

An analysis of the counterterrorism (CT) and counterinsurgency (COIN) operations employed by African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to counter the threat of al-Shabaab in Somalia (2007-2016)

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NDGLOI001

A mini-dissertation submitted in *partial fulfilment* of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Social Science, International Relations

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

[2018]

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30 January 2017

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express the deepest and sincere appreciation to several people who supported me through this journey. First and foremost, my sister, Janice, who spent countless hours listening to me ramble on about my dissertation. I am forever thankful for your input and advice on how to proceed with this paper. Secondly, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr John Akokpari, for his continued support of my research, for his patience, motivation and immense knowledge. I am also grateful for our conversations about African issues that shaped my understanding of the continent. Thirdly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Mandela-Rhodes Foundation who provided me with a scholarship that allowed me to pursue my MA degree. I am forever grateful for this opportunity and experience. Fourthly, I would like to thank my undergraduate thesis advisor, Associate Professor of Political Science at Elon University, Sean Giovanello, for encouraging me to pursue my interest in studying International Relations with a focus on international terrorism. Finally, I would like to thank Dr Amy Marks for your support and encouragement for the past ten years. You have been an instrumental part of my achievements including getting into UCT, getting my scholarship with Mandela Rhodes Foundation and thinking out my dissertation ideas. I am very thankful.

## **Abstract**

More than ten years after the deployment of the first African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops to Mogadishu, it is imperative that an in-depth analysis is conducted to examine whether the troops have reduced the threat of al-Shabaab in Somalia and the region. This analysis is especially important since AMISOM is the latest attempt to create a stable and strong central government in Somalia since the fall of Said Barre's regime in 1991. The extremist group, al-Shabaab, has evolved to become the strongest opponent and obstacle to the creation of the Federal Government of Somalia. The main objective of this dissertation is to challenge the definition of success advocated by AMISOM and its allies regarding their progress in Somalia. This study also aims to analyse the effectiveness of the counterterrorism (CT) and counterinsurgency (COIN) operations employed by AMISOM to reduce the threat of al-Shabaab. To analyse the effectiveness of the CT and COIN operations utilised between 2007 and 2016, this paper will contextualise the body-count approach using data collected from African Union (AU) and United Nations (UN) reports and the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) by the University of Maryland. This study concludes that the weak mandate, which prevented the troops from conducting military offensives, and inadequate troop strength during the first phase of the mission (2007-July 2010), provided al-Shabaab with the right environment to evolve from a terrorist group into an insurgency by securing their support both their domestic and international support. Also, AMISOM's failure to change their tactics and strategy to account for modifications adapted by al-Shabaab during the second and third phases (July 2010 – May 2012 and June 2012 – December 2016) has contributed to their limited success in Somalia. Although the scope of this study does not discuss all possible reasons for the limited success by AMISOM, it contributes to the larger discussion.

## **Abbreviations**

AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AIAI	al-Ittihad al-Islamiyah,
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ARPCT	Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism
ARS	Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia
ASWJ	Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a
AU	The African Union
CPCT	Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism -
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CT	Counterterrorism
ENDF	Ethiopia National Defense Force
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
GTD	Global Terrorism Database
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IJA	Interim Jubba Administration
IRA	Irish Republican Army
KDF	Kenyan Defense Forces
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NISA	National Intelligence and Security Agency
NPPPP	Northern Province People's Progressive Party
NSSS	National Security and Stabilisation Plan of Somalia
PSC	Peace and Security Council
SAF	Somali Armed Forces
SDDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SNA	Somali National Alliance
SNF	Somali National Front
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPF	Somali Police Force
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement
SSA	Somali Salvation Alliance
SSF	Somali Special Forces
TCC	Troop Contributing Countries
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TFI	Transitional Federal Institutions
TFP	Transitional Federal Parliament
TNA	Transitional National Assembly
TNG	Transitional National Government
UIC	United Islamic Courts
UN	United Nations
UNITAF	United Task Force in Somalia
UNOSOM I	United Nation Operation to Somalia I
UNOSOM II	United Nation Operation to Somalia II
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USC	United Somali Congress
WSLF	Western Somali Liberation Front

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# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1: Introduction

On 19<sup>th</sup> January 2007, the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the African Union (AU) organ responsible for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts on the continent,<sup>1</sup> announced the deployment of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeeping troops to Somalia's capital city of Mogadishu. A month later, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) approved the six-month peace support mission mandated to:“(i) provide support to the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) in their efforts towards the stabilization of the situation in the country and the furtherance of dialogue and reconciliation, (ii) facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance, and (iii) create conducive conditions for long-term stabilization, reconstruction and development in Somalia.”<sup>2</sup> The primary objective of this mission is to reduce the threat of insurgent and terrorist groups in the country. Thus, when al-Shabaab became the most dominant group in Somalia, they became the key target of AMISOM's counterterrorism (CT) and counterinsurgency (COIN) operations.<sup>3</sup>

Following the change of mandate in 2010, AMISOM's approach to minimising the threat of al-Shabaab has remained unchanged. The focus of the COIN operations became the “liberation of cities and towns” from al-Shabaab. Decapitation became the cornerstone of AMISOM's counterterrorism strategy, with the support of the United States (US) military, as part of United States Africa Command (AFRICOM). These operations are designed to kill or capture of top al-Shabaab leaders. To ensure that they reduced al-Shabaab's ability to conduct attacks both in Somalia and in the region, AMISOM's strategy has focused on increasing the number of CT and COIN operations and the troop strength.

AMISOM officials, Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) and donor countries continue to praise AMISOM's successes in Somalia. AMISOM claimed that COIN and CT operations conducted between January 2007 and December 2016<sup>4</sup> resulted in momentous victories in Somalia. The coalition forces maintain that COIN operations have “liberated” major cities such as Baraawe, Mogadishu, Kismayo and Beledweyne. Additionally, the deaths of top leaders such as Aden Hashi Ayro, and Ahmed

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<sup>1</sup> 'Peace and Security Council (PSC)', African Union, accessed 19 September 2016, <http://www.au.int/en/organs/psc>.

<sup>2</sup> 'Report of the Peace and Security Council on Its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa' (Addis Ababa: Assembly of the African Union, 29 January 2007). Article 53 and 54 of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter requires regional institutions to seek authorization from the UNSC. 'Article 53 and 54, Charter of the United Nations (UNTS XVI)' (United Nations, 24 October 1945), 54, <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-viii/>.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Shabaab is classified as a terrorist organisation by the AU.

<sup>4</sup> This dissertation will focus on this specific time frame, although the mission is currently ongoing, because Global Terrorism Database (GTD), the database I am using, released data until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016.

Abdi Godane,<sup>5</sup> Mr Adan Garar,<sup>6</sup> Jama Deere and Ismael Jamhad<sup>7</sup> as a result of CT operations have dealt significant blows to al-Shabaab. Also, the pressure from AMISOM has pushed al-Shabaab top officials such as Ali Hassan Gheddi and Mohamed Faruq to defect to AMISOM and Somali Armed Forces (SAF) troops.<sup>8</sup>

Although the reports and communiqués from the AU and UN do not specifically indicate how the institutions measure the successes mentioned above, the official documents suggest that AMISOM uses the body-count approach to evaluate the progress of their counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations. This method calls for the statistical analysis of CT indicators (number of incidents and casualties suffered, plots foiled, destruction of safe havens and training camps, leaders and members killed or arrested, disruption of recruitment flow or the amount of terrorist funding seized) and COIN indicators (territorial gains). The scholars and institutions that use the body-count approach conclude that the increase or decrease of the factors mentioned above indicate the success or failure of such operations.<sup>9</sup> The use of the body-count approach can be seen by the constant praise of the “liberation of cities and towns” from al-Shabaab and the death and defection of top leaders as a result of CT and COIN operations. In AMISOM’s view, the “liberation of cities and towns” not only diminishes the threat of al-Shabaab but also spreads the authority of the Transitional Federal Government’s (TFG), which later became the Federal Government of Somalia (FSG) in 2012, throughout Somalia. The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra, shared these sentiments when he spoke of the AMISOM’s gains in Mogadishu in 2011.<sup>10</sup> In one instance, UN Monitoring group claimed that the death of al-Shabaab leader

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<sup>5</sup> Aden Ayro and Godane, the first and second Emir (leader) of al-Shabaab, were killed by US airstrikes in 2008 and 2014 respectively. Bill Roggio and Zackary Elkaim, ‘Weekend Attacks in Somalia Deal Shabaab a Double Blow’, *FDD’s Long War Journal*, 26 January 2014, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/01/weekend\\_attacks\\_in\\_s.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/01/weekend_attacks_in_s.php); Eric Schmitt, Jeffrey Gettleman, and Hellene Cooper, ‘Strikes Killed Militant Chief in Somalia, U.S. Reports’, *The New York Times*, 5 September 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/06/world/africa/somalia-shabab.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Garar is suspected architect of the Westgate attacks in Nairobi, Kenya. ‘Four Die as Governor Convoy Is Ambushed’, *Daily Nation*, 13 March 2014, <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Al-Shabaab-Adan-Garar-Strike-US-Army/-/1056/2652674/-/s72mof/-/index.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Jama Deere and Ismael Jamhad are suspected commanders who executed the Garissa University attack in Kenya. Samwel Maina, ‘US Drone Attack in Somalia Takes out Al-Shabaab Leaders’, *Euronews*, 17 July 2015, sec. World News, <http://www.euronews.com/2015/07/17/drone-attack-kills-al-shabaab-leaders/>.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia Dated 8 January 2010’ (New York: United Nations Security Council, 8 January 2010), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Byman, ‘Scoring the War on Terrorism’, *The National Interest*, no. 72 (2003): 75–84; Nadav Morag, ‘Measuring Success in Coping with Terrorism: The Israeli Case’, *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 4 (2005): 307–20; Solomon, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Africa: Fighting Insurgencies from Al-Shabaab, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram*; Cronin, ‘U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism’.

<sup>10</sup> ‘AU Special Representative Praises Peacekeepers for Recent Gains in Somalia’, Press Release (Mogadishu: AMISOM, 21 September 2011), <http://amisom-au.org/2011/09/au-special-representative-praises-peacekeepers-for-recent-gains-in-somalia/>.

Godane in 2014 “represents a significant achievement for AMISOM and the Federal Government in their efforts to defeat Al-Shabaab” and have “in general resulted in short-term gains.”<sup>11</sup>

Ten years since the deployment of troops to Mogadishu, it is essential to question the validity of the repeated claims by AMISOM and their allies. It is essential to evaluate AMISOM’s progress in reducing al-Shabaab’s threat in Somalia and the region. This dissertation argues the picture painted by UN and AU documents, using the body-count approach, does not accurately reflect the reality on the ground regarding the diminished threat of al-Shabaab in Somalia. The minimal progress of AMISOM is heavily influenced by the inability of the coalition forces to adapt to the ever-changing conflict environment. Firstly, the classification of AMISOM as a peace-support mission, which did not allow the troops to engage militarily with militants like al-Shabaab unless in self-defence, and the inadequate troop strength during the first phase (2007 to 10 July 2010) proved to be beneficial to al-Shabab. Without military operations, the militant group had the freedom to rebrand themselves into an independent organisation, solidify their support base and create structures that have proved to be advantageous to the progress of their cause. Secondly, the claimed success of the “liberation” of Mogadishu in 2011 during the second phase (11 July 2010 to May 2012) secured the pathway to over-militarisation of the COIN and CT operations henceforth. This study argues that the “liberation of Mogadishu” exemplified to AMISOM that their new strategy that called for an increase in the number of CT and COIN operations, as a result of a mandate change, and additional battalions and the rehatting of TCC troops will ultimately lead to the reduction of al-Shabaab’s threat in Somalia and the region. The military pressure during the second phase forced al-Shabaab to make tactical changes such as relinquishing their territorial control of Mogadishu and other towns when directly confronted by AMISOM troops. Instead, the group waged a guerrilla war in which they intensified their use of terrorism in those so-called liberated cities and towns. Additionally, the militant group forged alliances with like-minded groups such as al-Hijra and al-Qaida to attract new members, foot-soldiers and sympathisers who would provide additional active and passive support. Thirdly, AMISOM’s decision not to change its tactics and strategy to accommodate the changes made by al-Shabaab during the third phase (June 2012 – December 2016) has contributed to AMISOM’s slow progress. This study maintains that the analysis of the third phase shows that an increased number of CT and COIN operations and additional troop strength does not equate to the reduction of al-Shabaab’s threat. Al-Shabaab has not only demonstrated its ability to orchestrate sophisticated attacks but also their resilience to the CT and COIN operations. Additionally, the use of terrorism to cause fear and chaos puts a significant hole to AMISOM’s assumption that clearing of insurgent activities or “liberation of cities and towns” is enough to claim success. For “Clear, Hold and Build” counterinsurgency operations to be deemed successful, AMIOSM must provide at least minimum security. Although AMISOM has not significantly decreased the threat

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<sup>11</sup> ‘Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2111 (2013): Somalia’ (New York: United Nations Security Council, 13 October 2013), 15.

of al-Shabaab, the CT and COIN operations have negatively impacted the militant group. At the end of the second and third phases, reports regarding infighting among the top echelon surfaced. Although it is unclear the direct impact of the infighting on the strength of the group, it is a sign of weakness.

## **1.2: Research question**

Since the fall of the President Barre's regime in 1991, each attempt to create a federal government was met with strong internal and external opposition, as well as spoilers determined to prolong the conflict. The constant pressure from clans, sub-clans, warlords, militant groups resulted in the creation of weak institutions that were easily toppled by militias and other non-state actors such as al-Shabaab. After many negotiations, conferences and transitional governments spanning twenty-five years, it is paramount to analyse the latest effort, AMISOM, to restore stability in Somalia. More specifically, this study aims to answer the questions: 1) Does the current standard of measuring the success of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations used by AMISOM provide a full picture of the progress of the mission ten years after its inception? 2) How effective have the COIN and CT operations employed by AMISOM been in reducing the threat of al-Shabaab?

## **1.3: Justification for this thesis**

This study hopes to build on existing research about the analysis and evaluation of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency policies, which is increasingly becoming important as groups such as al-Shabaab and Boko Haram become prominent international actors. There is a dearth of context-specific literature on CT and COIN policies in Somalia. Regarding Somalia, the existing knowledge discusses the history of the Somalia and al-Shabaab and the various negotiations that have taken place in the last twenty-five years. In some cases, some authors have discussed the CT and COIN strategies used by AMISOM, but not many scholars have evaluated the efforts to reduce the threat al-Shabaab. Also, many of the works in this field have not discussed the possible factors that have contributed to either the success or failure of the mission. Without an in-depth analysis, it becomes difficult to determine what is working and what needs to be changed to accommodate the evolving reality of the conflict.

This dissertation is also essential in the context of regional security and stability. The inability to establish a stable FSG has a detrimental effect on the region, particularly since al-Shabaab is conducting frequent attacks in Somalia and neighbouring countries. As long as there is conflict in Somalia, its neighbours will continue to interfere with Somali affairs under the pretence of national security. More Somalis will flee to neighbouring countries if the status quo remains unchanged in Somalia. As we have seen in other parts of the continent, mass migration of refugees can destabilise host countries. In the case of Kenya, the increase of refugees conjoined with fear that al-Shabaab is using Dadaab refugee camp as a haven has caused the government to consider closing the largest

refugee camp in the world.<sup>12</sup> Overall, the evaluation of the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies employed by AMISOM will be beneficial for regional security and stability.

#### **1.4: Research methodology**

This dissertation uses both qualitative and quantitative data to assess the progress of AMISOM's counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies to counter the threat of al-Shabaab. Since AU and UN support the mission, their respective institutions, PSC and the UNSC, publish reports. These documents detail the perceived successes and challenges faced by AMISOM, as well as details of some of the attacks and critical information about al-Shabaab. Unfortunately, both institutions do not regularly publish data on the number of attacks and casualties, especially when it comes to data regarding AMISOM and Somali Armed Forces (SAF) casualties. For this reason, this dissertation utilises the data gathered by the University of Maryland's database, Global Terrorism Database (GTD). As one of the best terrorism-related databases, it will provide information about al-Shabaab attacks and casualties. Existing research from books, scholarly articles and newspapers will also supplement the report prepared by the AU and UN, especially about terrorism, insurgency, COIN and CT operations.

#### **1.5: Research limitations**

The instability in Somalia lessens the likelihood of conducting independent field research. For this reason, this dissertation will face several limitations. The inability to administer independent research means that this thesis must rely on databases such as GTD which means that this dissertation must anticipate the possibility of human error, i.e. writing the inaccurate information. Furthermore, due to the volatile atmosphere in Somalia, it is difficult to gather complete information. Therefore, some of the categories in the database are missing vital information. From an analysis of the raw data, most of the missing information involves the number of attacks and casualties of AMISOM and SAF troops. The fact that the Somali government, AMISOM nor the TCCs frequently publish such information contributes to the problem of accuracy of data. Moreover, during the initial years of al-Shabaab (2007-2008), it was difficult to verify which attacks were conducted by the group since they did not claim responsibility for many attacks. Despite these challenges, GTD is considered one of the best terrorism databases. To verify the accuracy of information provided by the database, newspapers and other scholarly works will be used to cross-check the data. Another major limitation is the reliance on PSC and UNSC documents since they contain biases, i.e. what information to include or exclude in the documents. These reports tend to exaggerate the extent to which AMISOM's objectives have been met and the impact of their operations on reducing the threat of al-Shabaab. Despite these limitations, the

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<sup>12</sup> 'Kenya Delays Dadaab Refugee Camp Closure by Six Months', *Al Jazeera English*, 16 November 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/11/kenya-delays-dadaab-refugee-camp-closure-months-161116130647820.html>.

information provided by the official documents and the GTD, as well as newspapers and scholarly articles, will sufficiently offer a clearer image of the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies used in Somalia.

