Somalia dilemmas

Changing security dynamics, but limited policy choices

It is well known in every culture that if governments are weak or fail and leave a leadership vacuum, it will be filled by those with the energy and the desire to take over, no matter their ethics or agenda. In cases where a government concedes power to radical extremist groups who control with lethal violence and intimidation, a rot sets in that can be hard to remove. [1]

Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, Former Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia

INTRODUCTION

It has been nearly two decades since the collapse of Somalia and the beginning of the protracted conflict in the country. Despite this situation, the conflict continues to rage on and to injure, maim and kill tens of thousands of Somalis and to uproot many more from their homes and their country. Worse still, in what seems to suggest the inadequacies of the international response, recent events indicate that the situation is further worsening.

The deepening crisis in Somalia is largely a result of continuing insecurity and governance vacuum whereby the internationally backed, but nominally functioning, Transitional Federal Government (TFG) remains disorganised and militarily weak. In contrast, the insurgents, particularly *Al Shabaab*, enjoy a much stronger military strength and territorial control. Apart from its radicalisation and the resultant inflexibility of its leadership toward negotiation,[2] *Al Shabaab's* increasing ability to command and maintain the military and ideological balance of power in its favour is an equally strong disincentive for it to come to the negotiating table.

The main theme of this paper centres on the paradoxical state of affairs in which on the one hand the nature and dynamics of the conflict continue to change and the insecurity deepens and on the other hand the policy options remain limited. Whereas the security situation seems to be going from the frying pan to the fire, the

policy responses of the international community, from the exclusive focus on the TFG to an AU-led peacekeeping intervention, are failing to yield any progress toward ending the conflict.

This paper argues that with the TFG failing to achieve a cohesive leadership or functioning governance structure, and lacking a well-organised and motivated military capability, there is little chance that *Al Shabaab's* insurgency and the resultant misery, death and dislocation of ordinary Somalis, can be curbed, despite the emerging division in *Al Shabaab*. Until the balance of power shifts in favour of the TFG, which requires strong leadership and the support of the Somali people, there is very little the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) can do with its limited resources, inadequate force size and limited mandate, to help arrest the deteriorating situation in South Central Somalia, particularly in the absence of political leadership on the ground in Somalia. In the face of the growing threat that *Al Shabaab* represents, AMISOM is increasingly emerging as inadequate and thus risks failure to achieve its mandate. It is thus submitted in this paper that efforts toward changing the current situation would be counter-productive unless attention is given to initiatives aimed at national reconciliation, the provision of basic services, dealing with the humanitarian crisis, building effective institutions and reversing the radicalisation campaign of *Al Shabaab,* culminating ultimately in neutralising the radical terrorist elements within the group. While all these prerequisites cannot be achieved without a credible national authority, it seems that in the context of Somalia, apart from the TFG, options remain limited.

While this paper is a result of close monitoring and study of the Somalia conflict over the course of 2009 and 2010 and hugely benefited from various secondary sources, including books, articles and papers, it also draws from primary sources, mostly official reports, press releases and decisions of various bodies. The paper also used insights and information that I have gathered from discussions with senior AU and UN personnel

involved in the efforts to achieve peace, from listening to AMISOM officials and a Ugandan Colonel who was part of AMISOM and from an exchange of views with some individuals with a great deal of experience of working on the Somalia conflict.

Apart from this introduction and the conclusion, the substantive part of the paper is organised into four thematic areas. First, the paper examines the current state of the Somali crisis. Drawing on analysis of incidents of fighting, battles and insurgent attacks as well as trends in the humanitarian effects of the conflict during 2009 and 2010, this part seeks to show a discernable change in the nature of the conflict, manifesting the rising shift in the balance of power away from the TFG and the worsening of the humanitarian situation. Second, the paper provides a descriptive analysis of the armed opposition groups, focusing mainly on *Al Shabaab*, which is the main and most formidable armed insurgent group. In examining the pattern in the evolution of *Al Shabaab* into a global jihadist movement, I contend that *Al Shabaab* is emerging to present a far greater danger than admitted, although this may diminish, at least temporarily, in the face of the emerging division within the group. Building on this, the third area focuses on the pitfalls of the international response's exclusive focus on the TFG. It is maintained here that the TFG is the weakest link in the current Somali conflict. Finally, the fourth substantive theme involves interrogation of the other main international response to the Somalia conflict, namely AMISOM, and seeks to highlight various aspects of its inadequacies. The paper closes with a conclusion, which builds on the analysis and formulates policy recommendations.

> *Al Shabaab* is emerging to present a far greater danger than admitted, although this may diminish ...

CURRENT STATE OF THE CONFLICT

A deepening crisis

Dramatic evidence of the deepening of the crisis in Somalia, at least from the perspective of the outside world, came in the form of the 7/11 bombings in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. On Sunday evening 11 July 2010, many people were gathered in the Ethiopian Village Restaurant and Kayandodo Rugby Club in Kampala to watch the concluding 2010 Soccer World Cup match between Spain and the Netherlands. Minutes before the end of the match, three bombs exploded at both venues: the first bomb detonated at the Ethiopian Restaurant among a crowd of Ugandans, Ethiopians, Eritreans, Europeans and Americans and the other two exploded at the Rugby Club.[3]

The picture that emerged was a disturbing scene of young civilians killed while sitting in white plastic chairs to watch the sporting event, some with their bodies torn apart with their drinks still on their laps. In this deadliest attack in the history of *Al Shabaab* and the first of its kind engineered outside Somalia, more than 74 civilians lost their lives and many more suffered serious injuries.[4]

This act of terror came after repeated threats of attacks against the two troop-contributing countries (TCCs) to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for over a year.[5] One week before the attack, Sheikh Mukhtar Robow Ali, the spiritual leader and main spokesperson of *Al Shabaab*, called for attacks against Uganda and Burundi.[6] Before the Sheikh's statement, *Al Shabaab's* media arm, *al Kataib,* released an English-language video, directing '(the) *Mujahideen* to make the Ugandans their priority (for attacks)'.[7]

The significance of the 7/11 bombings in Kampala is that it showed the capability of *Al Shabaab* in launching a deadly attack against AMISOM troop-contributing countries and generally countries of the region, and it also illustrated the susceptibility of these countries to such attacks. The event brought into sharp relief the question of whether the threat posed by *Al Shabaab* has been treated with the seriousness it deserves.[8] It is feared that the tragic event signals *Al Shabaab's* intention of taking its terrorist attacks beyond the borders of Somalia into the Horn of Africa and the rest of Eastern Africa, thereby expanding the protracted Somali conflict directly into other countries in the region. The bombings also exposed the limits of the largely military-oriented approach of the international community, which involves military support to the TFG and attempts to weaken *Al Shabaab*.

Most significantly, the 7/11 bombings symbolise the deteriorating security situation in Somalia and mark the intensification of *Al Shabaab's* fight against the TFG and AMISOM. Indeed, the 7/11 bombings took place against the background of the intensification and increased regularity of *Al Shabaab's* offensive, including suicide bombings and mortar shelling during the course of 2010. A week before the Kampala bombings, fierce clashes took place between *Al Shabaab* and TFG forces, resulting in the deaths of at least 60 people and injuries to more than 120 others.[9] Since 7/11, *Al Shabaab* has been expanding its jihadist campaign against the TFG and AMISOM and has called on businesses in Mogadishu, Afgooye and Baidoa to make large financial and military contributions. The

organisation has also intensified its offensive against the TFG. According to reports 52 people died and 129 others were injured in the fighting that took place to the north of Mogadishu a week after the bombings.[10]

The heavy fighting continued in the following month as well, with a combination of suicide bombings and mortar shells. During the first week and in mid-August heavy fighting took place following attacks by *Al Shabaab* against the TFG. On 24 August 2009, *Al Shabaab* executed one of the deadliest attacks in Mogadishu against the TFG.[11] Its fighters, disguised in government security force uniforms, walked into the Huna Hotel (frequented by TFG Members of Parliament) in Mogadishu's Hamarweyne district and shot people indiscriminately before detonating suicide bombs, killing themselves and others in the hotel. In the attacks close to 40 people lost their lives, including six Members of Parliament and five TFG soldiers. The fact that *Al Shabaab* is able to carry out such deadly attacks in an area generally considered to be safe and under the control of TFG is indicative of the laxity of the TFG and the AMISOM security system.

By further weakening an already ailing TFG and by inflicting losses to AMISOM, *Al Shabaab* wants to discourage African countries from contributing troops to the Mission

---

In what seems to be another all-out military campaign against the TFG, *Al Shabaab* launched a fierce offensive against the TFG that resulted in fighting that continued for about two weeks. In the fighting, *Al Shabaab* fighters used heavy machine guns and mortars against government troops backed by AMISOM forces. Pushing into TFG-controlled areas, *Al Shabaab* forces attempted to seize a key street in Mogadishu. The street, known as Mekka-almukara, connects Mogadishu's international airport of Aden Adde to the presidential palace in the capital. *Al-Shabaab* closed the street on the side it controls, which leads to the Bakara market, after heavy fighting in which its forces overran the military base of Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa, between Dabka and Bakara.[12] The areas most affected in the recent fighting are around Bakara market, Hodan, Halwadaag and Wardhiigleey in southern Mogadishu, and the Cabdlcasiis, Shibis and Boondheere districts in northern Mogadishu.[13]

With the heavy offensive continuing in defiance of President Sharif's call for a Ramadan ceasefire, and in the context of the call by TFG for international help, Ethiopia reportedly reinforced its military presence on the border with Somalia. Some Ethiopian troops were also said to have crossed into Somalia in late August, a claim denied by the Ethiopian government. There are similar reports of reinforcement on the Kenyan side of the border, which has already witnessed some skirmishes and gun fighting in August. These troop movements are clear indications that the stakes in the current conflict are rising and that the situation should be taken seriously.

In the wake of these renewed attacks, AMISOM also did not escape from sustaining casualties. On 30 August 2010, a mortar shell that *Al Shabaab* launched against the presidential palace killed four AMISOM soldiers from Uganda. According to a press release by the AU Commission issued on 31 August, the attack also seriously injured 17 other AMISOM troops. More AMISOM troops lost their lives when two cars with suicide bombs exploded in the mission's base at Mogadishu Airport on 9 September 2010.

Apart from an apparent resolve on the part of *Al Shabaab* and other anti-TFG forces, such as *Hizb al Islam,* to defeat the TFG, the current fighting is also an attempt on their part to gain support and consolidate their position ahead of the deployment of additional troops to reinforce AMISOM. By further weakening an already ailing TFG and by inflicting losses to AMISOM, *Al Shabaab* wants to discourage African countries from contributing troops to the Mission.

The humanitarian calamity

Not surprisingly, the humanitarian situation in Somalia continues to be one of the worst in the world. The situation has deteriorated further during the course of the past year as fighting continued to intensify and the security situation continued to deteriorate. The last part of 2009 and the first month of 2010 witnessed some of the worst fighting in South Central Somalia since mid-2009, with an intolerable number of civilian casualties. There were 248 deaths and injuries to 253 people in Central Somalia alone. The incidents of January 2010 included the fighting of 29–31 January 2010 involving AMISOM, which followed several attacks by insurgents against AMISOM bases and the presidential palace. In February and March 2010, the violence in Mogadishu escalated with devastating consequences for civilians due to a rising number of mortar attacks and indiscriminate shelling. While the worst fighting in February resulted in 24 deaths and 158 war-related injuries, the subsequent fighting in Mogadishu in March led to several deaths and more than 900 injuries.

