

After Westgate: opportunities and challenges in the war against Al-Shabaab

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On 21 September 2013, fighters from the Harakat Al-Shabaab Mujahideen (Movement of the Warrior Youth) attacked the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, killing 67 people and wounding over 200 others. According to Kenya's parliamentary inquiry into the attack, it was conducted by four gunmen (three Somali nationals and a Norwegian citizen of Somali origin), all of whom died in the subsequent four-day siege.¹ The inquiry, by the Joint Committee on Administration and National Security and Defence and Foreign Relations, listed Westgate as the 28th terrorist attack in the country since Kenyan forces intervened in Somalia in October 2011. It concluded that a confluence of factors had left Kenya particularly vulnerable to such attacks: its porous border with Somalia; endemic corruption and poor levels of preparedness among its security officials; youth radicalization (with over 500 Kenyan youths recruited into Al-Shabaab), the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; and the influx of more than 600,000 Somali refugees into Kenya. Overall, the inquiry lamented that despite relevant general information about an impending terror attack on such a target, there had been a 'nationwide systemic failure' on the part of numerous government departments, confusion among government agencies in responding to the attack, and disgraceful looting of premises within the mall by some Kenyan soldiers and police.

Among its many recommendations, the Joint Committee urged Kenya's government to 'declare war against al Shabaab wherever they are', repeal the Refugee Act (2006), and close Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps and repatriate their residents. These were odd recommendations, not least because Kenya's government had declared war on Al-Shabaab a long time previously. More importantly, however, it was remarkable that the Joint Committee called for the repatriation of Somali refugees despite a July 2013 ruling by Kenya's High Court which quashed a similar government directive, issued in December 2012, requiring that, among other things, all refugees be relocated to camps in the north of the country. In March 2014 Kenya's National Assembly rejected the Joint Committee report for

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¹ *Report of the Joint Committee on Administration and National Security; and Defence and Foreign Relations on the inquiry into the Westgate terrorist attack, and other terror attacks in Mandera in North-Eastern and Kilifi in the Coastal Region* (Nairobi: Kenya National Assembly, Eleventh Parliament, First Session, Dec. 2013). In spite of this inquiry, many of the details of the attack, including the number of attackers, remain a source of controversy.

its shoddy workmanship and unhelpful recommendations.² Nevertheless, in the wake of several smaller-scale attacks by Al-Shabaab sympathizers in Nairobi and Mombasa, and egged on by elements of the country's media, the Kenyan government conducted a massive sweep and relocation of some 4,000 suspected 'terrorists'—dubbed Operation Usalama Watch. This involved house-to-house searches by police, principally of ethnic Somalis living in or around the Eastleigh and South C districts of Nairobi (many of whom were subsequently detained in Safaricom Kasarani stadium) as well as Mombasa and various towns in central Kenya.³

This episode revealed two things pertinent to the wider international effort to defeat Al-Shabaab. First, elements of the Kenyan media and political leadership played directly into Al-Shabaab's hands by scapegoating ethnic Somalis as a whole, refugees and Kenyan citizens alike. This is precisely the type of behaviour Al-Shabaab has previously used to recruit fighters, and it duly released its latest recruitment video in mid-May following Operation Usalama Watch. Second, the episode showcased corruption within Kenya's security forces, some of whom used the operation as a way to make money, arresting people (including one member of the Kenyan Senate) on accusations of lacking genuine identification documents and subsequently releasing those who could afford their bribes.⁴

Beyond the domestic debates in Kenya that intensified after the Westgate attack, the assault also affected the wider war against Al-Shabaab. First, although it was not the first Al-Shabaab terrorist 'spectacular', the siege received unprecedented international media attention that shone a spotlight on the state of Al-Shabaab and efforts to defeat it.⁵ Second, the attack gave renewed impetus to those calling for a new, more offensive phase in the war against Al-Shabaab. This was facilitated by UN Security Council Resolution 2124 (12 November 2013) which enhanced both the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Security Forces (SNSF), and by a new concept of operations for AMISOM, adopted in January 2014.⁶

Overall, the war against Al-Shabaab has made considerable progress. Having begun a concerted set of offensive operations in early 2014, by April AMISOM, the Somali National Army (SNA) and some of its aligned militias had pushed Al-Shabaab forces out of nearly a dozen settlements across south-central Somalia. While a newly reconfigured Al-Shabaab will remain a significant tactical threat with the ability to conduct ambushes and terror attacks, mainly in Somalia but

² Wilfred Ayaga, 'National Assembly rejects Westgate terror report', *Standard* (Kenya), 26 March 2014, http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000107918&story_title=national-assembly-rejects-westgate-terror-report, accessed 2 June 2014.

³ See Human Rights Watch, 'Joint letter to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay regarding violations in the context of Kenyan counterterrorism operations', 29 May 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/29/joint-letter-un-high-commissioner-human-rights-navanethem-pillay-regarding-violation>, accessed 2 June 2014.

⁴ See Human Rights Watch, 'Kenya: halt crackdown on Somalis', press release, 11 April 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/04/11/kenya-halt-crackdown-somalis>, accessed 2 June 2014.

⁵ For a useful summary of the international media debates and chronology of the attack, see the *Guardian's* special section 'Westgate mall attacks', 21 Sept. 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/westgate-mall-attacks>, accessed 2 June 2014.

⁶ For details see Paul D. Williams, 'Stabilising Somalia', *RUSI Journal* 159: 2, 2014, pp. 52–60.

also across the Horn of Africa more widely, the movement is becoming a much less important actor in Somalia's national politics. As Al-Shabaab loses more territory and its popularity among Somalis continues to dwindle, other clan- and region-based actors will become more salient as national debates over federalism, the decentralization of governance mechanisms beyond Mogadishu, and the place of clannism will come to occupy centre stage. As a consequence, AMISOM's principal role should gradually shift from degrading Al-Shabaab towards a broader stabilization agenda. This should involve helping to encourage a national consensus over how to build effective governance structures; to develop an effective set of Somali national security forces; and to ensure that the federal government delivers services and effective governance to its citizens, especially beyond Mogadishu in the settlements newly captured from Al-Shabaab. As it stands, however, AMISOM is not prepared to carry out these activities. More worryingly, nor is the Somali federal government (FGS).