## **1.6: Chapters overview**

Following the introductory chapter, the paper will progress to the literature review. This second chapter will discuss the ambiguities related to the fields of terrorism and insurgency. The literature review focuses specifically on two factors that contribute to the confusion between terrorism and insurgency; 1) use of terrorism by terrorist and insurgent groups, and 2) the transformation from a terrorist group to an insurgency vice versa. The third chapter discusses the historical background that led to the deployment of AMISOM troops in 2007. The chapter explores the reoccurring themes in Somali history (reunification of the Somali people under one flag, the competing clan and Islamic identities, and the occupation of foreign powers). Al-Shabaab has incorporated these themes into their ideology to maximise their appeal in the Somali society. The fourth chapter, the analysis chapter, is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the body-count approach and its limitations, as well as the approach this dissertation is going to use, the contextualisation of the body-count approach. The second section examines the AMISOM's progress in reducing al-Shabaab's threat level in Somalia between 2007 and 2016. The analysis of the AMISOM's progress is further divided into three sections; Phase one (2007 – 10 July 2010), Phase two (11 July 2010 – May 2012) and phase three (June 2012 to December 2016). The final chapter summarises and concludes the dissertation.

## **Chapter Two: Literature review**

### **2.1: Introduction: the impact of 9/11 on the field of terrorism and insurgency**

The tragic events of September 11 and the decision by the US to invade Afghanistan and Iraq tremendously shaped the discourse in the fields of terrorism and insurgency. Richard Jackson notes that terrorism became the single most relevant security issue globally in the shortest amount of time.<sup>13</sup> Bruce Hoffman adds that, although not every country is affected, many prioritised terrorism as a national and international political agenda.<sup>14</sup> The spread of al-Qaida-affiliated groups and sympathisers throughout the world added pressure to countries to prioritise terrorism. At the same time, scholars examined ways to lessen the many ambiguities concerning the definition of terrorism and its relationship to an insurgency. Each country's past experiences with terrorism and insurgencies shaped its narrative resulting in a lack of global definitional consensus. The lack of consensus remains a hindrance to the fight against international terrorism since countries cannot agree whether a group should be classified as a terrorist organisation or not.

The invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq challenged the previous understanding about insurgencies. Audrey Cronin states that these two wars forced the US and their allies to re-evaluate their understanding of CT and COIN. The two wars, she argues, illustrated how the nature of insurgency and terrorism had evolved significantly over the years.<sup>15</sup> Most countries had experience fighting Classical or Local Insurgencies which were contained in one country, and in some cases, had sanctuaries in neighbouring states. Since then, the shifting global relations has resulted in the creation of three additional types of insurgencies, according to Gompert and Gordon.<sup>16</sup> The authors maintain that governments must create counterinsurgency policies depending on the characteristics of the specific kind of insurgency they are fighting.<sup>17</sup>

### **2.2: Confusion between terrorism and insurgency**

Clarifying the ambiguities surrounding terrorism and insurgency is crucial for the African context as groups such as al-Shabaab, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Boko Haram become more brazen with their attacks. Also, as the AU becomes increasingly involved in fighting such threats, it is vital that the institution realises the negative consequence related to creating policies based on the

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<sup>13</sup> Richard Jackson, 'Constructing Enemies: "Islamic Terrorism" in Political and Academic Discourse', *Government and Opposition* 42, no. 3 (2007): 394.

<sup>14</sup> Bruce Hoffman, 'Definition and Essence of Terrorism' (University of Maryland, 31 August 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Audrey Cronin, 'U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism', *Orbis* 56 (2012): 192–214.

<sup>16</sup> For more information about three additional types of insurgencies (Local-International, Global-Local Insurgency and Global Insurgency), refer to David Gompert and John Gordon, 'War by Other Means: Building Complete and Balanced Capabilities for Counterinsurgency' (Santa Monica: RAND, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Gompert and Gordon, 25–30.

miscategorisation of a group. Kydd and Walters advise governments to answer critical questions regarding the purpose, strategies and underlying assumptions of terrorism before creating a policy.<sup>18</sup> This chapter explores the ambiguities regarding the terrorism and insurgencies. Authors such as Michael Boyle and Gompert and Gordon have criticised the interchangeability of the terms terrorism and insurgency. Boyle claims some governments, their military and policymakers are treating the two concepts as if they were functionally equivalent to each other.<sup>19</sup> Gompert and Gordon agree with Boyle, stating that although “terrorism is embedded in and subordinate to the insurgency”, terrorism also exists outside insurgency where groups are not interested in striving towards alternative solutions to socio-politico-economic problems.<sup>20</sup> Understand the distinction between the two concepts shapes the assumptions and direction of CT and COIN operations. Although differentiating factors contribute to the confusion between terrorism and insurgency, this chapter will elaborate on two critical factors; (1) the use of terrorism and (2) transforming from a terrorist group to an insurgency vice versa.

### **2.2.1: Terrorists, insurgents and the use of terrorism**

One of the reasons why some governments, their military and policymakers interchangeably use the two terms is because they do not differentiate the use of terrorism by terrorists and insurgents. First and foremost, terrorism is a tactic utilised by both insurgent and terrorist groups to achieve their goal(s). It involves the use of weapons such as Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), armed assaults, kidnappings, assassinations, and bombings. There are three reasons why terrorists and insurgents use terrorism as a tactic. One, terrorism is used by terrorists and insurgents to communicate with a government(s) and the public. Terrorism provides the opportunity to gain domestic, and on some occasion international attention, which sheds light on their cause. The extra publicity can result in new members or sympathisers.<sup>21</sup> Also, the use of terrorism illustrates to the society and the state their military strength. Both constituencies hope that their attacks will instil enough fear in the government and the public to willingly succumb to their demands.<sup>22</sup> Kydd and Walters believe that this assumption is incorrect since the mere act of instilling fear destroys the possibility of achieving one’s goal.<sup>23</sup> Two, terrorism is used by terrorists and insurgents to invoke a heavy-handed response by the government. A severe reaction can result in the decrease of the legitimacy of the state while increasing the terrorist and insurgents’ legitimacy. Also, a heavy-handed response can use propaganda to express to the public that

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<sup>18</sup> Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walters, ‘Strategies of Terrorism’, *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 50.

<sup>19</sup> Michael J. Boyle, ‘Do Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency Go Together?’, *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 86, no. 2 (2010): 335.

<sup>20</sup> Gompert and Gordon, ‘War by Other Means’, 7.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Mockaitis, Charles Tucker Jr., and Augustus Invictus, ‘The Military and the Role of Law in Countering Terrorism’, in *Counterterrorism: International Law and Practices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 395; David Kilcullen, ‘Counter-Insurgency Redux’, *Survival* 48, no. 4 (2006): 119–20.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walters, ‘Strategies of Terrorism’, 52–69.

<sup>23</sup> Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walters, 50.



the government is not well equipped to protect them.<sup>24</sup> Lastly, the use of terrorism can force the government to exhaust their resources fighting a tactic rather than tackling the root causes that influence people to conduct such acts.<sup>25</sup>

Although both constituencies use terrorism, it is important to note that there is one significant difference between the use of terrorism by insurgents and terrorists. Moghadam, Berger and Beliakova stress that the use of terrorism and other forms of violence by insurgents is just one tactic in their quiver, along with propaganda, demonstrations, political mobilisation of constituencies, subversion, insurrection, guerrilla warfare, and conventional warfare.<sup>26</sup> On the contrary, most terrorist groups use terrorism as their primary, if not only, mode of attack.<sup>27</sup> Daniel Roper states that by understanding the role terrorism plays in an insurgency provides the clarity needed for the government to identify the real enemy and create effective countermeasures.<sup>28</sup> Overall, it is important to remember it is not necessary for an insurgent group, unlike a terrorist group, to use terrorism.<sup>29</sup>

The use of terrorism by terrorist and insurgent groups is dependent on their relationship to the population. Unquestionably, both organisations need a segment of the society to be supportive of their stated objectives. Both constituencies cannot survive without a steady flow of active and passive support.<sup>30</sup> Some terrorist and insurgent groups have effectively utilised the internet to tap into more resources.<sup>31</sup> The significance of the population is determined by how broad or narrow the goal(s) of both the constituencies are. In the case of terrorist organisations, most have narrow policy goals, therefore, needing only a few active members and a smaller segment of the population to support the cause. Since most terrorist groups do not require a great deal of public support, they are more willing

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<sup>24</sup> Andrew H. Kydd and Barbara F. Walters, 59–61, 69–71; J. Boone Bartholomees JR., ‘The Issue with Attrition’, *Parameters* 40, no. 1 (2010): 5–19; David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 30–32.

<sup>25</sup> Kilcullen, ‘Counter-Insurgency Redux’, 114–15; Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, ‘How Terrorist Groups End - Lessons from Countering Al-Qaeda’ (Santa Monica: RAND, 2008), 11–12.

<sup>26</sup> Assaf Moghadam, Ronit Berger, and Polina Beliakova, ‘Say Terrorist, Think Insurgent: Labelling and Analysing Contemporary Terrorist Actors’, *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 5 (2014): 4.

<sup>27</sup> Hoffman, ‘Definition and Essence of Terrorism’.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel Roper, ‘Global Counterinsurgency: Strategic Clarity for the Long War’, *Parameters* 38, no. 3 (2008): 97.

<sup>29</sup> Leonard Weinberg and William Eubank, ‘Twenty-First Century Insurgencies: Understanding the Use of Terrorism as a Strategy’, in *Countering Terrorism and Insurgency in the 21st Century: International Perspectives, Strategic and Tactical Consideration*, vol. 1 (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2007), 80–81.

<sup>30</sup> Active support includes hiding members, raising money, and, especially, joining the organization. Passive support includes ignoring obvious signs of terrorist group activity, declining to cooperate with police investigations, sending money to organizations that act as fronts for the group, and expressing support for the group’s objectives. Audrey Cronin, ‘How Al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Groups’, *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 27.

<sup>31</sup> Daniel L. Byman, ‘Friends like These: Counterinsurgency and the War on Terrorism’, *International Security* 31, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 84.

to target civilians.<sup>32</sup> Cronin maintains the terrorists targeted civilians because they do not heavily rely on the public for backing and the probability of a heavy-handed response from the government.<sup>33</sup>

Insurgents must maintain a close relationship with the public to establish their broad goal of creating an alternative government.<sup>34</sup> To achieve this ambitious goal requires a large section of the people to support their cause. David Galula emphasises this point by asserting that insurgencies need a well-grounded cause that has the greatest potential to attract the most people.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, through this partnership with the public, insurgents benefit from the pre-existing networks (village, tribe, family, neighbourhood, political or religious party) to propel the movement and evade CT and COIN operations.<sup>36</sup> Thus, Weinberg and Eubank claim that indiscriminate attacks on the public must remain off limits.<sup>37</sup> In a classical insurgency, insurgents targeted mainly military and governments posts, unlike terrorist organisations. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have shed light on a new trend where insurgents will target anyone whom they believe will obstruct their goals including aid workers and civilians.<sup>38</sup> In such cases, henceforth referred to as soft targets, some groups have warned the public about their intentions.<sup>39</sup>

### **2.2.2: Transforming from a terrorist group to an insurgency**

The second reason why some governments, their militaries, and policymakers interchangeably use the two terms is due to the fact some terrorist groups have transformed into insurgencies vice versa. Daniel Byman and Jones and Libiscki warn of this growing trend when groups like Lashkar-e Taiba and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) who have evolved into insurgent groups.<sup>40</sup> Jones and Libiscki conclude that, based on their study of 84 terrorist groups that turned into insurgencies, that larger groups that have sizable public support are more likely to transform into insurgencies compared to smaller groups. The authors also note that this transformation is linked to groups with mid-level goals such as overthrowing the regime, secessionist movements, or territorial change. Moreover, they found that such groups are more willing to negotiate with the government than traditional insurgencies. In fact, nearly

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<sup>32</sup> Seth Jones and Martin Libiscki, "How Terrorist Groups End - Lessons from Countering Al-Qaeda" (Santa Monica: RAND, 2008), 32.

<sup>33</sup> Cronin, 'U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism', 195.

<sup>34</sup> Kilcullen, 'Counter-Insurgency Redux', 114–15.

<sup>35</sup> David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2006), 8, 13.

<sup>36</sup> Moghadam, Berger, and Beliakova, 'Say Terrorist, Think Insurgent: Labelling and Analysing Contemporary Terrorist Actors', 4–5; David Kilcullen, 'Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency' (US Government Counterinsurgency Conference, Washington DC, 28 September 2006), [http://www.au.af.mil/au/AWC/AWCgate/uscoin/3pillars\\_of\\_counterinsurgency.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/au/AWC/AWCgate/uscoin/3pillars_of_counterinsurgency.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> Weinberg and Eubank, 'Twenty-First Century Insurgencies: Understanding the Use of Terrorism as a Strategy', 81.

<sup>38</sup> 'Field Manual: Counterinsurgency Operations' (Washington DC: US Department of the Army, October 2004), 1:3-1:4.

<sup>39</sup> Seth Jones and Patrick Johnston, 'The Future of Insurgency', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, no. 1 (2013): 5–6.

<sup>40</sup> Byman, 'Friends like These', 84–85. Jones and Libiscki, 'How Terrorist Groups End', 98–100.

half of the surveyed insurgencies settled with the government while the military defeated only 19% of them.<sup>41</sup> When a terrorist group transforms into an insurgency, Colleen Bell maintains that the host government must modify the understanding of the threat, possibly lengthening the mission time-frame, re-evaluating the appropriate use of force and enabling a robust commitment to civilian forms of intervention.<sup>42</sup>

### **2.3: Conclusion**

In conclusion, the threat of terrorism and insurgency is not a new phenomenon, even in the African continent. However, as the chapter has demonstrated, the events of September 11 and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq proved to be a catalyst in both fields. More scholars and institutions have dedicated their resources to understand the two concepts and lessen the ambiguities between terrorism and insurgency. A lack of understanding has led to some governments, their military and policymakers have used the terms terrorism and insurgency interchangeably which impacts their ability to counter the threat in the long run. As the chapter has also demonstrated, the use of terrorism by insurgents and terrorists and the ability to transform from a terrorist group into an insurgency vice versa has contributed to the confusion between the two terms.

This dissertation aims to contribute to the broader context of the analysis and evaluation of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency policies, a significant research gap in the fields of terrorism and insurgency in Africa. Most of the research about terrorism and insurgency in the continent is about North Africa due to its proximity and similarities to the Middle East, henceforth referred to as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). According to Gary LaFree's research, the number of attacks in the MENA region has been increasing since the 1990s; almost doubling from 19% of all attacks in 1990s to 32% in the 2000s.<sup>43</sup> Terrorism and insurgency in the sub-Saharan context are still under-researched topics despite the increased threat. Between 2000-2010, terrorist attacks in sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 7% of the worldwide attacks and 15% of the global fatalities.<sup>44</sup>

As stated in the introductory chapter, contextualization of the available research is a major key to determine the success of a CT and COIN policies. Therefore, understanding the similarities and differences between a terrorist and insurgent group shapes which mode of warfare a country will use. The current literature mostly focuses on the history of Somalia and al-Shabaab and the various negotiations that have taken place since the fall of Saida Barre's presidency in 1991. Additionally, many scholars have examined AFRICOM counterterrorism policy of kill and capture in Somalia. Some researchers have attempted review the various CT and COIN operations used by AMISOM, but not

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<sup>41</sup> Jones and Libiscki, 'How Terrorist Groups End', 98–100.

<sup>42</sup> Colleen Bell, 'Civilianising Warfare: Ways of War and Peace in Modern Counterinsurgency', *Journal of International Relations and Development* 14, no. 3 (2011): 310.

<sup>43</sup> Gary LaFree, 'Geographic Trends in the GTD' (University of Maryland, Baltimore, 2 February 2015).

<sup>44</sup> LaFree.

many have evaluated the effectiveness of the efforts in reducing the threat al-Shabaab. The few scholars that have assessed the effectiveness have not explained the possible factors that have contributed to either the success or failure of the mission. Without an in-depth analysis, it becomes difficult to determine what is working and what needs to be changed to accommodate the evolving reality of the conflict. This paper aims to fill in the research gap by analysing and evaluating the CT and COIN operations employed by AMISOM, with the support of the US military, to reduce the threat of al-Shabaab. This paper also aims to discuss possible factors, such as over-militarisation, that have contributed to the slow progress of AMISOM.

## Chapter Three: Somalia and al-Shabaab before the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

After decades of ‘failed’ missions by various international and regional actors, the AU sanctioned the creation of AMISOM in 2007, with the support of the UN and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The decision was prompted by the realisation that as long as there are non-state actors such as al-Shabaab and other militias challenging the authority of the weak Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG), there was a need to send troops to support the government. This chapter will provide the background information that sheds light on the rise of al-Shabaab and the need for the deployment of AMISOM.

### **3.1: Pre-Colonial and Colonial History**

Somalia enjoyed periods of remarkable economic and political success before the colonial powers of Italy, France, United Kingdom (UK), and Abyssinian Kingdom (Ethiopia) changed the status quo. After centuries of living in various kingdoms, the Adal Sultanate formed in the early 1400s and sparked a golden age that lasted four centuries. The Adal Sultanate and the Sultanates that followed maintained robust trading systems, reliant on port cities of Mogadishu, Berbera, Kismayo, and Marka.<sup>45</sup> The flourishing trading systems, as well as the proximity to the Suez Canal, attracted European colonial powers.<sup>46</sup> Despite having a decades-long exploitive relationship with the Somali traders, it was not until the “Scramble for Africa” initiated by the Berlin Conference in 1885 did France and Britain officially carve out a portion of the land for themselves in 1885 and 1886 subsequently.<sup>47</sup> The Italian gained their colonial territory, Italian Somaliland, in Southern Somalia, in 1889.<sup>48</sup> Based on British colonial accounts, the Ogaden region in Ethiopia was annexed by Abyssinian Empire in the 1890s.<sup>49</sup>

From the very beginning, the Somali people objected to the invasion of European powers and the Abyssinian Kingdom. The most notable anti-colonial movement, led by Sayid Muhamad Adille Hassan, dubbed as the ‘Mad Mullah’ by the British, lasted from 1899 to 1920. Sayid Hassan believed in the unification of the Somali people under the banner of Islam would bring about the defeat of the colonial powers. He believed clannism could be cured if Islam was the primary identity of all Somali people. The strength of the British and Abyssinian armies and the lack of a unified vision among the Somali clans eventually led to the collapse of this anti-colonial movement.<sup>50</sup> The end of World War

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<sup>45</sup> Randall Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast 800-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 14–16.