Following some slight improvement in the security situation in June, when 20 900 people were displaced

throughout Somalia, subsequent months again witnessed heavy fighting, with high levels of civilian casualties and displacements that surpassed previous records. In some of the fiercest clashes in early July 2010, at least 60 people were killed and more than 120 others were wounded. Some 46 civilians were killed and 162 others were wounded in one week from 17 to 23 August 2010. Soon after the 24 August suicide bombings, fierce battles between *Al Shabaab* and combined TFG and AMISOM forces, involving heavy artillery, resulted in the deaths of at least 80 people and the wounding of close to 200 others in just four days. The majority of the victims were women, children and the elderly.

The overall figures for civilian deaths and casualties during 2010 serve as an indication of the rise in intensity and regularity of the fighting. According to UN reports, at least 964 civilians have been killed with 2 717 wounded in armed conflicts or in random shootings in residential neighbourhoods since the beginning of 2010.[14] This figure reflects an 18 per cent increase in the number of civilian deaths reported during the same time period in 2009.[15] This is also an indication that the fighting is continuing to affect more and more civilians.

The surge in fighting has also forced many more Somalis to flee their homes and communities. It has been reported that since the beginning of 2010 more than 100 000 people have been displaced from Mogadishu with nearly 60 000 people – more than double the number of people displaced in February – exiting the city.[16] While more than 12 000 Somalis fled Mogadishu in June 2010, this figure almost doubled in July, with more than 23 000 people fleeing the city.[17] In South Central Somalia as a whole, 200 000 people were reportedly displaced in 2010.[18]

> The overall figures for civilian deaths and casualties during 2010 serve as an indication of the rise in intensity and regularity of the fighting

Once displaced, internally displaced persons (IDPs) face many challenges. These include restricted access to food and water as well as basic medical care. Many of the displaced, particularly children, suffer from malnourishment. For displaced women, sexual exploitation and abuse as well as gender-based violence are major concerns. The threat of eviction is another challenge facing IDPs who are settled on privately owned land.[19] The fact that IDPs cannot own land also means that they cannot engage in any productive activity and they consequently cannot establish even a modest livelihood. Since most IDPs live in flimsy, flammable shelters made of sticks wrapped with cardboard and rags, their settlements are susceptible to fire hazards.

The deepening insecurity also continues to create rising levels of refugee flows to neighbouring countries. The large number of people fleeing the country has accorded Somalia the distinction of having the third highest refugee flow in the world after Afghanistan and Iraq,[20] and of being the highest refugee-producing country in Africa. By July 2010, during the seven-month period from the beginning of the year, some 50 065 Somalis had fled their country to seek refuge in neighbouring countries.[21] The three largest host countries for Somali refugees are Kenya, Yemen and Ethiopia.[22]

The increasing difficulty of undertaking humanitarian relief or conducting business in Somalia is another consequence of the deteriorating security situation in the country. Somalia ranks as one of the most dangerous places in the world for humanitarian workers. According to the UN, the whole of Somalia is in a programme-suspension phase, otherwise known as security phase IV, while Mogadishu and other areas have been placed on evacuation phase or security phase V.[23] It has thus become increasingly difficult for aid agencies to operate in many parts of Somalia. First, there is very limited access to affected populations. Second, there are very limited numbers of staff who are allowed to operate on the ground. Additionally, aid workers, including Somalis, are often kidnapped or otherwise attacked and threatened. According to the UN, since January 2010 approximately 100 UN staff members have been relocated from duty stations in southern and central Somalia.[24]

Various militant groups, particularly *Al Shabaab,* are continuing to target aid organisations, a practice that has increasingly made it unsafe to distribute aid supplies. In February 2010, *Al Shabaab* called for the suspension of all WFP operations in Somalia and the group took control of WFP compounds in those territories under its control.[25] When *Al Shabaab* took over the town of Belet Weyne from *Hizb al Islam* in June 2010, it also occupied the offices of the International Medical Corps (IMC), which subsequently led to IMC's suspension of its operations in the Hiraan and Bakool regions, thereby affecting thousands of beneficiaries, most of them women and children. Early in August 2010, *Al Shabaab* expelled three aid organisations – World Vision, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency and Diakonia – accusing them of preaching Christianity in a Muslim society.[26] *Al Shabaab* aims to exercise ever-increasing control over all aspects of public life. Its intrusive and restrictive acts in

the humanitarian field can therefore be seen as an effort to use humanitarian activities to its full advantage.

During recent fighting, as the few remaining aid agencies and businesses were not able to move freely from place to place, basic provisions such as food did not reach civilians dependent on aid and small trade for their survival. In some areas, where the fighting was heaviest, civilians were completely cut off from aid agencies and local vendors. Businesses were also closed.

The severe drought affecting the country, and the entire region, further compounds the humanitarian crisis. Although harvests have increased following good rains during the year and the number of people in need of emergency assistance has decreased by 25 per cent, the number of people needing humanitarian assistance remains high at two million people out of an estimated total Somali population of seven to eight million. It will also take many more good seasons of rain for pastoral communities to recover their losses from the prolonged drought that has killed most of their livestock.

However, there is more to the worsening humanitarian situation and the rising casualties inflicted upon civilians than the intensification of the fighting. The rise in civilian casualties, injuries and displacements also demonstrates that more and more civilians have become targets of those engaged in the fighting. The actors involved in the fighting, particularly the insurgents, have shown almost complete disregard for the requirements of international humanitarian law and human rights law, which require belligerents to attack only clear military targets and to use only proportional force. It was reported that Al Shabaab was involved in launching attacks from civilian neighbourhoods, consequently drawing the fighting into areas populated or frequented mainly by civilians.[27] Repeated, inaccurate and indiscriminate exchanges of mortar fire between both insurgents and government forces, including bombs hitting civilian homes, mosques and schools, also resulted in serious civilian casualties.[28] As such the rise in civilian casualties and displacements are also attributable to indiscriminate attacks and retaliatory actions from both sides in the conflict.[29]

THE GROWING THREAT: *AL SHABAAB'S* RADICALISATION AND ITS TRANSFORMATION FROM A LARGELY NATIONALIST INSURGENCY TO A GLOBAL JIHADIST MOVEMENT

Al Shabaab: from nationalist insurgency to global jihadism

While there are several groups fighting the TFG and AMISOM, the most serious threat emanates from

Al Shabaab. *Al Shabaab* has played a primary role in changing the dynamics of the conflict. Not only has *Al Shabaab* introduced extremism and radicalisation into the conflict, it has also given the conflict a more global jihadist dimension than had been the case previously. *Al Shabaab* is also responsible for introducing pure terrorist techniques such as suicide bombings that were previously unknown in the Somali conflict.

Although the origins of *Al Shabaab* can be traced to the 1970s when militant Islamist groups emerged in opposition to Siad Barre's brutality against religious leaders in Somalia,[30] its immediate emergence is associated with the rise of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) to political prominence in 2006. When the ICU defeated US-backed warlords in June 2006 and established its rule in southern and central Somalia in the following months, *Al Shabaab* served as the military wing of the ICU.[31] It was in the aftermath of the defeat of the ICU by the TFG and Ethiopian forces in early 2007,[32] in the course of the insurgency, that *Al Shabaab* emerged as a force distinct from the ICU. While the ICU leadership fled Somalia, *Al Shabaab* launched an insurgency against the TFG and Ethiopian troops and assumed the role of leading 'the struggle' to free Somalia from what it called 'occupying forces'.

From the first quarter of 2008, *Al Shabaab's* insurgency started to show results in dislodging the TFG from territories such as the Hiran, Middle and Lower Juba, Shebelle and Bay regions. On 22 August 2008, *Al Shabaab* took control of the strategic port city of Kismayo.[33] In September 2008, consolidating their control, *Al Shabaab* forces established a Sharia-based administration in the Lower Juba region. In November 2008, *Al Shabaab* forces pushed further from Kismayo and captured Merka, which they used as a base to launch attacks on Mogadishu. In late November, *Al Shabaab* forces were in control of most strategic towns in Lower Shebelle and those suburbs in the north-east of Mogadishu.

When the Ethiopian troops left Somalia in early 2009, *Al Shabaab* expanded its territorial control to include Baidoa, where the TFG parliament was based, and Jowhar, which was one of the TFG's strongholds. In 2009, *Al Shabaab* emerged as the strongest armed military group in Somalia and assumed control over much of southern and central Somalia and major parts of the capital, Mogadishu, including key locations such as the northern and north-eastern parts of the city, the main stadium and Mogadishu's major market, the Bakara market.

Al Shabaab, like *Al Qaeda*, is not a monolithic entity. It is rather a patchwork of factions that control various parts of Somalia but operate under one banner.[34] Its forces involve various elements that include opportunist

fighters induced by financial rewards, Somali nationalists, Islamic groups and global jihadists. Although it has increasingly become more organised and centralised, particularly since 2009, the exact number of *Al Shabaab* troops is unknown. The 2010 UN Monitoring Group Report estimated that *Al Shabaab* comprises no more than 2 500 hardcore fighters and several hundred foreign fighters with a large number of local armed militias affiliated to it.[35] Apart from its force size, *Al Shabaab's* military capability reportedly includes assault rifles, general-purpose machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, P-10 recoilless rifles, and light anti-aircraft weapons adapted for ground combat. The group also has a special operations unit consisting of an explosives brigade that sets up IED traps and an assassination brigade. It also runs various training camps, including specialised training such as for suicide bombing.

Other notable Islamist groups active in Somalia include *Hisb al-Islam*, *Ras Kamboni* and *Ahlu Sunaa Wal Jama'a* (ASWJ). Of these, *Hisb al-Islam* is a major armed group opposed the TFG. It was formed in February 2009 from four Islamist groups to serve as a platform for the return of Aweys from Asmara.[36] Although it enjoyed significant territorial control and military strength, it lost much of its territory and military capability following its defeat by *Al Shabaab* in 2009. After losing its territories in southern Somalia to *Al Shabaab*, the group is now confined to a few areas in central Somalia. The two most important differences between *Al Shabaab* and *Hisb al-Islam* are the latter's nationalist rhetoric and its more overt use of clan politics.

Al Shabaab is responsible for the introduction of terror tactics to the conflict in Somalia, more particularly suicide and car bombings

---

Ras Kamboni is another Islamist group that was one of the four groups that constituted *Hisb al-Islam* in February 2010.[37] It is a clan militia constituted mainly of fighters from the *Mohamed Subeer* sub-clan of the Ogaden. This is the H*isb al-Islam* element that was defeated by *Al Shabaab* in November 2009 following a fight over the control of the lucrative port city of Kismayo.

ASWJ is a moderate Sufi Islamist group that was established in 1991 'in the aftermath of the collapse of the Barre regime, with the support of General Mohamed

Farah Aydiid, in order to counter the growing influence of militant reformist movements like *Al-Ittihad Al-Islami*.'[38] Its emergence to prominence in the current Somali conflict is attributable to its opposition to *Al Shabaab's* attacks in 2008 against Somalia's traditional Sufi Islamic practices. The group receives support from Ethiopia and operates in close cooperation with the TFG, having also signed a power-sharing agreement with the TFG in March 2010. Although the group used to operate in various parts of central Somalia, particularly in the Galgadud and Hiran regions, it has more recently concentrated its presence in Mogadishu to prevent a complete takeover of the city by *Al Shabaab* and *Hisb al-Islam* forces.[39] Although ASWJ is an alliance of various loosely connected clan militias and suffers from internal divisions, it is still capable of serving as a bulwark against *Al Shabaab's* radicalisation campaign and its offensive against the TFG.[40]

Radicalisation and global jihadism

In early 2009, the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Somalia and the election of Sheikh Sharief Sheikh Ahmed, leader of ICU in 2006, as the new president of the newly expanded TFG, dealt a serious blow to *Al Shabaab's* claims to legitimacy. With the Ethiopian troops gone, *Al Shabaab* lost the major target that inspired Somali nationalism, the source of its public support. President Sharief also introduced *Sharia* law, which presented a further challenge to *Al Shabaab's* Islamic ideology and the cohesion of the group.