This article substantiates these arguments through an analysis of the three principal sets of actors in this war: Harakat Al-Shabaab Mujahideen; AMISOM and its international partners; and the various actors currently involved in building the security forces of the FGS.

Harakat Al-Shabaab Mujahideen: reinvented but not resurgent

The Westgate attack intensified debates about Al-Shabaab's capabilities and intentions. One narrative promoted by Al-Shabaab's current leadership suggests that this attack reflected a newly unified and emboldened movement. According to this view, after a period of internal turmoil, there is now consensus about the movement's ideology, strategy and tactics, and power has been consolidated under its emir, Ahmed 'Mukhtar Abu al-Zubayr' Godane.⁷

Godane's key move was an internal purge of Al-Shabaab's leadership in late June 2013 when he ordered the execution of several top commanders.⁸ These included two of the movement's co-founders: second-in-command Ibrahim al-Afghani (Ibrahim Haji Jama Mead, also known as Sheikh Abu Bakr Zaylai) and Abul Hamid Hashi Olhayi (also known as Burhan). Both were killed; over a dozen other senior figures were put under arrest in Barawe, 250 kilometres south of Mogadishu, one of Al-Shabaab's remaining strongholds, and by one estimate some 200 members of the organization's Amniyat ('secret service') network were also put to death.⁹ Other leading figures fled for their lives, including Mukhtar Robow and Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, both of whom reportedly ended up in FGS custody. The senior figures targeted by Godane had previously accused him of a

⁷ In mid-2012, the US government offered a reward of up to \$7 million for information leading to Godane's location. See http://www.rewardsforjustice.net/english/ahmed_aw_mohamed.html, accessed 2 June 2014.

⁸ For overviews of Godane's purge and its precipitating factors, see Matt Bryden, *The reinvention of Al-Shabaab: a strategy of choice or necessity?*, CSIS Africa Program Report (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Feb. 2014), pp. 3–6; Stig Jarle Hansen, 'An in-depth look at Al-Shabab's internal divisions', *CTC Sentinel* 7: 2, 2014, pp. 10–11.

⁹ Ken Menkhaus, 'Al-Shabab's capabilities post-Westgate', *CTC Sentinel* 7: 2, 2014, p. 5.

brutal and un-Islamic style of leadership and of destroying Al-Shabaab's *shura*.¹⁰ To take just one prominent example, in an open letter sent to Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in March 2013, al-Afghani blamed Al-Shabaab's misfortunes not on the military prowess of its opponents but on the unbecoming personal conduct and dictatorial leadership of Emir Godane. He accused Godane of being tyrannical and demanding blind obedience, straying from the true path of jihad, failing to consult other leaders, and placing personal desires above the requisites of shari'a and neglecting Islamic teachings of fairness, kindness and gentleness.¹¹

This new Al-Shabaab is smaller and has lost considerable territory to various government-aligned forces, but it retains more than enough fighters and ground to generate revenues to finance its terror attacks.¹² It also continues to exploit clan divisions within Somalia as well as local concerns about the growing role of Kenyan and Ethiopian troops in the country, and continues to infiltrate the FGS and its security forces. Moreover, Al-Shabaab continues to reach out to broader East African and global jihadi networks that are capable of expanding the war beyond Somalia, particularly to AMISOM's troop-contributing countries and their principal supporters, the United States and Britain.¹³ In sum, the Godane narrative paints a picture of a resurgent Al-Shabaab that is now unified, enjoys transnational support, and has willingly traded territory for potency.

This narrative contains a degree of truth inasmuch as Al-Shabaab remains a deadly opponent, as is evident from the relatively consistent level of small-scale operations mounted between the spring of 2013 and the summer of 2014. Leaving aside the Westgate attack, perhaps the most spectacular were those conducted against the Mogadishu courthouse (14 April 2013), the UN compound (19 June 2013), the Turkish embassy (27 July 2013), near the National Security Agency headquarters (27 February 2014), at the Villa Somalia (21 February 2014) and on the Somali parliament building (24 May 2014). In more general terms, one recent analysis concluded that Al-Shabaab was probably responsible for approximately 15 attacks a month between October 2012 (after Kenyan and allied militia forces took control of Kismayo) and February 2014. On average, these attacks killed over 40 people each month.¹⁴ In July 2013 the UN Monitoring Group catalogued an even higher rate, suggesting that between October 2012 and March 2013 the number of security incidents attributed to Al-Shabaab within south-central Somalia averaged 61.7 per month or nearly two a day.¹⁵ Most of these incidents were ambushes on

¹⁰ The executive *shura* had been the top leadership body in Al-Shabaab with approximately eight to ten members. A larger *shura* of 35–40 members could be convened as required.

¹¹ See Hansen, 'An in-depth look', pp. 10–11.

¹² The 2013 UN Monitoring Group report suggested that Al-Shabaab was still generating revenues of some \$25 million per year: *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2060 (2012): Somalia*, UN doc. S/2013/413, 13 July 2013, p. 39.

¹³ See e.g. Jamal Osman, 'Inside an al-Shabaab training camp', Channel 4 News, 16 Dec. 2013, <http://www.channel4.com/news/al-shabaab-somalia-kenya-westgate-al-qaeda>, accessed 2 June 2014.

¹⁴ Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Henry Appel, 'Al-Shabaab's insurgency in Somalia: a data-based snapshot', *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 3 April 2014, <http://journal.georgetown.edu/2014/04/03/al-shabaabs-insurgency-in-somalia-a-data-based-snapshot-by-daveed-gartenstein-ross-henry-appel/>, accessed 2 June 2014.

¹⁵ *Report of the Monitoring Group*, S/2013/413, 13 July 2013, p. 49. See also 'Terrorism threat in the country', reportedly produced by the Kenyan National Intelligence Service, Sept. 2013, <http://publicintelligence.net/kenya-shabaab-file/>, accessed 2 June 2014.

