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THESIS

**COMBATING TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM IN THE
EAST AFRICAN REGION: THE ROLE OF THE
AFRICAN UNION MISSION IN SOMALIA**

by

Nicholas Humble Nyesiga

June 2017

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader

Carolyn Halladay
Florina Cristiana Matei

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REGION: THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN UNION MISSION IN SOMALIA**

Nicholas Humble Nyesiga
Lieutenant Colonel, Uganda Army
B.A., Makerere University, 1998.

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June 2017**

Approved by: Carolyn Halladay
Thesis Advisor

Florina Cristiana Matei
Second Reader

Mohammed Hafez
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

With the logistical support of the international community, including the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United States, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) has liberated towns from Al Shabaab, protected the Federal Government of Somalia, and enhanced the military capabilities of the Somalia National Security Forces. However, the security situation in Somalia remains fragile, characterized by a mixture of conventional and asymmetrical attacks against AMISOM and the strategic government infrastructures. Al Shabaab still has the ability to switch from asymmetrical to direct conventional attacks against AMISOM forces and its partners. In other words, significant challenges remain. Some are strategic, some are operational, and some are geo-political. These bottlenecks, particularly as they aggregate, continue to undermine AMISOM's efforts to break the cohesion of Al Shabaab—and its will to fight. This thesis examines the achievements of and challenges before AMISOM in combating Al Shabaab-orchestrated transnational terrorism in Somalia. It also demonstrates comparative counterterrorism models from which lessons for Somalia can be drawn. The study concludes by suggesting policy recommendations to the Somali Federal Government, the African Union, and the international community in fighting against transnational terrorism in Somalia and the East African region.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION.....	1
B.	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH.....	2
C.	LITERATURE REVIEW	4
1.	Regionalism in Theory and Practice	4
2.	Regionalism in the Context of Counterterrorism	8
3.	Basis of African Regionalism	10
D.	POTENTIAL EXPLANATION AND HYPOTHESIS.....	13
E.	RESEARCH DESIGN	14
F.	THESIS OVERVIEW	14
II.	ACHIEVEMENTS AND MANDATE OF AMISOM	15
A.	HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF AMISOM	15
B.	AMISOM’S MANDATE	20
C.	ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMISOM.....	22
1.	Liberation of Strategic Towns and Sea Ports.....	22
2.	Political Mentoring	24
3.	Capacity Building and Training of Security Forces	25
III.	CHALLENGES FOR AMISOM IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM IN SOMALIA	27
A.	STRATEGIC CHALLENGES	27
1.	Lack of Consensus among International Partners	27
2.	Misunderstanding the Conflict Environment	30
3.	Lack of Financial Resources	31
4.	Lack of Regional Political Framework for Peacekeeping	32
B.	GEO-STRATEGIC CHALLENGES.....	33
1.	Undue Influence of Regional Proxy Interests.....	33
C.	OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES	36
1.	The Challenging Enemy Strategies and Tactics.....	36
2.	The Influence of Foreign Fighters	38
IV.	OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH THE THREAT POSED BY AL SHABAAB	41
A.	GLOBALIZED MODEL: THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR.....	42

B.	NATIONAL MODELS: COUNTERTERRORISM APPROACHES OF FRANCE AND SAUDI ARABIA	48
1.	The “Hard” Approach of the French Counterterrorism Model.....	48
2.	The “Soft” Approach of the Saudi Arabian Counterterrorism Model.....	52
C.	THE UNITED KINGDOM’S COUNTER-RADICALIZATION MODEL: CONTEST	54
D.	ANALYSIS OF KEY LESSONS LEARNED.....	58
V.	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	59
A.	FINDINGS	59
B.	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	61
1.	The Federal Government of Somalia	61
2.	The Role of the African Union Going Forward	63
3.	The International Partners	63
	LIST OF REFERENCES	65
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST	71

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Personnel AMISOM Authorized and Deployed from 2007 to 2013.	20
Figure 2.	Map of South and Central Somalia Showing AMISOM Deployment and Al Shabaab Occupied Areas.....	23

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
CTC	Counter-Terrorism Committee
EAC	East African Community
EU	European Union
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
KDF	Kenyan Defense Forces
OAU	Organization of African Unity
SNA	Somali National Army
SNSF	Somali National Security Forces
TNG	Transitional National Government
UN	United Nations
USAFRICOM	United States Africa Command

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I. INTRODUCTION

The persistent threat of Al Shabaab to mount terrorist attacks in Somalia and neighboring troop-contributing countries in East Africa undermines the efforts of the African Union to enhance peace and security in the region. The increases in troops from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) have not Al Shabaab and its affiliates in the region. Instead, the terrorist group has transformed into small active units capable of conducting assassinations, kidnapping, planting improvised explosive devices, and attacking neighboring countries, especially Kenya.¹ The rampant terror activities have left the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) vulnerable and restricted to areas secured by AMISOM), not only limiting the government's ability to do its work, but also undermining the government's legitimacy among the citizens.²

The Somali government still depends on AMISOM and the neighboring countries of Kenya and Ethiopia for the security it enjoys.³ Such security challenges as a weak federal government, Islamic radicalization, inter-clan conflicts, extreme poverty, and competing regional interests persist, despite AMISOM's progress. AMISOM has concentrated most of its efforts on a military approach to achieve security goals and less on the socioeconomic and political issues. For its part, Al Shabaab has proven notably resilient as an organization, reassembling and reasserting itself even after effective but narrowly conceived AMISOM military countermeasures.

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

This research examines the efforts by AMISOM to combat Al Shabaab-led terrorism in the East African region by evaluating the military success of AMISOM operations. This study further identifies the remaining challenges and highlights

¹ International Crisis Group, "Working to Prevent Conflict Worldwide" (Policy Briefing No. 99) June 26, 2014, 1, <http://www.crisisgroup.org>.

² Noel Anderson, "Peacekeepers Fighting a Counterinsurgency Campaign: A Net Assessment of the African Union Mission in Somalia," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 37, no. 11 (2014): 936–958, doi: 10.1080/105610X.2014.952260.

³ Jason, Mosley, "Somalia's Federal Future: Layered Agendas, Risks and Opportunities," Chatham House, September 2, 2015, 2, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/somalias-federal-future>.

opportunities for AMISOM to enhance peace and security in Somalia and the East African region. As a preliminary question, the thesis asks: How can AMISOM be strengthened to end Al Shabaab-led transnational terrorism in Somalia and the region?

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Emmanuel Kisangani explains the upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism in Somalia in the broader context of state failure and disintegration since the collapse of Said Barre's regime in 1990.⁴ The transnational terrorism threatening Somalia and the East African region emerged as an offshoot of the failed-state situation in Somalia.⁵ Most notably, it led to the rise of Al Shabaab, a terrorist group with connections to Al Qaeda and other transnational organized criminal groups and activities, including piracy.⁶

Al Shabaab gained momentum and local support in 2007, when Ethiopia entered Somalia to avert the expansion of the Islamic Courts Union and used harsh methods that cast Ethiopia more as an occupation force than as peacekeepers.⁷ AMISOM stepped in during 2007, with forces from Uganda and later Burundi, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, and Sierra Leone.⁸ Since the deployments, Al Shabaab operations in Somalia and the group's safe havens have been reduced.⁹ The relative peace and security attained have enabled the functioning of the Transnational Federal Government and created an environment conducive to relief and humanitarian activities.¹⁰

Despite AMISOM efforts, the Al Shabaab threat remains, manifested in the continued attacks on AMISOM forces in Somalia and elsewhere in the East African

⁴ Emmanuel Kisiangani, *Comparing Somalia's Al-Shabaab and Uganda's Lord Resistance Party: A Toxic Mix of Religion, Politics, and Violence* (ISS Paper No. 229) (Pretoria, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, December 2011): 1–16, <https://www.africaportal.org/dspace/articles/comparing-somalias-al>.

⁵ Hans-Georg Earhart and Kerstin Petretto, "Stabilizing Somalia: Can the EU's Comprehensive Approach Work?" *European Security* (2014): 183, doi: 10.1080/09662839.2013856306.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁷ Kisiangani, "Comparing Somalia's Al-Shabaab and Uganda's Lord Resistance Party," 7.

⁸ Donatien Nduwimana, "AMISOM in Somalia: A Ray of Hope," Nairobi: International Peace Support Training Centre, 2013, 10–13, ipstc.org/media/documents/Occasional_Paper_4-4.pdf.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

region. For example, the terrorist group assaulted the Kenyan Defense Forces camp in El Adde in 2016 with devastating effects, and in June 2015, it attacked the Burundian camp in Lego south of Mogadishu and killed more than 70 soldiers.¹¹ In September 2015, Al Shabaab made a daring attack on Ugandan forces at Janaale in southwest Mogadishu and killed 19 soldiers.¹² Such incursions, in addition to terrorist activities against troop-contributing countries—especially Kenya and Uganda—indicate increased transnational terror capabilities of the terrorist group.¹³

Al Shabaab's tactics, techniques, and procedures are becoming increasingly sophisticated and well resourced. It has stepped up its capability in terms of both materiel and radical individuals willing to carry out martyrdom operations against AMISOM, Somali National Security Forces (SNSF), and international partners. Meanwhile, the FGS continues to struggle unsuccessfully to contain a multifaceted insurgency characterized by Islamic extremism, political and financial opportunism, and clan interests.¹⁴

The international community, especially the U.S. government, has been concerned with the political instability and terrorism activities in Somalia.¹⁵ In response, the Africa Subcommittee of the U.S. Congress introduced Security Resolution 573, which details a broad strategy to master the security crisis in Somalia, especially to deal with the question of Al Shabaab-led terrorism.¹⁶ From the counterterrorism perspective, the U.S. government has made a significant contribution in terms of logistics, training, and putting boots on the ground.¹⁷ The Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, which is a component of the broader U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), has enhanced regional

¹¹ Jarat Chopra, "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2111," 2013, 32, www.cfr.org/somalia/un-report-monitoring-group-somalia-eritrea.

¹² Chopra, "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea," 32.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Anderson, "Peacekeepers Fighting a Counterinsurgency Campaign," 936–958.

¹⁵ Lauren Ploch, *Countering Terrorism in East Africa: The U.S. Response* (CRS Report No. R41473) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2010), 4–7, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41473.pdf>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Patrick Kimunguyi, "Terrorism and Counterterrorism in East Africa," Global Terrorism Research Centre, Monash University, Australia, 2011, 15, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267265383_Terrorism_and_Counter_terrorism_in_East_Africa.

counterterrorism capabilities.¹⁸ Such efforts indicate that the security of the East African Region, and Africa as a whole, is relevant to U.S. strategic security interests.

This research thus aims to improve the understanding of Al Shabaab- terrorism among AMISOM and allied practitioners. The study also can inform counterterrorism strategies and the relevant policy-making process of AMISOM and troop-contributing countries.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the existing literature on the growth and development of regionalism. It also provides a framework for examining the efficacy of regional organizations in fighting transnational terrorism in the East African region.

1. Regionalism in Theory and Practice

The study of regionalism still lacks a universal hypothesis and broader definition to accommodate all disciplines.¹⁹ The definition and understanding of “regionalism” largely depend on the field and purpose of study.²⁰ Several perspectives emerge, including those rooted in geographical, international security, and international relations.

From the geographical standpoint, regions are construed as subnational entities formed either out of historical processes or through the nation-state-making process.²¹ Joseph Nye views regionalism through two lenses: macro-regionalism, where three or more states integrate for benefits of conflict prevention and management; and micro-regionalism, where units smaller than the states cooperate for economic integration.²² He argues that regional organizations like the Arab Maghreb Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council in the Middle East, and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹ Louise Fawcett and Helene Gandois. “Regionalism in Africa and the Middle East: Implications for EU studies.” *European Integration* 32, no. 6 (2010): 622, doi: 10.1080/07036337.2010.518719.

²⁰ Björn Hettne, “Beyond the ‘New’ Regionalism.” *New Political Economy* 10, no. 4 (2005): 546, doi: 10.1080/13563460500344484.

²¹ Ibid., 547.

²² Andrew Hurrell, “Explaining the Resurgence of Regionalism in World Politics.” *Review of International Studies* 21, no. 4 (1995): 331, doi: 10.17/so260210500117954.

developed through one of these two trends.²³ In the same realm, Björn Hettne considers regionalism as “a cluster of states sharing a common space on the globe.”²⁴ He envisages it as a mechanism through which states promote cooperation and share benefits of economic integration and stability.²⁵ He argues that regionalism may consist of larger continents or a conglomeration of geographically small states.²⁶

Hettne further refers to the region as “typically a limited number of states linked together by a geographical relationship and a degree of mutual interdependence.”²⁷ He unpacks the concept thus: A region consists of “states which have some common ethnic, linguistic, cultural, social, and historical bonds.” He continues:

Regions can be differentiated in terms of social cohesiveness (ethnicity, race, language, religion, culture, history, consciousness of a common heritage), economic cohesiveness (trade patterns, economic complementarity), political cohesiveness (regime type, ideology) and organizational cohesiveness (existence of formal regional institutions).²⁸

To buttress the geographical view, Louise Fawcett and Helene Gandois argue that states cooperate based on sharing common social, economic, and political goals.²⁹ Fawcett notes that geographical proximity, the search for economic and security interdependence, and cultural identity are the dominant driving factors for regionalism.³⁰ They visualize regionalism as a project that connects states and non-state actors, with states playing a dominant role.³¹

Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, as quoted in “Southern Africa and the Quest for Collective Security,” contend that proximity is a necessary but insufficient yardstick in defining regionalism. They suggest such other factors as social homogeneity,

²³ Ibid., 330.

²⁴ Hettne, “Beyond the ‘New’ Regionalism,” 548.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Fawcett and Gandois, “Regionalism in Africa and the Middle East,” 622.

³¹ Ibid.

which includes race, religion and history, as plausible drivers that contribute to the proper understanding of region.³² Hussein Solomon and Jakkie Cilliers support the view that most regional bodies in Europe and Africa were formed because of shared history, economic interdependence, and the need for collective security against common threats and that geography was only an enabling factor.³³ Similarly, Gerrit Olivier points out that the original idea of the formation of the Organization of African Unity, a predecessor to the African Union, was mainly predicated on a shared African heritage, challenges, and borders—but also to rally against the common problems of underdevelopment, civil conflict, and marginalization, especially after decolonization.³⁴

The international relations field associates regions with super-national subsystems of international systems and this construes continents as regions. Liberal scholars such as Stephen M. Walt agrees that regional cooperation enhances state relations and collaboration toward the achievement of common goals.³⁵ Such relations manifest in the form of defense, diplomatic, political, and socio-economic ties. Evans and Newnham contend “the security dilemma of states can best be overcome not through national self-help and balance of power, but through an institution of communal commitments where each state undertakes to join common actions against those who threaten the territorial integrity or political independence of others.”³⁶

In addition, the new strand of transnational security threats such as terrorism and natural calamities transcends the traditional capabilities of individual states, thus the necessity for regionalism.³⁷ Realist scholars like John J. Mearsheimer, however, argue that states form regional alliances and coalitions for purposes of power balancing in an

³² Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, *The Dictionary of World Politics: A Reference Guide to Concepts, Ideas and Institutions* (New York: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1992): 43, quoted in Hussein Solomon and Jakkie Cilliers. “Southern Africa and the Quest for Collective Security.” *Security Dialogue* 28, no. 2 (1997): 191, <https://www.prio.org/Publications/Publication/?x=2601>.