In response to these developments, *Al Shabaab* shifted its focus to targeting the TFG and its leadership as well as the AMISOM forces mandated to protect strategic locations and TFG institutions. It designated the TFG leadership as a puppet of Western powers and their allies and AMISOM as an occupying force. *Al Shabaab* sought to discredit President Sharief's Islamic credentials and religious commitment, labelling him an 'apostate'. *Al Shabaab* also went through a centralisation process that saw the rise of more foreign jihadists to positions of leadership, thereby deepening its global jihadist bias and radicalisation.[41]

The challenges and setbacks of 2008/2009 also affected the nature of *Al Shabaab's* insurgency and the means and methods of warfare that it employs, as manifestations of its further radicalisation. *Al Shabaab* is responsible for the introduction of terror tactics to the conflict in Somalia, more particularly suicide and car bombings, acts that are frowned upon in Somali culture. Since the five suicide bombings in northern Somalia in October 2008, the use of suicide bombers by *Al Shabaab* has increased. On 22 February 2009, *Al Shabaab* suicide bombers detonated bombs inside a Burundi contingent

camp that were followed by mortar attacks. The incident claimed the lives of eleven AMISOM troops and injured fifteen others. In the deadliest suicide attack against AMISOM thus far, on 17 September 2009 *Al Shabaab* used a UN vehicle to enter an AMISOM base in Mogadishu and killed seventeen AMISOM troops, including the deputy force commander. This attack also wounded twenty-nine others. On 9 September 2010 *Al Shabaab* launched an attack on AMISOM troops at Mogadishu's main airport, killing two and wounding three AMISOM troops.[42]

Mortar attacks and artillery shells have become quite common, as has the use of anti-tank rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) against armoured vehicles. *Al Shabaab* forces are also increasingly using snipers and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), reminiscent of the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan.

During the course of 2009 and 2010, the increased boldness of *Al Shabaab* under the not-so-watchful eyes of the international community, the intensification of its fighting against the TFG and AMISOM forces and notably the 7/11 bombings in Kampala, all suggest that *Al Shabaab* is strengthening and that its reach is expanding. The 7/11 bombings in Kampala in particular denoted another stage in the evolution of *Al Shabaab* from a mainly nationalist insurgency movement into a global jihadist group. It signalled that the group has begun to take the conflict beyond the borders of Somalia by undertaking attacks in countries that actively support the TFG.

> The expansion and increased boldness of *Al Shabaab* is an indication of the continuing failure … of the TFG to institutionalise its security apparatus

As will be expounded further below, the expansion and increased boldness of *Al Shabaab* is an indication of the continuing failure or inability of the TFG to institutionalise its security apparatus, and reflects its lack of comparable military capacity. These weaknesses and failures, coupled with AMISOM's staunch defence of the TFG, undoubtedly gave *Al Shabaab* the space and motivation to plan and launch its first foreign attack against Uganda, the major contributor of troops to

AMISOM. Uganda also hosts the EU Training Mission, which is responsible for training TFG security forces. The 7/11 bombings in Kampala were a clear warning by *Al Shabaab* to the countries in the region and the most dramatic manifestation of the level that *Al Shabaab's* radicalisation has reached. The event brought into sharp relief the question of whether the threat posed by *Al Shabaab* has been treated with the seriousness it deserves. The bombings also exposed the limits of the largely military-oriented approach of the international community involving military support to the TFG and attempts to weaken *Al Shabaab* militarily.

What are *Al Shabaab's* political objectives?

Al Shabaab also became more radicalised by entrenching its ultraconservative interpretation of *Sharia* and assuming a more global jihadist orientation. As it emerged, *Al Shabaab's* medium-term political objective was to defeat the TFG and AMISOM forces and to establish an Islamic state as a foundation for eventually establishing a single Islamic Caliphate.[43] The rise of foreign fighters within the ranks of *Al Shabaab* and the subsequent assumption by foreign jihadists of key leadership roles in the organisation further exacerbated *Al Shabaab's* radicalisation and its global-jihadist tendencies. In the course of this process *Al Shabaab* not only declared its ideological affinity with the global terrorist organisation *Al Qaeda,* but also moved to establish stronger links with the latter. Expanding on its rhetoric of links with international terrorism networks, *Al Shabaab* announced in February this year that it was forming an alliance with *Al Qaeda.*[44]

Al Shabaab has deployed two ideologies as a basis for its legitimacy and for mobilising support for its armed rebellion. The first is Somali nationalism. The intervention of Ethiopian troops in Somalia triggered a wave of radical nationalist sentiment among Somalis. *Al Shabaab* appropriated the nationalist agenda to galvanise public support for its insurgent operations and advance its extremist agenda in Somalia and beyond. However, the use of Somali nationalism is not the result of genuine conviction for any Somali nationalist agenda but merely a means to win public support.

The second ideology is political Islam. *Al Shabaab* claims to be a defendant and champion of genuine Islam and has advanced political Islam as the most viable alternative for establishing order and stability in Somalia. Accordingly, in the regions under its control, *Al Shabaab* introduced a strict version of *Sharia* associated with Salafi-wahhibism and a form of governance akin to that practiced by the Taliban. It prohibited various social activities, including watching movies, watching football, chewing khat, and not dressing conservatively enough. These prohibitions and other *Sharia* rules are enforced

using draconian punishments including public floggings, head shavings, amputations and even stoning 'transgressors' to death.[45]

Al Shabaab's goal of enforcing religious homogeneity in Somalia has also displayed intolerance to, and violence against, Sufism, Somalia's most dominant form of Sunni Islam that involves the establishment of religious sites for saints and revered religious leaders as well as the holding of periodic rituals.[46] In 2008, *Al Shabaab* began a campaign of demolishing Sufi shrines and tombs of holy men as well as executing Sufi clerics in Kismaayo. Since then it has expanded this campaign to other areas, including Mogadishu.

It can be gathered from the above that political Islam, underpinned by a particular and ultraconservative application of *Sharia,* serves as the overarching ideological and political framework of *Al Shabaab*. While *Al Shabaab's* fighting against the TFG and AMISOM is presented as religious and hence is often characterised by *Al Shabaab* as jihad, the organisation is bent on ousting the TFG and establishing an Islamic Caliphate with itself at the helm.[45]

> While *Al Shabaab's* fighting against the TFG and AMISOM is presented as religious and hence is often characterised by *Al Shabaab* as jihad, the organisation is bent on ousting the TFG

Al Shabaab's support base: recruitment, funding

Initially, *Al Shabaab* benefited from significant public support for resisting Ethiopian troops and received external support from Eritrea.[47] *Al Shabaab* is also believed to receive support from the Middle East, particularly from sources in Yemen.[48] As recently as January 2010, the Somali Defence Minister, Sheikh Yusuf Mohammad Siad, reported that two boats originating from Yemen, carrying military logistics equipment, light weapons, Kalashnikov rifles, ammunition and hand grenades, had docked in the port of Kismayo, which *Al Shabaab* controls.[49]

To sustain its fighting and consolidate its control over the territories under its administration, *Al Shabaab* recruits new fighters from both within and outside Somalia. Within Somalia, it uses a combination of financial rewards and intimidation to induce new fighters to join its ranks.[50] In the territories under its control, *Al Shabaab* established a *Sharia*-based administration, which helps the group in implementing strict *Sharia* rules and the provision of community services, including law and order. The group takes advantage of radio stations, newspapers and religious occasions to reach out to the public for the purpose of winning and maintaining public support. It has made effective use of Somali nationalist and Islamic rhetoric.

However, one of the most significant support bases for *Al Shabaab* is the Somali diaspora. It is estimated that two to three million Somalis live abroad, mainly in Kenya, Yemen, the UK, the US, Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands. *Al Shabaab* successfully penetrated the Somali diaspora not only to raise funds but also to lure young ethnic Somalis from these countries to join its ranks. As the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia reported, over the course of 2008 and 2009 many young Somali men and women continued to be induced to join the rank and file of *Al Shabaab*.[51] It has used various Somali youth associations, mosques and Somali religious leaders to indoctrinate young Somalis in the West and facilitate their travel to join its forces. *Al Shabaab* has also managed to attract non-Somali foreign fighters. Hundreds of foreign fighters, including veteran insurgents from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, have joined the group.[52]

One of the most important tools used by *Al Shabaab* is the media.[53] The group's media strategy involves an aggressive use of the internet, online publications, CDs and video tapes, interviews, press conferences and religious and other occasions such as demonstrations against the aborted plan of a US pastor to burn the Quran on the occasion of the anniversary of the 9/11 bombings. This has been effective in raising the profile of the organisation, as well as attracting funds and fighters from the Somalia diaspora and potential recruits in various parts of the world.

The group raises funds for its operations through a variety of means. It collects taxes on imports from the port in Kismayo, at roadblocks in the territories it controls, and from businesses, NGOs and other organisations operating there. As reported by the UN Sanctions Committee, it also diverts aid from organisations such as the FAO. In addition, *Al Shabaab* benefits from remittances that the Somali diaspora sends to the country. Funds are also raised directly from its supporters in the diaspora and from foreign organisations with which it has close links.[54]

Al Shabaab's control of Somali air space and some of the most important seaports, as well as the country's porous borders with neighbouring countries, very

effectively facilitates all these activities and serves to maintain key support lines for all its supplies.[55]

Al Shabaab's increasing militancy and its capacity to launch successful attacks both inside and outside Somalia is not just a result of its ability to attract support and to adapt to changing situations. It is also attributable to the many failures and deficiencies of the TFG that collectively left a huge governance and security vacuum which, as the TFG Prime Minister Ali Sharmarke, aptly noted, has been masterfully exploited by *Al Shabaab*.[56]

From the above, it seems clear that *Al Shabaab* has evolved over the course of a few years into a more organised and a highly dangerous insurgent group, although it is still difficult to assess its exact strength and capabilities. Given the ideological divisions in the group, the emerging split in *Al Shabaab* is not surprising. Since the Somali security forces remain weak, the impact this may have on the group and on the security situation will not necessarily be long term, despite the recent limited territorial gains allegedly made by TFG with the support of AMISOM. Consequently, the threat that *Al Shabaab* poses not only to Somalia and the region but also to international peace and security is serious and needs to be treated accordingly.[57] A lot of effort needs to be focused on drying up *Al Shabaab's* support and exploiting the emerging divisions in the group. In this regard, it is important that effective campaigns are undertaken to counter *Al Shabaab's* radical teachings. Countries hosting Somali communities also need to regularly reach out to those communities and deepen their engagement with Somali community leaders, families, youth associations and religious leaders. There is also a need to take action to block the supply lines of *Al Shabaab* in order to contain and subdue its further expansion. This terror containment approach needs to be pursued as part of a larger political process rather than in isolation or independent of any such process. Accordingly, in taking advantage of the emerging division in *Al Shabaab* efforts should be made to convince moderate sections of the group to desert it, and to negotiate workable ways of effectively incorporating them into a broader, all-inclusive transition process.

THE NEW TFG: MORE OF THE SAME? WEAK, LACKING LEGITIMACY AND CREDIBILITY, DIVIDED, AND UNDER SIEGE

The rise of the new TFG: brief overview

The two decades-old conflict in Somalia is characterised by the ever-changing nature of its belligerent forces, countless peace processes and attempts at establishing a functioning government, the multiplicity of actors involved, the diversity and fluidity of alliances and the

dimensions of the conflict.[58] The rise of the new TFG therefore needs to be understood in the context of the very complex and fluid dynamics of the Somali conflict.