<sup>46</sup> Abdullahi Odowa, ‘What Can Current Leaders in Somalia Learn from Their Past History?’, in *Somalia: Clan and State Politics* (International Training Programme for Conflict Management, 2013), 20.

<sup>47</sup> M. J. Fox, *The Roots of Somali Political Culture* (Boulder, Colorado: FirstForumPress, 2015), 9.

<sup>48</sup> Fox, 10.

<sup>49</sup> Charles Gesheker, ‘Anti-Colonialism and Class Formation: The Eastern Horn of Africa before 1950’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 18, no. 1 (1985): 7–8.

<sup>50</sup> Gesheker, 17.

Two brought renewed efforts to fight against the invading forces. By this time, the British had incorporated the Italian Somaliland into their territory as the Italians surrendered their territories as a consequence of losing the war. After ten years, British Somaliland became the Republic of Somalia on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960.<sup>51</sup>

### **3.2: The first government (1960-1969)**

The first Somali government after independence, under the leadership of Aden Abdullah Osman Daar and Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, had the arduous task of rebuilding a functional state that could overcome the negative impact of colonialism.<sup>52</sup> The most prominent challenge the government tackled was the unification of the Somali people who are divided into four countries. The four areas include the British and Italian Somaliland that became the Republic of Somalia, French Somaliland (Republic of Djibouti), Northern Frontier District (Northern Kenya) and the Ogaden region (Ethiopia). Currently, the desire to establish Greater Somalia includes annexing the independent and semi-autonomous regions of Somaliland and Puntland, which seceded after the fall of General Said Barre in 1991 and 1998 respectively.<sup>53</sup> According to Charles Gesheker, “Somalis believe that unification of Somali-inhabited lands is essential for sustaining the connections between territoriality and their ability to survive as people without which regional peace and political stability remain unattainable.”<sup>54</sup> The first irredentist attempt came when the Somali government supported the Northern Province People’s Progressive Party (NPPPP), an ethnically Somali political party in Kenya, to wage war against the new Kenyan administration in 1963.<sup>55</sup> The guerrilla war, dubbed as the Shifta War, lost momentum after Prime Minister Mohamed Egal signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) assuring the Kenyan government that the Somali government would stop assisting the secessionist movement in 1967.<sup>56</sup> The lack of support from the Somali government and Kenyan Somalis forced NPPPP to end the Shifta war.<sup>57</sup>

Clannism is the second major challenge that the first Somali government faced. The five Somali clan families, i.e. Doraad, Isaaq, Dir, Hawiye, and Rahanweyn are divided into smaller sub-clans.<sup>58</sup> M. J. Fox states that despite being under various Sultanates and colonial rule, the clans and sub-clans maintained their independence and self-reliance.<sup>59</sup> The clan system helped to create a shared identity that maintained law and order through the enforcement of Xeer or customary laws. With the

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<sup>51</sup> Mwangi S. Kimenyi, John Mukum Mbaku, and Nelipher Moyo, ‘Reconstituting Africa’s Failed States: The Case of Somalia’, *Social Research* 77, no. 4 (1 December 2010): 1349.

<sup>52</sup> Odowa, ‘What Can Current Leaders in Somalia Learn from Their Past History?’, 20.

<sup>53</sup> Kimenyi, Mbaku, and Moyo, ‘Reconstituting Africa’s Failed States’, 1349.

<sup>54</sup> Gesheker, ‘Anti-Colonialism and Class Formation’, 1.

<sup>55</sup> Major John Ringquist, ‘Bandits or Patriots: The Kenyan Shifta War 1963-1968’, *Ballistic Security Defense Review* 13, no. 1 (2011): 108–9.

<sup>56</sup> Ringquist, 116.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Declaration on Kenya- Somali Relations’ (Organization of African Unity, 11 September 1967).

<sup>58</sup> Kimenyi, Mbaku, and Moyo, ‘Reconstituting Africa’s Failed States’, 1349.

<sup>59</sup> Fox, *The Roots of Somali Political Culture*, 7, 47.

introduction of Islam into the Horn of Africa in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, all the clans found ways to harmonise the Xeer and Sharia laws with the help of village elders, or the Guurti, who facilitated all communal problems by facilitating community-wide consensus-based discussions.<sup>60</sup> Regardless of the attempts to balance between the Islamic and clan identities, the deeply embedded clan system ensured that the Somalis primary loyalty was to the clan.<sup>61</sup> The colonial dynamics in which some clan-families and sub-clans were favoured over others and the impact on clans based on the differing colonial governance styles worsened the clan rivalries.<sup>62</sup>

To ensure all the clans were appeased, the President Daar attempted to implement the agreed upon stipulations created during the pre-independence period. During that period, the Somali elite agreed that the position of president would rotate to all regions in the country to ensure the representation of all clans and their sub-clans.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the Somali government attempted to create a comprehensive, consensus-based political structure that overcomes the heightened clan rivalries. Despite their intentions, the first government could not keep its promise since the Doraad and Hawiye, southern clans-families and sub-clans, dominated all branches of government.<sup>64</sup> From 1960-1969, the Darood clan dominated the parliament, taking approximately two-thirds of the available seats.<sup>65</sup>

### **3.3: Said Barre presidency (1969-1988)**

1969 was a significant turning point in Somali political history as General Mohamed Said Barre staged a bloodless coup,<sup>66</sup> days after the assassination of President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke.<sup>67</sup> General Barre, who ruled Somalia for more than two-decades afterwards, faced similar challenges as the first government, i.e. clannism and irredentist aspirations. His hostile and oppressive policies added a new dimension to Somali history in which the government persecuted clan and sub-clan opposition and Islamic groups. These three elements, which cannot be looked at singularly as they are heavily intertwined, served as catalysts to the instability in the country.

In his quest to alleviate clannism in Somalia through his policy of ‘Scientific Socialism,’<sup>68</sup> General Barre worsened clan rivalries. Like Sayid Hassan, President Barre believed that clannism is a major challenge that the Somali people need to overcome, hence, advocated for a unified Somali

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<sup>60</sup> Fox, 5–6.

<sup>61</sup> Fox, 7.

<sup>62</sup> Fox, 123–24.

<sup>63</sup> Terrance Lyons and Ahmed I. Samatar, *Somalia: State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention, and Strategies for Political Reconstruction* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 12.

<sup>64</sup> Pierre Englebert, *Africa: Unity, Sovereignty, and Sorrow* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 174.

<sup>65</sup> Abdulahi A. Osman, ‘Cultural Diversity and the Somali Conflict: Myth or Reality?’, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 7, no. 2 (2007): 103.

<sup>66</sup> Lyons and Samatar, *Somalia*, 14.

<sup>67</sup> Kimenyi, Mbaku, and Moyo, ‘Reconstituting Africa’s Failed States’, 1349.

<sup>68</sup> Kimenyi, Mbaku, and Moyo, 1349–51.

identity. He also believed that clannism is a contributing factor to economic and political stagnation.<sup>69</sup> His poorly executed plans solidified the control of the government and military in the hands of three Darood sub-clans; the Marehan, i.e. Said Barre's sub-clan, Ogaden, and Dhulbahante. This alliance, known as MOD, propelled sub-clan interests to the national level.<sup>70</sup> One of the consequences of this type of governance is that individuals become loyal to a person rather than an institution or the state, the exact opposite of his policy's intentions. Moreover, General Barre continued to antagonise the Isaaq clan, further creating tension between the southern and northern clans. In 1978, after the disastrous Ogaden war with Ethiopia in 1977, the tensions between the government and the Isaaq clan worsened after they were suspected to be involved in an attempted military coup, with support from the Majeerteen sub-clan, part of the Darood clan.<sup>71</sup> In retaliation, the president sent Ogadeni militias into the traditionally Isaaq territory to antagonise them.<sup>72</sup> Following the execution of seventeen Majeerteen military officials, many officers fled to Ethiopia to escape prosecutions and joined opposition groups seeking to overthrow the dictatorship.<sup>73</sup>

Like the first government, General Barre wanted to unify the Somali people under one flag. He went to war with Ethiopia to reclaim the Ogaden region. His decision to annexe this region possibly stems from the fact that the Ogaden sub-clan was an instrumental part of the MOD alliance. The Ogaden sub-clan in Somalia also had close relations with the nationalist groups operating in Ethiopia such as the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF). By the time that Somalia invaded Ethiopia in 1978, the government had significantly built its military capabilities as a result of Cold War politics. However, when the conflict commenced, Cold War alliances had shifted. The Soviet Union was solely supporting Ethiopia, and the US was helping Somalia.<sup>74</sup> Despite its military superiority, Somalia and its allies suffered a devastating loss. The Somali government signed an agreement with the Ethiopian government in the late 1980s in which both sides pledged not to aid any opposition groups operating in their respective countries.<sup>75</sup>

After a decade of General Barre's oppressive and divisive policies, Islamic opposition groups began forming in the 1980s. Groups such as al-Ittihad al-Islamiyah (AIAI), and Ahlu Sunna wa al-Jama'a (ASWJ) publicly criticised General Barre's controversial policies.<sup>76</sup> The rise of Islamic

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<sup>69</sup> Hussein Solomon, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Africa: Fighting Insurgencies from Al-Shabaab, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 44.

<sup>70</sup> Osman, 'Cultural Diversity and the Somali Conflict: Myth or Reality?', 109.

<sup>71</sup> Kimenyi, Mbaku, and Moyo, 'Reconstituting Africa's Failed States', 1349.

<sup>72</sup> Lidwien Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia: The Ruinous Legacy 1991* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 81; 'Somalia's Islamists' (International Crisis Group, 12 December 2005), 17, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/Somalias%20Islamists.pdf>.

<sup>73</sup> Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*, 81.

<sup>74</sup> Osman, 'Cultural Diversity and the Somali Conflict: Myth or Reality?', 110.

<sup>75</sup> Isabelle Duyvesteyn, 'Case Study: Somalia (1998-1995)', in *Clausewitz and African Wars: Politics and Strategy in Liberia and Somalia* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 40.

<sup>76</sup> Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'Anatomy of the Salafi Movement', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 1 (2006): 207-39.



opposition coincided with the movements in the Arab and Muslim world that called for the rejuvenation of Islamic traditions as a means to fix socio-political problems within the country.<sup>77</sup> The popularity of such group triggered repressive protocols such as mass arrests and executions. In one instance, on 23 January 1975, the government executed ten prominent Islamic leaders who had been vocal about their dissatisfaction with the government. The government claimed that these leaders were “bad Muslims.” Participants of mass protests were arrested and jailed with no due process.<sup>78</sup> The retaliation from the government forced many of these groups to operate underground.

### **3.4: Civil War (1988-1992)**

In addition to the Islamic opposition groups, secular, nationalist groups operating within Somalia and in other countries also began forming in the 1980s. Although there were many opposition groups, only a few played vital roles in the fall of General Barre’s regime in 1991. By 1988, the conditions within the country had worsened significantly that the Somali National Movement (SNM), a coalition of mainly Isaaq sub-clans, began attacking government and military posts in Northern Somalia, initiating the Civil War.<sup>79</sup> The Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), an Ogadeni sub-clan militia, and the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SDDF), a Majeerteen sub-clan militia, fought the government forces in Southern Somalia.<sup>80</sup> The United Somali Congress (USC), a coalition of mainly Hawiye sub-clans, fought against the Barre regime in Mogadishu and the surrounding areas. The USC became the strongest opposition group after the Somali Armed Forces (SAF) troops staged a mutiny in 1989 and joined the militia.<sup>81</sup>

As the pressure from opposition mounted on all sides, the General simultaneously attempted to negotiate with and brutally suppress opposition.<sup>82</sup> The government conducted aerial assaults on cities,<sup>83</sup> door-to-door searches and mass arrests of protestors and police and military indiscriminately killed civilians.<sup>84</sup> As General Barre brutally silenced the opposition, he simultaneously attempted to create changes within his administration to appease the public. President Barre assured the people that he would allow multiparty elections, which would take place on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1991 after a council drafted

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<sup>77</sup> David Shinn, ‘Al Shabaab’s Foreign Threat to Somalia’, *Orbis* 55, no. 2 (2011): 204; Abdelkérîm Ousman, ‘The Potential of Islamist Terrorism in Sub-Saharan Africa’, *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 18, no. 1/2 (1 October 2004): 85.

<sup>78</sup> ‘Somalia’s Islamists’, 1.

<sup>79</sup> Englebert, *Africa: Unity, Sovereignty, and Sorrow*, 175.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Somalia’s Islamists’, 18. Although the Ogadeni sub-clan were part of the larger MOD alliance, the SPM was created as a reaction of the demotion of and arrest of Minister of Defense General Gabyo. The SPM, led by Colonel Ahmed Omar “Jess” and the SDDF created an alliance since both belonged to Darood clan family, and were supported by the Kenyan government. For more information, refer to Abdurahman Abdullahi, ‘Conceptions of Transitional Justice in Somalia: Findings of Field Research in Mogadishu’, *Northeast African Studies* 14, no. 2 (2014): 7–43; Duyvesteyn, ‘Case Study: Somalia’.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Somalia’s Islamists’, 18.

<sup>82</sup> Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*, 99.

<sup>83</sup> Englebert, *Africa: Unity, Sovereignty, and Sorrow*, 175.

<sup>84</sup> Kapteijns, *Clan Cleansing in Somalia*, 105.

constitutional changes.<sup>85</sup> Despite his efforts, the president undermined his progress by backtracking on agreed upon resolutions which fuelled the desire of opposition groups to continue fighting.<sup>86</sup>

The fall of Said Barre came during the final Battle of Mogadishu in December 1990 to January 1991. By this point, the USC had created an alliance with SPM and SNM, who were also supported by the Ethiopian government.<sup>87</sup> The successful battle resulted in Said Barre and his supporters fleeing to the port city of Kismayo in Southern Somalia, which was under the control of General Morgan, Said Barre's brother-in-law.<sup>88</sup> The Somali Civil War resulted in the deaths of at least 300,000 Somalis due to war-related casualties, hunger, and diseases.<sup>89</sup>

### **3.5: International and regional attempts to create a federal government (1991 – 2007)**

The fall of General Said Barre's regime on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1991 created a power vacuum and consequently, opposition groups began to fight each other for the control of the country. The alliances created to topple the regime quickly disintegrated soon after USC took over Mogadishu. With the USC controlling the seat of government, the other opposition groups carved territory in other parts of the country. Each group sought to advance the interest of their clan or sub-clan instead of fighting for national interests.

The first major effort to create a stable federal government in Somalia came as soon as USC took control of Mogadishu. This attempt failed due to the internal fighting between the two main leaders, Ali Mahdi and General Aideed who disagreed about the process of creating a new interim government. As a result, the USC split into two warring factions.<sup>90</sup> Ali Mahdi with his Habr Abgal sub-clan supporters rebranded the USC into the Somali Salvation Alliance (SSA),<sup>91</sup> while General Aideed created Somali National Alliance (SNA), a Habr Gedir sub-clan militia.<sup>92</sup> The second effort came as a result of the international community's concern regarding the fighting between SSA and SNA in Mogadishu. This effort also failed despite the creation of the United Nation Operation to Somalia (UNOSOM I and II) in 1992 and 1993 respectively, and the deployment of United Task Force in Somalia (UNITAF), a US military operation in 1993. The US withdrew its troops from Somalia following the infamous Black Hawk Down attack in which suspected Aideed supporters shot down a

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<sup>85</sup> Kapteijns, 107.

<sup>86</sup> Kapteijns, 128–29.

<sup>87</sup> Duyvesteyn, 'Case Study: Somalia', 45–46.

<sup>88</sup> Duyvesteyn, 46.

<sup>89</sup> Moller Bjorn, 'The Somali Conflict – the Role of External Actors' (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2009), 12.

<sup>90</sup> Ken Menkhaus, 'Diplomacy in a Failed State: International Mediation in Somalia', in *Whose Peace Is It Anyway? Connecting Somali and International Peacemaking* (London: The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, 2010), 17.

<sup>91</sup> Lyons and Samatar, *Somalia*, 22.

<sup>92</sup> Abdullahi, 'Conceptions of Transitional Justice in Somalia: Findings of Field Research in Mogadishu', 11.

US plane killing eighteen soldiers in 1993.<sup>93</sup> All US and UN personnel withdrew out of Somalia by the end of 1995.<sup>94</sup>

Unlike other parts of the country, clans in Northern Somalia consolidated their power and created an independent state or semi-autonomous region. Under the leadership of the SNM, the Isaaq clan seceded from the Republic of Somalia, forming the Republic of Somaliland on May 18<sup>th</sup> 1991, although not recognised by any country in the world.<sup>95</sup> In 1998, the Puntland region in the Northwest region of Somalia followed in the footsteps of Somalilanders but chose to become an autonomous region. Although not independent, Puntland had its local government but also participates in the affairs of the Republic of Somalia.<sup>96</sup>

The new millennium brought renewed efforts to establish a federal government in Somalia. IGAD invited a select few warring factions to the negotiation table in Djibouti. The first attempt, the Arta Declaration, which created the Transitional National Government (TNG) and the Transitional National Assembly (TNA), was signed in Djibouti in 2000. The TNG proved to be ineffective in bringing any incremental change as it was riddled with corruption, anti-Ethiopia rhetoric and was unable to extend its authority outside Mogadishu.<sup>97</sup> In 2004, as part of the Eldoret Conference process, a new Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) were created. The new government, led by a pro-Ethiopia President Abdullahi Yusuf, agreed to keep the 4.5 formula from the Arta Declaration which stated that the four main clans, Doraad, Hawiye, Dir, and Rahanweyn, would have equal representation in parliament while the rest of the seats will belong to the other small clans.<sup>98</sup>

### **3.6: The rise of Islamic groups, including al-Shabaab, after the fall of Said Barre's regime (1991-2007)**

Amid the chaos of the Civil War, Islamic groups began operating above ground, becoming potential contenders for political power. The foundation of al-Shabaab lies inside the successes and structures of its predecessors, AIAI and United Islamic Courts (UIC). As briefly discussed in a previous subsection, AIAI formed in the early 1980s as an opposition group against President General Barre. The fall of the government in 1991 allowed for AIAI, under the leadership of Sheikh Mukhtar Robow,

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<sup>93</sup> Ioannis Mantzikos, 'The International Community's Role in the Radicalization of Islamist Politics in Somalia, 1992-1995: The Creation of the Security Dilemma', *Mediterranean Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 81–82.

