



# The Role of the African Union Mission in Somalia

AMISOM - Peacekeeping Success or Peacekeeping in Regress?

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Titel	AMISOMs roll i att säkra Somalia: Afrikanska unionens insats i Somalia – en fredsfrämjande succé eller ett tecken på en utarmning av fredsfrämjande insatser i Afrika?
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## Sammanfattning

Denna rapport är en uppföljning av FOI:s studie om AMISOM som genomfördes 2008. I rapporten undersöks den positiva utveckling av det somaliska säkerhetsläget som skett sedan 2010 och AMISOM:s roll i detta.

Studien ger en översikt över de största förändringarna som skett inom AMISOM under de senaste fem åren. Analysen kartlägger också andra omständigheter som bidragit till det förbättrade säkerhetsläget. Vidare undersöks i rapporten giltigheten i att beskriva AMISOM som en gångbar modell för effektiva fredsfrämjande insatser med afrikansk trupp understödd av västerländska medel.

Rapporten visar att AMISOM har haft viss framgång i att bidra till stabiliseringen av Somalia men att AMISOM är långt ifrån den enda faktorn som bidragit till den nuvarande säkerhetssituationen. I rapporten dras också slutsatsen att det är för tidigt att bedöma AMISOM:s generella framgång eftersom den politiska situationen och säkerhetsläget i Somalia fortsatt är osäkra.

Trots att AMISOM har fått ett mycket omfattande stöd från partners anses AMISOM fortfarande vara för hårt ansatt, dåligt utrustad och underfinansierad. Därmed dras slutsatsen att AMISOM starkt kan ifrågasättas som en modell för fredsfrämjande insatser i Afrika.

Nyckelord: AMISOM, AU, Afrikanska unionen, Afrika, Afrikas horn, Somalia, fredsfrämjande insatser, afrikansk säkerhet



## Summary

This report is a follow-up study to a report written on AMISOM by FOI in 2008. It seeks to explore the improvements made to the security situation in Somalia since 2010 and the role of AMISOM in bringing these about. The study outlines the major changes made to the mission since 2008 which have enabled it to contribute to the security achievements, as well as the conditions and circumstances, external to AMISOM, which have facilitated the improvements. Finally, the report makes an assessment of the validity of describing the AMISOM model, which uses Western resources to support African boots on the ground, as a prototype for effective peacekeeping.

The report argues that AMISOM has had some success in its contribution to the stabilisation of the situation in Somalia, but that AMISOM has been far from the only contributory factor. In addition, it is too early to make an assessment of the overall success of AMISOM because the security achievements that have been made are far from consolidated and because many security-related challenges still remain, not least the continued presence of al-Shabaab throughout the country.

Given that AMISOM has required very extensive support from partners to become a viable force, combined with the fact that the mission still remains overstretched and under-resourced, the report also argues that the validity of the AMISOM model can be questioned.

Keywords: AMISOM, AU, African Union, African security, Africa, peacekeeping, Horn of Africa, Somalia

## Table of content

Acknowledgements .....	7
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
1.1 Background .....	8
1.2 Aim, scope and limitations .....	9
1.3 Method .....	9
1.4 Outline .....	10
<b>2 Background</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 The political context of AMISOM.....	12
2.2 The current situation in Somalia .....	13
2.3 Rise of the Shabaab.....	15
2.4 AMISOM.....	17
2.4.1 Mandate and deployment .....	17
2.4.2 Lessons learned from the 2008 review of AMISOM .....	18
2.5 Evolution and achievements in Somalia since 2010.....	19
<b>3 Factors enabling AMISOM's success</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1 Internal mission enablers – Changes to AMISOM.....	22
3.1.1 Change in stance and mandate .....	22
3.1.2 The international support architecture for AMISOM .....	27
UN support to AMISOM.....	28
Bilateral support and support from other organisations .....	31
3.2 External conditions and circumstances – Changes around AMISOM.....	32
3.2.1 The political process .....	32
3.2.2 The bilateral interventions of Kenya and Ethiopia .....	33
3.2.3 Al-Shabaab's decreased popularity and internal dynamics.....	37
<b>4 Conclusions</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>44</b>

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

In 2008, as part of a study series on the peacekeeping capacity of the African Union (AU), FOI wrote a report assessing the status of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).<sup>1</sup> The findings of the report argued that AMISOM, sharing most of the challenges of other AU missions, lacked the military resources, capacity and funding, as well as the institutional capacity to manage operations. The study concluded that these factors had prevented AMISOM from fulfilling its mandate and, as a result, the mission had done little to contribute to the overall security situation in Somalia, other than securing the airport, the presidential palace and the road in between the two.

The assessment painted a bleak picture of AU peacekeeping. Together with concurrent FOI reports on Somalia<sup>2</sup>, the combined analysis of the future Somalia looked even bleaker. However, five years on, the situation looks remarkably different. Since 2012, a number of improvements have taken place in Somalia. The eight-year transition period ended in 2012 with the adoption of a provisional constitution, the formation of a new federal parliament and the appointment of a new president. Meanwhile, the Islamist militia al-Shabaab's loss of its former strongholds in the major cities has also, at least for now, led to a marked improvement in the security situation in the country, allowing the new government to assert an, in over two decades, unprecedented presence on Somali territory.

Somalia – for over two decades synonymous with anarchy – is no longer considered a ‘non-state’ by the international community. Albeit fragile, the current situation offers grounds for optimism. The positive developments in Somalia have led some observers to hail AMISOM as a peacekeeping success thanks to achievements such as wresting control of Mogadishu from the hands of al-Shabaab.<sup>3</sup>

Despite several challenges to consolidating peace and security in Somalia still remain and it being too early to assess the overall success of AMISOM, it may still be said that significant achievements have been made in Somalia. This has led some observers, including the UN<sup>4</sup>, to point to AMISOM as evidence that African-led peacekeeping, funded by Western resources, really works.<sup>5</sup> For this

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<sup>1</sup> Hull and Svensson (2008).

<sup>2</sup> Haldén (2008); Sörenson (2008); Norell (2008).

<sup>3</sup> Interview, AMISOM, Nairobi 2012-05-09.

<sup>4</sup> As referenced in Gatehouse (2012) .

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Inskeep and Warner (2013).



reason, AMISOM was depicted by the UN Secretary-General earlier this year as a potential model for the African-led mission in Mali.<sup>6</sup>

## 1.2 Aim, scope and limitations

In light of the improvements to the security situation in Somalia, this report explores the role played by AMISOM in affecting the recent changes, asking:

- To what extent has AMISOM contributed to improving the security situation in Somalia?
- What changes to AMISOM have had a positive effect on the mission, allowing it to play its current role, that of the security provider in Somalia?
- What circumstances that are external to AMISOM have enabled the improvements in the security situation?
- Could the improvements in the security situation in Somalia have occurred without the presence of AMISOM?

The rationale behind the report is to explore what factors have enabled AMISOM to go from, what was widely regarded as being, an ineffective and ill-equipped mission to even being referred to (although perhaps prematurely) as a “peacekeeping success”. Based on the findings of the above listed research questions, this report also aims to make an assessment of the validity of describing AMISOM as a model for effective peacekeeping.

Assessing the impact and effect of peacekeeping operations is notoriously difficult, as these always exist within a highly complex architecture of actors, institutions and events. This report does not intend to provide an evaluation of AMISOM, nor is it to be regarded a full assessment of the effects of and factors influencing the recent positive developments in Somalia.

## 1.3 Method

The study is mainly based on a literature review on Somalia. This has been complemented with a number of interviews which were conducted by FOI analysts during a visit to the region in 2012.

From a methodological point of view, this study has sought to deduce a number of factors/enablers influencing AMISOM’s achievements from the literature dealing with AMISOM and Somalia. These factors have then been used to construct a framework for the analysis. This has, in turn, been used to assess

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<sup>6</sup> S/2013/37.

AMISOM's performance and the argument that AMISOM can be considered a positive model for future peacekeeping missions.

An analytical subdivision between enablers which are inherent to AMISOM itself (e.g. changes to the mission's mandate) and enablers in the surrounding environment (e.g. advancements made in the peace process) has been made in order to illustrate that not all achievements which have led observers to describe AMISOM as 'successful' can, in fact, be ascribed to the mission itself. This division is also important as an analytical tool in assessing AMISOM's viability as a peacekeeping model since environmental enablers may be even less likely to exist than internal enablers in other missions.

There are plentiful accounts of the role of AMISOM, both in the academic literature and the popular media. The information used in this study, as well as the interviews relied on, have been cross-checked and elaborated in interviews and written communication with a handful of African and Swedish experts. In particular, issues related to Somali peace and security, AMISOM and al-Shabaab have been checked. The aim has been to verify the importance of the factors listed in this report and to ensure that no major factors have been left out.

## 1.4 Outline

In the following chapter (Chapter 2 – *Background*) background is provided that describes the political context in which AMISOM was deployed. The chapter also provides an account of the political and security situation in Somalia today in order to facilitate an understanding of what has actually been achieved and of the challenges that remain. In addition, it briefly outlines the inception and evolution of the main Islamist militia, al-Shabaab, following AMISOM's deployment. Chapter 2 also sketches out the status of AMISOM in 2008. The purpose is to present the original mandate and the findings of the 2008 report in terms of AMISOM's challenges and shortcomings. The chapter ends with a description of the main advances made in the security situation since 2010, which have led observers to regard AMISOM as a success.

