

Challenges Facing Amisom in its Bid to Restore Peace in Somalia

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Abstract: *Civil conflict in Somalia is considered one of the major and worst crisis in Africa's recent history. Due to this, Somalia had operated with an unstable functioning government for now over twenty years. This state of affairs has led to majority of the civilian population acquiring arms illegally for their protection. The study sought to explore the key challenges facing AMISOM in its bid to restore peace in Somalia. The study was based on the theory of conflict transformation. The study utilized primary data, which was collected using structured questionnaires and interview schedules. The unit of analysis constituted a sample size of 100 respondents drawn from the military, police, and civilian components of AMISOM and Somali civilian population working within Halane Base Camp, with a combined target population of 24,643. Quantitative data was descriptively analyzed using the percentages and qualitative data was analyzed using themes emerging from the data. The study found out that clan dynamics in the conflict torn Somalia remains the biggest hindrance to the achievement of peace and stability. This is coupled by the weak government structures that underpin inadequacy of support to AMISOM operations. The study recommends that there is need for AMISOM to increase involvement with civilians as they stand important in peace building initiatives, intelligence, mediation and prevention of conflict.*

Keywords: Challenges, peace, AMISOM, civil conflict, Somalia

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Looking back over 100 years, history is filled with major wars for instance the two world wars, the constant scare of escalation of threat during the cold war and more recently the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. Despite the fact that people will always talk about the need for peace in the world, the world is instead filled with fear and constant security threats. Since the First World War, many theorists and political scientists have tried to come up with solutions on how to create peaceful environments but with no real achievements. The United Nations Charter, Chapter VI lays down the peaceful settlement of disputes, which parties to conflict observe in maintenance of international peace and security (Rogers, 2013).

Continental Blocs have been constituted as well in a bid to resolve conflicts in the continent. For instance, the African Union Constitutive Act provides for establishment of the African Union Peace, and Security Council (AUPSC). Regional bodies such the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a regional group of sixteen countries has come together with an aim of promoting economic cooperation and regional integration (Shekhawat, 2015). The East Africa Standby Force, which Somalia is a member is mandated to provide capability for rapid deployment to forces to carry out preventive deployment, rapid intervention, peace support and stability operations and peace enforcement.

Due to overburdened UN System, the international community has progressively tasked regional organizations with conflict prevention and peacekeeping. Regional organizations have strongly come up to take up the mantle to ensure peace and stability within their jurisdiction. North

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) comprised of 28 European member countries established on April 4, 1949 was mandated to act as power deterrent against military aggression from non-members and promote democratic values and commit to the peaceful resolution of disputes. In this obligation, NATO's success was reflected in the fact that throughout the entire period of Cold War, NATO forces were not involved in any single military engagement and for much of the latter half of the 20th Century; NATO remained vigilant and prepared (NATO Website, 2016).

When countries go into conflict, all diplomatic efforts are put into test and when they fail, NATO has the military capacity needed to undertake crisis management operations, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organizations. NATO has approximately 18,000 military personnel who are engaged in NATO missions around the globe handling often-complex ground, air, and naval operations in all kinds of environment. NATO is currently operating in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Mediterranean and well beyond the Euro-Atlantic region; it continues to support the African Union in its peacekeeping missions especially AMISOM by providing airlift support for AU peacekeepers. The diversity of operations and missions in which NATO has been involved have greatly increased since the early 1990s (NATO Website, 2016).

In 2017, ECOWAS established a military intervention and deployed 4000 ECOWAS troops in Gambia to resolve a breakdown of internal order in Gambia due to a constitutional crisis in a dispute of the presidency where the long-standing President of Gambia Yahya Jammeh refused to hand over power for the elected President Adama Barrow (The Jerusalem Post, 2017). Because of the intervention, the former president was forced to step down, went into exile after the military incursion. The ECOWAS troops remained in Gambia to maintain order and re-establish democracy in Gambia. The UNSCR 2337 was approved which expressed

support for ECOWAS efforts to negotiate the transition of the presidency with the use of political means first without endorsing military action (UNSCR, 2017).

