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Reshaping the African Union Mission in Somalia: From AMISOM to ATMIS



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By Miguel Mbiavanga Ajú, Ph.D.

Abstract

Authorised in March 2007, AMISOM's mandate officially ended on March 31, 2022 giving way to a newly established African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) which came into effect on April 1, 2022. Confronted with a myriad of problems ranging from logistical challenges, geopolitical interests by state actors involved both at global and regional level to the country's internal political wrangling and continued threat posed by *al Shabab*, the African Union is once again reshaping its policy in Somalia. After fifteen years of mixed results, the regional body has remained resolute in its commitment and quest for peace and consolidation of state-building in Somalia. This time, there is a heightened sense of purpose with ambitious and clearly defined

targets for its mission, tight deadlines, and a well-defined exit strategy. This article explores the challenges of the transition and responsibilities placed into the hands of a still weak Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). More specifically, the prospect for peace and security in the most conflict-ridden nation of the Horn of Africa with the related regional implications and beyond in a post-AMISOM and ATMIS landscape are discussed. A critical assessment of AMISOM's experience and the overly-ambitious transition plan suggests that the emerging scenario could yet again fall short of expectations in the quest for stability and lasting peace will continue to remain an elusive grand ambition in Somalia.

Introduction

Preceded by other regional peace interventions including African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), Sudan (AMIS I & II), the Comoros (AMISEC & MAES), the Central African Republic (MISCA), and Mali (AFISMA), the establishment of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was certainly one of the most significant and challenging African Union-led peace support operation. Authorised in 2007 by the African Union (AU) through its Peace and Security Council's Communiqué of 19th January and

United Nations (UN) through Security Council resolution 1744 of 20 February under Chapter VII (United Nations, 2008) of the UN Charter, AMISOM was given the task of implementing a peace enforcement mandate aimed at bringing peace and stability in Somalia.

After decades of lawlessness, instability, and a longstanding political vacuum following the end of Mohamed Siad Barre's totalitarian clan-based regime in 1991 which led to the total disintegration of the State, the legal system and security forces, AMISOM emerged when an Islamic Shari'a based system became prominent with the rise and ascension of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in 2006 (Dias, 2010). It is also conceivable that in the aftermath of 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the establishment of AMISOM was influenced by geopolitical and national security interests both at global and regional levels; the US-led Global War on Terror (GWOT); and the evolving partnership between the AU and UN in peace and security.

Indeed, the establishment of AMISOM was the first kind of arrangement in which the UN broke the ground by authorising the funding of a regional force to an active



ATMIS hands over weapons captured during operations against al Shabab to the Federal Government of Somalia (Photo Credit: ATMIS Twitter)

combat operation through resolution 1863 of 2009, which created the standalone UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA), later renamed as UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) whose mandate was to provide the logistical and financial support to the AU forces fighting the war against *al-Shabaab* and other radical groups in Somalia (United Nations, 2009).

This article is anchored in the scholarly literature on peacekeeping interventions through the lens of Liberal Theory (Lebovic, 2004). Essentially, the deployment of soldiers to multilateral peacekeeping operations is a mechanism of facilitating democratic transition (Worboys, 2007). However, the article is also situated in the realist tradition which is centred on the notion that the international system is a 'self-help' system where States are obliged to look after themselves and they are obliged to be concerned with their national security (Worboys, 2007). The main aim of the article is to discuss the reshaping of AU policy in Somalia as it transitions its peace support mission from AMISOM to ATMIS while also highlighting the salient and challenging task for the still weak Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). The prospects for peace and security in most conflict-ridden nation of the Horn of Africa are discussed in a post-AMISOM landscape.

Mandate Implementation: Fault Lines

The assessment of how AMISOM went about carrying out the tasks assigned by the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) through successive resolutions over the past fifteen years is twofold. On the one hand, aspects such as logistical and operational challenges had significant impact on mandate implementation which revealed some design flaws and operationalisation of a regional peace support operation of this nature.

As noted earlier, AMISOM's logistical support was provided by UNSOA. However, UNSOA struggled to overcome the clash of organisational cultures between the UN and AMISOM. The central problem was that UNSOA was based on UN procedures, mechanisms, and frameworks designed for more traditional UN peacekeeping operations in relatively benign environments but tasked with supporting a war-fighting mission. As expected, UNSOA was simply overwhelmed and could not keep up with AMISOM's more intense tempo of operations especially once the mission was expanded beyond Mogadishu. In addition, UNSOA-

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AMISOM partnership broke one of the cardinal rules of war: commanders should always be in control of their logistics. While generally sympathetic to UNSOA, several senior AMISOM commanders saw their separation from their logistical support as fundamentally problematic and ill-advised, as would most military commanders. UNSOA's principal weakness was thus its structural design and the political terms on which it was established (Williams, 2018).

Another major challenge that was widely recognised and influenced AMISOM's ability to effectively implement its mandate was the issue of command and control. The UN peacekeeping doctrine provides clear guidelines and policy on authority, command and control in UN-led peacekeeping operations. This binding policy applies to all UN peacekeeping operations authorised by the UNSC and defines and describes the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of authority, command and control. The policy also defines the tasking authorities for both military and civilian logistics units within the integrated logistics system of the UN peacekeeping operations. Clear command and control arrangements support greater cohesiveness amongst all mission elements and allows for efficient and effective implementation of mandates and strengthen the mission's preparedness to handle crisis situations (United Nations, 2008).

However, in the case of AMISOM, there is overwhelming evidence which points out to the structural fault lines regarding the issue of command and control. For example, a major incident of a gun battle which exposed the absence of a unified command and control structure in AMISOM took place in September 2013 following a night-time raid by *al Shabab* militants. The militants were engaged by Somali troops commanded by the regional administration (partnered closely with AMISOM), repelled the attack, and sustained casualties. Unfortunately, the request made by Somali officials for medical evacuation

of the wounded soldiers from Baidoa airport was denied by the Burundian troops manning one of the two checkpoints of the airport.

The refusal was repeated by the Ugandan checkpoint thereby denying the timely evacuation of wounded Somali soldiers. The row resulted in an avoidable loss of life for soldiers who were fighting *al Shabab* in support of the implementation of AMISOM mandate. The dissection of command between AMISOM contingents is considered a plain indifference and recklessness by the administration and people of Baidoa, who are AMISOM supporters and are expected to support security operations to flush out *al Shabab* from the region. More worryingly, the regional administration said that the fact that Burundian troops take their orders from Bujumbura and the Ugandans from Kampala is clear evidence that raises serious questions on AMISOM's ability to control its contingents, its internal governance and accountability to the mission and the FGS (Komey et al., 2014).

Therefore, given the potential implications on the ground, in its resolution 2297 of 2016 the UNSC specifically called for the strengthening of command and control within AMISOM, cross-sector operations, and the generation/ deployment of quick reaction forces (QRF) as well as force enablers and multipliers under the central command of the mission's Force Commander.

On the other hand, a critical assessment of AMISOM's fifteen years presence in Somalia has also revealed major fault lines that are consequential in regional peace support operations. This emerged in the form of pre-existing conditions reflecting the geopolitical and national security interests pursued by state actors involved both at global and regional level. For instance, in 2016, a prominent former Somali diplomat and political analyst, Abukar Arman argued that Somalia was in need of a strategic partner that is willing to pressure the neighbouring tag-team that is holding it in a deadly headlock – Ethiopia and Kenya – to step aside; to weigh in and put economic pressure on key actors in order to engage in genuine, Somali-led reconciliation; and to

help rebuild the national army and security apparatus that is capable of keeping *al Shabab* at bay (Arman, 2016). Through such claims, he was certainly expressing his concern and focusing on the interference by Somalia's neighbours involved in the peace efforts and the apparent pursuit of their national security interests while playing an active role in the implementation of the AMISOM mandate. Yet, both countries have been concerned with the dangers to States' survival which is consistent with the realist tradition (Keohane & Nye, 2012).

To further illustrate, as Somalia and the Horn of Africa (HoA) in general became more and more the focus of attention in the post-9/11, 2001 coupled with the confluence of developments in the global geopolitical and geostrategic landscape, the overall AMISOM operating environment was inevitably shaped by other foreign interventions which also impacted on the implementation of its mandate.

Thus, the prospects and purpose of external intervention changed dramatically in 2006 when the ICU took power in Mogadishu. This introduced new dynamics and raised the interests of Western powers concerned about the threat of international terrorism and the situation in Somalia, particularly the US increasingly renewed its strategic interests in the Horn of Africa as it feared the threat of terrorism in the region and had accused the ICU of harbouring international terrorists associated with the 1998 East African simultaneous embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam. These US security concerns at the time, coincided with those of the most powerful regional states (Kenya, Ethiopia and to some extent Uganda) in the sub-region. This is because the emergence of Islamism as a political force in Somalia gave the conflict a regional dimension with implications for Ethiopia and Kenya, which both have sizeable Somali communities within their borders (Healy, 2009).

Meanwhile, the ever-growing influence of some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and Egypt, particularly Saudi Arabia and Qatar who, on the one hand, have been engaged in the pursuit of an Islamist agenda

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aimed at promoting Wahhabism in Somalia while Egypt, on the other hand, sought to promote the Salafi views of the Muslim Brotherhood there was not a welcomed development by everyone, especially Ethiopia. Indeed, the expansion of radical Islam in Somalia may explain why more than ever, Ethiopia has continuously felt the need to adopt policies capable of influencing the political and security landscape inside Somalia (Ali, 2011).

The animosity, diplomatic tensions and political rivalry which erupted in June 2017 within the GCC have had a spill-over effect reaching and significantly influencing the security dynamics and political shifts underway across the HoA region. Also, the impact of the Saudi-led intervention in Yemen has added to the complexity and volatility of the region which not only has challenged Somalia's federalism process but further complicated an already intricate situation with the balance of power shifting among the countries involved such as Qatar and UAE. These factors have altered old alliances in the region, eased access to weapons, and more importantly leading to further militarization which adds to the complexity and volatility of the region (Ali, 2011).

In summary, the various factors considered demonstrate the extent of complexity that surrounded the implementation of AMISOM's mandate between 2007-2022. Besides internal divisions and political dynamics, the analysis also shows that the competing international and regional interests of the actors involved in the peace efforts in Somalia have the potential of dictating the outcome and developments on the ground.

Political Wrangling, Elections Meddling, and al Shabab

While the African Union (AU) forces were engaged in the implementation of the peace enforcement mandate and fighting the war against *al Shabab*, the political process, consolidation of peace and state-building efforts were being overshadowed by ongoing internal divisions and constant political tensions between the central Federal Government and federal member states, lack of meaningful progress towards political reconciliation and rebuilding of match needed government institutions across Somalia. While there has been successful transfer of power in 2012 and 2017, the elections were also marred by widespread allegations of lack of transparency, procedural irregularities, and meddling in the electoral process by outsiders.

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Despite Qatar's relatively small size and population with a foreign policy impetus and objectives characterised as something of a black box and its long history in Somalia, the Gulf nation has played a powerful role in the country's politics since 2006 which was prompted by the rise of the ICU, their short-lived rule, and the subsequent atomisation of Islamist movements in the country. Doha used personal and religious networks to seriously engage with Islamist factions and former ICU members to influence politics in Somalia. Crucially, after Ethiopia invaded Somalia and ended the ICU's rule in 2006, Qatar hosted some of the ICU leadership members which included Sheikh Sharif Ahmed whose subsequent election as President in 2009 was possibly funded by Qatar despite later falling out with Doha when it insisted on expanding the government to include violent Islamists such as Hassan Dahir Aweys and his Hisbul Islam (Cannon, 2019).

The rivalries among members of the GCC referred to earlier, had further complicated the situation in Somalia. Competition between the UAE, Saudi Arabia, on the one hand, and Qatar and, by extension, Turkey on the other hand, has aggravated longstanding intra-Somalia disputes. Notably, this has been the case between factions in the capital; between Mogadishu and the regions; and between it and the self-declared Republic of Somaliland. Abu Dhabi's relations with the government of the current President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed "Farmajo" have tanked. Farmajo's government accused the Emiratis of funding its rivals and stoking opposition, particularly in Somalia's federal states. Emirati officials denied meddling and instead accused Farmajo of falling under Doha's and Ankara's sway (International Crisis Group, 2018).

Qatar's attempt to influence the political landscape did not stop with the withdrawal of support for Hassan Sheikh. Instead, it extended its financial support to Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmaajo' in the 2017 Somalia's presidential election, the UAE reportedly also tried to influence the outcome of the election but ultimately failed in its bid to locate a suitable candidate (Cannon, 2019). Faced with the failure to influence the outcome of the elections, Abu Dhabi has made strategic moves to remain an influential actor in the country including in the breakaway Somaliland where it has expanded its sphere of influence. To do so, it has used two main instruments: control of the ports and the establishment of military bases. The semi-autonomous regions of Somaliland and Puntland welcomed the Emirati initiative and allowed the UAE military to operate in these regions despite the explicit complaints from the Federal Government that Emirati activities have undermined its national unity (Telci, 2018).

It is, therefore, not surprising that progress on security has been hampered by the political wrangling which has been on spotlight recently and resulting in a power struggle at the highest level of the government between the Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble and the incumbent President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmaajo'.

In fact, as the Federal Government continued to be divided on the next steps in the electoral process and election deadlines missed amid continued manipulation of the process, with state and federal leaders manoeuvring to install loyalists in parliamentary seats, *al Shabab* has not only exploited and increased attacks to derail the process, but also launched large-scale attacks on strategic locations. In March 2022 alone, *al Shabab* launched a twin suicide attack on an election venue in Hirshabelle state's Beledweyne city killing at least 48 people including MP Amina Mohamed Abdi. Militants also breached the highly fortified Mogadishu's Halane

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Airport perimeter for the first time since 2014, killing at least six people, including five foreign nationals. In another attack, *al Shabab* killed two electoral delegates in the Lower Shabelle region (Southwest State) and in Mogadishu, respectively (International Crisis Group, 2022).

