

Somalia



Somalia remained violent and chaotic throughout 2009, with the violence reaching unprecedented levels in the second half of the year. Still only partially deployed and poorly equipped to address a crisis of this magnitude, the African Union's peacekeeping presence, the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), struggled to protect itself—let alone the Transitional Federal Government (TFG)—from large-scale attacks after the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces. As a consequence of the intensified fighting and worsening drought, the humanitarian situation deteriorated badly. By October 2009, fighting had displaced more than 255,000 people. In total, 1.5 million Somalis have been displaced since early 2007.¹

The situation has prompted a significant international response that, beyond immediate humanitarian and stability concerns, reflects broader regional and global security interests relating to both terrorism and piracy. Among the many foreigners within the insurgency against the TFG being waged by the extremist Al-Shabaab group are individuals identified as members of al Qaeda. Concerted international action has seen some reduction in the number of successful pirate attacks off the coast of Somalia, despite a rise in the number of attacks overall.

The UN Security Council effectively eschewed the immediate prospect of sending a UN-led peacekeeping operation to Somalia early in 2009; however, it did adopt an incremental approach to engagement, mandating a unique support operation through the Department of Field Support, which provides crucial logistical and resource assistance to the AMISOM operation. Meanwhile, the UN Political Office in Somalia (UNPOS) has been active in pursuing a political solution to the crisis, while the UN Development Programme (UNDP) has engaged in police training. The range of institutional operations is matched by a constellation of regional and bilateral actors who have also pledged their support to building up nascent—if not nonexistent—Somali security and justice bodies.

Considering the escalation of violence during 2009, establishing security in Somalia and pursuing political settlement to the conflict remain operational priorities. Despite this, much of the international activity surrounding Somalia rightfully recognizes that real security will only be achieved through establishing an environment where the rule of law prevails. But with the vast

amount of actors engaged—and beyond the political will of the conflict’s protagonists—the establishment of a more secure and stable Somalia will rest significantly on the ability to coordinate the international community’s broad yet mutually reinforcing peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities in a strategic manner.

Background

The current crisis in Somalia has a long history, and the situation facing peacekeepers is correspondingly complex. There have been fourteen international attempts to reconstitute the Somali government over the course of the last 19 years—each has failed to bring a broadly recognized central government to the country.

Ironically, this lack of central and formal governing structures has yielded an impressive level of organic sub-state structures. As a result the country can be pictured as a loose constellation of commercial city-states where local/*sharia* law is imposed. Between these polities there are vast expanses of pastoral lawlessness, where population levels are low and little business occurs.² Each polity functions differently, enforcing its own norms, while largely opposing authority from outside sources.

The violent unraveling of the Siad Barre regime in 1991 left Mogadishu in ruins and precipitated violent conflict among opposition movements. Fighting led to famine and by 1992 it was estimated that around 350,000 Somalis had perished from malnutrition and associated disease and a further million had fled the country. The humanitarian situation led to peacekeeping interventions by the UN (UNOSOM I and II) and the US (UNITAF). While the operations provided a measure of security for the delivery of humanitarian aid, they failed to establish widespread stability and reconciliation in Somalia. With significant casualties among their ranks, peacekeepers left Somalia in 1995, with the country as unsettled as it was when they arrived, and would not return for more than a decade.

In April 1995, the Secretary-General established UNPOS, which through contacts with Somali and regional stakeholders aims to achieve a

political solution to the conflict. While the intervening years witnessed a multitude of peace processes that dissolved on factional lines, in 2004 a peace process in Nairobi, Kenya, supported by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), led to the creation of the Transitional Federal Government for Somalia. The TFG was intended to govern the country until the anticipated end of the transitional period in 2011. Parliament met in Nairobi but immediately became divided over two key issues: proposed deployment of foreign peacekeepers to pacify Mogadishu, and a proposal to locate the seat of government in a provisional capital rather than in Mogadishu. From March 2005 onward, the Mogadishu-based members of parliament refused to meet in Nairobi and insisted that parliament be convened in the national capital. It did not meet again for nearly a year.