In view of the foregoing, scholars contend that Somalia is engulfed in a Hobbesian trap, in which mutual distrust has led to everyone wanting to own guns in fear of being attacked by their neighbours thus resulting into unending conflict situation (Mulugeta, 2009). Observers on the other hand argue that a confluence of factors including colonial legacy, external intervention, clannism, Siad Barre's dictatorship, and the intensification of armed opposition contributed to the disintegration of the country in 1991 (Amadi, 2014). Somalia has been struggling with unstable functioning central government consequently leading into lawlessness. The effects of the general anarchy in the country have not only affected the population, but have also spilled over to countries in the Horn of Africa region and the world over at large. The problem of refugees, smuggling of small arms and light weapons (SALWs), the spreading of terrorism, and radicalization are all threats emerging from Somalia, mainly affecting the AU in general and IGAD member states in particular (Mulugeta, 2009).

Somalia conflict also affects the region in the Horn of Africa. This has seen deployment of AMISOM troops to Somalia in the fight against the insurgents but in the process the troops have been attacked and killed in their operating bases. The neighbouring countries like Kenya have seen numerous terrorist attacks in which the Al-Shabaab insurgents from Somalia have claimed responsibility. For example, the Westgate Attack in Kenya 2013. The problems identified in Somalia tend seem to major on Somalis historical problems and not efficiency and effectiveness of the strategies applied by AMISOM for a peaceful Somalia. It is against this backdrop that the study attempted to investigate the effectiveness of the Africa Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) by seeking to find out solutions to the seemingly infinite conflict.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The general objective of this study was to explore the key challenges facing AMISOM in its bid to restore peace in Somalia.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the theory of conflict transformation as propounded by Vayrynen (1991). The theory draws on many of the familiar concepts of conflict management and conflict resolution, and that it also rests on the same tradition of theorising about conflict. It is best viewed not as a wholly new approach, but rather as a reconceptualization to make it more relevant to contemporary conflicts. The theory argues that certain crucial changes in the nature of conflict call for such a reconceptualisation.

First, most contemporary violent conflicts are asymmetric, marked by inequalities of power and status. Second, many contemporary conflicts are protracted, crossing repeatedly into and out of violence and thus defying cyclical or bell-

shaped models of conflict phases. Thirdly, protracted conflicts warp the societies, economies and regions in which they are situated, creating complex emergencies fuelled on the one hand by local struggles and on the other by global factors such as the arms trade and support for regimes or rebels by outside states (Miall, 2004). This explanation can also be used to explain the challenges faced by AMISOM in its bid to restore peace in Somalia.

2. Literature Review

The biggest challenge AMISOM faces are lack of funding, this frustration led to the August 2009 AU summit in Tripoli where statutory fund transfers were increased from 6% to 12% by 2012. This transfer was intended to avoid crippling of the AU in its peace and security mandate. African countries should endeavour to contribute substantially to AU peace operations. The assessed contributions of member states to peacekeeping operations should be paid regularly. The percentage of regular budget allocated to peace fund should be increased and the AU commission chairperson should intensify his effort at mobilizing funds and resources for AU peacekeeping operations from within the continent and diaspora (AU, 2007). This capacity challenge partly explains why AU has not been up to the task in conflict management in Somalia, a trend that needs more attention. The AU funding supports the AMISOM operations.

African heads of state, cognizant of the continents financial constraints, adopted a resolution during the AU summit in Maputo, Mozambique in July 2003 calling on the European Union to establish a Peace Support Operation Facility (PSOF) from funds allocated to African countries. In response to the request, the EU African Peace Facility was established in March 2004, with the initial budget of 250 Million Euros. The fund was increased four times to 440 Million Euros by 2007 due to the AU wide range of security and peace activities in the field (AU, 2010). Since 98 percent of funding is foreign, it remains doubtful that AU can assert its independence and autonomy in carrying out its peacekeeping mandate. This has remained one of the greatest challenges of AU in proactively responding to conflict in the region.

