

AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE
UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

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**REPORT OF THE FIELD MISSION OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN
UNION TO SOMALIA, FROM 8 TO 10 NOVEMBER 2021**

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I. BACKGROUND

1. From 8 to 10 November 2021, a delegation of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), led by the Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the AU, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Omar Gad, in his capacity as the PSC Chairperson for November 2021, undertook a field mission to Mogadishu, Somalia. The field mission was undertaken in the context of the Council's mandate of promoting peace, security and stability in Africa, particularly, as part of the ongoing consultations between the AU and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), in view of the impending end of the mandate of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and pursuant to the PSC Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.1037(2021)] adopted at its 1037th meeting held on 7 October 2021, UN Security Council resolution 2568 (2021), and the need to ascertain the nature of the follow-on AU peace support operation in Somalia. The mission was also a re-affirmation of AU Pan-African solidarity with the Government and people of Somalia, and a re-iteration of the AU's unwavering commitment to continue supporting Somalia in its efforts to restore political normalcy, peace, security and stability in the country. The Chairperson on behalf of the Council underlined that this visit is an expression of unwavering and continued commitment of the AU to Somalia and its people and Somalia's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and highlighted that the AU and Somalia share the same strategic objectives and should agree on the best means and ways to realize them in a satisfactory manner.

II. OBJECTIVES

4. The PSC delegation sought to ascertain the facts regarding the political, security, humanitarian and socio-economic situation on the ground and to engage in direct and honest dialogue with the FGS and other relevant stakeholders, which is critical in defining the next steps to be taken by the AU with regard to its future engagement in Somalia. The following were the objectives of the Mission:

- a. To **consult** with the leaders of the Federal Government of Somalia and the relevant key partners on the way forward for the future of AMISOM post 2021;
- b. To **engage** with AMISOM leadership on its activities on the ground with a view to gather information on the assessment of the current security situation, the AU's engagement in Somalia post 2021, including the progress made on the revised CONOPs;
- c. To **lay** the groundwork for future AU engagement and contribute to the identification of areas for possible AU interventions as the nation continues with its election process.
- d. To **gather** more information on the support required by the AU to facilitate the successful implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan.
- e. To **encourage** political stakeholders to address their political grievances and concerns through an inclusive dialogue as a peaceful and amicable mechanism to ensure that the root causes of the political challenges are comprehensively addressed;

III. COMPOSITION

2. The PSC delegation comprised the Permanent Representatives of the following PSC Members, namely: Egypt (as Head of Delegation), Chad, Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique, as well as representatives of Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Senegal. The delegation was accompanied by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Somalia and Head of AMISOM, H.E. Ambassador Francisco Caetano Madeira, the AU Ag. Director for Conflict Management, Ms. Fiona Lortan, and support staff from the AU Commission.

IV. METHODOLOGY

3. In order to achieve the objectives of the field mission, on arrival in Mogadishu, the PSC delegation received a comprehensive briefing by the AMISOM on the situation in Somalia. The delegation paid a courtesy call to the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, H.E. Mohamed Abdullahi "Farmaajo", and to the Prime Minister, H.E. Mohammed Hussein Roble, with participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Minister of Justice and Minister of Interior Security. The Delegation held consultations with various key stakeholders on the ground, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, H.E. Mohamed Abdirizak; and the Federal Electoral Team (FEIT). The PSC delegation also held consultations with the representatives of Troop Contributing Countries (TCC), namely: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda; the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSAM); United Nations Support Office for Somalia (UNSOS); the European Union; the Members of the C6 Plus (comprising, among others, the AU, UN, EU, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD); Ethiopia, Germany, Italy and Sweden); the Council of Presidential Candidates (CPC); Goodwill Ambassadors for the Women's Quota, Civil Society Organizations, and the media.

V. FINDINGS

4. From the consultations held with the various interlocutors, the PSC Delegation gathered the following information:

a) Political Situation:

- Elections

5. There has been progress in terms of liberating territory from Al Shabaab, with the support of AMISOM, building the institutional capacity of the FGS with the support of partners, the development of a Somalia Transition Plan. The election for the Upper House (54 seats) have now been concluded in the country's Federal Member States (including for two remaining seats in Galmudug State which were concluded after the PSC field mission). However, the political situation in Somalia is still marked by a number of serious challenges, including: disagreements between the Office President and the Office Prime Minister; the differences between the FGS and Federal Member States with regard to power and resources sharing, issues of foreign policy and national governance; Presidential and Lower House elections delays, and there is also for the

key challenge of the elapse of the mandate of the current President and legislature. Representatives of civil society and Council of Presidential Candidates argued that the delays in organizing elections are a result of, inter alia, a lack of political will, necessary resources, particularly financial. The Council underscored the paramount importance of the effective, comprehensive and expedited implementation of the September 2020 and May 2021 agreements concerning elections' modalities.

