

Mission After Mission: Challenges of African Union Mission on State Reconstruction in Somalia

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ABSTRACT

The unending challenges attributed to Peace Support Operations (PSO) in Somalia, is a glaring reality of how the African Union (AU) and her global partners are grappling with the costs of civil war, state fragility and international terrorism in Somalia which has turned out to be mission after mission. Anchored on state building and securitization theories, this study interrogated the challenges faced by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in carrying out state reconstruction. Three key challenges namely; strategic, operational and tactical are analyzed. An in-depth analysis and synthesis of the current relevant literature reviewed to unearth existing gaps in Somalia state reconstruction efforts. This study employed the case study research design. The targeted population was from AU, AMISOM, and experts in PSO from which a sample of 62 informants was purposively drawn. Interview and observation schedules were employed as key instruments of primary data collection while secondary data was collected using document analysis. The analyzed data was presented qualitatively. This study established that AMISOM faced three key strategic challenges namely, complexities and dynamism in the mission's mandate, inadequate funding, and the overall inadequacies of the mission's capacity and capability. AMISOM also endure two key tactical challenges. Firstly, the challenge of fighting the invisible enemy and secondly, the lack of internal coherence and coordination in the AMISOM command. Four operational challenges were identified. Firstly, negative clannism and clan differences among the Somali population. Secondly cases of violations of international laws and norms. Thirdly, uncertainty and fragility in the Somalia political atmosphere and fourthly, incidences of piracy off the Coast of Somalia. This study recommended that military interventions such as AMISOM require adequate technical, financial, logistical, administrative, and legitimate support to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations. African Union Commission should ensure that limitations and lessons learned in the previous missions in Somalia are addressed in both the UNSC and AUPSC so that a formidable framework is attained in guiding and enhancing missions that succeed AMISOM. Further, multisectoral approaches should be embraced in addressing challenges encountered in PSOs.

Key Words: AMISOM, African Union, state reconstruction strategic, tactical and operational challenges, peace support operations.

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INTRODUCTION

Peace Support Operations in Somalia have been subtle and unfolding with over five missions deployed since 1992 when the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) authorized the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) through Resolution 794/1992. This mission aimed to provide humanitarian relief and stabilize Somalia following the collapse of Siad Barre's regime. However, clan rivalries and the power of warlords undermined UNOSOM's efforts. Subsequently, the Unified Task Force (UNITAF), led by the United States and backed by UNSCR 814/1993, was launched to support the broader UNOSOM II mission. Despite these efforts, both UNITAF and UNOSOM II faced insurmountable challenges, including high levels of violence

against peacekeepers, leading to the withdrawal of United Nations and United States troops in 1995 (Allard, 1995; Tubbs, 1997; Mulugetta, 2014).

In renewed efforts towards state reconstructions in Somalia, the African Union (AU) authorized African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) which replaced and subsumed Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Peace Support Mission to Somalia (IGASOM) in compliance with UN resolution 1744/2007(UNSC, 2007) and in accordance with the 2007 Status of Mission Agreement (SOMA) between AU and Somalia (SOMA, 2007). Early reports on onset of the mission showed that AMISOM faced many challenges in state reconstruction (Loubser & Solomon, 2014). Loubser et al, 2014, alluded that retaliation by Al-Shabaab, lack of adequate capacity, logistical constraints, loss of military assets, and the invincible nature of the enemy haunted efforts towards state reconstruction in Somalia. According to Mohamed (2015), three towns which were under AMISOM troops' watch were recaptured by Al-Shabaab, which included Kuntuwarey, El Salundi and Bugda. Mohamed (2015) further argued that, it is expected in successful warfare that troops hold the captured positions from enemies. As such, they are never expected to cede captured ground. However, captured positions were abandoned by AMISOM when the capacity to hold them was inadequate. With regard to increase in enemy activities in the context of Somalia, the supposition is that AMISOM troops were ineffective or inefficient in how the peace support operations were conducted have been raised. With the end of AMISOM mandate on March 31, 2022, the African Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) was authorized. ATMIS had its own challenges. The current mission in Somalia, as of today, April 7, 2025, is the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), which replaced the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) on January 1, 2025. Deployment of mission after mission reveals fraught of challenges in state reconstruction in Somalia. The challenges of peace support operations in Somalia therefore, manifests huge gaps that need deeper and broader investigations. It is precisely in these contexts that this study examined the challenges faced by African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in carrying out state reconstruction in Somalia.

Statement of the Problem

Despite several state reconstruction initiatives in Somalia by the international community, the state of Somalia has never been in a position to holistically re-establish its political, economic and social authority over its territory hence unable to achieve the full functions of states as enshrined in the international law and norms. To augment efforts of botched state building by United Nations, the African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was deployed in 2007. After more than a decade of the peace support operations, AMISOM seemingly failed to attain what was largely anticipated by international community as the ultimate solution to restoration of Somalia as a nation and liberation of its citizens from the brutal hands of warlord, terrorist groups and negative clannism. PSO trajectories pinpoint AMISOM, multi-dimensional mission, struggled to meet its complex and ever-changing mandates as advanced by African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This study investigates strategic, operational and tactical challenges, encountered by AMISOM in carrying out state reconstruction in Somalia.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The theoretical foundation of this study was confined to the discipline of international relations and diplomacy. This study, therefore, was anchored on state-building and securitization theories. State-building theory refers to the historical and political process of establishment, consolidation of institutions, stabilization and sustainability of state development from the emergence of the state to the contemporary times (Hehir & Robinson, 2007). The state-building theory is relevant to AMISOM operations since its fundamental objectives include but are not limited to the establishment of good governance, constitutionalism and the rule of law, security sector reforms (SSR), rebuilding the economy and physical infrastructural development, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and the protection of civilians. This theory therefore delved into interrogation of the general problems that the issue of state reconstruction raises in AMISOM intervention by presenting varying critical perspectives on the nature, purpose and general prospects for international involvement in state reconstruction (OECD/DAC, 2008).