The third chapter (*Factors enabling AMISOM's success*) provides a descriptive account of some of the main factors that have enabled these achievements. The chapter focuses on the factors that scholars and commentators have judged to be crucial in bringing about the recent positive developments. The first part of the chapter looks at AMISOM itself, examining the changes and efforts that have been made since 2010 in order to make AMISOM a credible force. Specifically, this section addresses the augmentations made to its size and scope, as well as the extensive support architecture which has provided the mission with a range of necessities, from logistical support, food and housing, to funds, equipment and training. The second section examines the broader security and political circumstances, of which AMISOM has been both a direct and indirect

benefactor. This includes the political process, the interventions that were launched by Ethiopia and Kenya and also the dynamics of al-Shabaab. While the first section highlighted enabling factors that were directly related to AMISOM's effect on the Somali security situation, the second identifies factors which may or may not have led to improved security even without the existence of AMISOM, but which have also, in fact, been utilised by AMISOM to achieve or expand on security gains.

The final chapter (*Conclusions*) addresses the main research questions, including that of depicting AMISOM as a model for future peacekeeping missions.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 The political context of AMISOM

AMISOM is the third peacekeeping operation that has been launched by the AU. It was established in 2007 to replace the Ethiopian troops that had invaded Somalia at the invitation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in order to defeat the Islamic courts which had taken over large parts of the country.

When the TFG was formed in 2004, Somalia had been without a central government since 1991. The period in between was defined by factional conflict and continuous warfare, as rival clans competed for power.

A range of peace initiatives had been undertaken in order to address the situation, including major peace conferences supported by the international community. Several peace agreements had produced new governments, but these never managed to establish control outside of Mogadishu because none was able to gain the overall acceptance of the various warring factions.

The TFG was established as the outcome of a three-year attempt to negotiate a solution to the conflict by the regional organisation the *Intergovernmental Authority for Development* (IGAD). The TFG was established with an interim five-year mandate to prepare Somalia for elections to be held in 2009. It was backed by Ethiopia, which had undermined previous attempts at forming a Somali government, but saw the TFG president as an ally who would not renew Somalia's claim on the disputed Ogaden region.<sup>7</sup> The TFG was also supported by the United States, who considered the TFG's fight against Somali Islamists an important element in its war on terror.<sup>8</sup>

AMISOM was launched in Somalia in the context of protecting the TFG, which, at the time, represented an important, but embryonic opportunity for a new government for the whole of Somalia. Among its core activities, AMISOM was tasked with supporting the TFG in its efforts at stabilising Somalia and enabling further dialogue and reconciliation. One of the key problems for AMISOM was that, even though the TFG had been established as the result of a peace process, there really was no peace for AMISOM to keep. The Islamic courts had been defeated, but out of their ashes grew new opposition to the government. The TFG was not based on a legitimate inclusive process involving all relevant stakeholders such as Somaliland, Puntland or organisations like al-Shabaab. The establishment of AMISOM in order to prop up and defend the TFG was, therefore, considered by some of the key stakeholders as just another foreign

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<sup>7</sup> Cornwell, R. 2006: 76.

<sup>8</sup> Botha, A. 2007.



invasion. This notion was reinforced, as the TFG increasingly proved to be corrupt and weak, failing to achieve significant and timely progress on key transitional objectives.<sup>9</sup>

In summary:

- AMISOM was deployed to protect the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its institutions.
- The TFG was not considered a legitimate government by all stakeholders and its enemies came to see AMISOM as an invading force.

## 2.2 The current situation in Somalia

The state of Somalia is currently experiencing the best opportunity for sustainable peace and development in a generation.<sup>10</sup> A new president was appointed in September 2012. Rather than a direct, general election, the President was elected by the 275 Members of Parliament. The election was, nevertheless, considered the most transparent and representative Somali election in over 20 years. It was also the first election to be held inside the country.<sup>11</sup> Although the recent security and political gains are real, they remain incomplete. While there are grounds for optimism, the future remains uncertain.

The humanitarian situation in Somalia is still dire and there is little accountability for human rights. Several security challenges, such as the continued aggressive presence of al-Shabaab in the main parts of southern and central Somalia, acts of piracy along the Somali coast and a not yet fully functioning state apparatus persist in the country. Moreover, while al-Shabaab is no longer in control of the major cities, much of the country remains under the control and influence of the organisation. Al-Shabaab's presence in the cities is also still maintained, enabling frequent and violent attacks on, in particular, foreign and governmental targets. In the urban areas recaptured from al-Shabaab, the security situation remains unpredictable.

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<sup>9</sup> International Crisis Group. 2011.

<sup>10</sup> S/2013/69.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. The Members of Parliament were in turn elected by 135 traditional elders and vetted by a technical selection committee.

As of mid-2013, AMISOM troops remain in control of Mogadishu, alongside the Somali National Security Forces (NSF), but are frequently attacked by al-Shabaab. Attacks mainly take place in the outlying districts, but also occur in other areas. The political vacuum left behind in Kismayo following the withdrawal of al-Shabaab also gives cause for concern.<sup>12</sup>



Figure 1. Political map of Somalia, 2013.

The UN Political Office for Somalia relocated to Mogadishu in 2012 after spending 18 years working out of Nairobi for security reasons. In addition,

<sup>12</sup> S/2013/69.

several foreign diplomatic missions, including Turkey, are now establishing a presence in the Somali capital.

The advances made over the last one to two years should not be underestimated; nor should they be exaggerated. Somalia will require a massive peace-building and peacekeeping effort over the years to come, not to mention continued combat operations against al-Shabaab. The security situation remains unpredictable.<sup>13</sup>

In summary:

- The 2012 elections led to the establishment of a government that is considered to have the most widespread legitimacy of any since 1991.
- The advances made in the fight against al-Shabaab have resulted in a, since 1991, unprecedented opportunity to assert the state's presence throughout Somalia.
- Al-Shabaab still controls large parts of the country and the security situation remains unpredictable.

## 2.3 Rise of the Shabaab

There is no broad consensus on exactly how al-Shabaab emerged, other than that its ideology is rooted in Somalia's previous Islamist organisations. Al-Shabaab has, nevertheless, taken on a more radical approach.

In January 2007, one month prior to the deployment of AMISOM, Ethiopia launched an intervention in Somalia. The intervention had been requested by the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which needed Ethiopia's help to defeat the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) – a coalition of sharia courts that had united to form a rival administration to the TFG and had gained control of the majority of Somalia over the previous months. The TFG and the Ethiopian forces soon achieved their goal of defeating the ICU, but agreed that Ethiopian troops would remain in the country until they could be relieved by a multinational peace support operation in order to prevent a renewed security vacuum.<sup>14</sup> As AMISOM was unable to provide sufficient security, Ethiopia remained in the country until 2009 when it, at least formally, withdrew its troops.

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<sup>13</sup> *What's in Blue*, Tuesday 5 March 2013.

<sup>14</sup> PSC/PR/2(LXIX).

While the rule of the ICU had helped restore peace and stability in a lawless and chronically insecure southern and central Somalia, the Ethiopian offensive changed the power balance and entailed a return to civil war.<sup>15</sup> The Ethiopian presence, alongside the TFG's dysfunctional governance and widespread human rights violations, incited a renewed insurgency involving the most hard-line Islamists of the ICU.

Al-Shabaab had been an important military element of the ICU and proved to be the most resilient, and principal, source of armed resistance to the Ethiopian occupation.<sup>16</sup> Al-Shabaab framed its case as a national *jihad* against foreign occupation by the Ethiopian troops, but also by the TFG, which it considered an instrument of the West. The TFG was formed as part of a Western-supported peace process and was thus considered under the influence of secular and non-Islamic forces. Al-Shabaab also rejected the entire idea of establishing a nation-state in Somalia, which it regarded as simply one part of a larger Islamic emirate. The strategy applied to fight its enemy was one of terrorism – primarily aimed at the TFG and its institutions, including AMISOM and the Ethiopian troops which supported the TFG – launching hit-and-run attacks, using improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and relying on assassinations, suicide-attacks and bombings.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike the TFG, al-Shabaab initially enjoyed a great deal of legitimacy amongst the Somali population. Al-Shabaab came to propagate the use of political Islam as the only viable instrument to transform Somalia from a clan-based, conflict-prone society into a strong and healthy nation, founded on a common adherence to Islam. Al-Shabaab also filled a governance vacuum, providing the population with essential services and welfare, and re-establishing order and justice through the use of sharia courts. The organisation mobilised a variety of supporters, some joining due to its ideological stance, while others did so as a means of empowerment and economic survival or simply as a means by which to fight the Ethiopians and the TFG.<sup>18</sup>

In 2008, the US government designated al-Shabaab a terrorist organisation. The same year al-Shabaab had begun aligning its interests with those of al-Qaeda, receiving an endorsement from Osama bin Laden.<sup>19</sup>

The withdrawal of Ethiopian troops in 2009, coupled with the resignation of the TFG president and the consequent creation of a new unity government, presented al-Shabaab with a challenge in maintaining its relevance. The new government, which was led by a former ICU leader, and AMISOM which protected the government, became the primary enemy. Al-Shabaab's first attack outside

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<sup>15</sup> Roque. 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Wise. 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Roque. 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Masters. 2013.