It is within such a political and security landscape that Somalia's international and regional partners including the AU and UN will continue to rally support towards the rebuilding of strong state institutions, especially the security forces that will take over from ATMIS which is expected to withdraw by the end of December 2024 as stipulated in the Somalia Transition Plan (2021-2023). One thing is evident though, the plan has raised the stakes for AU's policy in Somalia and scepticism among Somalis including analysts.

A Bag of Mixed Results

Whoever wishes to foresee the future must consult the past; for human events ever resemble those of preceding times. This arises from the fact that they are produced by men who ever have been, and ever shall be, animated by the same passions, and thus they necessarily have the same results.

Niccolo Machiavelli

The closing of one page and opening of another by the AU with the transition from AMISOM to ATMIS, warrants some reflections on the successes and shortcomings that marked its one and half decade long presence in Somalia. But first, it is worth noting that as an AU-led peace support operation, the AMISOM intervention fits within the mantra of African-led solutions to African problems (AfSol) in addressing the many challenges faced throughout the continent, particularly armed conflicts, terrorism and security problems. As a concept, AfSol has been used by some scholars in their assessment of AMISOM's successful or unsuccessful record in the past fifteen years.

For example, Sabastiano Rwengabo has argued favourably about the success of the mission which in his view seems to vindicate emerging scholarly and policy optimism regarding Africa's potential to solve its peace and security problems through Africa-centred responses. Unlike non-Africa-centred interventions, AMISOM relied on the AfSol approach whose pillars-genuine commitment, shared Pan-African values, and a sense of



African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) soldier walks near the scene of a suicide explosion on November 11, 2021 (Photo Credit: Reuters/Feisal Omar)

ownership-engendered its success by incentivizing states to withstand the Mission's costs and tirelessly mobilise foreign support. Moreover, the willingness to undertake a risky operation and suffer large numbers of casualties without withdrawing reveals a sense of ownership, which was absent in previous interventions in Somalia (Rwengabo, 2016).

Meanwhile, as part of lessons learned at the tenth anniversary in 2017, a strategic review of the mission conducted by the AU had both praised AMISOM for its good work done under extremely challenging circumstances and criticised it for not having done enough in its 10-year presence in Somalia (Dessu & Mahmood, 2017). This introspective assessment is quite revealing in that it illustrates the cautious optimism in hailing the mission as having fulfilled its mandate successfully and highlights the fact that the success story emanating from an AfSol perspective is not shared by all.

Another major strategic task assigned by the mandating principals to AMISOM was the reestablishment and training of all-inclusive Somalia's Security Forces (SSF) that would eventually assume the security responsibilities after the AU withdraws its troops from the country. However, there is evidence to suggest that the lack of a common agenda among key stakeholders undermined the attainment of this critical objective.

As it turned out, trained entirely independent of both AMISOM and the Somali National Army (SNA) leadership, and in general contradiction to the international community's agenda, several hundred Somalis were being trained and paid by the Ethiopian forces. In this way, different groups of armed Somalis – which may or may not be presented as SNA members – were supported with one aim in mind: the establishment of border security. This situation exposed the obvious weakness of the FGS, and by extension the SNA. More importantly, it questioned the willingness of the TCCs to support, and thus AMISOM's ability to fulfil, the mandate of the mission. It also shows the limited room to manoeuvre that is available to the broader international community in Somalia. While it holds true that none of the above should detract from the successes that AMISOM has had over the years, it has become evident that realism, not idealism or liberalism, should be the mantra guiding expectations of the mission (Albrecht, 2015).

In analysing AMISOM, the 'African solutions for African problems' motto has been branded as one of the most confusing phrases in Africa today. Therefore, it is not surprising that the interventions from neighbours have not brought Somalia the promised peace (Arman, 2014). Similarly, the Crisis Group Nairobi-based program director for Africa, Comfort Ero also finds problems with

African Solutions mantra. African solutions are often problematic and riddle with hidden agendas as traditional interventions. While African solutions sound more legitimate, interventions by African states are often no less controversial than more international ones. For example, Ethiopia's and Kenya's interventions in Somalia in 2006 and 2011, respectively, have been deeply problematic and have had less to do with stabilizing that country and more to do with their own national concerns, even after the two countries were integrated as part of AMISOM (Ero, 2013).

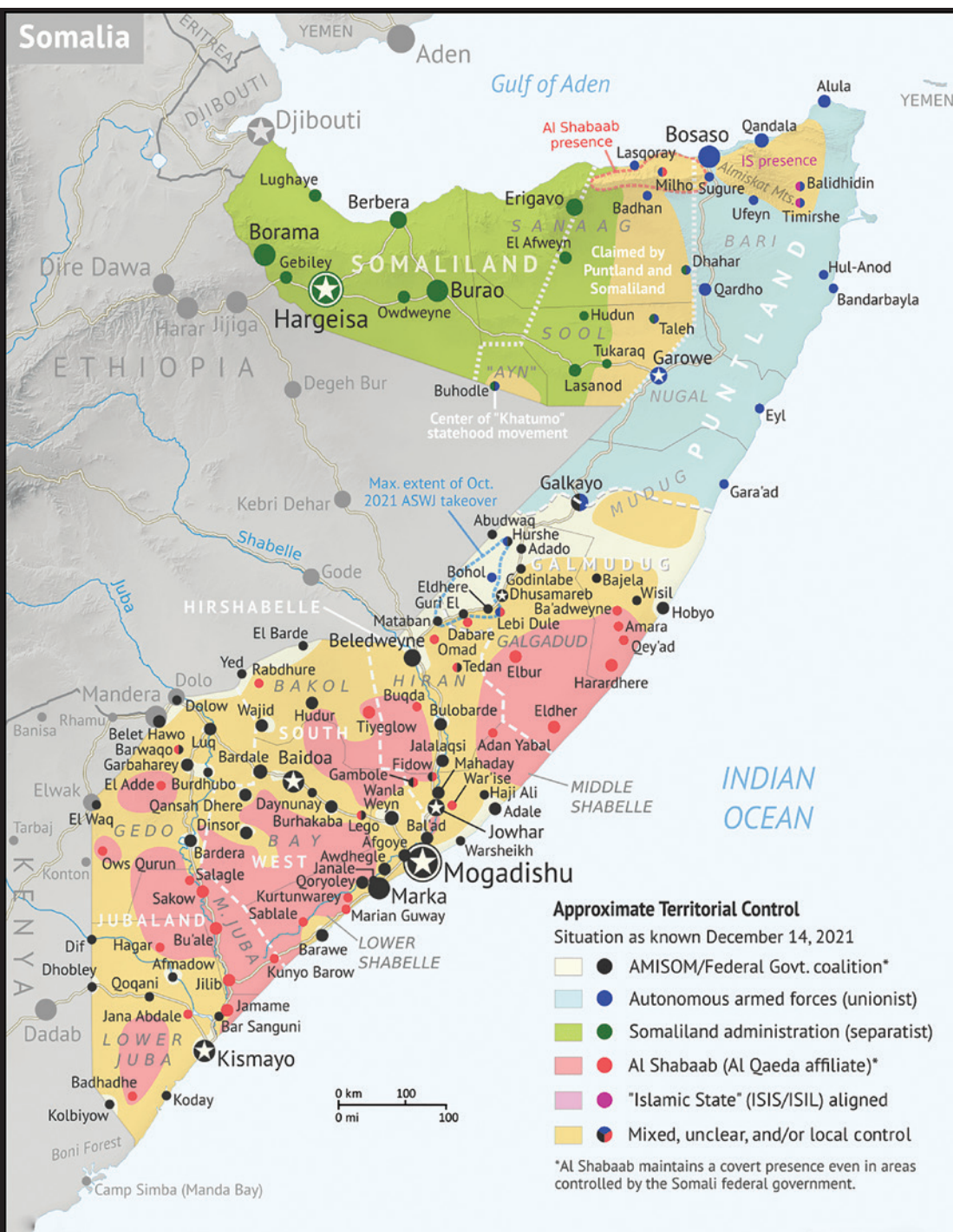
In summary, there is no doubt that the overall security situation in the country improved significantly since AMISOM was established. It is also evident that AMISOM's ability to

effectively implement its mandate was impacted by the global geopolitical interests and security dynamics of the regional countries involved which intersect with their national security interests in the whole sub-region of the Horn of Africa due to the centrality of Somalia. However, while AMISOM has undoubtedly laid the operational and strong security foundation, it remains to be seen how ATMIS will carry out the implementation of its mandate in order to eradicate and ultimately defeat *al Shabaab*.

The Challenges of a Transition

"...It is clear that the future of Somalia depends on the defeat of al-Shabaab, but it is also very clear that our success in this battle is of importance to the whole world" (Sharmake 2009).

Much has happened since the above sentiment was expressed and most certainly echoed by Somalis and those who wish to see a peaceful and stable Somalia today. The reality is that not much has changed since then although the AU, together with international partners, has remained resolute in the quest for peace and stability through AMISOM which has now been transformed into



A map showing alleged territorial control by terrorists groups in Somalia as of December 2021 (Photo Credit: polgeonow.com)

AMISOM's replacement comes at a critical time. Political tensions in the country still threaten the gains made over the years. Divisions among Somalia's elites over the distribution of power and resources are at the center of all the problems

ATMIS as of April 1, 2022. This transition comes at a time when several assessments and lessons learned about AMISOM have highlighted a few operational, strategic, and tactical flaws during its fifteen years of existence in Somalia.

Based on the experiences with AMISOM, there are a number of challenges that will impact the transition to ATMIS and subsequently into the Somalia security forces (SSF). First, the mission's success and exit are expected to rely on the handover of military responsibilities to an effective Somali replacement. But the Somali National Army (SNA) remains as politicized and clan divided as it has ever been, and at the present, little improvement seems likely in the short to medium term. Secondly, the *al Shabab*, the extremist Islamic insurgency, is likely to continue be a major threat. Third, there is the issue of troop contributing countries to AMISOM who have, to some extent, been fighting their own separate wars for their own reasons under the AMISOM banner and finally, the almost deliberately unsettled divisions of power and responsibilities between the FGS in Mogadishu and the federal member states (Colin, 2022).

AMISOM's replacement comes at a critical time. Political tensions in the country still threaten the gains made over the years. Divisions among Somalia's elites over the distribution of power and resources are at the center of all the problems. Moreover, with the political impasse and protracted power wrangling sometimes boiling over into armed clashes, the country's future remains unpredictable. Therefore, if it is to be anything different from AMISOM, ATMIS' mandate and force reconfiguration should include robust political engagement to support reconciliation among the country's divided political groups. Otherwise, the exercise simply renames the mission – which will not help the country much (Dessu, 2022).

Moreover, the bulk of the SNA remains a collection of clan-animating militias with few effective military characteristics that Westerners recognize. Foreign military assistance aimed at rebuilding strong SSF has regrettably become deeply entangled with vested interests, helping


to aid various political players against each other. The result is foreign-supported, semi-detached parallel forces like the US-supported Danab (probably the most effective military force in southern Somalia), the Turkish-supported Gorgor, the police Haram'aad, the intelligence agency's Gashan, and the newer Eritrean-trained forces (Colin, 2022).

Going forward, with clear targets and timelines including the need for the FGS to work with the federal member states in order to generate a total of 3850 security forces by December 2022; 8525 by September 2023 and 10450 by June 2024 as envisaged in the Somalia Transition Plan (STP) and National Security Architecture (NSA) (United Nations 2022) will be a major challenge for the transition. From the above, it is evident that stakes for peace and stability have once again been raised with the underlying security implications within Somalia and across the region. Finally, at the heart of finding durable security solutions lays an imperative that compels ATMIS to avoid falling into the same pattern of AMISOM's shortcomings, otherwise lasting peace and stability will remain an elusive grand ambition in the war-torn nation of the Horn of Africa.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The transformation of AMISOM into ATMIS illustrates the reshaping of African Union's policy in Somalia amidst the challenges highlighted in this article. This change also reflects the Federal Government of Somalia's transition plan (2021-2023), built upon national perspectives and policy objectives. Whereas AMISOM's legacy has arguably been considered as having mixed results, the transition may prove to be rocky for several reasons. First, from AMISOM to ATMIS then gradually from the latter to the Somali security forces (SSF) which is fragmented and ill-prepared. Second, while it attempts to build from AMISOM's legacy, the FGS continues to battle with a myriad of issues including lack of progress towards security nationwide, political reconciliation challenges, weak state institutions coupled with other external factors. Third, the envisaged counterinsurgency battle against *al Shabab* in the phased transition may prove to

be the quagmire that will define the success or failure of the policy. Regardless of what happens, Somalia's stability and state building efforts must be matched internally with meaningful advances towards political and national reconciliation which perhaps should contemplate the inclusion of *al Shabab* as part of the process. Finally, without a critical reflection on the AMISOM's experiences there is a risk of repeating the mistakes or shortcomings of the past fifteen years which will then make it difficult for ATMIS to succeed in its mission.