AMISOM's supply routes, or attacks and assassinations using improvised explosive devices and grenades in urban areas, notably Mogadishu.¹⁶ More recently, Al-Shabaab has carried out major attacks using both suicide bombers and suicide infantry. In its most recent attempt to transnationalize the conflict, Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for an attack on a restaurant in Djibouti on 24 May, in which two attackers and a Turkish national were killed and several western military personnel were wounded. In sum, Al-Shabaab clearly retains sufficient capability and intent to consistently employ terror tactics both within Somalia and beyond.

However, there is an alternative interpretation of Al-Shabaab's current status. This views Al-Shabaab's reinvention as being forced by necessity: rather than embodying a resurgent movement, it reflects a decline in its level of popular support to the extent that it has entered the beginning of its political end-game.¹⁷ As Matt Bryden has put it: 'Al-Shabaab's steep decline in recent years has made radical reform a matter of survival.'¹⁸ From this perspective, Al-Shabaab has changed from a strategic threat to the very existence of the transitional government in Mogadishu during the period 2008–2010 to its current form as a tactical (although often deadly) threat whose principal short-term objectives are survival and the exploitation of clan divisions.

Al-Shabaab's reinvention has also highlighted the need to disaggregate its constituent elements, since some are more important than others. As Ken Menkhaus has argued, these include:

- the Amniyat, which remains Al-Shabaab's most salient strike force;
- its conventional armed forces, which are estimated at between 5,000 and 6,000 fighters, most of whom seek to avoid direct combat with AMISOM and government forces;
- its administrative wings, which have provided various forms of policing and justice, as well as some basic education and health-care services;
- its criminal enterprises, including protection rackets, extortion and the illicit trade in charcoal;
- its East Africa franchise, principally its Kenyan affiliate Al-Hijra and its attempts to drum up recruits in Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania;
- its attempts to act as part of a global brand by nurturing ties with other extremist groups such as Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula; and, finally
- its attempt to depict itself as the voice of the disfranchised in Somalia and the wider East African region.¹⁹

With the exception of its Amniyat and its recruitment activities across East Africa, all these strands of activity have weakened significantly since 2010.

¹⁶ The total also included a small number (six) of abductions.

¹⁷ For a relevant general discussion of how groups engaged in terror tactics end, see Audrey Kurth Cronin, *Ending terrorism: lessons for defeating Al-Qaeda*, Adelphi Paper 394 (London: Routledge/International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2008).

¹⁸ Bryden, *The reinvention of Al-Shabaab*, p. 1.

¹⁹ Menkhaus, 'Al-Shabab's capabilities post-Westgate', pp. 4–9.

Al-Shabaab's decline and forced reinvention resulted from several interrelated factors. First, after its failed Ramadan offensives against AMISOM and Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces in Mogadishu in 2009 and especially 2010, the movement's leaders realized that they could not defeat their opponents through conventional military means, prompting the shift in tactics identified above.²⁰

A second and related factor was Al-Shabaab's loss of support from within key clan constituencies, particularly those members of the Rahanweyn clan loyal to Sheikh Mukhtar Robow. This occurred after the failed Ramadan offensive of 2010, when the majority of casualties were borne by Rahanweyn militia fighting for Al-Shabaab. Robow responded to subsequent clan pressure and pulled his Rahanweyn fighters out of Mogadishu.²¹ The tensions between Robow and Godane were further exacerbated over how to deal with the 2011 drought and famine that struck large parts of south-central Somalia which at the time were under Al-Shabaab's control. Because many of his clan territories were badly affected, Robow was willing to listen to the advice of his clan elders and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian relief from UN agencies and western NGOs. Godane, by contrast, banned such organizations from operating, apparently concerned that they might provide intelligence for western military strikes.²² The subsequent exclusion of many relief agencies meant the famine had a much more devastating effect on the locals—some 260,000 of whom died—than might otherwise have been the case.²³ This caused considerable popular resentment against Al-Shabaab.

A third source of Al-Shabaab's weakness was its increasingly extreme ideology, according to which Somali civilians were legitimate targets of its attacks and the movement should appeal more directly to hard-line Al-Qaeda affiliates beyond Somalia. This was reflected in the argument over famine relief discussed above, but was also a key strand in a longer debate within Al-Shabaab about targeting Somali civilians. One important aspect of this debate was the use of suicide bombers in civilian areas—a tactic brought to Somalia in late 2006 by foreign fighters who joined Al-Shabaab.²⁴ Arguably, two of the most egregious examples of such attacks on civilians both backfired on Al-Shabaab. For many local Somalis and members of the Somali diaspora who might have sympathized with Al-Shabaab during the Ethiopian occupation of Mogadishu (December 2006 to January 2009), a turning point came in December 2009 when a suicide bomber who had travelled to Somalia from Denmark killed 23 onlookers and medical students at a graduation ceremony.

²⁰ Among the few exceptions were the relatively large attacks on federal government garrisons in Jannale and Mahadaay in January 2014. See Bryden, *The reinvention of Al-Shabaab*, p. 12.

²¹ Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia* (London: Hurst, 2013), pp. 100–102.

²² 'Al-Shabaab leaders disagree over drought relief', *A Week in the Horn of Africa*, Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 July 2011, http://aigaforum.com/news/A_Week_in_the_Horn_072211.htm, accessed 2 June 2014.

²³ For a good discussion of the other factors involved, see Ken Menkhaus, 'No access: critical bottlenecks in the 2011 Somali famine', *Global Food Security* 1: 1, 2012, pp. 29–35.

²⁴ Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, pp. 44–5. Between 2007 and 2011, Al-Shabaab is estimated to have conducted 48 suicide attacks, killing an estimated 424 people, with a major increase in fatalities occurring in 2009–2011. Of these attacks, 65% were delivered by vehicles other than motorcycles and trucks, while 28% were carried out on foot; 65% were focused on the security forces, 20% on diplomatic targets, 7% on government targets and 8% on civilian targets. See Anneli Botha, *Practical guide to understanding and preventing suicide operations in Africa* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2013), pp. 76–86.