Somalia was a suicide-bombing in Kampala, Uganda – touted by the organisation as revenge against Uganda for providing troops to AMISOM.<sup>20</sup>

In summary:

- Al-Shabaab arose as an element of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU).
- As the ICU was defeated by Ethiopian troops, al-Shabaab declared a national jihad against the Ethiopian presence, the TFG and AMISOM – which were all considered instruments of foreign invasion.
- Al-Shabaab filled a security and governance vacuum in Somalia and initially enjoyed a fair deal of legitimacy amongst the population.

## 2.4 AMISOM

### 2.4.1 Mandate and deployment

AMISOM's original mandate included supporting the TFG and its institutions in their efforts at stabilising the country and advancing the process of dialogue and reconciliation, facilitating the provision of humanitarian assistance, and creating conditions that were conducive to long-term stability, reconstruction and development in Somalia.<sup>21</sup>

In order to fulfil these objectives, AMISOM was given the overarching task of:

- Supporting dialogue and reconciliation, working with key stakeholders,
- Providing, as appropriate, protection to the Transitional Federal Institutions and their key infrastructure in order to enable them to carry out their functions,
- Assisting in the implementation of the National Security and Stabilisation Plan, particularly the re-establishment and training of Somali security forces,
- Providing, within their capabilities and as appropriate, technical and other support to the disarmament and stabilisation efforts,
- Monitoring, in areas of deployment, the security situation

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<sup>20</sup> Wise. 2011.

<sup>21</sup> PSC/PR/Comm (LXIX).

- Facilitating, as may be required and within their capabilities, humanitarian operations, including the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and the resettlement of internally displaced persons
- Protecting its own personnel, installations and equipment, including the right of self-defence.<sup>22</sup>

The original mandate provided for 8,000 peacekeepers. However, force generation came to be a slow process. The mission was launched in Somalia with two Ugandan battalions in early 2007, followed by soldiers from Burundi who arrived at the end of the year. A year after the mission's inception, its strength numbered 2,613 troops. The slow deployment of troops was partly a consequence of a lack of resources among potential troop contributors, as well as within the AU itself.

Upon deployment, AMISOM troops were immediately attacked by armed elements. A high number of casualties within the force also reduced the willingness of AU Member States to contribute troops.

Due to a lack of equipment, the second Burundian battalion only managed to deploy to Somalia in mid-October 2008.<sup>23</sup> A number of troops, which had been pledged by other countries, never deployed. By early 2010, AMISOM was still operating at about half its authorised strength.<sup>24</sup> In fact, the full mandated strength of AMISOM was not achieved until 2012, by which time the UN Security Council had increased, on two occasions, the number of authorised troops due to the challenges on the ground.<sup>25</sup>

#### **2.4.2 Lessons learned from the 2008 review of AMISOM**

In 2008, FOI presented the findings of its review of the challenges facing AMISOM. The review concluded that the mission's ability to perform the tasks outlined in its mandate was hampered by a number of factors such as a lack of resources and its insufficient logistical ability to supply its own troops.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, a volatile security environment, an on-going conflict and a slow reconciliation process, in combination with the delays in deploying AMISOM, meant that the mission had very little impact on the prevailing situation in Somalia. On the other hand, the review suggested that the mission managed to perform some tasks successfully, namely, securing the airport, protecting the seaport, the presidential palace and the road between the presidential compound

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Hull and Svensson 2008: 28.

<sup>24</sup> *AMISOM Bulletin*, Issue 1: 2010.

<sup>25</sup> The mandated troop level was increased from 8,000-12,000 in December 2010 and further extended to 17,000 in January 2012.

<sup>26</sup> The first AMISOM troops deployed lacked almost everything: some of the Ugandan troops actually dying in Somalia of scurvy (lack of vitamin C). Straziouso. 2012.

and the airport. AMISOM had also received weapons from various parties in order to decommission them and had provided escorts to humanitarian organisations.<sup>27</sup>

The mandate did not include the principle of *protection of civilians*, making it difficult for the force to have any actual impact on the ground. This was particularly the case in Mogadishu where attacks on civilians, by all parties, massively surged in the months following AMISOM's deployment.<sup>28</sup> While mandated with the facilitation of humanitarian aid, the mandate did not explicitly state the protection of humanitarian workers, a protection greatly needed in Somalia as international and non-governmental organisations evacuated their entire international staff in the wake of a series of killings and kidnappings of aid workers in the country, hampering the delivery of much needed humanitarian assistance.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the challenges within AMISOM itself, the AU suffered from a lack of capacity at headquarters level for planning and managing the operation, which further reduced the effectiveness of the mission.

In summary:

- A lack of political will, a lack of resources among troop contributors and the hostile environment facing AMISOM in Mogadishu resulted in AMISOM remaining severely under-staffed until 2012.
- A range of factors, all relating to a lack of troops, resources and skills meant that AMISOM had only a limited impact on the situation and failed to fulfil its mandate.

## 2.5 Evolution and achievements in Somalia since 2010

By early 2010, despite remaining ill-equipped and severely under-staffed<sup>30</sup>, AMISOM had managed to re-capture and secure a number of areas around

<sup>27</sup> Hull and Svensson 2008:30-31.

<sup>28</sup> Amnesty International, 24 April 2007.

<sup>29</sup> Hull, Svensson. 2008: 27.

<sup>30</sup> In March 2010 the Ugandan deployment to AMISOM was reinforced with support from airlift by NATO, bringing the total force to 6,120 troops of the 8,000 authorised in 2007. S/2010/234. By December 2010, the authorised level was increase to 12,000.

Mogadishu where life was relatively normal. Critical infrastructure, such as the airport and seaport in Mogadishu, remained open and the government was still in place. Yet the mission remained unable to move out of limited areas of Mogadishu as militias were in control of most of the city, as well as of large parts of the country.

A major turning point for the security situation can be seen in 2011 when al-Shabaab lost control of Mogadishu. Following months of intense military operations by AMISOM and the Somali National Security Forces (NSF), al-Shabaab was forced to abandon positions it had held in the capital for over two years. Even though al-Shabaab elements remain in the city, the nature of their presence is now vastly different in that al-Shabaab no longer has direct influence over the daily life of the city's population. The departure of al-Shabaab as the ruling element in Mogadishu presented the government with the opportunity to extend its area of control in the city and enhance its legitimacy by delivering services to its residents.<sup>31</sup>

Since the recapture of Mogadishu, AMISOM has been on the offensive, leading to a series of defeats for al-Shabaab, progressively reducing the size of its quasi-state in southern and central Somalia.<sup>32</sup>

The second major turning point came in September 2012 when al-Shabaab finally lost its control of the port city of Kismayo. The city, which had been a major source of funds for al-Shabaab, was its last urban stronghold.

Nevertheless, al-Shabaab still maintains a strong presence in rural areas and controls much of the Somali countryside.<sup>33</sup> Having been pushed north, al-Shabaab also seems to be increasing its presence in Puntland and Somaliland.

NATO's experiences from Afghanistan show that an initial defeat of irregular forces does not equate to securing a sustainable peace as even seemingly defeated irregular forces often have the ability to lay low and bounce back, if given the opportunity. Al-Shabaab still retains the ability to strike within and outside of Somalia. Nevertheless, limiting the organisation's control of the capital and other major cities has enabled a new era of state governance in the country.<sup>34</sup>

Staff within the AU have hailed AMISOM as a success for Africa, arguing that it is the first time that African forces have been used in an African intervention to enforce peace.<sup>35</sup> Experts at the *International Crisis Group* agree with this assessment, stating, in an interview with the *Washington Times*, that "absent

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<sup>31</sup> S/2011/549.

<sup>32</sup> Meleagrou –Hitchens and Solomon. 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Correspondence, Swedish Armed Forces, 17/04/2013.

<sup>34</sup> Rosen. 2012 .

<sup>35</sup> Interview UNPOS, Nairobi, 09/05/2012.

AMISOM, al-Shabaab would be in control of Mogadishu [and] we would not be taking about a new [Somali] national government with a president from civil society in charge".<sup>36</sup>

From a military and security perspective, AMISOM has been a success, clearly contributing substantially to the changes in the situation in Somalia. The factors behind this success will be outlined in the following chapter.

Success has, however, come at a high cost.<sup>37</sup> While AMISOM and participating governments have refused to release death tolls, estimates state that some 400-500 Ugandans and Burundians have been killed over the past six years, plus an unknown number of Kenyans, who joined AMISOM in 2011. Proportionate to the troop levels, these figures are high and it is unlikely that they have been tolerated by many Western countries.<sup>38</sup>

In summary:

- It is, primarily, two major achievements which have led observers to regard AMISOM as a success: al-Shabaab being forced by AMISOM and the NSF to abandon its control of Mogadishu in 2011 and the retaking of Kismayo from al-Shabaab by the Kenyan troops of AMISOM in 2012.
- These security achievements have provided the new government with the opportunity to extend its presence throughout the country, leaving Somalia with the best opportunity to achieve sustainable peace and development that the country has seen in a generation.

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<sup>36</sup> Straziouso. 2012.

<sup>37</sup> Gadin 2012: 81.

<sup>38</sup> *Associated Press*, 17October 2012; Interview UNPOS, Nairobi, 09/05/2012.

### **3 Factors enabling AMISOM's success**

A number of factors account for the turnaround of AMISOM's military fortunes in the period from 2011 to 2012.