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Influence of Policy Actors on Kenya's Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Policy (2000-2017)

By Singo S. Mwachofi

Abstract

Over the last three decades, the threat posed by small arms and light weapons to Kenya's national security has persisted. During that period, the Kenya government has adopted various policies to deal with this threat within its territory. Community disarmament, border security management, community policing and stockpile management constitute some of the policies that the government and non-state actors have implemented to control SALW proliferation since the early 2000s. This article examines the influence of state and non-state actors on Kenya's community disarmament policy. The article defines community disarmament policy as those actions and initiatives that have been undertaken by the government of Kenya and non-state actors in their efforts to disarm communities possessing or suspected to be possessing illicit firearms. The objective of community disarmament is manifested in the need for the government and other actors to maintain peace and security amongst communities affected by the negative impact of the proliferation of illicit SALW.

Background

The North Rift region counties of Kenya comprising of Turkana, West Pokot, Elgeyo Marakwet, Baringo and Samburu, predominantly occupied by pastoralist communities, are characterized by harsh climatic conditions with low levels of annual rainfall, rough terrain and for many years, low levels of government security presence owing to the vastness of the territory and has suffered from years of economic marginalization. Poverty levels are high and most socio-economic indicators are below average compared to other counties (Kamenju et al., 2003). The region is characterized by cultural practices that engender community armament such as cattle raiding for dowry payment and for restocking after drought. It is further characterized by inter-communal conflicts tied to contestations over scarce pasture and water. For the last two decades, the uncontrolled spread of SALW has created a cyclic wave of conflicts that have rendered large parts of northern Kenya almost ungovernable, thereby drawing the interest of the government of Kenya to undertake policy interventions with a view to controlling the spread of SALW.

Prior to the 1960s, among the pastoralist communities in Turkana and West Pokot counties, cattle raids were carried out using crude traditional weapons such as spears, bows and arrows. However, these weapons have since been

discarded, so that today, the weapons of choice include a wide variety of modern assault rifles, principally the AK47, G3 and, in some instances, semi-automatic guns, mortars and hand grenades (Kyalo, 2019). Studies have shown that the proliferation of small arms in Kenya can be traced from Ethiopia, which considered 'Pokotland' and Turkana to be part of their territory. Ethiopia armed the two communities to fend off the British at the turn of the 20th Century. Over time, the AK-47 gained special attraction as it became an avenue to riches, coming handy in cattle raids and a means for individual, communal and animal protection.

It is widely reported that Turkana herders also acquired looted arms from Karamojong tribesmen in Northeastern Uganda with whom they exchanged animals for weapons. This was after a raid in 1979 on Uganda's Moroto arms depot following the collapse of the Idi Amin government (Kamenju et al., 2003).

Arms proliferation is also closely related to war and insecurity in neighboring countries. The South Sudan civil war that began in 1983 provided renewed impetus to the flow of small arms in the North Rift Region of Kenya. For example, the Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA) has had a record of selling the livestock it captures through



Illegal small arms and light weapons being destroyed at the Regional Police Traffic Training Centre in Ngong, Kajiado County in 2021 (Photo Credit: Statehouse, Kenya)

raiding in exchange for arms and thus fueling a barter trade in small arms. (Weiss, 2004). The outbreak of war between Somalia and Ethiopia in 1984 added to the already big problem of armament in the North Rift region of Kenya. In recent years, civil war in Somalia, South Sudan, and insurgency in the Oromia territory of Southern Ethiopia have all combined to ensure movement of illicit SALW in the northern counties of Kenya. Due to the adverse effects of the unrelenting proliferation of SALW, state and non-state policy actors have adopted policy interventions tailor made to eradicate the threats posed by the uncontrolled spread of SALW.

State Actors and Kenya's Community Disarmament Policy

Policy actors are instrumental in the design and implementation of public policy (Knoepfel et al), while policy instruments are a fundamental component of public policies and are often a result of mediation within the policy design process (Capano and Lippi, 2017). In this article, policy actors are defined as individuals, institutions or social groups with an interest in, or affected by a public problem. A state actor is defined as any government entity that is concerned with the problem of small arms and light weapons control.

Since the early 2000s, the government of Kenya has implemented a mix of community level policy actions aimed at reducing the proliferation of SALW in its territory. The community-based approaches are seen as constant engagement and participation of affected communities in small arms and armed violence reduction, and respond to demand-side causal factors thereby tapping local social capital and networks to address root causes and provide positive alternatives through develop strategies targeting livelihood systems, governance, conflict management at the local level, and provision of water especially for pastoral communities in northern Kenya (Weiss, 2004). The government's community disarmament policy features a number of components, informed by the prevailing geographical, climatic, and socio-economic factors obtaining in areas inhabited by pastoralist communities.

In 2001, Kenya government adopted the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA), a universal politically binding instrument that sets out commitments by state parties around the world to implement measures set out in the programme of action in order to reduce the spread of illicit SALW. The UNPoA's main objective is to reduce human suffering that is occasioned by the uncontrolled proliferation of SALW

around the world. Under the provisions of the UNPoA, states have committed to implement a range of policy actions aimed at controlling SALW proliferation among them: establishment of a specific agency or department within the relevant ministry to act as the focal point institution for coordinating all matters related to SALW control; collection and destruction of illicit SALW, proper stockpile management, marking of all official firearms to facilitate tracing and tracking of SALW, import and export controls to mitigate the risk of diversion among others (UNPoA, 2001). On April 21, 2004, a group of 11 states from the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa region signed the Nairobi Protocol for the prevention, control and reduction of SALW in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and bordering states. The protocol commits member states to, among other commitments, promote information sharing and cooperation between government on matters relating to the illicit trafficking and proliferation of SALW, and to encourage accountability, law enforcement and efficient control and management of SALW by states parties and civilians. Under the protocol, member states created the Regional Centre on Small Arms (RECSA), a regional body tasked with coordinating implementation of commitments made by states signatories of the protocol. It should be noted that the UNPoA and the Nairobi Protocol are the two key international and regional instruments that underpin Kenya's SALW control policy.

In 2004, Kenya adopted the National Action Plan (NAP) for Arms Control and Management which is reviewed after every 5 years. The NAP mainly operationalizes Kenya's commitments to regional and international protocols on SALWs. NAP further provides for wider participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in small arms reduction and armed violence reduction an elaborate institutional framework. The government of Kenya, through NAP, established the interagency coordination mechanism under the Ministry of International Security and Provincial

Administration (now Interior and Coordination of National Government) for control and management of SALW.

The government of Kenya through NAP established the interagency coordination mechanism under the Ministry of International Security and Provincial Administration (now Interior and Coordination of National Government) for control and management of SALW. Established in 2003, the Kenya National Focal Point (KNFP) on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is the agency mandated to coordinate initiatives and action on SALW, through interagency cooperation with the National Steering Committee on Peace building and Conflict Management (NSC). The KNFP brings together various government ministries, departments and agencies, as well as civil society groups and non-governmental organizations implementing action from the national level to the local level. The government through the KNFP formed 8 provincial task forces, 24 district task forces and 54 peace committees to help implement programs at the local level of administration (Government of Kenya, 2006; 2011). Further, the government has deployed administrative officers from the location level headed by the Chief, to the regional level headed by a Regional Commissioner. These officers are instrumental in coordinating implementation of the government's community disarmament policy. While county governments don't have a role to play in security provision since it is the preserve of the national government, they cannot be ignored in the quest for community security at the county level. The relevant county department is expected to work closely with national government offices at the county level to ensure the success of national government programmes.

Approaches to Community Disarmament in Kenya

The government has, over the years, adopted several approaches that form the cornerstone of its community disarmament policy. These are forceful disarmament, voluntary disarmament, the deployment of police reservists to boost security and the implementation of livelihood projects.

a) Forceful Disarmament

The government's approach to community disarmament in Kenya is state centric. The government sees itself as obligated to provide security to its citizens through ensuring that guns are held only by authorized personnel and not illegally by communities or criminals. It also views disarmament as a sovereignty issue, requiring the state

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to intervene forcefully against those it sees as a danger to state survival. Past disarmament exercises carried out in Kenya have largely been characterized by secrecy and were perceived to be the exclusive domain of the security forces (Kyalo, 2019). The government used strong arm tactics while forcefully disarming civilians in Turkana, West Pokot, Samburu, Marsabit and other counties. However, the recent community disarmament operations in northern Kenya, notably "*Dumisha Maisha I and II*" have been carried out in a relatively civil and humane manner, an approach that signifies a remarkable paradigm shift by the government from its hitherto strong-arm approach.

Kenya's first approach to civilian disarmament was total use of force. The first recorded community disarmament operation was done at Kolowa in East Baringo in 1950 during which over 60 Pokots were massacred. Several families relocated to Losiro in Uganda. The district of West Pokot was closed by the colonialists and over 10,000 heads of cattle confiscated (Gakuu, 2006). In 1961, the then Lieutenant Colonel Idi Amin of Uganda's King's African Rifles crossed the border into Kenya and tortured and terrorized civilians who refused to give up their weapons. 127 men were castrated and left to die (Mumia, 2006).

The worst forceful disarmament occurred in 1984. Dubbed "*Operation NYUNDO*" (operation Hammer), it was a brutal example of the difficulty of disarming civilians who would rather die than disarm. "*Operation Nyundo*" was a collaborative effort of the Kenyan and Ugandan armies and lasted three Months. Government soldiers shot and killed many Pokots on sight, or forced men to lie on the ground in a line as they ran across their backs. Women were raped in front of their husbands, sometimes with empty beer bottles being inserted in their private parts (Hull, 2006). The community was further devastated by mass killing of their cattle. 20,000 heads of cattle were confiscated, rounded up in sheds and starved to death (Ocan, 1994). The painful experience of forced disarmament served to alienate many communities from the government due to the brutality with which the

exercise was carried out. Cattle were confiscated, starved to death or killed in the full glare of their owners. Given the huge sentimental and cultural value the pastoralist communities place on cattle, it was a major miscalculation by the government, which served to erode trust and faith by communities in the governments' commitment to the security and wellbeing of the Pokot community. It is this mistrust that analysts have blamed for continued proliferation of SALW in the North Rift region since the residents and their leaders do not trust that government actors can secure the region.

b) Voluntary Disarmament

The government has also used voluntary disarmament methods in its quest to control SALW proliferation among communities. The government's voluntary disarmament initiative involved the use of "carrots" and "sticks" in the form of amnesty and threats. After failed attempts to effectively disarm pastoralist communities in northern Kenya since 1980s through coercive disarmament exercises, the Kenyan government under President Daniel Moi in 2001 began voluntary disarmament initiative under a blanket amnesty for communities which voluntarily surrendered their arms (Wepundi, Ndug'u & Rynn, 2011).

The first more organized voluntary disarmament campaign was carried out in 2005 through *Operation Dumisha Amani 1* (Operations Maintain Peace) targeting communities in North Rift region (districts of Turkana, Marakwet, West Pokot, East Baringo, Trans Nzoia, Laikipia, and Samburu). Under the voluntary disarmament programme, the government, through its local administration officers (Chiefs and district commissioners), the government issued amnesty to all people illegally possessing firearms in exchange for such firearms. The program was implemented alongside socio-economic support programs, which targeted to rebuild infrastructure and rehabilitate water points in a phased manner that further incorporated more local stakeholders including non-state actors: elders, church leaders and non-governmental organizations. The government issued amnesty and built

schools and hospitals and sunk boreholes in exchange for the firearms (Kimaiyo, 2009; Wepundi, Ndug'u & Rynn, 2011).

The government, through its senior officials issued stern warnings to the effect that when the amnesty expired, the communities would face forceful disarmament which came to pass in April 2006, when the then Security Minister Mr. John Michuki told Parliament, "The Government has decided to disarm the Pokot by force. If they want the experience of 1984 when the government used force to disarm them, then this is precisely what is going to happen." (East African Standard, May 1 2006).

A process similar to *Dumisha Amani I* was followed during phase one of *Dumisha Amani II* which was carried out in 2010. *Dumisha Amani II* incorporated several strategies implemented side by side. The design of the *Dumisha Amani II* policy component incorporated strategies to address SALW control from the demand side livelihoods programme using political, financial, administrative and economic instruments in the form of resources committed to finance alternative livelihood programmes, designation

of military personnel and equipment to construct "peace roads", government administrative deployment of police officers and police reservists to beef up security in conflict affected areas, and the development of the national peacebuilding and conflict resolution policy that involved government and civil society actors.

c) *Alternative Livelihoods Programme*

According to senior government officials, the government developed a socio-economic strategy for pastoralist areas with a view to addressing livelihood challenges and insecurity both of which are linked to the demand for SALW. The strategy combines various components such as "increased access to resources, identification and implementation of livelihood opportunities and stable income generating activities" for affected communities (Government of Kenya, 2011). The alternative livelihoods approach is a long-term strategy which specifically targets the youth who are otherwise involved in pastoralism and cattle rustling, through viable alternative livelihood systems which introduce sedentary livelihoods (Chopra, 2008; Government of Kenya, 2011). The government has thus promoted economic projects such as irrigation,



Armed Turkana herders guard their livestock at a watering hole at Oropoyi, in Kenya's north western district of Turkana (Photo Credit: Getty Images/Tony Karumba).

development of water points, animal husbandry and crop farming in Turkana, West Pokot and Samburu Counties, as well as rain-fed agriculture, aloe soap production and trading activities in Northeastern region. The alternative livelihood programs aimed to create employment and expand to alternative and stable livelihoods to reduce over-reliance on pastoralism which breeds harmful traditional practices such as cattle rustling and ultimately SALWs proliferation. While the alternative livelihood strategy has to an extent helped to address the demand side of SALW, analysts have argued that the programme is narrow in scope and reaches only a limited number of beneficiaries.

d) Climate Resilience Programme

Adverse climatic conditions in northern Kenya such as drought, has been linked to the proliferation of SALW. Drought leads to reduction of stock and erosion of pasture for pastoral communities which in turn creates resource-based conflicts and pushes the communities into cattle rustling as a 'restocking' strategy and thus acquisition of arms by both the raiding communities and communities targeted for raids (Huho, 2012). The Government of Kenya has thus promoted climate resilience projects to cushion ASAL communities from climate-related losses of livestock and cattle rustling and proliferation of SALWs, by stabilizing livelihoods to promote voluntary surrender of arms and discourage acquisition of arms.