Although some members of Al-Shabaab tried to disown this attack, crowds spilled onto the streets of Mogadishu to burn Al-Shabaab's black flag.²⁵ Outside Somalia, in July 2010 three explosions orchestrated by Al-Shabaab killed over 70 people who were watching the football World Cup at popular bars in Kampala, Uganda. Far from forcing Uganda to withdraw from Somalia, the bombings resulted in Uganda and Burundi deploying even more soldiers to AMISOM. In sum, the new Al-Shabaab represents the movement's 'extremist fringe', and as such has suffered a precipitous decline in support among Somalis.²⁶

The fourth major factor forcing Al-Shabaab's reinvention was the military pressure exerted upon it by AMISOM and the Somali security forces. After defeating Al-Shabaab's Ramadan offensive of 2010, in early 2011 AMISOM forces went on the offensive and by early August Al-Shabaab had withdrawn its fighters from Mogadishu. With a unilateral intervention by Kenyan forces in southern Somalia in October 2011, and additional troops from Ethiopia arriving the following month further north, Al-Shabaab lost a series of settlements in late 2011 and early 2012. Kenyan forces, supported by a variety of local militias, seized the strategic port city of Kismayo in late September 2012.²⁷ After more than a year of stalemate, in November 2013 the enhancement of AMISOM under UN Security Council Resolution 2124 led to more than 4,000 Ethiopian soldiers joining the African Union (AU) mission in January 2014. This prompted a series of offensive operations which by April had captured another ten towns from Al-Shabaab. Under pressure from these operations, most of the Al-Shabaab forces stationed in these settlements chose not to defend the urban areas, instead retreating to the countryside, often destroying wells and coercing some of the local population into leaving too, and subsequently infiltrating the towns to conduct its preferred type of asymmetric attacks.²⁸ Specifically, Al-Shabaab reverted to trying to compel AMISOM/FGS forces to spread themselves thinly, attacking their weaker positions and supply lines, and threatening local populations in these settlements to deter them from collaborating with AMISOM/FGS forces.

AMISOM and its international partners: from war-fighting to stabilization

As Al-Shabaab is ejected from more and more settlements across south-central Somalia, AMISOM's focus must shift from war-fighting and its previous strong emphasis on a military approach to tackling a broader set of sensitive political issues related to stabilization and governance. This will not be easy given AMISOM's shortage of policing and, importantly, civilian capabilities, and the desire of the FGS to lead on these issues without major input from AMISOM. Moreover, the

²⁵ 'Attack on graduation ceremony the "last straw"', *IRIN News*, 10 Dec. 2009, <http://www.irinnews.org/report/87387/somalia-attack-on-graduation-ceremony-the-last-straw>, accessed 2 June 2014.

²⁶ Bryden, *The reinvention of Al-Shabaab*, p. 2.

²⁷ For further details, see Bronwyn Bruton and Paul D. Williams, *Counter-insurgency in Somalia: lessons learned from the African Union Mission in Somalia, 2007–2013* (Tampa, FL: United States Joint Special Operations University, 2014).

²⁸ Harun Maruf, 'Al-Shabab strategy perplexes some experts', *Voice of America*, 11 April 2014, <http://www.voanews.com/content/al-shabab-strategy-perplexes-some-experts/1891885.html>, accessed 2 June 2014.

mission has been hampered by a variety of strategic challenges, including weak political leadership and lack of strategic coordination between its national contingents.²⁹

Over the last 20 months, AMISOM has shifted from a posture of defensive consolidation to pursuing sustained offensive operations across large areas of south-central Somalia. After capturing Kismayo in September 2012, AMISOM cited a lack of troops and force enablers as justification for assuming a defensive posture. This decision was reiterated several times by the AU between April and June 2013. As the chairperson of the AU Commission put it, AMISOM's lack of 'all the required force enablers' meant the mission had reached 'its operational limit' and would no longer engage in 'major advances to recover more territory from Al Shabaab'.³⁰ Instead, AMISOM focused on protecting its existing bases and supply routes from Al-Shabaab attacks. This generated some discontent among FGS officials, however, some of whom later lamented that AMISOM's defensive posture 'provided Al-Shabaab with the breathing room to regroup and take the offensive'.³¹

It was in this context that the AU and UN established the Joint African Union–United Nations Mission on the benchmarks for a United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Somalia.³² Conducted between 26 August and 6 September 2013, the benchmarking mission offered a sober assessment of the security situation in south-central Somalia, warning that many of AMISOM's gains were at risk of reversal if the defensive posture continued.³³ It cautioned against 're-hatting' AMISOM as a UN peacekeeping operation and recommended instead enhancements to the AU mission that would permit it to resume the offensive against Al-Shabaab and support the development of an effective set of SNSF capable of eventually taking the lead in those operations. Crucially, however, the benchmarking mission also cautioned that any military offensive must be followed by stabilization activities conducted by AMISOM and the FGS in order to provide a viable alternative set of governance structures that would enable the delivery of basic services in settlements captured from Al-Shabaab.³⁴

The Westgate attack gave even greater urgency to such concerns, not least within the UN secretariat and the United States government. In Washington, the Westgate attack confirmed the Obama administration's earlier decision to bolster

²⁹ These challenges persist but do not form the focus of this article. For more details see Paul D. Williams, 'Fighting for peace in Somalia: AMISOM's seven strategic challenges', *Journal of International Peacekeeping* 17: 3–4, 2013, pp. 222–47; Bruton and Williams, *Counter-insurgency in Somalia*.

³⁰ 'Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia', AU doc. PSC/PR/2.(CCCLXXIX), 13 June 2013, paras 27, 72 and 16. This assessment was shared by the UN Secretary General's technical assessment mission to Somalia (17–29 March 2013). See 'Letter dated 19 April 2013 from the Secretary General addressed to the President of the Security Council', UN doc. S/2013/239, para. 9.

³¹ Somalia's foreign minister, cited in UN doc. S/PV.7054, 30 Oct. 2013, p. 6.

³² The idea of a benchmarking mission was first welcomed in 'Statement by the President of the Security Council', UN doc. S/PRST/2013/7, 6 June 2013.

³³ The analysis of the benchmarking mission has not been published in full. However, its recommendations are summarized in 'Report of the chairperson of the Commission on the joint AU–UN benchmarking exercise and the review of the African Union Mission in Somalia', AU doc. PSC/PR/2.(CCCXCIX), 10 Oct. 2013, and 'Letter dated 14 October 2013 from the Secretary General addressed to the President of the Security Council', UN doc. S/2013/606. Other details are based on the author's communications with members of the review team.