The data revealed that AMISOM played a critical role in guiding Somalia's political transition through the support of constitutional processes and the establishment of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). This aligns with the state-building theory's emphasis on institutional development and governance (Hehir & Robinson, 2007). For instance, interviews with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighted that AMISOM facilitated platforms for inter-clan dialogues and electoral processes—key state-building activities—especially during Somalia's 2012 transition to a federal government. These actions directly demonstrated how the theory helps in analyzing AMISOM's contribution to institutional stabilization. Secondary data from policy documents and field reports indicated AMISOM's involvement in security sector reforms (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). These are core tenets of state-building theory as articulated by the OECD/DAC (2008). Informants from defence ministries confirmed that AMISOM mentored the Somali National Army (SNA) and helped to reorganize local policing structures. This insight clarifies how the theory supports the interpretation of AMISOM's capacity-building efforts in restoring the state's monopoly on violence and legitimacy.

The theory of securitization has a foundational basis in the Copenhagen School (Stritzel & Stritzel, 2014). In the context of AMISOM, military intervention in state reconstruction has huge relevance to the application of securitization theory. The launch of AMISOM was authorized by the UNSC after the successful securitization of Somalia as a failed state. The parameters for measuring state failure were infiltration of Al-Shabaab and Somalia refugee crisis. In the context of Somalia's peace support mission, AMISOM is the securitization agent. The AMISOM troops' role is ensuring the suppression of the prevailing threat which is the Al-Shabaab as well as other groups threatening Somalia's stability. The Federal Government of Somalia is the referred element in the context of the AMISOM intervention. The FGS was responsible for developing security mechanisms through carrying out sector and security reforms under AMISOM's mentorship. Further, the national police force and the national army of Somalia are considerably weak in achieving the country's security demands. The audience in Somalia's securitization theory was the Somali population. They play a significant role in the intervention's success. The initial step in securitization's success is called a "securitizing move", which theoretically is a method open to any unit because only when the audience has been convinced by an actor that there is legitimacy in the need to go beyond binding regulations and rules, can a case for securitization be identified. Securitization theory therefore guided in identification of the securitized components which contributed AMISOM to intervention in Somalia regarding state reconstruction (Taureck, 2006).

Interviews and official documents pointed out that AMISOM's deployment was legitimized through the portrayal of Al-Shabaab as an existential threat, both regionally and globally. This reflects the concept of a "securitizing move" in securitization theory (Taureck, 2006), where actors frame an issue as a security threat to justify extraordinary measures. In this case, the African Union and United Nations acted as securitizing actors, successfully persuading international and regional audiences (including the Somali populace and neighbouring states) of the need for intervention to prevent state collapse. Respondents from academic institutions emphasized how AMISOM's operations focused not only on defeating Al-Shabaab militarily but also on protecting civilian populations and humanitarian convoys—core functions that reflect the theory's focus on the practical outcomes of securitization (Stritzel & Stritzel, 2014). The audience's reception especially from the Somali communities was key in legitimizing AMISOM's presence. Thus, securitization theory helped explain how AMISOM managed the political narrative to sustain its intervention under international and domestic scrutiny.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tuvdendarjaa (2022) illustrates that multiple challenges the UN faces are categorized into three namely; strategic, operational and tactical challenges. At a strategic level, the challenges are covered in areas of leadership, legislation, global order and finance. The failure of leadership blended with poor management, discipline, inefficiency and insignificance of some traditional PSO approaches demonstrate the need to reform and improve the structure of the UN. For instance, misunderstanding and undefined bureaucracies between the organizations have impacted negatively on the strategic and operational level activities. This further complicates the peacekeepers' capacity to carry out their duty at the tactical levels in their areas of operations. Legislatively, troop and police contributing States had no consensus understanding of the PSO Status of Forces

Agreement (SOFA), mandates, rules of engagement and inconsistencies in policy raises issues about the effectiveness of PSOs.

Hussein and Mutundu (2021), highlighted that the challenges faced by IGAD in peace initiatives were on how to attain and maintain balance, maintain neutrality, addressing intolerance, and conflict of interest within its jurisdiction. Economically, IGAD members are poor states incapable of facilitating negotiation platforms among conflicting states on their own. IGAD was frustrated by the lack of progress in the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia. Francis (2005) attributed this to many warring clan factions and warlords uninterested in the peace process and benefiting from the multiple peace initiatives. Consequently, "IGAD convened a summit in March 1998 and called for an end to 'the proliferation of competing initiatives' (a reference to Egypt's activities) that served to undermine the peace process in Somalia' (Healy, 2009). Unfortunately, this was not achieved because of the emergence of conflict in 1998 between Eritrea and Ethiopia which worsened the conflict situation in Somalia. An inquiry found that Eritrea armed the Aided faction while Ethiopia supported its proxies in Somalia. This therefore undermined the IGAD processes towards reconstructing Somalia.

Agada (2008) in interrogating the challenges faced by of UNs peacekeeping in Africa, identified long bureaucracy in UN deployment, inadequate personnel and logistical Issues as well as non-cooperation of warlords or warring parties. The study observed that non-effectiveness of mandates, ineffective arms embargo enforcement, non-participation of troops from developed nations and failure to address the root cause of conflict and wars as primary challenges. These challenges impede the effectiveness of UN PKOs in Africa and continue to affect peacekeeping initiatives globally. Even with the lessons learnt, the United Nations peacekeeping operations challenges continue to persist.

