

BACKGROUND PAPER

ATMIS in Somalia: what lessons for assessed contributions?

ABOUT THE EVENT

The Challenges Annual Forum 2023 (#CAF23Addis) will gather partners and key stakeholders to explore ways to strengthen global-regional peace and security partnerships, with a focus on Africa. The in-person event, co-hosted by the Training for Peace (TFP) programme, will take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 26 – 27 October.

Challenges Forum is a global partnership that uses its convening power to generate innovative ideas and promote results for more effective peace operations.

Challenges Forum consists of Partners from:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
|  Argentina |  India |  Sweden |
|  Armenia |  Indonesia |  Switzerland |
|  Australia |  Japan |  Türkiye |
|  Canada |  Jordan |  United Kingdom |
|  China |  Nigeria |  United States of America |
|  Egypt |  Norway |  Uruguay |
|  Ethiopia |  Pakistan |  World Federation of United Nations Associations |
|  France |  Russia | |
|  Germany |  South Africa | |

Somalia has for long been in a complex and protracted state of crisis. Hence, these African Union missions – AMISOM/ATMIS – are to date the largest of its kind. Sustaining the mission’s deployment has required support from multiple actors, including assessed contributions channeled through the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). This paper offers lessons from the AMISOM/ATMIS experience to the ongoing discussions on UN financing of AU peace support operations. It also provides some recommendations and guiding questions to stimulate discussion.

The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) is a multidimensional military, police and civilian mission, authorised by the African Union (AU) and mandated by the United Nations (UN) Security Council. ATMIS became operational on 1 April 2022, following the end of the AMISOM mandate. The mission is focused on creating conditions for both military and institutional autonomy of the Somali government.

Over the years, AMISOM and subsequently ATMIS have benefited of support from multiple actors, including AU, UN, the European Union (EU) as well as Troop and Police-Contributing Countries, and other partners.¹ UN-assessed contributions have been a critical funding source for AMISOM/ATMIS, with a comprehensive financial, logistical, and technical support package provided through the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS).

“Sustaining the mission’s deployment has required support from multiple actors, including assessed contributions channeled through the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS)”

¹ Through its African Peace Facility (APF), the EU is the largest direct contributor to AMISOM/ATMIS, for a total amount of close to €2.3 billion since 2007.

Key lessons from UN financing of AU peace operations

This financing model offers critical lessons on UN financing of AU peace support operations:

1. Operationalising partnerships

The AMISOM/ATMIS experience has offered an opportunity to test and put into practice critical elements of global-regional partnerships. In particular, complementarity and comparative advantage, burden-sharing, jointness, and subsidiarity. For example, while international partners provided a comprehensive mission support arrangement, AU has been responsible for generating the mission personnel,² showing jointness and burden-sharing in practice. The AMISOM/ATMIS experience has also underlined the need for defined and clear reporting lines between the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), on questions of compliance and accountability with human rights due diligence frameworks.

2. UN financing and support models

The set-up of AU peace support operations in Somalia helped experimenting with specific modalities of UN financial and logistical support packages, in a highly volatile context with kinetic military action. Coupled with the experience of other African-led missions, such as the G5-Sahel, the Somalia experience indicated that UN's operational support arrangements, created for traditional peacekeeping, "may not be optimised to meet the requirements and operational tempos of African PSOs".³ This refers to the fact that current UN operational support capabilities are designed for peacekeeping operations, rather than peace enforcement of high pace.

3. Mandates with clear financing

AMISOM/ATMIS has evolved sui generis, largely shaped by exogenous and endogenous factors, and has been highly dependent on EU funding. A key lesson from this experience is the importance of linking mission mandates with clear financing strategies. While mandating processes should make room for flexibility, they should in parallel be accompanied by clear financing that allows for predictable and sustainable funding.

