



Somalia: Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 31 May 2011

Is AMISOM (African United Mission in Somalia) still present; Are Ethiopians part of it?

Amnesty International note in their Annual Report for Somalia published in May 2011:

“Al-Shabab claimed responsibility for suicide attacks, including at the Muna hotel in Mogadishu in August, which killed 33 people. The armed group also claimed responsibility for bombings in Kampala, Uganda in July (see Uganda entry), saying they were in revenge for civilian casualties caused by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

AMISOM, mandated to protect TFG institutions, increased its troops, composed of Ugandan and Burundian soldiers, to 8,000, partly in response to the Kampala bombings. AMISOM denied accusations that they responded to armed groups' attacks in Mogadishu with indiscriminate shelling and shooting, resulting in civilian deaths. However, AMISOM apologized for the killing of two civilians on 23 November in Mogadishu, saying it had opened an investigation and had arrested soldiers involved in the incident. On 22 December, the UN Security Council extended AMISOM's authorized troop strength from 8,000 to 12,000.” (Amnesty International (13 May 2011) *Amnesty International Annual Report 2011 - Somalia*)

A report from the *UN News Service* published in May 2011 notes:

“He said the Security Council is expected to meet Somalia's leadership and representatives from the AU and IGAD in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, during its forthcoming mission to Africa, in an effort to break the deadlock.

Mr. Mahiga said that TFG forces and allied militia have, with the support of the troops of the AU mission in Somalia (AMISOM), made significant territorial gains against Al Shabaab insurgents in the capital, Mogadishu, as well as in the central, western and southern areas.” (UN News Service (13 May 2011) Somali political bickering undermines peace process - UN envoy)

A report from *IRIN News* published in April 2011 states:

“Fighting between government troops, backed by the African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and opposition Islamist groups, continues in Mogadishu and other parts of the country and has caused the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Somalis.” (IRIN News (14 April 2011) Somalia: Shoe-shining in a war zone)

A *UN Security Council* report from May 2011 noted:

“In recent months, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its allies, with the support of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), have gained ground against Al-Shabaab militants, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon notes in his latest report to the Security Council on Somalia.

The TFG has undertaken efforts to expand its area of control in the capital, Mogadishu, to enhance security for its people, and has also opened new fronts in south-central Somalia and taken control of major towns.” (UN Security Council (4 May 2011) *Somalia: Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia*)

The report also noted:

“The development of the Somali security sector institutions is crucial, as is speeding up the deployment of additional troops for AMISOM. “A stronger AMISOM would help the Transitional Federal Government to bring and sustain more territory under its control and to begin delivering services to the Somali people,” he states.” (ibid)

Page 12 of the report noted under the heading D. Progress towards full deployment and strengthening of AMISOM:

“64. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1964 (2010), by which the Council requested the African Union to increase the AMISOM force strength from 8,000 to 12,000, Burundi and Uganda reaffirmed their commitment to deploy the additional 4,000 troops. As a first step, Burundi deployed an additional 1,000 troops in the first week of March 2011, bringing AMISOM strength to about 9,000. Coordination and preparations for the deployment of the additional battalions continue among the troop-contributing countries, the African Union Commission and other partners. While UNSOA coordinates support to AMISOM with the troop-contributing countries and partners on the ground, the United Nations Office to the African Union supports the African Union Commission in planning and managing AMISOM operations, including in assisting with force generation. Military planners of the United Nations Office to the African Union have participated in several predeployment visits and inspections to ensure the smooth insertion of troops.” (ibid)

Another *UN Security Council* report from 2010 noted:

“Al-Shabaab has engaged in acts that directly or indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Somalia, including but not limited to: acts that threaten the Djibouti Agreement of August 18, 2008, or the political process; and, acts that threaten the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs), the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), or other international peacekeeping operations related to Somalia.

Al-Shabaab has also obstructed the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Somalia, or access to, or distribution of, humanitarian assistance in Somalia.

According to the Statement by the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia to the Security Council delivered on 29 July 2009, both al-Shabaab and Hisb’ul Islam publicly and repeatedly claimed responsibility for the attacks by their forces on the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and AMISOM. Al-

Shabaab had also claimed responsibility for the killing of TFG officials, and on 19 July 2009 had raided and shut down the field offices of UNOPS, UNDSS and UNDP in the Bay and Bakool regions, in violation of paragraph 8 (c) of resolution 1844 (2008). Al-Shabaab has also repeatedly obstructed access to, or distribution of, humanitarian assistance in Somalia.” (UN Security Council (12 April 2010) *Security Council Committee on Somalia and Eritrea Issues List of Individuals Identified Pursuant to Paragraph 8 of Resolution 1844 (2008)*)

A report published in October 2008 by the *Swedish Defence Research Agency FOI* notes on page 21:

“Since AMISOM was deployed not long after Ethiopia intervened in the conflict, concerns have been raised that there is a risk of AMISOM being seen as too closely connected to Ethiopian interests, thus jeopardising its neutrality.⁵⁶ AMISOM’s mandate clearly states that the operation shall support and protect the TFG in carrying out its tasks.⁵⁷ Because legitimacy of the TFG as representative of the Somali state has been greatly contested, this has provided another case for those who question the neutrality of the AU forces, arguing that AMISOM is essentially backing a weak illegitimate government and carrying out the will of the IGAD countries and TFG president Yusuf.⁵” (Swedish Defence Research Agency FOI (October 2008) *African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) Exemplifying African Union Peacekeeping Challenges*)

The *Daily Monitor* reported in May 2011 under the heading ‘Gaining Ground’:

“The 9,000-strong force of Ugandan and Burundian troops deployed to protect the ailing Somali government has in the last five months regained significant ground in central Mogadishu.” (Daily Monitor (15 May 2011) UPDF officers killed, 3 injured in Somalia)

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

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BBC Monitoring

BBC News

Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

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Danish Immigration Services

European Country of Origin Information Network

Google

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

IRIN

Lexis Nexis

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

Relief Web

UNHCR Refworld

UK Home Office

US Department of State