Schofield in her analysis of the challenges of UNPKO in the post-Cold War intra-state conflict highlights that the diversity of UN mission mandates strains the UN's ability to deliver on all the objectives (Reynaert, 2011). This unsurprisingly pinpoints the use of the terms "overstretched", "under-resourced" and "overmatched" in debates surrounding the challenges facing UN peacekeeping missions (Clement & Smith, 2009; Simons, 2016; Lederer, 2009). Towards addressing these challenges, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) as well as the Department of Field Support (DFS) through 'Peace Operations 2010' and 'New Horizon' agendas have been working together. However, some scholars argue that the initiatives by UNDPKO and UNDFS to mitigate these challenges happening at the time when UN missions are in crisis. (Clement & Smith, 2009; Gowan, 2008). Analytically, a concern in scholarship is that UN peacekeeping missions should be "clear" (Willmot & Sheeran, 2014), "credible" (Gray, 2001), and "achievable" (Oxfam, 2012). Nonetheless, Stock (2011) points out that missions' mandate lacks this certain criterion. In support of Stock's (2011) assertions, The UN Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) is a case study. The mandate changed frequently, reflecting a poor consensus in the Security Council on what strategy to employ and as such, ambiguous, inconsistent and under-funded mandates were crafted (Gray, 2001). The lack of clarity, credibility and achievability within peacekeeping mandates therefore raises pressing concerns about how to advance in the protection of civilians if mandates are not coherent (Willmot & Sheeran, 2014).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a case study research design. This design was considered suitable because it provided grounds for an in-depth and comprehensive investigation of the challenges AMISOM faced in state reconstruction in Somalia (Bryman, 2016). The study was done in Mogadishu. Mogadishu as a study area was justifiable on the basis that it is host to the targeted institutions and study population that provided adequate data in examining the challenges faced by the mission in Somalia. The study targeted relevant key informants in Academic and professional spectra particularly those with knowledge, intellectual base, experience and more importantly expertise in foreign policy especially on state reconstruction and AMISOM. The study further targeted Somali elders, Somali political and business elites, Somali political leadership and the Somali diaspora community as well as Somali NGOs. Given the qualitative nature of the study, purposive sampling was considered appropriate in determining the targeted institutions and key informants. The purposive sampling technique enabled the researcher to give a proper analysis even in the case of large populations using

limited resources (Patton, 2002). In determining the sample size of 62, the study emphasized theoretical saturation (Miles & Huberman, 1998). Interview schedules and document analysis were utilized as key data collection instruments for primary and secondary data respectively (Whyte, 2003). The researcher, through the interview schedule, was able to examine the respondents' values, concerns, interests or attitudes concerning the research question (Gay & Airasian, 2002). Document analysis was used to source information from books, websites, paintings and laws, journals, books conference papers, minutes, dissertations, theses, online libraries, policy documentations, periodicals, academic papers and books in addressing the research question" Babbie (2010). Document analysis was for triangulation

and a combination of methodological frameworks (Prior, 2014). Corbin and Strauss (2008) and Rapley (2007) point out that document analysis demands examination and interpretation of data to provide meaning, understanding, and development of empirical knowledge. The data collected was analyzed through content analysis.

Content analysis key steps entailed preparation of data, definition of unit of analysis, categorization and coding scheme, test of code scheme on a sample of text, assessing of coding consistency and, drawing inference from data which has been coded. Finally, it entailed reporting of methodological frameworks and findings. Thus, the data collected through interviews was transcribed into text, combining the notes taken. The notes were then be organized by using various thematic data categories. The thematic categorization of data enabled the study to minimize wide variety of data to more limited set of attributes constituting variables to draw conclusions on the research questions. All data, both primary and secondary, were cross-checked against theoretical frameworks to verify their alignment with the conceptual underpinnings of the study. This rigorous approach ensured that only valid, credible, and thematically relevant data informed the analysis and conclusions. Conclusions of findings from collected data were presented descriptively.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study examined challenges faced by AMISOM in carrying out state reconstruction in Somalia and classified the challenges in to three dimensions namely; strategic, tactical and operational challenges.

Strategic Challenges

Strategic challenges refer to the key limitations that AMISOM encountered in attempting to attain its long-term strategic initiatives towards state reconstruction. These challenges emerged out of internal and external variables and demanded proper planning and decision-making at both AUPSC and UNSC. The pinpointed strategic challenges largely focused on the issues that relate to legislation, leadership systems, global order and funding. Three key strategic challenges namely, complexities and dynamism in the mission's mandate, inadequate funding to the mission and the overall inadequacies of the mission's capacity and capability were identified and analyzed by this study.

Complexities and dynamism in the mission's mandate

AMISOM mandate constituted a complex assignment that previous international missions (UNISOM 1: UNISOM 2: UNITAF: Ethiopia Intervention) failed to achieve their goals (Ligawa, 2017). The complexities and dynamics in the mandate were evidenced by the fact that the mission could not be solely executed by the AU but in partnership with other international agencies. The resolutions by the Security Council to AMISOM as a multidimensional force were huge, varied, and complex and kept on evolving from time to time between 2007 and 2021. The mandate in itself wasn't commensurate with the support which the UNSC and other relevant parties gave to the AMISOM. Between 20th February 2007 and 21st December 2021, the UNSC passed 45 resolutions concerning the dynamics, nature and scope of the AMISOM mandate (UNSC, 2024: AMISOM, 2024). These made a problematic and challenging discourse in the execution of the stipulated mandate. As propounded by the securitization theorists, securitization of the mandate was the key component in the facilitation of peace and security initiatives in Somalia. Williams (2013) observed that the AMISOM mandate was very impossible to be executed within a short period. Musoma (2021) also points out that the provided mandate was too ambitious to be practically executed and at the same time operated in the war space with a

few numbers of troops. Consequently, the incompetent mandate made AMISOM an easy target for insurgents and this led to the numerous casualties from the enemy.

