Exit Strategy Challenges for the AU Mission in Somalia

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Cover: AMISOM troops departing from Mogadishu airport

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List of Abbreviations

AMISOM	AU Mission in Somalia
ARS	Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia
AU	African Union
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defence Force
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU	European Union
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGASOM	IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia
IRA	Interim Regional Administration
ISF	International Stabilization Force
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
MINURCAT	UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
ONUB	UN Operation in Burundi
SNA	Somali National Army
SNP	Somali National Police
SNSF	Somali National Security Forces
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UN	United Nations
UNITAF	Unified Task Force
UNMEE	UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNMIS	UN Mission in Sudan
UNOSOM	UN Operation in Somalia
UNSOA	UN Support Office for AMISOM
UNSOM	UN Assistance Mission in Somalia
UNSOS	UN Support Office in Somalia (new name for UNSOA)

Executive Summary

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) alone cannot defeat al-Shabaab. This can only happen if AMISOM can partner with a capable, legitimate and inclusive set of Somali security forces. Unfortunately, over the last decade, Somalia's political leaders have failed to forge a political settlement that charts an agreed pathway towards creating an effective set of professional national security forces. The African Union (AU) and AMISOM's international partners have exacerbated the problem by failing to provide the mission with vital capabilities, including the 12 military helicopters authorized in 2012. Moreover, the growing influence of Somalia's neighboring states within AMISOM has damaged the mission's reputation among Somalis. These failings have not only further endangered AMISOM personnel, they have also undermined the mission's effectiveness and the prospects of stabilizing Somalia.

They have also intensified debates about how and when AMISOM should leave Somalia. In a ceremony to commemorate Kenyan troops who were killed in al-Shabaab's attack on AMISOM's El Adde base on 15 January 2016, the AU's Peace and Security Commissioner, Smail Chergui, reminded his audience that "AMISOM is not an occupation force in Somalia. As soon as the Federal Government signals it is ready to stand on its own because it can withstand a severely degraded or defeated Al Shaabab, AMISOM will leave."[1] This is the dominant view among AMISOM and its international partners: it would be irresponsible of AMISOM to withdraw without leaving behind "a capable, legitimate and inclusive" set of Somali security forces.[2]

A successful exit strategy for AMISOM would therefore involve two interrelated transitions: first, a transition from operations led by foreign forces to Somali-led operations; and, second, a transition from military-led operations to police-led operations. The second transition is arguably the most difficult, especially because AMISOM has only a small police component (of around 540) and the Somali police force remains in a dire state. However, these goals remain a long way off. In the interim, AMISOM's critics are growing more vocal, albeit for a variety of different reasons.

The challenge for AMISOM is that its ability to leave Somalia successfully hinges on several factors that the mission is unable to control. First, AMISOM must rely on its international partners to give it the capabilities that have long been authorized. AMISOM needs to be enhanced and reconfigured to enable it to seriously degrade rather than simply displace al-Shabaab's fighting capabilities, severely restrict the militants' ability to move throughout Somalia and separate al-Shabaab's fighters from the local population.

Second, AMISOM should not leave until Somalia has its own capable, legitimate and inclusive security forces. But the current approach to generate such forces has not worked. AMISOM and its international partners must therefore devote more effort to building Somali security forces that can cope with the threat posed by al-Shabaab as well as other security challenges, such as clan conflicts, deadly disputes over land and other resources and violent criminality.

This will require a third development beyond AMISOM's direct control, namely, a sustainable political settlement between Somalia's Federal Government, the new Interim Regional Administrations and the authorities in Puntland. This settlement must include agreement on how to govern Somalia, a shared vision of the roles of the country's security forces and a roadmap for integrating the numerous armed groups that currently proliferate across Somalia. A political

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[1] Remarks, Nairobi, 22 January 2016, http://amisom-au.org/2016/01/statement-by-amb-smail-chergui-commissioner-for-peace-and-security-on-the-solemn-occasion-of-laying-to-rest-of-amisoms-kenya-defence-forces-soldiers-nairobi-22-january-2016/

[2] Remarks by Ambassador Francisco Madeira to the UN Security Council, 28 January 2016, http://amisom-au.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/REMARKS-BY-AMBASSADOR-FRANCISCO-CAETANO-JOSE%CC%81-MADEIRA.pdf

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settlement is the most important development, because it is a prerequisite for defeating al-Shabaab and building capable, legitimate and inclusive Somali security forces. Encouraging such a political settlement, an enhanced and reconfigured AMISOM and capable, legitimate and effective national security forces should be the principal priorities of the AU, its international partners and Somalia's governing elites.

As things stand now, however, AMISOM faces a range of challenges that are preventing it from achieving its mandated tasks. This report analyzes five of them:

1. Al-Shabaab's ability to adapt to its new environment;

2. Internal problems within AMISOM;

3. Obstacles to building an effective set of Somali national security forces;

4. Lack of a sustainable political settlement clarifying the nature of federalism in Somalia; and

5. The rise of negative local perceptions about AMISOM.

AMISOM's operational effectiveness, if not its exit strategy, will hinge on how it deals with these challenges.

In an environment as unpredictable as the Horn of Africa, it is no use making plans that are not flexible and adaptable to unforeseen circumstances. AMISOM will undoubtedly have to adapt to new and unforeseen challenges. To that end, this report briefly sketches six scenarios in order to illustrate some of the ways in which AMISOM's withdrawal might be affected by different events. We refer to these scenarios as:

- Muddling through

- Political settlement excluding al-Shabaab

- Political settlement including *al-Shabaab*

- AMISOM enabled

- AMISOM reduced

- Financial austerity

Key Findings

- AMISOM has made major sacrifices in its fight against al-Shabaab and its attempts to stabilize Somalia. It is probably the most deadly peace operation undertaken in the modern era. Although the mission has not publicly released details of all its fatalities, many hundreds of AMISOM peacekeepers have lost their lives and many more have sustained serious injuries.

- AMISOM cannot defeat al-Shabaab without the support of the local population and an effective set of Somali national security forces. However, protracted wrangling among Somalia's politicians has made it impossible to build capable, inclusive and professional national security forces. Such forces are a critical part of reducing the threat posed by al-Shabaab. Today, the Somali National Army is in no position to take the leading role in the fight against al-Shabaab.

- After nearly nine years of operations, AMISOM continues to lack critical enablers and resources, including military helicopters as well as engineering, transportation and logistics capabilities that were authorized by the UN Security Council. It is an international embarrassment that peacekeepers are dying as a result of such neglect.

- AMISOM is one of the most complex peace operations ever undertaken. It relies on an unprecedented set of international partnerships. While African states provide the uniformed personnel, bilateral partners are required for various training and assistance packages to support the troop-contributing countries. The United Nations (UN) provides the mission's logistical support and the European Union (EU) pays the monthly allowances for AMISOM's uniformed personnel. Furthermore, the success of the mission is premised on the assumption that Somalia can field an effective national army. For such a complex mission to work effectively there must be consistent coordination and cooperation between numerous international partners. This has not always been the case.

- Officially, AMISOM is a UN-mandated peace support operation. In practice, it has functioned more like a war-fighting operation comprised of a loosely coordinated coalition of willing troop-contributing countries. Each of these countries has exercised considerable operational autonomy in their respective sectors. Rather than taking full command and control of the mission, AMISOM's force headquarters has generally played a coordinating role but has often failed to ensure effective coordination across the mission's different sectors.

- The frontline states, especially Ethiopia and Kenya, have repeatedly pursued counter-productive policies in Somalia that sought to retain their influence over local and national dynamics. Such policies undermine local perceptions of AMISOM as an impartial force and provide fuel for al-Shabaab's propaganda.

Introduction

This report analyzes the main challenges facing AMISOM as it seeks to implement a successful exit strategy. Like all peace operations, AMISOM was never intended to be a permanent fixture of the Somali landscape but the mission is now nearly nine years old. AMISOM will leave Somalia; the questions are how and when? The official answers are set out in the mission's exit strategy. We define an exit strategy as *the process of generating the resources needed for the mission to leave the host country*. Successful exit strategies involve a mission leaving its host having achieved all or most of its stated objectives.

When it was first authorized in December 2006, AMISOM's original exit strategy was to transition to a UN peacekeeping operation after just six months. When this plan failed, AMISOM's strategy and tactics had to evolve as local conditions and international circumstances changed. This report provides an overview of the different ways in which peace operations can come to an end, and how AMISOM's exit strategies have evolved from its initial deployment in March 2007 through to January 2016.

Now is an important time to analyze AMISOM's exit strategy. First, to our knowledge, this report represents the first independent effort to comprehensively study the challenges raised by AMISOM's exit. Despite being nearly nine years old, and the AU's largest ever peace operation, AMISOM has rarely been subjected to independent scrutiny. Second, AMISOM now costs approximately US$900 million per year. Hence, there are questions about its financial sustainability, especially after the recent EU decision to cut its funding to pay for AMISOM allowances by 20 percent, starting in January 2016. Third, AMISOM has also been one of the most deadly peace operations ever undertaken, causing an unknown number of fatalities among the peacekeepers and, probably, many more among its principal enemy (al-Shabaab) and

Somali civilians.[3] Fourth, the Federal Government of Somalia's (FGS) inability to hold national elections in 2016 as originally envisaged under "Vision 2016" has, once again, required AMISOM to adapt to new circumstances and alter its planned timetable.[4]

Finally, AMISOM's departure has become the subject of increasing debate and controversy. These debates have taken place among the troop-contributing countries, most notably in Burundi and Kenya, but probably most intensely among Somalis. As any survey of AMISOM's presence on social media will attest, increasing numbers of Somalis are making known their negative views about the mission. Some point to serious misconduct by AMISOM personnel, including killing civilians, engaging in sexual exploitation and abuse and selling mission resources such as fuel and rations. Others claim the mission has become a money-making enterprise for its contributing countries, leaving them with little incentive to defeat al-Shabaab. Others see AMISOM as legitimizing unwanted interference in Somali politics by its neighbors, especially Ethiopia and Kenya. Even AMISOM's supporters are increasingly calling for more international support to focus on creating effective Somali national security forces.

During nearly nine years of operations, AMISOM's evolution has reflected both the changing political context in Somalia and international responses to the country's many problems. In its first few years, AMISOM was widely viewed as a struggling mission. However, especially after AU and Somali soldiers pushed the majority of al-Shabaab forces out of

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[3] For a discussion, see Paul D. Williams, "How many fatalities has the African Union Mission in Somalia suffered?" *The Global Observatory*, 10 September 2015, http://theglobalobservatory.org/2015/09/amisom-african-union-somalia-peacekeeping/

[4] See AbdirashidHashi, "Somalia's Vision 2016: Reality check and the road ahead," Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, May 2015, http://www.heritageinstitute.org/somalias-vision-2016-reality-check-and-the-road-ahead/

Mogadishu in August 2011, AMISOM has been credited with various successes. For example, US President Barack Obama has lauded AMISOM as supporting a successful US "strategy of taking out terrorists who threaten us, while supporting partners on the front lines."[5] Senior AMISOM officials have regularly argued that their recent operations have liberated 80 percent of south-central Somalia from al-Shabaab, implying that the job is nearly finished but ignoring the fact that al-Shabaab retains freedom of movement across most of south-central Somalia.[6] And in his departing interview, the head of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), credited AMISOM with playing a crucial role in reducing the threat from al-Shabaab and transitioning Somalia from a "failed" state to a "fragile but recovering" one.[7]

And yet AMISOM still faces considerable problems and limitations. This report focuses on five major challenges:

1. AMISOM still faces considerable internal problems including a lack of key enablers such as military helicopters and engineering units; problems in its command, control and coordination structures between its troop-contributing countries; its inability to roll out effective stabilization programs in recovered settlements; and various forms of misconduct by some of its personnel.

2. Al-Shabaab is a diminished political force, but it has proved adaptable and remains a deadly foe with a range of violent tactics at its disposal. It retains an ability to strike even the most secure of targets and has significantly increased its operational tempo beyond Somalia, most notably in Kenya.

3. AMISOM's principal local partner, the Somali National Army (SNA), has not developed according to plan. Among the SNA's most pressing problems are destructive clan dynamics; numerous technical and infrastructural limitations; and problems related to command and control and political leadership.

4. AMISOM is facing intensifying criticisms from Somalis that are challenging the mission's credibility as well as its effectiveness.

5. Perhaps most fundamentally of all, AMISOM has been forced to operate in a context of regular political infighting between Somalia's leaders that took the focus away from fighting al-Shabaab. The subsequent lack of a political settlement between Somalia's bickering elites presented AMISOM with a wide range of problems and undermined its ability to effectively implement its mandated tasks.

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[5] "Statement by the President on ISIL," The White House, 10 September 2014, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/10/statement-president-isil-1

[6] For example, "PSC Interview: The high cost of defeating Al-Shabaab," *ISS*, 6 February 2015, https://www.issafrica.org/pscreport/addis-insights/psc-interview-the-high-cost-of-defeating-al-Shabaab

[7] "UN Envoy: Somalia Momentum Toward Peace 'Unstoppable'," *Voice of America*, 30 December 2015, http://www.voanews.com/content/somalia-momentum-toward-peace-unstoppable/3124257.html

Structure of the Report

To address these issues, this report is organized into seven sections. Section 1, *AMISOM: A Very Brief Overview*, summarizes how the AU mission has evolved since its initial deployment and sketches the main international partnerships that have kept it running.

Section 2, *Exit Strategies in Theory*, then briefly recaps some of the general conclusions about exit strategies for peace operations that emerge from the academic literature. It also lists the most common mechanisms used to bring peace operations to an end, namely, deadlines or predetermined timetables, cut and run, expulsion, sequenced withdrawals, achieving benchmarks and successor operations.

Section 3, *Exit Strategies in Practice*, then briefly reviews the practical modes of exit used by nine different foreign military operations in Somalia between 1992 and 2015. Its objective is to draw out any potential patterns or lessons that might be relevant for AMISOM.

Section 4 turns from the history of previous operations in Somalia to examine how *AMISOM's Theory of Exit* has evolved since the mission was established in early 2007. Drawing on AMISOM's internal documents and several international reviews of the mission, this section shows how AMISOM's principal focus has been assessing whether conditions on the ground in Somalia were appropriate to transition into a UN-led peacekeeping operation, and, more recently, an emphasis on building the capacity of local Somali

security forces. In recent years, AMISOM has set out a range of different benchmarks to evaluate whether transitioning to a UN peacekeeping operation remains a viable way out of Somalia. This option is looking less and less likely.

Section 5, *Practical Challenges to AMISOM's Exit*, turns from the theory of AMISOM's exit strategies to analyze the main ongoing practical challenges facing the mission as it looks for a way out. For analytical purposes, these are grouped into five categories but in reality the issues overlap and interrelate in important ways. The challenges discussed are: the continued threat from al-Shabaab; internal problems within AMISOM; building an effective set of Somali national security forces, especially the SNA; the lack of a political settlement between the Federal Government and the regions, and the rise of negative local perceptions about AMISOM. If AMISOM is to chart a successful exit from Somalia that preserves its hard-won gains, all these challenges must be overcome.