According to an individual at UNPOS, the success of AMISOM thus far can be attributed to excellent training and overall good leadership.<sup>39</sup> However, any success cannot be attributed in isolation; while AMISOM is still short of some essential resources, a range of factors have contributed to making the mission a credible force.

The following part of this study examines the major enablers which have influenced AMISOM's military achievements, as identified by scholars and other observers. These enablers are divided into two categories: internal mission enablers and external conditions and circumstances. The analytical subdivision between these two sets of enablers is used to illustrate how well the "AMISOM model" might be applicable to other peacekeeping contexts; while other missions may, with some effort, be provided similar mandates and support structures, replicating the external environment might be more difficult.

#### **3.1 Internal mission enablers – Changes to AMISOM**

##### **3.1.1 Change in stance and mandate**

In early 2010, analysts, such as Jakkie Cilliers and Henri Boshoff from the *Institute for Security Studies*, reported that it was "unreasonable to think, given the weakness of its mandate and lack of means and resources, [that AMISOM could] deliver anything resembling the conditions for peace".<sup>40</sup> By May 2010, only some 6,120 troops had been deployed to AMISOM, out of the 8,000 mandated.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, the security situation in Somalia continued to deteriorate, and also started to have a more widespread impact on the region.<sup>42</sup> The first al-Shabaab attack outside of Somalia was launched in Kampala, Uganda in July 2010, killing more than 70 people. This attack demonstrated that al-Shabaab was a serious threat, not only in Somalia, but to the sub-region and the wider international community.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Correspondence with UNPOS, 09/05/2013.

<sup>40</sup> Cilliers et al. 2010.

<sup>41</sup> S/2010/2349.

<sup>42</sup> PSC/MIN/1(CCXXXXV).

<sup>43</sup> S/2010/2349.

The aim of the attack was to undermine Uganda's commitment to AMISOM in an attempt to weaken the force. It came to have the exact opposite effect; the attack made it evident that a new phase of strengthening AMISOM was required. Efforts to deploy the remaining troops were intensified and, at the end of the year, the Security Council took the crucial decision to authorise an increase in the mandated strength of AMISOM from 8,000 troops to 12,000 in order to enhance its ability to carry out its mandate.<sup>44</sup>

Despite an increase in troop levels, the mandated tasks remained the same. This was problematic for several reasons.

The first problem with AMISOM's mandate was that, despite not being sent to Somalia to fight, the troops were continuously engaged by hostile adversaries. The peace process was also moving slowly and the government, which AMISOM was there to support, had little of a state to govern.

This problem was identified by the UN as early as 2007, when pressure was mounting on the organisation to launch a UN peacekeeping mission in Somalia. A review of the situation in Somalia by the Secretary-General concluded that, under the present circumstances, a UN deployment to Somalia would be inappropriate. Given the volatile situation in the country, the Secretary-General argued that the task would be better suited a coalition of the willing, acting under a UN mandate and with the capability to deal with the high paramilitary threat.<sup>45</sup> The Security Council agreed with the Secretary-General's findings, stating that a UN operation could only be "deployed in support of a political process, not as a substitute for one".<sup>46</sup>

The second problem with AMISOM's mandate was that, despite knowledge of the context in which AMISOM was deployed, the mission was constructed much like the type of mission which the UN had considered to be inappropriate. AMISOM carried a typical peacekeeping mandate. Like most peacekeeping missions deployed in the 2000s, AMISOM was authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, i.e. with the authority to use force. This authorization to use force permits the use of force as a means to create an environment that is conducive to continued peace by, for example, addressing spoilers. Nevertheless, for missions like AMISOM, the mandate does not prepare the mission to act as a peace enforcer or be proactive in tackling aggression, such as was faced by the mission immediately upon its arrival.

As AMISOM's mandate was revised to increase the number of troops to 12,000, a broader revision also came into consideration. While the foreign ministers of the AU were initially in agreement about the need to transform AMISOM from a

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<sup>44</sup> S/RES/1964 .

<sup>45</sup> S/2007/204.

<sup>46</sup> S/2007/38; S/2007/204.

*peacekeeping* to a *peace-enforcing* mission, ready to take on al-Shabaab, the UN Security Council felt differently.<sup>47</sup> AMISOM remained a peacekeeping force without a peace to keep, mandated to support a political process without the peace-enforcing means to deal with those who rejected the process. Although it was recognised that AMISOM's mandate might require a level of military force, the solution to the Somali problem was still considered to be primarily a political one.

AMISOM may have been deployed in support of a peace process, but it did not enjoy the consent of at least one of the major stakeholders – al-Shabaab – which, rather than allowing the mission to function as a peacekeeping force, sought to engage AMISOM in irregular warfare. In several aspects, AMISOM was the exact type of mission that the 2000 report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations, commonly known as the *Brahimi report*, had warned against.<sup>48</sup> The report cautioned against deployments in post-conflict environments where there was no peace to keep and argued that if a mission did in fact deploy to such an environment it would require: a) an appropriate, achievable and robust mandate to ensure that the mission did not cede the initiative to the attackers, and b) the political support and sufficient means and resources needed to successfully achieve such a mandate, as well as self-defence.<sup>49</sup> AMISOM, in contrast, carried a considerably weaker mandate and also lacked the political support and resources required in order to make this mandate achievable.

Increasing the authorised troop level of a mission that continued to struggle to generate sufficient troops to reach the previously authorized strength may seem to have been ill-advised. In contrast, the move proved to be the first major step on the path to turning around the fortunes of AMISOM. Even though the scope of the mission's mandate was still problematic, this move sent out the very important signal that there was a renewed commitment to the AU force on the part of the international community. Even though AMISOM still struggled to reach its full mandated strength, the upgrade provided the mission with both additional manpower and momentum. By August 2011, some nine months after AMISOM's mandate had been augmented, all districts of Mogadishu had been recaptured and were, thanks to AMISOM and the NSF, under the effective control of the TFG. This constituted the first major turning point in the Somali crisis.

The second turning point came some six months later, in January 2012, when a new strategic concept for AMISOM was instituted.<sup>50</sup> The transitional period in Somalia was scheduled to come to an end in August 2012, and Somalia was

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<sup>47</sup> Kazooba. 2010. Kasasira and Muyita. 2010.

<sup>48</sup> Cilliers et al. 2010.

<sup>49</sup> A/55/305 - S/2000/809.

<sup>50</sup> PSC/PR/Comm (CCCVI).



considered to be at a tipping point where the prospects for positive change appeared greater than they had been for years.<sup>51</sup> In addition to the advances made by AMISOM, Ethiopia and Kenya had intervened in Somalia and recovered additional areas of the country from al-Shabaab.<sup>52</sup> This had presented the TFG with a chance to extend its authority across a wider area of southern and central Somalia. The timing was extraordinary as this would enable the TFG to reach out to the population at precisely the moment when important decisions about the constitution and the political future of Somalia had to be made. At the same time, the gains made were politically and militarily fragile. An armed presence was needed to fill the security vacuum created by the withdrawal of al-Shabaab and there was a need for the TFG to build sustainable administrative structures in these areas. The UN and AU therefore considered the adoption of a new strategic concept, coupled with a further expansion of AMISOM.

The joint AU-UN strategic concept was based on the assessment that the time was ripe to deal a severe blow to al-Shabaab.<sup>53</sup> The concept was endorsed by the Security Council and was followed by a Council resolution authorising yet another expansion of the authorised strength of AMISOM; this time from 12,000 to 17,731.<sup>54</sup> In light of the new realities on the ground, this expansion also included a broadening of AMISOM's mandate. The new mandate signalled a second phase of the operation with expansion outside the capital. In addition to the original tasks, AMISOM would expand its area of responsibility to four new sectors.<sup>55</sup> An expansion of AMISOM was considered the best possible way to significantly degrade the military capability of al-Shabaab, while preventing its relocation to other parts of Somalia.<sup>56</sup> For this reason, AMISOM was also authorised to take all necessary measures in the new sectors to reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab and other armed groups.<sup>57</sup> In addition to this, AMISOM

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<sup>51</sup> SC 10479.

<sup>52</sup> More on these interventions can be found in section 3.2.2.

<sup>53</sup> S/2012/74.

<sup>54</sup> S/RES/2036. Council members were reportedly supportive of the new concept although some, including the US, Germany and France, were concerned that the large increase in troop numbers would be associated with much increased costs to the mission. This was particularly a concern due to the special funding and support structure that was applied to the mission (see the following section) meaning that the UN would have to carry large proportions of the cost. The final resolution nevertheless accepted the numbers proposed by the UN. The resolution also included an expansion of the UN support package to match the new mandate. *What's in Blue*, 21 February, 2012.

<sup>55</sup> These are 1) Banadir (Mogadishu) and Middle and Lower Shabelle regions (9,500 troops); 2) Middle and Lower Juba regions (Kismaayo) (4,700 troops); 3) Gedo, Bay and Bakool (Baidoa) and western part of Hiraa regions (2,500 troops); and 4) Galgud, Mudug and part of the Hiraa regions (Beledweyne) (1,000 troops). S/2012/74.

<sup>56</sup> S/2012/74.

