

Somalia

Somalia underwent enormous political and security change in 2011. Al-Shabaab's August announcement that it would retreat from Mogadishu brought hope that conditions in the capital city would improve. While security gains have been made, Al-Shabaab has scaled up asymmetric attacks in the city since ceding control. The militia has also threatened reprisal against Kenya, after that country's military entered Somalia in October to drive Al-Shabaab from its northern border. The efforts against Al-Shabaab were also bolstered by the November announcement that Ethiopia would send troops to Somalia for a short deployment.

A massive drought and poor harvests in 2011 resulted in a declaration of famine in June, and this acute humanitarian situation has expanded to cover nearly all of south-central Somalia. While a rapid increase in humanitarian assistance has improved conditions, progress remains fragile and the crisis has resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Somalis, both inside the country and into refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia.

At the same time, Somalia underwent important political developments. Somali political stakeholders agreed to extend the transitional period, which was set to end in 2011, until August 2012. While the timeline to complete the transitional period is ambitious, the agreement may be an important milestone for developing the critical long-term political structures needed in Somalia. However, the political and security gains of 2011 remain fragile. The humanitarian crisis and the continued threat from Al-Shabaab could reverse the year's progress.

Background

Somalia, the prototypical "failed state" and one of the most dangerous countries in the world, has struggled with political instability and insecurity for over two decades. In 1991, Somalia was confronted with clan-based violence after the collapse of Siad Barre's regime. A year later, drought in the region sparked a famine in Somalia that resulted in the death of over 300,000 people and the displacement of thousands more.

In 1992 the UN imposed an arms embargo, followed by the establishment of the first UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I)



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AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

• Authorization Date	21 February 2007 (UNSC Res. 1744)
• Start Date	March 2007
• Force Commander	Major-General Fred Mugisha (Uganda)
• Budget	\$152 million (1 October 2010–30 September 2011)
• Strength as of 30 September 2011	Troops: 9,754 Police: 50 Civilian Staff: 13

to monitor a cease-fire in the Somali capital of Mogadishu and provide military support to the UN humanitarian relief operation. However, attacks on aid convoys and humanitarian staff continued, and aid efforts were slowed dramatically as 1.5 million people were declared to be at risk of starvation.

It was these circumstances that prompted US president George H. W. Bush to deploy the UN-authorized and US-led Unified Taskforce (UNITAF). The mission, deployed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, comprised 37,000 soldiers authorized to use “all necessary means” to open up space for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

In 1993 the UN assumed control of the operation, under the new name UNOSOM II, with a wider statebuilding mandate. In October of that year an attempt by US forces to capture warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid resulted in the infamous “Blackhawk down” incident and the death of eighteen US soldiers. In the aftermath, US and other Western military forces withdrew from Somalia; the effect of this incident on popular perceptions of peacekeeping, and of Somalia, continues to impact Western policymaking in the region.

The UN operation struggled following the withdrawal of Western forces and assets, and in 1995 the mission withdrew from the country and established the UN Political Office in Somalia (UNPOS) in Nairobi, to continue its monitoring and negotiation efforts.

Political Context

After approximately a dozen peacemaking attempts in Somalia, discussions led by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in 2004 resulted in the establishment of the Transitional Federal Charter and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Many Somalis viewed the TFG as a puppet of Ethiopia, and its legitimacy continues to be deeply challenged both inside Somalia and abroad.

After the establishment of the TFG, the president quickly requested the support of a peacekeeping mission, but the planned AU-sponsored IGAD mission was never deployed and the TFG—unable to control the capital on its own—was forced to meet in exile.

In 2006 the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), a coalition of moderate and extreme Islamist groups and exiled Somali parliamentarians, came to power in Mogadishu, initiating the first period of relative stability and security in over fifteen years. In December 2006 the Ethiopian military, concerned about the emergence of an Islamist state on its border, intervened with tacit support from the United States, ousting the ICU and reinstalling the TFG in the capital. In response, Al-Shabaab, a hard-line faction of the ICU, launched an insurgency. Large-scale fighting in 2007 and 2008 displaced over 1 million Somalis.

In 2007 the UN Security Council authorized the deployment of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The mission was mandated to support the TFG, provide assistance to ongoing political dialogue, create secure space for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and support the reform and reestablishment of a professional Somali security sector. Initial discussions cast AMISOM as a “bridging” mission, intended to pave the way for a UN deployment. Following serious disagreements at senior levels of the UN and among Security Council member states, it was determined that conditions on the ground were not appropriate for the deployment of blue helmets.