The models employed by AMISOM guaranteed partial success because voluminous work was to be done but quite limited in means (Ligawa, 2017). Ligawa further alludes that the AMISOM mandate was renewed every other time by the UNSC and was subjected to political dynamics, financial implications and other unprecedented factors beyond the control of the AU, AMISOM and the Somali Authorities. Consequently, AMISOM had various mandates to undertake and required various forms of assistance so that they would be attained. For success to be accomplished by AMISOM troops, other stakeholders in the process needed to play their respective roles. In the same context, UNSC kept on changing, amending reviewing and extending the mandate of AMISOM. In conformity with the theory of securitization, adequate support of the AMISOM mandate remained a key component in the successful facilitation of peace initiatives in Somalia.

The informant's views on the AMISOM mandate acknowledged the fact that the AMISOM mandate was not commensurate with its capacity and capability. The statements further agree with the previous finding by Amadi 2012: Williams, 2017, and Ligawa, 2017. The glaring reality in this context pinpoints the need to implement the Brahimi Panel recommendations on UN peace operations in 2000 ([https://www.unv.org/sites/default/files/Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations \(Brahimi Report\) - A-55-305.pdf](https://www.unv.org/sites/default/files/Report%20of%20the%20Panel%20on%20United%20Nations%20Peace%20Operations%20(Brahimi%20Report)%20-%20A-55-305.pdf) retrieved on 9th October 2024). The report asserts that AU peace support operations have far-reaching implications, especially in the logistics, areas of coordination, training, doctrine, capacities and capabilities.

Inadequate Funding

The positive outcome of any PKO/PSO squarely lies in its funding capacity to address logistical, technical, personnel and operational components. The logistical challenge constitutes communication and equipment as well as the troops' capability to maintain their modern infrastructure and supply systems. For AMISOM to make strides in Somalia, adequate financial assistance from the international community and donor partners was needed to support its initiatives. Many experts and scholars allude that inadequate funding hindered AMISOM from attaining its desired strategic responsibilities. Within the concept of operations, voluminous resources were needed for efficacy. De Coning and Freear (2013) assert that AMISOM was unable to fund itself with TCC contributions which made it largely dependent on external financing. The procurement of military hardware largely depended on the availability of financing which the AU could not relinquish to foreign donors. European Union as the major donor announced plans to cut down on their financing of AMISOM (Ligawa, 2017). European Union stated that the cut on funds was a result of austerity measures caused by the financial challenges on the African Peace Facility (APF) which funded AMISOM and reflected huge demands placed on the facility to assist peace and security efforts in Africa (Ligawa, 2017).

Financing AMISOM operations required an astronomical figure of financial packages. AMISOM received funding of 1 billion dollars covering allowances for the 22,000 military personnel, payment for police, international and local civilian personnel as well as operational costs for civilian offices based in Nairobi. For example, the EU provided 1 billion dollars to AMISOM between 2007 and the end of 2015 (Mahmood & Ani (2017). EU cut down financial contributions to AMISOM by 20 % from January 2016. AMISOM requires close to \$300 million every month. AMISOM forces were paid an allowance of \$1,028 monthly with no other allowances. For every KDF soldier, the government deducted an administration cost of \$200 implying that every military personnel got \$828. This cut created discontent among the troops considering the risks in the pacification of Somalia (Ligawa, 2017). As a mitigation measure, AU with other partners such as the EU, UK, France, the US China and the UN were prompted to have discussions on how they could mitigate the budgetary issues to avoid "waste and duplication of functions".

An analysis of the report by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) shows how funding challenges in the AMISOM elevated the debate on external support for the mission; raised issues over AMISOM's legacy after a decade of operations and spurred the development of a concrete agenda for AMISOM's withdrawal by 2020/21. Funding was a major issue for AMISOM activities and this called the need for AUPSC to explore mechanisms to fund the mission. Both the experts and scholars concur that a limited financial and logistical

base hindered the performance of AMISOM. This calls for the international community to develop structural and budgetary frameworks before deploying peacekeeping operations in Africa.

Inadequacies in the overall mission's capacity and capabilities

Insufficiency in the number of personnel to ensure the stabilization of zones liberated from Al-Shabaab and to continue with its mandate was an issue that undermined the effectiveness of AMISOM. The expansive Somalia with a total land area of 637,660 km² (246,202 miles²) and a total coastline stretch of 3,025 km (1,879.6 miles), (World Data, 2023) required a huge number of militaries, police and civilian personnel for AMISOM to have significant control. Through UNSCR 2036, AMISOM troops capacity was increased from 12000 to 17,731 positively impacted on the military operations towards attaining its mandate. Although there was an increase, the number was still below the desired figure to stabilize and pacify the entire territory of Somalia due to consideration of the asymmetrical nature of the threats posed by Al Shabab (Ligawa, 2017). Due to limited military personnel, the efforts were limited to a few districts in Mogadishu (Kromah 2010). Consequently, the presence of AMISOM in Mogadishu was confined to vital sectors such as the harbours, airports, government buildings and mission posts (Boon 2012).