<sup>57</sup> SC 10550.

was requested to expand its efforts to develop the capacity and effectiveness of the Somali security forces.<sup>58</sup>

The revised mandate and the increase in authorised troop numbers contributed considerably to making the mission more robust. Nevertheless, the assessment on which the strategic concept was based had judged that for AMISOM to be able to conduct concurrent offensive operations throughout southern and central Somalia, up to 35,500 troops, in addition to substantial resources, would be required. The 17,731 troops subsequently authorised were identified in the assessment as a more realistic option, given AMISOM's limited access to resources. The lower number was also identified as viable, on the condition that, for example, Ethiopia remained in the country and continued to provide support to the TFG in certain regions.<sup>59</sup> Ethiopia is, however, neither mentioned in the Security Council resolution, nor in the AU communiqué endorsing the new strategic concept for AMISOM.

The change in stance of AMISOM can thus be considered a significant factor in the mission's success, although, as indicated, external actors, such as Ethiopia, made a considerable contribution to enabling AMISOM.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> As of November 2012, AMISOM is mandated to: Maintain a presence in 4 specified sectors, and in those sectors, in coordination with the Somali National Security Forces, reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab and other armed groups in order to establish conditions for effective and legitimate governance across Somalia; To support dialogue and reconciliation in Somalia by assisting with the free movement, safe passage and protection of all those involved with the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia; To provide, as appropriate, protection to the Somali authorities 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 SNSF; To contribute, as may be requested and within capabilities, to the creation of the necessary security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance; To protect its personnel, facilities, installations, equipment and mission, and to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel, as well as of, United Nations personnel carrying out functions mandated by the Security Council. S/RES/2073.

<sup>59</sup> S/2012/74: 4.

<sup>60</sup> The role of bilateral interventions is further outlined in chapter 4.2.

In summary:

- AMISOM initially carried a weak mandate which was not in tune with realities on the ground in Somalia, either in terms of the mission's size or its scope.
- By late 2010, after al-Shabaab had also proved to be a problem outside of Somalia, AMISOM was authorised an increase in size from 8,000 to 12,000 troops. This increase sent an important signal that there was a renewed commitment to AMISOM and provided the mission with both new momentum and increased manpower.
- This momentum helped AMISOM seize Mogadishu. Building on these positive developments, and the need to help Somalia bring an end to the transitional period later in the year, the international community decided in early 2012 to take military action against al-Shabaab. AMISOM's mandate was increased to 17,700 troops and broadened to include a more offensive stance, using all necessary means, and a geographic expansion outside of Mogadishu.

### 3.1.2 The international support architecture for AMISOM

What made AMISOM a credible force? An extensive support architecture has been developed to aid AMISOM and help address deficiencies such as a lack of resources, delayed deployment, and limited capacity of the AU to manage the operation. The structure is unprecedented and complex with several co-existing support packages. Numerous partners contribute, the largest donors being the UN, EU and US<sup>61</sup>. International support to AMISOM can be divided into the following categories:<sup>62</sup>

- Institutional capacity-building and technical support to AU headquarters from the UN and other partners for planning and managing AMISOM.
- Provision and delivery of logistical support to AMISOM by the UN.
- Voluntary financial and in-kind support to the AU and troop contributors through various bilateral partners and institutions such as the US and EU.

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<sup>61</sup> Examples of costs: the cost of logistical package supplied to AMISOM from the UN had amounted to some US\$ 730 million by 2012. Between 2007-2012, the EU supplied US\$ 347 million through the African Peace Facility. Gadin. 2012: 77.

<sup>62</sup> Gadin, 2012: 77.

## UN support to AMISOM

The first two categories of support for AMISOM are, primarily, but not exclusively, provided by the UN. The AU originally deployed AMISOM with the intention that the UN would take over the responsibility for the peace operation within six months. As the UN considered such a take-over inappropriate, due to the lack of a peace to keep in Somalia, the AU was forced to extend AMISOM's mandate over and over again.<sup>63</sup> On each occasion, the organisation reiterated that the UN, especially considering the limited capacity of the AU to manage and fund the mission, carried ultimate responsibility for international peace and security and, thus, should increase its support to AMISOM.<sup>64</sup>

At the time of the first mission extension, the AU called on the UN to put in place a support package for AMISOM, focusing on financial, logistical and technical support.<sup>65</sup> Arguing that the UN is also a scarcely resourced organisation and that regional organisations taking on peace operations should carry the responsibility of securing its own essential assets, some Security Council members were unwilling to supply such a support package.

The Security Council remained divided over both the eventual conversion of AMISOM into a UN mission and an assistance package that included UN financial resources.<sup>66</sup> By the end of 2008, just as Ethiopia was about to withdraw from Somalia, the US made a push for the authorisation of a UN peacekeeping operation. The draft resolution failed to gain sufficient support, but the Council members finally agreed, as a compromise, that a support package would be put in place to strengthen AMISOM.<sup>67</sup>

The support package that was authorised was similar to that which had previously been made available by the UN to the AU mission in Darfur (AMIS). This support had eventually become a method for transforming AMIS into the hybrid UN-AU force, the so-called UNAMID.<sup>68</sup>

The resolution authorizing the support package also requested that the Secretary-General established a trust fund to provide financial support to AMISOM until

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<sup>63</sup> AMISOM's mandate was also authorized by the UN Security Council and the mission thus enjoyed legitimacy from the international community even though the UN was reluctant to launch a mission of its own in Somalia. Like for all other AU missions, AU PSC authorization has been swiftly followed by a UN SC authorization.

<sup>64</sup> S/2007/499.

<sup>65</sup> PSC/PR/Comm. (LXXX).

<sup>66</sup> Uganda and China remained the only countries in favour of a quick transfer to a UN peacekeeping mission, *What's in Blue*, 2 November, 2009, with Russia, the UK, France, other European members and Costa Rica being the strongest advocates for a cautious approach to a UN deployment, *What's in Blue*, 30 April 2009.

<sup>67</sup> *Security Council Report*, 29 January 2009.

<sup>68</sup> Ekengard. 2008.

such time as a UN force could be deployed. It also requested a trust fund to help re-establish and train the NSF. These trusts would be funded by voluntary contributions from Member States, but the UN would help manage and direct the use of the funds, as well as holding donor conferences to solicit contributions. In addition to the UN hosted funds, Member States were encouraged to help support AMISOM through direct bilateral arrangements (see below).

The authorised support included the transfer of assets from the liquidated UN mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea to AMISOM. The Security Council also authorised a logistics support package, which included the equipment and services normally provided to peacekeeping missions as UN owned equipment and aimed to raise AMISOM's operational standards.<sup>69</sup> The Council did not, however, agree to authorise the transfer of UN funds to AMISOM, as had been advised by the Secretary-General.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to support provided directly to AMISOM, the UN provided assistance to AU headquarters. In early 2007, the UN had agreed to dispatch ten military, police and civilian experts to AU headquarters to assist with AMISOM planning and management.<sup>71</sup> The UN continued this support and had sent additional technical advisers to work alongside other partners in supporting AU capacity-building.<sup>72</sup> In 2010, the UN planning team assigned to the AU was integrated into the UN Office to the AU (UNOAU) which was created by merging the UN Liaison Office to the AU, the AU Peacekeeping Support Team, and the UN Planning Team for AMISOM.<sup>73</sup> UNOAU has assisted AMISOM in, among other things, formulating mission implementation plans and police concept of operations, recruiting civilian staff, strengthening its public information offices, updating the AMISOM communication strategy and its strategy on the protection of civilians.<sup>74</sup>

The resolution authorising the UN support package broke new ground for the UN. The delivery of the logistics package also significantly improved AMISOM's operational capability, as well as the living and working conditions for AMISOM personnel.<sup>75</sup> The support provided by the UN had a dramatic impact on the effectiveness of AMISOM.

Using UN resources to support AMISOM was, however, neither easy nor self-evident. Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which discusses regional arrangements, allows for peace operations authorised by the Security Council to be carried out

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<sup>69</sup> S/2008/804, 19 December 2008.

<sup>70</sup> S/RES/1863 (2009).

<sup>71</sup> S/2007/204; S/PV/5858.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid; S/2008/178.

<sup>73</sup> Gadin. 2012:77.

<sup>74</sup> S/2011/277; S/2010/447.

<sup>75</sup> Gadin. 2012: 77.

by other organisations. It does not, however, require cooperation with, or the financial or other support of, such arrangements.<sup>76</sup> Regional-led operations do not qualify for the use of UN funding or support from the UN Secretariat. Nevertheless, the UN recognised that providing such support would have important consequences for the Somali conflict and made a creative interpretation of UN legal codes in order to realise the support package. In the end, the UN established the UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA), a special UN political mission with the authority to use UN resources, as a means of providing the support package to AMISOM.<sup>77</sup>

The support provided by UNSOA to AMISOM is funded through a UN assessed budget. In 2012, \$729 million had been disbursed from the assessed budget to UNSOA to implement the AMISOM logistical package. The support provided by UNSOA includes, for example, information support operations, facilities and engineering, health and sanitation, medical support, communication and information technology, aviation rotations, capacity building, property management, rations, fuel and water, and vehicles and other equipment.<sup>78</sup> In addition, UNSOA has provided training to AMISOM, for example, explosive ordnance disposal training.<sup>79</sup> UNSOA has also engaged directly with AMISOM troop contributors without necessitating the involvement of the AU or AMISOM, on occasion causing some friction with the AU.