Following the late 2006 Ethiopian intervention in Somalia, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), which had assumed control of South Central Somalia in June 2006, collapsed.[59] Many members of the ICU leadership, who subsequently fled to neighbouring countries, later came together and established a group called the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) in the Eritrean capital, Asmara. As shifts and divisions have become a typical feature of Somali alliances, the ARS split into two groups in early 2008, one group located in Djibouti, led by current President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, known as ARS-Djibouti, and the other group, based in Asmara, led by Hassan Dahir Aweys, called ARS-Asmara.

In the context of the escalation of the insurgency led by *Al Shabaab* and the military gains they were achieving, it was recognised that the TFG alone could not establish a functioning administration and bring about stability in Somalia. This led to the launch of the Djibouti peace process in early 2008. Led by the UN Secretary-General's special representative to Somalia, Ambassador Ould Abdallah, the Djibouti peace process brought together the TFG and one of the opposition groups, Sheikh Sharif's ARS-Djibouti, which accepted the offer to negotiate and earned recognition regionally and internationally for its moderate stance.

On 25 November 2008, the two parties signed an agreement involving various proposals for power-sharing and for reconstituting the TFG. The agreement included the enlargement of the parliament by an extra 275 seats, of which 200 seats were allocated to the ARS-Djibouti and 75 to civil society groups, including women, the business community and the diaspora; the election of a new leadership by the new inclusive Parliament; and a two-year extension of the Transitional Period that was due to end in January 2009. The new, expanded parliament was established in early January 2009. In an intriguing turn of events, this parliament elected Sheikh Sharif Ahmed as the president of the new TFG on 31 January 2009. This event also facilitated the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops.

Peacemaking efforts and reconciliation

In early 2009, these new changes were seen as offering an opportunity for bringing the long-standing conflict to a close. Sheikh Sharif's ascent to power was thus received in all corners with a great deal of enthusiasm. Both local and international expectation was that the president was in a position to reach out to opposition groups and achieve a negotiated settlement. Accordingly, not only did most actors in the international community

warmly welcome him, but they also organised an event in Brussels to raise funds for supporting the new TFG.

During the course of the past two years, these optimistic expectations seem to have resulted in some disillusionment. The measures taken by the new TFG in earlier days, such as pronouncements to negotiate with all groups and the adoption of *Sharia* law, fell far short of expectations. The TFG generally failed to articulate and implement a clear reconciliation process. Accordingly, the TFG did not 'draft a national reconciliation strategy and draw up a list of potential interlocutors, acceptable mediators, and parameters'.[60] The difficulty in achieving consensus among the various elements within the TFG also deprived the TFG of the resolve to aggressively reach out, even to those elements of the opposition that might have easily been convinced to defect. The labelling of insurgent groups, including by the former Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, and fears expressed by many in the international community that negotiating with opposition groups could lead to radicals' ascent to power, have not helped the situation. The increased number of attacks by insurgent groups also drew a lot of attention from the government, which as a result was sidetracked into fighting for its survival instead of leading the country toward a negotiated peace.

> It is imperative that the government is able to provide services, enhance public security and create the conditions for political, economic and societal growth

The only major achievement that the TFG has to show the world, as an outcome of its reconciliation efforts, is the agreement it signed with the moderate Sufi group *Ahlu Sunah Wal Jama* (ASWJ), which remains opposed to *Al Shabaab's* version of *Sharia* and its disrespect for holy shrines. On 15 March 2010, the AU and IGAD co-ordinated the signing of the Framework for Cooperation Agreement between the TFG and the ASWJ, a moderate Sufi Islamic group.[61] The agreement commits the two sides to consolidating their forces and sharing power in the interests of advancing the national reconciliation process. ASWJ controls several major towns in central and southern Somalia and is reported to have about 2 000 fighters.[62] Accordingly, the agreement was expected to significantly bolster the military capability and influence of the TFG.

Unfortunately however, even this internationally-backed and much publicised deal has encountered serious challenges of implementation. The TFG has been dragging its feet on sharing power with the ASWJ and it has been reported that some individuals in the government are trying to sabotage it.[63] Frustrated by the slow pace and the reluctance of the TFG to duly implement the agreement, the ASWJ has called on the international community to intervene and mediate between the two groups.[64] If this deal unravels, it will deal a further blow to the credibility of the TFG and deprive it of an opportunity for reconstituting and consolidating itself. The new TFG could well find itself in the same position that Abdulahi Yusuf's government experienced toward the end of 2008, by losing international support.

Apart from the lack of an adequately articulated and clear reconciliation framework and of a determined effort on the part of the TFG leadership, the TFG has also not established an effective communication strategy. The TFG's public relations campaign and outreach strategy to mobilise support from Somalis within and outside Somalia has therefore been inadequate to counter *Al Shabaab's* more radical message. There has been little if any effort to reach out to various Somali constituencies. Consequently, the TFG is less engaged with the Somali public and hence has failed to earn the confidence of the public. The inclusion of people from the diaspora into the ranks of government has not even been used to implement an organised and effective campaign within the Somali diaspora. With the early 2009 optimism long gone, the TFG has not been able to transform itself into an inclusive, locally accepted and cohesive government. This failure, together with its constant call to the international community for help, gives the impression that the TFG is more accountable to, and dependant upon, the international community for its survival, than on the Somali people, a perception that continues to undermine trust in the TFG.

Unable to stand on its own feet and establish effective security and administration

What is perhaps most troubling, for both Somalis and external actors, is the TFG's continuing failure, ineptitude and lack of unity of purpose. As the lessons in Iraq and Afghanistan show, in the absence of a credible government to rally behind and to work with, it is not possible to curb the insurgency. Ordinary people do not want to take risks and Somali pragmatism dictates that they do not side with the weaker side. For external actors, the absence of strong and committed local leadership

means that they do not have a credible partner to work with. If success is to be achieved, it is imperative that the government is able to provide services, increasingly enhance public security and create the conditions for political, economic and societal growth. On all these fronts, the TFG has nothing to show and is unable to achieve cohesion and common purpose; instead it is becoming more of a liability with every day passing by without any achievements in these fields.

The TFG commands an inadequate number of troops. Of the 8 000 troops scheduled to constitute the Somali National Security Forces, those on the TFG's payroll total only 3 000. As the report of the UN Monitoring Group has observed, the TFG also receives support from a few thousand affiliated militias.[65] Apart from inadequate force strength, TFG forces also suffer from various other deficiencies. According to the UN Monitoring Group, the Somali Security Forces are 'ineffective, disorganized, and corrupt – a composite of independent militias loyal to senior government officials and military officers who benefit from the business of war and resist their integration under a single command'.[66]

Additionally, TFG security forces are neither well equipped nor well organised. They have inadequate supplies of weapons and on the day that *Al Shabaab* forces killed six members of parliament with suicide bombs in a Mogadishu hotel on 24 August 2010, TFG forces ran out of ammunition and called on the AU and the UN for help. There are no trained officers to command platoons and sectors, let alone battalions. Many of the troops even lack the skill to operate communication instruments such as radios. Thus, as the report of the UN Monitoring Group indicated, the Somali security sector suffers from a lack of proper organisation and has an inadequate chain of command.[67] This is further compounded by a lack of the means and administrative capacity for sustaining newly recruited TFG forces. AMISOM's administrative machinery is used even for processing salaries for TFG security forces.

> The new TFG also suffers from in-fighting and the same kind of leadership crisis that bedevilled Abdulahi Yusuf's tenure

The TFG troops also seem to have low morale due in part to inadequate supplies, poor leadership and, most importantly, unpaid salaries. There are also reports of defections from TFG security forces. It is suspected that

'[d]efectors from the newly trained TFG forces may have been the source of the uniforms the Hotel Muna attackers used on 24 August to breach security'.[68]

The TFG forces are also involved in violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. The most serious of these violations involved indiscriminate attacks targeting civilians and a disproportionate use of force.[69] It is also reported that the TFG is involved in enlisting child soldiers.[70]

The progress made in institutionalising the security sector has been very modest. Thus the TFG has made no territorial gains and little or no progress to create any degree of stability. Let alone providing security for Somalis, the TFG found itself under constant threat of collapse and was continually struggling for its own survival, particularly after mid-2009. All these shortcomings have not helped the new TFG to earn the required level of serious public support. Instead, they have caused its earlier legitimacy to dwindle. The TFG's heavy reliance on external support, with little or no engagement with the Somali public, has played into the hands of the insurgents by nurturing the perception that the TFG is an externally driven government with little or no institutional bond with the Somali people.

Many of the institutions of the TFG, including the Parliament, are barely functioning and poorly institutionalised. The TFG's authority is severely challenged and it has been unable to regain a monopoly over the means of violence. Consequently, it also does not have the necessary structures for administering law and order, and it is unable to guarantee basic security for the public. The TFG is a government without institutions and public administration. It has 'almost no functional civil service. Cabinet ministers have no portfolios to oversee.'[71] It is therefore not in a position to establish effective administration capable of delivering services to the people. Many in the TFG, including security forces, are being accused of entrenched corruption.[72] This involves not only the diversion of military assistance, including selling weapons and ammunitions, but also visa fraud.[73]

Most serious of all, in addition to these flaws the new TFG also suffers from in-fighting and the same kind of leadership crisis that bedevilled Abdulahi Yusuf's tenure and his eventual departure. On 17 May 2010, a power struggle with the prime minister led to the resignation of the Speaker of Parliament. Although this prompted President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed to announce the dismissal of Prime Minister Sharmarke, who then refused to resign, the president later felt compelled to rescind the sacking of Sharmarke. In June 2010 four ministers resigned from Sharif's government, protesting against the election on 28 May 2010 of former finance minister Sharif Hassan Sheikhh Aden, as Speaker of Parliament. The division and infighting deepened as

claims and counter claims about impeaching the prime minister continued, and as the TFG leadership failed to agree about how to implement the agreement signed with the ASWJ. Although the parliament failed to hold another vote of confidence on Sharmarke's leadership on 18 September due to an inability to form a quorum, the tension finally culminated in the resignation of the prime minister on 21 September 2010. However, it is not clear to what extent his resignation alone will produce substantive change in terms of creating effective leadership.

All these problems naturally create a serious credibility gap on the part of the TFG. Its acceptance by the Somali public is therefore becoming increasingly unlikely. Externally, not only are many actors having doubts about the TFG, but they are also showing signs of frustration with the continuing failures of the TFG. For the international community, this has presented a choice between two evils: either support a weak and failing TFG or allow the insurgents to reign over Somalia. Many are not willing to countenance the latter, particularly given that the insurgents, more particularly *Al Shabaab*, are significantly under the control of global jihadists.

In this context, there are two areas that require serious consideration in terms of creating a credible entity to rally behind and to work with. The first is the need to address the leadership crisis in the TFG. The second is the need to look beyond the TFG and to focus on other centres of *de facto* legitimate authority. Accordingly, in addition to and alongside the TFG, international actors including AMISOM should also provide support to local authorities in their efforts to provide security and deliver services. All these considerations and imperatives have to be part of a concerted effort by the TFG and its supporters to deploy all means to earn the confidence and goodwill of ordinary Somalis.

> Unable to challenge the Islamic insurgent threat and confined to a few sites in Mogadishu, the TFG is fighting for its life

Under siege and fighting for its survival

The TFG has constantly been on the receiving end of attacks by *Al Shabaab*. The first serious *Al Shabaab* attempt at militarily dislodging the TFG took place in May 2010. The fighting that started on 7 May 2009 was waged for more than a week in Mogadishu and resulted in many deaths, extensive displacement and large refugee flows. By 14 May 2010, the fighting had killed at least 139 civilians,[74] injured more than 350 and displaced an estimated 30 000 people.[75] Although the TFG survived the attacks, it lost to *Al Shabaab* and *Hisbul Islam* its limited territorial control, including the key Somali town of Jowahr, 90 kilometres north of the capital Mogadishu, and other locations in Mogadishu.[76] In at least one location, the *Al Shabaab* frontline is a mere 500 meters from the presidential palace.