The scarce nature of military equipment and supplies was another issue connected to resource restrictions. The shortage of equipment particularly aviation equipment prohibited AMISOM from conducting offensive air operations thus a huge limitation to the efficacy. AMISOM military personnel would have moved effectively and safely with this form of supplies (Tres, 2014). AMISOM also faced budgetary challenges for wages and reimbursements for state-owned equipment among TCCs. This included the absence of assistance for troop enablers as well as multipliers. The operations of AMISOM were harmed due to the inadequacies. AMISOM was so overburdened by the situation that it was not able to increase its geographical scope of military operations. The outcomes of these contexts were extremely hazardous to regional peace and security (Australian Universities, 2013). Furthermore, the AMISOM and SNA personnel were forced to abandon or sell their military equipment due to a lack of payment (Kiyonga, 2015). Despite high levels of training of troops, they could not defeat contemporary insurgencies without necessary and modern military assets. Ideally, troops should not deploy to war zones without adequate military hardware because defeat would be the outcome in an already complex situation. In the absence of the necessary armour, initiatives towards state reconstruction in a fragile situation like Somalia would be an exercise in futility. This frustrated the credibility and weakened the responsible peace missions. AMISOM's greatest challenge was specialists with reliable expertise and skills in different fields such as medicine, intelligence gathering and engineering. To cure this deficiency, AMISOM was dependent on external actors to provide finance, training and equipment directly to TCCs.

Ligawa (2017) alludes that peacekeeping and peace enforcement training are separate and distinct. PSOs need training in the form of mine/booby-trap handlings, cease-fire supervisions, media liaisons, patrols, checkpoint operations, law and order maintenance and the rebuilding of infrastructures which are vital to Africa's PSOs. The AMISOM training was specific to the mission and made provisions for "complex, integrated, multifaceted operations geared towards support and facilitation of comprehensive peace agreements." More importantly, the focus of PSO was evolving gradually from peacekeeping to peace-building contexts. SNA in itself was not prepared to conduct operations. AMISOM could not develop an exit strategy if the Somali national security mechanism was not able to maintain security after the AMISOM exit.

Tactical Challenges

This section analyzed the tactical challenges that AMISOM encountered during the mission. Tactical challenges refer to the obstacles that a conceptual action implemented as one or more specific tasks encounters. Tactical capability is the ability to manoeuvre and disposition AMISOM troops in a combat mission. At the tactical levels, challenges were analyzed in the context of a common understanding of the operation, cooperation, discipline and code of conduct in the mission. We analyze two key tactical challenges in this section. These are firstly the challenge of fighting the invisible enemy and secondly, the lack of internal coherence and coordination in the AMISOM command.

Fighting Invisible Enemy

Attacking an enemy which is invisible in its approach is a complex challenge in any peace support operation mission. It is always difficult to differentiate between the local population and Al-Shabaab combatants because of its guerrilla war strategy. With its invisible nature, Al-Shabaab launched wide-scale conventional attacks on AMISOM and SNA by executing mortar attacks on the key international compound within the precincts of Mogadishu Airport. The successful attacks on military bases and convoys also enabled Al-Shabaab to seize huge amounts of military arsenal from both the AMISOM and the SNA. Ligawa, (2017) posits that Al-Shabaab claimed to have launched 418 attacks between October 2017 and April 2018. Many of these were military attacks (166 cases), Improvised Explosive Devices (101 cases), series of assassinations (67 cases), attacks by use of grenades (43 cases), and suicidal attacks (10 cases). 54% estimate that Al-Shabaab attacks were aimed at SNA and allied militias while 28% targeted AMISOM contingents. The frequency of attacks was evidenced in Mogadishu and its environs (125 cases), with the next highest number of attacks happening in Afgoye (28 cases), Bosaso (22 cases), Baraawe (19 cases), Qoryoley (17 cases) and Beledweyn (16 cases). This statistical information was synonymous with the official data by AMISOM that suggested Al-Shabaab attacks were more than once against the mission every other day. Key supply routes from Mogadishu to Barawe and Baidoa were the most targeted by the insurgents.

Apart from its fighting capabilities, Al-Shabaab collected adequate revenue through the extortion of local populations as well as illegal commercial activities. In certain parts, Al-Shabaab maintained sophisticated systems of administration which were premised on coercion and fear of the local population. At the same time, they provided a modicum of justice which was viewed as more reliable as compared to the Somali government. In Mogadishu, for example, Al-Shabaab exercised huge control and ability to infiltrate tax institutions and even top government officials as well as extorting traders through protection rackets.

In this context, AMISOM's principal mandate was to reduce the threat posed by Al-Shabaab and additionally provide stability within which the Somali population can pursue their state reconstruction. However, this created harsh and resistive feedback from Al-Shabaab which concentrated its combats on AMISOM across major sectors with unprecedented assaults on major supply routes between Mogadishu, Barawe and Baidoa. Funds raised from hijacking, piracy and individual states and diasporic assistance aided Al-Shabaab to pay salaries of its members (ibid). Moreover, Al-Shabab's resilience is enhanced by the development of ICT which allowed Al-Shabaab to communicate, network and enlist the assistance of global terror networks (Williams, 2017).

The military wing of Al-Shabaab was composed of militants from local and transnational backgrounds, and the fact that it constituted disparate segments caused a huge obstacle to the success of AMISOM because it was unable to define and focus on a specific gravity context.

The combatants in the group were from a local guerrilla fighter as well as global Al-Qaeda terror networks. Consequently, AMISOM faced dilemma in determining who was a member of Al-Shabaab (ibid). Al-Shabaab's nature also paused a severe threat to AMISOM. Dagne (2011) observed that the group was created in 2003 with the major intention of irredentism and creation of a greater Somalia.

Analytically, warnings, propaganda, and official sentiments from Al-Shabaab in the course of AMISOM portray a radical and extremist group full of determination and resilience. For instance; An Al-Shabaab suicide bomber (Abdisalam Ali) made a video publication of martyrdom before killing himself on 29th October 2011 in Mogadishu stating the need for jihadism; on 16th November 2011, a member of Al-Shabab, Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage warned Kenya a troop contributing country for intervening and joining AMISOM; on 29th December 2011, an Al-Shabaab spokesperson vowed that the terror group would launch retaliatory attacks in Kenya if authorities did not withdraw troops from Somalia (Muibu, 2024).