Upon taking office, TFG president Abdullahi Yusuf appealed to the international community for a 20,000-strong multidimensional peacekeeping force, to be deployed by IGAD. The mission never came to fruition and out of the ongoing anarchy emerged the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). A direct opponent of the TFG, beginning in 2005 the ICU gradually and largely peacefully established its control over large swaths of Somalia, instituting strict *sharia* law. By June 2006 the ICU controlled the capital, Mogadishu, and much of the country. The level of stability that the ICU imparted won it much support as unified and predictable administration appeared for the first time in eighteen years. But the period of relative calm ended in December 2006 when Ethiopia, with political backing from its allies, invaded Somalia and took the capital. What looked like an early success soon turned to fierce resistance—an estimated million people fled the fighting and humanitarian indicators plunged to 1992 levels.

Peacekeepers Return

With the security situation dire, in February 2007, following indications to establish a peacekeeping operation in Somalia from the AU, the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of AMISOM for an initial six-month period at

AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

• Authorization Date	6 December 2006 (UNSC Res. 1744)
• Start Date	March 2007
• Force Commander	Major-General Nathan Mugisha (Uganda)
• Budget	\$134.0 million (1 October 2008–30 September 2009)
• Strength as of 30 September 2009	Troops: 5,122

a strength of 8,000 troops.³ AMISOM is mandated with protecting the Transitional Federal Government, supporting political dialogue and national reconciliation, facilitating humanitarian assistance, and supporting reestablishment of the Somali security forces.

AMISOM's deployment in 2007, however, was largely predicated on the implied and future involvement of UN peacekeepers. In proposing the operation, the AU's Peace and Security Council stressed its role as a bridging mission that would base its exit strategy on the eventual handover to a multidimensional UN presence. Despite this, and in the face of constantly rising levels of violence, AMISOM remained the only peacekeeping presence deployed in Somalia at the end of 2009.

The presence of peacekeepers and the Ethiopian forces in 2007 brought about an insurgency by the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS), a TFG opposition group based in Asmara and bent on ridding Somalia of foreign forces. Shaikh Sharif Ahmed, chair of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), was elected chair of the ARS. UNPOS-mediated talks between the ARS and TFG began in May 2008 in Djibouti and eventually brought about a political settlement and agreement for the withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces and the deployment of an "international security presence" to replace them.

But the period that followed the agreement was marked by the fragmentation of the main signatories, the ARS and the TFG. The ARS split into two factions: the so-called moderates, who signed the Djibouti Agreement, and the more

hard-line elements based in Asmara, who were not party to the agreement. Critics of the Djibouti Agreement have cited its lack of inclusivity as a harbinger of failure.

Meanwhile, the TFG was also shaken by rifts between President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and Prime Minister Nur Adde Hussien over the prime minister's willingness to engage with Islamists, who had been labeled as terrorists by President Yusuf. This tension peaked dramatically in December 2008, when President Yusuf sacked Prime Minister Nur and replaced him with a new nominee. Yusuf's move was met with considerable Somali and international resistance. This eventually led to the resignation of Yusuf himself at the close of the year, demonstrating the tremendous political challenges ahead.

Key Developments

Political

The withdrawal of Ethiopian forces in early 2009 and the subsequent election of moderate Shaikh Sharif Ahmed (formerly head of the ICU, then the ARS) as president of the TFG provided a small window of hope that some progress and reconciliation would come to Somalia. With Yusef and the Ethiopian troops gone, the rallying cry of the opposition was thought to have disappeared. The TGF returned to Mogadishu from having operated remotely in Nairobi, Kenya, for years and there were more prospects for peace than there had been for a long time.

Nevertheless, Sharif and the TFG are recognized as being supported by the international community, an issue that has drawn the ire of Sharif's former colleagues among the hard-line insurgent groups loosely aligned under the umbrella of Al-Shabaab. Thus far, Shaikh Ahmed has been unable to defeat the Islamist insurgents, but has had some limited success in enticing rebel leaders away from the insurgency and into the government. Despite this, 2009 has witnessed the worst fighting in Somalia in over a year, while the humanitarian situation has spiraled, restricting critical humanitarian aid delivery and

leaving more than half of the population in need of assistance.

In the meantime, President Sharif's admission that he sanctioned the hunting down of suspected terrorists in Somalia by the United States caused disquiet among many Somalis—who have no love for al Qaeda but equally do not want to see others' wars fought on their land. Similar principles also provide Al-Shabaab's justification for the frequent attacks on AMISOM.