³³ Solomon and Cilliers, “Southern Africa and the Quest for Collective Security,” 193.

³⁴ Gerrit Olivier, “Regionalism in Africa: Cooperation without Integration,” *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 32, no. 2 (2010): 17, <http://hdl.handle.net/2263/16138>.

³⁵ Stephen M. Walt, “International Relations: One World, Many Theories,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 110 (1998): 32, doi: 102307/1149275, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1149275>.

³⁶ Quoted in Solomon and Cilliers, “Southern Africa and the Quest for Collective Security,” 194.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 195.

anarchical internal system, rather than harnessing the benefits of cooperation.³⁸ Fawcett also contends that in practice, regionalism is limited to maneuvers of individual states' interests and quest for power manifested in the patterns of power balancing.³⁹

Scholars of international security credit regionalism for the significant role it played during and after the post-Cold War period.⁴⁰ Charles Kupchan, Clifford A. Kupchan, Hussein Solomon, and Jakkie Cilliers appreciate integrated regionalism as the key tenet of collective security.⁴¹ The team observed that

The underlying logic of collective security is twofold. First, is that the balancing mechanisms that operate under collective security should prevent war and stop aggression far more effectively than balancing mechanism in an anarchic setting.... Second, a collective security organization, by institutionalizing the notion of all against one, contributes to the creation of an international setting in which stability emerges through cooperation rather than competition.⁴²

Supporting the view that regionalism is integral to global security, Solomon and Cilliers concur that collective security rests on the interdependence of states and argue that because “many problems transcend national borders, governments are no longer capable of protecting their citizens unilaterally.”⁴³ They argue that in such situations, states are safer when they confront threats jointly.

Barry Buzan's view dovetails with this argument by asserting that security threats are increasingly becoming interlinked and regionalized and that countries must deal with spill-over effects from neighboring local conflicts; thus, the necessity for security cooperation.⁴⁴ This assertion gives credence to the view that organized regions have an

³⁸ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2001), 17.

³⁹ Louise Fawcett, “Exploring Regional Domains: A Comparative History of Regionalism,” *International Affairs* 80, o. 3 (2004): 431 doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2346.2004.00391.

⁴⁰ Charles A. Kupchan and Clifford A. Kupchan, “Concerts, Collective Security, and the Future of Europe,” *International Security* 16, no. 1 (1991): 114–161, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539053>.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Solomon and Cilliers, “Southern Africa and the Quest for Collective Security,” 192.

⁴⁴ Barry Buzan, *People, States & Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Harvester-Wheat-sheaf, 2009), 90, https://play.google.com/store/books/details/Barry_Buzan_People.

advantage in managing internal regional security and peace.⁴⁵ In the same vein, Hutten states that

security regionalism is thus meant attempts by states and other actors in a particular geographical area—a region in the making—to transform a security complex with conflict-generating inter-state and intra-state relations in the direction of a security community with cooperative external (inter-regional) relations and domestic (intra-regional) peace.⁴⁶

His definitions suggest several ideas in common. First, states organize themselves to attain social, economic, political, and security interests.⁴⁷ Second, regionalism is a state-led process structured along a particular set of objectives and regional organizations are key drivers that shape and promote regional cooperation.⁴⁸ Third, regionalism is a human construct that often changes to suit the political, economic, and security interests of the actors.⁴⁹ This elaboration denotes the multidimensional roles of the current wave of regionalism, which transcends the traditional role of economic integration.⁵⁰

2. Regionalism in the Context of Counterterrorism

Tracing the contribution of regionalism in the fight against terrorism, Olivier attests that emergence of new threats, especially terrorism, required regional organizations initially set up to coordinate economic development to expand and include security imperatives such as institutional frameworks for conflict resolution, management, and counterterrorism.⁵¹

The United Nations (UN) Charter envisaged the role of regional organizations in the provision of peace and security.⁵² Article 53 of the UN Charter empowers regional

⁴⁵ Ibid., 92.

⁴⁶ Hettne, “Beyond the ‘New’ Regionalism,” 543.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 547

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Olivier, “Regionalism in Africa: Cooperation without Integration,” 17.

⁵¹ Eric Berman and Katie E. Sams, *Peacekeeping in Africa: Capabilities and Culpabilities*. (Geneva, Switzerland: UNIDIR, 2000), 34. <http://unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/peacekeeping-in-africa-capabilities-and-culpabilities-104.pdf>.

⁵² George Finch, “The United Nations Charter,” *American Journal of International Law* 39, no. 3 (1945): 543, doi: 102307/21935332.

organizations to settle regional conflicts through and with authorization from the UN Security Council.⁵³ It states that

the Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilize such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under its authority. But no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council, with the exception of measures against any enemy state, as defined in paragraph 2 of this Article, provided for pursuant to Article 107 or in regional arrangements directed against renewal of aggressive policy on the part of any such state, until such time as the Organization may, on request of the Governments concerned, be charged with the responsibility for preventing further aggression by such a state.⁵⁴

Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum note that the UN agenda for peace further provides the basis for the participation of regional organizations in UN security operations for conflict resolution and management.⁵⁵

UN Security Council Resolution 1373, adopted in September 2001 following the 9/11 attacks on the United States, further underlines the importance of international and regional organizations in the fight against terrorism, calling on all states to “work together” and to increase cooperation in the name of combating terrorism.⁵⁶ At the supranational level, the resolution saw the establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) to coordinate the fight against international terrorism.⁵⁷ The CTC operationalized the resolution by synergizing international, continental, and regional organizations with a view to defining their roles and enhancing cooperation against international terror.⁵⁸ The CTC committee highlighted the following tasks for regional organizations: sharing expertise and best practices; and developing local counterterrorism

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ United Nations. United Nations Charter and Statute of the International Court of Justice, 1945, <http://treaties.un.org/doc/publications/CT/uncharter.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Björn Hettne and Fredrik Söderbaum. “The UN and Regional Organizations in Global Security: Competing or Complementary Logics?” *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 12, no. 3 (2006): 228, <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-155926524/the-un-and>.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 230.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

programs.⁵⁹ The deployment of AMISOM forces in Somalia to stabilize the security situation in the country is an offshoot of such efforts.⁶⁰

3. Basis of African Regionalism

Several scholars note that the idea for African states to form regional bodies to mitigate the common challenges of underdevelopment, civil conflicts, and marginalization emerged immediately after decolonization by post-independence African leaders.⁶¹ Memar Ayalew Demeke and Solomon Gebreyohans Gebru suggest several factors that accelerated the process: 1) the dynamics of international trade; 2) the quest for economic cooperation, and integration among African countries to gain more bargaining power from international trade; and 3) the need to fill the security gap that resulted from the withdrawal of the Cold-War super powers.⁶²

Gebru and Demeke agree that the practical steps to African regionalism began with the establishment of the Lagos Plan of Action in 1980 in Nigeria, where African leaders advocated for the formation of self-sustaining regions and the subsequent adoption of the Abuja Treaty in June 1991 that highlighted the significance of regional organizations as the critical stakeholders in security and development.⁶³ However, they observe that the implementation process was limited by inherent structural and functional weaknesses in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) such as inadequate funding, failure of members to meet their financial obligations, absence of security enforcement capabilities, and lack of clear mechanisms for the prevention of internal conflict.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Eric Rosand, "Security Council Resolution 1373, The Counterterrorism Committee, and the Fight against Terrorism," *American Journal of International Law* 97, no. 2 (2003): 333–341, www.cfr.org/international-organizations-and-alliances/un-security.

⁶⁰ Christopher L. Daniels, *Somalia Piracy and Terrorism in the Horn of Africa* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 54.

⁶¹ Olivier, "Regionalism in Africa: Cooperation without Integration," 17.

⁶² Memar Ayalew Demeke and Solomon Gebreyohans Gebru. "The Role of Regional Economic Communities in Fighting Terrorism in Africa: The Case of Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)," *European Scientific Journal* (2014): 217, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1671853437?accountid=12702>.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 226.

Assessing the evolving role of regional organization in counterterrorism, Tim Murithi asserts that unlike the OAU, its successor organization, the African Union (AU), adopted a much more robust regional interventionist approach that is strongly based on solid legal and institutional frameworks.⁶⁵ He cites the establishment of the Peace and Security Council specifically to conduct peace-making, peacekeeping, and peace-building missions on behalf of the Union as a practical step.⁶⁶ Murithi further observes that the Articles 4(H) and 7(E) of the Constitutive Act of AU empower the African Union to intervene and stop war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity in member states.⁶⁷ He argues that such a mandate provides a solid foundation for regional counterterrorism efforts.⁶⁸

Martin Ewi and Kwesi Aning further emphasize the importance that the AU attaches to regionalism as a viable mechanism to defeat terrorism.⁶⁹ They observe that the AU antiterrorism concept of operation places more emphasis on regional cooperation. It envisages four levels of combating terrorism: the national level, the regional level, the international level, and the global level.⁷⁰ They point out that organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Cooperation, the Economic Community of Central Africa States, and the Maghreb Union, have made a significant contribution in fighting terrorism in their respective regions of Africa.⁷¹ Ibrahim Ghali, et al. argue that due to recognition of the regional organization's role in combating transnational terrorism, the Intergovernmental Authority on

⁶⁵ Tim Murithi, "The African Union's Evolving Role in Peace Keeping Operations: The African Union Peace Keeping Operation in Burundi, the African Union Operation in Sudan, and the African Union Mission in Somalia," *Africa Security Review* 17, no. 2 (2008): 70–74, www.academia.edu/6477735/The_African_Union_s_evolution_role_in.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 71.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 72.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Martin Ewi and Kwesi Aning, "Assessing the Role of the African Union in Preventing and Combating Terrorism in Africa," *African Security Studies* 15, no.3 (2006): 33, doi [org/10.180/10246029.2006.9627603](https://doi.org/10.180/10246029.2006.9627603).

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Development (IGAD) transformed and expanded to handle security matters.⁷² Since its expansion, IGAD has played a critical role in combating terrorism in the region through capacity building, supporting legislation processes against terrorism, and providing relevant training to antiterrorism institutions.⁷³ Similarly, East African Community (EAC) states signed the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in Defense in 1998, which resulted in several policies and common approaches to fight against crime and transnational terrorism and to enhance border defense, intelligence sharing, and military-to-military engagements.⁷⁴ Such efforts are operationalized under mechanisms such as the East Africa Police Chiefs Co-operation, Defense/Armies Chiefs of Intelligence, Chiefs, Fusion Centers and the Regional Defense Counter-Terrorism Center, headed by the Defense chiefs and heads of intelligence and security in EAC member countries⁷⁵.

Conversely, Murithi contends that most African militaries that constitute AU forces have limited counterterrorism training, expertise, and capabilities to outmatch the tactical flexibility of terrorists⁷⁶. This argument is in harmony with Paul Williams's assertion, as quoted by Francis Onditi, et al. that African peacekeeping forces lack the requisite training to meet the contemporary threats, especially asymmetric warfare.⁷⁷ Kisiangani supports Williams's argument by giving the example of Somalia, where Al Shabaab continues to rely on localized small and flexible command units to render AMISOM forces vulnerable to constant incursions.⁷⁸

⁷² Ghali Ibrahim Sheriff, Iro Iro Uke, et al., "Consolidating Cooperation under Regional Integration: A Theoretical Approach to Combating Terrorism and Maintaining Peace and Security among IGAD Member States," *International Journal of Arts and Humanities* 4, no. 3 (June 2015): 46–57, <http://www.onlineresearchjournal.org/IJH>.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Murithi, "The African Union's Evolving Role in Peace Keeping Operations," 34.

⁷⁷ Paul Williams, "Enhancing U.S. Support for Peace Operations in Africa," Council on Foreign Relations, Centre for Preventive Action, Special Report No. 73, <http://www.cfr.org/peacekeeping/enhancing-us-support-peace-operations-africa/p36530>, quoted in Francis Onditi, Pontian Godfrey Okoth et al., "The Quest For a Multidimensional African Standby Force," *African Conflict and Peace Building Review* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 70, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/618469>.

⁷⁸ Kisiangani, "Comparing Somalia's Al-Shabaab and Uganda's Lord Resistance Party," 13.

Peter Kagwanja observes that the ambiguity in the concept of terrorism is an obstacle in the fight against terrorism.⁷⁹ He argues that some African leaders use the pretext of fighting terrorism for selfish gains by branding political opponents as terrorists in order to exclude them from political participation.⁸⁰ He cites the examples of Ethiopia, where the minority-ethnic based insurgencies of the Oromo Liberation Front and the Ogaden National Liberation Front, agitating for inclusion in national affairs, are blacklisted as terrorists.⁸¹ Similarly, Kagwanja notes that President Isias Afewerki of Eritrea branded liberal-minded former colleagues as terrorists to stop them from political competition.⁸² In addition, Demeke argues that a lack of regional consensus and strategy on how to handle terrorists remains a daunting challenge to member states when fighting against terrorism, enabling terrorists to keep on manipulating ethnic conflicts for survival.⁸³ Kisangani attributes the resilience of Al Shabaab to the group's ability to manipulate clans against the Federal Government of Somalia.⁸⁴

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATION AND HYPOTHESIS

This study suggests ways to strengthen AMISOM to end Al Shabaab-led transnational terrorism and establish peace and security in Somalia, as well as in the East African region.

The study further argues that a breakthrough against Al Shabaab cannot be achieved by the military approach alone, but that a whole-of-government approach is required. Such a campaign may include prioritizing the education and training of youth as a key factor in securing employment; addressing issues of poverty, especially in rural areas; and working with local clan and religious leaders to design a reliable counter-radicalization strategy.

⁷⁹ Peter Kagwanja, "Counter-terrorism in the Horn of Africa: New Security Frontiers, Old Strategies," *African Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (2006): 70–86. doi:10.1080/10246029.2006.9627608.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 76.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Demeke and Gebru, "The Role of Regional Economic Communities in Fighting Terrorism in Africa," 226.

⁸⁴ Kisangani, "Comparing Somalia's Al-Shabaab and Uganda's Lord Resistance Party," 14.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research examines the role of AMISOM in fighting against transnational terrorism in Somalia. It also makes recommendations on how to defeat Al Shabaab and its affiliates in order to stabilize Somalia and the East African region. To achieve this objective, the study examines the following aspects: 1) the historical context of deployment of AMISOM, as well its mandate; and 2) the achievements, challenges, and prospects for AMISOM in relation to fighting terrorism in the region. In-depth thematic studies are also used to determine whether AMISOM military operations have succeeded in reducing the threat.