Muibu (2024) demonstrated the extent of Al-Shabab's actions to ensure that they achieve and advance their aspirations among them challenging AMISOM's quest to the realization of its reconstruction mandate and neighboring and regional stability as well as the international community. The unconventional approach and guerilla tactics they employ in wars against the AMISOM conventional approach present a dilemma that state

reconstruction in Somalia may not be easily realized. The extremist jihadist doctrine entrenched in the aspirations further demonstrated the resilient nature of their quests.

Lack of Internal Coherence and Coordination

AMISOM components were divided on a geographical basis with the political affairs and strategic planning section located in Addis Ababa and the operational section situated in Mogadishu. The separation of these structures undermined the internal cohesion when it came to handling tactical and operational issues within the mission. Williams (2013) asserted that the approach in which AMISOM leadership was instituted decreased the opportunities for peace and reconciliation in Somalia. The fact that AMISOM headquarters was based in Nairobi, Kenya until the closure of 2012, showed bad political signals to the Somali population and the world. The Commanders in AMISOM were allowed to act as top representatives in the political sphere. The AMISOM capability was undermined by travels by civilian staff to and from Mogadishu and Nairobi. The regular travels had a significant impact on the performance of the mission. For instance, when civilian staff want to leave the protected zones in Somalia they must be escorted by the military which affects the limited resources of the military personnel (Kromah 2010). Another coordination challenge that was evidenced in AMISOM was inadequacy in cooperation between teams in the task force was a problematic concern given the difficulties of patrolling the highly volatile operation zones (Block et al., 2012). Internally, AMISOM faced the challenge of weak leadership in the political discourses. The AU Chairperson, the AU Commission Chairperson and the AUPSC Commission showed weaker leadership at the time in handling the situation in Somalia. Because Nairobi rather than Somalia being the mission headquarters, successive military commanders competed for the intermediary political roles between the TFG and the AU. This means that Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) had a higher degree of autonomy thus impacting negatively on the outcome (ibid). Neus (2013) alludes that AMISOM had a tall order in bridging several gaps to be viewed as a trustworthy and legitimate entity by the Somali populace. Ligawa (2017) asserts that AMISOM in its command-and-control structural framework was inadequate enabling military personnel to operate in a divided and incoherent model. Djibouti summit stressed the essence of effective AMISOM command and control to achieve synergies in efforts to combat Al-Shabaab and therefore directed AMISOM contingents to fully assist the Force Commander in exercising an effective and transparent command of Military components and equipment assigned to AMISOM, under the general leadership of the Special Representative of the AU Commission Chairperson and the Head of AMISOM Mission.

The majority of the respondents alluded that the AMISOM command structures were likely to be controlled by foreign actors because the forces were not entirely under the AMISOM command. The TCCs dictated where their troops were to be deployed within AMISOM sectors (Ligawa, 2017). AMISOM command was also overstrained with most of its military bases situated distance apart therefore making its control and command complex and the response period for beefing up such zones took a relatively long time. Al-Shabaab maximized the AMISOM's weakness by dominating these areas with frequent patrols. Al-Shabaab also conducted ambushes and IED attacks at their will. There were limited established contact points where liaison initiatives would be done freely with allied forces. This justifies the grounds that an outpost in the Gedo region was overrun by Al-Shabaab and rescue initiatives didn't happen for close to 5 days. With strong command and control, reinforcement should have been deployed on time to help the distressed troops at El-Adde.

Analytically, varying interests among the TCCs to AMISOM was a key component that undermined its mandate on state reconstruction in Somalia. AMISOM in its aspiration desired a stable and prosperous Somalia but the aspirations of TCCs to an extent suggested the contrary. Consequently, these enabled AMISOM and its TCCs to pursue their interests instead of the stipulated goal thus affecting their primary objectives to help those they were tasked with responsibility to protect. The initial mandate of the mission called for conducting peacekeeping operations in Somalia and TCCs had the latitude to pursue their own strategic goals in Somalia which directly and indirectly negatively affected the realization of the AMISOM mandate. For Instance, Kenya as a TCC to AMISOM located in Sector 2 pursued its strategic objectives thus conflicting with the mission's objectives. Kenya was also accused of undermining peace dialogues and reconciliation initiatives by exacerbating instead of mitigating rivalry and tensions among warring factions. This interfered with the smooth implementation of the Somali National Security strategy in total violation of AMISOM aspirations

towards achieving state reconstruction. Chopra (2014) and Mohamed (2022) assert that these actions by TCCs undermined initiatives to bring sustainable peace and stability to Somalia.

Operational challenges

Operational challenges refer to the limitations that AMISOM encountered in lacking adequate capabilities with a proper operational framework to deploy capable and adaptable military, police and civilian personnel. This section analyzed the operational challenges in terms of the nature of the armed conflict, methods of operation, and readiness AMISOM in the peace support operations. Four operational challenges were identified and analyzed. Firstly, negative clannism and clan differences among the Somali population. Secondly cases of violations of international laws and norms. Thirdly, uncertainty and fragility in the Somalia political atmosphere and fourthly, incidences of piracy in the territorial waters and high seas off the Coast of Somalia

Negative clannism and clan differences

Ligawa (2017) observed that Somali society is characterized by homogeneity ethnically and religiously that is deeply rooted in clannism as the social and political foundation of their existence. Luling (2006) points out that Somali society traces their genealogical origin to a single male ancestor, Hiil, and his two sons (Sab and Samaale where Sheikhs from Arabia married into this lineage. Menkhaus (2004) pinpoints that Somalis identify with both aspects of their lineage, divisions (clans and sub-clans) have become more vital since the early 1990s. The Somali clans are sharply divided and they largely display their loyalty to the clan rather than the Somali state. Somalia has 5 major clans with numerous sub-clans in the social structure. Hawiye clan is closely linked to extremism and constitutes 25% of the Somali population. Traditionally, the Hawiye clan are found in the vicinities north of Mogadishu and steps below the Puntland. The Isaaq clan constitute 22% of the Somali population is located in the Northwest Somaliland and the Eastern part of Ethiopia. The Darod clan is the most widely distributed clan network and constitutes 20% of the Somali population. The Darod clan covers Puntland and quite further south as well as the areas that border Kenya.