UNPOS continued to be quite active in Somalia and the region, convening consultations between key stakeholders in Somalia and coordinating political and peacebuilding activities across the UN, AU, and IGAD, including overseeing mapping exercises for TFG security structures. However, the impact of UNPOS's ongoing work is questionable, as violence showed no sign of abating throughout the year.

Security

There were increasing attacks on the TFG throughout the year that aimed to dislodge it from the capital. The cabinet and parliament nevertheless continued to hold sessions in Mogadishu. On 18 April, in an effort to meet some of the demands of opposition groups, they unanimously voted to endorse the implementation of *sharia* law in the country. A cross-section of Somali society, including clan elders and scholars, welcomed the endorsement as a positive step and called upon the opposition groups to stop the fighting.

The fighting, however, intensified and on 20 June Somalia's cabinet declared a state of emergency, saying that the attacks posed a serious threat to the country and region. Humanitarian aid slowed significantly as a result. During July, insurgents came within one hundred meters of overtaking the presidential palace in Mogadishu before being repulsed by AMISOM and government forces. The AU called upon the UN to impose a sea blockade and a no-fly zone to stop the flow of weapons and other supplies to the insurgents. Al-Shabaab, meanwhile, confirmed the presence of foreign fighters within its ranks and stated openly that it had been working with al Qaeda in Mogadishu to remove the

TFG. Beyond Mogadishu, the security situation has deteriorated markedly, with government and allied militia challenging insurgent forces for control over strategically important towns. The second half of the year saw a shift toward asymmetric insurgent attacks, including suicide bombings and assassinations. Among many other attacks, a December suicide bombing at a medical school graduation saw three TFG members killed.

The instability on mainland Somalia continued to breed insecurity off its coast. Pirate activity launched from Somalia's shores—already a significant problem during 2008—rose by 30 percent during the first half of 2009, even though later in the year there was evidence of a reduction in the number of successful attacks.⁴ Beyond the security implications, the effect of the hijackings and hostage-taking by the pirates had a considerable financial dimension, as the insecurity cut off crucial shipping lanes between Europe and Asia and caused significant increases in insurance costs for shippers; the pirates' ransom demands regularly reached into the millions of dollars.

The international community reacted in force to the piracy issue, with multiple countries



AMISOM troops on patrol in Mogadishu, Somalia, 7 May 2009.

deploying warships to protect humanitarian and commercial cargo vessels. In late 2008 the Security Council issued a resolution that allowed willing member states to pursue pirates on Somali territory, provided they first gain the consent of the TFG.⁵ In February 2009, the European Union's first maritime mission, the EU Naval Force (NAFOR), also known as Atalanta, reached its operational capacity for protecting humanitarian and commercial vessels. Finally, in early 2009, the International Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) was established, pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1851 (2008), to coordinate the extensive work of bilateral and institutional actors in their attempts to suppress piracy in Somalia.

Recognizing that the piracy threat represented a manifestation of the chaos in Somalia proper, a donor conference was held in Brussels during April 2009. There, international donors pledged some \$213 million to restoring Somalia's rule of law and security sector institutions, the aim of which is to build a security force of 5,000 soldiers and a police force of 10,000 officers capable of enforcing the law.⁶

The influences of regional actors continued to fuel instability by supporting insurgents. In response, the Security Council in late 2009 imposed sanctions on Eritrea for its continued supporting role to Al-Shabaab.

Peacekeeping

AMISOM's ability to impact the situation remained minimal primarily on account of the ongoing conflict—violence that AMISOM frequently became the object of. On 17 September 2009, two vehicles carrying explosives drove into the AMISOM-controlled area and detonated, killing at least twenty-one people, including seventeen peacekeepers—one of whom was the deputy force commander. The vehicles used in the attack were identified as UN vehicles that had been stolen by Al-Shabaab during raids at UN compounds earlier in 2009. The September assault was the most brazen and large-scale attack on AMISOM during the year and is indicative of AMISOM's operational context. On account

of the hostile environment, incomplete deployment, and still developing logistical support AMISOM remained limited to operating in Mogadishu, providing security for the airport and the seat of government.

In the wake of the September attack, the AU's Special Envoy pushed for a stronger mandate, saying: "The time has come to re-examine AMISOM's mandate so that we can have the power to act when and as necessary." AMISOM too has called for stronger rules of engagement. But stronger mandates and rules of engagement do not necessarily defeat insurgents and can easily bring their own set of operational challenges. Similarly, the envisioned expansion of rules of engagement would also necessitate a significant amount of specialized resources and more personnel, two aspects that have only just started coming online for AMISOM.