Section 6, *Future Scenarios and AMISOM's Exit Options*, sketches six scenarios that might be useful for thinking about AMISOM's potential modes of exit as well as highlighting some of the potentially influential actors and issues that might hasten or prolong AMISOM's withdrawal.

Finally, Section 7, *Policy Considerations*, offers some proposals for moving forward to address some of AMISOM's main challenges.

AMISOM: A Very Brief Overview

Since it first deployed to Mogadishu in March 2007, AMISOM has undergone a major evolution.[8] Geographically, the mission started out protecting a few districts of Mogadishu but has since grown to cover the whole of south-central Somalia. Militarily, AMISOM has expanded from an initial force of about 1,600 Ugandan troops to over 22,000 (see Figure 1). The origin of those troops has also evolved. Initially, the AU and UN concluded that AMISOM should not include troops from Somalia's neighboring countries because of the potential for unleashing unhelpful political dynamics. However, this decision was reversed and in December 2011 Djibouti deployed troops into AMISOM. In late 2011, Kenya and Ethiopia both conducted unilateral operations that were not part of AMISOM. Kenya integrated some of its forces into AMISOM in 2012, while some Ethiopian forces joined the AU mission in January 2014. Today, these frontline states" provide about half of the total as well as the acting (Ethiopian) Force Commander (see Box 1).

Operationally, AMISOM started out as a VIP protection operation guarding the institutions of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and helping to re-establish what the UN Security Council referred to as "all-inclusive Somali security forces" (see Box 2). By 2009, AMISOM was conducting urban warfare against al-Shabaab and over the next few years morphed into a broader counter-insurgency and stabilization campaign conducted across vast swathes of countryside and many urban settlements (see Box 3). After receiving a temporary surge of approximately 4,000 additional (mainly Ethiopian) troops in January 2014, AMISOM conducted a series of offensive operations against al-Shabaab strongholds across south-

central Somalia, most in conjunction with the SNA and other allied militias.[9]

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[8] For an overview up to January 2014 see Bronwyn E. Bruton and Paul D. Williams, *Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Lessons Learned from the African Union Mission in Somalia, 2007-2013* (Florida: JSOU Press, Report 14-5, September 2014).

[9] Operation Eagle (March 2014), Operation Indian Ocean (August to November 2014), Operation Ocean Build (December 2014 to July 2015), and Operation Juba Corridor (July 2015-).

Figure 1: AMISOM authorized and deployed strength, 2007-15
(Source: AMISOM has not provided a public monthly tally of its personnel. This figure therefore depicts multiple snapshots of the mission strength compiled by the authors from official AU and UN sources.)
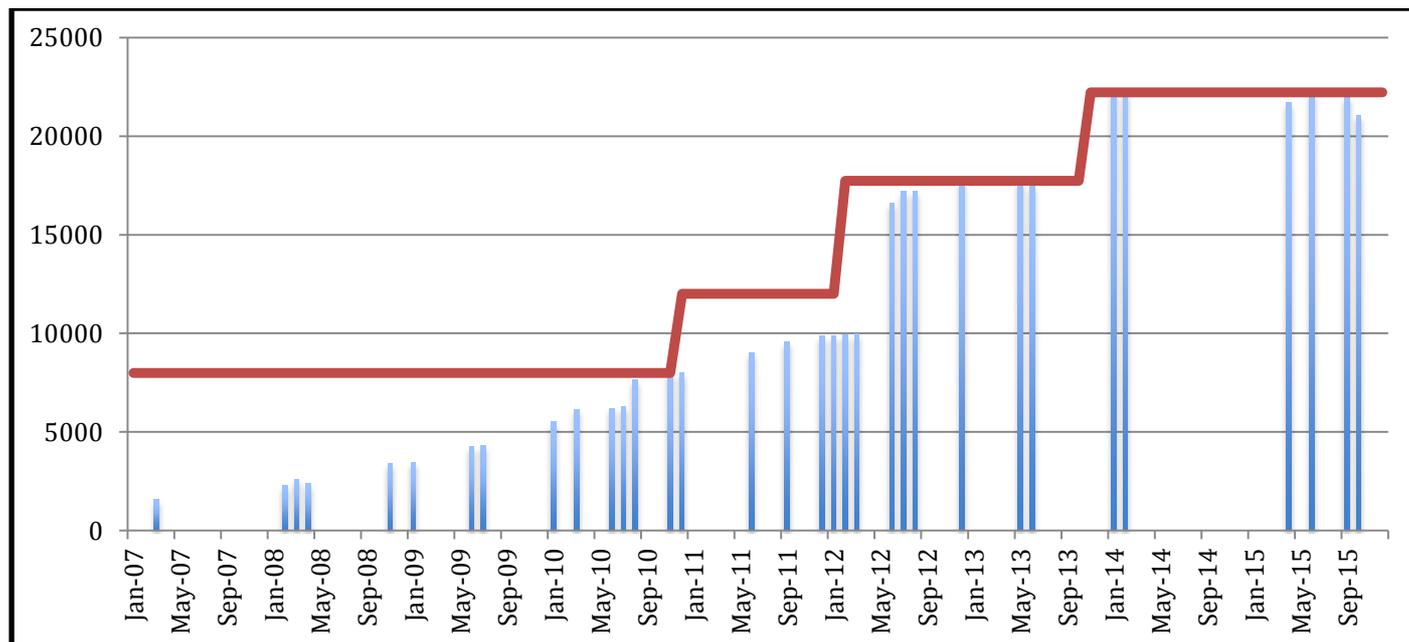
AMISOM has never been a peacekeeping operation in the traditional sense of the term. Rather, it has more closely resembled a war-fighting operation, especially after Ethiopian troops withdrew from Mogadishu in January 2009 leaving AMISOM as the main source of support for the TFG. Like other war-fighting missions, AMISOM is a multinational force that has operated without much strategic control imposed on the troop-contributing countries by the Force Headquarters. This is not unusual in such war-fighting campaigns where the contributing countries want to retain as much autonomy over their operations as possible.

However, it has raised problems of coordinating action across the different national contingents, which al-Shabaab has been able to exploit.

Box 1: AMISOM's Major Troop and Police-Contributing Countries	
Major Troop-Contributing Countries (arrived)	*Major Police-Contributing Countries* (arrived)
Uganda, March 2007 **Burundi**, December 2007 **Djibouti**, December 2011 **Kenya**, June 2012 **Sierra Leone**, April 2013 (withdrew December 2014) **Ethiopia**, January 2014	**Uganda**, August 2012 (Formed Police Unit) **Nigeria**, September 2012 (Formed Police Unit)

Box 2: AMISOM's Mandate in 2007
Source: UN Security Council Resolution 1772, 20 August 2007

- To support dialogue and reconciliation in Somalia by assisting with the free movement, safe passage and protection of all those involved with the [all-inclusive political] process referred to in paragraphs 1 to 5 [of resolution 1772];
- To provide, as appropriate, protection to the Transitional Federal Institutions to help them carry out their functions of government and security for key infrastructure;
- To assist, within its capabilities, and in coordination with other parties, with implementation of the National Security and Stabilization Plan, in particular the effective re-establishment and training of all-inclusive Somali security forces;
- To contribute, as may be requested and within capabilities, to the creation of the necessary security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance; and
- To protect its personnel, facilities, installations, equipment and mission, and to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel.

Box 3: Summary of AMISOM's Mandate as of July 2015
Source: UN Security Council Resolution 2232, 28 July 2015

- Take all necessary measures, as appropriate, and in coordination with the Somalia National Defence and Public Safety Institutions, to reduce the threat posed by Al Shaabab and other armed opposition groups;
- Assist in consolidating and expanding the control of the FGS over its national territory;
- Assist the FGS in establishing conditions for effective and legitimate governance across Somalia, through support, as appropriate, in the areas of security, including the protection of Somali institutions and key infrastructure, governance, rule of law and delivery of basic services;
- Provide, within its capabilities and as appropriate, technical and other support for the enhancement of the capacity of the Somalia State institutions, particularly the National Defence, Public Safety and Public Service Institutions;
- Support the FGS in establishing the required institutions and conducive conditions for the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections by 2016, in accordance with the Provisional Constitution;
- Liaise with humanitarian actors and facilitate, as may be required and within its capabilities, humanitarian assistance in Somalia, as well as the resettlement of internally displaced persons and the return of refugees;
- Facilitate coordinated support by relevant AU institutions and structures towards the stabilization and reconstruction of Somalia; and
- Provide protection to AU and UN personnel, installations and equipment, including the right of self-defence.

AMISOM is also a very complicated mission (see Figure 2). The AU force has always relied upon a range of international partnerships in order to function. The troop-contributing countries have relied on external security assistance programs to train, deploy, equip and sustain their forces in Somalia. The most important sources of bilateral support have come from the United States and United Kingdom. Similarly, the allowances paid to AMISOM peacekeepers are funded by the European Union. For the last few years, this has been at the rate of about US$1,028 per soldier per month.[10] Since 2009, the United Nations has provided a logistical support package to the AU mission via the UN Support Office to AMISOM (UNSOA).[11] This is an unprecedented UN mechanism that uses the UN's assessed peacekeeping budget to directly support a non-UN regional peace operation. Since late 2011, AMISOM has also worked in parallel with unilateral operations conducted by Ethiopia, Kenya, and the United States that took place outside of AMISOM's command and control. AMISOM had relatively little interaction with the large international coalition that assembled off the coast of Somalia from late 2008 to fight piracy.

Figure 2: AMISOM's Partnerships

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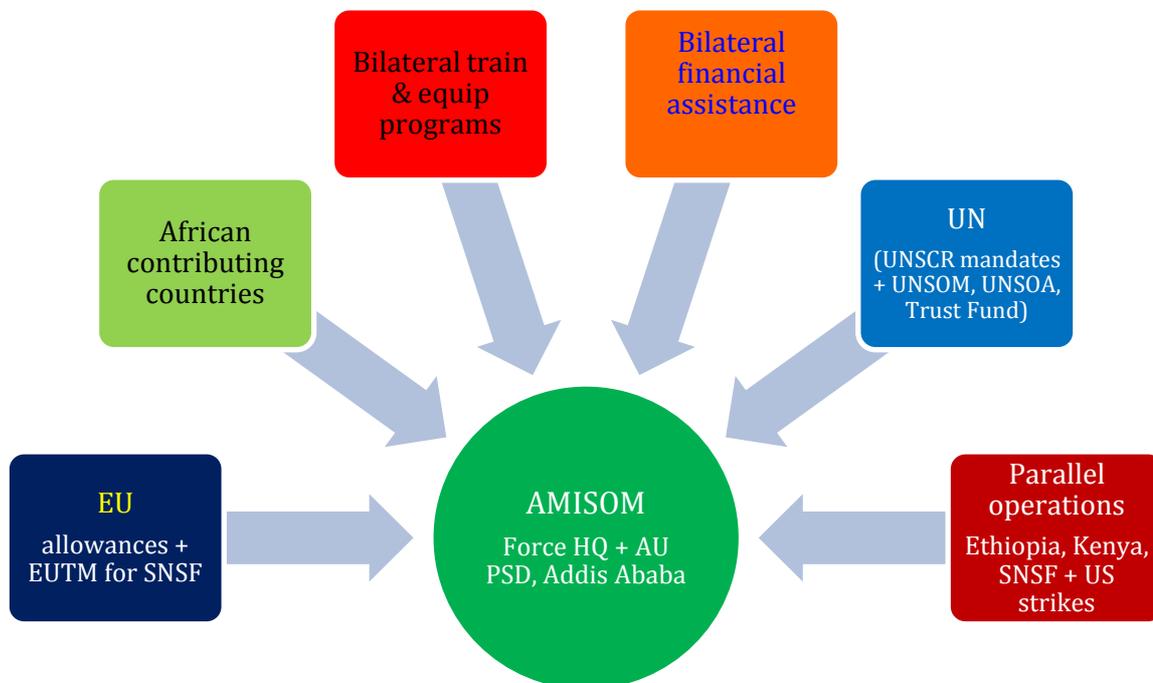
[10] The European Union pays this money to the African Union, which, in turn, pays the governments of the troop-contributing countries. These governments take a portion (usually about US$200) of the allowance each month for administrative and other purposes.

[11] UNSOA covered the delivery of rations, fuel, general stores and medical supplies; engineering and construction of important facilities; health and sanitation; medical evacuation and treatment services and medical equipment for AMISOM medical facilities; communications and information technology; information support services; aviation services for evacuations and troop rotations; vehicles and other equipment; and capacity-building. UN support did not extend to the provision of ammunition, which remained a bilateral partner arrangement.

Exit Strategies in Theory

Most peace operations start as a rather rushed response to some crisis. Planning for their departure is therefore not normally a high initial priority. Yet all peace operations must eventually withdraw. Ironically, the concept of exit strategies in peace operations is usually traced to US engagement in Somalia in the early 1990s when Washington was concerned about avoiding mission creep and getting bogged down in a longer-term state-building operation.[12]

An exit strategy is not the same thing as having a plan for withdrawal.[13] As Lawrence Freedman has observed, plans assume a set sequence of events "that allows one to move with confidence from one state of affairs to another."[14] A strategy is needed for precisely those occasions when the sequence of events is unpredictable, as is the case with peace operations like AMISOM. We therefore define an exit strategy as *the process of generating the resources needed for the mission to leave the host country*. Successful exit strategies involve a mission leaving its host having achieved all or most of its stated objectives.

Strategy involves figuring out how to sensibly get from one stage to the next in the conflicted relationship(s) in question. It is a perpetual process of diagnosing the current set of problems faced and figuring out how to move beyond them and onto the next set of problems. As a consequence, a strategy that starts with a predetermined set of objectives – for example the end state identified in the concept of operations of most modern peace operations – and works backwards to achieve them will likely fail. Instead, successful strategies need to be open-ended and display flexibility and adaptation. Unfortunately, they do not lead to a definitive resolution of the issues and challenges concerned. As Freedman puts it, "The world of strategy is full of disappointment and frustration, of means not working and ends not reached."[15] Strategy doesn't offer a solution that allows us to assert control over our problems. Rather, strategy functions as a more or less successful coping mechanism; a dignified way of muddling through. Successful strategies move us on to the next stage of the relationship without delivering a definitive or permanent conclusion.

Understood in this manner, strategy is really "about getting more out of a situation than the starting balance of power would suggest. It is the art of creating power."[16] In other words, "the essence of strategy is to force or persuade those who are hostile or unsympathetic to act differently than their current intentions."[17]

An exit is therefore not best thought of as a discrete event that occurs on a particular date but rather as a process. That process might be as simple as gradually shrinking a mission's area of operations before complete departure. Or, more commonly, it will revolve around the more complex process wherein the stakeholders try to achieve particular milestones or benchmarks.