Since May 2009, *Al Shabaab* has launched other rounds of offensives against the TFG and AMISOM in which *Al Shabaab* has increasingly resorted to a combination of suicide bombings, roadside and car bomb attacks, and sniper attacks targeting TFG-controlled locations, including Villa Somalia, the presidential palace. These offensives include the heavy fighting in January and March 2010 as well as the attack *Al Shabaab* launched on 26 August 2010. Although the TFG announced it would launch its own counter-offensive in March 2010, this goal remained unrealised and the TFG forces have found themselves constantly in a defensive position.

Consequently, the TFG has been and continues to be under constant threat. A series of *Al Shabaab* attacks has left government forces with limited space for consolidation. Unable to challenge the Islamic insurgent threat and confined to a few sites in Mogadishu, the TFG is fighting for its life, its daily survival only extended by the formidable support of AMISOM forces. In this context, the exclusive focus on the TFG and the continuing belief of the international community that the TFG is the only actor they can deal with will ultimately be counter productive, although the choice of abandoning the TFG is also not palatable.

AMISOM: PEACEKEEPING AND ITS LIMITS AS THE PRIMARY MEANS OF MANAGING THE SOMALI CRISIS

Its conception as a means of facilitating the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops and filling the security vacuum

After the ICU was dislodged following the offensive by the TFG and Ethiopian forces in early 2007, some of the ICU fighters declared an insurgency against Ethiopian troops until the latter's withdrawal from Somalia. This declaration, together with the perceived view that the presence of Ethiopian forces would complicate the conflict situation in Somalia, led to a call by members of the international community for the early withdrawal of Ethiopian forces. In order to fill the security gap that the withdrawal of the troops would create, and with a view to facilitating negotiations, the international community called for the deployment of a peacekeeping force to Somalia. Although

the UNSC authorised IGAD countries to deploy a mission known as IGASOM, the restrictions it imposed on the frontline states against intervening in Somalia meant that it was not possible to implement IGASOM. It thus became necessary to deploy an AU Mission. Accordingly, the PSC, at its 69th meeting held in Addis Ababa on 19 January 2007, mandated the AU Commission to establish a Peace Support Mission in Somalia.[77]

It is clear from the above that AMISOM is unlike any other peacekeeping operation. Its conception is not related to any peace process.[78] For more than a year after the deployment of the first AMISOM troops in March 2007, there was no peace process. AMISOM was in effect contrived within the context of a set of exceptional circumstances. The first was the inability of IGAD to operationalise IGASOM due both to legal and operational limitations.[79] Another factor was the perceived need to relieve the Ethiopian troops and facilitate their withdrawal from Somalia, which was considered essential for stabilising the situation. Finally, the international community was not willing to deploy an international force to Somalia nor was it ready to risk Somalia's takeover by radical Islamic insurgents after the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces. The result was the birth of AMISOM. Of course, seen in the light of the AU's ambitious peace and security regime, AMISOM should also be understood as another manifestation of the AU's new proactive approach and its increasing willingness to confront conflicts in Africa.

Problematic mandate

The Peace and Security Council, the AU's standing decision-making body with the authority to mandate the deployment of peace support operations, issued a communiqué mandating the deployment of AMISOM at its 69th meeting held on 19 January 2007.[80] The communiqué authorised 'the deployment of AMISOM for a period of 6 months with the mandate (i) to provide support to the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) in their efforts toward stabilising the situation in the country and the furtherance of dialogue and reconciliation, (ii) to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance, and (iii) to create conducive conditions for long-term stabilisation, reconstruction and development in Somalia.'[81]

Within the framework of these mandates, AMISOM is entrusted with carrying out the following tasks:

- Supporting dialogue and reconciliation in Somalia, working with all stakeholders
- Providing, as appropriate, protection to the TFIs and their key
- infrastructure, to enable them to carry out their functions

- Assisting in the implementation of the National Security and Stabilisation Plan of Somalia, particularly the effective reestablishment and training of all inclusive Somali security forces, bearing in mind the programmes already being implemented by some of Somalia's bilateral and multilateral partners
- Providing, within capabilities and as appropriate, technical and other support to the disarmament and stabilisation efforts
- Monitoring, in areas of deployment of its forces, the security situation
- Facilitating, as may be required and within capabilities, humanitarian operations, including the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and the resettlement of IDPs
- Protecting its personnel, installations and equipment, including the right to self-defence[82]

The mandate further stipulates that AMISOM 'shall be comprised of 9 infantry battalions of 850 personnel each supported by maritime coastal and air components, as well as an appropriate civilian component, including a police training team'. When fully deployed, AMISOM will have a force level of 8 100 troops.

Central to AMISOM's mandate is the provision of protection and support to the Transitional Federal Institutions, comprising the President, his Ministers and the Parliament, and key installations and locations in Mogadishu. Accordingly, AMISOM is stationed in a number of strategic locations divided into two sectors. Sector 1, where Ugandan troops are deployed, covers the harbour, airport, Villa Somalia (the presidential palace) and Kilometre 4 (K4). Sector 2, also known as Burundi sector, covers other locations such as the Mogadishu University and the Military Academy.[83]

While the mandate is ambitious for a mission with a force level of only 8 100 troops in a highly dangerous mission environment, conspicuously absent from the mandate is the need to protect civilians. Given the brutality of the violence in Somalia and the far-reaching humanitarian consequences, the absence of a mandate for the protection of civilians comes as a serious anomaly. As a result of this anomaly even such basic tasks as the monitoring, recording and reporting of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law may not be adequately reflected in the design of the mission structures. This omission has also resulted in a failure to impress on AMISOM troops the need to balance their protection of the TFIs with the requirement of avoiding civilian casualties.

In this regard, AMISOM seems to have followed the pattern of the African Union Mission in Sudan I (AMIS I). Accordingly, AMISOM's mandate only provides for the protection of the mission. Specifically and in a

typically traditional peacekeeping style, the mandate speaks only of protection of 'AMISOM personnel, installations and equipments, including the right to self-defence'. Accordingly, AMISOM troops may only engage in defensive peacekeeping operations. Lacking the mandate to go on the offensive against *Al Shabaab*, AMISOM troops largely remain tied to the few locations in Mogadishu in which they are deployed.

In the context of the strong opposition of the major insurgent groups, notably *Al Shabaab*, against the deployment of AMISOM, the nature of AMISOM's main mandate reflects a posture of siding with the TFG, which *Al Shabaab* is determined to oust. AMISOM thus has the appearance of lacking one of the defining features of peacekeeping, namely impartiality and neutrality. While providing support to the TFG, not only in providing capacity building for its security institutions but also in the military operations of TFG forces directed against the insurgents, AMISOM cannot maintain a neutral and impartial position.

However, this latter aspect of AMISOM's mandate is not completely inexplicable. It arises from the belief of the international community and the AU that support for the TFG is the only way to achieve peace and security in Somalia, even though the TFG has repeatedly failed to live up to such expectations and has thereby undermined the efforts of the AU and international actors in general.

> By default AMISOM has become the primary means of international engagement in Somalia, taking the place of an absent political process

Peacekeeping without an effective political process and political leadership

Following the 2008 agreement signed between the TFG and ARS–Djibouti and the subsequent merger of the two, the Djibouti process seems to have lost momentum. Contrary to expectations, since 2009 there has not been any significant political process. Initially, the TFG failed to maximise the good will extended to it by both Somalis and the international community. This allowed insurgent groups, most notably *Al Shabaab*, to grow from strength to strength as they gained more territories and increased their military capability and cohesion. In contrast, the TFG has not made any significant gains in military

strength and commands only poorly equipped and disorganised troops, most of whom have no strong allegiance to the TFG. In the process, *Al Shabaab* emerged as the most formidable armed group, apparently wielding more military muscle than TFG troops. As a result, *Al Shabaab* came to believe that it was in a position to oust the TFG militarily and establish an Islamic state in Somalia. Indeed, on a few occasions *Al Shabaab* came very close to defeating the TFG. In fact, were it not for AMISOM forces, *Al Shabaab* could long ago have expelled the TFG from Mogadishu. Further compounding the situation is the radicalisation of *Al Shabaab*, particularly during the course of 2009. With the international community labelling and ostracising *Al Shabaab* as a whole, the initiative for negotiating with it diminished. The combination of all these factors has also resulted in a lack of incentive for *Al Shabaab* to negotiate with the TFG.

As a result, AMISOM finds itself in a conflict environment with no effective political process and no end in sight. By default AMISOM has become the primary means of international engagement in Somalia, taking the place of an absent political process. However, like any peacekeeping mission that, by its very nature, is not designed to resolve a conflict, the use of AMISOM has proven to be utterly inadequate for the task of stabilising the security situation in Somalia.

The absence of political leadership on the ground in Mogadishu is compounding the inadequacies of AMISOM in contributing toward stabilising the security situation in Somalia. AMISOM is unlike any other peacekeeping operation; it is unique in having its mission headquarters located away from the mission, in Kenya's capital, Nairobi. It is therefore not surprising that the Force Commander complained that one of the major problems of AMISOM was the lack of political leadership on the ground. Unfortunately, the absence of organisational coherence, exemplified by the distant headquarters, impacts negatively on both AMISOM itself and the TFG, which AMISOM is deployed to protect. This means that AMISOM has been denied the necessary structure and expertise in the mission area to enable it to undertake effective initiatives, such as reaching out to the community and facilitating reconciliation efforts. This situation has also debilitated the supportive role that AMISOM could have played for the TFG, particularly in keeping the TFG leadership together and encouraging them to achieve cohesion by impressing upon them a sense of common purpose that, for them, is in short supply.

The only line of defence for the TFG

Although *Al Shabaab* is dominant in military terms and in terms of territorial control, compared with the TFG,

the formidable defence by AMISOM has deterred all efforts to oust the TFG. *Al Shabaab* strongly opposed the deployment of AMISOM and after the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces it directed its attacks against AMISOM, designating the latter an occupying force. AMISOM's juxtaposition between the TFG and the armed militia and its protection of the TFG has made it an unavoidable target of *Al Shabaab's* insurgency.

Since AMISOM was deployed in March 2007, more than 70 of its troops have lost their lives.[84] The deadliest attack against AMISOM took place on 17 September 2009. In this shocking incident, *Al Shabaab* penetrated the supposedly highly secured Force Headquarters of AMISOM, using two UN vehicles, and undertook a suicide operation killing 17 AMISOM soldiers, including the Deputy Force Commander, and wounding 29 others. It was both shocking and startling that *Al Shabaab* managed to carry out such a successful suicide-car bombing, out-manoeuvring the mission's security system. The scale of the attack, the success in executing the plan using UN vehicles, the choice of the target and the ability to successfully carry out the plan of attack is a manifestation of determination, diligent planning and preparation, the use of an effective intelligence system and the capability and resources to conduct sophisticated attacks by *Al Shabaab*.[85]

> AMISOM has been forced to operate as a peace support operation in a situation that regularly draws it into a position of armed fighting

Between 29 and 31 January 2010, intensive combat activities took place between the insurgents and AMISOM, which resulted in the injury of two Ugandan soldiers. While one of them died at a field hospital, the other was evacuated to Nairobi. During the course of the past few months, the operational environment of AMISOM has continued to deteriorate. From May to July 2010, five AMISOM soldiers died from attacks by *Al Shabaab* forces. Uganda announced that from June 2009 to June 2010, it lost 26 of its soldiers serving with AMISOM while 68 others were injured.[86] The number of Ugandan soldiers who died in Somalia increased to 32 following the deaths of two Ugandan soldiers in bomb attacks in July 2010 and of four others from a mortar shell launched by *Al Shabaab* on 30 August 2010.