³⁴ Author's confidential communications with members of the benchmarking mission.

its military engagement with the Horn of Africa. In June 2013 the US Army created a new East African Response Force (EARF) to respond to contingencies such as the attack on the US embassy in Benghazi, Libya, in September 2012.³⁵ It deployed for the first time on 14 December 2013 to protect the US embassy and personnel in Juba, South Sudan. The creation of these forces occurred in tandem with an increased tempo of US kinetic operations and support for various African actors in the war against Al-Shabaab, including, in October 2013, the deployment of approximately two dozen military advisers to Somalia to support AMISOM and the SNSF.³⁶ The United States also conducted sporadic air strikes and special forces operations, including a failed attempt to capture a senior Al-Shabaab commander from the movement's stronghold of Barawe in October 2013.³⁷

In New York, the Westgate attack prompted the UN Secretary General to reiterate the warning of the benchmarking review that 'the political progress made over the last year and the military gains against Al-Shabaab that have been achieved in recent years are at a serious risk of being reversed'.³⁸ The subsequent debates in Addis Ababa and New York eventually led to the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2124 on 12 November 2013 and fed directly into the new AMISOM concept of operations, which was adopted in January 2014.

As well as extending AMISOM's mandate to 31 October 2014, Resolution 2124 called for enhancements to the mission's capabilities in several areas.³⁹ It also reconfigured the UN's presence in Somalia, giving additional tasks both to the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSO) and to the UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA). Not all of these provisions were new, however: some of Resolution 2124's demands had appeared in earlier Security Council resolutions on AMISOM—perhaps most notably Resolution 2093 of 6 March 2013—but had not been implemented.

Resolution 2124 sought to enhance AMISOM in three main areas. First, it increased the number of uniformed personnel (via a surge capacity that would last between 18 and 24 months), and reiterated its call for various force enablers and multipliers. The AU–UN benchmarking review had included an option for an additional 6,235 uniformed personnel, which would bring AMISOM's total to 23,966. This figure included a 1,000-strong guard force comprised of AMISOM troops, as well as 840 police officers.⁴⁰ The AU Peace and Security Council endorsed

³⁵ The EARF is based in Djibouti, and its area of operations includes Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda. The commanding general of AFRICOM now has three rapid reaction forces at his disposal: the EARF; the Commander's In-extremis Force (CIF), established in October 2013 and based in Fort Carson, Colorado; and a 500-strong Special-Purpose Marine Air–Ground Task Force Crisis Response unit, focused on north-west Africa, which was formed in May 2013 and is temporarily based at Moron Air Base, Spain.

³⁶ Craig Whitlock, 'US has deployed military advisers to Somalia, officials say', *Washington Post*, 10 Jan. 2014.

³⁷ Nicholas Kulish and Eric Schmitt, "'Imperfect intelligence' said to hinder US raid on militant in Somalia', *New York Times*, 8 Oct. 2013.

³⁸ 'Letter dated 14 October 2013', S/2013/606, p. 3.

³⁹ This section draws on Williams, 'Stabilising Somalia'.

⁴⁰ AMISOM's guard force was initially authorized by the UN Security Council in Resolution 2010 (30 Sept. 2011), para. 5. It was intended 'to provide security, escort and protection services to personnel from the international community'. Various formulations of the guard force have been discussed subsequently, including in UN Security Council Resolutions 2036 and 2124 and 'Letter dated 14 October 2013', S/2013/606.

this figure on 10 October 2013.⁴¹ However, the UN Security Council adopted a different figure, of 4,395, increasing AMISOM's uniformed personnel to 22,126. These additional troops were provided by Ethiopia, which joined AMISOM in January 2014. The Security Council deferred to the UN Secretary General on the details of a new UN guard force to protect its personnel and installations.⁴² In addition to extra infantry, the Security Council reiterated its call for various force enablers and multipliers, especially for AMISOM's aviation component, which was supposed to have twelve military helicopters.⁴³ This was 15 months after Uganda had withdrawn its contribution of six military helicopters when, in August 2012, three of them had crashed on the slopes of Mount Kenya while en route to Somalia.⁴⁴

Along with these increases, Resolution 2124 also expanded the UNSOA logistical support package for AMISOM to encompass the additional personnel. UNSOA was also authorized to provide food and water, fuel, transport, tents and in-theatre medical evacuation facilities for SNA troops engaged in joint operations with AMISOM under AMISOM's overall strategic concept. Support given to the SNA would be funded by a UN trust fund rather than (like most of UNSOA's activities) covered by the UN's assessed peacekeeping budget.

This funding decision was controversial. In the light of the recommendations made by the AU–UN benchmarking mission, which took the view that using a trust fund that relied on voluntary contributions would have a negative impact on the predictability and sustainability of funding, on 10 October 2013 the chair of the AU Commission concluded that the subsequent 'increased support to AMISOM should be availed through UN assessed contributions', as should all support to the SNSF.⁴⁵ Four days later, the UN Secretary General concluded that: 'Resourcing this package from United Nations assessed contributions would send a clear political message that the Security Council is strongly behind Somali efforts to end the insurgency in Somalia.'⁴⁶ The UN Security Council, however, ruled that funding for this aspect of the enhanced UNSOA support package would come via a UN trust fund.⁴⁷ This decision reportedly originated with some of the permanent members of the UN Security Council (notably the United States and France), which were worried that such provision might create a precedent

⁴¹ 'Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council', AU doc. PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCXCIX), 10 Oct. 2013.

⁴² On 20 December 2013 the UN Secretary General had recommended that the guard force 'form part of UNSOM'. See 'Letter dated 20 December 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council', UN doc. S/2013/764. In March 2014, Uganda offered to provide approximately 410 troops operating outside AMISOM to act as the guard force. The force duly deployed in mid-May 2014 as part of UNSOM.

⁴³ As provided for in UN Security Council Resolution 2036 (22 Feb. 2012), para. 6. Twenty-eight months later, AMISOM remained without any military helicopters. It did, however, sometimes have access to UNSOA's four utility and casualty-evacuation helicopters.