To carry out this research, the thesis relies on secondary scholarly sources and the researcher's personal experience in the area of study. As the result of this design, the researcher is able to develop prescriptions and generate explanations for the problem as well as suggest recommendations to deal with the threat.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

The thesis consists of five chapters. The next chapter examines the historical background, mandate, and achievements of AMISOM in relation to fighting terrorism in the region. Chapter III highlights the challenges and prospects of AMISOM from the perspective of counterterrorism. Chapter IV provides the analysis of findings from previous chapters and other factors that account for the persistence of Al Shabaab. Chapter V draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

II. ACHIEVEMENTS AND MANDATE OF AMISOM

The fluid security situation in Somalia continues to pose a challenge for the East African region and the international community, including the United States. Several reconciliation efforts by such African Union regional bodies as IGAD and by UN-led peacekeeping interventions in the early 1990s yielded minimal results to stabilize the country. The deployment of AMISOM forces in 2007 positively changed the political and security landscapes, though the conclusive defeat of the Al Shabaab terrorist group has yet to be achieved.

Tracing the nature of the conflict in Somalia through a historical perspective is not only important for understanding the threat, but also critical in analyzing the gaps that the AMISOM response has to target if Al Shabaab is to be effectively weakened. This chapter, therefore, discusses the historical contextual factors that led to the emergence of AMISOM, its mandate, and achievements.

A. HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF AMISOM

The deployment of AMISOM in Somalia was necessitated by several factors. First, AMISOM forces were tasked to stop the vicious cycle of instability in Somalia, particularly from the growing influence of the Islamic Courts Union in south and central Somalia. Second, the force was also assigned to avert the advance of transnational terrorism in the region, especially in the aftermath of the 1998 U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania because the perpetrators were believed to be hiding in Somalia. Third, the East African regional states were concerned about the prevalence of small arms proliferation and piracy that was negatively affecting their economy and security.⁸⁵ Polly Kijongoma Kamwesiga opines that terrorists and other transnational organized crimes, including illegal arms cartels, exploited the stateless situation in Somalia to proliferate arms in the Great Lakes region⁸⁶. He attributes the vicious cycle of conflicts in Burundi,

⁸⁵ Bronwyn Bruton and Paul D. Williams. “*Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Lessons Learned from the African Union Mission in Somalia, 2007–2013*,” *JSOU*, no. 14–5 (2014): 35.

⁸⁶ Polly Kijongoma Kamwesiga, “Small Arms Proliferation and Home-grown Terrorism in the Great Lakes Region: Uganda’s Experience” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2016), 22.

South Sudan, and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo to the increased number of illicit arms in the hands of non-state actors.⁸⁷ Fourth, AMISOM was also deployed to replace the Ethiopian Defense Forces that were sparking a wide controversy in both Somalia and the international community mainly because of their harsh counterinsurgency approach.⁸⁸

Historically, the rationale for deploying peacekeeping missions, including AMISOM in Somalia, has both internal and external factors. In the Somali case, the internal factors include the civil wars, failed peace initiatives, the breakdown of law and order, and piracy. Meanwhile, such external influences as regional proxy wars and the proliferation of Islamic extremism have also exacerbated the country's instability.⁸⁹ While internal factors provided for AMISOM's presence, external factors have accounted for the rapid development of militant and terrorist groups.

The internal instability in Somalia began with the collapse of the state apparatus in 1981 and the subsequent fall of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. Since then, the country became a war theater for competing clan warlords, notably Mohamed Farrah Aideed and Ali Mahdi.⁹⁰ These faction leaders began to compete to snatch political power from the already failing central government.⁹¹ Consequently, the country became a breeding ground for transnational crime, namely drugs and arms trafficking, piracy, and terrorism, including the attacks on the American embassies in Tanzania and Kenya on 8 August 1998.⁹²

The UN peacekeeping missions under the umbrella of the United Nations Assistance in Somali attempted to reunite the warring factions in 1992, but this mission

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Bruton and Williams, "Counterinsurgency in Somalia," 39.

⁸⁹ Ken Menkhaus, "They Created a Desert and Called It Peace (Building)," *Review of Political Economy* 36, no.120, Conflict and Peace in the Horn of Africa (2009): 223, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27756263>.

⁹⁰ Tariku Abreha Kahssay, "Keeping the Peace: Intervention and Security Challenges in Africa: The Case of African Union Mission in Somalia" (master's thesis, Erasmus University, 2009), 4, <https://thesis.eur.nl/pub/6628>.

⁹¹ Ibid., 4.

⁹² Bruton and Williams, "Counterinsurgency in Somalia," 39.

failed due to the hostile environment that precluded safe relief operations.⁹³ Similarly, a multinational force under the leadership of the United States, but under the auspices of the Unified Task Force initiated in 1993, tried a humanitarian and nation-building intervention approach without much success. By 1995, the UN and U.S. peacekeeping missions had withdrawn from Somalia without providing a long-term or lasting solution to the conflict.⁹⁴

The disengagement of international community allowed the warlords to entrench themselves in Somali society and also opened the way for foreign jihadists to radicalize the population. This factor is partly responsible for the escalation of the conflict and expansion of Al Shabaab influence.⁹⁵ Islamic militant organizations capitalized on the U.S. withdrawal as a propaganda tool to superficially indicate the strength of Islamic forces against a perceived western Christian crusade and their narrative coincided with the earlier Russian forces' retreat from Afghanistan in 1989.⁹⁶ The narrative, though deceitful, motivated many young jihadists to join the Al Shabaab cause.⁹⁷

In addition, regional actors who capitalized on the weak state apparatus have exacerbated the instability in Somalia. They aimed at frustrating the establishment of any Somali government that was not in favor of their interests.⁹⁸ For instance, Eritrea supported Al Shabaab insurgents in Somalia, in order to check the influence of its traditional enemy—Ethiopia—in the region.⁹⁹ Sally Healy argues that the outbreak of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1998 aggravated the conflict in Somalia, as the two countries sought proxy allies from different warring factions¹⁰⁰. Indeed, Eritrea openly

⁹³ Chester A. Crocker, "The Lessons of Somalia: Not Everything Went Wrong," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no.3 (1995):2–8, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2004711>.

⁹⁴ Kahssay, "Keeping the Peace: Intervention and Security Challenges in Africa," 6.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Daniels, *Somalia Piracy, and Terrorism in the Horn of Africa*, 54.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 54.

¹⁰⁰ Sally Healy, "Seeking Peace and Security in the Horn Africa: The Contribution of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development," *Royal Institute of International Affairs* 87, no. 1 (2011): 113, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20869613>.

supported the faction of Aideed, while Ethiopia increased its military assistance to its allies.¹⁰¹ The external support to various armed groups in Somalia continued to perpetuate the asymmetric conflict in the country and hindered the possibility of any locally, generated peace initiative.¹⁰²

In the first attempt to mitigate the situation, the IGAD regional partner states and international partners organized a conference at Eldoret in Kenya in 2004. The conference established the Transitional National Government (TNG) headed by Abdullahi Yusuf to midwife the transition political process of Somalia.¹⁰³ The president thereafter appealed for international support, including a military force of 20,000 troops, to deploy in Somalia in order to reverse the waning situation in the country.¹⁰⁴ Ethiopia responded by deploying troops in Baidoa to support the TNG—as well as to promote its own interest in territorial border security.¹⁰⁵ The implementation of the Eldoret conference plans, however, did not materialize due to disagreements among the various clan leaders over the sharing of power in the transitional government.¹⁰⁶ Regrettably, the mandate of TNG expired without much progress.¹⁰⁷

Against this background, the United Nations Security Council decided to take a practical step toward solving the Somali conflict. In December 2006, it approved Resolution 1725, partially lifting the arms embargo to Somalia and authorizing the IGAD member states to start training for the mission in Somalia.¹⁰⁸ The UN Security Resolution 1744 (13) in 2007 further mandated the deployment of a peacekeeping mission with a mandate of six months to facilitate Somali national reconciliation congress and to assess the feasibility of deployment of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Kahssay, “Keeping the Peace: Intervention and Security Challenges in Africa,” 44.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

In response, the AU designated the IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia that was initially designed by the IGAD in 2005 to carry out the training mission in Somalia.¹¹⁰ The IGAD Peace Support Mission to Somalia (IGSOM), however, could not deploy immediately due to the lack of adequate resources and contests about the neutrality of troop contributing countries. Most of these countries were close neighbors to Somalia and were initially excluded because of the potential political consequences.¹¹¹ In addition, some Somali clan leaders initially misconstrued IGSOM as the harbinger of U.S.-sponsored interests against the growth of Islam.¹¹² In the bid to seek an alternative conflict management mechanism for Somalia, the African Union Peace and Security Council, in its 69th meeting, decided to establish AMISOM in January 2007.¹¹³ Subsequently in 2007, the AU, with UN consent, deployed AMISOM in Mogadishu, initially with one battle group of 1,650 Ugandan troops. Their strength later increased to 1,800, with personnel from Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Djibouti, and Sierra Leone and the headquarters staff officers from Nigeria, Zambia, and Botswana.¹¹⁴

In consideration of the Al Shabaab threat still at hand, the UN Security Council in 2013 adopted another security resolution number 2124 (13) expanding the non-lethal logistical support for AMISOM to a maximum force of 22,126 uniformed personnel through October 2014.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2182 (14), allowing the African Union to proceed with the mission in Somalia until 30 November 2015.¹¹⁶ The council also gave additional authority to the AU to use all appropriate measures to support the dialogue and foster reconciliation by facilitating safe passage and providing security to all stakeholders involved.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰ Nduwimana, "AMISOM in Somalia: A Ray of Hope," 12.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Paul Williams, "The African Union Mission in Somalia and Civilian Protection Challenges." *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development* 2, no. 2 (2013): 1–17, doi.org/105334/sta.b.z.

¹¹³ Bruton and Williams, "Counterinsurgency in Somalia," 43–50.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Bruton and Williams note that from 2007 to 2013, AMISOM grew into a multidimensional force, consisting of military, police, and civilian components from various African states and had its operational bases expanded throughout south and central Somalia.¹¹⁸ They, however, observe that AMISOM was hastily deployed with inadequate peacekeeping planning capabilities and materiel, which limited its initial operations.¹¹⁹ Figure 1 shows the gradual increase of AMISOM troop levels from 2007 to 2013.

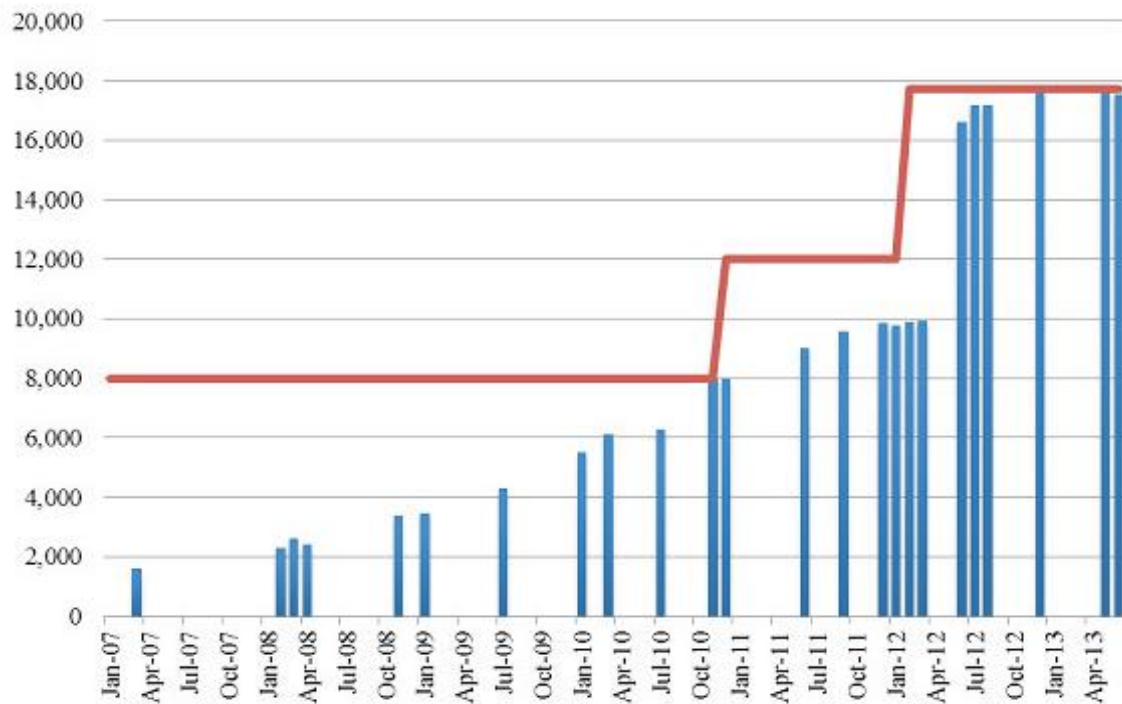


Figure 1. Personnel AMISOM Authorized and Deployed from 2007 to 2013.¹²⁰

B. AMISOM'S MANDATE

AMISOM derives its mandate from the African Union Peace and Security Council Communiqué and UN Security Council Resolution 2124. Since its inception in

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Williams, "The African Union Mission in Somalia and Civilian Protection Challenges," 2.

2007, the mandates have been changing to suit the changing security situation.¹²¹ Originally, AMISOM's mandate was restricted to enabling dialogue between the TNG and Islamic Courts Union, protecting senior TNG officials, key installations, and assisting humanitarian organizations.¹²² With the worsening situation, however, AMISOM's functions expanded to war-fighting against Al Shabaab.¹²³

The multidimensionality of AMISOM's mandate is better assessed in two broad strategic approaches. First, security-oriented strategy mandates AMISOM to conduct peace enforcement and support peace operations in order to stabilize the country. Second, a politically centered approach primarily mentors the Federal Government of Somalia's institutions of governance, its critical pillars of state, and delivering services to the population.¹²⁴ The current mandate requires

Supporting the Somali government and its institutions in their efforts to stabilize the country, advancing the process of dialogue and reconciliation, facilitating the provision of humanitarian assistance, and creating conditions for long-term stability, reconstruction and development in Somalia.¹²⁵

The mandate assigns enormous tasks to AMISOM compared to its strength and resource capabilities.¹²⁶ The mission routinely suffers from delays in the deployment of troops, requisite operational logistics, and tactical combat equipment. Noel Anderson assessed the mandate as ambitious, unrealistic, and hard to achieve.¹²⁷ Together, these insufficiencies have made AMISOM forces inconsequential in the theatre.¹²⁸

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Peter Albrecht and Cathy Heinlein, "Fragmented Peacekeeping: The African Union in Somalia," *RSU Journal* 161, no.1 (2016): 50–61, doi .org/ 10.1080/0371847.2016.1152121.

¹²³ Ibid., 54.