6. Furthermore, there is tension between the Election Management Teams at the Federal level and at State level. The elections have remained embroiled in the country's constitutional crisis. The Goodwill Ambassadors, who were established by the Office of the Prime Minister, are undertaking civic education and awareness raising campaigns in the States in order to ensure that the women's quota is achieved. To this end, they are spearheading the campaign for effective participation and representation of women and youth in the upcoming elections. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has also negatively impacted on the elections process. FEIT is facing institutional capacity challenges in terms of funding and logistics. The candidate registration fees are also exorbitant. The volatile security situation throughout the country further compounds these challenges, particularly for the organization of elections. An appeal was made for both AMISOM and the SNA, to provide and guarantee the required security conditions for the successful organization of credible elections. An appeal was also made for the mobilization of additional funding similar to the one availed by the League of Arab States (LAS). The FEIT commended the AU Commission for deploying a technical team of experts and for other supports the election process.

- Post-2021 AU Engagement in Somalia

With regard to AU engagement in Somalia post-2021, the representatives of the FGS and most of the international partners, expressed their disagreement with Option 1 of the Independent Assessment Report, namely to establish an AU-UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Somalia, as endorsed by the PSC at its 1037th meeting held on 7 October 2021. They underscored the importance of positively engaging with the views of the FGS, stressing that an agreement between the AU and the FGS is key to securing the support of the UN, as well as the EU. To this end, a proposal was made for an urgent need for the resumption of technical discussions as well as convening of an informal technical forum for all Somalia security stakeholders with the AU, to discuss possible alternative options, leading to a shared consensus that would enjoy the guaranteed support of all key stakeholders, including the permanent Members of the UN Security Council.

7. However, the EU indicated that it expresses no particular position vis-à-vis the proposed options, and is willing to continue its financial support to the AU based on the principle that the position should have a consent of the FGS and take into consideration the relevant principles and concerns including the shrinking financial resources that can be availed in this regard.

8. The Council explained the rationale behind opting for Option 1 as expressed in the communique of the 1037th session of AUPSC, and underscored the need for effectively addressing the challenges relation to sustainability and predictability of financing, sufficiency of enablers and multipliers, the pool of T/PCCs and coherence of command and control. It also explained the need for the multidimensional nature of the follow-on mission that allows a comprehensive undertaking of the situation, and reiterated that the role, functions and mandate of the new mission are closely linked with the degree of preparedness of the Somali authorities including the level of training, mentoring, force generation and deployment under the framework of the Somali Transition Plan (STP).

b) Security Situation

9. The security situation in Somalia has made significant progress through the support from AMISOM, including degrading the activities of Al Shabaab in the country. Although, the fighting capacity of Al Shabaab has been reduced, the terrorist group remains an existential threat to Somalia and the region. As such, the security situation in Somalia remains extremely volatile due to the increasing asymmetric attacks by Al Shabaab, targeting the civilian population, symbols of the FGS and AMISOM, as well as private property. Lately, the group has resorted to unconventional methods of asymmetric warfare that include use of guerrilla tactics of surprise attacks, improvised explosive devices, landmines and long range mortars. Furthermore, the group has a very effective strategy of providing public services that the FGS is currently not providing, including law and order, administrative justice and food aid. The group is also receiving financial and material support from its allies outside the Continent besides a well enforced programme of extorting taxes from the Somali population to finance its activities.

10. On the other hand, although the FGS is building the capacity of the SNA, with a view to take over the security and protection of the country from AMISOM, there are still many challenges to be addressed. These range from insufficient force generation capacity, low recruitment capacity, lack of accountability for graduates from the training programmes being conducted by various bilateral partners of Somalia, lack of force enablers and force multipliers including intelligence capacity, low levels of morale, and the continued inability to unilaterally conduct offensive operations against Al Shabaab. In addition, there are more forces trained at Federal level compared to State level. Furthermore, the SNA currently has no dependable capacity to hold on to territory liberated from Al Shabaab. Thus it still lacks the required capacity to take over and guarantee national security of the country without external support. It was very clear from the interactions with interlocutors that SNA is not ready to take charge of security of the country completely without the support from AMISOM.

11. The security situation in the country is also being compounded by the political impasse between the President and the Prime Minister and, on the other hand, between the FGS and Federal States, which Al Shabaab is taking full advantage of. Others also argued that the short term of office for the SNA chiefs of defence staff, every four years, were negatively impacting on relations between the AMISOM and SNA.

c) **Humanitarian Situation**

12. Somalia is facing a dire humanitarian situation, a result of a combination of factors, including the prevailing security situation resulting from the attacks by Al Shabaab and other terrorist groups operating in the country, climate change phenomena such as drought and floods, desert locusts, and the COVID-19 pandemic. All these have resulted in loss of innocent lives, massive population displacement through internally displaced persons and refugees, loss of income and livelihoods, as well food insecurity. The humanitarian situation is compounded by lack of humanitarian access due to the ongoing activities of Al Shabaab. As such, there is an urgent need for sustained humanitarian assistance to the population in need.