For instance, the *Arid Lands Resource Management Project* (ALRMP) was initiated in 1993 through the support and funding of the World Bank in response to drought related famine and insecurity in northern Kenya (Baringo, Mandera, Turkana and Wajir). The program expanded to about nine districts including Marsabit, Garissa, Tana River, Isiolo, and Samburu) in 1996 (Africog, 2012). Phase I of the project focused on Arid Lands and building of

For instance, the *Arid Lands Resource Management Project* (ALRMP) was initiated in 1993 through the support and funding of the World Bank in response to drought related famine and insecurity in northern Kenya (Baringo, Mandera, Turkana and Wajir)

resilience among affected communities in 10 districts. The District Commissioner served as the Chair of a District Steering Group which coordinated cooperation among local stakeholders especially international NGOs and other civil society groups with some level of political participation through the role of Members of Parliament in District Steering Groups.

ALRMP while not directly targeting small arms, promotes development programs and projects as an alternative to local livelihood systems which sustain small arms proliferation such as pastoralism and cattle rustling. In 2003 the program expanded to cover more semi-arid districts including Kajiado, Kitui, Laikipia, Makueni, Mbeere, Mwingi, Narok, Nyeri, Tharaka, West Pokot, and Transmara. The World Bank further introduced *Kenya: Adaptation to Climate Change in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands* (KACCAL) (Africog, 2012) However, World Bank's funding support to ALRMP was frozen in 2010 after audit by the Integrity Vice Presidency of the World Bank revealed gross financial mismanagement and corruption in Kenya's administration of the funds (Africog, 2012). Programs under ALRMP include HIV/AIDS education, vocational training and education, and economic projects which build self-sustainability away from pastoralism.

Further, under the Ministry of Devolution and the ASALS with funding from Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) implemented the *Enhanced Community Resilience Against Drought* (ECORAD) project between 2012 and 2014 in Marsabit and Turkana counties to build the resilience of the communities in the two counties against drought through improvement of livestock value chains, provision of water for livestock, livelihood diversification, secondary infrastructure development, pasture development and promotion of small and medium enterprises (Government of Kenya, 2015). The government has carried out many of such projects with international development support to cushion communities in ASALs against climate risks that drive SALWs proliferation.

The government also implemented a range management strategy as part of its community disarmament policy whose aim was to ensure all communities understood their grazing areas and respect personal property. The end product was to have professionally managed and properly delineated cattle ranches and/or grazing areas and water points so as to obviate eruption of armed confrontations and internecine conflicts in these regions,

such as the conflict pitting ranchers and pastoralist communities in Laikipia County over grazing rights.

e) *Peace Building for Disarmament*

An important component of the Government's community disarmament policy is the strengthening of peace building and conflict resolutions as a strategy to reduce demand for SALW. This strategy was meant to help the grassroots communities to come up with acceptable traditional conflict management and peace building tools to be finally implemented by security forces and local administration. A key objective of the strategy was to initiate dialogue between community leaders from opposing ethnic groups and to assist communities to identify potential areas of conflict.

In the 1990s, with increase in inter-communal violent conflicts, local stakeholders began to organize ad hoc peace campaigns especially in Northeastern region. Such actors included the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC) which sprung from women-led efforts for peace, and later formed Wajir Women for Peace and combined forces with other educated Somalis to establish Wajir Peace Group (Kratli & Swift, 1999). The government's national peacebuilding framework under the NSC and NFP later absorbed the informal community-based peace initiatives into the District Development Committees bringing together the youth, elders, religious leaders, business leaders, civil servants and local community-based organizations and other civil society groups in peace building, inter-communal dialogues and mediation.

At the local level, the peace initiatives became a bottom-up process with mushrooming 'peace committees' across locations, divisions and district levels composed mainly of community-based organizations and local actors from diverse backgrounds and capacities with the support of international donor agencies and international NGOs. Local peace committees are well placed to foster peace and prevent conflicts which drive up acquisition and flow of arms across the Kenya-Somali, Ethiopia-Kenya, South Sudan-Kenya and Uganda-Kenya borders, due to their ability to "(a) integrate a broad range of local stakeholders who are locally perceived as relevant for conflict resolution and (b) appl features of the local systems" (Chopra, 2008 p. 20-24).

The most significant outputs of peace building initiatives are peace agreements and peace declarations between communities such as the *Modogashe Declaration* of

“The inter-communal peace agreements, beyond radically reducing violence, have incrementally adopted official laws of Kenya by moving to describe possession of illegal firearm as a crime and requiring caravans and herders not to carry with them any guns

April 2001 which was an output of inter-communal peace talks between the community elders, local chiefs, county councils, provincial and district commissioners, the police, and Members of Parliament. Peace agreements and declarations cover issues such as "disputed use of pasture and water sources, cattle rustling, and trafficking of illegal firearms, and the position of elders in handling firearms and nomadic caravans" (Chopra, 2008 p.24) in ways that limit the occurrence of conflicts and build-up of SALWs. Peace agreements further consolidate the community cooperation with security agencies, and the role of community members in identifying perpetrators of illegal firearm trafficking, banditry, and cattle rustling. Another peace declaration, the *Garissa Declaration*, was later signed between districts of Isiolo, Marsabit, Samburu, Garissa, Moyale, Tana River, Wajir, Meru North, Ijara and Mandera. Other declarations include the *Laikipia Declaration* of 1999, *Wamba Declaration* of 2002, *Kolowa Declaration* of 2002, and the *Naivasha Peace Accords* of 2005. The inter-communal peace agreements, beyond radically reducing violence, have incrementally adopted official laws of Kenya by moving to describe possession of illegal firearm as a crime and requiring caravans and herders not to carry with them any guns (Chopra, 2008). The local inter-communal peace agreements which incorporate traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, are deemed more effective than the formal legal system in the pastoral regions. However, such informal systems continue to undermine the effective establishment of the rule of law or formal processes of disarmament which are largescale and collect fairly large amounts of firearms and seek to prosecute perpetrators or criminal acts including possession of illegal guns.

Influence of State and Non-Actors on Kenya's Community Policing Policy

Kenya's SALW control policy incorporates community policing as a policy undertaking in which the Kenya government and non-state actors particularly civil

society organizations have implemented community policing as a control measure of SALW proliferation. As a concept, community policing has been defined as both a philosophy (a way of thinking) and an organizational strategy (a way to carry out the philosophy) that allows the police and the community to work closely together in creative ways to solve the problems of crime, illicit drugs, fear of crime, physical and social disorder (from graffiti to addiction), neighbourhood decay, and the overall quality of life in the community. Like community disarmament policy initiatives, community policing in Kenya is government driven. The state is the main policy initiator and implementer of community policing initiatives including establishment and operations of community policing committees (CPCs) as well as *Nyumba Kumi* initiative. The government has deployed its security agents to coordinate activities of CPCs. The Officer Commanding Police Station oversees the CPCs within his/her jurisdiction. *Nyumba Kumi* is a community-based philosophy that involves every ten households within a village operating as a communal security unit, with a chairperson. Members are expected to act as each other's keeper in terms of identifying and sharing information about security threats that may threaten members of the unit. Through such village-based units, the initiative aims to leverage on the proximity, norms, awareness and knowledge of members about their surroundings, information sharing amongst members etc. Such information sharing about security is expected to cascade to higher levels of the local government administration structures. *Nyumba Kumi* are particularly important as custodians of security related information within their jurisdiction.

The government's community policing policy has two components namely:

i) Early Warning

The other component of community policing in the volatile regions replete with small arms, is the early warning system at the community level. Through the early warning component, KNFP and NSC coordinate the community policing with a link to SALWs reduction in the conflict-

prone and SALW-infested regions in the country through a decentralized structure flowing from the national level to provincial (now regional) level through Provincial Task Forces, and District Peace and Development Committees (Government of Kenya, 2011). The community policing architecture brings together government agencies and departments, civil society groups and organizations, and community leaders to implement arms reduction at the local level. Main interventions under this model of community policing include community awareness initiatives and collaboration between community leaders and security agencies around information sharing (Government of Kenya, 2011).

Other policy instruments supporting the role of community policing in small arms reduction include Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism Protocol (CEWARN) established by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Combating and Eradication of Cattle Rusting (Government of Kenya, 2011; Muchai, n.d.). Through the interagency framework of the Kenya National Focal Point (KNFP) on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the National Steering Committee on Peace building and Conflict Management (NSC), the government further supports and encourages the expansion of participation in community policing and early warning by including and partnering with non-state actors such as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as local peace builders to drive community based small arms reduction initiatives at the local level (*Small Arms Survey*, 2014). CSOs promote inter-tribal and inter-clan dialogues and promote community awareness and public education about the impact of SALWs, reduction of small arms, and voluntary surrender of small arms and reconciliation (*Small Arms Survey*, 2014). Civil Society organizations actors have also supported community policing through capacity building of community policing committees through partnership with donors. Civil society Organizations such as Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC) have, for the last five years implemented community policing training programmes aimed at building the capacities of members of CPCs.

The community-based system of policing is mostly preferred in the areas where police presence is low with high volatility, and thus the KPR supplement the police in providing security by being the closest responders



Dr. Martin Kimani, Kenya's Permanent Representative to the UN, presides over the Council's briefing session on Small Arms and Light Weapons at the UN headquarters in New York on October 5, 2021 (Photo Credit: Debebe/UN Photo)

ii) Kenya Police Reservists

The Kenya Police Reservists (KPR) is a separate policing system to the Kenya Police Service which is the most present government created security system in the semi-arid and arid lands in Kenya which make 80% of the country's territory. The KPR are mainly volunteers recruited from their own localities and armed by the government to take the responsibility of providing security in their own communities as frontline or first responders (Mkutu & Wandera, 2013). As such, the KPR are managed by the local Police divisions in collaboration with the district officers and local chiefs. The Officer Commanding Police Station (OCS) in a respective locality directly controls, inspects and accounts for a police reservist (Muiruri & Sigei, 2012). The National Police Service Act of 2011 stipulates the role of the KPR as to:

assist the Kenya Police Service or Administration Police Service in their respective mandates, including in the (a) maintenance of law and order, (b) preservation of peace, (c) protection of life and property, (d) prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, and (e) enforcement of laws and regulations with which the service is charged (Government of Kenya, 2011 part.XV, sect.110)

The community-based system of policing is mostly preferred in the areas where police presence is low with high volatility, and thus the KPR supplement the police in providing security by being the closest responders. The reservists guard livestock enclosures and move with pastoral caravans to protect them against raids from neighboring pastoral communities (Mkutu & Wandera, 2013). The Police Reservists fill in major gaps of poor state presence and penetration, poor state control of borders (993km north-western border), under-provision of security, and dysfunctional law enforcement systems (Mkutu, 2008: 7-9; Mkutu, 2005). The KPR are better equipped and informed to handle localized conflict systems which mainly revolve around resource competition for land and water sources, coupled with the ungoverned nature of the region and high rates of arms in the hands of civilians (Wepundi et al., 2012: 35). Reservists are "familiar with local geography, terrain and climate, they speak local languages, understand local security context, and are a cost-effective security body to protect livestock and border management [to intercept cross-border flows of small arms and attacks]". In 2013, the Reservist officers were estimated to number about 16,500 are mainly deployed in the far-flung volatile and pastoral regions in the Rift Valley (including Turkana, Samburu, Baringo, West Pokot, and Laikipia counties), Eastern, North Eastern and Coast as shown in figure 1.

Region	Estimated number of KPRs	Comments
Rift Valley (includes Turkana and Laikipia)	9,000	
Eastern	5,000	Mainly used for border management
North Eastern	500	Press reports indicate 300 more armed in 2012 (<i>Daily Nation, 2012a</i>)
Coastal	2,000–3,000	Most in Tana River to protect Tsavo National Park from poachers
Other regions	Few	
Total	16,500 (conservative estimate)	

Figure 1: Number of Police Reservists in Kenya. Source: Mkutu & Wandera, 2013

The KPR officers have recorded chequered performance against banditry, cattle rustling and control of flow of illicit arms. Controversies around the recruitment, and deployment of the reservists have abounded on grounds of recruitment being done with favoritism and corruptly, and deployment being politicized to affect local political dynamics (Ndung'u, 2010). The performance and effectiveness of KPR is thus affected by the compromised recruitment and deployment processes. Ndung'u (2010) and Wepundi (2011) further note that corruption within the KPR is paralyzing intended efforts and results of creation of the security system as Reservists have turned to facilitating arms trafficking, involving themselves in banditry using government arms, and participating in cattle rustling which have led to loss of trust in the KPR among the communities. It is from this background of dysfunction among the KPR that Wepundi (2011) observes that the Kenyan government decided to disarm all police reservists countrywide in 2003 pending rigorous vetting process for re-arming. The government further disarmed the police reservists in 2010 especially in North Rift and Upper Eastern. However, the KPR are faced with various challenges unique to their nature and role in security provision, which demoralizes the reservist officers and incentivizes criminality among KPR or dereliction of duty. For instance, Mkutu (2001) explains that the KPR are under-paid or mostly unpaid, due to the volunteer nature of their service, they lack adequate training which makes them incompetent in most cases and lack resources to effectively carry out their functions. The under-resourced KPR are thus ineffective in meeting the local needs for security, and control of illicit firearms.