The situation is very reminiscent of the insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan with suicide, car and roadside bombs as well as IEDs in regular use against AMISOM, despite the latter's lack of an offensive mandate or the resources and military power that the coalition forces have in Iraq and Afghanistan. This has heightened the threat to AMISOM personnel, and restricted the ability of the Mission to operate beyond a few locations in Mogadishu. As a result, AMISOM's area of operation and presence is increasingly being confined to its bases and immediate surroundings.

One of the notable consequences of *Al Shabaab's* attacks is that AMISOM has been forced to operate as a peace support operation in a situation that regularly draws it into a position of armed fighting, for which it is poorly designed, organised and equipped. AMISOM's response to such attacks has attracted considerable criticism. Despite using force only in response to an attack, AMISOM's responses have reportedly often resulted in civilian casualties that have brought its operations into disrepute. Allegations against AMISOM include indiscriminate shelling and the use of disproportionate force.[87] Given that AMISOM also supports much of the TFG operations, it has become implicated in the indiscriminate attacks and use of disproportionate force by TFG forces that has resulted in so many civilian casualties. AMISOM's association with TFG attacks on civilians therefore plays into the hands of *Al Shabaab*. The group publicises all retaliatory attacks that have resulted in injuries to or deaths of civilians, thereby discrediting AU forces and turning public opinion against AMISOM. The lack of an effective public information capacity and the failure of the AU to undertake credible investigations into allegations of violations by AMISOM troops further deepens the perception of the occurrence of the alleged violations.

Inadequately equipped and supplied

Despite operating in such increasingly insecure conditions, the provisions for the troops remain quite inadequate for the task. As the May 2010 edition of the PSC Report of the ISS noted, in addition to the mobility challenges, the Mission is also beset by logistical problems. Its troops are still using sandbags even in very high-risk areas, and lack concrete shelters and bunkers. In the majority of the Mission's bases, such as at airports and seaports, the outer perimeters and checkpoints lack adequate protection barriers. AMISOM also lacks an air and maritime capability.[88]

There have also been problems in terms of the supply of ammunition and military hardware and spare parts. While AMISOM depends on donors for its finances and supplies, many of the donors do not finance the supply of

military equipment, nor do they directly provide military supplies. There has also been little or no capability of countering the threat of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). In addition, the required protection equipment to shield against mortar attacks and roadside bombs, as well as necessary defensive structures to enhance fortifications, are almost entirely lacking.

Although donors pledged financial support for AMISOM, funds were not released promptly enough to be effective. Long and tedious processes of clearing pledged funds and the involvement of too many actors in the management of the funds to be used by AMISOM also contributed to the tardy disbursement of the funds that were so necessary for AMISOM to be able to conduct its operations as planned.[89]

For the AU, the challenges facing AMISOM and the Somali conflict itself have presented a serious test to its new normative commitments and its will to take the lead in dealing with and resolving conflicts in Africa. In the context of Somalia, which, as we noted resembles the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan and hence demands the attention of the UN and major powers, the AU has naturally come to believe that it is bearing too heavy a burden. Little wonder then that the AU has repeatedly urged the UN to assume its responsibilities in Somalia and mandate the type of mission that the situation in Somalia demands. It is also no surprise that the AU has begun to manifest a sense that the UN is yet again failing to deal with another African conflict that demands its full and direct involvement.

> Although various countries pledged to contribute troops, none of these pledges materialised

Slow and inadequate troop surge and consequences of insufficient numbers of troop-contributing countries

AMISOM has a mandated force strength of 8 100 troops, which is inadequate for a conflict as complex and protracted as the one in Somalia. In addition, the deployment of additional forces has been very slow. Even though a number of AU member states have pledged to provide troops to the Mission these have not been forthcoming. On 25 February 2010, the PSC renewed its call to AU member states to fulfil their pledges for additional

troops.[90] In March 2010, Uganda deployed an additional battalion to increase AMISOM's troop numbers to 6 118. Burundi has pledged to deploy another battalion once the necessary support equipment is sourced. Djibouti has also apparently reaffirmed its pledge to deploy a contingent of 450 troops to AMISOM. The AU has been coordinating plans to deploy a police component to AMISOM. Currently, 270 police officers have been selected from Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Uganda to train, mentor and monitor the Somali police. In February 2010, 34 of these police officers participated in an induction course. On 15 April 2010, AMISOM announced the deployment of 7 police trainers who would serve as an advance team of 40 police officers to Somalia.

Although various countries, including Nigeria, Ghana and Malawi, pledged to contribute troops, none of these pledges materialised. With the deterioration of the security situation, many of these countries seem to have reneged on their declared intention to deploy their forces. Consequently, the burden of contributing troops to AMISOM is shared by Uganda and Burundi only.

Given that many African countries have been reluctant to heed the AU's plea for troop contributions to AMISOM, it has been a blessing for the AU that these countries, Uganda and Burundi, continue to keep their troops on the ground even in the face of increasing casualties and heightening attacks from the insurgents. However, this imperfect situation has at the same time brought certain costs to the AU. For fear of pushing Uganda into withdrawing its forces, the AU is not able to compel Uganda or Burundi to adhere to relevant AU rules and procedures. Uganda, in particular, proved to be very difficult for the AU to deal with as a Troop Contributing Country (TCC). Complaints from AU sources on Uganda range from an unwillingness to avail its troops for verification before deployment; to undertaking operations on the ground with direction from Kampala, without consultation with, or authorisation from, the mandating authority and the mission's strategic leadership; to a lack of co-ordination and failure to share critical intelligence with the contingents from Burundi. On their part, Ugandans have expressed dissatisfaction that the AU has not demonstrated strong leadership on the ground, with Mission headquarters located in Nairobi, and that it has not been strong enough in dealing with the crisis in Somalia. Particularly since the September 2009 attacks by *Al Shabaab,* Uganda has been calling for an offensive mandate, which is currently lacking.

The new troop surge and flexible Rules of Engagement for AMISOM

IGAD has been at the forefront of efforts to resolve the conflict in Somalia, not least because member

countries are directly affected by the conflict. On 5 July 2010, IGAD held the 15th extra-ordinary session of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, to consider the political and security situation in Somalia. In the communiqué issued at the end of the session, the IGAD Assembly expressed its serious concerns over the deteriorating security situation in Somalia and the escalating danger to Somalia and the sub-region. The IGAD Assembly also decided to deploy the additional 2 000 troops necessary to bring AMISOM to its mandated force size and to this end called on the AU to mobilise the necessary resources, logistics and equipment for the required deployment. IGAD members also called for raising the mandated force level of AMISOM to 20 000.

In the context of the 7/11 bombings, the conflict in Somalia dominated the agenda of the 15th ordinary session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, which took place in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, only two weeks after the attacks. Although IGAD's campaign at the behest of Uganda for an expansion of AMISOM's mandate, allowing it to launch an offensive against *Al Shabaab,* was not successful, an understanding emerged that the rules of engagement could be formulated in a way that would allow AMISOM to take pre-emptive action where it had credible information about an imminent attack by *Al Shabaab* or any other insurgent group. It was also agreed that additional troops would be deployed and AMISOM would receive further support to enhance its capabilities.

The Assembly approved the IGAD 'initiative to enable AMISOM to achieve its mandated force strength of 8 100 troops (and) mandated the AU Commission to initiate planning for the new phases of the deployment of AMISOM'.[91] Acting on the request of IGAD, the Assembly also requested the AU Chairperson to appoint a high level personality, who would work to galvanise international support for, and focus attention on Somalia and motivate the engagement of the Somali population in the processes of government. The request for increasing the mandated force level of AMISOM was also received positively and the Peace and Security Council of the AU was expected to lift the current limit in September 2010.

In terms of new deployments, apart from the two current contributing countries, Guinea has also pledged to contribute troops. Preparing the troops for deployment, identifying the required equipment and finally airlifting soldiers and supplies means that the forces will be ready for deployment only after some four to five months. It is expected that France will provide training for the Guinean forces. Germany, which was expected to provide the Burundians with equipment, has yet to deliver the required supplies.

The decision to reinforce AMISOM, expand its mandated force level from the current 8 100 troops and allow more flexibility in its rules of engagement are all indications of recognition by countries of the region that the threat posed by the insurgency has substantially increased. Accompanying these decisions is the call by the AU for the UN to assume its responsibilities in Somalia. This is premised on the understanding that the intensity of the insurgency and the bigger threat that the situation represents requires a robust, well-resourced and equipped deployment. It underscores that only with a better-resourced deployment comparable to the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan can *Al Shabaab's* offensive be successfully curbed and the imminent threat it poses, reduced. In terms of making a more substantive and effective change to the existing external intervention in Somalia through AMISOM, this is probably the only option that requires more serious consideration. The potential of this to deepen the insurgency and to backfire should not be underestimated. As Mahmood Mamdani pointed out, '[t]o strengthen the mandate of an external military force in the absence of a political agreement is more likely to deepen the dilemma than to resolve it'.[92]

CONCLUSION

Like the acts of piracy in the waters off the coast of Somalia, the 7/11 bombings in Kampala are indications of the deterioration of the Somalia conflict and the escalation of the violence. *Al Shabaab* has the capability of acting out its threats. Consequently, there is high potential for the crisis to escalate, both within Somalia and in the region as a whole. This risk is heightened due to the terror networks that *Al Shabaab* has established and the effective radicalisation campaign that the organisation is executing in order to galvanise support among Somalis in the country, the diaspora and within extremist groups.

In future, *Al Shabaab* may employ a variety of tactics to mount its attacks in the region. First, it has the potential for radicalising Muslims, particularly Somalis, by exploiting their grievances and using them to launch further attacks in the region. It is also possible that the group may use desperate dissident groups or bribe vulnerable individuals to perpetrate more attacks. One cannot also dismiss the possibility that *Al Shabaab* could send suicide bombers to other countries in the region.

Most importantly, however, *Al Shabaab* is expanding its military campaign against the TFG and AMISOM and seems bent on escalating its attacks.

This likelihood unfortunately means more misery, death and dislocation for ordinary Somalis. While the international community is not ready to take the risk of withdrawing support from the weak, dysfunctional and divided TFG, the deteriorating security situation necessitates that the failing or inadequate policy approaches pursued thus far ought to be reconsidered and revised.

Restructuring the TFG? Addressing the leadership problem, improving security institutions, implementing development programmes and providing services

Unless the prevailing balance of power between the TFG and *Al Shabaab* changes, it is unlikely that the deepening insecurity and the attacks and the threat from *Al Shabaab* will change in any meaningful way. Any successful attempt to weaken *Al Shabaab* requires that the TFG achieves adequate levels of cohesion and institutionalisation and its military capability radically improves. [93] In proportion to this, the TFG also needs to gain control of territories it lost to *Al Shabaab* and establish effective administration capable of guaranteeing order and security and delivering basic services. The TFG therefore requires a great deal of capacity building and there is also a need for implementing development projects.

> Another … battleground between the TFG and *Al Shabaab* is the campaign to win the hearts and minds of various Somali constituencies

---

For the TFG to become a credible entity for effecting such transformative changes, it is essential that it addresses its recurrent leadership crisis and resultant inability to achieve cohesion and unity of purpose. This is where the hard work for changing the current situation needs to begin.

In terms of capacity building support and implementation of development projects, the focus also need to go beyond the TFG. International actors should be encouraged to provide support to local entities in their efforts to counter the threat posed by *Al Shabaab* and to provided basic services for Somalis. This approach, of course, requires coordination and consultation with

both external actors and the Somali public, as well as the Somali diaspora.