As a process, an exit strategy requires a peace operation to regularly reassess its goals and the progress being made toward them. Have new threats emerged? Have new objectives arisen? How will the mission measure progress? In sum, exit strategy must be rethought as circumstances and goals evolve. It is therefore not surprising that AMISOM has reevaluated its strategy and goals on a fairly regular basis, but it has not always been clear how it measured progress towards its objectives.

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[12] Gideon Rose, "The Exit Strategy Delusion," *Foreign Affairs*, 77:1 (1998), pp.56–67.
[13] See for discussions, William J. Durch, "Supporting Peace: The End," *Prism*, 2:1 (2010) and William J. Durch, "Exit and Peace Support Operations" in Richard Caplan (ed.), *Exit Strategies and State Building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[14] Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford University Press, 2013), p.xi.

[15] Freedman, *Strategy*, p.608.
[16] Freedman, *Strategy*, p.xii.
[17] Freedman, *Strategy*, p.627.

It is also common for complex peace operations to take a long time, especially those with state-building components in their mandates. The World Bank, for example, concluded that transitions to just a "good enough" level of governance in even the most successful developing states emerging from war will probably take between 10 and 40 years, with most countries taking well over 20 years.[18] In this sense, AMISOM's nearly nine years in the field is not excessive given its mandated tasks.

Finally, as an inherently political process, a peace operation's exit strategy will generally encounter fewer challenges the more support it enjoys from local elites. When key elements of an exit strategy are at variance with the interests of local elites, successful withdrawal will be very difficult unless the peace operation can generate considerable leverage over the conflict parties, which is rarely the case. Critics of some UN peace operations in Africa, for example, have argued that when missions are unable or unwilling to change the dominant local political dynamics they will find it almost impossible to leave having achieved their (usually lofty) stated objectives.[19] As Richard Caplan has concluded, "effective implementation of state-building plans will depend increasingly on the willingness and capacity of host country stakeholders to come together, own, and eventually drive the process forward."[20] In this sense, AMISOM's exit strategy is intimately connected to the behavior of Somalia's political elites.

So what are the mechanisms by which peace operations can manage their exit process? Among the six most common alternatives are deadlines or timetables, cut and run, expulsion, sequenced withdrawals, achieving benchmarks

and successor operations (see Table 1).[21]

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[18] World Development Report, *Conflict, Security and Development* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2011), p.109.
[19] Alex de Waal, "Mission without end? Peacekeeping in the African political marketplace," *International Affairs*, 85:1 (2009), pp.99-113.
[20] Richard Caplan, "Policy Implications," in Richard Caplan (ed.), *Exit Strategies and State Building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.318.

[21] My list builds upon that provided by Richard Caplan, "Exit Strategies and State Building' in Richard Caplan (ed.), *Exit Strategies and State Building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp.9-11.

Table 1: Summary of Potential Modes of Exit for Peace Operations

Exit Mechanism	Description
A Designated Timetable	Withdrawal is fixed to a predetermined period of time
Cut and Run	The mandating authorities decide to terminate the mission before it has achieved its stated objectives
Expulsion	Exit follows the host state authorities withdrawing consent for the operation's presence
Sequencing	Devise withdrawal plan based on predetermined sequenced objectives
Benchmarking	Devise withdrawal plan based on indicators of progress towards the mission's mandated goals
Successor Mission(s)	Transition some or all of its forces into a successor operation

A Designated Timetable

One option is for a peace operation to end at a predetermined point. This might be a specified period of time or it might be a schedule tied to a particular event (the date of which might alter).

Cut and Run

In some cases, the authorities responsible for a peace operation may decide to terminate the mission before it has achieved its stated objectives. This could happen for a variety of different reasons including an unwillingness to suffer more sunk costs with the prospect of little forthcoming benefit; a change in conditions which render the stated objectives increasingly difficult to achieve; or recognition that the stated objectives were unrealistic or mistaken in the first place. In Somalia, Ethiopia's initial intervention in 2006 until 2009 could be seen as an example of cut and run, leaving behind a TFG that was unable to sustain its presence in Mogadishu without the assistance of external military forces.[22]

Expulsion

Peace operations may sometimes have to exit a theater because they are legally required to do so after the host state government withdraws its consent for the operation's presence. In Africa, several host governments have recently expelled UN peace operations, including Burundi 2006 (ONUB), Eritrea 2008 (UNMEE), Sudan 2011 (UNMIS) and Chad 2010 (MINURCAT). So far, no host governments have expelled an AU peace operation, although in 2013 the Somali federal government called for the withdrawal of the Kenyan contingent in AMISOM.[23] In 2015, some Somali parliamentarians made similar complaints when they claimed Kenyan troops were encroaching onto Somali territory in the Gedo region.

Sequencing

Sometimes, peace operations are designed with sequenced objectives in order to facilitate the mission's departure. For example, in the context of US concern about how to extract its forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, a 2007 RAND study proposed the following priorities and sequence for state-building operations: public security and humanitarian assistance (including the return of refugees and internally displaced persons), governance (restoring public services and administration), economic stabilization (including a stable currency and a legal/regulatory framework for commerce), democratization (including an essential free press) and long-term development aid.[24]Although AMISOM did not

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[22] Officially, the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops was stipulated in the Djibouti Agreement (June 2008), http://unpos.unmissions.org/Portals/UNPOS/Repository%2 0UNPOS/080818%20-%20Djibouti%20Agreement.pdf

[23] See Bruton and Williams, *Counterinsurgency in Somalia*, p.69.

[24]James Dobbins et al., *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building* (Arlington, VA: RAND, 2007).

initially explicitly adopt such a sequencing approach, the deployment of its police and civilian components was delayed because of instability in Mogadishu for the first few years of the mission, thereby sequencing the mission by default. More recently, since 2014, AMISOM has explicitly conceptualized its military operations in terms borrowed from Western militaries as involving shape, clear, hold and build phases as part of its overall stabilization agenda.[25]

Benchmarking
First used by UN peacekeeping operations in the case of UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone from 1999, benchmarks are indicators of progress towards a mission's mandated goals. To be effective, benchmarks should be "concrete and measurable, using meaningful indicators."[26] For example, in the area of security sector reform, simply counting the number of trained police or troops in uniform is less useful an indicator than measuring police or military performance. Or in more political terms, conducting free and fair elections in the host state has been frequently employed by peace operations as a benchmark in their exit strategy. In Somalia, AMISOM was typical inasmuch as it was tasked to support the Federal Government's Vision 2016, which initially included the aspiration to hold one-person one-vote presidential elections in 2016. By late 2015, and entirely predictably, this aspiration was recognized as being impossible in the proposed timeframe.[27]

Successor Mission(s)
A peace operation can also exit by transitioning some or all of its forces into a successor operation. Exit thus entails passing on the peacekeeping baton to another actor or placing it in the hands of a different institutional authority. Such successor operations might be authorized and conducted by the same set of stakeholders; for example, the transition from UNOSOM I to the much larger and more ambitious UNOSOM II in Somalia in 1993. Alternatively, there might be a transfer of authority from one set of stakeholders to another; for example, by transitioning an African-led mission into a UN peacekeeping operation. As discussed in more detail below, this approach was evident in Somalia during the 1990s and in the 2010s (sees Table 2) and was the exit strategy initially envisaged for AMISOM: to transition to a UN peacekeeping operation after six months.

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[25] See, for example, Anthony H. Cordesman, *Shape, Clear, Hold, and Build: The Uncertain Lessons of the Afghan and Iraq Wars* (Washington DC: CSIS August 2009), http://csis.org/files/publication/Afghan-IraqLess.edit.7.8.pdf
[26] Caplan, "Policy Implications", p.317.
[27] Under the prevailing conditions in Somalia, as the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Parliament jointly declared, on 28 July 2015, one-person one-vote elections, as envisioned in the Federal Provisional Constitution, will not yet be possible in 2016. http://www.villasomalia.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Facilitation-Guide.pdf. For an overview see "Somalia discusses complicated next steps for 2016 elections," 23 October 2015, http://somalianewsroom.com/2015/10/23/update-somalia-discusses-next-steps-for-2016-elections/

Exit Strategies in Practice: Somalia 1992-2015

How have previous foreign military operations in Somalia managed their exit process? And do their exit strategies hold any lessons for what might work in AMISOM's case? Table 2 summarizes nine such missions that deployed in Somalia between 1992 and 2015. The last four were unilateral operations conducted by Kenya and Ethiopia.

Table 2: Modes of Exit in Major Foreign Military Operations in Somalia, 1992-2015

Operation	Year of Exit	Precipitated By	Mechanism	Success or Failure
UNOSOM I	1993	Changed circumstances	Successor mission	Failure
UNITAF	1993	Avoid quagmire	Successor mission	Partial Success
UNOSOM II	1995	Withdrawal of key TCC	Phased withdrawal	Failure
IGASOM*	2006	N/A – didn't deploy	Successor mission	Failure
International Stabilization Force*	2008	N/A – didn't deploy	Successor mission	Failure
Ethiopian Intervention 1	2009	Avoid quagmire	Phased withdrawal + successor mission	Partial Success
Kenyan Intervention	2012	Legitimacy & financial costs	Re-hatted forces	Partial Success
Ethiopian Intervention 2	2014	Legitimacy & financial costs	Re-hatted forces	Partial Success
Ethiopian Intervention 3	Ongoing	N/A	N/A	Too soon to tell

* Operation did not deploy but conceptualizes an exit strategy nevertheless.

UNOSOM I (1992-93)

In January 1992 the UN deployed a small observer mission and a protection detachment for the observers to Mogadishu to monitor a ceasefire agreement between the competing factions in Somalia's civil war. However, as the ceasefire promptly collapsed and circumstances on the ground altered, the small mission became overwhelmed and largely confined to its barracks. With no peace to keep and growing international concern about the civilian victims of the war

UNOSOM I was unable to cope.[28] Its exit process began with the arrival of a much bigger, parallel intervention force led by the United States, the Unified Task Force (UNITAF). With UNITAF's departure, UNOSOM I then transitioned into a

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[28] See Paul D. Williams, "UNOSOM I" in Joachim Koops et al (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.408-15.

new, larger UN peacekeeping operation, UNOSOM II.

UNITAF (1992-93)

In December 1992, the US-led task force arrived in Somalia with a UN Security Council mandate "to use all necessary means to establish as soon as possible a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia."[29] UNITAF comprised approximately 37,000 mainly American troops and operated across south-central Somalia. After enjoying considerable initial success in stabilizing the flow of humanitarian relief and getting most of the armed factions to back-off, UNITAF looked to extract itself from Somalia. The United States in particular did not want UNITAF forces to get involved in a wider mission involving disarmament of the various militias or any elements of state-building. After disagreements with the UN Secretary-General on these issues, UNITAF engaged in a phased withdrawal from Somalia by transitioning some of its forces into a new, larger UN peacekeeping operation, UNOSOM II, in March 1993. UNITAF's exit strategy thus involved semi-re-hatting some of its forces to a successor mission, while the US left behind some unilateral forces which were intended to work in parallel with the new UN mission.

UNOSOM II (1993-95)

With UNOSOM I overwhelmed and Washington deciding to pull out most of its forces in UNITAF, the UN deployed a multidimensional peacekeeping operation of about 28,000 uniformed personnel.[30] UNOSOM II had a mandate to disarm "unauthorized armed elements" in Somalia's conflict and prevent any resumption of violence across south-central Somalia. It struggled to execute this mandate and in June 1993, 24 peacekeepers were killed while trying to disarm fighters led by Mohammed Farah Aideed. On 3-4 October 1993 a unilateral US operation to capture suspected leaders of the Somali National Alliance went badly wrong. In the subsequent battle 18 US soldiers, a UN peacekeeper and as many as 1,000 Somalis are thought to have been killed. This event led Washington to withdraw its forces from Somalia. With the impending loss of one of its most important contributing countries, not least because US forces provided most of UNOSOM II's logistical support, the UN began planning for a phased withdrawal of its mission. Leaving behind a country in roughly the same state as it had found it, UNOSOM II started to draw down its forces from late 1994 through to March 1995.

IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia (2005-06)

Responding to a request from Abdullahi Yusuf, the president of the TFG, in January 2005 the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) proposed the deployment of a 10,500 strong Peace Support Mission in Somalia known as IGASOM. Its mandate would be to facilitate the TFG's entry into Somalia's capital city, Mogadishu.[31] In May 2005, the AU's Peace and Security Council endorsed IGASOM and in July it agreed that an AU peace operation should eventually take over from IGASOM.[32] However, the IGASOM proposal did not gain sufficient political traction and only Uganda readied any soldiers for the mission. As a consequence, IGASOM did not deploy. Nevertheless, the envisaged exit strategy was clear: a form of institutional transfer wherein IGASOM would transition into an AU-led operation.

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[29]UN Security Council resolution 794, 3 December 1992, para.10.
[30] Paul D. Williams, "UNOSOM II" in Joachim Koops et al (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.429-42.

[31] IGAD, "Communique on Somalia," issued in Abuja, Nigeria, 31 January 2005. Interestingly, IGAD's charter did not explicitly include a provision for deploying such a peace operation, although advocates suggested that Article 7(g) could perhaps be used as the legal basis.
[32] AU doc. PSC/PR/Comm.(XXIX), 12 May 2005 and AU doc. PSC/Min/Comm.(XXXIV)–(i), 3 July 2005.

International Stabilization Force (2008)

In late 2008, the idea for an International Stabilization Force (ISF) was briefly mooted as an interim mechanism to facilitate AMISOM's exit and transition into a UN-led peacekeeping operation. Although the AU and several African governments had always envisaged that AMISOM would transition into a UN peacekeeping operation, there were few external supporters for this idea until late 2008. At that point the George W Bush administration in the United States led a renewed push to deploy a UN operation to Somalia. Washington's principal concern was fear that Ethiopia's withdrawal would create a security vacuum that AMISOM was not equipped to fill. The result was a flurry of diplomatic activity in New York that culminated in mid-November 2008 with the UN Secretary-General recommending that an ISF of "approximately two brigades" be deployed to Mogadishu.[33]

The ISF was supposed to support the implementation of the Djibouti peace agreement and create conditions for the deployment of a multidimensional UN peacekeeping operation.[34] Despite attempts to drum up support for the ISF concept by the US and senior AU officials by mid-December, the UN Secretary-General had to inform the Security Council that while he still believed only "a multinational force" was "the right tool for stabilizing Mogadishu," just 14 of the 50 countries approached had responded to his request for contributions. Of these, only two offered funding (the United States and the

Netherlands). None pledged any troops or offered to assume the lead nation role. With the death of the ISF concept, the Secretary-General explored other options to prepare for the expected security vacuum (see Section 4).[35]

Ethiopian Intervention 1 (2006-09)

In 2006, Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, ordered his armed forces to support the relocation of Somalia's TFG into Mogadishu. He gave four interrelated reasons for this intervention a) the destabilizing mission of the Eritrean government from the north b) the declaration of *jihad* by the UIC [Union of Islamic Courts] against Ethiopia c) the presence in Somalia of Ethiopian insurgents which seek to overthrow the government of Ethiopia by force and d) the presence and continued influx of foreign terrorist groups with the view to advancing the extremist agenda of the UIC—created a state of "clear and present danger" triggering its lawful right to self-defense under international law.[36]Soon after Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) troops installed the TFG in Mogadishu in December 2006, Ethiopia's leaders recognized that their presence was problematic. This was not surprising for military occupations usually generate a negative local reaction (the ENDF operation was one of only four military occupations worldwide since 1989 (the others being Iraq in Kuwait, Uganda in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the US-led coalition in Iraq).[37]There were also calls by the UN Security

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[33] Subsequent UN–AU planning cohered around an ISF of approximately 6,000 troops.