⁴⁴ Uganda had signed a letter of assist with the AU and UNSOA to deploy three attack/tactical, two utility, and one medical-evacuation helicopters to AMISOM. They would provide air cover for troops, escort convoys, fly rescue and evacuation missions, and airdrop forces.

⁴⁵ AU doc. PSC/PR/2.(CCCXCIX), paras 15(ii) and 16.

⁴⁶ 'Letter dated 14 October 2013', S/2013/606, p. 5.

⁴⁷ It is worth noting that of the three African states on the UN Security Council when Resolution 2124 was passed, one (Morocco) is not a member of the AU, and neither Rwanda nor Togo was a member of the AU Peace and Security Council.

for other situations and were further concerned about accountability, given the lack of UN Security Council control over the Somali armed forces.⁴⁸ At the vote to pass Resolution 2124, Somalia's representative at the UN lamented the lack of 'more consistent and timely' funds and wondered out loud when such a trust fund would materialize.⁴⁹

A third set of enhancements involved proposed changes to AMISOM's management structures. Specifically, the UN Security Council called for enhanced planning and strategic management capabilities appropriate for the new concept of operations, as well as new systems to address allegations of misconduct and ensure that any AMISOM detainees, including disengaged combatants, would be treated in strict compliance with applicable obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law.

In line with this reconfiguration of international engagement with Somalia, AMISOM adopted a new concept of operations in January 2014, with a view to the achievement of four strategic objectives: to secure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia by helping to neutralize Al-Shabaab; to enhance the capacity of Somalia's national security forces to enable them to take full responsibility for the country's security; to support the establishment of effective governance structures, especially in the areas recovered from Al-Shabaab; and to facilitate the holding of general elections in 2016.⁵⁰ Duly reconfigured and with Ethiopian troops integrated into AMISOM as the surge capacity outlined in Resolution 2124, AMISOM launched a series of offensive operations across south-central Somalia. By April, with the onset of the rainy season, these had succeeded in recovering approximately a dozen settlements from Al-Shabaab. At this point, AMISOM was faced with the challenge of how best to ensure that these areas received a genuine 'peace dividend' in the form of legitimate administration mechanisms and the delivery of essential services.⁵¹

Part of AMISOM's problem is that it remains a predominantly military operation, with relatively few police officers and even fewer civilian personnel who could conduct the necessary types of stabilization tasks. But it has also faced considerable push-back from the FGS, which has been keen for its own personnel to lead in these governance-related efforts and has cautioned against expanding AMISOM's civilian capabilities. This is part of a longstanding set of concerns on the part of Somali government and military officials that continually enhancing AMISOM may detract from the willingness of donors to provide resources directly to the SNSF, which is more important in the long term.⁵²

⁴⁸ 'Somalia resolution authorising increase in troop strength', Whatsinblue.org, 11 Nov. 2013, <http://www.whatsinblue.org/2013/11/somalia-resolution-authorising-increase-in-troop-strength.php>, accessed 2 June 2014.

⁴⁹ Elmi Ahmed Duale, cited in UN doc. S/PV.7056, 12 Nov. 2013, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Author's communications with AU officials, Dec. 2013–Jan. 2014.

⁵¹ This was not the mission's only challenge. For a longer list see Williams, 'Stabilising Somalia'.

⁵² Author's interviews with senior FGS and SNA officials, Mogadishu, Jan. 2013.

Somalia's security forces: divided they stand

Part of the reason for the defensive posture adopted by AMISOM from late 2012 until early 2014 lay in the lack of progress in building an effective set of Somali national security forces. As the chair of the AU Commission argued in October 2013, operations against Al-Shabaab had been significantly hampered by 'the failure to achieve the envisaged level of force generation for the SNA [Somali National Army]'.⁵³ Not only does the Somali Army have an important part to play in degrading Al-Shabaab, it is also a crucial component of AMISOM's exit strategy and of keeping the peace in Somalia over the longer term. But the architects of the new SNA face some major political and technical challenges. With enough time and resources, international efforts to reform and enhance the capacity of Somalia's security sector should be able to overcome most of the technical obstacles related to training and equipping the forces. More difficult, and yet ultimately more important, is addressing the political challenges such as clan loyalties and corruption. Trying to build a national army without getting the national politics right is a recipe for instability, at least in the short term, because the force is unlikely to fight as one and will be viewed as an instrument of particular clan interests rather than as representing the Somali state for the benefit of all clans and citizens.

Building a 'national' army in the absence of a national consensus about what constitutes the Somali state and how it should be governed is a risky endeavour, particularly in the short term. The immediate political challenge for the FGS is how to make its vision of 'one Somalia' a reality, in part by building a single, united army that is not captured by particular clan interests and can operate free from the mentality of clannism. The problem of clannism has manifested itself in several ways. First, the SNA is seen as representing a narrow set of partisan rather than national interests. One reason for this is that AMISOM/FGS forces have controlled relatively little territory across south-central Somalia and hence most of the new SNA recruits have been drawn from a small subset of clans in those areas. So far, a majority of SNA soldiers and senior officers are from the Hawiye clan, as is the current President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. The second problem has to do with the tendency of individual recruits to retain a primary loyalty to their clan/sub-clan rather than transferring allegiance to the state institutions. AMISOM, the United States, the European Union and other actors engaged in training programmes have tried to counter this and instil a sense of national loyalty through symbolic gestures (e.g. guiding recruits through the interim constitution and other national documents and singing the national anthem in front of the Somali flag), by mixing the recruits into multi-clan fighting units and by keeping them away from their families and clan bosses during training.⁵⁴

An additional problem is that the SNA remains just one of numerous armed groups and factions that maintain de facto control over particular fiefdoms across

⁵³ AU doc. PSC/PR/2.(CCCXCIX), 10 Oct. 2013, para. 13(iii).

⁵⁴ See Tristan McConnell, 'Inside the fight for Somalia's future', *GlobalPost*, 29 May 2014, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/140528/inside-the-fight-somalias-future>, accessed 2 June 2014.

