

Box 4.8.1 Somalia

Soon after his election in October 2004 as president of Somalia's new Transitional Federal Institutions (TFI), Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed appealed to the international community for a multinational peace-keeping force of up to 20,000 troops to help restore security in Somalia and enable his government's return from exile. The request initially met a lukewarm reception, but in January 2005 the African Union accepted the idea of a mission "in principle." The Security Council expressed its support, and regional states, notably Ethiopia, offered to contribute. The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), sponsor of the peace talks, agreed to take the lead in establishing a peace support mission, which was approved by the AU on 7 February 2005.

In Somalia, however, there was widespread opposition to the notion of a force comprising peacekeepers from neighboring countries. An initial AU assessment mission in February 2005 was met with violent protests. The Security Council cautioned that any peace support mission "would require the support of the Somali people," while IGAD promised not to include troops from Ethiopia, Kenya, or Djibouti in the proposed mission.

IGAD formally established its Peace Support Mission in Somalia (IGASOM)

in April 2005, with a robust "peace enforcement" mandate. The concept of operations was approved by the transitional parliament on 11 May and authorized by the AU on 12 May 2005. However, deployment of IGASOM was suspended, pending Security Council approval of an exemption to its arms embargo on Somalia imposed under Resolution 733 (1992). The Security Council agreed to consider an exemption, but only on the basis of an IGASOM plan that had the support of the TFI and was consistent with an agreed national security plan.

Though the Somali parliament finally adopted its national security plan on 14 June 2006, concerns emerged that unless the TFI could reach agreement with the increasingly powerful Union of Islamic Courts (UIC)—which controls Mogadishu and large sections of Somali territory—there would be no peace for IGASOM to keep. In early July the UIC made clear to a joint EU, AU, and Arab League delegation that it opposed the deployment of foreign troops.

Nevertheless, on 13 September 2006, the (African Union's) Peace and Security Council (PSC) approved the deployment plan of IGASOM. Among other things, it authorized the mission to provide security for the TFI and create an environment

conducive for dialogue and reconciliation. The PSC renewed its request to the Security Council for an exemption to the arms embargo. The IGASOM plan calls for the deployment of 8,000 troops. The UIC rejected the AU decision. The League of Arab States continued to mediate between the UIC and TFI, but tensions between the two sides persisted. The UIC accused Ethiopia of deploying troops in support of the TFI—an allegation that Ethiopia initially denied but later admitted to sending hundreds of military trainers.

On 6 December, the UN Security Council amended the arms embargo and authorized IGAD and AU states to establish a "protection and training mission" in Somalia. Neighboring states, including Ethiopia, would be prohibited from contributing troops to the mission. Matters took a dramatic turn in late December when war between the UIC and transitional government broke out. Backed by Ethiopian troops and aircraft, the TFI regained territory that had been under UIC control. With pressure on Ethiopia to withdraw, momentum to get an African peacekeeping force on the ground grew, although it was unclear which countries would provide troops.