[34]*Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia* (UN doc. S/2008/709, 17 November 2008), paras 31–43. Phase 1 would involve deployment to Mogadishu while in Phase 2 the ISF would monitor and verify the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from the city. These two phases were scheduled to take place "within six months" (para.44). In Phase 3, the force would conduct stabilization operations in Mogadishu in order to facilitate the consolidation of the TFG's authority. Phase 4 involved the transition to a UN multidimensional peacekeeping operation of "22,500 troops operating in five brigade-sized sectors throughout southern and central Somalia" (para.47).

[35] "Letter from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council" (UN doc. S/2008/804, 19 December 2008), Annex.

[36]MelesZenawi, press conference, Addis Ababa, 26 June 2007, cited in Awol K. Allo, "Ethiopia's Armed Intervention in Somalia: The legality of self-defense in response to the threat of terrorism," *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy*, 39:1 (2010), p.157.

[37] According to Article 42 of the Hague Regulations on Land Warfare a territory is "occupied" if in the course of an armed conflict it is "actually placed under the authority of the hostile army." Gregory H. Fox, "Exit and Military Occupations" in Richard Caplan (ed.), *Exit Strategies and State Building* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.199. Fox lists Ethiopian operations in Somalia from 2006 as an occupation that did not engage in legal or political

Council "for the withdrawal of all other foreign forces from Somalia."[38]

Ethiopia consequently envisaged AMISOM as a way to withdraw its troops while leaving behind a security presence to defend the TFG in Mogadishu. The original plan was that AMISOM would be transitioned into a UN peacekeeping operation by mid-2007. The problem was that AMSIOM's failure to generate sufficient numbers of troops and contributing countries meant that Ethiopian forces became stuck in Somalia without an alternative security force to cover their withdrawal.

In December 2007, Meles Zenawi publicly admitted that the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops was taking "a lot longer" than planned.[39] By late 2008, Meles was facing increasing domestic pressure to leave Somalia because of the growing financial burden and criticism from within the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).[40] It was the Djibouti agreements during the second half of 2008 that finally catalyzed concrete plans for Ethiopia's troops to withdraw. Ethiopia's exit strategy was precipitated by concerns of becoming stuck in a political quagmire, mounting casualties and rising financial costs. To save a partial success (installing the TFG), the ENDF was forced to wait over 18 months longer than it wanted for AMISOM troops to arrive in sufficient strength to facilitate its exit. AMISOM thus became Ethiopia's exit strategy. The ENDF conducted a phased withdrawal, reducing its original intervention numbers fairly quickly but leaving behind a smaller, embattled force in Mogadishu.

Kenyan Intervention, Operation Linda Nchi (2011-12)

On 16 October 2011, some 6,000 Kenyan forces launched Operation Linda Nchi (Swahili for protect the nation).[41] This was the first time it openly deployed troops across the border.[42] One of Kenya's many stated aims was to prevent crippling al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya by creating a buffer zone up to the settlement of Afmadow, which was an al-Shabaab stronghold. The UN Monitoring Group declared Kenyan operations between 16 October 2011 and 2 June 2012 to be a breach of the general arms embargo on Somalia, because they were not part of AMISOM and only after 5 January 2012 did AMISOM's area of operations include Sector 2 where the Kenyan forces were operating.[43] By February 2012, some external observers estimated that the deployment cost approximately US$180 million and 50 deaths per month, though Kenya did not provide a public record of its fatalities.[44] Operation Linda Nchi was terminated for several reasons. First, the financial costs of the mission were mounting. Second, the Kenyan authorities concluded that they would gain greater

reform of Somalia. See also Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia After Ethiopian Occupation* (ENOUGH Report, February 2009), http://www.enoughproject.org/files/Somalia%20After%20the%20Ethiopian%20Occupation.pdf
[38] See UN Security Council resolutions 1744, 21 February 2007, and 1772, 20 August 2007.
[39] "Ethiopia PM attacks UN on Somali," *BBC News Online*, 12 December 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/7152997.stm.
[40] Wikileak Cable 08ADDISABABA3393, 19 December 2008.

[41] According to the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, the operation may have been planned as early as June 2011. Kenyan military intelligence document cited in *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea* (13 July 2012), p.226. For the official Kenyan government narrative of the campaign see *Operation Linda Nchi: Kenya's Military Experience in Somalia (Nairobi: Kenya Defence Force, 2014)*.
[42] In early 2010, Kenyan forces conducted a secret military operation, Operation *Linda Mpaka* to prevent "Al-Shabaab, pirates and contraband from entering the country [Kenya]." Kenyan military intelligence document cited in *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council resolution 2002 (2011)*, UN doc. S/2012/544, 13 July 2012, p.225. Kenyan forces also made cross-border incursions into southern Somalia in early 2007 in search of Union of Islamic Courts forces, which had fled into the swampy, forested territory of the Juba regions.
[43] *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council resolution 2002 (2011)*, UN doc. S/2012/544, 13 July 2012, p.229.
[44] See David W. Throup, "Kenya's Intervention in Somalia," CSIS, 16 February 2012, http://csis.org/publication/kenyas-intervention-somalia. A recent documentary claimed that Kenya had suffered 118 fatalities between October 2011 and December 2015. *The Jubaland Frontier*, NTV Investigates, Kenya, December 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcmP59dzYvk

international legitimacy by being part of a multinational force rather than a unilateral mission. In this case, Kenya's exit strategy was to re-hat the majority of its forces into a successor mission, namely, AMISOM. As with Ethiopia in January 2009, AMISOM provided Kenya with an exit strategy for its unilateral military operation. Kenyan authorities would subsequently supplement their forces in AMISOM with additional air and maritime assets that were not put under AMISOM command and control.

Ethiopian Intervention 2 (2011-14)

In December 2011, Ethiopian forces once again entered Somalia, this time they came on the back of Kenya's Operation Linda Nchi to open up an additional front against al-Shabaab and create a buffer zone against the threat. The ENDF captured the strategic town of Beletweyne in December and Baidoa in February 2012. By opening up another front against al-Shabaab, the ENDF operations helped AMISOM expand beyond Mogadishu. ENDF troops remained in Somalia with the stated aim of helping to stabilize the territory that would become AMISOM sectors 3 and 4.[45] These forces continued to operate alongside AMISOM troops until January 2014 when Ethiopia decided to integrate some of its forces into AMISOM as part of a temporary "surge" of reinforcements for the AU mission authorized by the UN Security Council in November 2013.[46] The exit process for Ethiopia's second military intervention was influenced by a changed international political context wherein the UN Security Council authorized an expansion of AMISOM, in large part to facilitate the integration of Ethiopian troops already on the ground in Somalia. For Ethiopia, financial concerns were also a significant factor that was eased by joining AMISOM. Like Kenya, Ethiopia continued to conduct unilateral operations in Somalia in support of its AMISOM contingent.

Ethiopian Intervention 3 (2015-ongoing)

In July 2015, it was reported that approximately 3,000 ENDF troops had entered Somalia's Gedo region.[47] Other official sources put the figure between 4,000 and 8,000 with an additional but unknown number of Liyu police also operating in Somalia's Galgadud region.[48] The ENDF troops are ostensibly fighting to support their colleagues in AMISOM to carry out Operation Juba Corridor in the Bay and Gedo regions. Currently, the exit strategy for these ENDF soldiers and Liyu police remains unclear.

Do these military operations hold any lessons for AMISOM? One obvious pattern is the frequent passing of the peacekeeping baton to successor missions. Only UNOSOM II and the first Ethiopian intervention force completely withdrew their troops from Somalia, and in the latter case this was only temporary with more Ethiopian soldiers returning in late 2011. Second, it was not until September 2012 that Somalia had a federal government that was at least theoretically able to build a national army capable of leading its own national security campaigns. Third, AMISOM has been used as the exit strategy for four different foreign military operations: the failed IGASOM mission (2006), Kenya's Operation Linda Nchi, and the two Ethiopian interventions into Somalia launched in 2006 and 2011 respectively. This suggests that despite all the problems these military operations generate, foreign powers have been reluctant to completely remove their forces and disengage from Somalia. This relates to the final point, which is that the unilateral

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[45] After 6 December 2012, when IGAD launched its Grand Stabilization Plan for South-Central Somalia, the troops were said to be supporting this Plan, http://unpos.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=tsZp qEW0yZs%3D&tabid=9705&language=en-US. AMISOM Sector 3 centered on the town of Baidoa and comprised some 2,500 Ugandan and Burundian troops supported by Ethiopian forces. Sector 4 focused on the town of Beletweyne northeast of Mogadishu. This contained roughly 1,000 Djiboutian soldiers supported by Ethiopian forces.
[46] On 12 November 2013, UN Security Council resolution 2124 increased AMISOM's uniformed personnel from 17,731 to 22,126.

[47] "3,000 Ethiopia troops cross into Somalia," *Daily Nation* (Kenya), 9 July 2015, http://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/3-000-Ethiopia-troops-cross-into-Somalia/-/1066/2781280/-/fesx5tz/-/index.html
[48] Author's confidential interview, September 2015.

operations by Kenya and Ethiopia were intended to create buffer zones or neutralize the perceived threat within Somalia. They did so by trying to increase the influence Nairobi and Addis Ababa could wield at the local level in Somalia and by extension increase their leverage over the Federal Government. For AMISOM this created a major challenge: how to ensure the national interests of these frontline states did not override the mission's mandate to support the Federal Government? As we discuss below, many Somalia think the mission has failed to do this.

AMISOM's Theories of Exit

How has AMISOM conceptualized its exit strategy and end state? This section answers this question by reviewing various iterations of AMISOM's concept of operations, some of the mission's strategic directives and the reports of several international review teams who assessed aspects of the mission and/or international engagement in Somalia during AMISOM's deployment.

As discussed in Section 3, AMISOM was the successor to IGAD's failed attempt to deploy IGASOM. In the AU's original conception of the mission, AMISOM was supposed to last only six months before its responsibilities were taken over by the UN. This exit strategy was based on the recommendation of the AU Technical Assessment Mission, which had visited Mogadishu on 13-15 January 2007. Specifically, the AU stated that, "AMISOM shall be deployed for a period of 6 months, aimed essentially at contributing to the initial stabilization phase in Somalia, with a clear understanding that the mission will evolve into a United Nations operation that will support the long term stabilization and post-conflict reconstruction of Somalia."[49] This decision was taken without also being authorized by the UN Security Council.[50] This approach was reflected in

AMISOM's original concept of operations, which envisaged the mission unfolding in four phases.[51] Phase IV, titled Redeployment/Exit Phase, was to coincide with a foreseen handover to a UN peacekeeping operation.

In AMISOM's next Strategic Directive of May 2008, the mission's overall objective was to "create a safe and secure environment in preparation for the transition to the UN."[52] AMISOM's end state was defined in the following terms: "the consolidation of the TFG's authority in Somalia will have been established to allow for continuation and transition of the AMISOM responsibilities to follow-on UN Peacekeeping authorities."[53] To achieve this goal, AMISOM was conceptualized as having four phases: an Initial Deployment phase; an Expansion of Deployment phase; a Consolidation phase; and, finally, a Redeployment/Exit phase. Somewhat confusingly, the directive still wanted to hand over "to the advance contingent of a UN led peacekeeping mission within six months".[54] Importantly, one of the assumptions built into the directive was that "The TFG will agree to the envisaged transition of peacekeeping authority in Somalia from AMISOM to the UN."[55]

As discussed in Section 3, in late 2008, the concept of a UN-authorized ISF was briefly floated by the AU and the Bush administration in the United States as an interim mechanism to withdraw AMISOM and replace it with a UN peacekeeping operation. However, the concept failed to gain traction with any potential troop-contributing countries and thus quickly

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[49] Cited in AU doc. PSC/PR/2(LXIX), 19 January 2007, para.33d and then AU doc. PSC/PR/Comm(LXIX), 19 January 2007, para.9.

[50] In UN Security Council resolution 1744 (20 February 2007) the Security Council noted the AU's decision (preamble) and requested the Secretary-General to assess,

within 60 days, the possibility of deploying a UN peacekeeping operation to Somalia following AMISOM's deployment (para.9).

[51] The document was available at AMISOM's webpages at http://au.int/RO/AMISOM/about/military/concept-operation-conops [accessed 14 April 2012] but was subsequently removed.

[52] *Strategic Directive for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)*, Addis Ababa, AU internal doc., 20 May 2008, para.22.

[53] *Strategic Directive for AMISOM*, 20 May 2008, para.27.

[54] *Strategic Directive for AMISOM*, 20 May 2008, para.24f.

[55] *Strategic Directive for AMISOM*, 20 May 2008, para.23c.

disappeared.[56]With the death of the ISF concept, the UN Secretary-General explored other options to prepare for the expected security vacuum that would occur with the departure of the Ethiopian troops in January 2009. In addition to advising that the UN continue its contingency planning for a potential UN peacekeeping operation, he proposed three steps.[57] First, AMISOM should be reinforced through bilateral support to Uganda and Burundi; support at the mission-level in the area of logistical, medical and engineering capabilities; and the transfer of some US$7 million worth of assets from the UN peacekeeping mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE).[58] He also suggested the UN should provide an additional logistics support package to AMISOM and continue to assist AU planning and deployment preparations through its planners team in Addis Ababa. Second, the UN should build the capacity of the Djibouti Agreement signatories to restore the Somali security sector and the rule of law by training and equipping 5,000 joint TFG/Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia-Djibouti forces, a 10,000-strong Somali Police Force, and other justice and corrections personnel. The third step involved the Security Council establishing a maritime task force which could support AMISOM operations, host a quick-reaction force and serve as an operational platform for any envisaged UN peacekeeping operation. None of these initiatives materialized as planned.