Somalia. While the Somaliland Armed Forces and Puntland Defence Forces have been relatively stable, in south-central Somalia the patchwork of armed factions has been much more fluid. Beyond the many small-scale self-defence militias that have emerged around particular settlements, these groups include fighters representing Himan and Heeb, Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa (ASWJ), the Isiolo militias, and the forces of the Jubbaland Interim Administration. Some independent militias are ostensibly aligned with the FGS; some are distinctly hostile to it; yet others shift allegiance to facilitate the pursuit of their primary concerns with local turf battles and self-defence.

Ken Menkhaus has argued that these alliances are formed with an eye to grabbing territory rather than defeating Al-Shabaab. In his words: 'The fact is the Somali government and its external allies are fighting two different wars ... The external actors are fighting Al Shabaab but the Somalis are mainly clan-based armed groups that are scrambling to control valuable territory.'⁵⁵ Thus the clan identity of the new SNA recruits becomes a political factor: for example, clan elders in some parts of Lower Shabelle see the SNA's expansion into this area as first and foremost an attempt to occupy territory for a particular sub-clan rather than defeat Al-Shabaab.

It is this type of dynamic that explains some of the strange alliances that have formed. In one case, in Kismayo during 2013, FGS troops allied themselves with a local leader, Barre Hiiraale, who declared that his forces were co-located with Al-Shabaab, in order to engage in joint military operations against the forces of Ahmed Madobe, now the governor of the Jubbaland Interim Administration.⁵⁶ In another recent case, ASWJ, an ostensibly government-aligned force, once again fell out with the Mogadishu authorities over how to fight Al-Shabaab.⁵⁷

In order for the federal government to acquire a monopoly over the legitimate instruments of violence and build a genuinely national army, these various armed groups must either be integrated into the new SNA or disbanded. Even leaving aside the big issues to do with the relationship between Somalia and Somaliland, most of these armed groups are highly unlikely to disband in such a volatile situation. The main short-term focus in south-central Somalia must therefore revolve around deciding which forces should be integrated into the SNA and how.⁵⁸

This process will require greater effort in at least three areas. First, more work must be done to identify and deal with disengaging fighters and the concomitant issues related to their demobilization and reintegration into either civilian life or the SNA. Unfortunately, a lack of funds has jeopardized the federal

⁵⁵ Cited in McConnell, 'Inside the fight'.

⁵⁶ Matt Bryden, *Somalia redux? Assessing the new Somali federal government*, CSIS Africa Program Report (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, Aug. 2013), p. 22.

⁵⁷ Hamdi Salad, 'Somali government, ASWJ at loggerheads over integration of militia into SNA', *Sabahi*, 27 March 2014, http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2014/03/27/feature-01, accessed 2 June 2014.

⁵⁸ See e.g. Daniel Kebede, 'A bottom-up approach to integration of armed forces in Somalia', *Africa Up Close*, 16 Dec. 2013, <http://africaupclose.wilsoncenter.org/a-bottom-up-approach-to-integration-of-armed-forces-in-somalia/>, accessed 2 June 2014.

government's ability to deal with these individuals.⁵⁹ Without adequate financial support, efforts to move former fighters into alternative livelihoods will fail and 'disengaging' will prove only temporary as disgruntled individuals turn against the government and/or resort to banditry. Second, there must be more engagement with local and regional community leaders to ensure that they support the idea of recruiting some of their constituents into the SNA. But this will not work unless the problems of clannism (noted above) can be eradicated from the SNA. This means greater emphasis must be placed on creating army units composed of members from multiple clans. So far, the most important examples of this cross-clan approach are the attempt to form the Danab advanced infantry companies—whose soldiers are selected on merit rather than by clan affiliation—and the Djibouti armed forces' efforts to train SNA soldiers by removing clan leaders during trainings and mixing up recruits from across different clans. The Alpha Group special operations unit (known as Gashan or 'Shield') is another case in point, although the identity of its members is kept secret.

The FGS and its international partners also face a looming trade-off between short-term and long-term concerns when thinking about Somalia's national security strategy. In the short term, Somalia needs an army that can collaborate with AMISOM to defeat Al-Shabaab and facilitate stabilization policies across the newly recovered areas. At present, the federal government is working with an army of approximately 22,000 troops. In the longer term, however, as the conventional threat from Al-Shabaab recedes and it turns increasingly to asymmetric terror tactics, Somalia's army will become less important in dealing with this threat compared to its police and intelligence services. Furthermore, as levels of external funding are reduced over time, Somalia must build an army that can be sustained by its own resources. Somalia's army should thus gradually shrink quite considerably and more resources should instead be given to the police and intelligence services. This poses a difficult challenge: how to build an army for today that does not become a burden tomorrow?

In addition to these overtly political issues, there is a long list of technical challenges facing the architects of a new Somali Army. Nevertheless, given an appropriate amount of time, resources and political coordination among the trainers, most of these could be overcome with the assistance of committed external partners—if the political obstacles noted above can be resolved. If, however, Somalis themselves fail to come to a political settlement over the nature of their polity, no amount of technical training, enhancing or reforming of the security sector will have the desired outcome.

Part of the problem is the legacy of previous incarnations of the Somali Army and the passage of more than two decades without a central government.⁶⁰ One

⁵⁹ Paul D. Williams, 'Dealing with disengaged fighters: the case of al-Shabaab', *IPI Global Observatory*, 29 Jan. 2013, <http://theglobalobservatory.org/analysis/423-dealing-with-disengaging-fighters-the-case-of-al-shabaab.html>, accessed 2 June 2014.

⁶⁰ Mohamed Mubarak, 'Somali military has more problems than lack of guns', *African Arguments*, 26 Feb. 2014, <http://africanarguments.org/2014/02/26/somali-military-has-more-problems-than-lack-of-guns-by-mohamed-mubarak/>, accessed 2 June 2014.

legacy challenge revolves around the so-called 'grey' soldiers—troops from the former Somali Army of the Siad Barre era who are now well over 40 years of age. A concomitant problem is the lack of a corps of mid-ranking non-commissioned officers to hold the army together.