In the context of continued fighting in 2007, ICU members, diaspora leaders, and exiled Somalis joined together to form the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS). This group also included Al-Shabaab and other hard-line militant groups. Under what came to be known as the Djibouti process, ARS leaders and the TFG met in Djibouti in 2008 to hammer out an agreement that would precipitate the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces, the incorporation of ARS elements into the TFG, and the creation of an “international security presence.”

The hard-line members of the ARS, including Al-Shabaab, rejected the agreement and intensified their efforts to oust the TFG and AMISOM forces, while the Djibouti process moved forward without them. In early 2009, after the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces and the selection of Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the former head of the ICU, as president, there was a lull in the violence and some businesspeople began to return to Mogadishu to reclaim property and resume their affairs. However, Al-Shabaab resumed its insurgency with renewed vigor, and by June 2009 the TFG had declared a state of emergency. The militant group continues to control large swathes of south-central Somalia today.

Key Developments

Security Developments

In 2010 and 2011, AMISOM took a more forward-leaning approach, mounting offensive operations against Al-Shabaab throughout Mogadishu, an effort that was bolstered by the December 2010 UN Security Council authorization to increase troop levels. In August 2011, weary of continuing direct confrontations with the growing AMISOM force, Al-Shabaab declared that it was withdrawing from the capital to regroup. Since Al-Shabaab’s withdrawal, the TFG and AU peacekeepers now control all of Mogadishu.



UN Photo/Stuart Price

A Ugandan soldier serving with the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) stands guard in a doorway inside Mogadishu Stadium, north of the Somali capital, on 7 August 2011, two days after the insurgent group Al-Shabaab withdrew the majority of its forces overnight. Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces, backed by AMISOM troops, fought sporadic gun battles in the area as pockets of resistance erupted and “mopping-up operations” took place, according to an AMISOM commander on the ground.

Al-Shabaab has also returned to a more asymmetric style of attacks, however. A number of suicide bombings in the capital in October 2011 have resulted in many civilian deaths, including a truck bomb that killed more than 100 people.

On 17 October, the government of Kenya launched military operations aimed at creating a large buffer area inside Somalia, between Al-Shabaab and the Kenyan border area. The Kenyan government initially stated that the operations were in response to a number of high-profile kidnappings, despite Al-Shabaab’s denial of involvement in the abductions. However, the Kenyan government subsequently acknowledged that the operations had been planned further in advance and were in reaction to long-term security threats.¹

The incursion is likely to draw Al-Shabaab forces into combat in the southwest of the country. Militants have also promised to mount attacks inside Kenya, adding a new—and

wider—dimension to the Al-Shabaab threat. To date, the majority of violence has taken place in Somalia, with the notable exception of the 2010 suicide bombing in Uganda, the first bombing outside the country for which Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility. However, shortly after the Kenyan government launched the operation, Nairobi suffered several grenade attacks, carried out by a Kenyan member of Al-Shabaab.²

In addition, in late 2011 Ethiopia, responding to an IGAD request for support, agreed to provide assistance to the efforts of Kenya and the AU to oust Al-Shabaab. The form and scale of this support is yet to be determined, but it is expected that the deployment will be brief and that Ethiopian troops will remain outside AMISOM command. The decision followed media reports that Ethiopian troops entered Somalia in late November.

Separate from these operations, US officials confirmed in October that the US military is flying unarmed surveillance drones from a base in Ethiopia to monitor Al-Shabaab's activities in Somalia. The drones are part of a broader counterterrorism effort in the region aimed at militant groups with links to Al-Qaida.

Meanwhile, as the acute humanitarian situation continues, Al-Shabaab has hindered international efforts to provide aid to famine-affected people in two ways. First, severe insecurity throughout most of the famine-affected area, as well as an Al-Shabaab-declared ban on the World Food Programme and other aid organizations, has meant that humanitarians must negotiate access day by day, village by village, in order to operate. In November, Al-Shabaab looted the offices of a number of aid agencies and announced a ban on more humanitarian organizations in areas under its control, striking a further blow at relief efforts. Second, Al-Shabaab is considered a terrorist organization by the United States, which restricts the delivery of assistance funded by the US government or by any donors based in the United States that operate in areas controlled by the militants.