<sup>94</sup> Paul Williams and Abdirashid Hashi, 'Exit Strategy: Challenges of the AU Mission in Somalia' (Mogadishu, Somalia: Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, February 2016), 17.

<sup>95</sup> Moller Bjorn, 'The Somali Conflict – the Role of External Actors', 10.

<sup>96</sup> Kimenyi, Mbaku, and Moyo, 'Reconstituting Africa's Failed States', 1352.

<sup>97</sup> Robert I. Rotberg and World Peace Foundation, *Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa* (Brookings Institution Press, 2005), 29.

<sup>98</sup> Rotberg and Foundation, 24–31.

formally known as Abu Mansur,<sup>99</sup> to gain widespread support especially in Mogadishu, Gedo, and Lower Jubba.<sup>100</sup> The group's primary goal was the reunification of all Somali people under an Islamic government.<sup>101</sup> According to Menkhaus and Docking, "AIAI...adopted a long-term strategy to prepare Somalia for Islamic rule by building up its activities in education, media, judiciary, and commerce, and has deemphasised the use of violence as a tactic."<sup>102</sup> Like other opposition groups, AIAI relied on clan alliances to recruit members. In their case, they had the support of the mainly Darood clan but also the Hawiye and Isaaq clans.<sup>103</sup> The Ethiopian government believed that the growing popularity of AIAI threatened its sovereignty. Their fears materialised when AIAI conducted grenade attacks in Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa killing dozens in 1995 and 1996. As a result, Ethiopia invaded Somalia in 1997 which, along with the decision by the US to classify the group as a terrorist organisation following the declaration of 'War on Terror,' caused its eventual demise.<sup>104</sup>

The fall of AIAI resulted in the emergence of various splintering groups including the UIC.<sup>105</sup> The UIC, although stemming from the AIAI's Islamic courts, emerged as a moderate group that protected the interests of Mogadishu business community who were tired of paying taxes to warlords.<sup>106</sup> The business community believed in UIC's ability to maintain peace and security, despite their Islamic rhetoric.<sup>107</sup> The UIC benefited from AIAI's pre-existing networks, especially since the top leaders such as Sheikh Robow, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmad, and Hassan Dahir Aweys became part of the top echelon of the UIC.<sup>108</sup> After years of consolidating power within and outside Mogadishu, UIC successfully challenged the TFG's authority in Mogadishu in 2006 forcing the government to move its seat to Baidoa.<sup>109</sup> Ethiopia invaded Somalia for the second time in less than a decade to support the pro-

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<sup>99</sup> Richard Barno, 'Africa's Responses to the Terrorism Threat: Perspectives from the IGAD Region', in *Understanding Terrorism in Africa: In Search for an African Voice*, ed. F. Wafula Okumu and Anneli Botha (Institute for Security Studies, 2007), 95; Christopher Harnisch, 'The Terror Threat from Somalia: The Internationalization of Al Shabaab', *Critical Threats*, 12 February 2010, 10, <http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/terror-threat-somalia-internationalization-al-shabaab-feb-12-2010>.

<sup>100</sup> For a detailed understanding about the AIAI's origin, refer to 'Somalia's Islamists'; Barno, 'Africa's Responses to the Terrorism Threat: Perspectives from the IGAD Region'.

<sup>101</sup> Ken Menkhaus and Tim Docking, 'Special Report: Terrorism in the Horn of Africa' (United States Institute of Peace, 2004), <http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr113.pdf>.

<sup>102</sup> Menkhaus and Docking, 10.

<sup>103</sup> Virginia Luling, 'Come Back Somalia? Questioning a Collapsed State', *Third World Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1997): 296. Cedric Barnes and Harun Hassan, 'The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts', *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, no. 2 (2007): 152–53.

<sup>104</sup> Thomas Dempsey, 'Counter-Terrorism in African Failed States: Challenges and Potential Solutions' (All Strategic Studies Institute, April 2006), 13, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub649.pdf>.

<sup>105</sup> 'Somalia's Islamists', 9.

<sup>106</sup> Roland Marchal, 'The Rise of a Jihadi Movement in a Country at War: Harakat Al-Shabaab Al Mujaheddin in Somalia' (CNRS, March 2011), 14.

<sup>107</sup> Karl Sandstom, 'Contextual Disconnect: The Failure of the International Community in Somalia', in *Somalia Multilateral, International, and Transnational Repercussions of Conflict* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 52.

<sup>108</sup> 'Somalia: Al-Shabaab - It Will Be a Long War', Policy Briefing (Nairobi/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 26 June 2014), 6.

<sup>109</sup> Abdel Bari Atwan, *After Bin Laden: Al Qaeda, the Next Generation* (New York: The New Press, 2012), 113.

Ethiopian government with the full support of the US in December 2006. Within a month, the coalition had managed to remove the UIC from Mogadishu but could not reinstall the TFG in the capital city. The constant military pressure from the Ethiopian military forced many UIC leaders such as Sheikh Sharif to turn themselves into the allied forces while other leaders fled to neighbouring countries.<sup>110</sup> By the beginning of 2007, UIC splintered into two groups, Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) led by Dahir Aweys and al-Shabaab.<sup>111</sup>

By the time the AU and UN approved AMISOM, al-Shabaab was in its infancy. Before 2007, al-Shabaab was the military wing of the UIC,<sup>112</sup> founded by Sheikh Mukhtar Aby Zubayr, commonly referred to as Godane, Ibrahim Haji Jamaa al-Afghani, Sheikh Mukhtar Robow and Aden Hashi Aryo.<sup>113</sup> After splintering from UIC, al-Shabaab moved its operations to Southern Somalia where they conducted joint attacks with remnants of UIC against the Ethiopian and TFG forces.<sup>114</sup>

### **3.7: Conclusion**

In the four-decade history of the Republic of Somalia before the deployment of AMISOM troops are categorised with the prevalence of three occurring themes: 1) unification of the Somali people, (2) occupation by foreign powers, and (3) the Somali identity (Islam and the clan). As this chapter has demonstrated, the question of the reunification of Greater Somalia is a critical issue. So far, the problem has been dealt with militarily, i.e. the Shifita and Ogaden War. The need for unification of the Somali people is a consequence of occupation by foreign powers. From the very beginning, the Somali people have fought against the invading forces as seen with Sayid Hassan in the 1890s. The same sentiment is still felt today with the spread of the anti-Ethiopian rhetoric as Ethiopia is viewed as a colonial power. As a means to unify the Somali people and fight against the foreign forces, the question of identity always arises. As illustrated by Sayid Hassan accounts, Somali people wondered which identity should prevail, the Islamic or the clan identity. Since independence, Somali governments have tried to lessen the problem of clannism by attempting to create a system in which all clans feel represented within the state. Despite the noble intentions, especially with the 4.5 formula, the Doraad clan and its sub-clans have dominated governmental posts.

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<sup>110</sup> Barnes and Hassan, 'The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts', 157.

<sup>111</sup> Melisa Simpson, 'An Islamic Solution to State Failure in Somalia?', in *Terrorism in Africa: The Evolving Front in the War on Terror* (Lexington Books, 2010), 11.

<sup>112</sup> John Davis, *Terrorism in Africa: The Evolving Front in the War on Terror* (Lexington Books, 2010), 162.

<sup>113</sup> Lauren Blanchard, 'The September 2013 Terrorist Attack in Kenya: In Brief' (Washington: Congressional Research Report, 14 November 2013), 2, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R43245.pdf>. For more information about the structure of al-Shabaab, refer to 'Letter Dated 9 October 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee Pursuant to Resolutions 751(1992) and 1907 (2009) Concerning Somalia and Eritrea Addressed to the President of the Security Council' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 9 October 2015); Dr. Abdi Shuriye, 'Al-Shabaab's Leadership Hierarchy and Its Leadership', *Academic Research International* 2, no. 1 (January 2012): 274–85.

<sup>114</sup> Davis, *Terrorism in Africa*, 162.

The deployment of AMISOM troop in 2007 is the latest attempt to fix the power vacuum created after the fall of Said Barre's regime in 1991 by the regional and international organisation. As the chapter has demonstrated, previous attempts (UNOSOM I, UNITAF, UNOSOM II) failed to create any substantial peace agreements. The new millennium brought with it renewed hope with the signing of Arta Declaration and the Eldoret Conference agreement. The decisions agreed upon on these two occasions influence the mandate and operations of AMISOM as IGAD countries accept it as the basis for peace in Somalia.

# **Chapter Four: Analysis of Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency operations by AMISOM (2007-2016)**

## **4.1: Introduction**

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section discusses the scholarship behind what constitutes counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations. This section also includes an explanation of the body-count approach, the most used method of evaluating CT and COIN policies, and why AMISOM uses this approach. This segment will explain how this paper plans to assess and analyse AMISOM's CT and COIN operations. The second section of this chapter analyses the AMISOM's counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations in Somalia. The analysis is divided into three phases; Phase one (January 2007- 11 July 2010), Phase two (12 July 2010 – May 2012) and Phase three (June 2012 – December 2016). This section contextualises the data provided by GTD and the information provided by the UN, AU and other scholarly articles to explain whether the CT and COIN operations by AMISOM, supported by the US military, have impacted al-Shabaab's ability to conduct attacks in Somalia and the Eastern Africa region. This dissertation argues that the weak initial mandate and inadequate troop strength during the first phase permitted al-Shabaab to grow into a fully-fledged insurgency that maintained domestic support. This dissertation also argues that AMISOM's inability to recognise al-Shabaab's change of tactic (relinquishing of territorial gains) during the last Battle of Mogadishu and thereafter and lack of understanding about the use of terrorism by the group have contributed to AMISOM's slow progress. This dissertation concludes that, although the COIN and CT have affected al-Shabaab, the group still possesses the capability to conduct frequent attacks in Somalia and the neighbouring region. The most notable of these negative impacts is the rise of infighting among the top echelon.

## **4.2: Section one: counterterrorism, counterinsurgency and evaluation methods**

### **4.2.1: What constitutes counterterrorism and counterinsurgency?**

Counterterrorism is an enemy-centric approach that stresses the destruction of the human and the military capability of the target with the end goal of terminating them altogether.<sup>115</sup> Richard Barrett states, "the main objective of [a] counterterrorism policy should be to make it as hard as possible for terrorists to mount attacks, not just by denying them the means and targets, but also by denying them sympathisers and recruits."<sup>116</sup> The two main ways governments conduct counterterrorism operations is

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<sup>115</sup> Boyle, 'Do Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency Go Together?'

<sup>116</sup> Richard Barrett, 'Legitimacy, Credibility and Relevance: The Tools of Terrorists and Counter-Terrorist', in *After the War on Terror: Regional and Multilateral Perspectives on Counter-Terrorism Strategy* (London: Rusi books, 2009), 9–10.

by using the war-model or the judicial-model. Crelinsten explains that the main goal of the war model is to use maximum force to overpower and defeat the enemy.<sup>117</sup> Rineheart supplements Crelinsten's idea, adding that the war model is mostly a series of offensive operations where the military utilises hard power tactics such as drone and aerial bombings targeting the capabilities of terrorist organisations, i.e. military arsenals and training camps.<sup>118</sup> A significant element of this approach is decapitation, the killing or arresting the leaders and the top echelon of an organisation by using airstrikes, drone strikes, covert actions, and raids.<sup>119</sup> Decapitation is at the centre of AMISOM strategy in Somalia. Gompert and Gordon warn that lethal and destructive capabilities of the military if used ineffectively, will lessen sympathy and support for the government. The authors' advise governments to use force precisely and in proportion to the threat.<sup>120</sup> The judicial model is increasingly accepted as an essential element of counterterrorism, especially as the threat of transnational terrorism becomes increasingly evident. Countries and international and regional institutions like the UN and AU have adopted anti-terrorism legislation. Many of these laws have ambiguously defined terrorism and terrorist organisations, and criminalise terror-related actions such as recruiting and financing designated terror groups.<sup>121</sup> These anti-terrorism laws are also used to prosecute captured insurgents when they have been accused of committing terror attacks. Intelligence gathering is crucial for both the war and judicial models as it provides information regarding safe havens, key individuals and future attacks.<sup>122</sup>

Counterinsurgency is a population-centric approach aimed at winning the hearts and minds of the population. To this end, the operations stress the importance of creating rifts between the insurgents and the population.<sup>123</sup> Colleen Bell argues that COIN operations are distinct from CT in that the government understands that an insurgency problem cannot be solved with the military alone; it is necessary to look at the root causes.<sup>124</sup> Ucko adds that governments should use a mixture of military and non-military COIN strategies to lessen the chances of backlash from the public from heavy-handed responses.<sup>125</sup> In the case of Somalia, the COIN element of creating rifts between the insurgents and the

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<sup>117</sup> Ronald Crelinsten, 'Perspectives on Counterterrorism: From Stovepipes to a Comprehensive Approach', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 8, no. 1 (2014): 3–4.

<sup>118</sup> Jason Rineheart, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency', *Perspectives on Terrorism* 4, no. 5 (November 2010): 38.

<sup>119</sup> Solomon, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Africa: Fighting Insurgencies from Al-Shabaab, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram*, 10. Walter Enders and Todd Sandler, 'The Effectiveness of Antiterrorism Policies: A Vector-Autoregression- Intervention Analysis', *The American Political Science Review* 87, no. 4 (1993): 829, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2938817>.

<sup>120</sup> Gompert and Gordon, 'War by Other Means', 42.

<sup>121</sup> Samuel Makinda, 'Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Norms in Africa', *African Security Review* 15, no. 3 (2006): 28–29.

<sup>122</sup> For an in-depth understanding regarding the legal approach to counterterrorism, refer to: Ana Maria Sailinas de Frias, Katja Samuel, and Nigel White, eds., *Counterterrorism: International Law and Practices* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Jones and Libicki, 'How Terrorist Groups End'.

<sup>123</sup> Bell, 'Civilianising Warfare'; Jason Rineheart, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency'; Boyle, 'Do Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency Go Together?'

<sup>124</sup> Bell, 'Civilianising Warfare', 310.

<sup>125</sup> David Ucko, *The New Counterinsurgency Era: Transforming the US Military for Modern Wars* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 88.



population by instituting reforms is the responsibility of the Somali government, which is beyond the scope of this paper. AMISOM's primary COIN objective is conducting Clear, Hold and Build operations.<sup>126</sup> During the clearing phase, most militaries, including AMISOM, focus on recovery of strategic locations such as port cities, and towns with access to natural resources.<sup>127</sup> The liberation of cities is viewed as reinstating the legitimacy of the state., which Bo Rothstein argues is lost when segments of the population take up arms and challenge the state's authority.<sup>128</sup> Moreover, Lea Ypi argues that seizing territory from the state challenges the conceptualisation of a country's legitimacy because the exercise of political authority is dependent on exclusive territorial control.<sup>129</sup> After clearing territory of insurgent activity, the next step is to secure the newly acquired territory and then finishing with the re-building the political and economic structures that might have been removed or deteriorated under the insurgent rule.<sup>130</sup>

#### **4.2.2: Introduction to the evaluation of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations**

##### **4.2.2.1: Introduction to the body-count approach**

As stated in the literature review, there are some ambiguities in the fields of terrorism and insurgency. These ambiguities stretch into how CT and COIN are evaluated. There is no universally accepted method to determine the effectiveness of CT and COIN operations. As a result, various schools of thought have arisen to fill in the procedural void. The most favoured of these schools of thought is the body-count approach. Championed by governments, this method calls for the statistical analysis of CT indicators such as the number of incidents and casualties suffered, plots foiled, destruction of safe havens and training camps, leaders and members killed or arrested, disruption of recruitment flow or the amount of terrorist funding seized, and COIN indicators such as territorial gains.<sup>131</sup> As terrorism becomes transnational and partnerships between terrorist and insurgent groups grow, governments have also begun to look at the spread of terrorism into neighbouring countries as an indicator.<sup>132</sup>

Governments, scholars and institutions use the body-count approach because they believe that the indicators mentioned above will best explain the evolution and effectiveness of CT and COIN

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<sup>126</sup> Kilcullen, 'Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency'.

<sup>127</sup> Byman, 'Friends like These', 84.

<sup>128</sup> Bo Rothstein, 'Creating Political Legitimacy: Electoral Democracy Versus Quality of Government', *American Behavioural Scientist* 53, no. 3 (1 November 2009): 313, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764209338795>.

<sup>129</sup> Lea Ypi, 'Territorial Rights and Exclusion', *Philosophy Compass* 8, no. 3 (1 March 2013): 241.

<sup>130</sup> Kilcullen, 'Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency'.

<sup>131</sup> Daniel Byman, 'Scoring the War on Terrorism', *The National Interest*, no. 72 (2003): 75–84; Nadav Morag, 'Measuring Success in Coping with Terrorism: The Israeli Case', *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 28, no. 4 (2005): 307–20; Solomon, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Africa: Fighting Insurgencies from Al-Shabaab, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram*; Cronin, 'U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism'.