The AU has deployed peacekeeping troops under (AMISOM) mission, though they are struggling to strengthen their presence in Somalia. The Mission has itself been derailed by the conflict between the government troops and insurgent groups. Its presence in Somalia, however, has effectively ensured the continuity of the weak Transitional Federal Government. In general, regional and international Organizations have provided a vital forum for various actors to address the conflict in Somalia. Mobilization of funds and support for various initiatives in Somalia has so far been shouldered by these organizations. If these Organizations effectively coordinate their actions and that of their member states, a stable Somalia which is not a safe haven for terrorists and pirates as well as a source of refugees, internally displaced persons and light weapons may be possibly restored (Mulugeta, 2009).

African Regional Institutions lack the required expertise, logistics, diplomatic, and financial muscle to singularly

mount a successful intervention without support from extra Africa. Swift responses from the Western world in the form of willing partnerships with regional African Organizations like the case of France in Mali and Ivory Coast, conflicts would dramatically improve the outcome of peacekeeping operations in Africa (Baraza, 2013). Corporation between the UN, regional and sub-regional African organizations, can mitigate these shortcomings.

Since the day AMISOM became operational in Somalia, it has been facing numerous attacks from their bases. For instance, in 15 January 2016, an attack was carried out by Al-Shabaab on a Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) in El-Adde Base leaving over 150 Kenya Defense Forces soldiers dead, others captured and other seriously wounded. On 21 April 2016, six Ethiopian troops were killed in a blast in Bay Region which Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility. On 26 June 2015, at least 50 Burundian soldiers were killed in an attack near Mogadishu base (BBC News, 2016).

3. Methodology

This study adopted a mixed design strategy to the key challenges facing AMISOM in its bid to restore peace in Somalia. First, being an evaluative study, the research design for this study was descriptive survey design. The design was appropriate for this study, as data was collected from a cross-section of the AMISOM staff in Somalia using both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. Secondly, the study applied the case study approach in trying to understand the Somalia conflict through the AMISOM intervention. The location of the study was at the Mogadishu capital where the African Union operations in Somalia are based. The study targeted 24,643 AMISOM staff and Somali civilian population.

The researcher used purposive sampling to include the individuals deemed to be have the relevant information for the study. The research also used the strata whereby the population was divided into groups depending on the demographic characteristics considered important for the analysis for this study. The sample size for this study was calculated using the formula by Yamane (1967) where a total of 100 respondents were sampled.

The study relied on use of primary data. Primary data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules containing both structured and semi-structured questions respectively. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis approaches were applied to this study. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics were conducted through frequency counts and percentages to capture the distribution of responses on the key issues addressed in the study objectives. Qualitative data on the other hand was analyzed by use of thematic analysis.

4. Findings

4.1 Demographic Information

The demographic information sought from the respondents in this study included: gender, nationality, as well as the category of the respondents. Gender is a construct that influences people’s attitudes and response to given situations hence this study sought to collect gender-disaggregated data and ascertain if gender differences influenced their responses. The findings are presented in Figure 1.

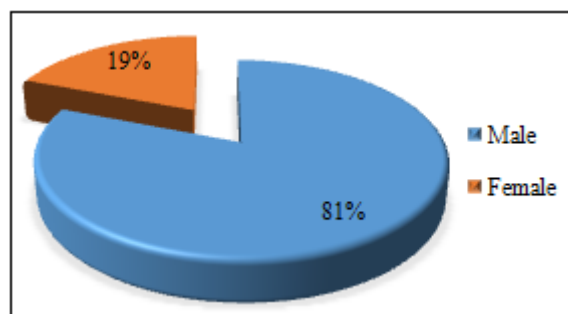


Figure 1: Gender of respondents

From the findings in figure 1, most of the respondents (81%) were male while 19% were female. The findings reflect disparities attributable to the conflict prone Somalia where AMISOM recruitment target more males in the mission operations being a high volatile region. The researcher was also interested in establishing the nationality of the respondents in this study working under the AMISOM. The findings are presented in Figure 2.