Expanding the reconciliation processes and aggressively engaging Somalis at home and in the diaspora

Much of the effort in terms of peacemaking and reconciliation has been limited to trying to negotiate with the various factions. This approach has two serious drawbacks. First, it lacks a mechanism to cater for those sections of society that oppose Al Shabaab's extremism, its domination by foreign jihadists and its attacks against civilians and the resultant disrespect for Somali tradition and culture or respect for human life. Most importantly, such an approach also fails to reach out to the constituencies of the various opposition factions and notably the local Somali public. There has been very little effort, if any, on the part of the TFG to effectively engage the diaspora, the Somali youth and Islamic groups.

The TFG needs to articulate and aggressively implement a clear strategy of national reconciliation. As part of this strategy it needs to organise, on a regular basis, consultations and dialogue with all sections of the Somali public and implement realistic and effective confidence-building measures.

The TFG should also fast-track the implementation of the agreement it signed with the ASWJ to bolster its military capability as well as territorial control and to encourage others to join and support the TFG. It should also keep the door open for negotiating with moderate elements within insurgent groups with a view to ultimately achieving peace and security in Somalia.

Countering the *Al Shabaab* radicalisation and containing and neutralizing its fighting capabilities and radical terrorist elements

Another and probably more important battleground between the TFG and *Al Shabaab* is the campaign to win the hearts and minds of various Somali constituencies. This has been an important means for *Al Shabaab* to effect its radicalisation campaign and attract young Somali recruits. There is a need for the TFG and other actors to join forces to formulate and implement an effective communications campaign that exposes *Al Shabaab's* brutality and terrorist activities that are contrary to the interests of Somalis and effectively reveal the organisation's contradictions, its extremism, its non-Somali tendencies and its distorted interpretation of Islam. Various Somali actors, particularly moderate religious leaders, elders, prominent Somalis and civil

society organisations, should also be mobilised in support of the TFG.

Additionally, there is also a need to contain the military capabilities of Islamic insurgents. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to disrupting the supply lines of insurgent groups. Accordingly, the call to the UN Security Council by the AU Peace and Security Council for the imposition of an air and sea blockade in Somalia needs serious consideration.

Changing AMISOM? Further troop surge, additional capabilities (air and naval), adjusting the mandate, replacing it with a UN mission

There is no doubt that reinforcing AMISOM has the potential of allowing it to expand its areas of operation and thereby creating enhanced chances for stabilising wider areas. As past experiences in Somalia repeatedly showed, a military approach on its own is inadequate and usually counter productive. It cannot and should not be the primary approach. It will succeed only if it accompanies efforts in national reconciliation, in the provision of basic services, in dealing with the humanitarian crisis caused, in building effective institutions, in reversing the radicalisation campaign of *Al Shabaab* and by ultimately neutralising its radical terrorist elements.

For AMISOM, its reinforcement with new troops and rules of engagement that allow for pre-emptive attack has a serious danger. It may deepen the perception that it is an occupying force and hence provoke resentment of the mission among Somalis.[94] Moreover, it may be used to serve 'as a magnet to "internationalise" the conflict, attracting foreign elements to the side of *Al Shabaab* and other insurgents'.[95] Therefore, there has to be a great deal of caution in implementing this proposal.

Along with increasing the troop level of AMISOM, there is a need to enhance its outreach to local communities and public relations systems as well as its capability for reducing indiscriminate attacks that counter-responses against *Al Shabaab* have reportedly caused to civilians. This is very critical. While AMISOM may use force pre-emptively, care should be taken to secure the confidence of the local populace by maintaining a non-threatening approach. Any force that intimidates the public may ultimately push the public further into the arms of *Al Shabaab*. Without the support of the Somali public, it is unlikely that any changes in the way AMISOM engages with *Al Shabaab* forces will succeed. A great deal of attention should therefore be focused on increasing vigilance in order to reduce casualties against civilians.

AMISOM also needs to design and implement, in concert with other actors, and in consultation with Somalis, its own effective strategic communication plan for engaging with Somalis. This will enable AMISOM to demonstrate, publicly, the efforts it is making to minimise casualties, the challenges it is facing, its activities in protecting civilians, and its assistance in helping to provide health services for the people. For this approach to achieve success, AMISOM's headquarters must inevitably move from its current temporary location to become part of the mission in Mogadishu.

Given the nature of the insurgency *Al Shabaab* is undertaking, it is also necessary to substantially enhance the defence capability of the Mission in order to reduce the level of exposure of troops to attacks and improve their ability to detect and neutralise potential attacks by the insurgents.

Ultimately, given the level of strength *Al Shabaab* has come to acquire and the threat that the organisation has come to represent, the international community may need to innovatively consider the possibilities of deploying a robust UN force or some other form of effective external intervention to Somalia. In the absence of any effective political process to resolve the conflict, this approach promises to be the most effective way to contain and neutralise the growing threat posed by the insurgents. Such an approach could effectively change the current balance of power and end the misery of Somalis. Of course, it is necessary to begin with consultations at various levels and more specifically with Somalis so that the necessary good will for such intervention is forthcoming from Somalis and other relevant actors.

The circumstances in Somalia are extraordinary, very complex, fluid and involve ever-increasing dangers. Pursuing any of the above policy options and making any progress toward achieving stability in Somalia will thus be fraught with serious challenges and dilemmas. All these call for a very strong Somali leadership, a more determined, sustained and well coordinated and facilitative international engagement.

NOTES

1   'Somalia: Building Stability and Peace', Chatham House, transcript of address by the Prime Minister 28 October 2009, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/SNAA-7XA9SD?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (last accessed on 20 August 2010).

2   See ICG, Somalia's Divided Islamists, Africa Briefing No. 74 (18 May 2010), 4.

3   "Somali Militants Praise Attack That Killed 64," Garowe, July 12, 2010, http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somali_militants_praise_attacks_that_killed_64.shtml (accessed on 15 July 2010).

4   'Uganda bombs kill 74, Islamists claim attack' Reuters Africa, 12 July 2010, http://af.reuters.com/article/ugandaNews/idAFLDE66B00L20100712?sp=true (accessed on 13 July 2010).

5   'Somalia Shabaab rebels threaten Uganda, Burundi,' Reuters, 23 October 2009, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900-sid/ASAZ-7X4FRM?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 13 July 2010).

6   "Al-Shabaab urges attacks on diplomats," Daily Nation, July 8, 2010, http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/Al%20Shabaab%20urges%20attacks%20on%20diplomats%20/-/1066/954666/-/essd9hz/-/ (accessed on 19 September 2010).

7   "Shabaab Calls upon Uganda and Burundi to Cease Sending troops to Somalia,' SITE Intel Group, June 29, 2010, https://www.siteintelgroup.com/layouts/SiteIntel/ApplicationPages/Document.aspx?ID=26601 (accessed on 15 July 2010.

8   The military capability of *Al Shabaab* and its changing characters has been underestimated and this partly explains the failure to take *Al Shabaab's* threat to attack countries such as Uganda seriously.

9   OCHA *Somalia: Humanitarian Overview* Vol. 3 Issue 7 July 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/VDUX-88AKWA?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 5 August 2010).

10 'Somalia: Mogadishu fighting kills 52 civilians in one week,' Reuters 20 July 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MINE-87JKXE?OpenDocument&rc=1 (accessed on 20 July 2010).

11 'Update: Somalia militants storm hotel, 31 dead includes MPs', Reuters, http://af.reuters.com/article/somaliaNews/idAFLDE67N0P820100824?sp=true (accessed on 26 August 2010).

12 LPI, *Horn of Africa Bulletin*, August 2010 at 9-10, http://www.life-peace.org/default2.asp?xid= (accessed on 2 September 2010).

13 OCHA *Somalia: Humanitarian Overview* Vol. 3 Issue 8 August 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/VVOS-893JXZ?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 2 September 2010)

14 'Somalia: Dramatic conditions for civilian population: More than 960 civilians killed in battles since January 2010,' 24 August 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/MDCS-88NE85?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 25 August 2010).

15 OCHA *Somalia: Humanitarian Overview* Vol. 3 Issue 7 July 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/VDUX-88AKWA?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 5 August 2010).

16 See ISS, Peace and Security Council Report No. 10 (May 2010), 9.

17 OCHA *Somalia: Humanitarian Overview* Vol. 3 Issue 7 July 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/VDUX-88AKWA?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 5 August 2010).

18 UNHCR Somalia Briefing Sheet, July 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/FERB-892JFZ?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 7 August 2010).

19 UN reported that thousands of people have been evicted by private land owners from IDP settlements along the Afgooye Corridor. See 'Somalia: Weekly Humanitarian Bulletin' Issue No. 31, 6–13 August 2010, OCHA Somalia,

http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/VDUX-88AL5K?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 18 August 2010).

20 UNHCR Somalia Briefing Sheet, July 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/FERB-892JFZ?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 7 August 2010).

21 Ibid.

22 In Ethiopia some 2 000 Somalis had arrived to the Sheder camp by March 2010 resulting in a 25% population growth in the camp.

23 Ibid.

24 Secretary-General's Report on Somalia, 11 May 2010 UN Doc. S/2010/234, 3.

25 ISS, Peace and Security Council Report, No. 10 (May 2010), 9.

26 'Somalia's al shabaab rebels expel three aid groups' Reuters, 9 August 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/VVOS-886KBY?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 10 August 2010).

27 Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia (September 2009) UN Doc. A/HRC/12/44, 11.

28 Ibid.

29 See Report of the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, (March 2010), UN Doc. A/HRC/13/65, 20; Human Rights Watch, 'Somalia: Harsh War Harsh Peace, Abuses by Al Shabaab, TFG and AMISOM in Somalia', New York: Human Rights Watch (April 2010) 40–42.

30 See Kinfe Abraham, *The Horn of Africa: Conflicts and Conflict Mediation in the Greater Horn of Africa*, Addis Ababa: EPIID & HADAD, 2006, 91–93; Daveed Dartenstein-Ross, 'The strategic Challenge of Somalia's Al Shabaab Dimensions of Jihad' *Middle East Quarterly* (Fall 2009), 25, 26. However, the connection between those who pushed Islam into Somalia politics in the 1970s and *Al Shabaab* is not clear.

31 See Solomon A. Dersso, The Somalia Conflict: Implications for peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts, ISS Paper 198 (September 2009), 13–14; Shaul Shay, *Somalia between Jihad and Restoration*, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2008, 93–100.

32 On what led to Ethiopia's intervention see Shay, supra; Ken Menkhaus, 'Somalia: A country in peril, a policy nightmare,' ENOUGH Strategy Paper (September 2008) 2.

33 *Al Shabaab* assumed full control of this revenue generating port city in October 2009 after defeating its rival Hisb al Islam forces. See 'Shabaab rebels take full control of Somali port' 2 October 2009, on http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900-sid/SNAA-7WG8ML?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (27 July 2010).

34 UN Monitoring Group, 'Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008),' 10 March 2010, http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/264/89/PDF/N1024689.pdf?OpenElement (accessed on 12 April 2010).

35 Ibid, 15.

36 Ibid, 16.

37 Ibid, 17.

38 Ibid, 12.

39 See 'The partitioning of Somalia: Islamists Strengthened Against Western-backed Government,' Critical Threats, 1 June 2010, www.criticalthreats.org (accessed on 17 August 2010).

40 Rashid Abdi, Ej Hogendoor 'It is not too late to rescue Somali Islamists from the Jihadis who have hijacked them' The East African 3 May 2010, http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/abdi-hogendoorn-its-not-too-late-to-rescue-somali-islamists-from-the-jihadis-who-have-hijacked-them.aspx (accessed on 16 August 2010).

41 See ICG, Africa Briefing No. 74, supra, 7–9.

42 Joint press release by AMISOM, IGAD and UNPOS on terrorist attacks on AMISOM troops in Mogadishu, Nairobi, 9 September 2010.