<sup>132</sup> Solomon, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Africa: Fighting Insurgencies from Al-Shabaab, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram*, 10–11.

operations over time. They argue the decrease in the numbers is a sign of the effectiveness of a policy.<sup>133</sup> Audrey Cronin observes that this approach is drawn from militaries and early terrorism scholars who used classical military measurements during war, i.e. territory gained, number of incident and casualties suffered, or leaders killed or arrested, to evaluate counterterrorism policies.<sup>134</sup> Nadav Morag maintains that this approach can give an overall picture regarding the success of terrorist activities.<sup>135</sup> Overall, the body-count approach rests on the assumption that these indicators will provide the best picture of whether or not a terrorist or insurgent group enjoys the freedom to operate.

The body-count approach is not without critics. Byman notes that body-count approach can be misleading since many of those who are killed or captured are usually low-level recruits who can be easily replaced. Moreover, he adds that this approach does not “reflect the impact on the adversary’s morale, recruitment, fundraising, and residual ability to conduct sophisticated attacks.”<sup>136</sup> He concludes that this approach should not be used as the only and concrete measure of success and failure of counterterrorism policies. Morag challenges the notion of victory in the body-count school of thought, stating that the concept of victory is not the same in terrorism as it is in war. For starters, with war, it is easier to determine the hostile army, and for the most part, there is sufficient knowledge, due to intelligence, about their military capability. This is not the case with terrorism and insurgency; terrorists and insurgents do not have clear uniform and insignias (other than flags) to distinguish themselves from non-combatants. Additionally, it is not always obvious who exactly the threat is or if they have been fully neutralised. Also, gathering information about the groups is significantly harder than with a hostile nation. Therefore, focusing on destruction and damage of resources of economic and military importance, infrastructure and reclaiming territory is not enough information to inform whether the threat of terrorism or insurgency has been neutralised.<sup>137</sup> Barrett criticises the use of decapitation as a measure of victory, maintaining that these authors assume that the “more terrorists killed or incarcerated, the fewer will remain the cause of concern.”<sup>138</sup> This assumption goes back to the point stated earlier by Byman that most of the captured and killed are usually low-level recruits who can be replaced easily. Cronin agrees with Barrett, adding that terrorist groups like al-Qaida are still able to carry out terrorist attacks even when they appear weakened by counterterrorism operations.<sup>139</sup> Finally, Raphael Perl argues that purely body-account approach does not consider unintended consequences of CT and COIN operations such as radicalisation. He also states that this method propels the

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<sup>133</sup> Alexander Spencer, ‘The Problems of Evaluating Counter-Terrorism’, *UNISCI Discussion Papers 12* (2006): 185.

<sup>134</sup> Cronin, ‘U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism’, 194.

<sup>135</sup> Morag, ‘Measuring Success in Coping with Terrorism: The Israeli Case’, 310.

<sup>136</sup> Byman, ‘Scoring the War on Terrorism’, 76.

<sup>137</sup> Morag, ‘Measuring Success in Coping with Terrorism: The Israeli Case’, 307.

<sup>138</sup> Barrett, ‘Legitimacy, Credibility and Relevance: The Tools of Terrorists and Counter-Terrorist’, 10.

<sup>139</sup> Cronin, ‘U.S. Grand Strategy and Counterterrorism’, 194.

misconception that increasing military expenditures assists with the progress of the mission, which is not necessarily the case.<sup>140</sup>

#### **4.2.2.2: AMISOM's measure of success**

PSC and UN reports, press releases, and communiqués discuss AMISOM's perceived successes and challenges. The perceived successes are measured by whether AMISOM has achieved its primary objective: to increase the security and peace in Somalia by combating all insurgent and terrorist groups including al-Shabaab. These primary sources do not explain how the success is measured. However, an overview of these published documents shows that AMISOM uses the body-count approach to measure their success. These reports mention the number of recaptured towns and cities, number of leaders and top echelon killed by American and AMISOM targeted airstrikes and drone strikes or arrested, increases in troop strength, number of foiled attacks, and the increase or decrease in the number of casualties and attacks. Some of the documents discuss the AMISOM's success in restricting al-Shabaab's freedom to operate, but they have not mentioned how came to this conclusion. This paper assumes that this analysis is based on the body-count approach; the increase and decrease of the data are equated to the success or failure of the operations.

#### **4.2.2.3: How is this dissertation going to evaluate CT and COIN operations?**

Due to the lack of a unified method to evaluate CT and COIN strategies, this paper will follow the guidance of authors such as Nadav Morag, Alexander Spencer and Teun Van Dongen who advocate for the contextualisation of the body-account approach. One of the major problems of the body-count approach is that it assumes that the increase or decrease of the figures are a direct result of the counterinsurgents' actions. The contextualisation of the body-count approach calls for the factoring of operations and tactics employed by both the counterinsurgents and the threat (insurgents or terrorists). The authors mentioned above argue that the increase and decrease in numbers is not always an indicator of the success or failure of CT and COIN operations.<sup>141</sup> These authors claim that the Dongen explains that there are at least two possible reasons for the increase in the number of attacks; 1) a group trying to send a message to its members and the government about their perceived strength, and 2) to increase radicalisation.<sup>142</sup> Spencer insists that a decrease in attacks can be a result of the group's decision to shift its resources to other activities such as recruitment and increase their military capabilities.<sup>143</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>140</sup> Raphael Perl, 'Combating Terrorism: The Challenge of Measuring Effectiveness' (Washington DC: Congressional Research Report, 12 March 2007), 3–5.

<sup>141</sup> Teun van Dongen, 'Break It Down: An Alternative Approach to Measuring Effectiveness in Counterterrorism' (Berlin: Economics of Security, 2009), 3, [http://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw\\_01.c.354161.de/diw\\_econsec0023.pdf](http://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw_01.c.354161.de/diw_econsec0023.pdf); Spencer, 'The Problems of Evaluating Counter-Terrorism', 185–86. Morag, 'Measuring Success in Coping with Terrorism: The Israeli Case'.

<sup>142</sup> Dongen, 'Break It Down: An Alternative Approach to Measuring Effectiveness in Counterterrorism', 3–4.

<sup>143</sup> Spencer, 'The Problems of Evaluating Counter-Terrorism', 185–86.

Morag notes that the decrease in the number of attacks could be a result of a change in tactics due to the ever-evolving conflict environment.<sup>144</sup> Dongen reminds governments and policymakers that the increase of casualties, based on existing research, is a sign of weakness of a group since they most likely have changed from hard to soft targets which increases the chances of having a devastating attack.<sup>145</sup> In the same way that an increase in casualties does not mean failure of CT or COIN operations, the decrease in the frequency of attacks or casualties does not equate to success or effectiveness. Dongen and Spencer assert that the decreases can be a result of the group trying to save its resources for a bigger and more advanced attack(s). Additionally, the decrease can be a result of the group trying not to agitate its support base and potential supporters with devastating attacks. These groups rely on the active and passive support of the public, and too many high-casualty attacks will challenge their legitimacy.<sup>146</sup>

This dissertation contextualises of the data provided by GTD, UN and AU reports and other scholarly works to explain the impact of COIN and CT operations by AMISOM, supported by the US military, on al-Shabaab's ability to conduct attacks in Somalia and the region. This approach will provide a better image of why the number and frequency of attacks, as well as sum of casualties, has been steadily increasing since AMISOM's deployment in 2007. Additionally, this approach considers the evolution of the conflict environment, i.e. the increased or decreased capabilities and change of tactics by both the government and al-Shabaab to explain the increase or decrease in the number and frequency of attacks and casualties. Furthermore, this paper examines how AMISOM's decisions impacted the progress of the mission. Therefore, contextualisation informs the fluctuation of data as a result of AMISOM's operations, decisions and implementation of those military operations and al-Shabaab's change of tactics and strategy. Also, this method of analysis challenges the presumed successes claimed by AMISOM and their allies.

### **4.3: Section two: Analysis of CT and COIN operations by AMISOM**

#### **4.3.1: Phase one (January 2007- 10 July 2010)**

##### **4.3.1.1: AMISOM's structure and CT and COIN operations during the first phase**

As stated in the introduction chapter, by the time AU and UN-authorized AMISOM in February 2007, the ENDF, with the support of the US, had dethroned the UIC in December 2006. Following this event, al-Shabaab moved its operations to Southern Somalia. Although the UIC had been defeated, the ENDF could not assist the TFG to move its operations from Baidoa to Mogadishu. Similarly to the fall of General Barre, the fall of the UIC caused a power struggle in Mogadishu among the warlords and militias who had gained significant power since 1991.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Morag, 'Measuring Success in Coping with Terrorism: The Israeli Case', 310–11.

<sup>145</sup> Dongen, 'Break It Down: An Alternative Approach to Measuring Effectiveness in Counterterrorism', 5.

<sup>146</sup> Dongen, 3–4; Spencer, 'The Problems of Evaluating Counter-Terrorism', 185–86.

<sup>147</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia Dated 28 February 2007' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 28 February 2007).

As a peace-support mission, AMISOM troops could not engage militarily with any non-state actor such as al-Shabaab unless in self-defence. As a result, the troops were limited to conducting defensive COIN operations.<sup>148</sup> This included the protection of vital installations such as airports, seaports, federal buildings and the presidential palace in Mogadishu which were under constant attacks from terrorist and insurgent groups.<sup>149</sup> In addition, AMISOM acted as a mediator between the TFG and other non-state actors who wanted to join forces with the government such as Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPCT),<sup>150</sup> Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ),<sup>151</sup> and Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS). Additionally, the coalition forces monitored and verified the terms of the ceasefire after the success of the peace negotiations.<sup>152</sup>

From the very beginning of the mission, the US military offered to assist AMISOM with CT operations as part of their 'War on Terror.' Since the US was uninterested in sending boots on the ground, they conducted airstrikes targeting top leaders and echelon of al-Shabaab. A year after AMISOM deployed its first troops to Somalia, US airstrike killed Aden Hashi Ayro, then Emir or leader of the al-Shabaab, which ushered the reign of Godane.<sup>153</sup> Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, a senior commander of al-Qaida East Africa division and al-Shabaab commander, was killed during a US special forces raid in Baraawe in 2009.<sup>154</sup> The military pressure caused two senior al-Shabaab operatives, Ali Hassan Gheddi and Mohamed Faruq, as well as 500-foot soldiers, to defected to SAF and AMISOM forces.<sup>155</sup>

#### **4.3.1.2: Analysis of COIN and CT operations**

AMISOM's lack of progress during the first phase was limited was a direct consequence of the weak mandate. The peace-support classification was not ideal for the conflict environment since troops cannot enforce peace when there is no peace to keep.<sup>156</sup> In fact, Cilliers, Boshoff and Aboagye claim it is unreasonable to think that AMISOM could achieve substantial gains with a weak mandate.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> 'Communique of the 69th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council' (Addis Ababa: Peace and Security Council, 19 January 2007); 'Letter Dated 19 December 2008 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 19 December 2008); 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 7 November 2007' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 7 November 2007).

<sup>149</sup> 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1872 (2009) Dated 2nd October 2009' (United Nations Security Council, 2 October 2009), 4.

<sup>150</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 7 November 2007', 4.

<sup>151</sup> 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1872 (2009) Dated 2nd October 2009', 2.

<sup>152</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia Dated 17 November 2008' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 17 November 2008), 2–3.

<sup>153</sup> Roggio and Elkaim, 'Weekend Attacks in Somalia Deal Shabaab a Double Blow'.

<sup>154</sup> Jeffrey Gettleman and Eric Schmitt, 'U.S. Kills Top Qaeda Militant in Southern Somalia', *The New York Times*, 14 September 2009, sec. Africa, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/africa/15raid.html>.

<sup>155</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia Dated 8 January 2010', 1.

<sup>156</sup> Isabel Dusterhöft and Antonia Gerlach, 'The Successes and Failures of the Interventions of the European Union, the African Union and Neighbouring Powers in Somalia', *Sicherheit Und Frieden (S+F) / Security and Peace* 31, no. 1 (2013): 20.

<sup>157</sup> Jakkie Cilliers, Henri Boshoff, and Festus Aboagye, 'Somalia: The Intervention Dilemma' (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2010), <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/No20Aug2010Somalia.pdf>.

Available research indicates immediate military pressure on an infant terrorist group is crucial as they are more susceptible to CT and COIN operations. As a matter of fact, 90% of terrorist groups do not survive past the first year. Of those who survive past the first year, more than half of them will collapse during the first decade of their existence.<sup>158</sup> Jenna Jordan's research shows that, although decapitation is ineffective as a long-term strategy, younger groups are more susceptible to the policy.<sup>159</sup> The longer the terrorist group survives, the harder it becomes to defeat the organisation since they have created solid roots in the community.

AMISOM's lack of sufficient troop strength contributed to the lack of progress during the first phase. The mission anticipated that Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) would donate nine infantry battalions composed of 850 troops each and another 350 personnel, who would be part of the civilian component of the mission.<sup>160</sup> While operating at a capacity of 65% by the end of the first phase, the coalition forces could not effectively protect the intended infrastructure while also protecting themselves and government officials from attacks from al-Shabaab and other militants.<sup>161</sup> ENDF's decision to withdraw its forces by the end of 2009 added pressure on AMISOM. ENDF was the only force conducting military operations aimed at stopping the progress of militant groups. Consequent to ENDF's departure, many of the areas under their control such as Beledweyne, Baidoa, Kismayo, Hudur and parts of Mogadishu district fell into the hands of al-Shabaab and other clan and religious militias.<sup>162</sup> According to a UN report, the areas that fell into al-Shabaab hands were done peacefully through negotiation with clans.<sup>163</sup> The alliances forged between militias and the government during this phase provided temporary relief because they assisted AMISOM and the Somali Armed Forces (SAF) with the protection of checkpoints.<sup>164</sup> Despite the limitations, AMISOM's efforts allowed TFG to move all its operations from Baidoa to Mogadishu.<sup>165</sup> Once the capital city was fully secured, AMISOM anticipated to gradually extend the authority of the TFG to other parts of the country.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Audrey Cronin, 'How Al-Qaida Ends', 13.

<sup>159</sup> Jenna Jordan, 'When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation', *Security Studies* 18, no. 1 (2009): 734.

<sup>160</sup> 'Communique of the 69th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council', 2–3.

<sup>161</sup> 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1872 (2009) Dated 2nd October 2009', 10. AMISOM hoped that TCCs would contribute 8000 troops by the end of the first phase. By the beginning of the second phase, only 65% of the needed troop strength were deployed to Mogadishu with Burundi and Uganda supplying troops.

<sup>162</sup> Seth Jones, Andrew Liepman, and Nathan Chandler, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia' (Santa Monica: RAND, 2016), 18.

<sup>163</sup> 'Report of the Secretary General on the Situation in Somalia Dated 09 March 2009' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 9 March 2009), 3.

<sup>164</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia Dated 17 November 2008', 2–3. AMISOM's role in the peace agreement negotiations between the government and ARPCT, ASWJ, and ARS was to monitor and verify the terms of the ceasefire, as well as protection of VIPs.

<sup>165</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia Dated 14 March 2008' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 14 March 2008), 3.

<sup>166</sup> 'Special Report of the Secretary General on Somalia Dated 31 January 2012' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 31 January 2012).

	Government (Diplomatic and General)	Military	Police	Private Citizens and property	Terrorist organisation and non-state actors	Other	Grand total
<b>2007</b>		5					<b>5</b>
<b>2008</b>	12		1	4	2	4	<b>23</b>
<b>2009</b>	23		4	12	5	11	<b>55</b>
<b>2010</b>	6	2		4		12	<b>24</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>107</b>

Figure 1: Number of attacks conducted by al-Shabaab during phase one (Source: Global Terrorism Database)

#### **4.3.1.3: al-Shabaab’s transformation into an insurgency**

The lack of offensive military operations provided al-Shabaab with the necessary environment to rebrand themselves and solidify their support base in Somalia. While transforming from a terrorist group to an insurgency, al-Shabaab dedicated its resources to attracting followers with a compelling cause. al-Shabaab rebranded themselves into an Islamic and nationalistic group. Unlike their predecessor UIC, they believed in the strict observance of the Quran and interpretation of the Sharia laws. The Somali group claimed that the Somali Muslim community was under attack from “the foreign Christian occupation” i.e. AMISOM. This narrative justified the resistance to many Somalis and other Muslims who joined the fight. al-Shabaab welcomed foreign fighters into its ranks without any conditions, unlike the UIC who wanted to a uniquely Somali struggle.<sup>167</sup> Based on a 2012 PSC report, al-Shabaab has between 1000 and 1500 foreign fighters at their disposal.<sup>168</sup> To appeal to nationalists in Somalia, al-Shabaab pushed the anti-Ethiopian agenda, driven by the presence of Ethiopian troops in Mogadishu after the defeat of UIC.<sup>169</sup> Many Somalis consider the ENDF as an occupation and illegitimate force.<sup>170</sup> Additionally, al-Shabaab promised to reunify the Somali people under one flag, an idea that many Somalis, including previous Somali governments, desired.<sup>171</sup> To al-Shabaab’s credit, available research states that religious and nationalistic groups are the hardest to counter and have longer life spans because they can attract the largest support from the population.<sup>172</sup>

With a noteworthy cause, al-Shabaab focused on the solidification of the popular support in and out of Somalia. As stated in the literature review, the success of an insurgency rests on their relationship with the population. al-Shabaab dedicated their resources to strengthening their affiliation

<sup>167</sup> Marchal, ‘The Rise of a Jihadi Movement’, 16–17.

<sup>168</sup> ‘Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa’ (Addis Ababa: Peace and Security Council, 13 November 2012).

<sup>169</sup> Aisha Ahmad, ‘The Security Bazaar: Business Interests and Islamist Power in Civil War Somalia’, *International Security* 39, no. 3 (Winter 2014): 89–117.

<sup>170</sup> Marchal, ‘The Rise of a Jihadi Movement’, 17.

<sup>171</sup> Marchal, 17.