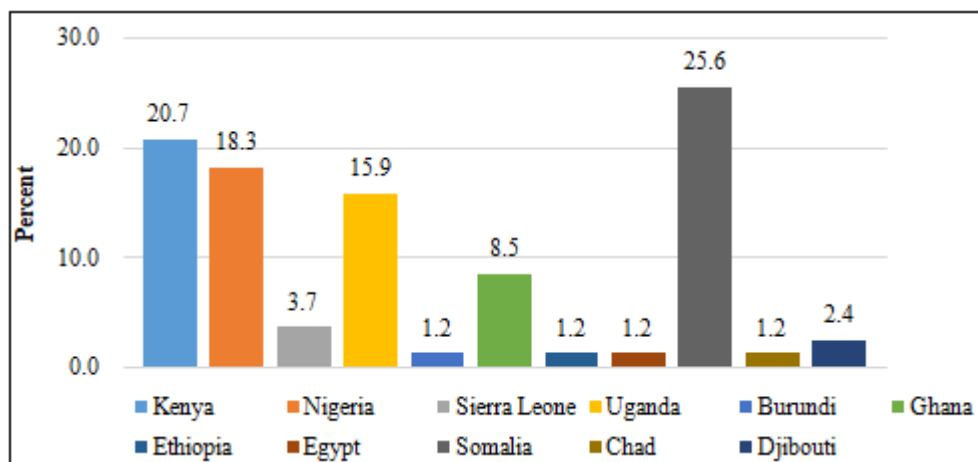


Figure 2: Nationality of respondents

Most of the respondents in the study were Somali (26%) and Kenyan (21%). Nigerians comprised 18% followed by Uganda (16%), Ghana (8.5%) and Sierra Leone (3.7%). Respondents from Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Egypt and Chad comprised 7%. These findings underscore the involvement of different nationalities in the AMISOM operation in the horn of African country.

The category of the respondents was important as it informs from different dispensations the effectiveness of the AMISOM in the transformation of the Somalia conflict. The researcher sought information on the category of the respondents and the findings are presented in Table 1. The findings indicate that majority of the respondents were AMISOM police (36.9%) while AMISOM civilians were the least (9.5%).

Table 1: Category of respondents

Category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
AMISOM Military	24	28.6	29
AMISOM Police	31	36.9	65
AMISOM Civilian	8	9.5	75
Somali	21	25	100

4.2 Presentation of the Findings

The objective of the study was to explore the key challenges facing AMISOM in its bid to restore peace in Somalia. This entailed an exploration to the hindrances to the achievement of peace and stability as well as challenges accosting the African peace mission in Somalia relative to the execution of its mandate. The findings are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Hindrances to the achievement of peace and stability in Somalia

Hindrances	Percent
Clannism/Clan dynamics	31%
Weak government structures	14%
Inadequate human and financial resources	11%
Foreign interference	9%
Al-Shabaab links with other terror organizations	6%
Poor coordination of troops from different TCC's	6%
High Illiteracy levels	6%
Lack of cooperation from civilians	6%
Logistical constraints	3%
Language barrier	3%
Proliferation of weapons	3%
Drought/Famine	3%
Total	100%

From the research findings, Clan dynamics, weak government structures and inadequate human and financial resources for peace keeping operations are the biggest challenges toward peace and stability, accounting for more than half (56%) the hindrances in question. Moreover, clan dynamics relating to clan-based power rivalries remain the biggest threat toward achievement of peace and stability, as indicated by 31% of the respondents. Weak government structures, inadequacy of financial, and human resources for peacekeeping operations account for 14% and 11% respectively.