¹²⁴ R. S. Neus, *The Role of African Union in Somalia: Where to Go from Here with the AMISOM Peace Operations?* Institut Catala Internacionale, Policy Paper no. 8, (April 2013):2, www.academia.edu/3327615/The_role_of_the_African_Union_in_Somalia.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Anderson, "Peacekeepers, Fighting counterinsurgency Campaign," 938.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 938.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

C. ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMISOM

Despite the mismatch between the mandate and the reality on the ground, AMISOM has registered considerable achievements. First, the military operations line has aimed at combating Al Shabaab and liberating areas and people from its influence. Second, the political and humanitarian lines of operations have tapped into military gains to nurture FGS political institutions and service delivery systems. Third, the enhancement of the operational capacity of the AMISOM forces and the FGS security forces through training has consolidated peace and security in the country. The combination of military efforts, together with political engagements, has provided the basis of a semblance of peace and security existing in Somalia.

1. Liberation of Strategic Towns and Sea Ports

AMISOM military operations have significantly altered the security landscape of Somalia since its deployment. In support of the Somali National Security Forces, AMISOM defeated and dislodged Al Shabaab terrorists from the capital of Mogadishu and surrounding areas.¹²⁹ During the series of military operations, especially Operations Eagle and Indian Ocean conducted between 2013 and 2014, AMISOM secured other occupied towns to provide further assistance. The most significant liberated town consisted of Bulo Burto, which has a principal bridge across the Shebelle River, used as the communication hub for Al Shabaab. Other liberated areas include Hudur, Wajid, Qoryooley, Rabdhure, Ceel Buur, and a major portion of the lower Shebelle region, which are key areas for agricultural production. This success has imparted a sense of security and social and economic development to the population.

In addition, these military operations enabled AMISOM and other stakeholders to carry out political and humanitarian activities. For example, the displacement of Al Shabaab from major towns provided the occasion for the FGS and AMISOM to understand the human terrain, integrate the disengaged fighters, and embark on counter-radicalization programs. It also increased the footprint of FGS-led development and

¹²⁹ Nduwimana, “AMISOM in Somalia: A Ray of Hope,” 13.

governance efforts to hinterlands.¹³⁰ Nduwimana argues the breaking of Al Shabaab's military strength created an opportunity to address and resolve most of the underlying grievances politically through local fora.¹³¹ The FGS moved from a transitional arrangement to an elected central government and started to establish the local government structures in liberated areas.¹³² Indeed, the liberation of large portions of central and south Somalia permitted humanitarian organizations to provide assistance to the population.¹³³ However, the presence of armed groups and local militias is still prevalent and posing a challenge to AMISOM. Figure 2 shows AMISOM-liberated areas in relation to the areas that are still occupied by the Al Shabaab elements.

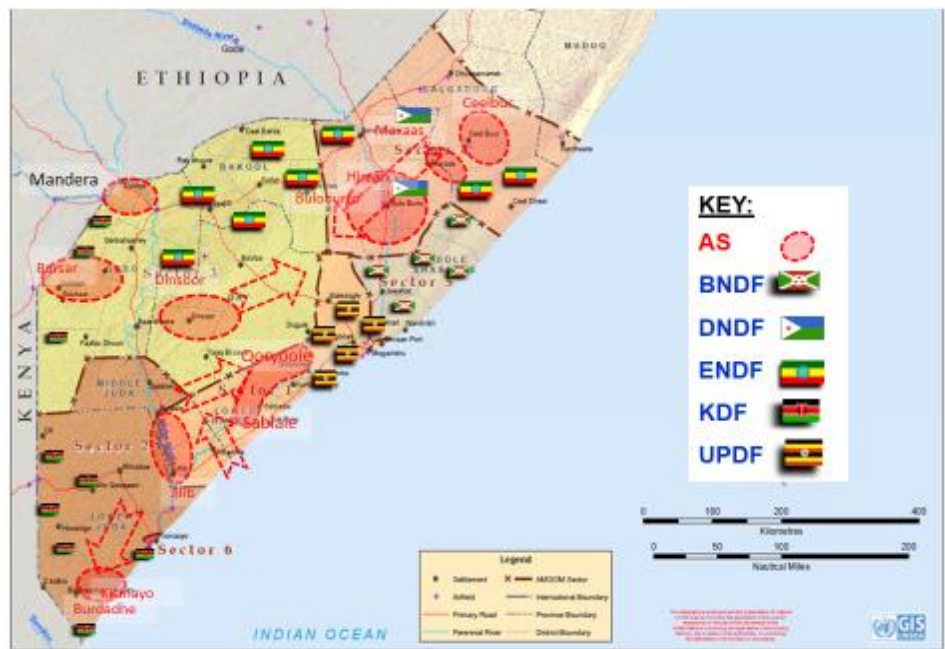


Figure 2. Map of South and Central Somalia Showing AMISOM Deployment and Al Shabaab Occupied Areas.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., 19.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Adapted from Google Maps, "Somalia," accessed on 2 February 2017, www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/google_map_somalia.htm.

2. Political Mentoring

The political institutions and structure in Somalia are nascent and still developing. Some achievements have, however, been recorded. First, the AMISOM political unit has worked closely with the FGS to implement the six-pillar policy framework adopted in October 2012. These include security, rule of law, economic recovery, dialogue and reconciliation, service delivery, and international cooperation.¹³⁵ In the same spirit, AMISOM has nurtured several reconciliation meetings to build political consensus on issues of national importance.¹³⁶ For example, the political office played a critical role to unite various southwestern federal regions under FGS; significantly, it coordinated the signing of an agreement between the FGS the Jubaland administration, which had been spreading the seeds of separatist tendencies.¹³⁷ The reconciliation between the federal government and Jubaland administration was critical in reducing the political tension that Al Shabaab has been manipulating to perpetuate the conflict by luring the disgruntled small clans.

Second, AMISOM, in collaboration with strategic partners, has mentored the legislative institutional capacity that, in turn, made necessary constitutional reviews. The growth of the spirit of constitutionalism resulted in the formation of the National Independent Commission that organized the recently concluded presidential and parliamentary elections in February 2017. Peaceful change of leadership is indicative of the prospects for political reconciliation and steady growth of institutions.¹³⁸ Political development without strong security, however, is not sustainable. Somalia's political process still relies on the presence of foreign troops, because the capability of SNSF to play a vanguard role in the stability of their country is still lacking. The inter-clan hostilities continue to impact negatively on the Somali security sector; some commanders in the Somali National Army (SNA) are caught up in the web of clan enmity; their clan loyalty transcends national unity, and thus escalates the clan conflicts.

¹³⁵ Nduwimana, "AMISOM in Somalia: A Ray of Hope," 15.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 16.

3. Capacity Building and Training of Security Forces

Daniel Byman alludes to the fact that a well trained and equipped military force is an important tool in counterterrorism.¹³⁹ Therefore, another fundamental achievement of AMISOM is the training and the capacity building of the SNSF. AMISOM with support from international partners, particularly the European Training Mission in Somalia, has trained 4,500 basic soldiers and 95 junior officers. It also trained non-commissioned officers of the SNA in Bihanga—Uganda and in the Al Jazeera Training wing—Somalia.¹⁴⁰ These graduates have formed a core force that is playing a critical role in the fight against Al Shabaab.

Furthermore, the training programs are boosted by U.S. logistical support to troop-contributing countries and sponsored training packages for AMISOM through such private security contractors as DynCorp International and Bancroft Global Development. DynCorp particularly trains AMISOM Troops on urban warfare that was hitherto unknown to most AMISOM forces. In addition, the combat equipment and special training provided by the U.S. State Department's Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program has significantly enhanced the counterterrorism capabilities of AMISOM.¹⁴¹ The troops are trained in how to fight in urban areas and in small combat teams in order to counter the flexibility of Al Shabaab.¹⁴² AMISOM forces also benefit from accurate and timely intelligence from their U.S. partners. All these new developments have contributed to the success of AMISOM expansion operations, especially from 2011 to 2016.¹⁴³

Nonetheless, some analysts point out that the training is still inadequate and uncoordinated as it is being conducted in different countries under different doctrines, resulting into a lack of unified command, control, and interoperability among forces in

¹³⁹ Daniel Byman, *The Five Front War: The Better Way to Fight Global Jihad* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 3.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Bruton and Williams, "Counterinsurgency in Somalia," 57.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

the theatre.¹⁴⁴ In addition, the fragmented training has provided a gap for self-interested parties to train their own militias under the disguise of AMISOM. For example, contrary to AMISOM's mandate and goals, Kenya and Ethiopia continue to conduct the training of local militias in their respective sectors without AMISOM's authorization and the consent of FGS.¹⁴⁵ Reports from AMISOM reveal that Kenya and Ethiopia train and pay some Somali youth under the pretext of keeping their border security.¹⁴⁶ Williams notes that such forces lack the unity of command and operational teamwork, and are often construed as mercenary militias of particular clan interests.¹⁴⁷ Indeed, building the military capability of the SNSF without generating a political consensus on how the country should be governed is a tipping point for more instability in the near future.

¹⁴⁴ Paul Williams, "AMISOM in Transition: The Future of the African Union Mission in Somalia." *Rift Valley Institute Briefing Paper* 13 (2013), 5, <https://elliott.gwu.edu/sites/elliott.gwu.edu/files/downloads/research/williamsp-rvi-amisom-0213.pdf>.

¹⁴⁴ Bruton and Williams, "Counterinsurgency in Somalia," 83.

¹⁴⁵ Albrecht and Heinlein, "Fragmented Peacekeeping," 53.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Williams, "AMISOM in Transition," 5.

III. CHALLENGES FOR AMISOM IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM IN SOMALIA

Despite the progressive performance by AMISOM in enhancing security in Somalia, Al Shabaab's administrative structures that provide background support to operations in the form of policing, recruiting, and mobilizing finances are still active.¹⁴⁸ In other words, significant challenges remain. Some are strategic, some operational, and some geo-political. The strategic challenges include the absence of consensus among actors, a misunderstanding of the conflict environment, inadequate resources, and the lack of a regional political framework for peacekeeping missions. Although the geo-strategic limitations are associated with the undue influence of regional proxy interests and regional pessimism, AMISOM also contends with a number of tactical difficulties in the field. Such difficulties include the challenging asymmetrical enemy tactics compared to the conventional approach of AMISOM. These bottlenecks, particularly as they aggregate, continue to undermine AMISOM's efforts to break the cohesion of Al Shabaab—and its will to fight.

A. STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

These challenges affect AMISOM at the policy level; however, they have a multiplier effect at the operational and tactical levels of the mission.

1. Lack of Consensus among International Partners

The inept and often contradictory interventions in the Somalia conflict by the international community continue to cast a shadow across AMISOM operations. From the outset of the conflict in the 1980s, the international community lacked a coherent strategy to stabilize the country. The United Nations has been intervening in a piecemeal fashion, especially after the state collapse and emergence of the radical elements of the Islamic Courts Union.¹⁴⁹ The miscalculations started with the withdrawal of United

¹⁴⁸ Williams, "AMISOM in Transition." 5.

¹⁴⁹ Bruton and Williams, "Counterinsurgency in Somalia," 83.

Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and U.S. peacekeepers in 1995 that created an intelligence vacuum about the conflict in Somalia.¹⁵⁰

Ken Menkhaus buttresses this narrative and states that “by failing to provide a timely diplomatic mediation when it was most needed in 1991, and intervening clumsily in the UN Operations in Somalia in 1993–94 made the situation worse.”¹⁵¹ Furthermore, desperate to find the solution to the growing influence of the Islamic Courts Union, IGAD made another contradictory but necessary decision to back the Ethiopian military to install unpopular TNG in Somalia, which resulted in a political backlash manifested in increased Islamic militancy.¹⁵² Overall, AMISOM began its duty in the middle of such complexities, ultimately affecting its efficacy in delivering its mandate.

Moreover, AMISOM operations have been more often than not let down by disagreements among the stakeholders over the courses of action and priorities to take. Some international partners and the AU disagreed over the prioritization of the operation’s funding. First, they failed to reach a consensus on how to prioritize the resources between fighting piracy in the Gulf of Aden and combating Al Shabaab in Somalia.¹⁵³ In December 2008, the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization launched a series of maritime operations off the coast of Somalia to curtail the rise of piracy. Meanwhile, the AU and other strategic partners believed that piracy was shielded and motivated by conflict dynamics on Somalia’s mainland and could only be ended with the conclusive defeat of Al Shabaab.¹⁵⁴

Along the same lines, the UN Secretary General remarked that “his efforts to generate forces to tackle Somali problems on land stood in such sharp contrast to the exceptional political will and commitment of military assets, which member states have shown in respect of the fight against piracy.”¹⁵⁵ The maritime operations, however,

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Menkhaus, “They Created a Desert,” 223.

¹⁵² Bruton and Williams. “Counterinsurgency in Somalia,” 83.

¹⁵³ Williams, “Seven Strategic Challenges,” 236.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 236.

lacked coordination with the AMISOM ground troops to destroy the mainland bases for pirates. The operation also failed to conclusively deal with Al Shabaab's illicit trade, particularly charcoal and ivory, on the southern port of Kismayo.¹⁵⁶ Fighting two fronts required huge financial obligations that did not seem available. Lack of operational logistics caused AMISOM to remain in a defensive posture without carrying out any major operation for the whole of 2008. Such an operational pause allows Al Shabaab the opportunity to convalesce.

Also, differences in the interpretation of Al Shabaab's narrative equally challenge the mission planning and operations. AMISOM strategic actors have disagreed on how to handle the Al Shabaab threat. The league of Arab States, Finland, Kenya, and Ethiopia offered to reach out to some Al Shabaab commanders to persuade them to settle the conflict peacefully. On the other hand, the United States was strongly against such an approach on the grounds that Al Shabaab was already designated an international terrorist organization in March 2008.¹⁵⁷ The United States remained committed to the strategy of degrading Al Shabaab and its Al Qaeda affiliates as the most viable option to create peace and security in Somalia and the East African region.¹⁵⁸

The absence of accord at the strategic level significantly affected cohesion of forces at the operational level. The contingents respected the orders from their home countries more than the operational directives from AMISOM force headquarters. For example, some troop-contributing countries placed a limitation on the use of strategic assets like specialized logistic equipment and helicopters that were supposed to be under the operational control of the AMISOM force commander, thereby undermining the efficiency of operation.¹⁵⁹ As a stopgap measure to streamline command and control friction, AMISOM initiated the concept of the Joint Coordination Mechanism and a Military Operation Coordination Committee within the chain of command of AMISOM. The mechanism minimized the contradictions in command and control; however, issues

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Bruton and Williams, "Counterinsurgency in Somalia," 89.

of lack of interoperability remained extant in sectors 2 and 3 where Kenya and Ethiopia failed to coordinate.¹⁶⁰ Undesirably, Al Shabaab ably exploits the miscoordination among the contingents to attack them one by one. The successful terrorist attacks on AMISOM do not reflect the increased strength of Al Shabaab but a weakness in command, control, and administration of AMISOM.