Political Developments

Continued infighting between President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and the Transitional Federal Parliament, particularly the speaker of the parliament as well as a series of prime ministers, has stymied achievement of key transitional benchmarks, including the establishment of a Somali constitution and preparation for elections. The transitional process was slated to end in August 2011, but on 9 June the president and the speaker of the parliament, with the support of IGAD, agreed to extend the transitional period to August 2012 under the Kampala Accords.

The accords commit the TFG to a new “roadmap” for stabilization and development. In conjunction with UNPOS, the TFG has agreed to a set of priority benchmarks that must be met in the lead-up to an election in August 2012. This timeline is ambitious, especially because the benchmarks include activities that went unrealized during the first three years of the transitional period, and also because donor support for the effort has been tied to results that the TFG may struggle to achieve. Nonetheless, the first major milestone—the drafting of a new national security and stabilization plan—was completed in October and has been viewed as a successful, Somali-owned process with a greater chance of long-term success than its donor-driven predecessors.

The Kampala Accords also included a provision requiring the resignation of Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, who was widely respected as a reformer who could rise above the clan divisions that often dictate Somali politics. While his resignation was based on an agreement between the president and the speaker of the parliament to strengthen parliament's support for the accords and unify the TFG, it prompted large-scale protests in Somalia and throughout the diaspora community. There is hope, however, that the new prime minister, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, a US-trained economist, will strengthen international support and confidence in the Somali political process.

Peace Operations

Since its deployment in 2007, AMISOM has pursued a three-phase approach to stabilizing south-central Somalia. The first phase involves stabilizing and establishing control over Mogadishu; while the force established control over the city in 2011, the recent trend of suicide attacks by Al-Shabaab suggests further challenges. In the second phase, the force is to expand southwest, toward Kismayo and Baidoa, though mission leadership has emphasized that AMISOM will need significant air and sea assets—including attack and utility helicopters—as well as strengthened logistical and engineering capacity in order to progress past the first phase. The third phase would entail consolidation and the full implementation of AMISOM’s mandate.

In order for AMISOM forces to move out of Mogadishu, TFG security forces, including police and military, must be able to hold and maintain order in the capital. AMISOM, with European Union support, completed the training of 1,000 soldiers in January 2011, and a second cohort of 998 troops completed training at the end of October. The TFG and AMISOM are also currently seeking strong leaders from within the ranks of the newly trained troops, as well as from the TFG-allied militia groups operating inside Mogadishu, who can be trained as midlevel officers. Somali soldiers are now being registered in a biometric database in an effort to minimize corruption and help ensure that troops receive their salary.

Somali police have also made strides toward becoming a more professional force. AMISOM police provide operational training and capacity building for the Somali police force, roughly 500 of whom were trained in 2011. Still, there is a tremendous need for continued donor support to enhance individual troop and officer capacity, and to better equip the police for the difficult task of maintaining law and order in Mogadishu. The TFG also requires support to develop institutional processes and controls to manage its new security institutions.

AMISOM has struggled to find balance between difficult counterinsurgency in densely populated Mogadishu and the need to minimize civilian casualties. The more aggressive posture of the mission has come with increased accusations of indiscriminate killing of civilians. In 2011, with the assistance of the non-profit organization Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict, AMISOM instituted a new indirect fire policy in an effort to reduce the likelihood of civilian casualties. The mission also instituted a policy of making “amends” with families and communities when its actions result in harm to people or property.

AMISOM itself has been the target of serious attacks, including an October attack on an AU military base that resulted in an undisclosed number of AMISOM troop fatalities.³ Though the mission has sustained heavy casualties, troop-contributing countries—Uganda and Burundi—regard the operation and the containment of the threat posed by Al-Shabaab to be national priorities, and have sustained support in spite of the human and economic costs of continued involvement.

The UN Security Council first authorized the expansion of AMISOM troop levels—from 8,000 to 12,000 (still 8,000 fewer than the requested ceiling of 20,000)—in December 2010. But in October 2011 there were still just 9,700 troops deployed, though additional deployments, including from Djibouti and Sierra Leone,⁴ are expected to bring the troop levels to 12,000 by early 2012.⁵ The Somali prime minister has stated that these troops are urgently needed to support the extension of the state’s presence to those areas vacated by Al-Shabaab.

Further, in December the Kenyan parliament approved a request from the AU to rehat Kenyan troops under AMISOM, contingent on approval from the UN Security Council to increase the mission’s troop ceiling. The AU’s Peace and Security Commissioner noted that including Kenya’s forces in AMISOM would provide the mission with critical force enablers including helicopters and war ships,⁶ which

may provide the necessary support for the mission to move to its second phase.

The UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) is mandated to provide support and supplies to the overstretched mission, including logistical, engineering, medical, and transport support. UNPOS is also working to build AMISOM capacity through training in communications and public information. This support has allowed for significant improvements to AMISOM's capabilities in recent years, but the mission remains extremely under-resourced for the complex tasks it is mandated to perform. Gaps in information-gathering and analytical capacity still hamper the mission's ability to operate in this highly fluid and insecure environment.

The EU Training Mission in Somalia was established to provide assistance to the Somali security sector. Deployed in 2010, the mission's original twelve-month mandate was extended for an additional year in July 2011 to support the training of 2,000 Somali soldiers. The training takes place in Uganda and focuses on strengthening the TFG security forces. In addition to military assistance, the mission provides training on human rights, international humanitarian law, and protection of civilians.

Piracy continues to present a major threat off the Somali coast, and incidents continue to occur in spite of the international naval presence in the Gulf of Aden (see Box 3.7.1). The EU Naval Force (EU NAVFOR), also known as Operation Atalanta, is tasked primarily with

deterring and preventing acts of piracy and armed robbery off the coast of Somalia, including protecting transports by the World Food Programme, AMISOM, and other vulnerable vessels. In 2010, EU NAVFOR's mandate was extended two years, until December 2012. In June 2011, Operation Atalanta escorted its 100th AMISOM vessel, ensuring the secure delivery of important humanitarian and security supplies.

Conclusion

In December 2011, Ban Ki-moon visited Mogadishu, the first trip by a UN Secretary-General to Somalia in nearly two decades, underscoring the tremendous change that took place in the country this year. The ambitious agenda set out in the roadmap for stabilization and development will require renewed efforts by Somali political stakeholders and international partners if the transitional period is to be brought to an end in 2012. Significant challenges remain: the TFG's legitimacy is still contested, and both the famine and the continued threat from Al-Shabaab could further destabilize the already tenuous security environment.

AMISOM's ability to support the TFG and stabilize Somalia will depend critically upon the availability of troop reinforcements and military assets. Without these resources, while it may be able to hold its positions in Mogadishu, AMISOM will likely face significant challenges in extending its presence beyond the capital.

Notes

1. Jeffrey Gettleman, "Kenyan Motives in Somalia Predate Recent Abductions," *New York Times*, 26 October 2011.
2. "Kenyans in First Al-Shabab Battle in Somalia," *BBC News*, 28 October 2011.
3. Josh Kron, "Militants Strike at Troops at Base in Somali Capital," *New York Times*, 29 October 1.
4. Josh Kron, "Somalia: Sierra Leone to Send Troops," *New York Times*, 3 November 2011. South Sudan has also offered to send troops.
5. Mohamed Ahmed and Richard Lough, "Suicide Bomber Hits Somali Capital, Dozens Killed in South," *Reuters*, 6 December 2011.
6. Peter Heinlein, "Regional Summit Urges Ethiopia to Send Troops to Somalia," *Voice of America*, 28 November 2011.

Box 3.7.1 Piracy off the Coast of Somalia

Piracy off the Somali coast continues to present a significant challenge to international security, prompting concerted effort from a diverse group of actors to counter the threat. Since 2008, over 1,900 individuals have been kidnapped from Somali coastal waters¹ and hundreds of millions of dollars have been paid in ransom, disrupting one of the world's key shipping routes. In 2011 alone there were twenty-six successful ship hijackings in Somalia, representing nearly 70 percent of the global total.² While the success rate of attacks off the Somali coast has decreased over the past several years, mainly due to the presence of naval vessels, the level of violence, sophistication, and frequency of attacks hit a record high in 2011.

International collaborative efforts through the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) and the group Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) to counter piracy continue. As a voluntary international forum, the CGPCS coordinates the responses of over seventy member states and several major international organizations, including on operational matters, legal issues, shipping self-awareness, and public information. In 2011 the CGPCS created a group to strengthen international efforts aimed at dismantling complex pirate financial networks—an area of increasing international attention. SHADE, a

voluntary international military group, continued facilitating coordination between independently deployed navies in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. In May, members agreed to further bolster communication mechanisms, strengthen operational cooperation, and enact regional capacity-building measures to increase the organization's efficacy.