VI. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

13. In view of the findings of the field mission, Council may wish to:

- a. **Welcome** the progress achieved to date in terms of liberating the country from Al Shabaab and degrading its capabilities, and in creating an enabling environment for the FGS to effectively extend state authority throughout the territory of the country, and **commend** the SNA and the AMISOM for the progress registered thus far in the fight against the Al Shabaab terrorist group;
- b. **Underscore** the importance of preserving the gains made to date, maintaining the current momentum in the fight against Al Shabaab; and **emphasize** the need for the continued presence of an AU peace support operation on the ground post-2021 to continue to support to the security of the country in close coordination with the SNA;
- c. **Pay tribute** to the AMISOM and Somali SNA personnel for their immeasurable personal sacrifice and unwavering commitment to defeat Al Shabaab in very challenging conditions; **pay special tribute** to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace, and express condolences to the troop and police contributing countries and the immediate families of the deceased; and wish speed recovery to all those nursing injuries from Al Shabaab attacks;
- d. **Note with concern** the institutional challenges facing AMISOM, in particular adequate, predictable and sustainable funding, force enablers and force multipliers and coherence of command and control;
- e. **Highlights** the relevance of its communique of 1037th meeting which endorsed Option 1 of the Independent Assessment Report, namely to establish an AU-UN Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in Somalia; while **taking note** of the position of the FGS, as well as the position of some international partners with regard to the nature post-2021 AU engagement in Somalia, and **request** the Commission to continue to explore other options for a continued AU peace support operation presence in Somalia, which would address the concerns of both the FGS and the key

international partners, while at the same time addressing the imperative of ensuring predictable, sustainable and adequate levels of financing for a future AU peace support operation for a multi-year period and all the other related concerns and ensuring the safety and security of the AU Peace Support Operation particularly through availing the needed resources vis-à-vis the assigned tasks;

- f. **Further request** the Commission to resume technical discussions with the FGS on the Concept of Operations for a follow on mission to AMISOM, and with the United Nations on the preparation of Joint Report on the the strategic objectives, mandate, size, composition and financing of such a follow-on mission. Such mission should have as its end state the transition of responsibility for security to the Somali Security Forces by the end of 2023, as stipulated in the Somali Transition Plan; In this regard, **reiterating** its appeal to the UNSC to approve a technical roll over of the mandate of AMISOM to avail the time and space needed for reaching the desired consensus;
- g. **Consider** informal supporting technical fora with the participation of the FGS and UN, as well as other relevant partners, to consult and explore different options, with a view to reach an agreement with the FGS, UN and partners aiming at paving the way forward on the future of AMISOM post 2021 and **present** the option(s) to the PSC and later to the UN Security Council for consideration;
- h. **Reiterate** its position that any future presence of AU in Somalia should be multidimensional and encompasses the civilian and political dimensions with a view to ensure comprehensive approach to addressing the security situation, while **highlighting** the particular importance of Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development activities in Somalia including through the role of AUPCRD Centre in Cairo in areas of recovery and stabilization;
- i. **Express deep concern** over the institutional differences, on the one hand, between the President and the Prime Minister, and on the other, between the FGS and the FMS and, in this regard, **encourage** all the concerned actors to expeditiously address their differences, in order to ensure that Al Shabaab is deprived of the opportunity to exploit these political differences to its advantage;
- j. **Note with concern** the persistent institutional capacity challenges facing the SNA, including force generation, insufficient capacity to effectively hold on to, and ensure effective control over, territory liberated from Al Shabaab and, most importantly, lack of required capacity to immediately take over full responsibility of guaranteeing national security in Somalia after 31 December 2021;
- k. **Underscore** the importance of concluding the conduct transparent, free, fair and credible elections in order to stabilize Somalia and, in this respect, **encourage** the FGS

and in particular the FEIT to ensure that all elections are organized within the stipulated timelines;

- l. **Request** the AU Commission to work closely with the Government of Somalia with a view to provide support to FEIT to address the challenges facing the elections, as well as provide the necessary support;
- m. **Commend** all international partners and the bilateral partners of Somalia for their continued support, **underscore** the importance of enhanced collaboration, coordination and complementarity of their efforts, as well as transparency;
- n. **Express gratitude** to the Government of Somalia for its hospitality and positive engagement, as well as to all the other stakeholders who expressed keenness to engage with the Council;
- o. **Express** particular gratitude to the AMISOM and UNSOS for facilitating the successful conduct of the field mission and commend the efforts of Mission to promote the visibility of the AU on the ground, including through implementation of quick impact projects (QIPs) and peace strengthening projects (PSPs) and assure the Mission of the continued support of the AU and Council in particular; and
- p. **Decide** to remain actively seized of the matter