2. Misunderstanding the Conflict Environment

Menkhaus argued the international community misinterpreted Somalia conflict as a post-conflict situation and deployed peace keepers in a war theatre where there was no peace to keep and no state apparatus to buttress the peace keeping efforts. On the one hand, Noel Anderson argues that AMISOM does not meet the basic characteristics of a peacekeeping force, such as the consent of belligerents, impartiality, and non-use of excessive force except in self-defense.¹⁶¹ Anderson highlights the controversy as follows:

Al-Shabaab does not consent to the presence of AMISOM troops; the mission was explicitly established to support the Somali government; and AMISOM units have adopted offensive combat postures, aggressively attacking al-Shabaab strongholds. Nor is AMISOM a peace enforcement mission, defined as “coercive action . . . to maintain or restore international peace and security. Peace enforcers must be prepared for armed factions to become hostile, but they nevertheless expect cooperation on the part of combatants, at least at the outset of the mission.”¹⁶²

At the same time, Scholars like Bruton and Williams argue that in the execution of the tasks, AMISOM went beyond the norms of ordinary peacekeeping operations; instead of monitoring the peace process as agreed by conflict parties, circumstances compelled it to take a side in the counterinsurgency operations.¹⁶³ In this sense, then, AMISOM is neither a peace-keeping nor a counterterrorism force. Thus, the mission faced difficulties of securing facilitation and support from normal international mechanisms and programs that were meant only to support a traditional UN-model peace

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Anderson, “Peacekeepers, Fighting Counterinsurgency Campaign,” 947.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Williams, “AMISOM’s Five Challenges,” 3.

keeping operation.¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, the impartiality of AMISOM a counterterrorism force rather than a peace keeping came to bear when it collaborated with international partners, particularly the U.S. Special Forces, to degrade the operational capabilities of Al Shabaab.¹⁶⁵

More so, asymmetrical warfare makes it difficult for AMISOM operational forces effectively isolate the Al Shabaab terrorists from the population because Al Shabaab assumed the strategy of using civilians as human shields. This strategy has resulted to considerable civilian casualties due to firing to civilians targets camouflaged with Al Shabaab.¹⁶⁶ Bruton and Williams clearly put it that “Al Shabaab deliberately engages in tactics designed to provoke AMISOM into causing civilian casualties. Unfortunately, AMISOM plays into their hands by responding with indiscriminate fire into civilian populated areas.”¹⁶⁷ David H. Shinn also observes that Al Shabaab uses civilian casualties as a propaganda tool to radicalize and mobilize the population against the AMISOM and the SNA. The FGS faces uphill obstacles in winning the confidence and legitimacy from the people, when it is arguably perceived to be killing its own people.¹⁶⁸

3. Lack of Financial Resources

Another problem confronting AMISOM is the lack of sustainable funding and logistics for the mission. Despite the fact that AMISOM is deployed in the active war zone, it does not have a guaranteed commitment of resources and funds.¹⁶⁹ The funds generated from external sources, particularly from the EU, the UN-assessed peacekeeping budget, and the UN Trust Fund for the Somalia National Security Forces are inadequate and unpredictable. These funds are budgeted on the premise of an ordinary peacekeeping

¹⁶⁴ Williams, “AMISOM’s Five Challenges,” 3.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹⁶⁷ Bruton and Williams, “Counterinsurgency in Somalia,” 53.

¹⁶⁸ David H. Shinn, “Somalia: Origin, Development and Future of AMISOM,” University of Minnesota, October 2013, 2–4, <https://www.scribd.com/document/177564711/Somalia-Origin>.

¹⁶⁹ A. Sarjoh Bah, “The Broader Horn of Africa: Peacekeeping in a Strategic Vacuum,” *International Peacekeeping* 16, no. 4 (2009): 507, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13533310903184705>.

model and yet the AMISOM forces are involved in active combat against Al Shabaab.¹⁷⁰ Counterterrorism operations require different equipment and readily available resources compared to traditional peacekeeping. For example, more often than not AMISOM halts operations because of a shortage of either logistics or funds. From the start, the AU deployed troops in the theater without sufficient planning capabilities as well as crucial pieces of equipment and materiel. Throughout 2007 to 2009, troop-contributing countries struggled with logistics to sustain the tempo of the operation.¹⁷¹ Such capability gaps crippled the initial AMISOM operations against Al Shabaab.¹⁷² The United Nations Support Office for AMISOM, a UN mechanism established to support the AU operations, failed to meet all logistical challenges created by the AMISOM's expansion operations.¹⁷³ In his comparative study of AU peacekeeping missions, Williams observes that

the AU's operations have relied on external (non-African) assistance. The considerable activities undertaken by the AU should not conceal the fact that the organization still lacks sufficient funds, troops, police, materiel, strategic airlift capabilities (for both personnel and equipment), training facilities, management structures, and qualified staff to sustain even relatively small-scale peace operations.¹⁷⁴

This assertion realistically applies to AMISOM, which relies on the funding from donors to sustain operations. Indeed, Bruton and Williams state that “the failure to provide AMISOM soldiers with even the basic resources required for the mission success was morally indefensible and militarily disastrous.”¹⁷⁵

4. Lack of Regional Political Framework for Peacekeeping

Like other AU-led peacekeeping missions, AMISOM faces the critical challenge of the AU's lack of a feasible political structure in which peacekeeping operations are

¹⁷⁰ Williams, “AMISOM in Transition,” 6.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Williams, “Fighting for Peace in Somalia,” 228.

¹⁷³ Bruton and Williams, “Counterinsurgency in Somalia,” 89.

¹⁷⁴ Paul D. Williams, “The African Union's Peace Operations: A Comparative Analysis,” *African Security* (2009):2–3, 97–118, doi: 10.1080/19362200903361937.

¹⁷⁵ Bruton and Williams, “Counterinsurgency in Somalia,” 83.

entrenched.¹⁷⁶ Because of the lack of a viable political framework to mobilize resources to support peacekeeping missions, the deployment of AMISOM in Somalia has generated more pessimism among the AU member states. The pessimists contend that challenges like the lack of a functioning government, violent inter-clan clashes, and the presence of Al Qaeda would make the mission impossible. The pessimism was reinforced by the history of failed UN-led peacekeeping missions in Somalia in the 1990s.¹⁷⁷

Based on such negative perceptions, most countries declined to commit their troops in the active war theatre in Somalia. For example, Nigeria conducted a reconnaissance mission in Mogadishu and concluded that the circumstances on the ground were not favorable for the deployment of their peacekeeping force. Their fear was strengthened by the frequency and magnitude of attacks on AMISOM by various warlords competing to control the Mogadishu airport.¹⁷⁸ Only Uganda first deployed one battle group; later in December 2007, Burundi also committed troops. The two countries were left the mission as the only troop-contributing countries for four years. Currently, the mission has limited strength and military capabilities to secure the whole of south and central Somalia and at the same time protect key government installations and TNG senior officials.¹⁷⁹

B. GEO-STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

Geo-strategic challenges are associated with individual interests of neighboring states that impose limitations to the operations of AMISOM, especially in the field.

1. Undue Influence of Regional Proxy Interests

The interwoven geo-political conflicts in the Horn of Africa region significantly affect AMISOM policies and operations.¹⁸⁰ The conflict in Somalia has provided an

¹⁷⁶ Bah, "The Broader Horn of Africa," 507.

¹⁷⁷ Paul Williams, "Fighting for Peace in Somalia: AMISOM's Seven Strategic Challenges." *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 17, no. 3-4 (2013): 228, www.bancroftglobal.org/.../AMISOM-Strategic-Challenges-JOUP-20131.pdf.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 228.

¹⁸⁰ Bah, "The Broader Horn of Africa," 506.

occasion for neighboring states to fight their proxy wars under the guise of supporting AMISOM operations. This problem was exacerbated after the admittance of neighboring countries into the mission framework. For instance, although the unilateral intervention of Kenya and Ethiopia in Somalia helped AMISOM to expand beyond Mogadishu, it initiated the conflict of interests in the mission.¹⁸¹ These contingents are preoccupied by their own national security interests that at times do not align with AMISOM strategic objectives, thereby undermining the credibility of the mission.¹⁸² Peter Albrecht and Cathy Heinlein argue that both Kenyan and Ethiopian foreign policies in Somalia are historically driven more by domestic security concerns in each state rather than by a desire for the stabilization of Somalia.¹⁸³ Therefore, their participation in AMISOM only served the two states with political and financial platforms to serve their own border security.¹⁸⁴

The competing security agenda between Ethiopia and Kenya has fragmented the central mission of AMISOM by pitting the clans against the other. The politics of divide and rule that the two states are playing are likely to backfire into severe inter-clan clashes. An analyst of Somalia affairs, Jibril Mohamed argued that such tactics present a huge challenge in the battle against Al Shabaab. It gives Al Shabaab a chance to manipulate and recruit from the disgruntled clans¹⁸⁵ In October 2011; Kenya launched Operation Linda Nchi and ended up entering the territory of Somalia and capturing Kismayo without the consent of the Federal Government of Somalia. The operation ignited diplomatic conflicts between Kenya and the TNG. The TNG president interpreted it as an invasion of his country since he was not consulted.¹⁸⁶ This disagreement has affected the interoperability and smooth intelligence sharing between the Kenyan

¹⁸¹ Williams, "Seven Strategic Challenges," 236.

¹⁸² Bruton and Williams, "Counterinsurgency in Somalia," 89.

¹⁸³ Albrecht and Heinlein, "Fragmented Peacekeeping," 53.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Mohamed Jibril, "Kenya's Misbehavior and Consequences of Disrespecting the AMISOM Mandate," African Arguments (3 July 2013), 1–2, africanarguments.org/2013/07/03/Kenya's-misbehavior-in-kismayo.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

Defense Forces (KDF) and the host government forces to the detriment of AMISOM operations.

Furthermore, Kenyan Defense Forces diverted from AMISOM goals when they started to unilaterally support and train local militias belonging to Ahmed Madobe, the leader of the Interim Jubaland Administration and head of the Ogaden clan.¹⁸⁷ Ethiopia interpreted Kenyan support of Madobe as a move to bolster the Ogaden clan in the region, which is a threat to Ethiopia because of Madobe's suspected links with the traditional separatist movement of the Ogaden Liberation Front rebellion in the eastern Ogaden region.¹⁸⁸ To respond to that perceived threat from Kenya's ally, Ethiopia deployed troops in Somalia in November 2011, arguably to check the influence of Kenya. Within the shortest possible time, the Ethiopian Defense Forces captured the northern border towns of Beletwyne and Baidoa in December 2011 and February 2012, respectively.¹⁸⁹ All these operations were done in disregard of the AMISOM concept of operation; they only aimed to check the growing influence of Kenya in Somalia.

In addition, the aforementioned situation was aggravated by the illicit economic interest of Kenya around Kismayo seaport. The illegal business in charcoal and ivory in the KDF-controlled town of Kismayo significantly weakens AMISOM operations in a number of ways. First, Al Shabaab took advantage of the trade in charcoal to financially resource their operations against AMISOM. Despite the UN Security Council in 2000 imposing a ban on the export of charcoal, the trade has continued to blossom because of connivance among some KDF commanders, Al Shabaab leaders, and Jubaland forces (formerly the Ras Kamboni brigade), which took control of the seaport after Kenya's incursion.¹⁹⁰ The UN Monitoring Group for Somalia and Eritrea report indicates that Al Shabaab has gained more from charcoal and other illicit trade than when it was in control.¹⁹¹ Buttressing the viewpoint, the UN Environment Program and INTERPOL note

¹⁸⁷Albrecht and Heinlein, "Fragmented Peacekeeping," 55.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 55.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

that Al Shabaab's revenue from the illegal trade increased from \$25 million in 2011 to \$380 million in 2013¹⁹² This increase in illicit trade is attributed to the rent-seeking behavior of senior military officers in the KDF who allow trade in charcoal and other items through the Kismayo. The trade continues to benefit both Al Shabaab and the Ras Kamboni Brigade, a militia group of Ahmed Madobe that is allied to the KDF.¹⁹³

Second, the domination of Kismayo by Kenya remains heavily contested by Ethiopia and the FGS. The Somali government complains that Kenya stifles its efforts to control and collect taxes from the port, while Ethiopia continues to challenge the KDF's support for Ras Kamboni militias. The KDF's conflict of interest in the sector has paralyzed the processes of integrating the separatist Jubaland administration into the central government. The failure of AMISOM to resolve the problems in Kismayo is indicative of the weakness of the AU political leadership. The contentions have bred inter-contingent rivalry, a factor that has made AMISOM vulnerable to constant Al Shabaab attacks due to a lack of synergy of effort and smooth sharing of intelligence.

C. OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

During the active combat engagement with Al Shabaab, AMISOM has faced a number of obstacles, ranging from the asymmetrical tactics of the terrorists to the challenging terrain.

1. The Challenging Enemy Strategies and Tactics

Another category of challenges that has confronted AMISOM is associated with the resilience and elusive nature of its principle enemy—Al Shabaab. The asymmetrical tactics applied by Al Shabaab have affected AMISOM operations in several ways. First, AMISOM's failure to achieve a significant balance of power in the battlefield against Al Shabaab left the local population fearful of reprisals if they were considered to be sympathizers of the foreign force, AMISOM. Lack of local support hindered efforts by

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

AMISOM forces to collect intelligence and to shape human terrain for subsequent military operations.¹⁹⁴

Second, Al Shabaab is not a defined enemy and is not bound by either geography or space. It transformed into a front line group of the broader terrorism narrative in Somalia and the East African region. The group's strict adherence to a religious-political ideology has enabled it to gain prominence throughout south and central Somalia. In addition, through its local networks, Al Shabaab has managed to appeal to the pan-Somali and anti-West rhetoric to manipulate the population to believe that the Western world is against Islam.¹⁹⁵ The group rallies support by reinforcing the perception that Sharia law is the most viable option to return to sanity in Somalia. It projects itself as the true custodian of the Islamic faith and, therefore, an alternative government in waiting. For example, since 2008, Al Shabaab has been initiating a community development initiative in its occupied territories in order to counterbalance the civil-military activities of AMISOM.¹⁹⁶ The group also set up structures to administer justice, collect taxes, and keep security.

Paradoxically, the population in Al Shabaab held territory seems to be safer than in the liberated areas, where there are numerous cases of robbery and extortion by government security forces that continue to undermine the support of the people. Al Shabaab's mobilization efforts capitalize on the indiscipline of the SNA, especially looting and harassment of women, to rally the support of the victims against the FGS and its partners. David Shinn contends that the sustainable solution to putting to an end Al Shabaab-orchestrated terrorism necessitates a strong and functioning state that derives its legitimacy from the majority of the Somali people.¹⁹⁷ Fiefdoms based on divisive clans

¹⁹⁴ Bruton and Williams, *Counterinsurgency in Somalia*,” 84.