4. Funding uncertainties effect mission effectiveness

The imbalance between voluntary and UN-assessed contributions⁴ has left AMISOM/ATMIS with an uncertain financing situation. As highlighted in the UN Secretary-General's Report on Financing of AU peace support operations (May 2023), voluntary trust funds should be avoided as they do not provide an adequate, predictable, or sustainable source of funding, which affects planning and expectations management. The Report calls for UN to financially support AU peace support operations in a more systematic manner. It further suggests AMISOM/ATMIS type of UN support packages through assessed contributions as one of the preferred financing models. Financial uncertainty for the AU peace support mission in Somalia has affected its operational effectiveness and long-term planning. For example, recent discussions around the mission's exit have been obscured by funding imperatives rather than the attainment of tangible peace and security results on the ground⁵. Another lesson is the need for a systematic future funding coordination mechanism, in support of Somalia's authorities.

"A key lesson from this experience is the importance of linking mission mandates with clear financing strategies"

Finally, the UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief on the New Agenda for Peace (July 2023) reaffirms a similar call for the systematic consideration of support requests for AU, and sub-regional organisations.

² The mission has been one of the deadliest operations, leading to the death of more than 3,500 personnel and more than 5,000 injuries during the sixteen years of operations. This figure is close to the total casualties recorded in the seventy years of UN peace operations.

³ United Nations Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia (S/2023/109).

⁴ United Nations Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia (S/2021/281).

⁵ Meressa, K. D., & Dawit, Y. (2023, April 26). "ATMIS is still central to protecting Somali's hard-won gains". ISS Today, Institute for Security Studies. <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/atmis-is-still-central-to-protecting-somalis-hard-won-gains>

Recommendations

a. Systematic & assessed funding

UN and AU should seize this momentum to push for adopting and implementing a UN Security Council resolution on financing AU missions. Sustained diplomacy by AU and the three African Council members is vital.

b. Strategic dialogue

AU and its Member States should pursue other avenues for greater burden sharing and mitigate Africa's over-reliance on partner funding for its peace efforts. Strategic and high-level dialogue is key to enhancing the commitment of African Member States to the AU Peace Fund as a critical option to complement UN financing.

c. Regional collective security

The Summit of the Future scheduled for 2024 offers an important opportunity to engage in debates on the way forward for regional and global collective security mechanisms, including the financing of AU PSOs. AU and its member states should critically engage in these discussions, with adequate and crucial preparations at regional levels.

Guiding questions for working group discussions

- What lessons could be learned from missions like AMISOM/ATMIS, for future AU peace support operations mandated by the UN Security Council?
- Is there a need to adapt UN's "toolbox" with new support models to strengthen AU peace support operations?
- How could UN and AU work collaboratively to ensure swift adoption of the UN Security Council framework resolution on financing AU-led missions?
- Under which circumstances could UN assessed contributions be used to fund African-led subregional peace support operations?
- What oversight mechanism for AU peace support operations could ensure compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as accountability on the transparent use of UN assessed contributions?

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Dawit Yohannes is Project Manager and Senior Researcher at the Training for Peace project, ISS Addis Ababa. His research focuses on the conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and peace support operations roles of the African Union and national dialogue and reconciliation processes in the Horn of Africa.

Meressa Kahsu Dessu is a Senior Researcher and Training Coordinator in the ISS Addis Ababa office. His research and capacity building focus on peace operations, peacebuilding, and conflict resolutions in Africa.

Dr. Emmaculate Asige Liaga is a researcher at the Institute for Security Studies, Training for Peace program. Her research focus is on peace support operations and peacebuilding in Africa.



Visiting Address:
Drottning Kristinas väg 37,
Stockholm, Sweden

Postal Address:
Sandövägen 1,
SE-872 64 Sandöverken, Sweden

E-mail: info@challengesforum.org
www.challengesforum.org
Phone: +46 (0)10 456 23 00



Challenges Forum International Secretariat is hosted by FBA – the Swedish Agency for Peace, Security and Development – on behalf of the Challenges Forum Partnership.