Further, 9% of the respondents cited foreign interference including misplaced competition from international actors as

a hindrance to peace and stability in Somalia while 6% equally mentioned Al-Shabaab links with other terror organizations, poor coordination of troops from different TCC's, and high illiteracy levels as barriers to the achievement of peace. Language barrier between forces and civilians, logistical constraints, proliferations of arms and drought and famine in Somalia equally challenge the achievement of peace and stability in Somalia. However, respondents indicated that these factors acted least against the achievement of peace in Somalia.

Additionally, the researcher sought to understand the challenges underpinning the effectiveness of the AMISOM in the transformation of the Somalia conflict. Table 4-7 shows that the inadequacy of funding poses as the biggest challenge toward AMISOM efforts in restoration of peace in Somalia, accounting for 19% of responses by respondents. Among the pool of challenges facing the African Mission in Somalia in the peace and stabilization endeavour, poor coordination from local population regarding AMISOM mission is second in command. About 15% of the respondents indicated that there is resistance and or poor coordination between AMISOM and the local population, which undergirds a lack of cooperation between the two entities further hampering the course of peace and stabilization efforts in Somalia.

Table 3: Challenges faced by AMISOM in restoration of peace

	n	Percent
Inadequate funding to run most programme	30	19.1%
Resistance/Poor coordination from local population regarding AMISOM activities	23	14.6%
Inadequate military resources and institutional capacity to manage operations	17	10.8%
Language barrier between AMISOM and Somali	15	9.6%
Lack of strong, acceptable government structures and policies to support AMISOM	14	8.9%
Clan dynamics	11	7.0%
The militia group has developed new and strong ways of attacks	7	4.5%
Logistical constraints	13	8.2%
AMISOM attack strategies leaked to the militia group	5	3.2%
No signed peace agreement between the warring parties	5	3.2%
Death of AMISOM forces through attacks	4	2.6%
Drought and famine in Somalia	4	2.6%
High illiteracy levels among the general population	3	1.9%
Internal conflicts within AMISOM	1	0.6%

Research findings further reveal the inadequacy of military resources and institutional capacity to manage operations is among top challenges faced by AMISOM. While it accounts for about 11%, it is the third most frequent challenge acknowledged from respondents. About one in every ten respondents indicate language barrier between AMISOM and Somali challenges the peace and stabilization efforts as communication with locals to build cooperation frameworks and fight the enemy are not existent. Evidently, more than half of the challenges experienced (54%) are accounted for by four reasons mentioned inadequate funding, poor coordination with local population, Inadequate military

resources and institutional capacity as well as language barrier.

Other challenges toward AMISOM peace and stabilization efforts include Lack of strong, acceptable government structures and policies to support AMISOM (8.9%), Clan dynamics (7%), new and strong ways of attacks by militia group (4.5%), Logistical constraints (8.2%) AMISOM attack strategies leaked to the militia group (3.2%) and No signed peace agreement between the warring parties (3.2%). These account for a third of potential reasons AMISOM fails to achieve its mandate in expected fashion.

Moreover, the existence of drought and famine in Somalia, death of AMISOM forces through attacks, high illiteracy levels among the general population and internal conflicts within AMISOM have further derailed peace-building efforts jointly accounting about 8% of the gap.

5. Discussion

From the research findings, clan dynamics, weak government structures and inadequate human and financial resources for peace keeping operations are the biggest challenges toward peace and stability, accounting for more than half (56%) the hindrances in question. Moreover, clan dynamics relating to clan-based power rivalries remain the biggest threat toward achievement of peace and stability, as indicated by 31% of the respondents. Weak government structures, inadequacy of financial, and human resources for peacekeeping operations account for 14% and 11% respectively. These findings corroborate previous findings by Wiklund (2013) who established competition for power by rival clans as the biggest cause for factional conflict and continuous warfare preceding the formation of the transitional federal government.