Another fundamental technical issue is the need to establish systems that yield an accurate headcount of SNA troops as well as their identities and locations. All too frequently the SNA has suffered from soldiers deserting and absconding on the one hand and infiltration on the other, in part because it has been difficult to track which individuals are members of the national army. This is a longstanding problem. The mayor of Mogadishu apparently opined back in August 2009 that there were 6,000–7,000 government soldiers on payday, yet only 2,000–3,000 when it was time to fight.⁶¹ Some insiders have used this state of confusion to engage in corruption and fraud. Al-Shabaab has repeatedly exploited it to prosecute attacks on government installations and personnel. Now that a new card-based identification system has been approved, it needs to be implemented and enforced. A related point of controversy between the FGS and some external donors has been the persistent presence of child soldiers within the SNA. This should be unacceptable, and an effective identification system would make it much easier to stop the recruitment of children.

Training and equipping the SNA raises further technical challenges. For too long, coordination was lacking among multiple international efforts to train the SNA, most notably those conducted by AMISOM, the EU, Ethiopia and Turkey. Until recently these programmes were mostly run outside Somalia. With the recent arrival of the EU training mission in Mogadishu and the Ethiopians joining AMISOM, it should be easier to organize a coordinated set of training programmes for the SNA's different levels and specialisms (e.g. aviation, logistics, mine clearance and so on). Nevertheless, it is clearly not ideal that the SNA is going through major training programmes while simultaneously trying to conduct joint operations with AMISOM in a war against Al-Shabaab.

In terms of materiel, the SNA is particularly lacking in vehicles (of all types) and communications technologies, most notably radios. With the partial lifting of the arms embargo the SNA has recently acquired more weaponry and ammunition. But the forces still lack certain basic modern weaponry, and many of the weapons they do have belong to clans or individuals. An even more worrying problem is that of arms diversion. The UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, for example, recently claimed that some of the government's newly acquired arms were being deliberately diverted either to fuel clan interests or for economic gain.⁶² This too is an old problem. In 2008, for example, the UN Monitoring Group estimated that 80 per cent of materiel provided to TFG forces was diverted to the

⁶¹ Wikileaks cable 09NAIROBI1798, 25 Aug. 2009, para. 5, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/08/09NAIROBI1798.html>, accessed 2 June 2014.

⁶² 'Letter dated 6 February 2014 from the Coordinator of the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group addressed to the chair of the Committee', UN doc. S/AC.29/2014/COMM.13, 6 Feb. 2014, <http://somalianews.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/6-feb-2014-unmg-memo-somalia-arms-diversion.pdf>, accessed 2 June 2014.

black market and Al-Shabaab.⁶³ Further illegal sales of TFG equipment in Bakara market were noted in the 2010 report.⁶⁴ As a direct consequence, AMISOM was forced to strictly ration supplies of ammunition to TFG soldiers to try to prevent them from selling it to buy food and qat.⁶⁵ The subsequent shortage of ammunition further diminished the government forces' ability to combat Al-Shabaab: many soldiers deserted the front line when their ammunition ran out. The federal government's response to the Monitoring Group's most recent claims was not entirely convincing.⁶⁶ The storage and management of ammunition and weapons must therefore be given a much higher priority.

The SNA has also lacked crucial infrastructure such as barracks and medical facilities. Without dedicated military barracks, fighters were often left to mix among the local population. This was hardly conducive to stopping corruption, intimidation and infiltration by opponents. It is at least being rectified with the construction of various military camps in Mogadishu and elsewhere. It is also significant that a hospital for Somali security forces will soon be constructed. Without access to adequate medical care it is difficult to raise morale and ask troops to carry out risky operations. Morale will also be enhanced if SNA troops are consistently paid a reasonable salary in full and on time. To date, payment of salaries to the SNA has been the responsibility of the federal government, with the United States and Italy paying additional stipends to some troops. This was seen as being a crucial part of retaining SNA fighters. Better accounting and financial management procedures will also be needed, as well as a much clearer and consistent set of pay scales for the different SNA ranks.

Conclusion

At the time of writing, the Gu rains in Somalia have brought the AMISOM and SNA offensive against Al-Shabaab to a halt. The focus now falls on bringing concrete benefits to the residents of the settlements recovered from Al-Shabaab. For this to work, the FGS must deliver on its promises to provide the inhabitants with at least basic services, administration and protection. Meanwhile, Al-Shabaab's forced reinvention has seen it enter the beginning of its political end-game: with power now consolidated in its extremist fringe, its continued terror tactics are unlikely to win it more supporters within Somalia. Al-Shabaab is attempting to survive through a difficult period and develop a more potent East African franchise. The factors that would be most likely to reverse this situation

⁶³ *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008)*, Annex to UN S/2010/91, 10 March 2010, p. 7.

⁶⁴ *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1916 (2010)*, UN S/2010/433, 18 July 2011, pp. 231–4.

⁶⁵ Wikileaks Cable 09NAIROBI1520, 15 July 2009, para.7, <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/07/09NAIROBI1520.html>, accessed 2 June 2014.

⁶⁶ 'Letter dated 6 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Somali Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council and copied the chair of the committee', UN doc. S/AC.29/2014/COMM.15, 7 Feb. 2014, <https://docs.google.com/a/email.gwu.edu/file/d/0B7rKkxQN2SGSaWZPVVkhEMFpaUTg/edit>, accessed 2 June 2014.

are a counterproductive backlash by Kenyan authorities against Somalis in Kenya in the name of fighting terrorism, the failure of the FGS to provide an alternative set of governance structures in the recovered areas, and poor behaviour by AMISOM troops, especially those from Ethiopia or Kenya.

As Al-Shabaab becomes less important in Somalia's national politics, greater attention will focus on the fundamental issues of governance across the country, especially finalizing the national constitution and agreeing how to put into practice federalism and the decentralization of power beyond Mogadishu. AMISOM, UNSOM and their international partners must work hard to encourage a national consensus around these issues as quickly as possible. Without such widespread agreement it will be difficult to hold meaningful elections in 2016. If these core issues of governance remain unresolved, the progress made against Al-Shabaab will be vulnerable to reversal, and it will be almost impossible to build a new, effective and sustainable set of national security forces for Somalia.