Nevertheless, the diplomatic push by the United States did produce UN Security Council resolution 1863 (16 January 2009). This resolution included the strongest language thus far that the UN would take over from AMISOM. In particular, it expressed the Council's "intent to establish a United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Somalia as a follow-on force to AMISOM, subject to a further decision of the Security Council by 1 June 2009". It requested that "in order for AMISOM's forces to be incorporated into a United Nations Peacekeeping Operation" the Secretary-General should "provide a United Nations logistical support package to AMISOM."[59]The initial aim of what would become UNSOA was thus to raise the operational standards in AMISOM to enable its forces to be incorporated into a future UN peacekeeping operation. However, the US-led push for the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia was dropped when Barack Obama became President and instead US policy focused on the UN providing logistical support to AMISOM via UNSOA.

Between early 2009 and August 2011 when AMISOM forces succeeded in driving the main *al-Shabaab* force out of Mogadishu, very little changed in the way AMISOM thought about its exit strategy. The only issue that received increased attention was the growing realization that AMISOM would have to work harder to build a capable set of Somali security forces. Consequently, AMISOM's 2010 revised operational plan noted that "the ultimate security of Mogadishu and an eventual exit strategy of AMSIOM will largely depend on a well trained, disciplined and cohesive TFG force that is well resourced and motivated."[60] But little was done in practice to build such a TFG force.

AMISOM's Mission Implementation Plan for 2011 continued in much the same vein as previous documents. It defined AMISOM's "vision" as being "to stabilize the security situation in Somalia and to create a safe and secure environment in preparation for the deployment of a United Nations Mission through the re-

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[56]*Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia*, UN doc. S/2008/709, 17 November 2008, paras 31–43.
[57] UN doc. S/2008/709, 17 November 2008, Annex.
[58] This included prefabricated accommodation, electricity generators, air-conditioning units, ablution units, and soft-skin vehicles Unfortunately, most of these assets were worn out, un-serviced, missing parts and some were obsolete. Only some 10 percent of the vehicles could be driven from the Mogadishu seaport to the airport. Author's interview with AMISOM official, June 2013.

[59]UN Security Council resolution 1863, 16 January 2009. The quotations are from operative paragraphs four and 10 respectively.
[60]*AMISOM Modified Strategic Plan* (AU internal document, October 2010), p.64.

hatting of AMISOM."[61] AMISOM's "desired political end state" involved the "immediate term" objective of creating "an enabling environment for the effective implementation of the stipulated tasks as enshrined in the Transitional Federal Charter." This was to be achieved "through both military and institutional building means."[62] The plan also noted some technical aspects of AMISOM's exit strategy, namely that the transition to a UN peacekeeping operation would be preceded by a joint AU-UN technical assessment mission in Somalia and that when the UN Security Council decided to authorize a UN peacekeeping operation, the "UN will re-hat AMISOM in line with a set UN criteria and policy."[63] At this stage, the mission's concept of operations envisaged a UN peacekeeping force of 20,000 personnel.[64] (This figure reflected the AU's desire to increase AMISOM to 20,000. In practice, this did not happen because the UN Security Council rejected that number, instead proposing an increase to 12,000 personnel in resolution 1964 on 22 December 2010.)

In AMISOM's 2012 Mission Implementation Plan the strategic end state was once again defined as "the consolidation of security and established TFG authority in Somalia that allow for gradual transition of AMISOM responsibilities to UN peacekeeping mission."[65] Once again, emphasis was placed on boosting Somalia's own security forces. But the plan also expanded the mission's objectives to include creating a democratic Somali state – a particularly bold objective given the very un-democratic nature of most of AMISOM's troop-contributing countries. Specifically, the plan stated that "The overall success of AMISOM mission in Somalia is the creation of a stable and sustainable secure environment where democratic freedoms, law and order thrives. This calls for immediate and deliberate actions to train, mentor, equip and

empower the Somali security forces to gradually take over from AMISOM forces as part of the exit strategy."[66]

The latter point was reiterated in the January 2012 concept of operations document, which noted that AMISOM's "eventual exit strategy … will largely depend on a well trained, disciplined and cohesive TFG force that is well trained, well resourced and motivated under a coordinated command and control."[67]

These points were reiterated in a communiqué released by AMISOM's Joint Security Committee on 8 May 2012. The committee stressed the importance of having clarity about AMISOM's exit strategy and argued that this required long-term investment that "must be focused on capacity building rather than simply sustaining current forces."[68] Specifically, the committee pointed to three gaps that required fixing to give AMISOM a hope of achieving a successful exit: "First is support for the Somali National Security Forces—we have not achieved critical mass in terms of building their capacity; second are enhanced capabilities for AMISOM; and third is a well-resourced and coherent United Nations role in the exit strategy for AMISOM, which includes support to UNSOM and the United Nations Support Office for AMISOM, as well as the work of United Nations agencies in Somalia."[69]

In early 2013, some similar concerns about the prospects for AMISOM's successful exit were noted in the AU Commission's Strategic Review of AMISOM, which was conducted during late 2012 and early 2013. The review team concluded that AMISOM's "envisaged End State would be a significantly depleted military and related capacity of Al Shaabab and the threat it poses to Somalia and the sub-region; enhanced capacity and cohesion of the Somalia National Defence

[61]*Mission Implementation Plan, March-December 2011* (AU internal document, no date), para.5.
[62]*Mission Implementation Plan, 2011*, para.30.
[63]*Mission Implementation Plan, 2011*, Annex E.
[64]*Mission Implementation Plan, 2011*, Annex B-7.
[65]*Mission Implementation Plan, January-December 2012* (AU internal document, January 2012), para.11.

[66]*Mission Implementation Plan, 2012*, para.30.
[67]*Mission Implementation Plan, 2012*, Annex B-8.
[68]Communique of the Joint Security Committee, Mogadishu, 8 May 2012, p.2.
[69] UNSOM SRSG Nicholas Kay, S/PV.7030, 12 September 2013, p.5.

and Public Safety Institutions to assume primary responsibility for the security of the state and its citizens. This will then facilitate the expansion of the Federal Government of Somalia's authority across the country and enable the creation of a stable, secure Somalia whose citizens enjoy access to justice and the rule of law."[70]

Moving forward, the review team envisaged AMISOM unfolding in three further phases: Phase 1, territorial recovery and consolidation (2013-17); Phase 2, handover and drawdown (2016-18); and Phase 3, drawdown and withdrawal (2017-20).[71] These phases assumed AMISOM would "facilitate the conduct of general elections by 2016."[72] In terms of next steps, the review team recommended the establishment of a new joint AU-UN mission wherein AMISOM would be joined up with a UN peace building office. This new arrangement should ensure joint AU-UN political direction and leadership, that AMISOM had the necessary resources from the UN to pursue its mandate, and that AMISOM retained its multidimensional character and a mandate that allowed it to use the levels of force necessary to recover and secure those areas still under the control of al-Shabaab.[73]

In mid-2013 the UN and AU conducted a joint review of AMISOM as well as the local Somali security forces. It was this report, completed in October 2013, which first made use of a list of benchmarks for assessing whether the UN should deploy a peacekeeping operation to Somalia to take over from AMISOM. The report listed eight benchmarks defined in the following terms:[74]

1. Political agreement, supported by federal and relevant regional/local authorities, on the

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[70]*Report of the African Union Commission on the Strategic Review of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)* (AU internal document, 2013), p.7. Hereafter, *AUC Strategic Review of AMISOM*.

[71]*AUC Strategic Review of AMISOM*, p.9.

[72]*AUC Strategic Review of AMISOM*, p.8.

[73]*AUC Strategic Review of AMISOM*, p.11.

[74]*Report of the Joint African Union–United Nations Mission on the Benchmarks for a UN Peacekeeping Operation in Somalia and Assessment of AMISOM and Somali National Security Forces*(2 October 2013), para.17.

process to finalize the federal vision and formation of administrations and states, including through the constitutional review and the electoral process.

2. Extension of state authority through local administrations in areas recovered from al-Shabaab in line with the provisional constitution, delivering basic security and assistance to the local population.

3. Degrading Al Shaabab to the level that it is no longer an effective force through a comprehensive strategy that includes political, economic and military components. Specifically, Al Shaabab should no longer be capable of undertaking major combat operations or control key military strategic objectives, including financial avenues, and is limited in its ability to conduct attacks.

4. A significant improvement in the physical security situation with 30 percent to 50 percent reduction in Al Shaabab attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Improved control of access of key urban areas, including Mogadishu, Merka, Kismayo, Baidoa and Beletweyne and improved security along main supply routes.

5. SNA is capable of holding the majority of major cities and key roads in south central Somalia achieved by a trained and equipped critical mass, assessed by the mission as at least a 10,000-strong cohesive SNA force, with clear and effective command and control and capable of holding cleared areas.

6. Broad agreement on the major security arrangements, in line with the political process, set by the Federal Government of Somalia within the context of the federal vision agreed by major political stakeholders; in particular on the role and functions of the police service.

7. In view of the envisioned elections in 2016, it is important that at least 4,000 trained SNP elements, provided with basic equipment and

deployed with sustainment, are able to perform basic police functions in the major populations centers of south central, contributing to peaceful elections and maintaining law and order within a more permissive security environment.

8. Consent of the Federal Government and regional authorities, as well as important segments of civil society, to the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation.

Of course, these benchmarks were very far from being met, and hence there was no prospect of the UN deploying a peacekeeping operation in the foreseeable future. This, in turn, reiterated the previous points that for AMISOM to exit successfully, the mission needed to be enhanced but also needed to make more progress in building the capacity of Somalia's own security forces.

The major enhancement to AMISOM came shortly after this benchmarking review in the form of a temporary surge of reinforcements. On 12 November 2013, UN Security Council resolution 2124 authorized a temporary increase in AMISOM's uniformed personnel from 17,731 to 22,126, for between 18 and 24 months.[75] The surge forces were supposed to total 4,395 troops comprising of three infantry battalions (2,550), training team personnel (220), logistics units (1,000), an engineering unit (190), a signals unit (117), a port security unit (312) and a civilian casualty tracking analysis and response cell (CCTARC) (6).[76] Resolution 2124 also reiterated the urgent need for AMISOM to acquire "an appropriate aviation component of up to twelve military helicopters".[77] In practice, the surge did not materialize as planned—most of the surge

resulted in increases in combat troops, not the critical logistics and mobility enablers.

The surge did not change AMISOM's exit strategy but did boost its ability to conduct offensive operations against al-Shabaab. It also led to a new concept of operations for AMISOM, adopted in January 2014. This included a short section on AMISOM's exit strategy.[78] It emphasized the need to improve the capacity of the SNA and SNP so that they could maintain effective security and thereby eventually "enable a safer environment for the political process including reconciliation and elections." The document also envisaged "a reduction in the tempo of combat operations a few months after holding of the general elections planned for 2016". This would allow "for draw down of AMISOM military operations with the possibility of transition to a UN Peacekeeping Operation." But this would depend on "the deployment of agreed local administrations to govern and provide services in newly recovered areas in a timely manner and to coordinate the military, political, governance and service delivery expansion envisaged." The revised concept of operations used the same three phases for AMISOM's subsequent operations as outlined in the AU Commission Strategic Review: Phase 1, territorial recovery and consolidation (2013-17); Phase 2, handover and drawdown (2016-18); and Phase 3, drawdown and withdrawal (2017-20).

In light of these developments, from March 2014, AMISOM conducted four major operations against al-Shabaab, most in conjunction with the SNA and other allied militias. Operation Eagle took place during March 2014 across all AMISOM's sectors, Operation Indian Ocean lasted from late August to November 2014, Operation Ocean Build came next, lasting until July 2015, at which point Ethiopian and Kenyan forces in particular embarked on Operation Juba Corridor. These operations recovered approximately two-dozen towns from al-Shabaab but struggled to implement the stabilization and reconstruction agenda that was intended to bring

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[75] This resolution built on the earlier communiqué of the AU Peace and Security Council, PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCXCIX), 10 October 2013. The surge was extended in UN Security Council resolution 2232 (28 July 2015), para.3.

[76] As set out in "Letter dated 14 October 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council," UN doc. S/2013/606, 14 October 2013.

[77] An aviation component for AMISOM of 12 helicopters was first authorized in the Annex to UN Security Council resolution 2036 (22 February 2012).

[78] *Revised Concept of Operations for the African Union Mission in Somalia (Revised AMISOM CONOPS)* (AU internal document, January 2014), paras 21-22.

a genuine peace dividend to the local populations concerned.

In light of the remaining challenges, in mid-2015, the UN and AU conducted another benchmarking review. This one set out a revised list of the eight benchmarks previously identified in the 2013 review:[79]

1. Political agreement on the finalization of a federal vision and formation of administrations and states.

2. Extension of state authority through local administrations in recovered areas, in line with the provisional constitution.

3. Degrading al-Shabaab to the point that it is no longer an effective force through a comprehensive strategy that includes political, economic and security components.

4. A significant improvement in the physical security situation, with improved control in major cities and access to key urban centers.

5. Improved capability of the Somali security institutions to hold the majority of territory in the areas of operation of AMISOM with a critical mass of trained and equipped security personnel.

6. Broad agreement on the major security arrangements, in line with the political process, set by the FGS within the context of the federal vision agreed by major political stakeholders.

7. Police services with essential training and equipment provide security and basic law and order functions in major population centers, creating an environment conducive for political processes, economic activities and the delivery of basic social services.

8. The consent of the Federal Government and the support of important segments of the Somali population for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

From this overview of AMISOM's official documents and international reviews, we can identify several notable points. First, there has been consistent tactical evolution in the way AMISOM conceptualized its exit strategy while retaining roughly the same strategic objective. Second, AMISOM has evolved with little prospect of the UN deploying a peacekeeping operation and little appetite (at least on the UN side) for a joint AU-UN mission as recommended by the 2013 AU Strategic Review team. This has necessitated greater attention on how to enhance AMISOM and prepare it for a longer haul rather than focus on the modalities of a transition to a UN or a joint AU-UN operation. Third, increasing emphasis has been given to building effective local security capabilities, particularly the SNA and to a lesser extent the SNP. Fourth, AMISOM has identified the need for two interrelated transitions: first, a transition from operations led by external forces to SNA-led operations;[80] and second, a transition from military-led operations to police-led operations, especially in the newly recovered towns and Somalia's regions more generally.[81] For these transitions to occur, AMISOM needs the capabilities to significantly degrade al-Shabaab's combat capabilities and separate its fighters from the local population, and Somali elites and external donors must build an effective set of Somali Security forces.

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

[80] This would likely unfold in four phases: 1) AMISOM leads operations with SNA support; 2) joint AMISOM/SNA operations; 3) SNA leads operations with AMISOM support; and 4) SNA conducting operations alone.

[81] Eventually, there must be an additional transition from policing focused on counterinsurgency against al-Shabaab towards more general community policing.