The resolution authorising the support package has led to varying interpretations in the AU and UN regarding whether logistical support to civilian components would be included. Initially, this strained the relationship between these organisations, the subsequent revisions of the AMISOM mandate by the Security Council have addressed this problem, authorising logistical support to civilian components as well. The expansion of AMISOM outside of Mogadishu has also entailed a need to extend the mandate of UNSOA, in order to address AMISOM's new logistical challenges.<sup>80</sup>

One problem with the UN logistical package is that it has been modelled on requirements of ordinary UN operations. In contrast to such missions, AMISOM has broader combat elements. As a consequence, UNSOA has occasionally struggled to meet AMISOM's logistical requirements and make the rapid operational decisions on procurement needs, as required by the tempo of AMISOM's operations.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> *Charter of the United Nations*, Available at: <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/index.html>.

<sup>77</sup> Holt and Shanahan. 2005:62.

<sup>78</sup> Gadin. 2012:79.

<sup>79</sup> S/2013/69.

<sup>80</sup> Schulman, and Williams. 2012:32-45.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

The trust fund for AMISOM, mentioned above, is used by the UN to support the AU mission in areas not covered by the assessed funding, e.g. reimbursement for contingent-owned equipment, medical support, civilian and police operational costs, travel and administration.<sup>82</sup> As the trust fund is based on the voluntary donations of Member States, this funding is far less predictable or reliable than the assessed contributions. The UN has encouraged Member States to make donations on several occasions, yet the fund has frequently been short of support for AMISOM's critical requirements.<sup>83</sup>

## **Bilateral support and support from other organisations**

The third category of support to AMISOM, the voluntary support, comes in two forms.

The first is support for planning, deployment and management of the mission, which is mainly funded by the European Commission. The EU has been the largest single financial supporter of AMISOM, having provided some €411 million through funds from the *African Peace Facility* between 2007 and 2012.<sup>84</sup> The financial support provided by the EU has been used to cover overheads and operational costs, e.g. troop and police allowances.<sup>85</sup>

The second form of voluntary support is provided directly to troop contributors by means of bilateral agreements. Several EU Member States also support AMISOM bilaterally. However, among bilateral supporters, the US stands out particularly. The US has provided pre-deployment training to both Uganda and Burundi.<sup>86</sup> It has also supplied a support programme for AMISOM personnel of approximately \$340 million, including counter-terrorist training and force protection equipment to strengthen the ability of AMISOM to fight al-Shabaab.<sup>87</sup> In general, bilateral support has been provided in terms of strategic airlift, training, equipment and troop sustenance. Other major bilateral donors include Algeria (airlift) and the UK (e.g. support to troop contributing countries and contributions to the AMISOM trust fund).<sup>88</sup>

Without the support architecture for AMISOM, the mission would not have had the chance to successfully engage al-Shabaab; however, the reliance on external support also makes the mission vulnerable. As AMISOM expands its operational area in Somalia, its support requirements will change and increase, and there are no guarantees that donors will be forthcoming in the future. The construction of

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<sup>82</sup> Gadin. 2012: 79.

<sup>83</sup> S/2011/759.

<sup>84</sup> *European Union External Action Services*, January 2013.

<sup>85</sup> Gadin. 2012 : 80.

<sup>86</sup> Gadin. 2012 :76 & 80.

<sup>87</sup> Soria. 2012.

<sup>88</sup> Gadin.2012: 76.

the AMISOM support structure has been both laborious and complex. As such, modelling future African missions on AMISOM's success is not entirely unproblematic. Nor must the significant achievements of AMISOM divert attention from the fact that the mission remains under-equipped and underfunded.

In summary:

- AMISOM partners provide the mission with a complex and extensive support structure – including support for institutional capacity-building and technical support for, for example, planning, provision and delivery of logistics, and financial and in-kind support for, for example, troop allowances and training.
- Without this support structure, it would have been highly unlikely that the mission would have accomplished any of the achievements it has made.
- The support structure, in particular the support package provided by the UN, has been highly innovative and is basically what is referred to when observers speak of the “AMISOM model”: African boots on the ground backed by western money.
- Despite the support that has been provided, AMISOM remains understaffed, under-equipped and underfunded, challenging the view of the AMISOM model as a successful prototype for future operations.

## **3.2 External conditions and circumstances – Changes around AMISOM**

### **3.2.1 The political process**

The first factor contributing to an environment in which AMISOM was able to achieve success was the political process that sought to end the transitional period.

Over the years, several attempts have been made to find a solution to the Somali conflict. The most recent was the Kampala Accord of 2011 which was signed by the then President of Somalia and the Speaker of Parliament. The Accord and the subsequently agreed transitional roadmap ended five months of political deadlock and helped define the end of the transitional period by stating that



elections to decide a new president and parliament would be held by 20 August 2012.<sup>89</sup> The negotiations did not involve al-Shabaab, but managed to bring together the warring clans that the President and the Speaker were representing. In August 2012, a new Somali Federal Parliament was inaugurated in Mogadishu. This was followed in September with the Members of Parliament electing Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as the country's new president.<sup>90</sup>

Implementing the roadmap to end the transitional period was not easy. Yet, the Kampala Accord and the roadmap have generated an enabling environment for AMISOM as it managed to keep the parties to the agreement united in presenting a common front against al-Shabaab. This happened at both the political and military levels. A related factor which enabled AMISOM to achieve success in Mogadishu was the support of allied Somali clan militias who fought alongside AMISOM against al-Shabaab.

The achievement made in the political process also enabled AMISOM by renewing the commitment of the international community to Somalia. The accords opened up a great window of opportunity to finally lead Somalia down a path of peace, stability and state-building. The international community therefore became more forthcoming in extending support to AMISOM, as well as other programmes, that would help carry Somalia through the end of the transitional period.

### 3.2.2 The bilateral interventions of Kenya and Ethiopia

An important factor enabling the improved situation in Somalia is that AMISOM has not stood alone in the fight against the militias.<sup>91</sup> In the latter part of 2011 both Kenya and Ethiopia launched separate interventions in Ethiopia to help the TFG defeat al-Shabaab.

For Kenya, bordering Somalia to the south, several factors seem to have motivated the intervention, the primary perhaps being the perceived need to establish a Kenya-dominated buffer state in the southern parts of Somalia in order to protect Kenyan national interests.<sup>92</sup> The most immediate catalyst for the intervention was a series of kidnappings and killings of foreign tourists in Kenya by Somali gangs; however, other, perhaps greater, motives also lay behind the operation. Among the likely motives were the need to boost security for trade with Somalia and the continued development of the Lamu district. Kenya's

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<sup>89</sup> *UN Department of Political Affairs*. 'Somalia' available at: [http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/activities\\_by\\_region/africa/somalia](http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/main/activities_by_region/africa/somalia). Rather than a direct, general election, the president was elected by the 275 Members of Parliament. These were in turn elected by 135 traditional elders and vetted by a Technical Selection Committee.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>91</sup> Meleagrou –Hitchens and Solomon . 2012.

<sup>92</sup> Wajir. 2011.

development of the district includes the construction of a deep-water port near the Somali border to serve as the terminus of a new oil pipeline from Uganda and Southern Sudan and improving security would also increase Kenya's chances of selling oil and gas concessions in Lamu. Other motives for Kenya likely included gaining control of the lucrative Kismayo port; advancing the interests of Kenyan sub-clans in southern Somalia, and to test Kenya's well-equipped but little-used army in combat.<sup>93</sup>

In October 2011, Kenya sent two battalions in to the southern parts of Somalia. Despite several apparent motives, the intervention came as a surprise to many.<sup>94</sup> Kenya had, as a host to Somali refugee camps, for example, been affected by the instability in Somalia for decades. American and British officials had previously discouraged the Kenyan government from intervening; arguing that more time should be given to AMISOM. Endorsing this idea, Kenya had settled on training Somali refugees to operate against al-Shabaab on both sides of the border. The 2011 drought, and the following humanitarian crisis, caused a surge in new arrivals to refugee camps in both Kenya and Ethiopia and generated conditions that thwarted the efforts of the Kenyan military and police at preventing al-Shabaab recruiting in the camps.<sup>95</sup>

Kenya and Somalia issued a joint communiqué, stating that the operation was carried out in support of and in close collaboration with the TFG and calling for AMISOM to deploy to the areas liberated by Kenyan troops.<sup>96</sup>

The Kenyan military is of modest size; it numbers only some 24,000 troops in total, but is well equipped by African standards.<sup>97</sup> The Kenyan intervention therefore operated under better conditions than AMISOM. The greatest impact that the intervention had on the security situation in Somalia was the increase in the number of troops who fought al-Shabaab and the fact that al-Shabaab were now being attacked on several fronts – the Kenyan's operating from the southern border and inwards. Kenya made great advances against al-Shabaab over the following weeks and months. Nevertheless, the 2,400 Kenyan troops who entered Somalia met stiff resistance and bad weather, and the intervention proved costly both financially and in terms of Kenyan casualties.<sup>98</sup>

By November, reports of Ethiopian advances across the Somali border also started to circulate.<sup>99</sup> Pushing in from the west, the Ethiopian troops propped-up AMISOM's efforts in Mogadishu and the Kenyan troops advancing towards

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<sup>93</sup> Throup. 2012.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> *Security Council Report*, 8 August 2011.