¹⁹⁵ Anderson, “Peacekeepers, Fighting Counterinsurgency Campaign,” 42.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ David H. Shinn, “Neither Desperate nor Stronger: The Adoption of Al Shabaab,” *E-International Relations*, 3 July 2015, 2, <http://www.e-ir.info/2015/07/03/neither-desperate-nor-stronger-the-adoption-of-al-shabaab>.

remain a major threat to the political and security development of Somalia as much as Al Shabaab.¹⁹⁸

2. The Influence of Foreign Fighters

The conventional AMISOM forces faced difficulties in fighting against unconventional and battle hardened jihadists in the field. The reentry of external forces in Somalia, particularly Ethiopian and U.S. forces, galvanized support and marketed Al Shabaab to Al Qaeda.¹⁹⁹ In 2006, when Ethiopian forces backed by the U.S. government entered Somalia, Osama Bin Laden launched a jihad in Somalia ostensibly to stymie their influence. He mobilized all dedicated jihadists to rescue the country from the perceived Western Christian crusade.²⁰⁰ Consequently, in 2008, the Al Shabaab leadership assured allegiance to Bin Laden, and subsequently, foreign fighters and volunteers from different countries started to join the group. Williams notes that Al Shabaab foreign fighters in Somalia numbered close to 15,000 mostly from Kenya, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Yemen, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Saud Arabia.²⁰¹ Shinn further categorizes foreign fighters into three brands:

Somalis who were born across the borders in neighboring countries, primarily, Kenya, and have nationality of those countries; Somalis who were born in Somalia or whose parents were born in Somalia but have grown up in diaspora and now carry a foreign passport; and foreigners who have no Somali connection.²⁰²

However, the greatest boost came from Afghan-trained Somalis who blended well with the returnees from Iraq and formed the command echelon of Al Shabaab. The marriage between Al Shabaab and Al Qaeda was made public in September 2009, when Al Shabaab released a video clip labeled “At Your Service, oh Osama,” declaring

¹⁹⁸ Roland Marchal, “The Rise of a Jihadi Movement in a Country at War—Harakat Al-Shabaab Al Mujaheddin in Somalia,” *Sciencespo*, 3 January 2011, 5, www.sciencespo.fr/cei/en/content/rise-jihadi-movement-country-war.

¹⁹⁹ Markus Virgil Hoehne, “Counter-terrorism in Somalia: How External Interference Helped to Produce Militant Islamism,” *Social Science Research Council: Crisis in the Horn of Africa (ensaio online)* (2009): 2, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267711489>.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² David Shinn, “Al Shabaab’s Foreign Threat to Somalia,” *Orbis* 55, no. 2 (2011): 210, www.academia.edu/3150026/Al_Shabaabs_Foreign_Threat_to_Somalia.

allegiance to Al Qaeda.²⁰³ The affiliation of Al Shabaab to Al Qaeda and the Taliban changed the outlook of the group in two ways: the importation of terrorist tactics and ideology and the recruitment of foreign fighters using the contacts in Afghanistan.²⁰⁴ The Afghan veterans also introduced specialized skills like suicide attacks, the use of improvised explosive devices, kidnapping, and assassinations, arguably copied from Iraq and Afghanistan.²⁰⁵

Al Shabaab subsequently gained a transnational dimension and the capabilities to attack foreign targets and retain ground in Somalia at the same time. Troop-contributing countries were fixed in the dilemma of protecting their home security and defeating Al Shabaab on the front line. The July 2010 Al Shabaab incursion in Uganda and numerous attacks in Nairobi demonstrated the group's ability to expand the battle space in the East African region, thanks to its partnership with Al Qaeda. The analysis of the challenges demonstrates that the AU, lacking sufficient financial capacity to sustain peacekeeping missions, relies on international financial and logistical assistance, especially from the United States, the EU, and the United Kingdom. The organization also lacks strong political institutions to provide back and forth leadership to field forces as a result the individual countries' national interests derail the mission.

²⁰³ Ibid., 207.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 209.

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IV. OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH THE THREAT POSED BY AL SHABAAB

Recognizing the vulnerabilities as well as the factors that underpin the root causes of terrorism in Somalia is critical to identifying a more appropriate model to enhancing the effectiveness of counterterrorism efforts in Somali. Several lessons emerge from the comparative analysis of counterterrorism approaches. First, the current counterterrorism discourse that focuses on defeating Al Shabaab as a guarantee of ending the Somali conflict is not informed by historical perspective about Somalia's civil war. The conflict existed long before Al Shabaab became the central threat and would still be far from ending, even if Al Shabaab is conclusively defeated. The conflict is multidimensional, involving the issues of land disputes, differences in ideologies and objectives of various militia groups, poverty, and lack of economic opportunities, especially for the youth. Clan identity is only used as a platform for power and economic struggle, and Al Shabaab continues to manipulate the inter-clan struggles to survive.²⁰⁶ Arguably, any efforts to defeat Al Shabaab and stabilize Somalia should ensure that there is socioeconomic development and unity among clans in south and central Somalia and that its people are considered as important stakeholders in the decision-making process.

Second, the current Somalia National Security forces are far from capable of taking over the national defense of the country, in case AMISOM forces exit.²⁰⁷ The FGS ought to emphasize the building of a strong and ideologically conscious national army that is able to midwife the transformation of the entire Somali society. Credible and professional security forces are the sustainable remedy for combating terrorism and securing the stability of the country.

Third, lessons learned are that establishment of robust democratic institutions of governance that are tailor-made to the Somali society, but in conformity to internationally agree upon democratic norms, are critical to combating transnational terrorism. Lack of

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ David Mastro, "Expert Opinion on AMISOM Contributing Countries Continued Provision of Troops," Brookings, October 2016, 11, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/expert-opinion-on-amisom>.

effective control of the whole country and its population continues to frustrate the development of institutions of governance and service delivery. The FGS still shares both the territory and population with Al Shabaab terrorists. This political vulnerability has created fertile ground for radicalization and recruitment of terrorists in the hinterlands and the flourishing of other transnational organized crime, including piracy. Restoring legitimacy of the state and building trust and confidence among the population is a critical aspect in winning the people's support.²⁰⁸ However, the analysis of the counterterrorism models provides some lessons that can inform the counterterrorism operations in Somalia.

This chapter examines several counterterrorism models. In particular, analysis focuses on the globalized, national, and counter-radicalization models. Juxtaposing these three different counterterrorism approaches contributes to an informed counterterrorism perspective that can shape an effective solution to the Al Shabaab threat in Somalia. Overall, the different approaches employed by the models and the limitations inherent in each suggest that no single model offers a “magic bullet” solution for countering the threat of terrorism. It is, therefore, important to develop a multifaceted strategy that considers addressing the likely deep-seated causes of terrorism, countering the spread of violent extremism ideology, and promoting cooperation at the national, regional, and international levels, especially in the area of information sharing.

A. GLOBALIZED MODEL: THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

Ever since the Al Qaeda attacks on the United States in September 2001, the call for concerted efforts against transnational terrorism have gained the center stage of global security. The attack demonstrated the international capabilities of terrorists and created the fear that that no state is safe from such potential heinous acts, thus necessitating a need for a common front. This model, therefore, is grounded on the assumption that the effectiveness of any counterterrorism approach largely depends on the existence of concerted, powerful, global enforcement bodies with super- national powers to deal with

²⁰⁸ Mohamed A. Mohamoud, “Federalism for Somalia: Internal and External Challenges in the Post-Transition Period,” Somaliland Press, 2015, 6, http://www.somalilandpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Paper-about-Somalia-issues-on-state-building_2.pdf.

the causes and consequences of terrorism.²⁰⁹ Kennedy Graham argues “that counterterrorism will be successful only when a ‘global law enforcement’ approach prevails over the national security-driven ‘war-on-terror’ and when genuine efforts are undertaken to address the root causes of terrorism, including the forward basing of U.S. forces in the Arab world.”²¹⁰ This narrative also borrows ideas from the notion that global peace is an essential human condition that can only be guaranteed by a viable global security mechanism.²¹¹ Furthermore, it contends that because terrorist organizations are transnational in nature, the approaches to counter their activities need to foster cooperation at the regional and global level.

The proponents of this model further claim the elusive nature of terrorism dictates that any counterterrorism effort needs to consider accurate and robust intelligence sharing among states and other counterterrorism mechanisms. Intelligence plays a key role in breaking the terrorist networks and blowing their covers. Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer Morrison-Taw also agree that positive collaboration between states is critical to avert terrorists taking advantage of foreign ungoverned spaces as safe havens.²¹² In appreciation of the necessity for combined action against terrorism, the UN Security Council, in the aftermath of 9/11, adopted United Nations Resolution 1373 (2001), which encouraged member states to promote the required joint counterterrorism measures in order to deter terrorist acts.²¹³ The resolution further gave a motivation to global and regional entities to hasten cooperation against terrorism. Because of this resolution, most countries started national and regional counterterrorism centers to enhance support for the Global War on Terror.

²⁰⁹Kennedy Graham, “The Security Council and Counterterrorism: Global and Regional Approaches to an Elusive Public Good,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 17, no 1–2 (2005): 37–65, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09546550590520555>.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² Bruce Hoffman and Jennifer Morrison-Taw, “A Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism” in *European Democracies against Terrorism: Governmental Policies and Intergovernmental Cooperation*, ed. Fernando Reinares (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000), 10, www.worldcat.org/title/european-democracies-against-terrorism.

²¹³ G. N. Okeke, “The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373: An Appraisal of Law Fare in the Fight against Terrorism,” *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution* 6, no. 3 (2014): 39–47, <http://www.academicjournals.org/JLCR>.

The U.S. counterterrorism strategy, as enshrined in the concept of the Global War on Terror is a classic example of a globalization model. The strategy highlights four substantial cores for defeating terrorism: (1) fighting the enemy abroad; (2) disrupting the terrorists; (3) denying the terrorist an opportunity to access weapons of mass destruction; and (4) promoting democracy.²¹⁴ Daniel Byman, whose views on counterterrorism are consonant with the globalized model, argues that strengthening the counterterrorism capabilities of allies is a crucial aspect in combating terrorism because it offers mutual benefits to states.²¹⁵ In line with developing the capabilities of allies, the U.S. government established several initiatives to enhance anti-terrorism skills.²¹⁶

First, the U.S. government started a regional counterterrorism base known as the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa situated in Camp Lemonier in Djibouti. Its operational tasks are “detecting, disrupting, and defeating the transnational terrorist groups; countering the resurgence of international terrorism, and enhancing long term stability of the region.”²¹⁷ The base has enabled both U.S. and African counterterrorism forces to share intelligence and train together, which is an essential aspect in disrupting terrorism. For instance, the United States and its African allies have engaged in several counterterrorism operations in Africa, especially in the Horn of Africa and the East African region. Such operations have taken the form of air strikes, military advisors, law enforcement, provision of security assistance, and psychological operations to win over the support of the population.²¹⁸ Also through its allies, the United States has managed to annihilate some notorious terrorist leaders, including Osama Bin Laden and Ahmed Godane—formerly the heads of Al Qaeda and of Al Shabaab, respectively.

²¹⁴Raphael Perl, *Combating Terrorism: The Challenges of Measuring Effectiveness* (CRS Report No. RL33160) (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2007), 4, www.congressionalresearch.com/RL33160/document.php?study=Combating.

²¹⁵ Byman, “the Five Front War,” 56–57.

²¹⁶ Johnathan D. Garon, “Stabilizing Somalia: A New Approach to State-Building” (bachelor’s thesis, Univ. of Rochester, 2009), 7, writing.rochester.edu/celebrating/2009/Garon.pdf.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Garon, “Stabilizing Somalia.” 7.

The second significant enterprise to actualize global cooperation against terrorism was the formation of the East African Counterterrorism Initiative in 2003. Through this program, the United States sponsored various training programs to enhance border control and coastal security in allied states like Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda. In the same vein, the United States also supports its allies in the development of counterterrorism capacities to effectively combat international terrorism through training and education, such as the Counterterrorism Fellows Program at the Naval Postgraduate School.²¹⁹ It is worth noting that the graduates of such programs enhance the intelligence sharing mechanism with the U.S. government, which is a critical factor in containing transnational terrorists.

The globalized model is also shaped by the thinking that Islamic terrorists operate in unison and in a coordinated fashion, which therefore requires a global network to counteract it. Patrick Sookhdeo buttresses the idea of a globalized approach to disrupting the terrorist networks, noting that “not only are they networked to each other but also they are linked to the Muslim community at large, from which they draw funds and new recruits to enable their continued operation.”²²⁰ In demonstrating the extent of the interconnectedness of terrorist operations, Sookhdeo relates terrorist networks to a spider’s web and indicates that such well knitted alliances can only be neutralized by breaking the main pillar on which they built these alliances and isolating them from one another. To him, isolating the groups would suffocate the flow of funds, recruits, and other materials that replenish their operations.

This strategy, however, requires the genuine cooperation and coordination of various states to isolate different terrorist organizations. To this end, he underscores the importance of the global model and attests that “it is important to recognize that the global Islamic totalitarian movement characterized by an asymmetric mode of operation is currently at war with the rest of the world. It is a long-term global war that cannot be

²¹⁹ For more information, see the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Civil-Military Relations website, <https://my.nps.edu/web/ccmr/-/combating-terrorism-fellowship-program-ctfp>.

²²⁰ Patrick Sookhdeo, *Global Jihad: The Future in the Face of Militant Islam* (McLean, VA: Isaac Publishing, 2007), 396.

contained in separate individuals' local pockets."²²¹ This argument, though it presents a radical approach to counterterrorism, is relevant because local terrorists finance their operations with funds from their affiliates and sponsors, and this infrastructure can only be deconstructed by international collaboration.

The globalization model presents a feasible counterterrorism narrative; however, it is burdened with a number of challenges especially when juxtaposed with the African conflict environment. First, the model assumes the universality of the concept of terrorism and, therefore, presupposes the possibility of the common counterterrorism approach, but terrorism as a tactic is dynamic and camouflages itself in the different forms of conflicts. For example, most asymmetric conflicts have adopted terrorism as a method of obtaining their social and political objectives. As a result, the concept of terrorism has been generalized to include all kinds of insecurity challenging the states.

As such, political opposition, liberation movements, local criminals, and pirates are all included in the category of terrorism.²²² Indeed, Peter Kagwanja ably observes that some the African leaders use the pretext of fighting terrorism for political expedience to blacklist political opponents as terrorists in order to exclude them from participating in the political process.²²³ Kagwanja broadly observes that the cosmopolitan approach to counterterrorism has created a varied impact on the security situations in Africa, especially in the eastern African region. He notes:

The dynamics of 'the war on Terrorism' catalyzed peace deals in Somalia and Sudan, but also fostered restrictive security paradigms which have perpetuated conflicts and stocked civil wars in the region. The campaign against terrorism also gave new impetus to old security perspectives that privileged state stability, enabling regimes to instrumentally utilize terrorism for political ends. On their part, local extremist groups, redefined as 'terrorists' formed strategic alliance with Islamists aimed at securing aid and sanctuary and imported into the local theatres of war tactics of jihadists such as beheading victims.²²⁴

²²¹ Ibid., 396.

²²² Kagwanja, "Counter-terrorism in the Horn of Africa," 70–86.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

This characterization also defines the current security environment in most African countries, where autocratic regimes have ostensibly used the imperatives of the Global War on Terror to label political opponents as “terrorists.” For instance, Ethiopia blackmailed Orombi Liberation Front and Ogaden Liberation Front minority ethnic groups who are agitating for inclusion in national affairs by labeling them as terrorists.²²⁵ Despite the colossal financial and logistical support offered by developed countries toward combating international terrorism, asymmetric conflicts continue to arise in Africa due to poor governance and political exclusion.