The present study found out that weak government structures continue to impact on the efforts to achieve peace and stabilizations efforts. The findings indicate that there are weak government structures leading to sabotage of the existing government and peacekeeping operations. Previous findings by Wiklund (2013) are consistent with these findings, establishing that the existing government has proved weak and corrupt leading to failure in the achievement of significant and timely progress on strategic goals.

Research findings indicate that inadequacy of financial resources to manage operations is a challenge as Somalia does not have the financial muscle to maintain police and military who the police who AMISOM uses in all operations. Baraza (2015) concurs that regional institutions lack the required expertise and financial muscle to mount successful interventions. Study findings further reveal inadequate cooperation from the locals regarding the AMISOM and international community efforts in peacekeeping and stabilization threatens the achievement of peace in Somalia. This was attributed to high illiteracy, language barrier between forces and civilians, logistical constraints, proliferations of arms and drought and famine in Somalia. Baraza (2015) concurs, postulating the difficulties that arise in conflict resolution efforts by failure to maintain

cooperation and good relations. These results complement previous findings by Amadi, (2014) who established a number of similar challenges to AMISOM operations in his an analysis of Peacekeeping Strategies in Africa focusing on the African Union Mission in Somalia.

On the other hand, inadequate funding to manage operations, poor coordination with locals and inadequate military resources and institutional capacity remain the biggest challenges to AMISOM in its attempts to bring peace and stabilization to Somalia. This is despite previous efforts by the African union to increase statutory fund transfers by double (AU, 2007). The findings of Freear and de Coning (2013) are in consonance postulating, the assembling of financial and logistical support package under difficult conditions remain a significant challenge for African Union and United Nation peace operations. Amadi (2014) concurs that the number of military resources in Somalia is still too low and there is need for increase of troops to stabilize the whole of Somalia informed by the extensiveness of the country and threat posed by the asymmetric threats by Al-Shabaab. On the other hand, the civilian component of AMISOM is also understaffed derailing the institutional capacity to achieve is stated objectives.

The problem of lack of finance has been a challenge for AMISOM to effectively undertake their activities. The same has been seen by the AU (2010) which determined that the African heads of state, cognizant of the continents financial constraints, adopted a resolution during the AU summit allying on the European Union to establish a Peace Support Operation Facility (PSOF) from funds allocated to African countries. Since 98 percent of funding is foreign, it remains doubtful that AU can assert its independence and autonomy in carrying out its peacekeeping mandate. This has remained one of the greatest challenges of AU in proactively responding to conflict in the region.

The AU has deployed peacekeeping troops under (AMISOM) mission, though they are struggling to strengthen their presence in Somalia. The Mission has itself been derailed by the conflict between the government troops and insurgent groups. Mulugeta (2009) noted that its presence in Somalia, however, has effectively ensured the continuity of the weak Transitional Federal Government. In general, regional and international Organizations have provided a vital forum for various actors to address the conflict in Somalia. Mobilization of funds and support for various initiatives in Somalia has so far been shouldered by these organizations.

6. Conclusions

The coordination of troops especially from different troop contributing countries remains one of the biggest challenges to peacekeeping operations. Different troops often necessitate the need for harmonization of different institutional cultures, capacities and methods. There is need for integrated planning and having a unitary command system in order to be effective. The findings from this study on the relative non-impact of nationalities or different strategies and priorities amongst different troop contingents

indicate significant strides made toward conflict resolution in Somalia. Therefore, disarmament strategies and reintegration strategies will go far and the address of challenges faced by AMISOM which would eventually lead to the transformation of the conflict.

The study recommends that there is need for AMISOM to increase involvement with civilians as they stand important in; peace building initiatives, intelligence, mediation and prevention of conflict. Engaging with the federal government and expanding power sharing with various clans is important in ensuring clan dynamics and armed factions all contribute to an ending of the conflict.

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