs using the MSRs. These would often become either unpassable during the rainy season or filled with IEDs during dry seasons.

As ATMIS’ deployment progresses, it is important to revisit some of the challenges endured by AMISOM.

A challenge that endured throughout AMISOM’s existence was the near centralisation of logistical supports hubs.

The arrangement had two adverse consequences on AMISOM. First, moving supplies by road often became a task on its own that would fully occupy the troops. For example, AMISOM Sector One stretches from Mogadishu to Shiik Adan: a distance of about 200 kilometres. It took an average of two weeks for troops to deliver supplies from Mogadishu to the FOBs in the sector. This practice was replicated across other sectors. This hindered the commander from deploying troops for operations against AS. Secondly, the delivery of logistic supplies by long-distance roads often led to IED attacks against AMISOM vehicles, which affected operational capacity.

ATMIS is expected to be a mobile, agile force capable of rapid deployment. Indeed, part of the objective of the 2022 ATMIS CONOPS¹¹ was that the mission should ‘... facilitate the co-location of ATMIS and UNSOS in the sector logistic hubs to strengthen joint and independent operations as well as reporting and monitoring of service delivery and logistic support’.

UNSOS therefore needs to decentralise its system to make it more responsive to ATMIS’ logistical needs. It is gratifying to note that, in its proposal titled *The Implication of a Reconfigured AU Mission for UN Logistical Support in Somalia*,¹² UNSOS pledges that:

It is intended that Joint Operations Logistics Bases will be strategically located to better facilitate positioning of ATMIS-SSF units and United Nations support to more mobile security operations. In addition, United Nations support hubs will also include Joint Operations Coordination Centres to facilitate ATMIS-SSF operational planning and ...

Improving SNA logistical support

ATMIS is configured as a transition mission which, by 2025, should be winding down its operations – having succeeded in transferring security responsibilities to the SNA. Indeed, in the 2022 ATMIS CONOPS¹³, the tasks of the new mission include having to:

- Conduct joint simultaneous targeted offensive operations across all sectors, in coordination with SSF to degrade Al-Shabaab and AoG; and
- Configure ATMIS in terms of composition, structure, disposition, and equipment, to best support the handover of security responsibility to SSF.

ATMIS and SNA forces are therefore intended to operate jointly across all ATMIS sectors in the coming months, and jointly hold all newly recovered areas (NRAs). This requires improved and predictable logistical supplies to the SNA. UNSOS has, since 2013, been providing logistical support to the SNA. This was enhanced in 2018 through the UNSC resolution 2431, which directed that UNSOS should, among others:¹⁴

Continue to provide a logistical support package for ... 10 900 Somali security forces, who are formally part of the national security architecture, on joint operations with AMISOM, in line with the transition plan.

UNSC resolution 2568 (2021), increased the number of the SSF to benefit from UNSOS logistical support to:¹⁵

... 13 900 SSF personnel who are formally part of the National Security Architecture, and

members of units that actively participate in joint or coordinated operations with AMISOM, including 12 900 personnel from the Somali National Army and 1 000 personnel from the Somalia Police Force...

Despite this, the UNSOS support packages for AMISOM suffered two main deficits. First, the support arrangement lacked the adequacy and predictability of funding to enable the SNA to take over security responsibilities from comparatively well-resourced AMISOM troops. For doctrinal reasons, the UN is reluctant to provide direct support to military forces of member states. Instead of drawing from the UN Assessed Contribution to support the SNA, the UN subsequently established a Somalia Trust Fund, where interested bilateral partners could make donations and such donations would be used to support the SNA. However, given that Trust Fund contributions were voluntary, it could not be relied upon for planning purposes in terms of predictability and adequacy.

It is hereby proposed that the SNA should be funded directly from the UN Assessed Contribution. A precedent for this exists in the case of the UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), where the country's armed forces benefit directly from UN support using the Assessed Contribution.

The second deficit, and perhaps as a result of the first, is that the number of areas covered by the support packages, is limited to nine areas, namely:¹⁶

... food, water, fuel, tent accommodation, transportation, in-country medical evacuation, defence stores, and VHF/UHF/HF equipment to enable communications with AMISOM, as well as training, equipment and mentorship

to counter the threat of Improvised Explosive Devices...

ATMIS forces are expected to continue to derive logistical support in 17 areas that AMISOM enjoyed. Given that ATMIS and SSF are intended to jointly carry out operations and hold NRAs together, there is no reason why there should be disparity in the support they derive from UNSOS.

Operational power centre

The operational control of AMISOM was in the hands of the AU. The AU took political and strategic charge of AMISOM from inception. It was the appointing authority for its Heads of Mission (also referred to as Special Representatives of the AU Chairperson, or SRCCs), and all senior mission leadership, including the force commanders, police commissioners and civilians. The mission's annual Mission Implementation Plans (MIPs) were appraised at AU Headquarters, and all military operations required approval from Addis Ababa.

To coordinate AMISOM military operations, the AU put in place an ad hoc committee, the Military Operations Coordination Committee (MOCC). In 2021, it was renamed the Somalia Operations Coordination Committee (SOCC). The committee served as a critical coordinating mechanism on AMISOM operational matters at a strategic level. The SOCC comprised of chiefs of TCCs' defence forces, including that of Somalia, and the police commissioners of AMISOM PCCs. It held regular meetings on operations, special and offensive operations, command and control issues, logistics and others.

While the AU deserves kudos for its management of AMISOM from inception until the liquidation of the mission, the commission should improve on some key issues in ATMIS, especially by creating a mission-specific framework for recruitment, procurement and other facets.