Practical Challenges to AMISOM's Exit

AMISOM's recent strategic objectives have been to encourage positive outcomes along three interrelated tracks. First, to help facilitate a political settlement that clarifies the federal structures that will govern relations between Somalia's center and its regions. Second, to continue the military offensive against al-Shabaab, aimed at degrading its key combat capabilities and separating its fighters from the local population. And, third, enable stabilization efforts in the recovered areas, by supporting local authorities to deliver a genuine peace dividend to local populations. In order to make progress on these three lines of effort, we suggest that AMISOM must overcome five main practical challenges.[82]

Challenge 1: The Lack of a Political Settlement

AMISOM's most fundamental problem was that the process of constructing a federal state in Somalia not only failed to make sufficient progress but sometimes actively generated conflict between the subsequent centers of power. AMISOM was mandated to support the federal government but the mission had to operate in a context defined by the lack of an overarching political settlement setting out how Somalia should be governed and by whom. The underlying problem, as the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia put it, was the inability of "Somalia's political elite to prioritize the long-term goals of State-building over the short-term capture of State resources."[83]

The lack of elite agreement left Somalia without a consensus on some fundamental issues. First, until very recently there was no consensus over how to form the next political dispensation, and therefore no way to get genuine buy-in and support from Somali citizens and international donors alike. When a decision was finally made,

Somalia's external partners ended up endorsing the Federal Government's version, despite the fact this was rejected by important regions such as Puntland as well as Somaliland. Second, with regard to security, Somalia was left without a national security strategy setting out the vision for and roles of its security forces. Without such a document there could be no clarity on how to build national security forces and what form they should take.

As we discuss below, the Guulwade (Victory) Plan, which emerged in 2015, was a poor substitute. Third, the numerous rounds of political infighting amongst Somalia's political elites distracted them from building a genuinely national army and police force and taking the fight to al-Shabaab.

Instead of national political consensus to take on al-Shabaab, AMISOM was stuck in the middle of bickering amongst Somalia's politicians over how to interpret the country's provincial constitution, which was finally adopted in 2012.[84] In Mogadishu, MPs lost confidence in the executive, twice attempted to impeach the president and regularly changed prime ministers. In the regions, conflict occurred along two axes: against the federal government and among different actors struggling to gain power within particular regions themselves. The problem for the federal government was that although it was recognized as the legitimate sovereign authority by most external actors it lacked the power to impose its preferred political outcomes on other regional actors. As a result, several regional administrations emerged, sometimes generating intense conflict between the local actors and the federal government. The first Interim Regional Administration (IRA) was established in August 2013 when Ahmed Madobe effectively defeated the Federal Government in a power struggle to control the Interim Jubbaland Administration.[85] Since then, the Interim South West

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[82] This section draws from Paul D. Williams, "AMISOM Under Review," *RUSI Journal*, 160:2 (forthcoming 2016).
[83] UN doc. S/2015/801, 19 October 2015, p.6.

[84] The provisional constitution is available here http://unpos.unmissions.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=RkJTOSpoMME=
[85] See Bruton and Williams, *Counterinsurgency in Somalia*, pp.70-71.

Administration formed in June 2014, the Interim Galmudug Administration in July 2015, and the Interim Hiraan and Middle Shabelle Administration should be up and running by March 2016.

The process of establishing these administrations created considerable (and sometimes violent) conflict among the participants. For AMISOM, this generated several headaches. First, it distracted national leaders from implementing President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud's top three priorities, which he had defined as "security, security and security." Second, it gave AMISOM an additional set of tasks related to providing security and logistical support at the numerous regional conferences and meetings across south-central Somalia that took place in the process of establishing the IRAs. The mission did this successfully but it diverted resources from the offensives against al-Shabaab. Third, it was notable that most of the influential players in the process of establishing the IRAs derived their power from clan affiliations rather than political parties or religious movements. This highlighted that al-Shabaab was not the only security threat facing the FGS and AMISOM. Indeed, clan conflicts over the newly recovered towns, inter-communal clashes and fighting over land and water resources had often intensified after al-Shabaab withdrew from its strongholds.[86]

Fourth, AMISOM's mandate to support the Federal Government sometimes put it at odds with the local regional power brokers who saw the SNA as a clan dominated institution.[87] The situation was made even more complicated and confusing when certain AMISOM contingents ignored that mandate and struck up unofficial relationships with those actors, some of which put them in conflict with the FGS. In 2013, for example, Kenya's support for Ahmed Madobe pitted one of AMISOM's national contingents against the Federal Government. Tensions

between the FGS and the Kenyan contingent in AMISOM flared up again in late 2015after the latest round of allegations that Kenyan troops in Kismayo were involved in illicit smuggling activities, which had the indirect effect of supporting al-Shabaab.[88]

Fifth, as discussed in more detail below, the lack of clarity about Somalia's national security strategy made it impossible (for outsiders or insiders) to build a capable, legitimate, and inclusive set of Somalia National Security Forces. AMISOM was therefore left without an effective local security partner and had to fight al-Shabaab while walking through the political minefield of forces established by the IRAs, other clan militias and additional armed groups such as Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamma'a. In such circumstances, AMISOM's attempts to work with the FGS to deliver stabilization programs and extend the Federal Government's authority into the regions was always as likely to generate conflict as it was to build peace.

Finally, failure to finalize the constitution and political infighting among Somali elites also made it impossible to hold general elections in Somalia in 2016. This also negatively affected AMISOM's objective to pacify the country and implement its planned exit strategy. In July 2015, the FGS finally publicly gave up on the original Vision 2016 idea of holding one-person, one-vote elections. Instead, it opted to pursue a process of intra-elite consultations and selection aimed at enhancing the legitimacy of whatever government emerged from that process.[89]

Challenge 2: The Threat of Al-Shabaab

Although al-Shabaab is a significantly weaker movement than it was during its golden age

[86] See *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council resolution 2182 (2014): Somalia*, UN doc. S/2015/801, 19 October 2015, p.6.

[87] See, for example, Tristan McConnell, "Inside the fight for Somalia's future," *GlobalPost*, 29 May 2014, http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/140528/inside-the-fight-somalias-future

[88] These were intensified by the publication of *Black and White: Kenya's Criminal Racket in Somalia* (Nairobi: Journalists for Justice, November 2015). Arguments over the location of the Somali-Kenya land and maritime borders also play a role in this dispute.

[89] See The Somalia National Consultative Forum on the Electoral Process in 2016, *Facilitation Guide* (no date), https://www.scribd.com/doc/287843236/Facilitation-Guide

(2009-10), it still poses a deadly threat to AMISOM, the Somali security forces and government officials and civilians.[90] AMISOM's offensive operations during 2014 and 2015 did make life more uncomfortable for al-Shabaab: the insurgents lost several senior leaders (mainly through US strikes) and numerous towns and ports, which, in turn, forced them to generate financial resources from a narrower set of activities such as zakat (taxation) which was much more unpopular with locals than skimming profits from the illicit trades in charcoal and sugar.

But in other respects the AMISOM/SNA operations did not deal a major blow to al-Shabaab's combat capabilities, particularly its Amniyat forces, its "technicals" and the new Abu Zubair Battalion that reportedly conducted the assaults on the AMISOM bases in Leego and Janaale in June and September 2015 respectively. Nor did AMISOM's operations completely stop al-Shabaab benefitting from the illicit trades in charcoal and sugar. Most recently, al-Shabaab demonstrated its continued ability to overrun AMISOM forward bases when its Saleh Nabhan brigade captured Kenya's El Adde base on 15 January 2016, and to wreak havoc in Mogadishu with an attack on Lido beach a week later. In this sense, AMISOM continued to face an adaptable enemy that was down but not out.

First of all, al-Shabaab usually chose to surrender most of its settlements without a fight. Before they withdrew, al-Shabaab often left these towns in a desperate state of humanitarian crisis. In some towns the militants destroyed wells. In its former headquarters of Barawe, the militants completely gutted the hospital of its equipment. As a result, a single SNA mobile clinic was the only medical care available to the local population.[91] Having retreated, al-Shabaab fighters would often set up camp several kilometers outside the recovered towns and return for harassing raids as well as set up roadblocks and taxation points along the entry routes as a means of continuing their control over the local population. Alternatively, the militants would sometimes force local people to leave with them, leaving AMISOM to inherit ghost towns. AMISOM was also not well prepared to deal with the IED threats and its main supply routes were left vulnerable, presenting problems not only for AMISOM, SNA, and UNSOA personnel but also humanitarian relief supplies, which could reduce local reliance on al-Shabaab.[92]

Second, AMISOM's operations prompted some members of al-Shabaab to relocate. Some of its forces moved north into Puntland while it dramatically expanded its presence and influence in Kenya. Indeed, one of al-Shabaab's recent propaganda videos even extolled the virtues of jihadi life in Kenya's Boni forest where its fighters could feast on giraffe and other local wildlife.[93] There was also renewed internal debate within al-Shabaab about its position in the global jihadimarketplace. Despite some flirtation with ISIL by small factions in Puntland, most of al-Shabaab remains wedded to al-Qa'ida.

Third, al-Shabaab's dwindling political fortunes in Somalia pushed it to conduct a war of destabilization rather than attempt to build a genuine alternative form of government to the federal process. Indeed, it is important to recall that al-Shabaab's voice hardly registered in any of the debates about the IRAs, nor did it succeed in disrupting them. This highlights the militants' political insignificance in the ongoing process of reconstructing the Somali state. However, this has also forced al-Shabaab to morph into a more extreme transnational network. Kenya has borne the brunt of this transformation.[94] As such, al-Shabaab needs only to survive and launch reasonably regular attacks to be deemed a success.

[90] The phrase is from StigJarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia* (London: Hurst, 2013), chapter 6.

[91] Author's confidential interview, November 2014.

[92] Author's confidential interview, AMISOM official, June 2014.

[93] "The Tourism of my Ummah is Jihad" (Al-Kataib Foundation, 2015).

[94] David M. Anderson and Jacob McKnight, "Kenya at war: Al-Shabaab and its enemies in Eastern Africa," *African Affairs*, 114:454 (2015), pp.1-27.

Fourth, militarily, al-Shabaab proved able to exhibit a flexible range of tactics. In Kenya, it massacred civilians in a shopping mall, small villages, quarries and at a university campus. In some cases it also began separating Christians (who were executed) and Muslims (who were sometimes spared) as part of its propaganda. In Somalia, of course, almost all al-Shabaab's victims are Muslims. In Mogadishu it focused on assassinations against members of parliament and senior security forces personnel and attacked symbolic, high-profile targets, frequently hotels. Against AMISOM, it conducted ambushes, IED attacks and raids, particularly along the mission's main supply routes. But it also infiltrated AMISOM's main base at Mogadishu International Airport and proved capable of larger-scale conventional attacks. Al-Shabaab fighters defeated Jubbaland forces at Koday island (in November 2014), but its most high-profile and largest attacks occurred against AMISOM's forward operating bases in Leego (June 2015), Janaale (September 2015) and El Adde (January 2016), resulting in 54, 19 and over 100 AMISOM fatalities respectively.[95]

In sum, al-Shabaab lost the political significance and numerous settlements it once held in Somalia, but it remained a deadly foe, able to conduct operations cheaply and effectively, in part because of its ability to infiltrate government forces and in part because its freedom of movement enabled it to choose the time and place of its attacks against overstretched and disoriented AMISOM and SNA forces.[96] To separate al-Shabaab fighters from ordinary civilians and deny them freedom of movement, the SNA and AMISOM must win the support of the local population. This, in turn, requires AMISOM to fix some of its own internal problems.

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[95]Author's confidential interviews with AU officials, July, September 2015 and January 2016.
[96] The extent to which there is ongoing collusion between some members of the Somali political elite, including members of parliament, and *al-Shabaab* remains an open but important question.

Challenge 3: AMISOM's Internal Problems

It is important to remember that the AMISOM that exists on paper in the UN Security Council resolutions and AU communiqués is not the same AMISOM that exists in reality. The real AMISOM suffers from several major internal problems that have hindered its ability to effectively implement its mandated tasks.

AMISOM's first internal challenge is its lack of military enablers. Although African governments and external donors regularly made statements supporting the mission, they failed to deliver the resources required to effectively take the fight to al-Shabaab while simultaneously supporting the stabilization of the south-central regions. Specifically, AMISOM was forced to conduct its offensive operations without sufficient military helicopters, armored vehicles, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, and a quick reaction strike force (ideally comprised of air mobile troops) that could operate across AMISOM's sectors. All these resources have been authorized in previous UN Security Council resolutions, some more than three years ago. Yet AU member states and external donors have consistently failed to deliver them to the commanders in the field.

The lack of military helicopters in particular has left AMISOM without the ability to strike al-Shabaab in depth. It enabled the militants to simply retreat before AMISOM's greater firepower, while retaining the luxury of freedom of movement. Hence, al-Shabaab remained able to target the new AMISOM/SNA bases at the time and place of their choosing. Although both Ethiopia and Kenya deployed their own air assets inside Somalia, they were not part of AMISOM and hence were not able to deliver sustained or coordinated cross-sector operations. Another dimension of this problem was that AMISOM's success in capturing about two dozen towns over-stretched its forces and left its main supply routes and some of its forward operating bases vulnerable. Again, helicopters would have been useful to provide rapid response and protection of these supply routes and bases.

The continued under-resourcing of the UNSOA and the stark differences between a UN organizational culture focused on peacekeeping and the war-fighting environment in Somalia also left many gaps in the logistical support needed to mount sustained, effective and coordinated offensive operations against al-Shabaab.[97]

A second challenge stemmed from several interrelated problems in AMISOM's command and control structures. One was the lack of centralized control over the operation. As one senior AMISOM commander put it, AMISOM's force headquarters had command but no control over its national contingents in the regional sectors.[98] Another was inadequate cooperation among the troop-contributing countries themselves as well as with the force headquarters. This left AMISOM's operations fragmented and lacking the cohesion necessary to address the kind of threat al-Shabaab posed. For example, al-Shabaab fighters had been able to hide in the areas between AMISOM's sector boundaries because operational coordination was so poor between the mission's different contingents.[99] Finally, there also appear to have been significant lapses in the command of particular bases, most notably perhaps the Ugandan forward operating base at Janaale, which was overrun by al-Shabaab fighters on 1 September 2015.[100]

AMISOM's third problem was its inability to roll out effective stabilization programs in the liberated settlements. This stemmed from two factors. First, AMISOM was primarily a military operation and did not have sufficient numbers of the appropriate personnel including CIMIC officers, police, and relevant civilian experts. Second, as noted above, the FGS, the SNA and

Somali police force were unable to perform the necessary tasks, which left AMISOM struggling to roll out its planned stabilization programs. This left unconsolidated its territorial gains and hence the real prospect that they could be reversed.