Second, Kagwanja further observes that in the response to the Global War on Terror, African states hastily introduced legal counterterrorism regimes that threaten the human rights and increase religious antagonism and hence violent extremism.²²⁶ Because no universal concept of terrorism is applicable to Africa, a mismatch has occurred between national and international counterterrorism efforts.²²⁷ The differences between definitions of terrorist organizations, coupled with a lack of regional consensus and strategy on how to handle homegrown terrorists, especially groups that have not been internationally declared terrorists, remain a daunting challenge.²²⁸ The application of the globalized model, therefore, would require the promulgation of a single legal regime against terrorism that would necessitate AU member states to amend their national and regional laws. Although this is possible, it would be difficult to achieve because of the traditional suspicion and mistrust among states. Suspicion, secrecy, and confidentiality procedures revered by the intelligence community affect the sharing of information.

For instance, the AMISOM experience reveals that the suspicions between Kenya and Ethiopia continue to affect the sharing of intelligence in their respective areas of operation, thereby affecting interoperability. Similarly, due to disputes between the FGS and the KDF over the control of Kismayo, the SNA does not share intelligence with the

²²⁵ Kagwanja, “Counter-terrorism in the Horn of Africa,” 72.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Demeke and Gebru, “The Role of Regional Economic Communities in Fighting Terrorism in Africa,” 216.

KDF on anticipated Al Shabaab attacks. Terrorists often utilize such intelligence gaps to conduct premeditated attacks on AMISOM contingents.

Another challenge facing the globalized model is that it emphasizes a top-down approach to counterterrorism. This strategy excludes local key stakeholders and neglects causes of domestic terrorism. For instance, the AMISOM strategic partners viewed the Somali conflict from the perspective of counterterrorism. As such, many efforts were focused on defeating Al Shabaab and paid less attention to state building processes. This assessment created a misleading view of the situation and has frustrated the political and military endeavors to end the conflict.²²⁹ Al Shabaab thrives on manipulations of local clans and taking advantage of the power vacuum and the dysfunctional state; therefore, proper analysis of the local issues is a critical path to reducing radicalization and recruitment of terrorists.

B. NATIONAL MODELS: COUNTERTERRORISM APPROACHES OF FRANCE AND SAUDI ARABIA

In contrast to the globalized model, which advocates for super-national efforts to address issues of international terrorism, the national model focuses on how individual states apply their counterterrorism apparatus. For purposes of comparison, the French model is selected to represent the “hard” approach, while Saudi Arabia illustrates the lessons of fighting terrorism by using the “soft” method. The approaches are each contrasted with the Al Shabaab terrorist threat to inform counterterrorism policies and planning in Somalia. While most aspects highlighted in the national models would be useful in supporting AMISOM’s counterterrorism efforts, the absence of a strong state apparatus in Somalia to oversee the process hinders their implementation.

1. The “Hard” Approach of the French Counterterrorism Model

The French counterterrorism mechanism is unique among Western democracies because France, unlike its European counterparts, did not assume soft approach to

²²⁹ Peter K. Sjogren, *Alternatives for Conflict Transformation in Somalia: A Snapshot and Analysis of Key Political Actors’ Views and Strategies* (Uppsala, Sweden: Life & Peace Institute, May 2014), 7–8, www.life-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/The-ACTS-Report.pdf.

counterterrorism programs, despite the prevalence of radicalization and terrorism, especially after the 2004 Madrid and the 2005 London attacks.²³⁰ The French model, therefore, provides important lessons for counterterrorism policies and institutions. The model is based on the philosophy of the centralization of powers and the combining of all the tools of state institutions to defeat terrorism. The model contends that to be effective in reducing terrorism, judicial systems, the intelligence community, and other enforcement agencies must work in unison to track, apprehend, and prosecute the terrorists and their accomplices.²³¹ The approach concentrates counterterrorism authority in seven investigating judges who work closely with the Directorate of Territorial Surveillance. The system does not believe in a separation of the prosecutorial and judicial functions; both roles are fused under the investigating judges.²³² The magistrates have overwhelming powers of prevention, deterrence, punishment, oversight, and direct investigations of the intelligence system.²³³

Following the terrorist attack on the United States in September 2001, France further restructured its counterterrorism apparatus into four main groups: prevention; disruption; prosecution; and coordination and information sharing. Under prevention, counterterrorism forces are allowed to conduct wiretapping and to monitor bank accounts, private emails, and internet transactional data. In 2006, the police were granted powers to collect all travel information of passengers moving to countries out of Europe, especially to the suspected countries. Further, surveillance cameras were placed in all private and public facilities to collect images for intelligence analysis.

As far as disruption is concerned, since 2014, the security agencies were allowed to seize passports and national identity cards, which were valid for a minimum of six months and renewable only for two years, for French nationals suspected of leaving the country to join the jihadists or any other terrorist organizations. In addition, the security

²³⁰ Dorle Hellmuth, "Countering Jihadi Terrorism and Radicals the French Way," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 38, no 12 (2015): 979, doi: 10.1080/1057610x.2015.1076277.

²³¹ Ibid., 979.

²³² Ibid., 980.

²³³ Ibid.

staffs were authorized to block internet sites and financial assets for companies or individuals suspected of sympathizing with terrorism. Further, French anti-terrorist law criminalizes all activities that may promote terrorism. Such predicate acts include financial support to terrorists, association with terrorists, the instigation of terrorism, and any act of participating in or visiting terrorists training camps.

Finally, the Anti-terror Coordination Department under the Ministry of the Interior acts as joint intelligence fusion center. This joint mechanism has created a teamwork spirit and unity of effort against terror threats.²³⁴ Robert J. Art and Louise Richardson observe that the French counterterrorism apparatus, though intrusive and repressive, provides a wide and a coordinated institutional framework that relies on local knowledge and informants to pre-empt and arrest the suspected terrorists.²³⁵ The combination of all these efforts has enabled France to contain the threat of terrorism:

The French concluded from all their activities that preventing future attacks required increased cooperation with foreign governments; greater attention to the sources of terrorists support, logistics and financing within France; tighter integration of government resources, particularly of intelligence, judicial, and law enforcement organizations; and an increased legal capacity to act in anticipation of terrorist actions.²³⁶

Despite its highly publicized success in neutralizing domestic terrorism, the French model is highly criticized for violating human rights and oppressing minority groups, a factor that has remained the recipe for potential terrorism.²³⁷ The counterterrorism apparatus is supported by a legal system that puts the burden of proof on the individual suspects to prove their innocence. This stance contrasts with the legal procedures of the U.S. and British legal systems, in which one is presumed innocent until proved guilty. The legal procedure of presuming suspects guilty before proved innocent by the court has resulted in the violation of human rights by the police and the

²³⁴ Hellmuth, "Countering Jihadi Terrorism and Radicals the French Way," 980.

²³⁵ Robert J. Art and Louise Richardson, *Democracy and Counterterrorism: Lessons from the Past* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2007), 161.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 160.

²³⁷ Brian T. Preece, "Community-based Counterterrorism: What French Security Forces Can Learn from the British CONTEST Model," in *Claremont-UC Undergraduate Research Conference on the European Union*, vol. 2016, article 6 (22 September 2016), 60, <http://scholarship.claremont.edu/ureu/vol2016/iss1/6>.

intelligence agencies. Most innocent people, especially the Muslim migrants from North Africa, have been unjustly convicted under this system because they lack resources to defend themselves.²³⁸ Again, Art and Richardson describe the French counterterrorism system as “extraordinary, repressive and intrusive, and repressions fall heavily on specific groups, particularly of North African origin.”²³⁹ Radicalization and recruitment of domestic terrorists is caused by socioeconomic and political dissatisfactions; the remedy is to build mutual trust with the citizens and to minimize all forms of marginalization from society.

The analysis of the French model reveals sharp differences between the globalization model, represented by the American and the British counterterrorism strategies. First, it professes a centralized system with fused roles. The security agencies use overwhelming authorities to conduct surveillance and human intelligence, and the specialized magistrates monopolize the rule of preventive arrest, extradition, and sentencing. France deals with terrorist suspects in the same way it handles criminals. Second, unlike the British and the globalization model, the civil society and the disaffected communities, particularly Muslim society, are not mainstreamed in the counterterrorism processes.²⁴⁰ The French model cannot be effectively replicated in Somalia for the following reasons. First, Somalia is a failed state without tangible state institutions, security agencies, and resource capabilities to track, apprehend, and prosecute suspected terrorists. The country is still fragmented without a standard legal framework and, above all, the national constitution to buttress the court systems. Second, the FGS and SNSF lack full legitimacy to control the whole country. Al Shabaab still controls a large swath of territories and terrorism is deeply ingrained in the clan system, which makes it difficult to target terrorists without colliding with clan leaders. The French model brings out significant lessons for counterterrorism; however, it can be ably applied only in mature democracies having developed state institutions and intelligence capabilities, which are conspicuously absent in Somalia.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Art and Richardson, “Democracy and Counterterrorism,” 157.

²⁴⁰ Preece, “Community-based Counterterrorism,” 60.

2. The “Soft” Approach of the Saudi Arabian Counterterrorism Model

The second national model is employed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The model contrasts with the French model in the sense that it is a community-based approach as opposed to the centralized system used by France. Analyzing the Saudi counterterrorism methodology is important for a number of reasons. First, the Saudi counter-radicalization program is most facilitated; it has become a highly publicized de facto model for many countries, which are fast tracking counter-radicalization policies.²⁴¹ Second, it provides an intriguing scenario, as Saudi Arabia produces a large number of militant Islamists involved in jihadist wars abroad, but it maintains the lowest frequency of Islamist violence at home.²⁴² Since 1980, the Kingdom has served as a base to hide foreign fighters belonging to Muslim terrorist groups in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Chechnya. It was also the home of Osama Bin Laden and his 15 lieutenants who were responsible for the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the U.S. government. Saudi Arabia is described as “a black box from which radicalism is steadily pumped into the international system.”²⁴³ The Saudi counterterrorism model balanced all these security imperatives to attain stability.

This is not to suggest that the Kingdom has not faced the challenges of radicalism and domestic terrorism. In 1979, it experienced a mild terrorist attack on the Mecca Mosque by an extremist Islamic sect of al Jama’a –al Salafiyya-al Muhtasiba (JSM), which left many people dead. The serious wave of radicalism came to bear from 2002 to 2003 in five attempted assassinations of judges and police in the northern city of Sakaka. These acts opened the door for more terrorist acts in the Kingdom. The significant challenge, however, developed with the rise of Al Qaeda in the Peninsula. It propagated the pan-Islamic agenda, most of its planned attacks were on Western targets, and its ultimate objective was a regime change in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. However, using its counterterrorism mechanism, Saudi Arabia has been able to undermine the extremist

²⁴¹ Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid., 3.

intentions and prevented the situation from degenerating into terrorism.²⁴⁴ Seeds of violent extremism are still extant and its conclusive defeat would necessitate cooperation of regional states, especially the Arab countries.

Following the phenomenal growth of domestic terrorism, the government of Saudi Arabia crafted a three-dimensional counterterrorism strategy to operate along with traditional security and law enforcement apparatuses. The primary objectives were to make the narrative of Islamic extremism in the Kingdom unattractive and to encourage the radicalized elements to renounce extremist ideologies.²⁴⁵ The strategy consists of three components: prevention programs to detect and deter people from being lured to join violent extremist groups, rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives to inspire the silent sympathizers to abandon violence, and the provision of social support to detainees and their families to avoid backsliding and resettle them in the Saudi community.²⁴⁶ The rationale of the strategy is to uproot the terrorist infrastructure from the population by solving the issues that underpin the growth of violent extremism.

The Saudi counterterrorism program is based on the realization that the solution to terrorism lies at the community level. The government invested more resources in de-radicalization and counter-radicalization programs in order to render the Islamic extremism narrative obsolete. It designed a strategic counterterrorism narrative that was disseminated throughout the country by use of various committees. Eminent Islamic scholars and clerics who gave the correct interpretation of Islam to detainees and the population, in addition to counseling services and resettlement packages, ran the programs.²⁴⁷ With the strong security sector, Saudi Arabia has successfully neutralized terrorism on its soil. Countries like Egypt, Algeria, Indonesia, and Yemen have adopted the same aspects from the model.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 9.

²⁴⁵ Christopher Boucek, "Counter-Terrorism from Within: Assessing Saudi Arabia's Religious Rehabilitation Program," *RUSI Journal* 153, no.6 (2008): 60–65, <http://dx.doi.org/10.108/03071840802670106>.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 61.

²⁴⁷ Boucek, "Counter-Terrorism from Within," 61.

Several factors have contributed to the success of Saudi Arabia's model. First, the government has been able to engage in a number of interventions because of its enormous financial resources to fund the projects throughout the country. Second, the de-radicalization program blended well with Saudi culture and religious doctrine (*da'wah*), which discourages the use of violence. Moreover, the government's counterterrorism narrative dovetailed with the teachings of Wahhabi Islam that are dominant in the country, which emphasizes values such as obedience to leadership and loyalty. Finally, through the implementation of counterterrorism programs, the government was able to penetrate the society and solve the underlying causes of violent extremism, hence disabling the terrorism infrastructure.

Although the model has successfully reduced the threat of terrorism domestically, it has not achieved much in promoting human rights and deterring jihadists from leaving the Kingdom to volunteer in other Islamic-led insurgencies. Certainly, Saudi Arabia's model seems plausible and practical for Somalia because of its similar religious traits. It cannot, however, be replicated because of several reasons; it is resource intensive. As it still relies on donations to operate, the FGS has not yet developed the financial capabilities to support such a huge undertaking. Furthermore, the approach requires legitimate institutions to facilitate a participatory democracy, counter radicalization, and foster economic improvement. Somalia's institutions are still nascent and marred by corruption and clan disputes, and politicians have not yet agreed on how to compete for power democratically.

C. THE UNITED KINGDOM'S COUNTER-RADICALIZATION MODEL: CONTEST

To contain the domestic and foreign terror threats, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland established a counterterrorism model known as CONTEST in 2009. The model focuses on reducing the terrorism risks to the United Kingdom and its interests abroad by responding to root causes and threats from terrorist accomplices.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ Secretary of State, *CONTEST: The United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism* (Policy Paper No. Cm 8123) (London: Home Office, 12 July 2011), 40, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest>.