<sup>96</sup> *Security Council Report*, 1 December 2011

<sup>97</sup> Throup. 2012.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

Kismayo, squeezing al-Shabaab from all sides. Security gains continued to be made against the militia, allowing the consolidation of AMISOM control of Mogadishu and the expansion of its operations to other cities.<sup>100</sup>

Even though AMISOM and the bilateral interventions of Ethiopia and Kenya managed to function as a three-front war on al-Shabaab, it is likely that there was little coordination between the three. The Ethiopian intervention was initially denied by both the Ethiopian and Somali governments, as an Ethiopian presence in Somalia has always been considered provocative to the TFG's opposition. Ethiopia had intervened in Somalia previously, prior to the deployment of AMISOM, and stayed on to reinforce the mission until 2009. Reportedly, Ethiopia never really withdrew completely from western Somalia after its last intervention, between 2006 and 2009, and has continued to run reconnaissance missions across the border.<sup>101</sup> As such, acknowledging the Ethiopian presence may have been more controversial than doing so for the Kenyan presence.

Ethiopia has sustained a more direct engagement in the Somali conflict than Kenya. The Ethiopian involvement in Somalia is linked to its interest of preventing a Somali claim on the Ogaden region in western Ethiopia, which is home to ethnic Somalis and over which two wars have been fought between the countries.<sup>102</sup> The Kenyan intervention may have generated fear in the Ethiopian government that Kenya would gain an upper hand in Somalia, leading to a renewed engagement. Ethiopia has, however, remained secretive as regards the political objectives of its intervention.<sup>103</sup>

Six weeks in to the Kenyan intervention, in late November, the regional organisation, *Intergovernmental Authority on Development* (IGAD) called for Kenya to consider integrating its forces into AMISOM and requested that the Security Council augment the mandate of AMISOM to incorporate the Kenyan troops and adopt an appropriate posture for consolidating peace and security in the recovered areas.<sup>104</sup> This request was also picked up by the AU and was perceived favourably by Kenya, probably as an exit strategy from a campaign that was proving to be both costly and difficult.<sup>105</sup> As previously mentioned, such an authorisation was made by the Security Council in early 2012. In March 2012, the Kenyan troops were subsequently incorporated into AMISOM, which also received additional troop contributions from Djibouti, significantly augmenting the mission and allowing for the capture of Kismayo.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> S/2012/74.

<sup>101</sup> Wajir. 2011.

<sup>102</sup> Elmi and Barise. 2006: 34.

<sup>103</sup> Wajir. 2011; Schulman and Williams. 2012.

<sup>104</sup> *Security Council Report.*, 1 December 2011.

<sup>105</sup> Schulman and Williams. 2012.

<sup>106</sup> Zimmerman. 2012.

Unlike Kenya, Ethiopia was consistently determined not to integrate its forces into AMISOM.<sup>107</sup> This position is not too surprising given Ethiopia's usually secretive stance on all defence related issues. Ethiopia was also better equipped than Kenya for sustained unilateral operations. In addition, Ethiopia's involvement in AMISOM had always been considered controversial given Ethiopia's role in the Somali conflict.

Even though the Ethiopian intervention remained separate from AMISOM, the new strategic concept for AMISOM, authorised by the Security Council, was dependent on Ethiopia maintaining a presence in western Somalia.<sup>108</sup> Unlike the Kenyan troops, the Ethiopian soldiers were thus not re-hatted into AMISOM, but continue to be a significant external factor in the security improvements made in Somalia. Despite not contributing troops to AMISOM, Ethiopia does hold positions at AMISOM headquarters; a highly unusual arrangement which indicates the importance of Ethiopia in Somalia.<sup>109</sup> Despite this, coordination between the Ethiopian operation and AMISOM is reportedly often lacking. This is also symptomatic of the relationships between the countries contributing to AMISOM; Kenya, in particular, is reportedly operating much like a separate mission, much detached from AMISOM's command and control structures.

In addition to the interventions by Ethiopia and Kenya, the US contributed to the effort of defeating al-Shabaab by flying unmanned drones over its positions. It is likely that the US and other countries, such as the UK and the Gulf states, have also, in various ways, had an effect on the security situation in Somalia. Nevertheless, this role is not explored further in this report as the other factors addressed have been considered as of greater relative importance.

Analysts have argued that the advances made against al-Shabaab can partly be considered a result of regional and international power politics and partly attributed to a largely unprecedented effort in African multilateralism: attributing the turning point in the fight against al-Shabaab to the moment when fighting forces in Somalia – Kenya, Ethiopia, AMISOM, the TFG and proxy militias – began cooperating and developing a coherent vision of how the defeat of al-Shabaab was to be achieved.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Schulman and Williams. 2012.

<sup>108</sup> S/2012/74.

<sup>109</sup> Interview UNPOS, Nairobi, 09/05/2012.

<sup>110</sup> Rosen. 2012.

In summary:

- The interventions of Ethiopia and Kenya into western and southern Somalia in late 2011 had a great impact on the security situation, allowing al-Shabaab to be confronted from all sides.
- Even though coordination between the various operations was limited, the bilateral interventions significantly bolstered AMISOM's effort, which was far too small to have been able to make a similar move against al-Shabaab on its own.
- The Kenyan troops were eventually integrated into AMISOM, greatly strengthening the mission and allowing for AMISOM to operate in the southern parts of Somalia, including in Kismayo.
- The Ethiopian troops also remain in Somalia, but continue to operate separately from AMISOM. A withdrawal of Ethiopia would likely entail a significant worsening of the security situation and AMISOM and the Somali government remains dependent on the Ethiopian presence.

### 3.2.3 Al-Shabaab's decreased popularity and internal dynamics

Although al-Shabaab has clearly been suffering military defeats in Somalia as a result of offensive operations conducted by AMISOM and its partners, the decline of al-Shabaab can also be attributed to more prosaic factors, such as a reduction of its support among the Somali population. In particular, two main factors have led to a reduction in the organisation's popular support: the mishandling of the 2011 drought and internal divisions within the organisation.<sup>111</sup>

In mid-2011, eastern Africa suffered from a severe drought which is considered the worst for a generation. Although much of the region was affected, it was only in the areas of southern and central Somalia, which were controlled by al-Shabaab, where the drought also led to a highly devastating famine. UN reports estimated that approximately three million people in these areas were without enough food. International humanitarian relief organisations stood ready to assist the starving populations. Al-Shabaab, nevertheless, decided to maintain its policy of refusing foreign aid, which it considers a tool of western influence, and denied access to most aid agencies. Relief that was allowed to enter was primarily kept

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<sup>111</sup> Meleagrou –Hitchens and Solomon. 2012.

for al-Shabaab's own fighters. An al-Shabaab spokesperson even suggested the declaration of famine to be a politically motivated lie with a hidden agenda.<sup>112</sup>

Al-Shabaab's handling of the situation forced starving Somalis to flee Shabaab-controlled area. It also made it difficult for al-Shabaab to continue to convincingly present itself as the provider of order and justice, which had been its major selling-point since al-Shabaab's days as part of the Islamic Courts' Union in 2006.<sup>113</sup> In the end, popular support for al-Shabaab among its key constituents was severely reduced.<sup>114</sup>

Al-Shabaab is also suffering as a result of its internal dynamics. It has been alleged that the organisation has had links with al-Qaeda for years, but the two organisations did not officially merge until 2012. The relationship to al-Qaeda and its global jihad has, nonetheless, led to rifts amongst the al-Shabaab leadership, as there are divisions over how al-Shabaab's regional struggle should relate to al-Qaeda's broader ambitions. Reportedly, disagreement between the more committed jihadists of al-Shabaab and leaders with a more regional focus has weakened the organisation from within.<sup>115</sup> There are reports that some of the more opportunistic regionalists are willing to sit down with the Somali government and become part of a political process, a move considered inconceivable by the more ideologically committed jihadists. In general, the success of the political process in yielding a legitimate government in Somalia has, to some extent, led to the questioning of al-Shabaab's own legitimacy to lead Somalia among some factions in the organization.

In addition to this on-going rift, clan divisions are also reportedly causing splits within the group; some clan leaders, whose clans comprise the majority of al-Shabaab's foot soldiers, are becoming enraged that their clans are bearing the brunt of the casualties as al-Shabaab increasingly suffers defeats. Such divisions were exacerbated by the famine since it was primarily clan leaders in areas that were barely affected by the drought who made the decision to refuse foreign aid.<sup>116</sup>

A range of additional factors, as noted by scholars and experts on the Somalia conflict, other than the series of military defeats contributing to the demise of al-Shabaab can also be added: the heightened number of civilian casualties resulting from an increased number of suicide and IED attacks, further reducing popular support; heavy taxation; and harsh interpretations of what is permitted under Sharia law, making life under al-Shabaab miserable.<sup>117</sup> The Arab spring also had

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<sup>112</sup> Meleagrou -Hitchens and Solomon. 2012.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid .

<sup>114</sup> Rosen. 2012.

<sup>115</sup> Meleagrou -Hitchens and Solomon. 2012.

<sup>116</sup> Meleagrou -Hitchens and Solomon. 2012.

<sup>117</sup> Rosen. 2012.

negative effects on the organisation, as political and financial support from Islamist fundamentalists in North Africa reportedly was reduced and funding from Libya ceased entirely as a consequence of regime changes and political tumult. In addition, the supply of weapons and soldiers from Yemen has reportedly been terminated for similar reasons.<sup>118</sup>

In summary:

- The fact that AMISOM managed to take control of Mogadishu and Kismayo from al-Shabaab is also due to a weakening of the organisation from within.
- This weakening is partly due to reduced popular support among the Somali population (due to, for example, its mismanagement of the 2011 drought, heavy taxation and the success of the political process in yielding a government, widely considered to be legitimate), as well as the weakening of the organisation's internal cohesion (due to an internal power struggle between two major leaders/clan factions, relating also to disagreement over al-Shabaab's broader ideology and political purpose).