Misconduct by some of its personnel was AMISOM's fourth internal problem. This came in several forms, but arguably the most damaging were the killing of local civilians and allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Not only did it tarnish AMISOM's relations with the local population, but al-Shabaab used such abuse as part of its recruitment propaganda. The most prominent recent example of AMISOM personnel killing civilians came on 31 July 2015 when the AU acknowledged that Ugandan members of AMISOM killed seven civilians in Marka town. Three AMISOM personnel were subsequently indicted for this incident.[101]

With regard to sexual exploitation and abuse, in September 2014 a major controversy erupted when AMISOM's reputation was badly damaged by the publication of a Human Rights Watch report that alleged AMISOM personnel had sexually exploited and abused local civilians and had been doing so for some time with impunity.[102] Such abuses and widespread local perceptions that such abuse continued made it more difficult for AMISOM to build a strong relationship with the local population. After initially denying the allegations, between November 2014 and February 2015, the AU and AMISOM conducted an investigation, which (completed in March 2015) also found evidence that AMISOM personnel had sexually exploited and abused some local civilians.[103] Unfortunately,

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[97] See "Letter dated 7 October 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council," S/2015/762, 7 October 2015.

[98] Author's interview with AMISOM official, Nairobi, April 2015.

[99] Author's interviews with AU and US officials, Nairobi, April 2015.

[100] Author's confidential interviews with AU and US officials, September 2015.

[101] "Statement by AU Special Representative for Somalia and Head of AMISOM addressing the 31st July 2015 incident in Marka, Lower Shabelle Region of Somalia," 21 August 2015, http://amisom-au.org/2015/08/statement-by-the-african-union-special-representative-for-somalia-and-head-of-amisom-addressing-the-31st-july-2015-incident-in-marka-lower-shabelle-region-of-somalia/

[102] *The Power these men have over us: Sexual exploitation and abuse by African Union Forces in Somalia* (Human Rights Watch, September 2014).

[103] "The African Union strongly rejects the Conclusions contained in the Report of theHuman Rights Watch on

the subsequent report was of such a poor standard that it was never publicly released, and instead the AU issued a detailed press release summarizing the principal findings and recommendations.[104] The recommendations included that AMISOM's Conduct and Discipline Office must monitor all reported cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and that the AU Commission should establish an Office of Internal Oversight Services to investigate such issues.

Finally, AMISOM may also face issues of reduced morale because of the lack of payments to its personnel. The Ugandan press, for example, reported that its soldiers had not been paid for nine months during 2015.[105] This issue is likely to intensify if the EU implements its decision to cut the allowances paid to AU uniformed personnel by 20 percent from January 2016 and the AU cannot find an alternative source of finance to fill the gap.[106]

Challenge 4: Problems in the Somali National Army

AMISOM's limitations in the field were amplified by the failings of its principal partner, the SNA. Effective operations against al-Shabaab clearly required good coordination between AMISOM and the SNA. However, this was not always possible because of the dire state of many SNA units. The FGS finally publicly acknowledged the SNA's many problems in March 2015 when it launched the Guulwade (Victory) Plan to revamp

its army.[107] The plan recognized that the SNA was little more than a collection of clan militias without a functioning, centralized command and control structure. It argued that in order to fight effectively the SNA needed better equipment, infrastructure, organization and morale.

In the short-term, the SNA badly needed more mobility and firepower to conduct effective operations. But the plan also noted that the SNA faced serious political obstacles to becoming a genuinely national force. Most notably, the SNA would need to draw troops from all over the country, which had not previously been the case. An effective SNA would also require a massive political, even cultural, shift wherein its forces shed their clan identities and operated instead as professional soldiers loyal to the Somali state wherever in the country they were deployed. The Guulwade Plan then spelled out how external actors could best support the 10,900 SNA who were supporting AMISOM's operations (as set out in AMISOM's January 2014 Concept of Operations). The plan also lamented the often uncoordinated support and training packages that Somali security forces received from different countries and international organizations.

Reading between the lines, the Guulwade Plan reflected the fact that during 2014 and 2015 the SNA suffered from three fundamental problems, which, in turn, further eroded AMISOM's effectiveness. These were clan dynamics, technical and infrastructural gaps and problems related to command and control and political leadership.[108]

Among the principal technical and infrastructural shortages for the SNA are mobility (especially

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allegations on sexual exploitation and abuse by AMISOM," AU press release, 8 September 2014, http://au.int/en/content/african-union-strongly-rejects-conclusions-contained-report-human-rights-watch-allegations-s

[104] "The AU releases the key findings and recommendations of the report of investigations on sexual exploitation and abuse in Somalia," AU press release, 21 April 2015, http://cpauc.au.int/en/sites/default/files/auc.com_.investigation.sea_.amisom.21.04.2015.pdf

[105] RisdelKasasira, "UPDF in Somalia not paid for nine months," Daily Monitor (Uganda), 6 September 2015, http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/UPDF-in-Somalia-not-paid-for-nine-months/-/688334/2859660/-/93v1xq/-/index.html

[106] UN doc. S/PV.7551, 9 November 2015, p.7.

[107] The plan was endorsed by Somalia's National Security Council on 31 March 2015. In June 2015, the Somali federal government launched its Heegan (readiness) plan for the police force.

[108] The Somali National Police suffers from a similar set of problems and has, to date, functioned almost entirely in Benadir region around Mogadishu with far too many old, "grey" officers from the SiadBarre era.

armored vehicles); all types of ammunition;[109] heavy weapons; communications equipment; field defenses; as well as specialist vehicles such as ambulances and water trucks. The SNA also suffered major shortages and problems related to training, logistics capacity, vehicle maintenance facilities, arms and ammunition storage facilities, medical support (medical facilities and ambulances) and barracks for its troops. The FGS also regularly failed to pay salaries to its armed forces. The combined effect of these gaps was to significantly reduce morale. The Guulwade Plan estimated that it would cost $85m to fill these gaps for the 10,900 SNA troops concerned. In reality, it is unlikely that more money alone would have produced much better results in the absence of a political settlement between the FGS and the IRAs.

The SNA's second problem related to clan dynamics. As noted above, the SNA remained largely a collection of militias that owed their principal allegiance to individual commanders and clans and regional formations rather than the federal government. Indeed, as a consequence, it is also important to recall that many of the weapons belong to the clans rather than the federal government. In addition, fighters loyal to the various IRAs were not integrated into the SNA. Nor was it apparent how and when this would happen and which fighters should count as part of the 10,900 identified in the Guulwade Plan as working with AMISOM.

All these issues fed into the third problem of political leadership and command and control. It is difficult to lead an army if one does not know what its roles and purposes are supposed to be and how it fits in with other elements of the security sector. Yet Somalia still lacks a national security strategy, without which it is impossible to plan for what type of national army is required and what roles it will play in relation to the other parts of the security apparatus such as the police, intelligence services and navy. Another problem

of command stems from the multiple and fluid loyalties of many of its troops. Without genuine loyalty to the Somali state there can be no effective command and control structure for the SNA as a whole. With regard to leadership, Somalia not only had a missing generation of junior officers and non-commissioned officers which will take considerable time to develop and train, some of its senior military leaders proved time and again they were corrupt, which undermined the ability of outsiders to build a professional military force.[110] For example, the inability or unwillingness to address the endemic corruption among senior officials connected to the SNA made some external donors reluctant to provide the SNA with the tools it needed to lead the fight against al-Shabaab. The British government, for instance, would not provide lethal equipment to the SNA out of concerns about lack of oversight and the potential for the diversion of arms and ammunition.[111] Similarly, the UN Security Council granted only a partial lifting of the arms embargo on Somalia, which still prevents the SNA from purchasing heavy weapons. This has left the SNA in the rather odd position of having fewer heavy weapons than several clan militias.[112]

It is obviously very difficult to simultaneously build a new army and fight a war with it. But as even this brief survey makes clear, the problems of building an effective national army are not purely technical; they are inherently political. Without a political settlement no amount of training and equipment will produce an effective SNA. The lack of a political settlement on national governance therefore left AMISOM without an effective local security partner.

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[109] Although note that the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia concluded the SNA should have received about nine million rounds of ammunition. UN doc. S/2015/801, 19 October 2015, para.136.

[110] On misappropriation and corruption in the Somali security sector see UN doc. S/2015/801, 19 October 2015, paras 67-69.
[111] See the comments of the UK Ambassador to Somalia on Twitter, 4 November 2015, https://twitter.com/harrietlmathews/status/66190317931 1878145
[112] For example, the SNA does not own a single tank whereas several clan militias possess multiple tanks, mostly acquired after the collapse of SiadBarre's regime in 1991. Author's communication with FGS official, 2 November 2015.

Challenge 5: Negative Local Perceptions of AMISOM

Although some AMISOM survey data suggests that after a bad start, Somali perceptions of the mission have improved, the AU force struggles to consistently win the trust and support of the Somali populace, its security forces, and even some of the country's political elites.[113] In our view, negative perceptions of AMISOM are increasing. They stem from several sources including views that AMISOM has become a vehicle for Somalia's neighbors to pursue their own selfish agendas, a money-making enterprise for its contributing countries which has reduced the incentive to defeat al-Shabaab and a source of harm to Somali civilians as well as a distraction from the more important job of building effective Somali security forces.

Within the SNA, there is significant resentment towards AMISOM evident within both the leadership and rank and file. For the now aging professional SNA commanders who were part of Somalia's army before 1990, the idea that outside troops are asked to secure their country is a reminder of how weak the Somali state remains. It is particularly galling that it is Ethiopia and Kenya currently playing leading roles in AMISOM, including the current offensive operations against al-Shabaab. Indeed, some senior officers describe the current situation as the effective occupation of Somalia by Ethiopian and Kenyan troops.[114] The goal of these outside powers is said to be keeping Somalia weak and manipulating the formation of local regional administrations in areas under their influence in order to increase their leverage over the Somali federal government.

Over the last couple of years, Kenya has been the focus of most Somali criticism, in part because its forces were seen as operating with little knowledge about the local populations and in part because of accusations that Kenyan troops were involved in the illicit trade in charcoal and sugar that were indirectly benefitting al-Shabaab.[115] Tensions between the Somali and Kenyan authorities grew after Nairobi began issuing concessions in the oil-rich Indian Ocean maritime border that Somalia claims as its own. In mid-2014, this prompted Somalia to ask the International Court of Justice in The Hague to determine the maritime boundary between the two countries.

On the other hand, for pragmatic reasons, the fact that AMISOM is more professional than the Somali army has led Somalia's political leaders to depend on the foreign troops rather than their own army. This has further demoralized Somali soldiers. Such dependence on AMISOM may also act as a disincentive for some Somali politicians to criticize misconduct by AMISOM personnel.

Rank and file SNA troops are also well aware that they are subordinate to AMISOM in terms of power, influence and stature, even though they have often fought alongside AU forces since 2009 without the luxury of sophisticated weapons, armored vehicles, communications equipment, regular salaries, medical care or even barracks. Their AMISOM counterparts remain better armed, better fed, better protected, better supplied, better cared for when they are wounded and better paid. Somali commanders have unsurprisingly become critical of the proportion of external resources being allocated to AMISOM and its contributing countries in comparison to the SNA and Somali national police.

AMISOM has proved unable to protect all Somali parliamentarians, especially when they are outside legislature sessions (since 2012 more than four percent of parliamentarians have been killed). This and other forms of violence has led

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[113] Polling of just over 1,000 adults carried out during March and April 2013 in Mogadishu for the AU-UN Information Support Team suggested that 59 percent felt that AMISOM had been "very" or "fairly" effective in providing security for the local community. Cited in Paul D. Williams, "Stabilising Somalia," *RUSI Journal*, 159:2 (2014), p.57.
[114] Confidential interview with serving SNA general, Mogadishu, December 2015.

[115] See, for example, the reports of the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Journalists for Justice, *Black and White*.

some Somali parliamentarians to openly criticize AMISOM's presence, question its performance and raise doubts about the mission's long-term prospects.[116] Civil society and diaspora groups have also regularly voiced similar opinions, including that AMISOM is absorbing resources that would be better given to local organizations and trying to tackle too wide a range of non-peacekeeping issues, including holding workshops on leadership, citizenship and even female genital mutilation.

AMISOM has also been criticized by Somali civilians. Most ordinary Somalis who live in towns with an AMISOM presence have limited interactions with the peacekeepers or see little direct benefit from the AU mission, which focuses its protection efforts on top government officials and around vital strategic facilitates such as Mogadishu's seaport and airport. Misconduct by AMISOM personnel has been a major source of complaints. As noted above, misconduct has assumed various forms, including the killing of civilians, sexual exploitation and abuse and engaging in illicit commerce (including allegations of the diversion of food, fuel supplies and armaments as well as participation in the illicit trades in charcoal and sugar). Civilians living in some of the newly recovered settlements have also criticized AMISOM's inability to prevent al-Shabaab forces blockading their towns.[117] The abrupt withdrawal of AMISOM forces from some of the newly liberated towns and forward positions has also drawn anger for exposing Somali security forces, civilian administrators, and ordinary citizens to grave risks, especially those who publicly welcomed the arrival of AU contingents. AMISOM's decision to commandeer various private and public properties and convert them into military bases – including the University of Kismayo and Stadium Mogadishu – has also become a source of public debate and sometimes criticism.[118]

More generally, Somali citizens increasingly hold negative views about the current federal government and note that these failings happened under AMISOM's watch.[119] Nor is it lost on Somalis that most of AMISOM's major contributing countries are hardly role models for good governance that set a good example of state-building for the federal government or IRAs to follow.

Future Scenarios and AMISOM's Exit Options

In his final interview as the UN special representative in Somalia, Nicholas Kay noted that while the timetable for AMISOM's departure "is clearly impossible to fix rigidly … it will be reviewed again at the end of 2016." After that, he continued, "I think there is an expectation that AMISOM numbers will start to fall."[120]

When the time comes for AMISOM to leave Somalia, it will most likely occur in one of three ways:

1. Transitioning to a UN peacekeeping operation;

2. Withdrawing and handing over directly to Somali security forces without the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation; or

3. Transitioning into a joint AU-UN mission before handing over to Somalia security forces as recommended by the AU's 2013 Strategic Review.

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[116] Faisal Roble, "The town hall meeting that shook Somalia," *WardheerNews*, 17 October 2015, http://www.wardheernews.com/the-town-hall-meeting-that-shook-somalia/

[117] See, for example, "Somalia: Humanitarian situation in besieged town sours," *Horseed Media*, 15 July 2015, https://horseedmedia.net/2015/07/15/somalia-humanitarian-situation-in-besieged-town-sours/

[118] See, for example, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7BtKoDHrgY

[119] In a recent Heritage Institute survey, only five percent of voters in five major urban centers wanted an extension of the current government and 60 percent thought it was a weak or failed administration. Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, *Selection of the Next Somalia Parliament: The Citizens' View* (December 2015), http://www.heritageinstitute.org/selection-of-the-next-somalia-parliament-the-citizens-view/

[120] *Voice of America*, "UN Envoy."