From the beginning, AMISOM has struggled to obtain enough troops, with Burundi and Uganda being the only two contributing countries. In the course of 2009, both sent new battalions, increasing deployment strength from 3,450 troops at start of year to slightly above 5,000, a considerable improvement but still short of the authorized total strength of 8,000. A number of countries have pledged to contribute, but the only pledge to have materialized to date is that of Djibouti, which is currently preparing one battalion for expected deployment in January 2010.⁷

Despite significant pressure from the previous US administration for a UN deployment, in February the UN sent a technical assessment mission to Somalia to determine how the organization could assist AMISOM. While the resultant report is mainly concerned with the technical and logistical aspects of UN support to AMISOM, it also sets out the basic thresholds necessary for the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force. These criteria are (a) the formation of a government of national unity in Somalia, inclusive beyond those represented in the Djibouti process; (b) the establishment and initial operation of a joint security force in Mogadishu; (c) the implementation of a credible cease-fire; (d) the lifting of illegal checkpoints;

Box 2.5.1 Confronting Piracy off Somalia: The Challenge of Coordination

Piracy off Somalia's coast has struck a chord of common security across a diverse group of international actors. By the end of 2009, nearly fifty UN member states—ranging from the United States and China to Russia and Iran—seven international organizations, and three multinational coalitions (EU-, NATO-, and US-led) were all working in some manner toward providing a measure of security from this piracy and armed robbery. This activity emerges from a range of motivations, from protecting humanitarian aid vessels and cargo ships supplying the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), to providing security to the vital Gulf of Aden shipping lanes. This unprecedented level of activity has yielded some positive results. Nevertheless, piracy emerging from Somalia continues to remain a substantial concern, and coordinating the activities of this wide range of actors remains a primary operational challenge.

As stipulated in UN Security Council Resolution 1851 (2008), which extended the legal authority to the international

community to combat Somalia's pirates on the high seas and Somalia's territory, in January 2009 the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) was established. The CGPCS serves as an international cooperation mechanism, a common point of contact on all aspects of combating piracy for the international community through quarterly meetings with stakeholders at UN headquarters. The CGPCS is composed of four working groups: operational coordination, chaired by the United Kingdom; legal matters, chaired by Denmark; strengthening shipping self-awareness, headed by the United States; and communications and media strategy, chaired by Egypt.

Similarly, the Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) group, established in 2008, is a voluntary international military group that serves as a vehicle for sharing best practices and informal discussions on combating piracy. While SHADE initially only consisted of the three multinational coalitions operating off Somalia, it rapidly expanded to involve bilateral

deployments. This forum meets on a monthly basis at the expert level in Bahrain. During 2009, SHADE meetings contributed to coordinated and focused anti-piracy operations and an increased sharing of command and communications assets across SHADE participants.

While these innovative coordination efforts, combined with the deployment of naval vessels and aircraft, served to thwart a number of successful pirate attacks during the year, the frequency of attempted pirate activity remained high. This reality underscored the need for a further level of coordination in regard to addressing the root causes of Somalia's piracy problem ashore. The justice and security sectors in Somalia are far from capable of both addressing the source of piracy and dealing with captured pirates. Nevertheless, a similarly diverse constellation of bilateral and multilateral actors are involved in building these structures, and their success will rest significantly on harmonizing their individual approaches.

(e) active outreach by the parties to groups that remain outside the Djibouti process; (f) consent to the deployment by all the major parties; and (g) adequate pledges of troops and the required military capacities by UN member states.

UN Support to AMISOM

With the Secretary-General's criteria for UN peacekeeping far from being met, the UN Security Council did not authorize a UN force for Somalia. Instead the Security Council followed the recommendations of the Secretary-General, opting for a phased approach to involvement in Somalia, beginning first with logistical support and with political to further consider a peacekeeping deployment as the situation develops.