One of the critical key informants (IR scholar) interviewed in KU City Campus on 28th June 2024 highlighted that Somali citizens are primarily a Cushitic ethnic group and share a common history, religion (Islam in this context), language and ancestry. He stressed that despite their rich, diverse and universal way of life, negative clannism is a glaring hindrance to Somali path to modern statehood. The informant further informed that shunning negative clannism would bring reconstruction in Somalia citing Puntland and Somaliland federal member states as successive case studies in Somalia.

From the respondents' views, clannism is a stumbling block towards a stable Somalia. This is because Somalis pledge allegiance to their clans instead of their state; the Federal Republic of Somalia. As a result, state legitimacy is washed down by clan dynamics and subsequently state reconstruction processes are fruitless. These hostilities among these clans have undermined the state reconstruction process in Somalia. Clan conflict was a result of the legitimacy disputes and was a major impediment to AMISOM's capacity to stabilize Somalia. Apart from AMISOM, the majority of the SNA were made up of coalitions of clan militia that were unified by their hatred for Al-Shabaab. There have been incidents of government forces attacking one another. Due to the considerable tensions among clan militias, it has been extremely challenging for all the clans to come together under a common umbrella and offer adequate support to AMISOM. Tres (2014) observed that rivalry among clan militias largely undermined AMISOM's effectiveness in deploying troops outside Mogadishu.

Violations of international laws and Norms

Within the normative frameworks, peacekeeping operations should ensure full compliance with the International

Human Rights law and International Humanitarian Law. It is a sacred norm that missions must be executed in compliance with international laws as enshrined in the UN Charter and must genuinely promote human rights in their mandates (UN Charter, 1948). International humanitarian law (IHL) as stipulated in the Geneva

Conventions, Hague Conventions and other additional protocols puts limitations on tactics that can utilized in armed conflicts (Bellal & Casey-Maslen, 2022; Bothe, 2013). They are aimed at protecting civilian populations that are not directly involved in conflict/wars. It also protects the basic rights of the population, victims and non-combatants caught during the conflict.

Mohamed, (2022) posits that the ROE of AMISOM were negatively impacted by the structural and operational restrictions that contributed to a compromise in the mission's ability to carry out its obligation. AMISOM was also in violation of human rights, especially in the infliction of damage, and death on civilians and its troops engaging in sexual exploitation as well as abuse of women and girls (Mwangi, 2015; Mohamed, 2022; Badri & Muscati, 2014). Initially, AMISOM dismissed the reports of sexual assaults but they later took some initiatives to address the issue. Prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse draft policy was produced by AMISOM in 2013 and started placing measures to investigate incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse (Ibid).

Critical informants (Security experts and academicians) interviewed on 5th July 2023 and 4th June 2024 elaborated that there was primary and secondary evidence that AMISOM troops violated the international laws guiding peace support operations under the AU and UN frameworks. They claimed that AMISOM troops engaged in sexual exploitation and assault on Somali women and girls, exchange of food and other products for sex, rape, killing of civilians, and other inhuman acts and unspecified human rights violations during combat operations against Al-Shabaab. The respondents' views were in tandem with the findings in the Human Rights Watch and International Refugee Rights Initiatives (IRRI) reports. According to the reports: "Some girls were being taken to Uganda and were in a dire situation. A few girls have been infected with HIV. Sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation were common". This pinpoints the need to develop legal and legislative frameworks that ensures international laws are fully complied during peace support Operations. Recommendations from human rights need to be implemented to ensure that gaps in violations are minimized and the civilian population is protected.

Uncertainty and fragility of Somalia's political atmosphere

Somalia's political situation was characterized by fragmented, fragile, heterogenic, local and hybrid-based structural institutions which had formal and informal manifestations and were largely controlled by clans and their respective militias. This feature in itself impedes the realization of statehood. Ligawa, (2017) alludes that the fluidity of Somalia's political structure with access to power and economic resources being the source of conflict among clans, was an enduring challenge for peace and reconciliation initiatives.

Beyond the clan issues, there was a disagreement on the federalism structure or even the desire for statehood. Most traditional Somali society has always been nomadic and suspicion of possible interference by the central authority in their traditional affairs, has drawn reflection from the experience of tyrannical military regimes. The major clans were in favour of federalism with autonomy. However, this approach led to a federated and further fragile state which eventually gave some Somali clans control over their areas. AMISOM's success was therefore partly reliant on whether centralized structures could display political/state legitimacy among the Somali citizenry. Scholars allude to the lack of political legitimacy demonstrated in the state with allegations that the local governance which took the positions of former Al-Shabaab leaders weren't coming from the major clans in their regions but were viewed as puppets of the Somali National Authority. Consequently, the Somali government continued to struggle to attain the required political legitimacy (Ligawa, 2017). Ibrahim (2010) points out that Al-Shabaab's commitment to global jihadism connections to al-Qaeda and ability to capture and control territory was another emerging concern. Al-Shabaab and other Somali radicals are viewed as a threat to the Somali Transitional Federal Government, to the Horn of Africa as well as the entire international community.