Figure 3 depicts these different exit pathways. AMISOM forces could transition into a UN peacekeeping operation or a joint AU-UN operation that would work alongside UNSOM to support the Somali security forces until they are able to function alone. Or, AMISOM could withdraw without transitioning into a UN peacekeeping or joint AU-UN operation, leaving behind UNSOM and probably various training missions to support the Somali security forces. Either way, assuming al-Shabaab continues to exist, its leaders would likely use any sign of AMISOM withdrawal to claim a victory.

Figure 3: AMISOM's Possible Exit Pathways
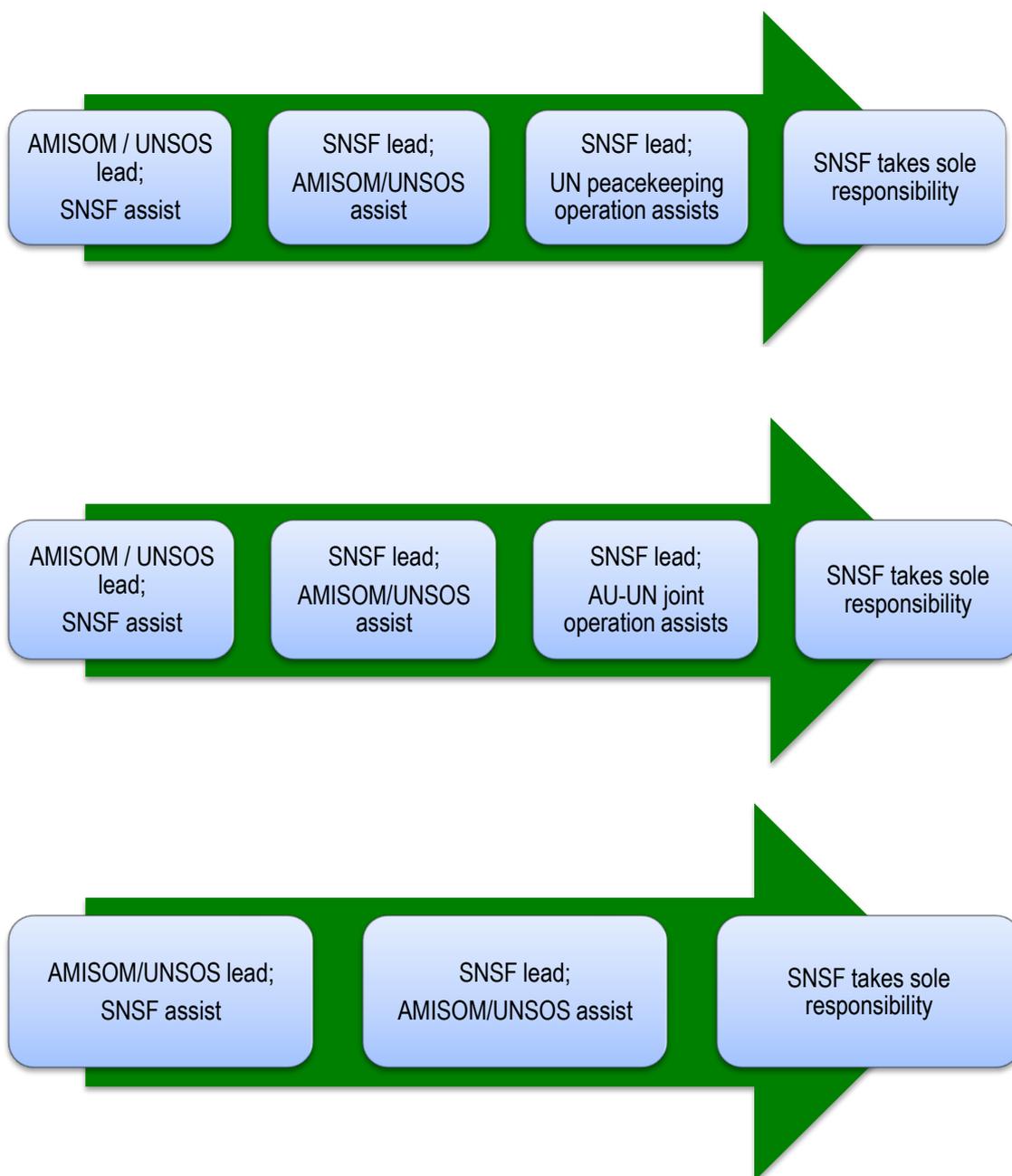
This section briefly sketches six scenarios in order to illustrate the type of issues that could influence AMISOM's exit. Scenarios are not intended to predict the future but rather provide a plausible alternative world which might help policymakers decide how to allocate their resources within these worlds and think about key relationships if such circumstances did arise. These scenarios revolve around the prospect of continuity, a political settlement in south-central Somalia, an enhanced or a weakened AMISOM and a financial shortfall.

Scenario 1: Muddling through

Probably the most likely scenario, at least for the short-term, is for AMISOM to continue on its current trajectory. While AMISOM's external partners would like to see a political settlement that addresses all of the challenges discussed above, they prove unable to persuade local elites to agree. Hence Somalia is left to struggle with poor governance, significant competition between the center and regions, no national security strategy as well as an evolving threat from al-Shabaab. AMISOM's international partners continue to fail to provide the mission with the capabilities it needs to significantly degrade al-Shabaab's fighters, separate them from the local population and severely restrict their movements. Despite heated debates in some of the AMISOM contributing states about withdrawing, they continue to assess that participation generates more benefits than costs. In sum, AMISOM is forced to continue but without being able to overcome any of the major challenges we identified. As local resentment grows, al-Shabaab will be emboldened to continue its current tactics.

Scenario 2: Political settlement excluding al-Shabaab

One positive scenario would involve a political settlement being struck that clarifies and finalizes Somalia's constitution, the roadmap for the next political dispensation, and paves the way for a settled relationship between the Federal Government and Somalia's regions (Somaliland remains outside the deal but this has little impact on AMISOM). This would send a strong signal of political unity that would have two major positive effects for AMISOM. First, it would facilitate the development of a genuinely national set of legitimate and inclusive Somali security forces by clarifying the military integration process of the regional forces into the SNA/SNP. Second, it would effectively exclude al-Shabaab from playing a major political role in Somalia's future and consign the militants to pursuing a war of destabilization and terror, eventually causing them to lose even more support inside Somalia and across the diaspora. It could, however, prompt al-Shabaab to seek expansion and recruits across other parts of eastern Africa, notably Kenya or as worst-case scenario be absorbed by ISIL.

Scenario 3: Political settlement including al-Shabaab

An alternative scenario involves a similar political settlement being struck but this time including representatives from al-Shabaab. Following the outcome of the Somali National Consultative Forum on the 2016 electoral process and intensifying local criticisms of AMISOM, a new administration assumes office that is more critical of the AU force in general and some of its troop-contributing countries in particular. The new leadership also takes a more conservative line on the implementation of Shari'a law and declares their intention to make peace with al-Shabaab or at least major factions within it. In this scenario AMISOM's central rationale (to reduce the threat of al-Shabaab) would be removed if the militants were brought into the political process. In the event that some small spoiler factions of al-Shabaab refused to make peace with the new Somali government – perhaps those that pledged loyalty to ISIL – it would still mean a considerably reduced role for AMISOM.

Scenario 4: AMISOM enabled

A fourth scenario involves AMISOM finally receiving some of the force enablers it has lacked. Most important among them would be its aviation component of a dozen or so military helicopters, more armored vehicles for its troops, better specialist units, including in engineering, medical support, logistics and intelligence-gathering. An enhanced AMISOM would be more capable of striking al-Shabaab from depth and better able to protect its main supply routes and respond quickly to attacks on its forward operating bases. In this scenario, al-Shabaab would suffer a major loss of its main combat capabilities, including its technicals, its Amniyat forces, the Saleh Nabhan brigade and its new Abu Zubair Battalion. Its freedom of movement would also be dramatically curtailed and its fighters would become increasingly isolated from the local population. This would leave al-Shabaab as a small, extremist but still deadly outfit capable of conducting deadly raids and harassment operations but consigned to being a marginal player in Somalia's future. Dealing with this kind of al-Shabaab threat would increasingly become a role for the Somali police and intelligence services rather than the army or AMISOM. Once again, al-Shabaab could seek to expand its operations into Kenya and elsewhere across east Africa or amalgamate with ISIL.

Scenario 5: AMISOM reduced

In this scenario one or more of AMISOM's troop-contributing countries withdraws from the mission. This has already happened in December 2014 when the Sierra Leonean battalion withdrew because of concerns about the Ebola virus back home. The loss of one battalion did not have a major effect on AMISOM. However, if Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya or Uganda left the mission, their larger contingents would not be so easy to replace. Two illustrative scenarios involving the Burundian and Kenyan contingents in AMISOM will suffice to make the point. We do not think either scenario is particularly likely.

One scenario involves the withdrawal of the Burundian contingent. This would most likely follow a significant escalation of violence and perhaps outbreak of civil war in Burundi, which might cause President Pierre Nkurunziza to recall his troops, or the African Union to ask them to leave AMISOM in the event that it wanted to authorize a forcible humanitarian intervention under Article 4(h) of its Constitutive Act.[121] In this scenario over 5,000 Burundian troops would return home, leaving AMISOM with a large gap to fill in Sector 5. AMISOM could look to replace these troops with soldiers or police officers from other AU member states. Deploying more police officers would help the proposed reconfiguration of AMISOM from military-led to police-led operations in more parts of Somalia. Alternatively, AMISOM could return to roughly its pre-surge numbers and the resources could be transferred to the Somali security forces. However, until there is some form a political settlement scenario, some external donors remain reluctant to invest directly in the Somali security forces.

In a second variant of this scenario, Kenyan troops withdraw. One version involves the government in Nairobi relent to public pressure to withdraw its forces after the El Adde attack or another similar incident. Alternatively, a major diplomatic confrontation erupts between the Somali and Kenyan governments, either related to allegations of illicit smuggling and other abuses by Kenyan troops in and around Kismayo or the conflict over the international border between the two countries. The Somali federal government becomes increasingly adamant that Kenyan troops are no longer acceptable within AMISOM and the authorities in Nairobi finally agree to withdraw. Once again, AMISOM finds itself missing approximately 4,000 troops in its much more volatile Sector 2. AMISOM looks to Ethiopian troops already operating in this region but currently outside AU command and control to

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[121]Following the internal instability in Burundi, in mid-December 2015 the AU announced its intention to deploy a 5,000 strong peacekeeping force in Burundi to help protect civilians and facilitate the inter-Burundian dialogue. See Paul D. Williams, "The African Union's Coercive Diplomacy in Burundi," *IPI Global Observatory*, 18 December 2015, http://theglobalobservatory.org/2015/12/burundi-african-union-maprobu-arusha-accords/

fill the gap. This new configuration leaves over one-third of the AMISOM force comprised of Ethiopian soldiers, a scenario that could embolden and reinvigorate al-Shabaab, tarnish the Somali government's legitimacy and image and could anger Somali nationalists, particularly vocal citizens in the diaspora.

Scenario 6: Financial austerity

Financial support for AMISOM has always been unpredictable and cobbled together from several sources, most notably key bilateral support to the contributing countries, the UN and the EU. In this scenario AMISOM is forced to operate on a reduced budget because some of its financial support is cut. The EU's recent decision to cut by 20 percent the money it gives to pay the allowances of AMISOM personnel from January 2016 is the first example. As more donors begin looking more favorably at the cheaper option of investing in local Somali forces instead, the AU mission struggles to sustain its budget. Its forces start to display a drop in morale as their allowances are reduced. This, in turn, forces the AU to intensify its ongoing efforts to find more indigenous sources of finance for its peace operations. In Addis Ababa and New York these developments intensify the debate about whether the UN should pay for African-led peace operations authorized by the UN Security Council from the UN's assessed peacekeeping budget. The AU's current aspiration is that it would pay 25 percent of its peace and security costs (including operations) by 2020, but these developments lead to it speeding up the timetable and calling on its member states to generate the funds more quickly than initially envisaged.[122] In the interim period, AMISOM's contributing countries have to choose whether to make up the gap in funds themselves, or not.

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[122] Decision on the budget of the African Union for the 2016 financial year, AU doc. Assembly/AU/3(XXV), Johannesburg, 14-15 June 2015.

Policy Considerations

To the African Union:

- AMISOM will be 10 years old in March 2017. In order to facilitate a successful exit from Somalia, the AU should take stock of the mission's posture, structures and operational assumptions. This should include clarifying the roles and relationship to AMISOM of foreign forces operating inside Somalia but outside the AU mission.

- The AU should ensure that all allegations of misconduct by AMISOM personnel are thoroughly investigated and perpetrators of abuses punished appropriately. Accountability of AMISOM personnel is crucial for maintaining good relationships with local populations and, hence, for mission effectiveness.

- The AU should urgently generate the financial resources to cover the reduction in EU funding for the mission.

To AMISOM's international partners:

- AMISOM's main international partners (namely the UN, EU, US and UK) and the Somali authorities (federal and regional) should make the establishment of an inclusive, capable and professional Somali security apparatus a top priority. This is a prerequisite for severely reducing the threat of al-Shabaab and enabling a successful AMISOM exit from Somalia.

- AMISOM's international partners should urgently generate the mission's missing enablers so it can successfully degrade al-Shabaab's key combat capabilities and adequately defend its own bases and supply routes. It should be considered an international embarrassment that AMISOM has not received the 12 military helicopters that were authorized by the UN Security Council in 2012.

- Once there is a locally agreed approach to building inclusive and professional Somali security forces, consider designating a single country to lead this effort. The current reality of competing external actors – with conflicting modes of operation, interests and agendas – are complicating Somalia's prospects for recovery.

To AMISOM's troop-contributing countries:

- AMISOM's troop-contributing countries should build the command mechanisms necessary to conduct more effective joint operations across the mission's sector boundaries.

- Somalia's neighbors, particularly Kenya and Ethiopia, should ensure that their policies and activities align with AMISOM's mandate. Deviation from AMISOM's official mandate fuels the insurgency and negatively impacts Somalia's state-building and regional security.

To the Somali authorities:

- Somalia's political leaders – in the Federal Government and in the regions – should focus on securing an inclusive, durable and legitimate solution to Somalia's fundamental governance issues. Without getting the politics right, tackling Somalia's security challenges – be it building a national security apparatus or defeating al-Shabaab – will be immensely difficult.

- The incoming Somali leaders should make it a top priority to develop an agreed national security strategy in order to establish an inclusive and professional set of national security forces. External actors cannot build an effective national army and police force unless Somali politicians tackle corruption and secure national legitimacy and international credibility.

- The Somali authorities (federal and regional) should prioritize the delivery of basic services and governance mechanisms in the towns recovered from al-Shabaab. More generally, authorities should take more concrete steps to fight corruption, build competent institutions and promote reconciliation. Doing otherwise provides fuel for al-Shabaab's propaganda.

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