Role of Civil Society Actors

Civil Society organizations (CSOs) play an important role in governance particularly in overseeing government in its policy interventions. Community disarmament policy implementation is one area in which Kenyan CSOs have made their voices heard. As indicated elsewhere in this paper, CSOs have supported capacity building programmes, they have called out government when it has committed excesses against civilians during forceful disarmament operations and injected desperately needed financial and human capital in livelihood programmes initiated by the government as part of its community disarmament policy initiatives. Civil society organizations such as Saferworld, Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC), the Small Arms Survey, Fellowship for Ecumenical Churches (FECCLAHA) are some of the non-state actors that have supported the government's community disarmament policy through research, advocacy, training and capacity building programmes among other activities.

The civil society, which in general seems to enjoy the trust, goodwill, and good working rapport with local communities, were expected to take a lead role in advocacy initiatives relating to practical disarmament, peacebuilding and conflict transformation in the build-up to, during and after a disarmament operation. To this end, the members of the National Steering Committee on Peace building and Conflict management (NSC) were invited to present a position paper which detailed on the best strategy to adopt at the pre-operation, during the operation and post-operation phases. This paper was preceded by a conflict analysis report of the geographical area in which the disarmament exercise was to be carried

out. It also urged the government to identify and initiate need-driven conflict-sensitive development projects, including viable income generating projects for the youth who generally constitute the majority population segment that keep and misuse illegal firearms. Another important role for the civil society was to provide oversight at all stages of disarmament operation to ensure that security forces complied with the agreed operation strategy. However, given the manner in which government conducts security related business, CSOs may not claim significant success on this particular issue.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this paper argues that the government is the actor that has demonstrated the highest influence on Kenya's community disarmament policy. The government designed and leads all SALW control initiatives using a top-down state centric approach. In doing so, the government has deployed its agents (government agencies, senior officials) and instruments (Political announcements, Plans, resources) to implement the components of the policy. In addition, it has employed strategies (political and administrative) and partnerships with non-state actors to drive the implementation of the various pillars of the policy. It is worthwhile to emphasize that the government's top-down approach to the design and implementation of the policy has been faulted for alienating the communities that it expects to benefit. A more inclusive process in the design stages of the policy process, and more involvement of the communities in the implementation of community disarmament initiatives would yield higher returns with respect to SALW reduction. Community policing as a philosophy and a strategy is a government idea. People do not even understand its components and therefore there is a problem of ownership. It is a government owned initiative that communities struggle to fit in. A different approach that involves consultations with the people's representatives at all levels would result in perception of ownership and therefore a desire by the people to ensure success of the policy owing to perceived benefits.

With regard to non-state actors, their role is limited to advocacy and oversight of the policy at the implementation stage. This is obviously limiting. While CSOs have done well in advocating for the rights of pastoralist communities, supporting peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives, capacity building of communities

through training programmes, overlooking government policy actions among others, mutual suspicion continues to characterize the relationship between CSOs and the state and makes it difficult for the involvement of those CSOs perceived as critical to government security policy initiatives. This has resulted in little impact by non-state actors as far as the government's SALW control policy is concerned. It is therefore not a surprise that despite the government's implementation of SALW control policy activities for the last two decades, SALW proliferation in Kenya has persisted.

This article recommends that the government should re-examine its policy design architecture to involve more actors in designing SALW policy initiatives. The top-down approach clearly has not worked as far as SALW control policy is concerned. Involving the consumers of policy at the design stage makes it easier for them to own the policy and to participate eagerly in its implementation. Treating SALW control as a sensitive security matter only suitable to be handled by government security agencies is counterproductive.

It further recommends that the instruments deployed by Kenyan state actors in implementing its SALW policy should be reconfigured to factor the realities of community armament. While government has rightly sought to address the demand side of SALW through implementation of community policing and alternative livelihood programmes, there is a perception that the government either does not understand or has chosen to ignore the fact that illicit SALW are instruments of survival for those who hold them. Without a firearm, a family in pastoralist northern Kenya may not own or hold on to its livestock, yet it is for that family the only means of livelihood. To this end, this paper recommends that the government of Kenya should address SALW control from a human security as opposed to a state security perspective. By so doing, policy interventions will be derived from a consultative process that integrates the concerns of affected communities and involves them in finding sustainable solutions.

In a nutshell, the article recommends an inclusive, consultative SALW control policy design and implementation process that aligns policy instruments to outputs and places communities holding illicit SALW at the center.

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Tracing the Evolution of Allied Democratic Forces: From a Rebel Group to a Terrorist Organization

By Raudhat Sayeeda Saddam and Janice Sanya

Abstract

Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) internationalized itself in 2016 through social media - Facebook – *Madina at Tauheed Wau Mujahedeen (MTM)*, and later on other social media platforms. It periodically made headlines as they carried out deadly attacks in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and later on in Uganda, after re-emerging with attacks in October and November 2021. ADF caught the attention of the international community after it pledged allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) and its recognition by IS as part of the Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) in 2018. This article explores the rise of this militia group including how it has broadened its scope and fashioned itself as a *jihadi* group. The article also highlights the impact of the group's activities in Uganda and DRC, and recommends some of the best practices, especially for countries in the Great Lakes region, as well as international and regional actors in their effort to weaken the group.

Introduction

What was once a rebel group driven by the impulse to launch an insurgency against the Ugandan government in the 1990s, is now a terrorist organization. On December 5, 2001, United States (US) Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, through the State Department designated 39 groups as Terrorist Exclusion List (TEL) organizations and among them was ADF (State Department, 2001). Almost two decades later, on March 10, 2021, the US State Department labelled ADF a terrorist organization with links to the Islamic State of Syria and Iraq (ISIS). The group has carried out many attacks especially on civilians in DRC and Uganda in the name of Islamic State – Central Africa Province (ISCAP).

Before receiving serious attention from the media, and international and state actors, the ADF had been carrying out atrocities in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) killing innocent civilians, soldiers, and UN peacekeepers, and abducting and looting villages. The gruesome activities conducted by the group made it look like any other militia group operating in eastern DRC. However, in recent years, the group has managed to attract recruits regionally and outside the region. ADF has not only become a Ugandan and DRC problem but an international problem spiking attention from some of its countries of recruits such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Burundi among others.

Historical Background

The ADF has been present in DRC since its formation in 1995 through an alliance between Uganda's Tabliq Islamic Sect and the National Army of the Liberation of Uganda (NALU) (Thompson, 2021). When Yoweri Museveni became the President of Uganda in 1986, not every Ugandan supported his government. Among the people who were anti-Museveni was Amon Bazira, the head of intelligence services during President Milton Obote's rule. Amon formed NALU by uniting Obote supporters, some of the Rwenzori combatants, and Idi Amin Dada's enthusiasts (Stacey, 2003). The group moved to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1988 after it was driven out by the Ugandan government and established itself in Beni and Lubero.

The Tabliq group on the other hand came as a result of the persecution of Muslims, especially in the southwestern region of Uganda (Titeka & Vlasenroot, 2012). After Idi Amin's government was overthrown, both Obote's and Museveni's governments discriminated against the Muslim minority. Tabliq used this to their advantage and recruited Ugandan youth to help fight their course making them a major player in Uganda's Muslim community (Crisis group, 2012). On 22 March 1991, a clash emerged between members of the Ugandan Muslim Supreme Council (UMSC) and the Tabliq sect over the leadership of a mosque in Kampala. The clash



Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebel leader Jamil Mukulu appears at the Uganda High Court in Kampala on May 14, 2018 for charges of terrorism and murder (Photo Credit: AFP)

resulted in the killing of five people including four police officers at UMSC headquarters. Museveni put a number of the Tabliq leaders in Luzira prison following the attack where they interacted with several former Ugandan army defectors who would later join ADF (Congo Research Group, 2018).

In 1993, the Tabliq was released and it established itself in Hoima, western Uganda under the leadership of Jamil Mukulu as the Ugandan Combatants for Freedom Movement (UFFM). However, it did not take long before the camp was overrun by Uganda's People Defence Forces (UPDF) causing their leader Mukulu to flee to Kenya and the remaining group to Bunia eastern DRC under the leadership of Yusuf Kabanda (Congo Research Group, 2018). It is in the DRC, that NALU and Tabliq members merged to form ADF under Commander Ngaimoko, the then NALU leader, and Mukulu's comrade, Yusuf Kabanda. The group was able to recruit among the Congolese people before it later settled in the Rwenzori Mountains.

In 1996, the newfound group ADF, started its attacks in Uganda carrying out three bomb attacks in Kampala in April alone, killing four and injuring more than five people. In July of the same year, two bombs exploded

in Kampala killing two people. ADF also detonated two explosives on three separate buses in August of the same year that killing at least 28 people travelling from Kampala (Human Rights Watch, 1999). It is in this same year that the group launched an attack on Uganda's Mpondwe, Kasese District on November 13, 1996 (Titeca & Vlassenroot, 2012).

On February 19, 1998, ADF abducted 30 girls and three boys from a school in Mitandi, Uganda. It later killed about 16 people and abducted about 45 people in Kichwamba, Kaborale District Uganda on April 9, the same year. During the same year, ADF attacked Kichwamba, a technical school and burnt three dormitories killing an estimated 50-80 students and abducting more than 60 on June 9 (Human Rights Watch, 1999). The group also perpetrated small-scale attacks in Uganda's western region of Rwenzori by invading homes, looting goods, abducting civilians and carrying out random killings which destabilized the region's economic activities (Titeca & Vlassenroot, 2012) citation).

ADF Support System Over the Years

The main support that ADF received especially in the 90s came from the Sudanese government. The Sudanese government was against the Ugandan government

accusing it of giving support to Southern Sudanese rebels and therefore retaliated by giving back-up to ADF (Gérard, 2004). Omar al Bashir, the then president of Sudan was an ally of Amin to an extent of aiding some of Amin's loyalties. Weakening Uganda's government became one of Sudan's goals and this it tried to achieve by providing training facilities, weapons and ammunition, and intelligence support for ADF fighters (Titeca & Vlassenroot, 2012). The successive governments of Mobutu Sseseko and Laurent Kabila of DRC were also in support of ADF (Titeca & Vlassenroot, 2012). For both governments, ADF was a useful force in countering the Ugandan and Rwandese governments.

ADF has allegedly had a network of supporters in the British Ugandan expatriate community since the mid-90s. However, the financial support is reported to have begun around 2007. According to a study done by *George Washington's Program on Extremism*, the British Ugandan expatriates have for almost 25 years provided financial support to ADF (Candland et al., 2021). According to the Congo Research Group, UN investigators discovered evidence of Western Union transfers between 2013 and 2014 from people in the United Kingdom to ADF agents in eastern DRC totalling at least USD14,970.84. ADF has also had relations with local power-brokers such as political leaders, chiefs and senior army officers (International Crisis Group, 2016), local business people, and international actors who have given support to the group in exchange for the extraction of minerals as a result of the chaos created by ADF (Kristof & Daniel, 2016).

ADF Relationship with Jihadi Groups

While there has been no clear evidence, after al Shabab claimed responsibility for the Ugandan twin attack of July 11, 2010, Ugandan authorities mentioned that the extremist group had collaborated with ADF and there was a link between the two (Delany, 2010). The UPDF spokesperson further 2013 linked the two groups stating that al Shabab had trained ADF in the use of explosive devices (IRIN Special Report, 2013).

The definite link that ADF has had with any International Jihadi group is the recent association between ADF and ISIS. There were claims of ADF allegiance to ISIS in 2016 and 2017 when the group published videos that showed rhetoric and symbols that align with those used by ISIS. The group adopted the name Madina at Tauheed Wau Mujahedeen (MTM), meaning City of Monotheism and Holy Warriors. The arrest of Waleed Ahmed Zein, an ISIS

enabler and a Kenyan national in July 2018 also showed the relationship between IS and ADF (*Nation Newspaper* 2018). Zein, according to Congo Research Group was arrested for moving over USD150,000 through a network linked to ISIS, which involved numerous countries, including DRC.

In April 2019, ISIS launched the Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) which was a merger between two groups from different origins (Department of State, 2021). One of the groups was the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria-Mozambique (ISIS-Mozambique) and the other was the Islamic State of Syria-DRC (ISIS-DRC). ISIS-DRC is led by Seka Musa Baluku, the successor to Jamil who was arrested in Tanzania and extradited to Uganda in 2015. Although there has been little evidence of direct command and control orders (as documented by UN expert reports and various publications) from ISIS to ADF, it is evident that ADF's operational and strategic activities suggest otherwise.

Ideology

ADF's ideology contains some Salafi Jihadist elements. This is common among armed actors in Africa affiliated to Islamist militant groups and organizations (Faleg & Mustasila, 2021). Ideologies serve multiple core functions: firstly, they are used to explain political, economic, and social conditions to a group of people (an 'in-group'). In this case, Salafi-Jihadism's goal is to spread awareness among Muslims that their religion has been on the wane (Moghadam, 2008). Secondly, ideologies are often utilized to attribute blame to a predicament that faces the 'in-group'. In line with this function, it identifies the alleged source of the conundrum and humiliation being faced by Muslims, and the part played by anti-Islam alliances (Moghadam, 2008). Thirdly, ideologies are utilized to create an identity for the group. Salafi-Jihadism is utilized to parallel other ideologies, creating a new identity for those who adhere to it (Moghadam, 2008). Lastly, they often offer the 'in-group' a specific program of action that can be used to get rid of the predicament that



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ADF's ideology contains some Salafi Jihadist elements. This is common among armed actors in Africa affiliated to Islamist militant groups and organizations

is facing. The program of action that is brought forward by this ideology is violent 'jihad' (Moghadam, 2008). While ADF has evolved from its inception, to recruit and mobilize along ethno-nationalist lines, it has not eroded its background in Salafi ideology. There have however been instances where recruitment and mobilization have been accomplished through ethno-nationalist lines (Titeca & Vlassenroot, 2012).