According to one of the key informants (an officer in an Islamic NGO) who was interviewed on 24th June 2024 in Nairobi informed that Somalia is extremely fragile and unpredictable and this created pessimism among AMISOM strategic partners. He further pointed out that the re-emergence and resilience of Al-Shabaab and their links to Al Qaeda continue to distract the initiatives towards state reconstruction in Somalia. The informant's statement corroborates the findings of Amadi (2012). Amadi posits that widespread pessimism

about embarking on the mission was deeply rooted in the previous legacy of UN missions in the 1990s. However, given the uncertainties and pessimism, AMISOM's contributions in Somalia outshines any previous mission in the execution of the mandate.

Incidences of piracy in the territorial waters and high seas off the coast of Somalia

Maritime piracy in the Indian Ocean has become a key concern to the international community initiatives towards state reconstruction in Somalia. Piracy continues to pose a security threat to thousands of ships sailing through the Somali coastline. The famous attack and hijacking of the Indonesian ship (MV Sinar Kudus) by pirates; where the ship and the crew were held captive for 46 days and released upon paying \$ 4.5 million as ransom (Ismunadi, 2011). Karawita (2019) points out that piracy in Somalia presented several challenges to the international community since the beginning of this century. Addressing piracy in Somalia implies confronting Somalia's unemployment, and poverty and, more importantly creating frameworks that shall serve as the best approaches to deal with piracy. The road to state reconstruction was hindered by piracy activities and the fact that AMISOM did not have a marine component to address the vice. Data from the International Maritime Bureau shows that 15 attacks were registered off the Somalia coastline in 2013 compared to 75 incidences in 2012 and 237 incidences in 2011, which was the apex of Somali piracy (ICC, 2013). Patinkin (2017) points out that no piracy was successful piracy was registered in 2016. A report published by the International Maritime Bureau demonstrated the decline of piracy. From January to June 2017, 87 piracy activities were reported. This decline was attributed to the naval initiatives and preventive actions by the international community. Although there was a decline in piracy in 2012, the region was not completely free of piracy and continued initiatives were executed to ensure safety. Many scholars and experts observed that the creation of a stable and peaceful Somalia was a vital mechanism for eradicating piracy and security of the international marine route bordering Somalia.

In a report released on 16th November 2009, Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recommended the necessity to assist AMISOM and Somali Authorities in addressing piracy problems in the Indian Ocean and Somali coastline. The report emphasized the state reconstruction in Somalia by focusing on peace, security and reconciliation through the Djibouti Peace Process, and the mandate of AMISOM (UN, 2009). In his recommendations, Ban Ki-moon's report to the UNSC on the situation in territorial waters as well as high seas off the Somali coast acknowledged that the increase in maritime presence by States played a significant role in the region's stabilization. In acknowledging the magnitude of the negative consequences of piracy in the Horn of Africa and beyond, a key informant (International Specialist) interviewed on 12th August 2024(online interview) highlighted that since pirates' prey on ships in the most traversed sea route in the globe, they subsequently threaten central artery of the world economy thus potentially leading to global instability and insecurity.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that military interventions in Somalia require adequate technical, financial, logistical, administrative, and legitimate support to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in its operations. African Union Commission should ensure that limitations and lessons learned in the previous missions in Somalia are addressed in both the UNSC and AUPSC so that a formidable framework is attained in guiding and enhancing missions that succeeded AMISOM as in the case of ATMIS. Adequate funding, conformity to international humanitarian law and international human rights, proper training and adequate intelligence should be a minimum for any mission sanctioned by the UN, AU or other legitimate actors before embarking on the interventionist agenda. A multisectoral approach should be embraced in addressing challenges. UNSC and AUPSC ought to be rationalistic, considerate and objective in ensuring that resolutions they make are timely, practical, realistic and within the financial ability of the missions assigned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To end cyclic deployment of mission after mission in Somalia. The study recommends that the AU should marshal sufficient resources that would sustain peace support operations in Somalia. AU should not entirely depend on donor communities, particularly from the collective West. In the spirit of the Constitutive Act of

the African Union and Pan-Africanism, the study recommends that the African Union should develop a model that seeks African solutions for African challenges. The idea of depending on Western powers appears to be partly detrimental to state reconstruction in Somalia. Concerning legitimacy and lack of trust in missions from Somalia's populace as well as Somalia authorities which has become a liability in the state reconstruction process, the study recommends a bottom-up approach that establishes the root cause of the problem and mechanism within which a cordial PSO are carried. This study is also rooted in the establishment of the National Commission for Reconciliation as well as a state agency for DDR initiatives within Somali national security architecture. The fact that military paradigms alone cannot bring state reconstruction, the study recommends the need to employ diplomacy as a tool in engaging the warring Somalia clans and insurgency groups. Al-Shabaab employs a determined Somali nationalism and Islam to its agenda and calls for an Islamic emirate of Somalia. Therefore, there's a need to employ diplomatic approaches to the discourse.

Finally, intelligence gathering and intelligence sharing remain a fundamental component for successful military intervention. The study therefore recommends the need for AU, its member states, the global intelligence community as well and the strategic partners, to develop an overt and covert intelligence database that will facilitate intelligence gathering and intelligence sharing to peace support operations in an effective, responsive, timely, swift and manageable manner. The study further recommends the need for the AU to have its own standing military and civilian force and to procure huge and modern military assets for air, ground and naval missions, to enhance its effectiveness and avoid proxy wars and state interests attributed to troop-contributing Countries (TCCs).

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