<sup>172</sup> Audrey Cronin, ‘How Al-Qaida Ends’, 13; Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, ‘Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia’, 36–37.

with inherited UIC and AIAI networks, i.e. clan and business connections. Since most of the top echelon and foot soldiers immediately joined the ranks,<sup>173</sup> the militant group enjoyed the freedom of movement in traditionally Hawiye and Rahanweyn clan-dominated areas mainly in Southern Somalia.<sup>174</sup> The close connection between members of a group based on a tight-knit social network like the clan and sub-clan should not be understated; the bonds had existed before the individuals choose to engage in terrorism. Thus, the strong bonds facilitate solidarity, commitment, and cooperation, as well as reduce disagreements.<sup>175</sup> Outside Somalia, al-Shabaab urged the diasporic Somali community to fight against the invading forces by becoming foot soldiers, sending money or other resources.<sup>176</sup>

While al-Shabaab dedicated their resources to strengthen their cause and popular support, the group utilised terrorism to propel their cause. al-Shabaab used terrorism to demonstrate to the Somali government and AMISOM forces their ability to challenge their authority. The militant group was confident in their ability to defeat the TFG since they had defeated them before the ENDF came to the government's defence in 2006. As figure 1 demonstrates, al-Shabaab predominantly targeted military/police,<sup>177</sup> and government-related posts,<sup>178</sup> like a traditional insurgency. As illustrated in figure 2, 45 percent of the fatalities recorded by GTD was a result of al-Shabaab attacks against those targets. The worst attack came in October 2008 when they coordinated car bombings in Somaliland and Puntland targeting the Ethiopian Consulate, UNDP and the Presidential palace in Somaliland. This devastating attack resulted in the death of more than 30 people.<sup>179</sup> Although AMISOM was not the initial target during this phase, they suffered casualties including attacks at the AMISOM's headquarter in Mogadishu and an AMISOM-contracted supply company that killed 20 people.<sup>180</sup> Regardless of the fact that al-Shabaab mainly targeted traditionally-insurgent targets, most of the casualties were civilians.

al-Shabaab also used terrorism to advertise their cause to the public by demonstrating illustrate their ability to potentially defeat the AMISOM-backed TFG. During the first phase, al-Shabaab's attack on soft targets resulted in few casualties unless government officials are present. One of these instances

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<sup>173</sup> Atwan, *After Bin Laden: Al Qaeda, the Next Generation*, 120.

<sup>174</sup> For more information about the clan partnerships with al-Shabaab, refer to Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia'; Graham Turbiville, Josh Meservey, and James Forest, 'Countering the Al-Shabaab Insurgency in Somalia - Lessons for US Special Operations Forces' (Tampa, Florida: Joint Special Operations University, February 2014), [http://www.jamesforest.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/al\\_Shabaab\\_Feb\\_2014\\_small.pdf](http://www.jamesforest.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/al_Shabaab_Feb_2014_small.pdf).

<sup>175</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

<sup>176</sup> 'Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa'.

<sup>177</sup> Based on GTD codebook, military posts include bases, units, patrols, barracks, aircrafts, recruiting sites, and convoys. Attacks on AMISOM troops and structures are incorporated into this code. Police posts includes police boxes, patrols, headquarters, academies, vehicles, checkpoints, jails or prison facilities, and jail or prison staff or guards.

<sup>178</sup> Based on the GTD codebook, government posts include general and diplomatic posts such as government buildings including consulates and embassies, government-sponsored institutions and events, civil servants, and UN agencies

<sup>179</sup> 'Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia Dated 22 December 2008' (Addis Ababa: Peace and Security Council, 22 December 2008), 8.

<sup>180</sup> 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1872 (2009) Dated 2nd October 2009', 4.



occurred at medical school graduation ceremony in Mogadishu where a suicide bomber killed three cabinet ministers and sixteen civilians.<sup>181</sup>

	Sum of Fatalities				Total Sum of Fatalities	Sum of Injured				Total Sum of Injured
	2007	2008	2009	2010		2007	2008	2009	2010	
<b>Government (Diplomatic and General)</b>		58	71	17	146		64	60	27	151
<b>Military</b>	35			7	42	40			8	48
<b>Police</b>			6		6			15		15
<b>Private Citizens &amp; Property</b>		1	59	1	61		1	292		293
<b>Other</b>		53	104	12	169		45	18	4	67
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>39d</b>	<b>574</b>

Figure 2: Sum of casualties due to al-Shabaab attacks during phase one (Source: Global Terrorism Database)

### **4.3.2: Phase two (11 July 2010 – May 2012)**

#### **4.3.2.1: Lessons from phase one and the change in AMISOM’s structure and strategy in phase two**

The second phase of AMISOM begun after the devastating twin bombings by al-Shabaab in Kampala on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2010. This attack, which was the group’s first major attack outside Somalia,<sup>182</sup> resulted in the deaths of 76 people. This attack came two days after Godane issued a fatwa, or religious edict, declaring jihad against TCCs.<sup>183</sup> The twin bombings forced AMISOM to re-strategise their plan in Somalia. It became evident at the beginning of this phase that al-Shabaab's capability to conduct lethal attacks had increased significantly during the first phase. For this reason, AMISOM’s strategy to defeat al-Shabaab relied on increased military offensives aimed at “liberation of cities”, decapitation and increased troop strength. To implement this formula, AMISOM, with approval from the UNSC, became a peace enforcement mission with the right to carry out military operations.<sup>184</sup>

#### **4.3.2.2: Liberation of cities**

A major part of the AMISOM’s formula to reduce the threat of al-Shabaab revolved around the “liberation of cities.” By this time al-Shabaab controlled most of the major cities and towns in southern

<sup>181</sup> ‘Blast Kills 19 at Graduation Ceremony in Somalia’, *CNN*, 4 December 2009, <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/africa/12/03/somalia.attacks/>.

<sup>182</sup> Before this attack, according to GTD, al-Shabaab is suspected to have conducted eight attacks in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda. Most of these attacks did not result in casualties, hence, AMISOM had not taken the threat of al-Shabaab on TCCs too seriously.

<sup>183</sup> Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, ‘Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia’, 20.

<sup>184</sup> ‘Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 9 September 2010’ (New York: United Nations Security Council, 9 September 2010).

Somalia including Mogadishu, Marka, Baidoa and Kismayo. The importance of cities in conflict should not be underestimated; cities are symbolic and have leverage value. Cities, especially the capital city, are centres of political, military and economic powers.<sup>185</sup> This means whoever controls the capital city and other major cities in the country have access to critical infrastructures such as roads, electrical grid, telecommunications and transportation services, resources, and military and police protection.<sup>186</sup> Due to this, public goods and services originate from cities then transmitted to towns and villages. In other words, cities are symbols of national development, a reminder of the progress of the State.<sup>187</sup> This is especially the case in African countries where, due to colonialism, the capital city and few other cities were developed, therefore becoming the ultimate identity of the State. The rest of the country, by independence, was largely inaccessible hinterlands.<sup>188</sup>

For the reasons mentioned above, it was indicative for AMISOM to retake the capital city of Mogadishu and other major cities from al-Shabaab. The loss of cities to nonstate actors is one of the best indicators of state illegitimacy. al-Shabaab as a threat to state legitimacy and sovereignty differed from the past experiences. After the fall of Said Barre regime in 1991, factions and warlords controlled territory but it was mostly within clan and sub-clan context. al-Shabaab's ability to transcend clan and sub-clan identities allowed the group to control more territory than the transitional government. Additionally, most of the territory that the militant group acquired was done through negotiations rather than conquest. This is extremely problematic as it illustrates TFG's lack of legitimacy in Somalia; the clans and sub-clans preferred to be governed by al-Shabaab rather than the Somali government.<sup>189</sup> Putzel and Di John explain the absence of state function over time can easily result in the creation of alternative government(s) that possess "powerful sources of legitimacy to mobilise people in the violent struggle against the state."<sup>190</sup> In the case of Somalia, al-Shabaab, within the first phase, was able to gain a greater domestic legitimacy, demonstrated by their ability to spread their authority throughout Southern Somalia in a short time, than the TFG, who mostly enjoyed international legitimacy, and mobilise people in a violent insurgency. Therefore, without full control over territory, the Somali government cannot entirely or effectively police and control its borders.

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<sup>185</sup> Jo Beall, Tom Goodfellow, and Dennis Rodgers, 'Cities and Conflict in Fragile States in the Developing World', *Urban Studies* 50, no. 15 (2013): 3068.

<sup>186</sup> Beall, Goodfellow, and Rodgers, 3069.

<sup>187</sup> Jo Beall, 'Cities, Terrorism, and Development', *Journal of International Development* 18, no. 1 (2006): 108–9.

<sup>188</sup> Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 109–12.

<sup>189</sup> 'Report of the Secretary General on the Situation in Somalia Dated 09 March 2009'.

<sup>190</sup> J. Putzel and J. Di John, 'Meeting the Challenge of Crisis States' (London: Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2012), 15.

### **4.3.2.3: Decapitation**

The second element of AMISOM's new strategy is the use of decapitation, the cornerstone of the counterterrorism strategy, to eliminate the threat of al-Shabaab in Somalia and the neighbouring region. As stated earlier, decapitation is the arresting and/or killing of leaders and the top echelon of terrorist and insurgent groups. As stated in a previous sub-section, the US military had conducted airstrikes and raids that resulted in the deaths of top leaders including Aden Hashi Ayro. AMISOM hoped that during the second phase, they would acquire the military equipment that would ensure that their troops could conduct their own decapitation policy.<sup>191</sup>

The presumed success of the decapitation strategy rests on four basic assumptions. One, the approach assumes that the main leader and the top echelon of the group are essential to the progress of the group, i.e. the charismatic leadership argument.<sup>192</sup> Secondly, the strategy assumes that the leaders and top echelon are the most skilled members, therefore, hard to replace compared to foot soldiers. Thirdly, this policy implies the capture of the leader and top echelon will provide the government with valuable information that would prevent future attacks or can be admissible in court cases.<sup>193</sup> Finally, the policy assumes that decapitation has the potential of swaying members and sympathisers to rethink their involvement in terrorism.<sup>194</sup>

### **4.3.2.4: CT and COIN operations during the second phase**

With the mandate change, AMISOM desired to increase its troop strength to implement the new strategy. To be able to conduct both offensive and defensive military operations, AMISOM needed to increase the troop strength. As stated previously, AMISOM was operating with only 65% of the needed 8000 troops at the end of phase one. Once AMISOM reached 8000 troop strength by the end of 2010, a UN-approved resolution urged TCCs to donate 12,000 additional troops to reach the desired strength of 20,000. The new resolution called for ground, air and maritime troops and an increase of personnel in the civilian and police components.<sup>195</sup>

The primary objective of this phase was the "liberation" of Mogadishu from al-Shabaab and other insurgent and terrorist groups. The Battle of Mogadishu happened in two stages. The 2010 Battle of Mogadishu offensive ended in a military stalemate as AMISOM and SAF troops were unable to retake any neighbourhood from al-Shabaab or any other militias, who at this point were controlling 9

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<sup>191</sup> 'Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia Dated 13 September 2011' (Addis Ababa: Peace and Security Council, 13 September 2011).

<sup>192</sup> The best example of decapitation working after charismatic leadership were arrested or killed is Shining Path and Aum Shinrikyo. For more information about charismatic leadership argument of decapitation, refer to Jenna Jordan, 'When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation', 722–28.

<sup>193</sup> Jones and Libicki, 'How Terrorist Groups End', 61.

<sup>194</sup> Jones and Libicki, 25.

<sup>195</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 30 December 2010' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 30 December 2010), 11.

out of 16 districts in Mogadishu.<sup>196</sup> Following the disastrous operation, AMISOM troops attempted to recapture all the districts in final Battle for Mogadishu in 2011. By the time the new operation commenced, Djibouti had rehatted most of its forces as AMISOM troops. The increased troop strength proved to be beneficial<sup>197</sup> as the operation retook Wadnaha Road,<sup>198</sup> the symbolic Red Mosque, the Damanyo military camp, the former Italian Embassy, and the former Interior Ministry building.<sup>199</sup> By the end of the operation, TFG claimed to be in control of 13 out of the 16 districts in Mogadishu. The government was able to control many districts since al-Shabaab vacated from the districts they controlled without any confrontation<sup>200</sup> and moved its operations to Lower Jubbaland, near the Kenyan border.<sup>201</sup>

Three months after claiming that Mogadishu had been liberated, KDF, who had not officially joined AMISOM, conducted Operation Linda Nchi, which translates to operation Defend the Nation, in Southern Somalia.<sup>202</sup> The Kenyan government claimed that it was necessary to perform such operations since al-Shabaab posed a threat to its sovereignty as the group sustained small-scale attacks along the border towns of Mandera and Garissa which resulted in deaths of tens of Kenyans and the kidnapping of Kenyan and foreign nationals.<sup>203</sup> Two days after the operation began, the representatives of the two governments signed a letter of understanding detailing Kenya's 'remedial and pre-emptive actions' against al-Shabaab and TFG's support of the efforts.<sup>204</sup> The primary purpose of this operation was to create a 100 kilometres buffer zone deep inside the Jubbaland administration.<sup>205</sup> The joint

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<sup>196</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 9 September 2010', 3–4.

<sup>197</sup> 'Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia Dated 13 September 2011', 8–9.

<sup>198</sup> Wadnaha Road is an important southern supply route for al-Shabaab to move their goods in and out of the Baraka Market, Mogadishu's economic backbone. Taking control of the Wadnaha road was the first step to retaking the Baraka Market, an important source of revenue as it was the largest arms bazaar in the country. For more information, refer to 'AMISOM Makes Big Push in Mogadishu', AMISOM, 20 September 2011, <http://amisom-au.org/2011/09/amisom-makes-big-push-in-mogadishu-2/>.

<sup>199</sup> 'AMISOM Makes Big Push in Mogadishu'.

<sup>200</sup> Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia', 21.

<sup>201</sup> 'Letter Dated 17 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 18 October 2011).

<sup>202</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 9 December 2011' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 9 December 2011), 1. Operation Linda Inchi was not the first operation that the KDF conducted in Somali soil. According to UN reports, the KDF had conducted approximately four independent military excursions since the beginning of AMISOM. For more information, refer 'Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 11 July 2012).

<sup>203</sup> 'Letter Dated 17 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council'.

<sup>204</sup> 'Letter Dated 17 October 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council'.

<sup>205</sup> 'Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)', 225–26.

operations with KDF, SAF and AMISOM troops resulted in the recapture of major towns in Southern Somalia such as Afgoye, Baidoa, Ras Kamboni, and Afmadow.<sup>206</sup>

Although AMISOM had emphasised the importance of decapitation in their strategy, both the coalition forces could not prioritise CT operations. In AMISOM's defence, the TCCs, until the incorporation of KDF and ENDF in the third phase, did not possess the necessary military equipment to conduct aerial airstrikes. Therefore, the coalition forces relied on the US military to conduct most of the operations. Regardless, their combined efforts contributed to the death of al-Qaida leader in East Africa and a senior al-Shabaab commander, Fazul Abdallah Mohammed.<sup>207</sup> Additionally, two senior al-Shabaab operatives, Ali Hassan Gheddi and Mohamed Faruq, defected to Somali troops.<sup>208</sup> Also regarding counterterrorism, AMISOM police component, with the support of the Angolan Government, trained Somali police in criminal investigations, community policing, airport security, and counterterrorism procedures.<sup>209</sup> Moreover, AMISOM and SAF troops partook in IED-diffusion training which, in one year, reduced the casualties by 90 percent.<sup>210</sup>

#### **4.3.2.5: Al-Shabaab's response to the CT and COIN operations during the second phase**

During the second phase, al-Shabaab increased the number and lethality of attacks. As Figure 3 illustrates, approximately 47 percent of all attacks were due to attacks on military, police and government posts. In fact, 76 percent of all fatalities were a result of those attacks. The attacks included a suicide car bombing on a government security base in Mogadishu resulted in the death of at least 19 police officers,<sup>211</sup> and suicide bombing on an Ethiopian military base in Beledweyne.<sup>212</sup> Similar to the first phase, although the militant group targeted traditional insurgent targets, most of the casualties were civilian, with the worst incident occurring after a truck bombing outside the education ministry building killing 70+ students.<sup>213</sup> Al-Shabaab tripled the number of attacks on private citizens and property posts compared during the first phase.<sup>214</sup> The most deadly attack came as a result of a combined armed assault

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<sup>206</sup> 'Letter Dated 20 June 2012 from the Secretary General Addressed to the President of the Security Council' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 20 June 2012), 4–5.

<sup>207</sup> Bill Roggio, 'Al Qaeda's East Africa Chief Fazul Mohammed Killed in Somalia', *FDD's Long War Journal*, accessed 1 March 2017, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/06/al\\_qaedas\\_east\\_afric\\_1.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2011/06/al_qaedas_east_afric_1.php). Fazul Mohamed is suspected to be one of the masterminds behind the twin US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania and the November 2002 attacks in Mombasa.

<sup>208</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia Dated 8 January 2010', 1.

<sup>209</sup> 'Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia Dated 13 September 2011', 10.

<sup>210</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 30 December 2010', 13.

<sup>211</sup> 'Deadly Attack on Somali Police Base', *Al Jazeera English*, 21 February 2011, sec. World News, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/02/20112218123567948.html>.

<sup>212</sup> 'Somalia's Al-Shabab Attack Ethiopian Base in Beledweyne', *BBC News*, 24 January 2012, sec. Africa, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-16697879>.

<sup>213</sup> 'Somali's Al Shabaab Kills 70 in Mogadishu Bomb', *Reuters*, 4 October 2011, sec. World News, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-conflict-toll-idUSTRE79317Y20111004>.