43 See ICG Africa Briefing No. 74, supra, 5.

44 ISS, Peace and Security Council Report, No. 10, May 2010, 7

45 See Report of the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, (March 2010) UN Doc. A/HRC/13/65, 20; Human Rights Watch, 'Somalia: Harsh War Harsh Peace, Abuses by Al Shabaab, TFG and AMISOM in Somalia', New York: Human Rights Watch, April 2010

46 ICG Africa Briefing No. 74, Supra.

47 See UN Monitoring Group, 'Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008),' 10 March 2010, supra note 34.

48 The role of Yemen, as the UN Independent Expert on the Human Rights Situation in Somalia put it, 'Somalia for Yemen was becoming like Pakistan for Afghanistan.' Report of the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, (March 2010) UN Doc. A/HRC/13/65, 13.

49 See ISS, Peace and Security Council Report No. 10, May 2010, 8.

50 'Somalia's Al Shabaab recruits 'holy warriors' with $400 bonus', The Christian Science Monitor, 15 April 2010. More on forced conscription see Human Rights Watch, 'Somalia: Harsh War Harsh Peace, Abuses by Al Shabaab, TFG and AMISOM in Somalia', New York: Human Rights Watch, (April 2010) 50–52.

51 UN Monitoring Group, 'Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008),' 10 March 2010, http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/264/89/PDF/N1024689.pdf?OpenElement (accessed on 20 August 2010).

52 'Kenya: Iraq, Afghan, Pakistan fighters in Somalia' AP, 8 July 2010 available on http://www.csmonitor.com/World/2010/0708/Kenya-Iraq-Afghan-Pakistan-fighters-in-Somalia?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+feeds/world+%28Christian+Science+Monitor+|+World%29 (accessed on 10 July 2010)

53 See Eloy E Cues & Madelein Wells, Somalia: Line in the Sand Identification of MYM Vulnerabilities, The Letort Papers, 16–18, US Army War College, http://www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil/ (accessed on 26 September 2010).

54 UN Monitoring Group, 'Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008),' 10 March 2010, 30, http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/264/89/PDF/N1024689.pdf?OpenElement (accessed on 20 August 2010).

55 According to the UN Monitoring Group, the notoriously porous border between Kenya and Somalia is one of the factors that contribute to 'Kenya's emergence as a major support base for Somali armed opposition groups. Members of Shabaab and Hizbul Islam travel with relative freedom to and from Nairobi, where they raise funds, engage in recruitment and obtain treatment for wounded fighters.' Ibid, 25.

56 See supra note 1.

57 It is interesting to note here the significant change in the characterization by the US of the threat that the situation in Somalia poses as 'a national problem, a regional problem, but also a global problem. See J Peter Pham 'A subtle, but significant, shift in US policy opens the door to realism' available on http://worlddefensereview.com/pham093010.shtml (accessed on 1st October 2010).

58 See Dersso, supra.

59 See for more Shay, supra, 114–120.

60 Rashid Abdi, Ej Hogendoor 'It is not too late to rescue Somali Islamists from the Jihadis who have hijacked them' The East African 3 May 2010, supra note 40.

61 AU Commission Statement of 15 March 2010 on the Signing of the Framework for Cooperation Agreement Between Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'A (ASWJ).

62 UN Monitoring Group Report, supra, 11.

63 Abdi & Hogendoor, supra.

64 "Somalia: Ahlu Sunna Calls International Community to Intervene Talks," Shabelle Media Network, July 7, 2010, http://allafrica.com/stories/201007070240.html (accessed on 12 July 2010).

65 UN Monitoring Group Report, supra, 12.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Oxford Analytica, 'Somalia: TFG remains least worst option for donors', 1 September 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/VDUX-88VSY2?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 1 September 2010).

69 Report of the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, (March 2010) UN Doc. A/HRC/13/65, 20; Human Rights Watch, 'Somalia: Harsh War Harsh Peace, Abuses by Al Shabaab, TFG and AMISOM in Somalia', New York: Human Rights Watch, (April 2010) 40–42.

70 Human Rights Watch, Ibid, 52.

71 Menkhaus, supra, 7.

72 See UN Monitoring Group Report, supra, 33–35.

73 J Pter Pham, Muddled on Mogadishu: America's confused Somalia strategy, available on http://worlddefensereview.com/pham032310.shtml (accessed on 23 August 2010).

74 'Clashes in Somalia kill 139 civilians' 14 May 2009, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/AMMF-

7S2PD8?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 8 April 2010).

75 'Heavy clashes cause fresh displacement in Mogadishu' 15 May 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/PSLG-7S3FT3?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 7 August 2010)

76 'Militants take key Somali town, fighting rages' 17 May 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/SNAA-7S5ELH?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 7 August 2010); 'Somali insurgents seize another village' 18 May 2010, http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/JBRN-7S6CNG?OpenDocument&rc=1&cc=som (accessed on 7 August 2010).

77 Communiqué of the 69th Session of the Peace and Security Council of the AU, AU Doc. PSC/PR/Comm.(LXIX).

78 The only other type of missions that are deployed including to Somalia without peace agreement of any kind, including ceasefire, are humanitarian missions whose main mandate is to facilitate the distribution of humanitarian relief and protect humanitarian actors.

79 See Cecilia Hull, Emma Svensson, African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM): Exemplifying African Union Peacekeeping Challenges', Stockholm: FOI Swedish Defence Research Agency, (2008) 22–25.

80 AU Doc. PSC/PR/Comm.(LXIX).

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid.

83 ISS, Peace and Security Council Report No. 10, May 2010, 8.

84 AMISOM Review (Information Department of the Africa Union Mission in Somalia, Spring, 2010), 14.

85 *Al Shabaab* has shown the possession of such capability repeatedly. After the September bombings, the major similar attacks successfully conducted by *Al Shabaab* include the 3 December 2010 suicide bombings at a graduation ceremony at a university in Mogadishu and the 24 August 2010 bombings targeting TFG officials at a Hotel in Mogadishu, both places located in areas controlled by the TFG and thus considered to be very safe. On the December 3 bombings see 'Turning Threats into Action: The Significance of Al Shabaab's December 3 Mogadishu Suicide Bombings', 5 December 2009, http://criticalthreats.org (accessed on 9 April 2010). On the 24 August 2010 attacks see notes 6 and 7 and accompanying text.

86 'Uganda: Army says 100 soldiers killed in fighting', 4 August 2010, The Monitor on allAfrica.com, http://allafrica.com/storiesprintable/201008040004.html (accessed on 10 August 2010).

87 See Human Rights Watch, 'Somalia: Harsh War Harsh Peace, Abuses by Al Shabaab, TFG and AMISOM in Somalia', New York: Human Rights Watch, (April 2010) 36–37; Sudarsan Raghavan, 'The Rising Civilian toll ignites anger at African forces as it battles Somali Militants,' The Washington Post, 18 July 2010.

88 ISS, Peace and Security Council Report, No. 10, May 2010, 8.

89 ISS, Somalia: The Intervention dilemma, Policy Brief No. 20 (August, 2010).

90 AU Doc. PSC/PR/BR.(CCXVII).

91 Decision of 15th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, Assembly/AU/Dec. 294 (XV). 2.

92 Mahmood Mamdani, *Savoirs and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror*, London & New York: Verso, 2009, 46–47.

93 It is important, however, to include as part of the capacity-building support to the TFG security institutions incentives and safeguards against the involvement of TFG forces in indiscriminate attacks targeting civilians and disproportionate use of force. An important aspect of this should therefore be the establishment of an accountability mechanism to oversee the operations of TFG forces and undertake credible investigations.

94 ISS, ISS, Peace and Security Council Report, No. 14, September 2010, 6.

95 ISS, Somalia: The Intervention dilemma, Policy Brief No. 20 (August, 2010), 5.

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO ISS PUBLICATIONS

If you would like to subscribe to ISS publications, complete the form below and return it to the ISS with a cheque, or a postal/money order for the correct amount, made payable to the Institute for Security Studies (marked not transferable). Please see ISS website for credit card payment and you may also deposit your payment into the following bank account, quoting the reference: **PUBSPAY**.

ISS bank details: ABSA, Brooklyn Court, Branch Code: 632005, Account number: 405 749 8921

Kindly fax, e.mail or mail the subscription form and proof of payment to:
ISS Publication Subscriptions, PO Box 1787, Brooklyn Square, 0075, Pretoria, South Africa.
ISS contact details: (Tel) +27 12 346 9500, (Fax) +27 12 346 9570, Email: pubs@issafrica.org
Website: www.issafrica.org

PERSONAL DETAILS

Title: .... Surname: .... Initials: ....

Organisation: .... Position: ....

Postal Address: ....

.... Postal Code: ....

Country: ....

Tel: .... Fax: .... Email: ....

Please note that the African Security Review (ASR) will be published by Taylor & Francis. Kindly refer to Taylor & Francis website www.informaworld.com/rasr, subscription requests and inquiries can be forwarded to Helen White (Helen.White@tandf.co.uk).

PUBLICATIONS	SOUTH AFRICA	AFRICAN COUNTRIES*	INTERNATIONAL
ISS Monographs (Approx. 15 per year)	R 370.00	US$ 75.00	US$ 95.00
ISS Papers (Approx. 12 per year)	R 150.00	US$ 30.00	US$ 40.00
SA Crime Quarterly (4 issues per year)	R 115.00	US$ 25.00	US$ 35.00
Comprehensive subscription (Monographs, Papers and SA Crime Quarterly)	R 600.00	US$ 130.00	US$ 170.00

SUBSCRIPTIONS	INDICATE COST
ISS Monographs only	
ISS Papers only	
SA Crime Quarterly only	
Comprehensive subscription	
TOTAL	

The mission of the ISS is to conceptualise, inform and enhance the security debate in Africa

* Angola; Botswana; Burundi; Congo-Brazzaville; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Gabon, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar; Malawi, Mauritius; Mozambique; Namibia; Reunion; Rwanda; Seychelles; Swaziland; Tanzania; Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe (formerly African Postal Union countries).

ABOUT THIS PAPER

The deteriorating security situation in Somalia, and particularly the 7/11 bombings in Kampala, triggered high-level discussions in continental and international policy circles. This study advances the argument that while the security situation is worsening, the policy options being pursued are limited and inadequate. After showing that a discernable and increasing shift has emerged in the balance of power between the TFG and the armed opposition groups, particularly *Al Shabaab*, the paper critically reflects on the major policy approaches currently being pursued in Somalia. While *Al Shabaab* has been collectively vilified without the increasing threat it poses being treated with the seriousness it deserves, the focus has been on propping up the TFG, which has failed in regaining military control, achieving credibility and legitimacy among the Somali public, and establishing consensus and coherence within itself. At another level, the nature of the peacemaking and peacekeeping mechanisms being used in Somalia does not match the situation on the ground. The paper accordingly proposes that a reconsideration of the way the TFG and the armed insurgency are treated needs to be accompanied by a more robust diplomatic and peacekeeping intervention.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Solomon A. Dersso is a Senior Researcher with the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Programme of the Institute for Security Studies' Addis Ababa Office. His research focus includes human rights law with a focus on minority rights, the Horn of Africa, and the African Peace and Security Architecture. He would like to thank Dr Duke Kent-Brown and the external reviewer of the paper for their very helpful comments on an earlier version of the paper and various people with whom he interacted on the subject and from whose insights this paper benefited. All errors will, however, remain the author's.

FUNDER

As a leading African human security research institution, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) works towards a stable and peaceful Africa characterised by sustainable development, human rights, the rule of law, democracy, collaborative security and gender mainstreaming. The ISS realises this vision by:

- Undertaking applied research, training and capacity building
- Working collaboratively with others
- Facilitating and supporting policy formulation
- Monitoring trends and policy implementation
- Collecting, interpreting and disseminating information
- Networking on national, regional and international levels

ISS Paper No 218
Price R15,00

ISSN 1026-0404

9 771026 040004