However, after joining IS, the group has adopted the Takfirist ideology, a trademark that has distinguished IS from the rest of international jihadi groups such as al Qaeda. This ideology has led to a split in the group with most of the Mukulu followers defecting from the group citing that Mukulu did not believe in killing fellow Muslims (Candland, 2021). Takfirism is defined by the *BRAVE Handbook* as the practice of labelling other Muslims as apostates; this term is applied to a Muslim who is declared an unbeliever, impure or apostate (*BRAVE Handbook*, 2019).

Drivers

The main reason behind the collaboration between Tabliq members and NALU was to overthrow Museveni (West, 2015). While the Tabliqs were tired of the state interfering in the affairs of Ugandan Muslims and were looking forward to establishing an Islamic state, NALU members having consisted of Amin's and anti-Museveni ex-soldiers were not in support of Museveni being in power (International Crisis Group, 2021). In the 90s all through to the early 2000s, the group exploited political differences between the ethnic Bakonjo people and the Uganda government by causing violent military campaigns in Uganda's Rwenzori region.

Following the arrest of their leader Jamil Mukulu in 2015, and his succession by Musa Baluku (*BBC*, 2021), ADF's main focus became that of becoming a global Jihadi group. Baluku's goal of leading ADF towards a more international jihadi group led to fallout by some of the members of the group. This, however, did not stop Baluku's intentions for the group and in August 2016, ADF made their Facebook account Madinaat Tauheed

active (Candland et al, 2021). Baluku declared in one of the videos released by Mujahideen TV, that there was no ADF and that ADF ceased to exist a long time ago. He added that they are currently a province, one of which makes the Islamic State (*BBC*, 2021).

An increase in regional fighters has also been a source of hope for ADF. The group has managed to recruit within East Africa and beyond, with Tanzania and Burundi being tagged as the largest sources of the group's non-Ugandan foreign recruits. Tanzania is also crucial to ADF as it is reported to act as a transit point for recruits coming from other countries especially Mozambique and South Africa. An example of ADF foreign fighters is Salim Mohamed Rashid alias Chotara, a Kenyan national who was caught by villagers in DRC in January 2022 and was later arrested for murder (*People Daily*, 2022). There is also a Jordanian ADF fighter who according to an article by VOA, was arrested by authorities in September 2021 (VOA, 2022). The chaos caused by ADF has also been driven by other forces such as the fact that the group could benefit from illegal trade. As stated earlier, some ADFs financiers are business people both local and international who use the group to do illegal mining.

Areas of Operation: Geography and Trends

From its inception, ADF's first area of operation was around Rwenzori Mountains an area that was conducive due to the terrain and the ethnic conflict that existed between the Bakonjo people and the government of Uganda (Thompson, 2021). However, the armed group was overwhelmed by UPDF thus, moving to the eastern part of DRC, where they continued to occupy and integrate with the surrounding communities. The group has occupied this part of DRC for the longest time as it has served as not only a suitable location to deter forces such as FARDC and MONUSCO, but it is also vast in resources (Kivu Security Tracker, 2022).

It is evident that Violent Extremism (VE) in Africa has expanded over the last decade. This can be associated with the following trends: a nexus between Salafi-Jihadism

and communal violence, the rising share of violent extremism in the broader armed conflict landscape, the changing territoriality of groups, and varying perceptions and impacts of extremism within countries (Faleg & Mustasilta, 2021).

The trend of a nexus emerging between Salafi-Jihadism and communal violence is not unique to Africa, this trend has been observed before in Europe. For instance, in the Netherlands where communal violence became prominent when orthodox Salafism, after 2001, gained popularity among the Dutch youth who were of Moroccan descent (Graaf, 2010). These groups of youth were able to gain a sense of identity, which they lacked from both their traditional parents and the secular state. These people were brought together via a shared line of community and they felt solidarity with their peers in Afghanistan (Graaf, 2010). Thus, they were open to the meta-narratives that were utilized in Salafi-jihadism. This is similar to what is happening in Africa, the youth, especially those who do not identify with the state or their surrounding community, and this is influenced by being part of marginalized groups or minority groups (Faleg & Mustasilta, 2021). Africa has had a history of armed inter-state and intra-state conflict. The eastern part of DRC has

been a complex armed conflict landscape (Kivu Security Tracker, 2022). Studies have shown that the presence of porous borders and patterns of conflict and instability have generated favourable conditions for markers in surplus military weapons that are recycled between conflict zones (Demetriou, Muggah, & Biddle, 2002). DRC, like several other states in Africa including the Central African Republic, Uganda, and Congo-Brazzaville, has experienced conflicts that created room for an expanding trend, the proliferation of small weaponry and the growth of armed groups.

The conflict landscape in DRC is complex, characterized by violence dating back to its colonial past, the first and second Congo Wars that involved its neighbours including Rwanda, Uganda, Namibia, Angola, and Zimbabwe. The evolution of ADF into a terror group introduces violent extremism into this complex and multi-faceted conflict landscape.

The involvement of ADF with IS has formed a new perception of VE in DRC, and by extension Africa as well has had its impacts. The first notable aspects are that despite ADF acknowledging its affiliation with the Islamic State UN reports and experts (2020), have found little



A MONUSCO APC is greeted by FARDC soldiers on their way back from the front line in the Beni region where the UN is backing the FARDC in an operation against ADF militia, March 13, 2014. (Photo Credit: MONUSCO/ Sylvain Liechti)

evidence to support this claim (Ingram & Vidino, 2021). This has been attributed to the fact that like in other instances it does not appear that the Islamic State is not in direct control of ADF and its activities. The operations conducted by ADF for instance, their crude-bomb making skills are very different from what has been observed for the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (Ingram & Vidino, 2021). This calls into question the international community's assumptions on the strategic and operational impacts of being an Islamic State affiliate. The impacts of the affiliation between ADF and the Islamic State is are not

very clear, this is because there is little known about the extent to which the Islamic State has exerted centralized control, and it would be difficult to determine how the strategies and operations of the group have changed as the terrain they occupy is difficult to penetrate (Ingram & Vidino, 2021).

The chart below tracks the number of attacks that the group has perpetrated in the DRC provinces of Ituri and North Kivu (Eastern DRC).

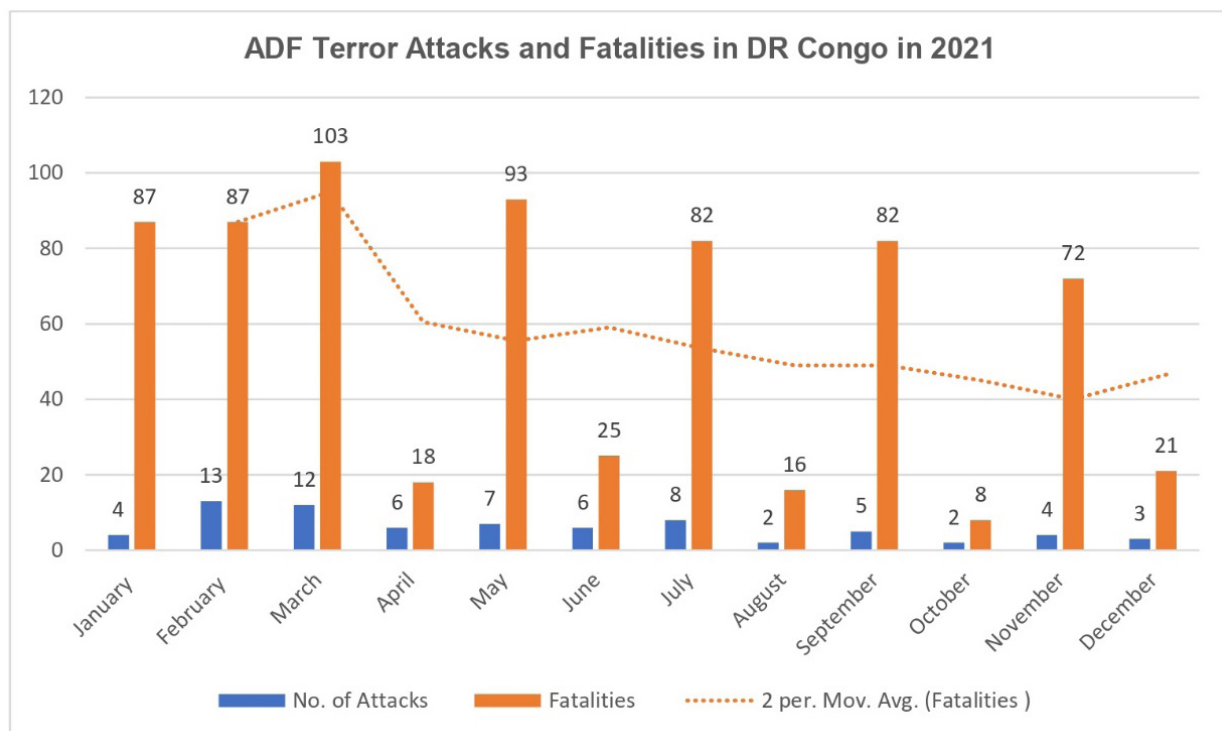


Figure 1 This figure shows the ADF attacks and fatalities in the year 2021 (Data Source: Varied Sources).

The attacks and number of fatalities highlighted above have been compiled from the reports made by Radio Okapi and the International Crisis Group from January 2021, to December 2021. ADF has also extended their attacks to neighbouring Uganda, where in November 2021 a series of attacks were led in the capital city, Kampala (*The New York Times*, 2022). These attacks have also led to a joint effort by the defence forces of Uganda and DRC to take action against the terror group, as ADF

becomes increasingly active in both states. This explosion in activities is not unique to ADF, across Africa there has been a flurry of activity from terror groups associated with IS. In 2020, the number of countries that have seen an upsurge in IS-linked activity as documented by Sky News has increased from 2013, they include; Mozambique, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Somalia, and Cameroon (*SKY News*, 2020).

Nature of Attacks

Nature	Methodology
Looting	The ADF steals food and medicine from hospitals and food stores and in some instances uses civilians to transport the looted goods. They also disrupt aid/peacekeeping.
Killing using machetes	Most ADF killings of Congolese civilians have been done by the use of machetes.

Nature	Methodology
Blocking of main roads	This is a tactic used by the group to prevent civilians from escaping and to be on the lookout for possible interventions by the defence and security personnel.
Arson	Attacks done by the ADF have also involved the burning of village houses or property.
Suicide bombing	An example is the November 2021 Uganda attack that involved three suicide bombers in Kampala (BBC 2021).
Prison attacks	In October 2020, the group attacked a prison in Kangbaya prison in DRC led to the freeing of over 1,300 prisoners. In February 2021, the group also attacked a prison freeing 20 prisoners in Nobili.

Conclusion

Understandably, there are concerns about the evolution of ADF from an armed group to a terror group. The assessment of this affiliation will have policy implications and has led to militarized counterterrorism responses as seen by the engagement of DRC and Uganda Military forces in the DRC's eastern territory. The evidence of Islamist links must not be ignored, as this can have devastating implications for the ongoing fight against terror in DRC and Uganda, and the broader regions of the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region.

The states in this region must engage in vigorous counter violent extremist and terrorism measures to deal with the currently escalating threat. These would include pushing counter-narratives, alternative narratives, and positive

narratives to undermine violent extremist narratives. There is ample evidence pointing to an increase in the affiliates of the Islamic State all over Africa. Correspondingly, there is an ever-growing potential for transnational collaboration between these groups and an increase in foreign fighters – who threaten regional stability. This article recommends collaboration between local forces (AU, FARDC, UPDF, and locals) and international bodies (UN Peacekeeping forces) who bring different strengths including; funding, logistics, and knowledge.

The development of programs and policies that target both vulnerable groups and reformed recruits to cut off the pool of recruits open to groups such as ADF will be critical. The lack of knowledge on the implications of this



Scenes of an explosion near Parliament building in Kampala, Uganda perpetrated by the Allied Defence Forces (ADF) (Photo Credits: Ivan Kabuye/AFP/Getty Images)

new affiliation can be detrimental to the efforts against ADF, as well as any other current or future affiliates of the Islamic State on the continent. An increase in the resources, for instance, funding and logistical help and personnel for research on the matter, are being deployed by governments, international organizations, and scholars in understanding the threat that is posed by an IS-affiliated ADF, including the implications.

Recommendations

DRC's geography provides adequate cover for most militia groups to engage in guerrilla warfare making it difficult for military forces such as UPDF and FARDC to eliminate. This paper recommends collaborative efforts with locals who are more conversant with the terrain to execute better results. This can also be employed by peacekeeping missions in the region like MONUSCO's lack of local knowledge, for instance, local terrain and local existing dynamics. To add, the above-mentioned groups should also engage with locals to create a foundation of trust.

Like most terror groups, ADF attracts and retains recruits – mostly the youth – by promising socio-economic opportunities. ADF recruits primarily from DRC and its

neighbouring states such as Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda, and Kenya aided by porous borders. These states should invest in harmonized CVE frameworks that target potential and reformed fighters in the region. This should be accompanied by localized CVE programs, which would also entail doctrinal revision.