NATO's Operation Ocean Shield and the EU's Operation Atalanta also maintained critical assistance and protection through their presence in the waterways. Operation Ocean Shield engaged in a number of counter-piracy operations, successfully freeing pirate-held ships and dismantling mother ships. The NATO operation also liaises with regional states, including Djibouti and Somalia, to promote anti-piracy efforts. Additionally, Operation Atalanta continued to provide assistance to the anti-piracy efforts of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government and the African Union's peacekeeping mission in Somalia through 2011.

During the course of the year, international attention also turned to bolstering onshore anti-piracy mechanisms, particularly in the judicial and security sectors. Although 1,046 individuals are currently being prosecuted or have faced prosecution for piracy in twenty countries,³ more than 90 percent of captured pirates are immediately released due to judicial obstacles, including the absence

of a Somali legal framework for prosecution. UN Security Council Resolutions 2015 (2011) and 1976 (2011) call for Somalia to strengthen its governance and rule of law structures to play a more substantial role in combating piracy. In the resolutions, the Council further reiterated its call for the adoption of a comprehensive set of counter-piracy laws and the construction of correctional facilities for convicted pirates. In addition, the Council also noted the need for specialized anti-piracy courts in Somalia and other states in the region. As a first step, Resolution 2015 requests the UN Secretary-General to provide further information on the technical and financial requirements needed to implement these courts.

Piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean is inextricably linked to the crisis in Somalia, and many of the root causes, including political instability and poverty, persist. However, the challenge is not isolated to Somalia, and the threat of piracy in the Gulf of Guinea is an increasingly pressing international concern. Concerted international support and a multipronged approach that targets piracy offshore, supports the development of institutions and capacity onshore, and addresses root causes such as widespread poverty and high unemployment, will be critical for responding to international maritime piracy.

Notes: 1. United Nations, *Report of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Legal Issues Related to Piracy off the Coast of Somalia*, S/2011/30, 25 January 2011.

2. International Maritime Bureau, Piracy Reporting Center, "Piracy News & Figures," <http://www.icc-ccs.org/piracy-reporting-centre/piracy-newsfigures>.

3. Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, "WG2: Chairman's Conclusions from the 9th Meeting," fact sheet, 11–12 October 2011, <http://www.thecgpcs.org/doc.do?action=doc>.

Box 3.7.2 From Host Nation to Troop Contributor

As United Nations peacekeeping struggles with debates on troop reimbursement and divides between troop contributors and financial contributors, a growing number of troops and police are deploying from familiar places: countries that have previously hosted or currently host peace operations.

Former hosts to peacekeeping missions including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, and El Salvador now provide troops and police to multilateral peace operations. Rwanda, former host to the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UN-AMIR), is currently ranked among the top ten UN military contributors globally, with Rwandan troops and police stationed in UN missions in Haiti, Liberia, Sudan, and South Sudan. With the support of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Rwanda also runs one of the main peacekeeping training centers in Africa, helping to prepare current and future troop-contributing countries using lessons learned from both the UN and its own experiences.

Burundi also plays a critical role in peacekeeping in Africa. A former host to African Union and United Nations peacekeeping missions, Burundi is now one of the two main troop contributors to the

AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and has deployed five battalions to the mission since 2007. Sierra Leone, previously host to a six-year UN peace operation, responded to the AU's September 2011 call for more AMISOM troops by signaling its intention to send a troop battalion to join Sierra Leonean police officers already serving with the mission.

Countries with current peacekeeping missions are also readying themselves for future contributions through training and capacity building exercises. The UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) has trained the national army for potential deployment as military observers in peacekeeping operations. In July 2011, Timor-Leste Defense Force engineers also began training ahead of their integration with a Portuguese contingent serving the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which will mark the first international military contribution by Timor-Leste. In Liberia, security forces received training for potential peacekeeping duties in 2011 from both the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the US African Command (AFRICOM), which assisted in a regional communications exercise.

Meanwhile, some countries have already begun participating in global operations even as missions continue within their national borders. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), current host to the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), has a small number of police deployed to the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), while Côte d'Ivoire has contributed over a hundred police to MONUSCO and UN missions in Haiti and Darfur.

Through proactive training, countries are increasingly emerging from robust peacekeeping missions with the ability and desire to contribute to global multilateral operations. Their own recent experiences of transition may also provide valuable lessons for peace operations and peace consolidation. Supporting these new and emerging troop and police contributors is especially important as many peace operations, including AMISOM, face chronic troop and police shortages. Further diversifying the group of contributing countries in peacekeeping missions also helps bolster the flexibility of these operations and strengthen their ability to deploy to crises around the world.