Lesson 4: Boosting operational command

For most of AMISOM's lifespan, the mission battled a perception that the force commanders were merely figureheads. It is not difficult to see how this perception took root. Although AMISOM Strategic Directives and its organogram clearly place the force commander at the apex of its military hierarchy, the mission evolved in a way that complicated the operational command and control of AMISOM forces.

One reason for this was the alignment of contingents to specific sectors, such that the contingent commanders of AMISOM sectors would also double as sector commanders (with the exception of sector six, which had two different contingents). The implication was that the sector commanders tended to possess not only tactical command but also operational command, which ought to remain under the force commander. This, critics have argued, concentrated AMISOM operational control and command in the hands of the TCCs and the contingent commanders.

It is difficult to deny that the TCCs exerted considerable control on AMISOM operations; and perhaps rightly so. The volatility of the AMISOM theatre of operation meant that the troop fatality rate was significantly higher than

in most PSOs. This meant that TCCs have duty of care to ensure that troops would not be sent into operations planned by a force commander who was not accountable to them. Managing this reality proved a challenge for AMISOM.

ATMIS should improve on this. In agreeing to deploy troops to Somalia under the flag of the AU, the TCCs agree to their troops being under full the force commander's full operational command. The AU must create an enabling environment to ensure that this happens. The planning of key operations must be intersectoral, integrated and well-coordinated between the FHQ and the various sector headquarters. The force commander must play a critical role in this by, as the Peace Support Operations Division noted in a pre-ATMIS CONOPS discussion seen by the author, '... facilitating planning and conduct of inter-sector as well as operations conducted jointly with SSF – or in support of independent operations undertaken by the SSF'.

Engaging non-TCC providers

A practical way that the AU can enhance the operational command of the force commander is to encourage the engagement of non-TCCs as providers of key enablers, such as attack and utility helicopters. Currently, two countries provide AMISOM with attack air assets. Both are currently members of AMISOM TCCs, and the helicopters are physically located at the sector headquarters of these two TCCs. The letter of assist signed by the AU, UN and these two TCCs clearly indicate that the helicopters are force commander assets. Still, it will make for firmer operational control if the countries contributing these assets do not have boots on the ground. It is therefore recommended that

while the current two TCCs should retain their status as providers of helicopters to ATMIS, in the discussions for additional air assets to ATMIS (as authorised by the UNSC), the AU may want to consider this proposal.

Conclusion

ATMIS commenced its operations in Somalia in April 2022 at a time of global financial difficulty. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent financial strain, coupled with the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, now mean that the biggest financial supporter to ATMIS, the EU, will not be able to match the financial support it had provided for AMISOM. The EU has communicated this reality to the AU.

Yet, despite the ongoing global economic downturn, the international community must continue to support Somalia in its efforts towards sustainable peace and security in the country. The UN, as the global lead on matters pertaining to peace and security, must consider extending access to its assessed contribution to ATMIS beyond the provision of logistical support.

The AU should, in addition to providing the troops, also dig deep into its own finances and directly fund aspects of ATMIS. The FGS and FMS should work together in the interest of the country and implement the provisions of the National Security Architecture of the country, which was agreed upon in 2017. Finally, the SSF must take over security responsibility from ATMIS forces by the end of 2024.

Despite the ongoing global economic downturn, the international community must continue to support Somalia in its efforts towards sustainable peace and security.

Notes

- 1 PSC/PR/Comm(LXIX), 69th meeting of the AU PSC, 19 January 2007, Addis Ababa Ethiopia.
- 2 AMISOM CONOPs 2018–2021, as directed by the PSC via its 782nd Communiqué of 27 June 2018.
- 3 Somalia Security Pact, May 2017.
- 4 ATMIS CONOPs, 2022–2024.
- 5 African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) ‘Strategic Concept of Operation (CONOPS)- 2022- 2024’.
- 6 See Human Rights Watch, *The Power These Men Have Over Us: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by African Union Forces in Somalia*, 8 September 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/09/08/power-these-men-have-over-us/sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-african-union-forces>
- 7 Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Shamsul Bari, 22 August 2012
- 8 IPI Global Observatory, *Paying for AMISOM: Are Politics and Bureaucracy Undermining the AU’s largest Peace Operation?*, 11 January 2017, <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/01/amisom-african-union-peacekeeping-financing/>.
- 9 Hiraan Online, *AMISOM to rely more on airstrikes as EU reduces funding*, 21 February 2016, https://www.hiraan.com/news4/2016/Feb/104229/amisom_to_rely_more_on_air_strikes_as_eu_reduces_funding.aspx
- 10 Several further developments occurred on the issue of the EU financing subsequent to the original compilation of this report. The AFP has since been discontinued and replaced with a different funding mechanism. Ongoing conflict in the Ukraine has also served to redirect international attention, including that of the EU. It is beyond the scope or objective of this report to expand on the full extent of subsequent developments.
- 11 ATMIS CONOPS (internal document).
- 12 *The Implication of a Reconfigured AU Mission for UN Logistical Support in Somalia* (internal document).
- 13 ATMIS CONOPS (internal document).
- 14 UNSCR 2431, OP 45.
- 15 Include citation to the relevant UNSCR 2568, OP 21.
- 16 UNSCR 2245, Paragraph 2.



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About the author

Adebayo Kareem, is currently the Coordinator of the African Union Compliance & Accountability Framework project. Before his current role, Kareem spent 10 years with AMISOM where he held various offices including acting as the Mission Chief of Staff between 2016-2018.

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