<sup>214</sup> Based on GTD codebook, private citizens and property posts include markets, commercial streets, intersections, pedestrian malls.

and bombing attack at the Muna hotel in Mogadishu, a hotel visited by top government and foreign nationals, that resulted in the deaths of six MPs and twenty-four civilians.<sup>215</sup>

	<b>Government (Diplomatic and General)</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Police</b>	<b>Private Citizens and property</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Grand total</b>
<b>July 2010</b>	10	2		12	10	<b>34</b>
<b>2011</b>	15	15	4	71	23	<b>128</b>
<b>May 2012</b>	14	58	6	7	16	<b>100</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>263</b>

Figure 3: Number of attacks by al-Shabaab during phase two  
(Source: Global Terrorism Database)

In addition to maintaining their terror campaign, al-Shabaab actively sought to expand its influence both inside and outside the Somali borders by creating formal alliances with like-minded groups. On 10 January 2012, a formal agreement was established between the group and Al-Hijra or Muslim Youth Centre in Mombasa. Godane appointed Ahmed Iman Ali as the Emir of al-Shabaab in Kenya.<sup>216</sup> Almost a month later, al-Shabaab formally became an al-Qaida affiliate group on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2012.<sup>217</sup> Also in February, al-Shabaab strengthened its alliances with militias in semi-autonomous region, Puntland, with Yaasiin Khalid Osman as Emir of Golis Mountain.<sup>218</sup>

By the end of the final Battle for Mogadishu, al-Shabaab saw a need to re-evaluate their strategy against the Somali government and their allies. Direct confrontation with AMISOM troops proved too deadly for the militant group as they were militarily inferior. Defeating TFG in 2006 before the ENDF came to their rescue and the stalemate during the first Battle of Mogadishu in 2010 gave the insurgents the belief that they could defeat the coalition forces. AMISOM's ability to successfully retake most of the districts in the capital city during the first quarter of 2011 confirmed to al-Shabaab their inferiority. For this reason, al-Shabaab began fighting a guerrilla war rather than a conventional war.<sup>219</sup> As a war for the weak, guerilla warfare was a best-suited strategy for the insurgents as it provides the best way

<sup>215</sup> Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia', 20.

<sup>216</sup> 'Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)', 16.

<sup>217</sup> 'Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)', 16. For more information regarding the relationship between al-Qaida and al-Shabaab, refer to Shinn, 'Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia'; Atwan, *After Bin Laden: Al Qaeda, the Next Generation*; Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia'.

<sup>218</sup> 'Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)', 171.

<sup>219</sup> Guerrilla warfare, also known as a traditional insurgency, is a protracted "political-military campaign by nonstate actors seeking to overthrow a government or secede from a country using unconventional—and sometimes conventional—military strategies and tactics." Unconventional military strategies and tactics include hit and run tactics, and terrorism (the use of weapons such as IEDs, armed assaults, kidnappings, assassinations, and bombings). For more information, refer to Seth Jones, 'Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan' (Santa Monica: RAND, 2008), 1.

to use their limited resources to inflict maximum damages.<sup>220</sup> Ultimately, a guerrilla war is a war of attrition that forces the state to engage in a lengthy and costly war, especially if the insurgents continue to gain legitimacy.<sup>221</sup>

Additionally, by the end of the second phase, al-Shabaab needed to do a cost-benefit analysis to determine their willingness to control cities and towns. The militant group understood the cost of controlling territory. The importance of cities, as discussed in a previous sub-section, guaranteed AMISOM and SAF's desire to 'liberate' cities and towns from al-Shabaab. Although the case, al-Shabaab recognized the benefit of maintaining territorial sovereignty. For one, like the state, they benefit from the critical infrastructure in cities. Also, their ability to capture major cities demonstrates their strength to local and international audiences. Martin Shaw affirms that the capture of a capital city "remains the ultimate symbol of conquest and national survival."<sup>222</sup> In other words, the capture of the capital city is a prize of significance due to the implication of and access to resources.<sup>223</sup> By the end of the final Battle for Mogadishu al-Shabaab made the tactical decision to relinquish their territorial grip when directly confronted by AMISOM troops. This meant that the militant group would continue to expand its territorial gains, but would retreat when confronted directly by AMISOM troops, as they did during the last few weeks of the final Battle of Mogadishu. As they retreat, al-Shabaab would continue to conduct hit and run attacks aimed at stopping AMISOM's advances.

### **4.3.3: Phase three (June 2012 – December 2016)**

#### **4.3.3.1: Lessons from phase two and the changes in AMISOM's structure and strategy in phase three**

The success of the final Battle for Mogadishu and the liberation of other major cities in Southern Somalia during the second phase gave AMISOM the much-needed confidence that their COIN and CT operations have had a positive impact on Somalia. As a result, AMISOM began the third phase without re-evaluating their strategies. From their viewpoint, the increased troop strength due to the rehatted Djiboutian troops and deployment of additional Burundian and Ugandan troops, the sustained COIN and CT operations, and the additional pressure from KDF unilateral efforts led the achievement of AMISOM's stated objectives during the second phase. AMISOM interpreted the "liberation" of Mogadishu, al-Shabaab's most prized possession, as the beginning of the decline of the group. The troops' morale increased when KDF officially joined the coalition forces at the beginning of the third

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<sup>220</sup> 'Field Manual: Counterinsurgency Operations', 1–9.

<sup>221</sup> Jones and Johnston, 'The Future of Insurgency', 5.

<sup>222</sup> Martin Shaw, 'New Wars of the City: Relationships of "Urbicide" and "Genocide"', in *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 280.

<sup>223</sup> M. Llandau-Wells, 'Capital Cities in Civil Wars: The Locational Dimension of Sovereign Authority' (London: Crisis States Research Centre, London School of Economics and Political Science, 2008), 13.

phase. The integration of the KDF troops increased the troop strength to 17,709,<sup>224</sup> which was short of their 20,000-target.<sup>225</sup>

The objectives of the current phase reflected AMISOM's optimism and high morale. The main purpose of the current phase is the "liberation of cities and towns" that provide revenue to the militant group, i.e. port cities used for selling charcoal, sugar and other contraband.<sup>226</sup> The coalition forces believed that the CT and COIN operations would result in the defeat of al-Shabaab by the end of 2015. This benchmark was placed as a precursor to the first universal election in Somalia since 1969, scheduled for November 2016.<sup>227</sup> After the elections, AMISOM would assist with the consolidation process that would fully reinstate the FSG's power throughout Somalia. Following the five-years consolidation process, AMISOM would withdraw all its apparatuses in the country by the end of 2020.<sup>228</sup>

#### **4.3.3.2: CT and COIN operations during the third phase**

The first operation during the current phase was Operation Sledgehammer which sought to retake the port city of Kismayo, an al-Shabaab's stronghold suspected to be the primary source of revenue. To ensure the success of the operation, the ENDF briefly rejoined the conflict with an attempt to force the militant group to fight on multiple fronts. Since Kismayo is believed to be a major source of revenue, AMISOM expected al-Shabaab to fight ferociously to protect the city. Three days after the battle begun on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2012, al-Shabaab militants retreated from the city. This tactical decision by al-Shabaab allowed AMISOM to claim victory.<sup>229</sup> After the completion of the operation, Burundi deployed troops to areas captured by ENDF since they once again withdrew troops to the to Ethiopian-Somali border.<sup>230</sup> Unfortunately, the Burundian force could not hold all ENDF-occupied territory resulting in al-Shabaab recapturing Hudur town.<sup>231</sup>

Rather than engaging in offensive CT and COIN operations after retaking Kismayo from al-Shabaab, AMISOM focused on defensive COIN operations in 2013. These operations, which included daily raids and patrols, aimed to clear and secure all 'liberated' cities and towns of remnants of al-Shabaab. Also, the troops worked to reinstate the authority of the TFG, which had transformed into

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<sup>224</sup> 'Letter Dated 25 January 2013 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 25 January 2013), 5.

<sup>225</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 30 December 2010', 11.

<sup>226</sup> 'Letter Dated 25 January 2013 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council', 4.

<sup>227</sup> 'Letter Dated 5 March 2013 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 5 March 2013), 10.

<sup>228</sup> 'Letter Dated 5 March 2013 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council', 10–11.

<sup>229</sup> Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia', 43.

<sup>230</sup> 'Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)', 229–30.

<sup>231</sup> 'Letter Dated 21 June 2013 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 24 June 2013), 5.



FGS on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2012, in the newly acquired territory by mediating talks with clans and sub-clans.<sup>232</sup> Although the forces did not conduct major offensives, AMISOM captured Jawhar<sup>233</sup> and secured the last stretch of the main road from Mogadishu to Baidoa.<sup>234</sup>

The US military and KDF intensified their counterterrorism efforts in the last quarter of the 2013 and beginning of 2014. A mission to kill or capture Abdulkadir Mohamed Abdulkadir,<sup>235</sup> in Baraawe, an al-Shabaab stronghold, failed as al-Shabaab reinforcement fought vigorously against the US Navy seals causing them to retreat.<sup>236</sup> Later in the month, KDF forces conducted an aerial attack on al-Shabaab training camps in southern Somalia.<sup>237</sup> The US carried out another drone strike killing three senior al-Shabaab commanders including the top explosives expert, Ibrahim Ali Abdi.<sup>238</sup> On January 26, 2014, an airstrike resulted in the death of Sahal Iskudhuq, a high-ranking al-Shabaab Amniyat or intelligence commander.<sup>239</sup>

The increased AMISOM troop strength from the rehatted ENDF troops in January 2014 expedited the advancement of operations in Southern Somalia where al-Shabaab still enjoyed the freedom of movement. The increased troop strength assisted AMISOM to reach almost full capacity with 22,026 out of the 22,126-requested troops available for missions.<sup>240</sup> ENDF's first mission as part of AMISOM was the 20-day Operation Eagle, which began on 3<sup>rd</sup> March, which retook eight of the desired ten districts the Galguduud and Hiraan regions in Central Somalia including Xudur, and Ceel Buur.<sup>241</sup> Operation Indian Ocean, which began the end of August, aimed to "seize, secure and stabilise key districts along the coastline in all sectors." Within the two-month operation, AMISOM claimed to have captured Baraawe, a major al-Shabaab stronghold, and Jalalaqsi and secured the Beletweyne-Bulo

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<sup>232</sup> 'Letter Dated 20 June 2012 from the Secretary General Addressed to the President of the Security Council', 4–5.

<sup>233</sup> 'Letter Dated 25 January 2013 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council', 5.

<sup>234</sup> 'Letter Dated 21 June 2013 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council', 5.

<sup>235</sup> Abdulkadir Mohamed Abdulkadir is a Somali-Kenyan al-Shabaab commander accused of orchestrating number of attack in Somalia and Kenya. US believe he was sanctioned by al-Qaida leadership in Pakistan to perpetrate attacks in in Kenya in 2011 and 2012. He is suspected to be a close associate of Fazul Abdullah Mohammed and Saleh Naben, two individuals accused to have coordinated the twin US embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salam.

<sup>236</sup> Abdalle Ahmed and David Smith, 'How the US Raid on Al-Shabaab in Somalia Went Wrong', *The Guardian*, 9 October 2013, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/09/us-raid-al-shabaab-somalia-navy-seals>.

<sup>237</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 2 December 2013' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 2 December 2013), 3.

<sup>238</sup> Mike Pflanz, 'US Drone Strike in Somalia Killed Al-Shabaab "Chief Bomb-Maker"', *Telegraph*, 29 October 2013, sec. World, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/somalia/10412699/US-drone-strike-in-Somalia-killed-al-Shabaab-chief-bomb-maker.html>.

<sup>239</sup> Roggio and Elkaim, 'Weekend Attacks in Somalia Deal Shabaab a Double Blow'.

<sup>240</sup> 'Letter Dated 13 February 2014 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 13 February 2014), 5.

<sup>241</sup> 'Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia Dated 16 October 2014' (Addis Ababa: Peace and Security Council, 16 October 2014), 5.

Burto road which al-Shabaab had closed off to aid relief trucks.<sup>242</sup> AMISOM launched Operation Ocean Build in November designed to “enhancing stabilisation by holding key population centres and protecting their inhabitants and movements along the main supply routes.”<sup>243</sup> The seven-month operation resulted in the recapture of Kudhaa Island, with the support of the Interim Jubba Administration (IJA), from al-Shabaab.<sup>244</sup>

AMISOM and US military viewed their decapitation efforts during the last quarter of 2014 as successful. The group’s Emir, Godane, was killed in a US airstrike in Baraawe on 1<sup>st</sup> September during Operation Indian Ocean. Sheikh Ahmad Abu Ubeyda was subsequently named the new leader.<sup>245</sup> Operation Ocean Build resulted in the deaths of Intelligence Chief Tahlil Abdishakur,<sup>246</sup> Chief of External Operations Tahlil Yusuf Dheeq,<sup>247</sup> and Dheeq’s immediate successor and mastermind of the Westgate mall attack, Adan Garaar.<sup>248</sup> Zakariye Ahmed Ismail Hersi, the putative head of military intelligence, deflected to Somali troops, although he was able only to provide “outdated” and “background” information since he had been sidelined for a year before his defection.<sup>249</sup>

Operation Juba Corridor, whose objective was to “expel al-Shabaab from its last remaining strongholds in south-central Somalia,”<sup>250</sup> occurred in two stages. During the first stage, which began July 2015, AMISOM claimed to have “liberated” Diinsoor, the presumed al-Shabaab headquarters after the coalition troops retook Baraawe in October 2014 and Bardhere.<sup>251</sup> The second stage, which resumed in January 2016, resulted in the capture of towns such as Adan Yabal and Galcud.<sup>252</sup> AMISOM defended the city of Afgoye from an al-Shabaab-attempted takeover in which two senior AMISOM military officials were killed.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> ‘Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia Dated 16 October 2014’, 5.

<sup>243</sup> ‘Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 23 January 2015’ (New York: United Nations Security Council, 23 January 2015), 4.

<sup>244</sup> ‘Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 12 May 2015’ (New York: United Nations Security Council, 12 May 2015), 3. Al-Shabaab retook Kudhaa Island from AMISOM troops soon after Operation Indian Ocean completed. The island was a source of revenue for the group as it was used to transport charcoal to the Gulf countries.

<sup>245</sup> ‘Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Situation in Somalia Dated 16 October 2014’, 3–4.

<sup>246</sup> ‘US Strike in Somalia “Killed Al-Shabab Intelligence Chief”’, *BBC News*, 31 December 2014, sec. Africa, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30635240>.

<sup>247</sup> Abdi Sheikh, ‘U.S. Strike Kills Senior Shabaab Leader in Somalia: Government’, *Reuters*, 4 February 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-somalia-shabaab-idUSKBN0L81QJ20150204>.

<sup>248</sup> ‘Pentagon Confirms Death of Al-Shabaab Terrorist Adan Garar’, *Daily Nation*, 18 March 2015, <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Al-Shabaab-Adan-Garar-Drone-Strike-Somalia/-/1056/2658422/-/uu0o4w/-/index.html>.

<sup>249</sup> ‘Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2182 (2014): Somalia’ (New York: United Nations Security Council, 19 October 2015), 28.

<sup>250</sup> ‘Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 11 September 2015’ (New York: United Nations Security Council, 11 September 2015), 3.

<sup>251</sup> ‘Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2182 (2014): Somalia’, 12.

<sup>252</sup> ‘Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 9 May 2016’ (New York: United Nations Security Council, 9 May 2016), 3–4.

<sup>253</sup> ‘Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 9 January 2017’ (New York: United Nations Security Council, 9 January 2017), 3.

While AMISOM actively sought to retake territory from al-Shabaab, 2016 saw an astounding twist in which the troops vacated from some cities and towns, claiming tactical reasons. AMISOM vacated from its bases in Badhaadhe, and Bulo Guduud in January,<sup>254</sup> Garas Weyne in July,<sup>255</sup> Ceel Cali and Tayeeglow in September and October.<sup>256</sup> Al-Shabaab immediately took control of the towns after AMISOM troops left. Due to lack of payment of salaries, SAF evacuated from the port city of Marka, but AMISOM ensured that al-Shabaab did not retake the city.<sup>257</sup>

AMISOM and the US military continued to pursue decapitation as the driving force of their counterterrorism strategy in 2016. Hassan Ali Dhoore,<sup>258</sup> Mohamud Dulyadeyn, and Maalim Daud were killed.<sup>259</sup> In a night-time raid in one of the training camps, the US and Somali commandos captured an undisclosed number of high-value al-Shabaab militants.<sup>260</sup> Somali Special Forces (SSF) raided a suspected hideout in Central Somalia where senior al-Shabaab members were killed.<sup>261</sup> US airstrikes targeted al-Shabaab's Rasao training camp in Hiraan region,<sup>262</sup> and another camp near Kismayo,<sup>263</sup> where hundreds of foot-soldiers and some senior commanders were apparently killed.<sup>264</sup>

#### **4.3.3.3: al-Shabaab's response to CT and COIN operations during the third phase**

The third and current phase of AMISOM is al-Shabaab's most dangerous phase. This phenomenon is noted in Figure 4 where each year has become more violent than before. Between June 2012 and December 2016, the extremist group increased the number and lethality of the attacks. Figure 5 shows al-Shabaab continued to target mainly classical insurgent targets with approximately 87 percent of all attacks during this phase targeted government, military and police posts. The attacks resulted in the deaths of top government officials including Chief of the Somali Counterterrorism Unit of the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA),<sup>265</sup> Deputy Mayor of Mogadishu, Somali

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<sup>254</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 9 May 2016', 3–4.

<sup>255</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 6 September 2016' (New York: United Nations Security Council, 6 September 2016), 3.

<sup>256</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 9 January 2017', 3.

<sup>257</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 6 September 2016', 3.

<sup>258</sup> Dhoore is the the mastermind behind the Christmas day bombing at Mogadishu airport and the Maka al-Makarramah hotel bombing in 2015. Spencer Ackerman, 'US Drone Strike Kills Key Al-Shabaab Leader in Somalia', *The Guardian*, 1 April 2016, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/01/us-military-somalia-airstrike-al-shabaab-terrorist-targets>.

<sup>259</sup> Dulyadeyn is the architect of the Garissa University attack in Kenya and Daud is the head of al-Shabaab's intelligence hit squad. Euan McKirdy and Robyn Kriel, 'Mastermind of Kenya University Attack Killed', *CNN*, 2 June 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/06/02/africa/garissa-university-mastermind-killed/index.html>.