The threat that ADF poses has not always been treated with the seriousness it deserves. The African regional body, African Union (AU), which has experience dealing with the terror group in Somalia, should place greater focus on ADF as it has the potential to escalate into another al Shabab. AU should mobilize a multinational joint force towards fighting the course as it did with Africa Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) which has since been replaced by African Union Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).

The International Community, through the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), should offer advanced training and intelligence sharing with the DRC and Ugandan forces. Intelligence information will supplement investigations regarding the sources ADF's weapons, food, and income; these sources should be cut.

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Contemporary Russia-Sudan Relations in the Light of the War in Ukraine

By Mgr. Tomáš Zwiefelhofer

Abstract

Russia is historically a close ally to Sudan. Western sanctions aimed at Sudan strengthened these ties even more. Russia–Sudan relations are also very pragmatic. Russia is supporting Sudan mostly with arms, military assistance and food export on the one hand and Sudan is granting concessions on mining gold and potential establishment of a Russian naval base on the Red Sea Coast on the other. Sudan is granting Russia concessions on mining gold, and they are in talks regarding potential establishment of Russian naval base on the Red Sea coast. The ongoing war in Ukraine will put these ties to a test because Russian arms exports will be disrupted due to the need to supply their own forces. Food exports are already disrupted by new export regulation and doing business with Russia could be harder due to imposed international sanctions. The aim of this paper is to highlight the existing areas of Russian involvement in Sudan and to point out potential shortfalls in these areas caused by the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Introduction

The ongoing war in Ukraine is conceivably the biggest war in Europe since the Second World War. However, the seemingly distant conflict will project its negative impact on other parts of world as well. Russian Federation, one of the belligerents, is a close international ally to Sudan. This relationship will be put to test in the following months as Russia is expected to concentrate on the war. Russia is Sudan's a longstanding ally from the Soviet era. It supports the country through arms exports, military cooperation, and food exports. In turn, Sudan has granted Russian companies access to its gold and mineral deposits. The following sections will dissect these issues in the contemporary context regarding the war in Ukraine.

The Russian Federation as a successor state after the collapse of Soviet Union inherited cordial relations with many African states including Sudan. The Soviet Union often posed as an alternative to western powers and had been viewed as a strong supporter in the fight against colonialization or potential neo-colonialization efforts. This form of political capital is being used by Russian federation up until today, although the lines between West and East are more blurred than in the past. Yet, other players are emerging. For instance, China is viewed as another alternative to the old traditional Cold War era's champions.

The Soviet Union took part in in both Sudanese civil wars. However, during the second one (1983-2005), it collapsed and was succeeded by the Russian Federation. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia-Sudan relations were rather kept at a low profile (Sukhankin, 2020). In 2007 and 2008, Russia was accused of violating the UN arms embargo, which was enacted because of situation in Darfur. Other accusations were based on Russia supposedly sending mercenaries to help the government of Omar al-Bashir.

During that time, Sudan was subjected to numerous sanctions and adopted pariah status in the international arena due to the country's support for Islamic radicals including harbouring Osama bin Laden and violation of human rights. For Russia, fostering relations with Sudan was a pragmatic way of breaking from the international isolation. In 2008, Sudan politically supported Russia during Russo-Georgian war. Many observers aver that from this period, this approach has become a trend. Sudan took pro-Russian stance in 2014 as well when the UN General Assembly was voting on territorial integrity of Ukraine in the light of Russian invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimean Peninsula (United Nations, 2014). It is worth noting that in this case Sudan together with Zimbabwe were the only two African countries which openly took pro-Russian stance. Since the invasion of Russia in Ukraine on February 24, 2022 until the publishing



Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) and Sudan army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan pose for a photo during their meeting in the Black Sea resort of Sochi, Russia, October 23, 2019. (Photo Credit: AP)

of this article, there were three resolutions regarding the War on Ukraine within the UN. Sudan abstained in all three votes, including in the last resolution which was aimed at suspending Russian membership from the Human Rights Council, and which had the most votes in Russia's favour from all three resolutions (United Nations, 2022a, b, c). Notably, in the case of this third resolution, many African countries decided to actually take a stance rather than abstain their vote. From the greater Horn of Africa, the Russian position was supported by Eritrea and Ethiopia.

In 2017, Omar al-Bashir visited Moscow, where he met President Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, and Minister of Defence, Sergey Shoigu. During this visit, Sudan closed various economic and security deals with Russia including mining concessions, energy sector cooperation, security assistance, as well as a deal which opened the Sudanese ports to Russian warships. Sudan also proposed a possibility of greater Russian access to the Red Sea by allowing Russia to establish a permanent naval base in Port Sudan. Despite Russian ambitions to strengthen their naval presence in the region, this particular idea wasn't utilized.

Russia hosted the first Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi on October 23–24, 2019, with Egypt as a co-host (Russia –

Africa, 2019). Its aim was to improve Russian relations with African nations and to offer economic and security assistance as the security is amongst top Russian exported services along with arms exports. Russia is thus able to provide a complete package, often without any export conditionalities regarding country's state of upholding human rights or democratic principles. Following the outcome of the Sudanese Revolution which toppled al-Bashir's regime, Sudan was represented at Russia Africa Summit by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

The following years were marked by continuous discussion about establishing the Russian naval base in Port Sudan, which has not been approved yet, although this topic became vivid recently with the ongoing war in Ukraine. Moreover, the coup in Sudan in October 2021, which was led by the al-Burhan and the military in general, was not condemned by Russia and was viewed merely as a "transition of authority" (Middle East Monitor, 2022). Based on this reaction, Russia was accused of supporting the coup owing to its close ties with Sudanese military which played a crucial role in the coup (Ibid).

Current war in Ukraine has put another traction to mutual relations. The deputy chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of Sudan Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti visited Russia just at the

time when Russia launched the invasion. Hemedti is part of the military wing of Sudanese governing body, and he has strong ties with Russia. It is most highly probable that he knew nothing about the invasion itself as it was kept in deep secrecy even in the Russian administration (Khair, 2022). Despite the turn of events, Hemedti decided to stay in Moscow for a whole week and continued with the signing of deals with Russia (Ibid.).

The following sections focus on specific areas where Russia cooperates with Sudan and where is strongly active. These are the energy sector cooperation, economic development focused mainly on natural resources extraction, and military assistance, where Russian paramilitary groups (notably the Wagner Group) are employed.

1. Energy Sector Cooperation

Sudan is a growing economy with more than 45 million people. More than 60 per cent of Sudanese live in rural areas. With these statistics, along with projected population growth, the need for greater energy supply is critical. Sudan has strong potential in generating the power from solar and wind. As the current world's initiative to tackle global change is gaining momentum, there will be increasing international pressure to develop low-emission energy sources. In this regard, it will be more difficult to obtain any international funding for new oil and gas powerplants in near future. While solar and wind are great sources and opportunities, they may not generate sufficient energy for future Sudan's demand.

Suitable energy source for broadening the Sudan's energy mix is nuclear energy. Sudan has been trying to obtain such capability for many years now. In 2010, Sudan harboured ambitions to build a nuclear power plant consisting of four reactors with output of 300-600 megawatts per year. This powerplant should have been

built by 2030 at a cost of 3-6 billion USD (McDoom, 2010). In 2016, Sudanese Minister of Water Resources, Irrigation and electricity, Moataz, announced to the parliament that in 2017 the country will start the construction of a nuclear powerplant with 1,200 megawatts output (Middle East Monitor, 2017). Sudan also signed framework agreement regarding construction of nuclear power plant with China in 2016 (Ibid.). The following year, Sudan signed agreement with Russia to build a nuclear power plant in Sudan. It happened one month after Omar al-Bashir's visit to Russia, where he met with President Putin, and they signed deal about cooperation in nuclear energy sector (France 24, 2017). More documents regarding nuclear energy cooperation were signed in 2018 during ATOMEXPO-2018 in Russian Sochi (Rosatom, 2018). Despite those numerous signed documents, no exact and specific plan with solid time frame was presented or has been made public yet. There are various talks regarding different types of reactors as well, including so-called floating reactors, which are still more in prototype stage. Notably, Sudan tried to include the construction of nuclear power plant in negotiation with Russia about providing Russian navy with base in Port Sudan (Ramani, 2022).

Since 2010, Sudan split in two separate countries, deposed Omar al-Bashir and had another attempted coup in 2021, yet there is still no nuclear power plant in sight. Potential partner in this project is Russia or more specifically Russian company Rosatom. Despite the deals with China, the cooperation with Russia looks more promising because both countries already cooperate in other areas and building a nuclear power is nonetheless strategic project. Rosatom is also well-known company with great know-how, currently developing other projects in Africa and it is able to provide complete package, including financial services for the project, nuclear fuel, and maintenance as well as provide personnel for operating the power plant.

2. Economic Development and Cooperation

Russia has immense interest in Sudan's natural resources, most notably gold. During Omar al-Bashir's visit to Russia in 2017, Russian company M-Invest got a concession to mining gold in Sudan. Sudan has extensive gold reserves as well as huge deposits of zinc and copper because of its proximity to Arabian-Nubian Shield. M-Invest as well as its subsidiary Meroe gold, which operates in Sudan directly, is connected to Yevgeny Prigozhin, President



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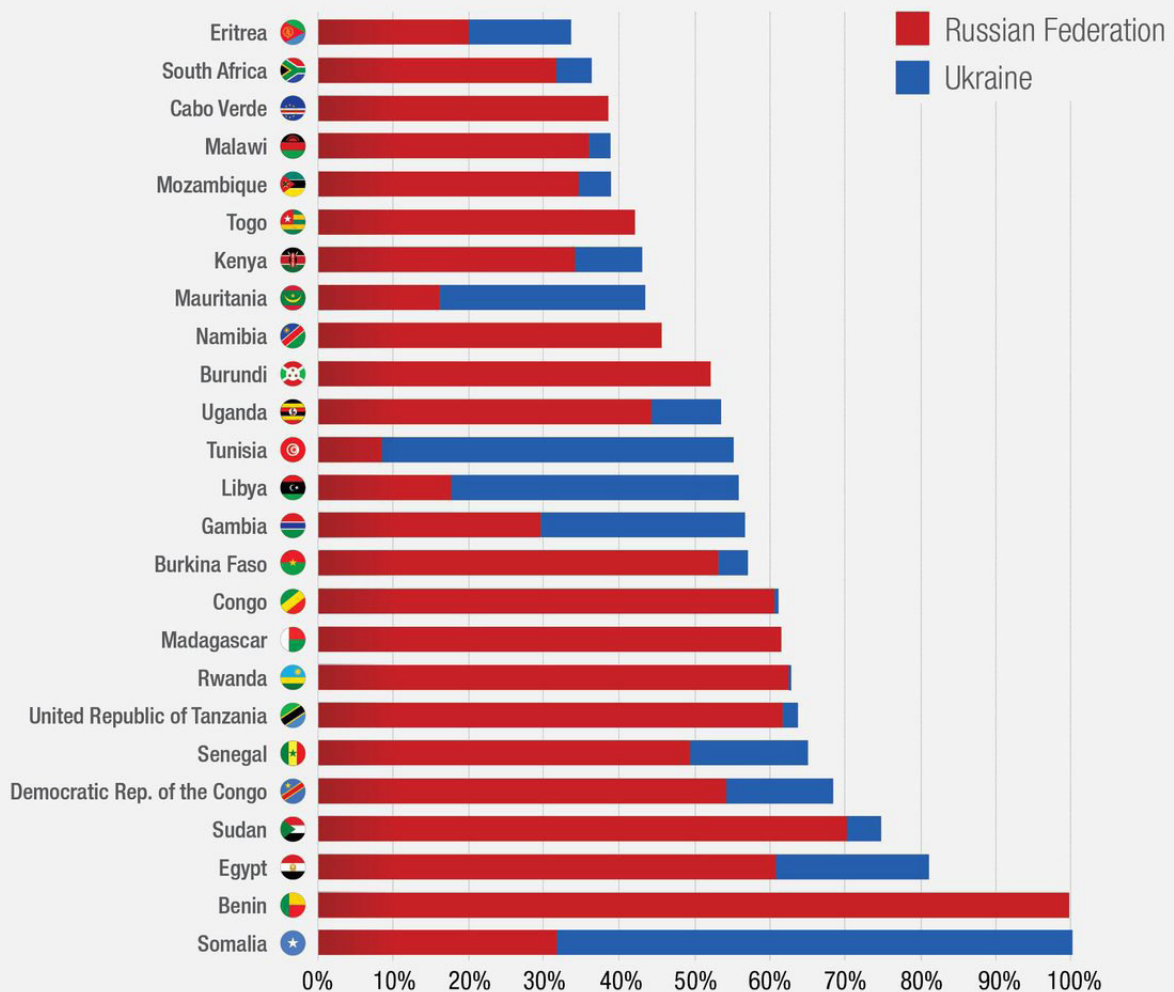
Putin's close ally and the man behind Russian paramilitary organization – Wagner Group (Yakorevna, 2018). It is worth mentioning that Russia managed to considerably expand its gold reserves in national treasury and huge part should be due to their activities in Sudan. Given the aforementioned, there is no surprise that Wagner Group is present in mining sites providing the security.

In exchange for gold, uranium and other minerals, Russia is providing Sudan with food. Food imports are viewed as a critical support for previous and current regime (Khair, 2022), especially in the light of contemporary food protests. Both sides of the ongoing war in Ukraine are

world's major wheat exporters as well as exporters of sunflower oil and those exports will be disrupted in the following months. Current Ukraine's wheat exports which were bound to their destinations by ships were effectively blocked at the Black Sea by Russian navy (Martin, 2022). When it comes to Russian exports, Moscow already introduced various bans on exporting wheat, sugar, barley, maize, and other commodities to countries in Eurasian Economic Union until June 30 and some commodities until August 31 (Hamaide, et al., 2022). Sudan is extremely vulnerable because it is importing almost 80 per cent of all wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine combined (UNCTAD, 2022).