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<sup>118</sup> Interview, Nairobi, 02/10/2012.

## 4 Conclusions

This report has sought to answer a few questions regarding the role of AMISOM in the recent improvements to the situation in Somalia. These were:

- To what extent has AMISOM contributed to improving the security situation in Somalia?
- What changes to AMISOM have had a positive effect on the mission, allowing it to play its current role, that of security provider in Somalia?
- What circumstances that are external to AMISOM have enabled the improvements in the security situation?
- Could the improvements in the security situation in Somalia have occurred without the presence of AMISOM?

In addition, this report has sought to evaluate the validity of describing AMISOM as a model for effective peacekeeping.

Based on the findings detailed in this report, it is clear that AMISOM has made an important and substantial contribution to improving the security situation in Somalia. In particular, this relates to the seizure of Mogadishu from al-Shabaab in 2011. This turn of events was facilitated by several factors, including the 2010 authorisation of an increase in AMISOM troop numbers, which increased the manpower of the mission. Another important facilitator was the support provided to AMISOM by its partners, such as the UN, EU and individual states, which strengthened the mission on several different levels. This included enabling the deployment of new troops, providing training and increasing the capability of the troops, and the planning of operations. The advances made in Mogadishu were, however, also enabled by a weakening of al-Shabaab which was not directly related to AMISOM, but rather a consequence of a range of factors inherent to al-Shabaab itself.

Other major security gains, such as wresting control of the cities of Kismayo and Baidoa from al-Shabaab, are more directly related to separate security interventions launched by neighbouring states Ethiopia and Kenya. One notable aspect of this is, however, that, at the time of the seizure of Kismayo, the Kenyan troops had been integrated into AMISOM and, as such, cannot be ascribed to a separate unilateral intervention, but rather a further increase in AMISOM troop levels, with better equipped and skilled soldiers.

In short, the major internal changes to AMISOM, which has enabled the mission to contribute to the improved security in Somalia has included changes in AMISOM's mandate, increasing the authorised troop levels from an initial 8,000 to 12,000 and finally to 17,700. AMISOM's mandate has also been revised to allow the mission to expand both geographically and in terms of scope, enabling a more offensive stance, using all necessary means to defeat al-Shabaab. Another major internal enabler has been the support provided to the mission by



international partners. In particular, this support has been crucial in making AMISOM a viable force by helping to ensure that the mission, which for several years struggled to reach the authorised troop levels, finally fully deployed in 2012. This was done by, for example, providing funding for troop allowances and providing strategic airlift to actually get the troops and their equipment into Mogadishu. In addition, the external support provided also aimed to increase the capacity of AMISOM in terms of improved management, planning and training.

Other than the circumstances external to AMISOM that have facilitated the improvements in the security situation and which have already been mentioned, the bilateral interventions of Ethiopia and Kenya, as well as the weakening of al-Shabaab, the advances made in the political process in Somalia are important factors for explaining and understanding the recent positive developments in the country. These political advances, which in 2012 yielded a new government, which is widely considered to be legitimate, are the primary driver of peace and security in Somalia, both now and in the future.

Examining the role of AMISOM in supporting the political process and exploring the effects of advances in the political process on AMISOM's ability to establish security presents a challenge in terms of establishing causality, providing a case of 'the chicken and the egg'. As an example, one could argue that AMISOM itself has only had a limited impact on the security situation in Somalia as al-Shabaab was, in fact, weakened, not so much by AMISOM's offensives, as by a reduction in popular support resulting from the establishment of the new government. At the same time, the presence of AMISOM enabled the political process, which, in turn, affected al-Shabaab in a way that was advantageous to AMISOM. Despite the difficulty in assessing the exact role of AMISOM in the security advances which have been made, the findings of this report indicate that the presence of AMISOM alone cannot explain the security gains. However, it is also clear that the improvements in the security situation in Somalia are unlikely to have occurred without the presence of AMISOM. AMISOM is clearly one important piece of the Somalia puzzle, although several other factors also constitute important pieces.

AMISOM can be considered as having achieved some peacekeeping success, in that it has contributed to the stabilisation of Somalia. The mission seems to have delivered on its mandate, i.e. contributing essential support to the TFG and its institutions. In its role as a peacekeeping mission, AMISOM has significantly contributed in bringing Somalia to where it is today and it will continue to be of importance to the future of Somalia. For this reason, AMISOM has come to be seen by some observers as a blueprint for 'African solutions to African problems', with African boots on the ground supported by international resources. In his March 2013 report on Mali<sup>119</sup>, the UN Secretary-General

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<sup>119</sup> S/2013/189

suggested a similar format for the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA), whereby troops would be supplied from the countries of the region and the UN would provide a similar support structure to that of AMISOM.<sup>120</sup>

AMISOM is an interesting model of what similar missions might be able to achieve given similar circumstances. However, as the results of this report indicate, several factors contributed both to the improvements to the security situation itself and to enabling AMISOM to act as a viable security partner. For this reason, it might be precipitous to think that similar missions would necessarily make equal accomplishments elsewhere. What is particularly important to keep in mind is that AMISOM spent about four years in Somalia without achieving any significant security improvements. It was not until the range of factors addressed in this report came into place that the mission started having an effect.

AMISOM was established to confront the situation in Somalia at a time when no one else would. At the same time, the AU lacked the capacity to make AMISOM effective and it wasn't until the international community, and particular the UN, started contributing its own resources that AMISOM began generating results of scale. Even so, generating the support architecture for AMISOM was a complex and strenuous task that should not be considered easy or self-evident. The result was, however, a new and extensive partnership between the UN and AMISOM (its Troop Contributing Countries and the AU); a partnership which could surely, as the Secretary-General suggested, be transferred to other regional missions. However, the lesson to be learned from AMISOM is that the support architecture to make the mission viable also went far beyond the UN and required a great commitment of both individual states and other regional organisations, such as the EU.

There is a further danger in depicting AMISOM as a peacekeeping success, in that doing so may be interpreted as arguing that AMISOM was a superior option to other types of mission, particularly UN-led missions. As a peace operation, AMISOM has lacked the desired resources and equipment. Formed as an ill-equipped peacekeeping force operating as a peace enforcer, AMISOM has, in fact, embodied most of the traits of bad peacekeeping that the 2000 Brahimi report warned against.<sup>121</sup> AMISOM has become a model for the regionalisation of peacekeeping, sometimes described as an outsourcing of peacekeeping by Western countries to regional organisations, or more maliciously "peacekeeping on the cheap". Leaving the responsibility for peace and security to an under-

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<sup>120</sup> On 25 April 2013 Security Council authorised the replacement of AFISMA by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to which AFISMA troops were to be re-hatted, another option which had been presented in the Secretary-General's report.

<sup>121</sup> See section 3.1.1 for more details.

strength, under-resourced and under-equipped mission, whose relationship to the UN is undefined, is problematic, to say the least. Even though AMISOM has been able to achieve some success, several challenges to the task of consolidating peace in Somalia still remain, and it is still too early to tell what the final assessment of AMISOM will be once the mission eventually withdraws.

At the moment, AMISOM is overstretched. The mission may consolidate its positions in southern and central Somalia or advance to the north, but is unlikely to be able to do both, leaving room for al-Shabaab to manoeuvre. The political process in Somalia also seems to have lost some momentum since the 2012 elections, and the country is still very far from the relatively peaceful situation which would allow AMISOM to withdraw. The national security forces are increasingly well-trained, but lack the effective command and control as well as the basic infrastructure that will allow them to function effectively. Ethiopia continues to carry out military operations in Somalia, which is not necessarily in line with AMISOM objectives or even with those of the Somali government. The same might be said of the Kenyans, who, despite formally being a part of AMISOM, are not fully integrated into the AMISOM command structure and are operating more or less independently, adding to the confusion that AMISOM has to address.<sup>122</sup>

As the Somali political process lingers on, addressing important questions such as the status of Mogadishu and how power should be allocated between the central government and the regions, AMISOM continues to be present, providing its support to the process. While al-Shabaab has lost control of its most strategically relevant positions and has ceased to be a viable alternative to the Somali government, the organisation still remains a highly relevant security threat. In addition, AMISOM, alongside the Somali government, faces new challenges in the effort to stabilise the country, including preventing security vacuums in the areas recovered from al-Shabaab being filled by warlords.

Even though it may only be a question of time before the mission is re-hatted into a UN force, it seems like there will be reasons to return to studying AMISOM in the years to come in order to achieve a conclusive evaluation of the mission's impact in Somalia.

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<sup>122</sup> Another important issue for Somalia is that since the government is not yet able to manage the security situation by itself, much of the responsibility for providing security is at the hands of other governments, whose interests may not always correspond to those of the Somali government.

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This report explores the improvements made to the security situation in Somalia since 2010 and the role of AMISOM in bringing these about.

The study outlines the major changes made to the mission since 2008 which have enabled it to contribute to the security achievements, as well as the conditions and circumstances, external to AMISOM, which have facilitated the improvements.

Finally, the report makes an assessment of the validity of describing the AMISOM model, which uses Western resources to support African boots on the ground, as a prototype for effective peacekeeping.