In this vein, Security Council Resolution 1863 authorized and established an unprecedented logistical support package for AMISOM—the

UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA)—to help it achieve its mandated tasks in preparation for a potential UN peacekeeping mission.⁸ The UNSOA logistics package consists of equipment and critical mission support services normally provided for a United Nations peacekeeping operation. UNSOA is funded from UN-assessed contributions and through the trust fund established during the Somalia donor conference in Brussels in April 2009. UNSOA is headquartered near the AMISOM headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, and logistics operations are facilitated through Mombasa and Entebbe, Uganda.⁹

Although UNSOA did not become operational until mid-2009, it has already begun to deliver in some critical areas. However, UNSOA is still hampered by UN bureaucracy and by a lack of recognition of the need for speed in such a

hostile environment, although it has creatively sought to overcome such obstacles.

Security and Rule of Law Institutions

The transitional security arrangements established by the Somali parties under the Djibouti process comprise three key institutions: a joint security committee, a joint security force, and Somalia's national police force. Their role is to deliver on the aims of the agreement, including promoting a peaceful environment and facilitating protection of civilians and delivery of humanitarian assistance. Yet a critical challenge in such an environment is to put in place mechanisms for civilian governance and accountability.

The Security Council called upon the TFG to develop a legal and policy framework for the operation of its security forces, and the UN has pledged support in this. In July, the TFG created a commission for security and pacification of the country, tasked with reforming the security forces of Somalia and all law enforcement agencies. Meanwhile, a police advisory committee—one of the civilian oversight structures that was established and assigned to all eighteen Mogadishu police districts, following a 2008 Amnesty International report that documented gross violations of human rights allegedly committed by government forces—has continued to operate in Mogadishu, where it is monitoring the situation of detainees. The committee, whose role is to ensure that police officers respect the rule of law and human rights law, includes parliamentarians, clan elders, journalists, representatives of the business community, and representatives of the national women's association.

At present Somalia's national police force consists of 2,770 officers trained by the UNDP, with a planned expansion to 10,000 officers. Problems with stipend payments during 2008 seem to have been resolved, but the police are also badly in need of more equipment and basic infrastructure. AMISOM's police commissioner arrived in Mogadishu on 18 June 2008 and 615 trainers, advisers, and mentors have been provisionally selected and are on standby, although

the current security situation prevents their deployment. The security situation also makes it impossible for the UNDP, which partners with AMISOM, to undertake work in Mogadishu and south-central Somalia, although it is still able to program in Puntland and Somaliland.

The police, however, can achieve little unless they are part of an effective justice system. Since the killing of several judges during 2008, the formal justice system in Somalia—always limited—has virtually broken down. Years of conflict and mismanagement combined with very poor infrastructure have also resulted in deplorable prison conditions, and there is a risk of a deepening human rights crisis within the prison system.

Overall, the development of Somalia's security sector lacks an overarching strategy and a shared understanding of immediate priorities. Donors have tended to channel development funds toward civilian police, but the most pressing security challenges presented by insurgents require military responses. In an effort to address this divide, the Joint Security Committee was reinvigorated as a mechanism to strengthen coordination and planning among the TFG, AU, UN, and donor countries.

Conclusion

AMISOM faces a complex and dangerous environment, especially as Somalia enters the end of its transitional period in 2011. This is made more difficult by the fact that outside actors have a series of overlapping, and at times conflicting, strategic objectives in relation to Somalia, from building peace to pursuing regional interests to fighting the war against Al-Qaeda.

Somalia has an unusually wide range of peacekeeping actors. In addition to UNPOS, the UN now has UNSOA. Politically, not only the UN and the AU but also IGAD and the League of Arab States have interests in what happens in Somalia. There has been progress in the past year in developing a single platform of engagement on Somalia between the UN, the AU, and IGAD, and this will continue to be vital. Important also

is that UNPOS and UNSOA develop a single strategy, with clearly defined roles for each.

Regardless of international involvement, the fate of Somalia is dependent upon the actions of

Somalia's clan and regional structures and their willingness to both engage and respect the legitimacy of central governing structures.

Notes

1. United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. S/2009/503, 2 October 2009.
2. K. Menkhaus, "Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism," *Adelphi Papers* (May 2004), p. 27.
3. UN Security Council Resolution 1744, UN RES1744, 20 February 2007.
4. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2009/sept/129143.htm>.
5. UN Security Council Resolution 1851, 16 December 2008.
6. <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/In86947.htm>.
7. Interview with AMISOM, 13 October 2009.
8. UN Security Council Resolution 1863, 16 January 2009.
9. *Ibid.*