The model is premised on a community-centered approach that focuses on positive engagement with the community and non-governmental organizations to reduce violent extremism and recruitment of terrorists in the country.²⁴⁹ It is implemented through four methodologies: prepare, protect, prevent, and pursue.²⁵⁰ The combined application of these styles has minimized the United Kingdom's vulnerabilities to terrorism because it encourages security forces to work with communities in identifying and apprehending those who are involved in radicalization.²⁵¹ In its operationalization, the model envisages the following objective:

To increase cooperation with third world countries and provide them with assistance; to respect human rights; to prevent new recruits to terrorism; to better protect potential targets; to investigate and pursue members of existing networks; and to improve capability to respond to and manage the consequences of terrorist attacks.²⁵²

An analysis of the objectives reveals that fighting against the growth of radical ideologies and recruitment of terrorism requires a robust method of identifying terrorists' communication networks, propaganda, and modus operandi of recruitment.²⁵³ The proponents of the model also recognize that radicalization is leveraged by theocratic fascist ideologies, which depict any conflict in the world as ostensible proof of a clash between the West and Islam.²⁵⁴ They further note the underlying factors that lead to radicalization, including autocratic leadership, forces of globalization, and a general lack of economic and educational opportunities. To remedy these challenges, the model proposes the establishment of effective social service delivery, nurturing institutions that promote good governance, democracy, and economic development.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁹ Preece, "Community-based Counterterrorism," 60–61.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Edwin Bakker, "EU Counter-radicalization Policies: A Comprehensive and Consistent Approach?" *Intelligence and National Security* 30, no. 2–3 (2015): 281–305, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2014.988442>.

²⁵² Ibid., 290.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Bakker, "EU Counter-radicalization Policies," 290.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

The British government's community-oriented approaches have helped to uproot the terrorism narrative from the society by engaging the disaffected members and at the same time immunizing the vulnerable groups against radicalization. The 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States and the growth of volatile attitudes within the Muslim community in the United Kingdom, due to protests against the government's participation in Iraq's war with the United States, compelled the United Kingdom to reassess its response to domestic terrorism. The government introduced a community-based national counterterrorism strategy called CONTEST to deal with issues of radicalization.²⁵⁶ The overarching objectives of CONTEST were to "tackle the ideology behind violent extremism and support individuals who were vulnerable to recruitment; increase the resilience of communities to violent extremism, and address the grievances, which Islamic ideologues are exploiting."²⁵⁷

The model rests on four fundamental pillars: prevent, pursue protect, and prepare. First, the preventive strategy primarily dissuades people from sympathizing with terrorism. It disables extremism infrastructure within the population by harnessing the efforts of security institutions, local communities, opinion leaders, especially religious leaders, and civil society. In addition, the government has fought Islamic extremism and recruitment of terrorists through debating, lobbying, advocacy, and giving voice to minority segments of the society. The simultaneous application of preventive, pursuit, and disruption methods greatly reduced radicalization and terrorist recruitment in the United Kingdom.²⁵⁸ Under this strategy, the counterterrorism forces monitor and remove terrorist-related propaganda from the internet. Other interventions include shaping the mindset of the Muslim community through the creation of youth guilds, such as the Young Muslim Advisory Group, as a platform to give minorities a voice to air their issues in a positive way; comprehensive community policing; and orientation of school curriculum to give students a proper perspective on the effects of radicalization. These

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 60.

²⁵⁷ Isabella Sankey, "Liberty's Response to Home Office Consultations on the Prevent Strand of UK Counter Terrorism Strategy," 2010, 3, <http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/sites/default/files/response-to-home-office-consultation-on-prevent-january2011.pdf>.

²⁵⁸ Preece, "Community-based Counterterrorism," 60.

efforts are complemented by the government's policy of addressing all issues of discrimination and any other forms of social and political injustices.²⁵⁹

Second, the concept also espouses pursuit, which allows the law enforcement officers to disrupt planned terrorist operations by tracking and trapping their networks. Disruption is achieved through cooperation and collaboration with other security agencies and friendly states as well.

Third, protection aims at strengthening and hardening targets against terrorist attacks. This concept deals with building robust homeland security defense mechanisms such as surveillance systems to track the activities of suspected terrorists. Finally, the prepare approach essentially is activated to mitigate the impact of terrorism in case the attack cannot be avoided.

CONTEST is a holistic approach that skillfully employs political, military, and information aspects to fight against the spread of violent extremist ideologies and recruitment of terrorists in the United Kingdom. The collective application of these efforts has created a better political environment that significantly reduces the terror threat perception in the United Kingdom today.

The critics of the CONTEST concept advocate for a hard-handed approach. They argue that focusing on countering jihadist narrative and promotion of democracy has little chance of combating terrorism because of constant change on the global stage. The CONTEST strategy, however, has demonstrated community engagement is critical in counterterrorism. Providing a forum and voice to disaffected groups to openly counter radical Islamist propaganda has helped to mitigate the terror threats in Britain.²⁶⁰ Finding a solution to local problems through community-integrated approaches provides a higher probability of minimizing radicalization and recruitment of domestic terrorists to a containable level.

²⁵⁹ J. Jeffrey Jones, "Countering Islamic Radicalization and Al Shabaab Recruitment within the Ethnic Somali Population of the United States: An Argument for Applying Best Practices for Stemming Youth Gang Recruitment and Initiation" (PhD diss., Naval Postgraduate School, 2010), 17–20.

²⁶⁰ Preece, "Community-based Counterterrorism," 63.

D. ANALYSIS OF KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Governments throughout the world have employed various counterterrorism efforts to curtail or defeat terrorists in their land. The variations in strategies have led to the development of several assumptions and different approaches. The common counter measures include, but are not limited to, enacting anti-terrorism legislation and strengthening military, enhancing intelligence capabilities, and investing in law enforcement mechanisms to track, apprehend, prosecute, and kill terrorists. Despite the consensus that transnational terrorism is premised on extremist ideologies, grievances, and governance challenges, countries continue to invest in hard-power strategies that emphasize the use of the military.

This kinetic approach, however, has not been always effective as is evidenced by the example of Somalia. Although AMISOM and the SNSF have been successful in reducing the Al Shabaab threat militarily, they are still struggling to win the ideological war. Al Shabaab continues to influence large sections of Somali society. Indeed, AMISOM's immediate challenge is to establish legitimate governance in both the liberated and the Al Shabaab controlled areas. Similarly, the elimination of Osama Bin Laden from the battlefield by U.S. Special Forces has not translated into the defeat of Al Qaeda, but instead has increased radicalization against Western strategic interests, especially the United States. These cases indicate that relying on a military option alone is not a plausible solution to defeat terrorists. Moreover, the ever-changing political and security landscape in Somalia has blurred the distinction between Al Shabaab and other clan militias with genuine grievances. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for terrorism in Somalia, but application of the whole of government approach is promising.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the progress made by and the challenges facing AMISOM in its efforts to put to an end to Al Shabaab terrorism in Somalia. Several conclusions can be made from the analysis of the findings. This analysis also makes recommendations.

A. FINDINGS

First, with the support of the international community such as the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United States, AMISOM has done a tremendous job toward stabilizing the security environment in Somalia. Together with the Somalia National Security Forces, it has liberated more towns from Al Shabaab, protected the Federal Government of Somalia, and enhanced the military capabilities of the Somalia National Security Forces. The Federal Government of Somalia and wider international partners hailed this achievement as a bold step toward ending the menace of Al Shabaab. However, the security situation remains fragile, characterized by the mixture of conventional and asymmetrical attacks against AMISOM and strategic government infrastructures. As such, the local population is cautious about the capacity of AMISOM and Somali National Army to deliver peace given the magnitude of the terrorist attacks on AMISOM forces and bombings in Mogadishu. Al Shabaab still has the ability to switch from asymmetrical to direct conventional attacks against AMISOM forces.

Second, this study recognizes that reliance on a hard-power approach to countering terrorism in Somalia has not achieved much success. The failed UN-U.S. missions in 1993, the unilateral Ethiopian military intervention in 2006, and the current AMISOM stalemate provide evidence to this fact. The overdependence on military means asymmetric conflicts such as the Al Shabaab insurgency only lead to casualties. It also generates low morale among counterterrorism forces and creates sympathy for the terrorists on the part of the locals, who convert it into a passive or active support for terrorists. To most Somalis, Al Shabaab is both an ideology and an organization; therefore, it should be defeated at the political, socioeconomic, moral, and military levels simultaneously.

Third, there is less visible stability in liberated areas because establishment of institutions of governance and service delivery have not kept pace with military success. The Federal Government of Somalia has yet to set up a comprehensive policy framework of governance to fill the administrative vacuum in the areas it controls. In addition, the concentration of AMISOM and government forces in towns, particularly the Mogadishu zone, often leaves a large part of the hinterlands in the hands of Al Shabaab, which enables the group to adapt the strategy of attacking the main supply routes. Such methods render towns isolated and vulnerable. Presently, Al Shabaab positions itself as the only effective organization to provide equitable justice to the Somali people. It runs a court system that arbitrates clan-related disputes in a manner that is tailor-made to the customs and religious beliefs of Somali society.

Fourth, south-central Somalia is a host to numerous and diverse armed groups, more than what is portrayed by the counterterrorism narrative. Even though most of the armed groups and socio-political actors pay allegiance to Islamic faith, they differ in ideologies and methods of struggle. Continuing to view the Somali conflict as a war between the extremist Al Shabaab and the rest of moderate Somalis have made international and regional actors miss the realities of the conflict and led to inconsistent strategies to end the war. The defeat of Al Shabaab militarily will not necessarily translate to termination of the Somali conflict because this conflict originated from clan-based violence, and it still reflects those origins.

Fifth, the lack of an effective and unified command and control mechanism continues to affect the progress of AMISOM operations. This problem was worsened by the inclusion of Kenya and Ethiopia in the AMISOM force structure; these countries sometimes front their national interests, which are not necessarily in line with AMISOM's strategic and operational objectives, thereby infringing on the mission's essential tasks and control of operations. The result of this fragmentation of command is that AMISOM force headquarters has lost the authority to control troop-contributing countries. The contingent commanders' actions are determined by orders from their respective governments. The force commander largely depends on personal rapport with individual field commanders to influence any aspect of the operation. This is particularly

challenging for AMISOM as it undermines the basic norms of peacekeeping missions such as impartiality, consent, and use of proportional force. Overall, the integration of Kenyan and Ethiopian forces into AMISOM in 2014 was contradictory as it weakened the cohesion of the mission because of their competing national security agendas in Somalia.

International partners still have a significant role to play in building sustainable counterterrorism capabilities of countries and organizations in the East African region. While regional efforts against terrorism in the form of regional organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the African Union, are taking shape as major players in the field of counterterrorism in the region, they are still facing challenges, including the lack of financial capacities and viable political structures to respond to terrorism.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations target different key actors in the fight against Al Shabaab-led transnational terrorism in Somalia and the East African region.

1. The Federal Government of Somalia

Federal Government of Somalia is currently facing multidimensional political and security transitional challenges that can reverse the semblance of stability gained so far. Dynamics of over-reliance on external support, lack of national consensus on political agenda, and mistrust among the clan factions, in addition to an all-embracing fragility still threaten the country. In view of these risks, the present leadership should focus on initiating an inclusive political and social reconciliation mechanism with a view to consolidating confidence, trust, and national responsibility among the clans, regions, and political factions. It is imperative that reconciliation and dialogue be structured from bottom to top, beginning at the local village level and managed at the district, regional, and national levels. It should also be chaired by mutually agreed upon and respected Somali citizens to avoid the influence of external actors, especially neighboring Kenya, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, which have competing security agendas in Somalia. In addition, the

government should continue to build the law enforcement, justice, and public order sector to effectively manage domestic security and enforce the rule of law.

Credible and professional security forces are the sustainable remedy for combating terrorism and securing the stability of the country. The Federal Government of Somalia ought to prioritize the building of an effective Somali national security sector, especially a strong national army and an agile law enforcement capability that are able to safeguard the entire Somali society as the nation transitions to a democratic and stable country. In addition, the government should also invest in the development of intelligence capabilities of monitoring, intelligence collection, and intelligence sharing with other critical law enforcement organizations.

To conclusively defeat Al Shabaab, the Federal Government of Somalia needs to target the following critical fighting constituents. First, the government must disable Al Shabaab intelligence squads (Amniyat) responsible for clandestine operations in Somalia and throughout the East African region. Second, terrorist regional command and administrative structures, which dispense justice, indoctrination, and mobilization for war, must be dismantled. Third, the government must eradicate external cells, especially Kenyan affiliates, such as Al- Hajira, and networks in Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia, that are used to generate funding for terrorist organizations

Like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Somalia is generally harmonious. The population comprises mainly Sunni Muslims, and the people have the same culture and language, though structured along different clans. The federal government can leverage this uniformity to initiate counter-radicalization and de-radicalization programs customized to their religious teaching and culture. Following the example of Saudi Arabia, which used reputable religious ideologues to counter the terrorist narrative by explaining the right version of Islam, the Federal Government of Somalia should make moderate Muslim sheiks and traditional clan leaders a prime force to counter radicalization and recruitment by terrorists. At the same time, this approach should be supported by effective community intelligence, law enforcement, and the political will to finance the project.

2. The Role of the African Union Going Forward

The Kenyan and Ethiopian governments continue to project their own security agendas in Somalia in contravention of AMISOM's mandate. The AU should replace Ethiopian and Kenyan with other member countries that are politically neutral in Somalia's conflict. Avoidance of undue neighborly influence will give the Federal Government of Somalia the chance to reach out to moderate elements of Al Shabaab as well as other influential clan and religious leaders to find a homegrown solution for their political and security problems.

Absence of consensus among the international partners, coupled with lack of interoperability among the troop-contributing countries, affects smooth running of the mission. The AU should provide bold leadership to ensure the harmonization and the coordination of international actors (the EU, United States, UN, and United Kingdom) with regional and sub-regional organizations (Intergovernmental Authority on Development, East African Counterterrorism Initiative) in stabilizing Somalia and the East African region. This synchronization of efforts should help in avoiding duplication of efforts and maximize the use of each actor's strength and comparative advantage in areas such as financial and technical expertise.

The AU's Peace and Support Division should strengthen interstate collaboration, especially in the areas of intelligence sharing and cross-border security enhancement. Such an initiative should, however, be complemented by continued improvements in human resources and technical capabilities. The development of skills and the application of modern technology will boost the detection and prevention of potential terrorists.

3. The International Partners

To guarantee the sustained security of liberated areas and stabilization of the whole of Somalia, the international partners should provide the necessary materiel and financial support required for AMISOM and the Federal Government of Somalia to defeat Al Shabaab. The requirements include consistent funding (i.e., mission subsistence allowance), as well as strategic force enablers and multipliers, such as air assets and a robust logistics system. The U.S. government should provide precision fire support to

AMISOM and Somali National Army operations to remove Al Shabaab from hard-to-reach safe havens. The fire support, however, needs to be aligned with the strategy of enhancing counterterrorism capabilities of the Somali National Security Forces and forces of regional partners to combat transnational terrorism, including Al Shabaab. The support should go beyond the train and equip concept, and focus more on overall issues having to do with command, administration, and accountability of the Somali National Security Forces. Training doctrine needs to integrate civil–military relations and human rights protection concepts in order to reduce human rights violations by security forces.

The principal drivers of the Somali conflict are associated with the ability of negative forces—including Al Shabaab—to exploit the vulnerabilities of the population entrenched in inter-clan rivalry, poverty, and religious dogma, and exploited by wealthy warlords. The UN, through its diplomatic institutions, should help Somalia to enhance governance, democracy, and development. Such initiatives can be achieved by establishing projects that promote individual household incomes and by nurturing critical state institutions and structures that guarantee accountability and transparency.

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