African dependence on wheat from Russia and Ukraine

Share of wheat imports



Source: UNCTAD calculations, based on data from the UNCTADstat database (accessed 4 March 2022).

Chart 1: Visually portrayed dependency on Russian and Ukrainian wheat exports. Sudan is not only endangered country in the Horn of Africa region. See Somalia (100 %), DRC, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, and Eritrea (UNCTAD 2022).

What goes beyond usual arms exports is military assistance. Russia allegedly used Wagner Group not only as a security provider for Russian assets in Sudan but also as military advisors for Sudanese armed forces

Food prices will rise and have further impact on livelihood of people thus it will put even greater pressure on current government. Despite close ties with Russia, it is hard to imagine that Sudan will be on the top of the priority list when Russian exports are diverted even into neighbouring countries, whose mutual relations are cordial as well and transporting costs are much lower.

3. Military Cooperation and the Role of Wagner Group

Russia can be considered as Sudan's long-time partner, even though in 2004 and 2005, Russia voted for arms embargo in Sudan's Darfur. This embargo prohibited arms exports to state and non-state actors in Darfur. Nonetheless, it did not prohibit arms export to Sudan, the only limitation was, that these arms could not be deployed and used in Darfur (McGregor, 2009). Sudan is amongst top markets for Russian arms, only behind Egypt and Algeria. Russia is supplying Sudan with various small arms, tanks, APCs, and aircrafts.

What goes beyond usual arms exports is military assistance. Russia allegedly used Wagner Group not only as a security provider for Russian assets in Sudan but also as military advisors for Sudanese armed forces. Wagner Group presents itself as Private Military Company (PMC), but due to its non-existent registration as a regular company in Russia or elsewhere, is often portrayed as a mercenary force. Mercenaries or not, it can be speculated, that Wagner Group is a tool for Russian foreign policy. Yevgeny Prigozhin, the individual behind Wagner Group, also has various companies active in Africa, more specifically in the mining business. That is also the case in Sudan, where Russian company, M-Invest, and its subsidiary Meroe Gold mines the Sudan's gold deposits (see previous section). The Following sections will focus on two specific areas where Wagner group is active: the military assistance, and Yevgeny Prigozhin's assistance with information operations.

i) Wagner Group and Military Assistance in Sudan

The initial mentions regarding Wagner Group operating in Sudan came up in 2017, as information about skilled veterans who fought in Ukraine appeared in Sudan, tasked with the protection of Russian business interests in the country. Amongst the first persons who claimed that was former Minister of Defence of self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic Igor Strelkov (Shukhankin, 2021). Ukrainian security service SBU stated in 2018 that, there were about 300 members of Wagner Group in Sudan involved in military training of the local armed forces, and they manage to collect at least 149 names of deployed Wagner troops (Ibid.). The personnel composition of the 300 may have involved citizens of Belarus, Moldova, Ukrainian Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk region. However, the presence of the Wagner Group in Sudan was refuted by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as by Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov. Later, there were reports about 500 strong Wagner Group contingent deployed in Darfur which was tasked with training Sudanese soldiers. Overall, it is believed that the Wagner Group provided training not only to the regular armed forces of Sudan, but also to the Rapid Support Forces, paramilitary forces with close ties to Hemedti.

The presence of Wagner Group was in some way admitted by Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2019. In the same year, leaked documents revealed the identity of some Russians in Sudan including Yevgeny Prigozhin (Espanol, 2022). Interestingly, their presence was dismissed with recent statement from Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Abdelaziz & Eltahir, 2022a).

Apart from Yevgeny Prigozhin's gold-mining activities, he is connected to influencing Sudanese public opinion through his company Internet Research Agency. This company is known for meddling with elections in the United States and in various European countries as well, through usage of co called troll farms. In 2019, social media network Facebook identified pages with

links to Prigozhin and Wagner Group in Sudan. The following year, there were eight pages identified as part of Russian information operation in Sudan. In May 2021, Facebook removed 30 pages, six groups, 83 accounts and 49 Instagram profiles after DRFLab and independent researcher tipped the social media (Knight, 2021a). This was followed by another discovery in September 2021 (prior to the October's coup), when Facebook deleted 116 pages, 666 user accounts, 69 groups and 92 Instagram accounts linked to paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, although the removed pages in this case were administrated from United Arab Emirates (Knight, 2021b). Their links to previous Russian activity are weak, but they used the same means.

Prigozhin services were hired in 2018 and his goal was to help Omar al-Bashir to stay in power. Nonetheless, al-Bashir was deposed in 2019. Russian information activities shifted towards improving Russian image in Sudan, shaping public opinion more towards favouring Russian involvement in Sudan including promoting the idea of establishing Russian naval base (Knight, 2021a). Some information campaigns were even focused on improving personal image of Yevgeny Prihozhin, portraying him as a provider of humanitarian assistance (Ibid.).

ii) Naval Base Issue

The Soviet Union had secured naval military presence in the Horn of Africa region by establishing naval bases in Yemen, Ethiopia (Nokra Island, now Eritrean territory), and Somalia (Ramani, 2020). After the dissolution of Soviet Union, Russia lost direct access to the Red Sea and western part of Indian Ocean. This area holds strategic value, as around 10 % of worlds shipping is going through the Red Sea. Naval base in this region significantly helps with sustaining naval presence and securing trade lines. Russian navy has shrank compared to the times of the Soviet Union. Russia has also lost its capability to build large surface vessels as crucial industrial shipbuilding capacity of the Soviet Union was located in Ukraine. This capability gap even deepened after the annexation of Crimean Peninsula and following sanctions which severed industrial cooperation between the two countries. It is worth mentioning that due to international sanctions France decided not to supply two Mistral class amphibious vessels to Russia (now sold to Egypt), which also deprived the Russian navy of large vessels (Frouin & Nikolaeva, 2016).

Russian shipbuilding efforts are now concentrating on building smaller vessels, mostly corvettes and frigates,

which are not as seaworthy as larger vessels. Maintaining its presence in the Red Sea and western Indian Ocean with smaller warships is crucial to establish a naval base in region (Felgenhauer, 2020). Potential naval base in Sudan would also ease a logistical strain already put on Russian base in Syrian Tartus. The base in Tartus is the only Russian naval base in Mediterranean Sea that provides support to any Russian warship deployed into Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean.

Russia is well aware of the strategic value of the ability to support naval operations in this area. In October 2008, Russia started talks about establishing a naval base in Yemen, where Soviet Union had a base during the Cold War. With overthrowing of Yemeni President and the onset of civil war in Yemen, this idea was abandoned. In 2014, Russia got into talks with Djibouti which hosts numerous foreign naval bases on its coastline. Eventually, Djibouti dismissed Russian proposal because of the pressure by the United States. After that, Russia held talks with Eritrea in 2018 (again a country with historical experience in hosting Russian personnel), but without any major accomplishments (Ramani, 2020). Russia also eyed a possibility of gaining access to the Berbera port, again with historical ties, but neither that was successful.

Given all the closed options, Russia welcomed a proposition from Omar al-Bashir, to establish base in Sudan. From the geostrategic point of view, the location is not great as it is in Yemen or Djibouti, and Sudan is not exactly internally stable country, which puts in question the longevity of such arrangement. Omar al-Bashir discussed this proposition in 2017 with President Putin and defence minister Shoigu during his visit to Russia (Daly, 2020). Although Omar al-Bashir was toppled in 2019 talks with Russia regarding the base continued. In 2020, Russian President Putin approved a draft of potential 25-year lease contract with an option for 10-year extensions. Russia should gain access to a part of already

Russia–Sudan relations are mostly military oriented. From the time of al-Bashir until today, Russia supports mainly the Sudanese military which has been and still is a crucial part of the nation's governing body



Sudan's military leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti) is greeted upon his return from the Russian capital, Moscow, at the airport in Khartoum, on March 2, 2022. (Photo Credits: ASHRAF SHAZLY/AFP - Getty Images)

existing facilities in Port Sudan, where it could construct housing for troops, warehouses and develop piers. All the following expenses should be covered by Russian side and Russia would not be paying fees to Sudan. On the other hand, Sudan should receive complimentary military equipment without charge and Russia should build piers for Sudanese warships as well. The capacity of Russian base should be up to 300 personnel with full diplomatic extraterritorial immunity, and maximum four (4) warships including the nuclear-powered vessels (Daly, 2020; Felgenhauer, 2020).

In April and May 2021, various information were made public regarding Sudan's decision to put whole project under review (Sukhankin, 2021). The Sudanese side also reportedly tried to gain more from this project requesting S-400 air-defence systems, Su-30 and Su-35 fighter aircrafts and 1,200 megawatts nuclear power plant in order to proceed with the project (Ramani, 2021). Frankly, S-400 air-defence system as well as Su-35 are state-of-the-art hardware for peer conflict with a very high price, thus making this request a bit greedy.

Last pieces of information regarding Russian naval base in Sudan are from March 2022. Upon his return from Russia, Hemedti announced that negotiations are still ongoing and if it will be beneficial for Sudan, they

will allow Russia to establish naval base in the country. He also emphasized that Sudan has 730-kilometre-long coastline, and it is open to negotiations even with other countries (Abdelaziz & Eltahir, 2022b). Currently, there are only speculations about Turkey aiming for this goal too, due to their 650 USD investment in developing Suakin Island (Ramani, 2020).

Conclusion

Russia–Sudan relations are mostly military oriented. From the time of al-Bashir until today, Russia supports mainly the Sudanese military which has been and still is a crucial part of the nation's governing body. This is boosted by Sudanese military control of Sudan's economy which is easing the mutual economic cooperation with Russia.

The current war in Ukraine will test mutual relations because Russia needs full focus on Ukraine as well as on the domestic situation worsened by economic sanctions at the moment. Sudan will experience disrupted supply of food imported from Russia (and from Ukraine as well), mostly the wheat. Disrupted supply will lead to food price increases, thereby deepening the ongoing social crisis in the country. Transitional government process which is supposed to end in 2023 is currently in danger and we could experience greater instability in the following months.

Russia being pre-occupied with the war in Ukraine could open a window of opportunity for another foreign power, which could help Sudan with food supply or financial aid. Turkey is already investing in Sudan and China is active

in South Sudan, those two could be likely candidates. Especially given the fact, that aid from Turkey or China also does not come with conditionalities like upholding human rights or democratic principles.

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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

We are excited to release our 24th bi-monthly issue of *The HORN Bulletin* (Vol. V, Iss. III, 2022). We bring to you well-researched articles and analysis of topical issues and developments affecting the Horn of Africa. We welcome contributions from readers who wish to have their articles included in the HORN Bulletin. At HORN, we believe ideas are the currency of progress. Feel free to contact the Editor-in-Chief for more details at communications@horninstitute.org.

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About the Authors

Miguel M. Ajú, Ph.D.

Dr. Miguel M. Ajú is a Researcher at the Centre for International Studies (CEI) of the University Institute of Lisbon (IUL-ISCTE), Portugal. He holds a Master's Degree in Management Sciences and Doctoral Degree in Political Science and International Relations from the University Institute of Lisbon – ISCTE, Portugal. While he works for the United Nations, the views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.

He can be reached at mmua@iscte-iul.pt

Singo S. Mwachofi.

Stephen Mwachofi Singo is a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Nairobi (Kenya) where he teaches Security Studies and Comparative Politics. He has also taught at Moi University (Kenya). He holds a Master of Arts in International Relations from the University of Nairobi (Kenya), and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Moi University (Kenya). He has also successfully completed professional courses in Peacebuilding; Diplomacy, Project Management, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in Kenya, Switzerland, Sweden, South Africa, and Austria. His research interests include the link between illicit small arms proliferation and development. He is currently a consultant at Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC) (Kenya), and the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) in Nairobi (Kenya).

He can be reached at smwachofi@gmail.com

Raudhat Sayeeda Saddam

Raudhat Sayeeda Saddam is a Researcher at the HORN Institute. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Strathmore University (Kenya). Her areas of interest include Youth and Women Empowerment, International Development, Terrorism, Conflict Resolution, and Community Development.

She can be reached at raudhat@horninstitute.org

Janice Sanya

Janice Nabwire Sanya is a Project Assistant at the HORN Institute. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies and Diplomacy from the University of Nairobi (Kenya). Her areas of interest include Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, Food Security, Regionalism and World Politics, and Politics of Aid and Development. She also has experience in Project Planning and Implementation.

She can be reached at janicesanya@horninstitute.org

Mgr. Tomáš Zwiefelhofer

Tomáš is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Security and Strategic Studies from the faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Czech Republic. He holds a master's degree in Security and Strategic Studies from the same university. He is the head of project management at Security Outlines, a Czecho-Slovak think-tank focusing on security issues. His areas of interest are great power competition, geopolitics, defence policy and violent non-state actors.

He can be reached at zwiefelhofer@securityoutlines.cz

Note:

The views expressed in this Bulletin are those of the authors and they do not necessarily reflect the position of the HORN Institute.



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The HORN International Institute for Strategic Studies is a non-profit, applied research, and policy think-do tank based in Nairobi, Kenya. Its vision is a progressive Horn of Africa and the African continent, served by informed, evidence-based and problem-solving policy research and analysis. Its mission is to contribute to informed, objective, definitive research and analytical inquiry that positively informs policies of governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and spaces.

HORN
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

+254 720 323 896
+254 735 323 896

info@horninstitute.org

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