<sup>260</sup> Greg Botelho and Robyn Kriel, 'U.S., Somali Commandos Nab Valuable Al-Shabaab Figures, Spokesman Says', *CNN*, 10 March 2016, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/09/africa/somalia-al-shabaab-fighters-killed/index.html>.

<sup>261</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 6 September 2016', 3.

<sup>262</sup> Spencer Ackerman, 'US Airstrike on Al-Shabaab Training Camp in Somalia Kills 150', *The Guardian*, 7 March 2016, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/07/us-airstrike-al-shabaab-camp-somalia-drone>.

<sup>263</sup> Barbara Starr and Jason Hanna, 'U.S. Airstrikes Hit Al-Shabaab Camp', *CNN*, accessed 13 July 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/12/africa/somalia-us-airstrikes/index.html>.

<sup>264</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 9 May 2016', 3–4.

<sup>265</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 23 January 2015', 3.

Ambassador to Switzerland, and Somali Permanent Representative to the UN office in Geneva.<sup>266</sup>

Similar to previous phases, most of the 5000 deaths were civilians.

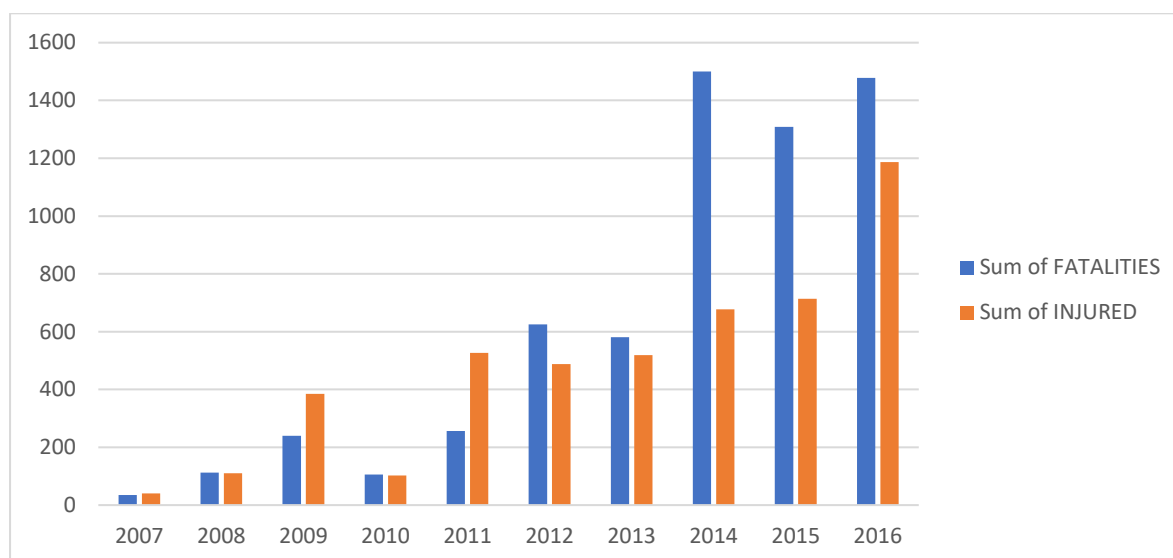


Figure 4: A graph illustrating the rise in the lethality of attacks by al-Shabaab (2007-2016) (Source: Global Terrorism Database)

	<b>Government (Diplomatic and General)</b>	<b>Military</b>	<b>Police</b>	<b>Private Citizens and property</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Grand total</b>
<b>June 2012</b>	12	45	1	8	9	<b>75</b>
<b>2013</b>	41	146	15	36	40	<b>278</b>
<b>2014</b>	104	414	32	130	99	<b>779</b>
<b>2015</b>	64	160	20	48	35	<b>327</b>
<b>2016</b>	75	241	25	96	61	<b>498</b>
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>1006</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>1957</b>

Figure 5: Number of attacks by al-Shabaab during phase three (Source: Global Terrorism Database)

After al-Shabaab relinquished their control of Mogadishu in mid-2011, reports of infighting among the top echelon of the group began to merge. The first reported instance of infighting came as a result of the change of tactics that led to al-Shabaab vacating from Mogadishu. Within weeks of announcing changes, Mukhtar Robow, one of the original co-founders of al-Shabaab, believed that the fighters should not retreat from combat too quickly.<sup>267</sup> Other leaders thought the withdrawal of its troops from Mogadishu was a telling of Godane’s leadership. Robow and Ibrahim al-Afghani’s, another co-founder of al-Shabaab, were replaced by Mahad Warsame Qaley Karatey, a staunch loyalist, in the top

<sup>266</sup> ‘Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 12 May 2015’, 3.

<sup>267</sup> Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, ‘Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia’, 20–21.

Shura after they voiced their concerns about the new tactical changes. In addition to this change, he suspended top Shura meetings indefinitely.<sup>268</sup>

The second cited an instance of infighting came as a result of the rise in civilian casualties, especially during the Ramadan offensive, the group's response to Battle of Mogadishu in the second phase. The first criticism came from Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, a senior al-Qaida and al-Shabaab leader, who opposed shedding the blood of innocent Muslims, as a result of targeting soft targets.<sup>269</sup> A year later, Omar Hammami, the senior American commander known for his propaganda videos, echoed Robow and Fazul Mohammed's earlier concerns of unnecessary killing of civilians. His stance against Godane's tactics, as well against his strict Sharia interpretation and marginalisation of foreign fighters, led to his death in 2013.<sup>270</sup>

Infighting became a major concern that Ibrahim al-Afghani voiced his frustrations with the Godane's leadership in a letter to Ayman al-Zawahiri, then second-in-command of al-Qaida, where he asked for help. In the letter, he asked for the appointment of a new leader. Godane responded to the increased criticism with an open letter claiming that the opposition, who were attempting to create new factions, was making false claims. He also accused the opposition of sharing group secrets with enemies of Islam and shedding blood of innocent Muslims. Three days after he issued the open letter, al-Afghani, like Hammami, was killed by militants loyal to Godane.<sup>271</sup> The death of al-Afghani caused further division between Godane and Robow.<sup>272</sup> Without a doubt, infighting among the top echelon of al-Shabaab is a sign of weakness in the group. It is yet unclear the extent of the impact of the infighting on the group's operations.

#### **4.3.3.4: Analysis of the third phase**

Although the current phase is not finished, thus far, the third phase has demonstrated AMISOM's strategy and formula in Somalia has not achieved the intended objectives. This phase has further confirmed that increased CT and COIN operations and troop strength do not necessarily equate to defeat of al-Shabaab or their capacity to conduct attacks. UN officials have also voiced their dissatisfaction with the progress of the mission. Tété Antonio, the Permanent Observer of the AU to the UN, observed that despite AMISOM's gains, the militant group had demonstrated their "resilience and the capacity to adapt...[and] gather intelligence." He adds that the militant group's use of highly mobile units to conduct 'complex attacks' has successfully impeded AMISOM's efforts.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Matt Bryden, 'The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity' (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies Africa Program, February 2014), 3–4.

<sup>269</sup> Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia', 20–21.

<sup>270</sup> Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, 24.

<sup>271</sup> Bryden, 'The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity', 5.

<sup>272</sup> Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia', 26.

<sup>273</sup> United Nations Security Council, '7674th Meeting of the United Nations Security Council', Meeting Transcript (New York: United Nations Security Council, 19 April 2016).

This current phase illustrates the need for AMISOM to re-evaluate their implementation of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism strategy. Their efforts have not reduced the threat of al-Shabaab nor have they achieved the majority of the intended objectives. This study argues that the three principal problems with the implementation of AMISOM's current formula are: 1) the execution of the Clear, Hold and Build operations, 2) the use of decapitation, and 3) the over-militarization of the counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. AMISOM must recognise the need for a holistic COIN and CT approaches that find a balance between military, political and economic solutions. Additionally, the coalition forces must strive to provide security in Somalia so that Clear, Hold and Build phases of COIN operations can be conducted efficiently.

#### **4.3.3.3.1: The implementation of “Clear, Hold and Build” operations**

This dissertation argues that AMISOM's inability to reduce the threat of al-Shabaab lies in the implementation of “Clear, Hold and Build” operations. As discussed earlier, a “clear” operation is intended to remove all remnants of insurgent activities in a city. This is then followed by “hold and build” operations that aim to ensure that the territory is not reclaimed by the insurgents while building structures associated with governance and development. The focal point of AMISOM's COIN operations is the “liberation of cities”, which, in its essence, is a clearing operation. The coalition forces simplistically define “liberation of cities” as the dispersing of al-Shabaab fighters during operations. This basic understanding of clearing operations is called into question. For one, AMISOM's understanding of the “liberation of cities” assumes that military offensives are the sole or predominant reason that AMISOM has recaptured cities and towns in southern Somalia. As stated in previous subsections, al-Shabaab made the tactical decision during the second phase to relinquish territorial gains when directly confronted by AMISOM troops. This tactical change is verified by UN Monitoring Group reports where they claim that in most of the cases in which AMISOM has claimed to have scattered militant fighters, al-Shabaab tactically retreated instead of engaging directly with the troops.<sup>274</sup> Secondly, AMISOM's claim of the “liberation of cities” is challenged by the frequency of attacks in those cities, which will be in-depth later in the study. For a clearing operation to be considered successful, remnants of the insurgent activity should not be as high as it is in the Somali case.

AMISOM's oversimplification of the understanding of what clearing operations entail underestimates the significance of the use of terrorism in an urban setting by al-Shabaab. As stated earlier, as a result of the military offensives in the second phase, the militant group tactically chose to vacate from cities and town rather than directly engage with AMISOM troops due to their military might. This tactical decision is surprising since a critical element of an insurgent group, which

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<sup>274</sup> ‘Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)’; ‘Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2111 (2013): Somalia’; ‘Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2182 (2014): Somalia’.

differentiates it from a terrorist group, is that they seek to control territory. Although the case, the use of terrorism by insurgent groups such as al-Shabaab in cities is as significant and powerful as capturing the city itself. Stephen Graham explains cities have “long actually themselves been the explicit target for a wide range of deliberate, orchestrated, attacks” due to their political, economic and cultural importance.<sup>275</sup> Jo Beall adds, the attraction of attacking cities lies in the vulnerability of soft targets which are harder to defend compared to government and military posts.<sup>276</sup> She continues to say that the “degree of visibility” and the potential for “maximum impact” of devastating attacks encourages modern-day terrorists and insurgents to carry out attacks in cities. Such attacks guarantee media attention from both local and international sources.<sup>277</sup> As stated in the literature review, terrorism is a communication tool in which insurgents and terrorists use to get media attention. The media attention, which brings light to their cause, has the potential to attract new members and sympathisers. Therefore, attacks on soft targets is a suitable tactic since it will get media attention and provoke a heavy-handed response by the government which delegitimises them, like capturing a city. Furthermore, targeting soft targets in cities further taunts the government because the attacks spread fear and chaos in their city which calls into question the government’s ability to perform its primary task of the protection of its citizens. Timothy Luke concludes that “it takes very little to terrorise a city, a region and even an entire nation; with the right technology, you can scare many people.”<sup>278</sup>

The current phase of AMISOM exemplifies al-Shabaab’s reliance on terrorism, especially in recently ‘liberated cities and towns,’ is used to delegitimise the Somali government and AMISOM. The Somali extremist group is capitalising on fear and chaos to promulgate their cause. Although the use of fear to achieve a political cause is associated with terrorist groups, as described in the literature review, insurgent groups in Afghanistan and Iraq are capitalising on this tactic. Kilcullen observes that some insurgent groups in Iraq and Afghanistan who use terrorism to spread fear are not interested in governing or gaining control but rather to paralyse and fragment the state.<sup>279</sup> The overuse of terrorism by insurgent groups today is becoming a contributing factor to the ambiguities between terrorism and insurgency.

al-Shabaab’s delegitimising terror campaign focuses on increasing the number and lethality of attack in towns and cities that AMISOM claims to be “liberated.” In this phase alone, 43.8% of the attacks (859 attacks) during this phase were concentrated in four key cities (Mogadishu, Baidoa, Marka and Kismayo) that AMISOM claim to be ‘liberated.’ As stated throughout this chapter, al-Shabaab has continued to mainly target military, police and government posts, like with traditional insurgencies.

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<sup>275</sup> Stephen Graham, ‘Cities as Strategic Sites: Place Annihilation and Urban Geopolitics’, in *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 90.

<sup>276</sup> Beall, ‘Cities, Terrorism, and Development’, 108–10.

<sup>277</sup> Beall, 108–9.

<sup>278</sup> Timothy Luke, ‘Everyday Techniques as Extraordinary Threats: Urban Technostructures and Nonplaces in Terrorist Actions’, in *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 253–54.

<sup>279</sup> Kilcullen, ‘Counter-Insurgency Redux’, 115.

Their most lethal attacks during this phase have been on soft targets, although the primary target was still locations frequented by military and government officials.<sup>280</sup> These attacks include restaurant bombing in Beledweyne in which 13 soldiers and civilians were killed,<sup>281</sup> Jazeera Palace and Sahafi Hotel bombing that killed at least 15 people,<sup>282</sup> and Somali Youth League hotel and peace garden and Lido beach bombings where Abdullah Hussein Mohamud, a recently elected MP,<sup>283</sup> Mohamed Hamza, Minister for Environment,<sup>284</sup> are among the politicians killed.<sup>285</sup> Regardless, civilians bare the majority of the casualties.

AMISOM must refocus their strategy to counter the chaos and fear that al-Shabaab's terror campaigns have brought to Somalia. David Ucko argues that insecurity makes it impossible and politically meaningless to pursue governance, development and other 'build' activities,<sup>286</sup> which is the case in Somalia. From the beginning of the mission until today, AMISOM struggled to effectively spread the authority of the FGS to all corners of Somalia when insecurity is still a major problem in the country. Kilcullen explains that providing security is one of the three pillars of counterinsurgency and counterinsurgents must protect the population from attacks or intimidation from guerrillas, bandits, terrorists and other armed groups.<sup>287</sup> The protection of civilians is complicated by the fact that insurgents, including al-Shabaab, frequently assimilate into the community in order to conduct attacks. This makes it difficult to fully distinguish insurgents from non-combatants when removing remnants of insurgency in "liberated areas."

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<sup>280</sup> This trend by al-Shabaab of attacking soft targets to target military and government officials is not replicated in their attacks in Kenya and other neighbouring countries. Their most lethal attacks ever, Westgate Mall attack in 2013 that killed 67 people and the Garissa University attack in 2014 which killed 147 students, targeted civilians. For information about these attacks and other attacks outside Somalia, refer to 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 2 December 2013'; 'Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)'; Fred Mukinda, 'Government Names Mohamed Kuno as Garissa University College Attack', *Daily Nation*, 4 February 2015, <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Mohamed-Kuno-Garissa-College-attack-mastermind/-/1056/2674114/-/co6umw/-/index.html>.

<sup>281</sup> Kevin Rawlinson, 'Al-Shabaab Suicide Bomber Attacks Restaurant in Somalia', *The Guardian*, 19 October 2013, sec. World news, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/19/al-shabaab-suicide-bomber-restaurant-somalia>.

<sup>282</sup> Michael Pearson and Kevin Wang, 'Deadly Attack at Jazeera Palace Hotel in Mogadishu', *CNN*, 26 July 2015, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/26/africa/somalia-jazeera-hotel-attack/index.html>. 'Somalia: Al-Shabab Attack Kills 15 in Mogadishu Hotel', *BBC News*, 1 November 2015, sec. Africa, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34691602>.

<sup>283</sup> Robyn Kriel and Pat St. Claire, 'Somalia Parliament Member Assassinated by Al-Shabaab', *CNN*, 25 July 2015, sec. Africa, <http://www.cnn.com/2015/07/25/africa/somalia-member-of-parliament-killed-by-al-shabaab/index.html>.

<sup>284</sup> Abdulaziz Osman, 'Somali Minister Survives Assassination Attempt', *VOA*, 7 August 2016, Africa edition, <https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-minister-survives-assassination-attempt/3454726.html>.

<sup>285</sup> 'Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia Dated 9 May 2016', 3–4.

<sup>286</sup> David Ucko, 'Beyond Clear-Hold-Build: Rethinking Local-Level Counterinsurgency after Afghanistan', *Contemporary Security Policy* 34, no. 3 (2013): 533.

<sup>287</sup> Economic and political progress are the two other pillars of counterinsurgency. Kilcullen, 'Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency'.



Then, it is vital for the AMISOM to move from the “realm of major combat to the realm of law enforcement.”<sup>288</sup> In other words, AMISOM must improve their strategy so that they can move from the “realm of major combat” (clear operations) to the ‘realm of law enforcement’ (Hold operations). As structures associated with law enforcement is re-established, AMISOM and the FGS must “consolidate the control [established during the hold phase] and then transfer the control to permanent, effective and legitimate institutions [established during the build phase].”<sup>289</sup> Kilcullen advises counterinsurgent, like AMISOM, that their intent should not be to “reduce the violence to zero or to kill every insurgent, but rather to return the overall system to normality.”<sup>290</sup> Normalcy is the delivery of security to levels consistent with local expectation.<sup>291</sup> In other words, AMISOM should return to its original population-centric mandate which will assist the Somali government to address the root causes and grievances that have allowed groups such as al-Shabaab exist in the Somali context.

#### **4.3.3.3.2: The use of decapitation**

As stated previously, decapitation is the basis of AMISOM’s counterterrorism strategy from the second phase onwards. The strategy has managed to kill top al-Shabaab leaders including the first and second Emirs, Ayro and Godane, and one of the masterminds behind high profile attacks in Kenya, Adan Garaar. As stated earlier, the UN Monitoring Group report claimed that the death of Godae is a major blow to the extremist group. Despite the deaths or the defection of much of the top leadership, al-Shabaab has continued to conduct major lethal attacks in Somalia and the neighbouring countries.

The ineffectiveness or counterproductiveness of decapitation strategy is verified by many scholars. Cronin, Dongen and Jordan maintain that the killing of leaders can bring attention to the group’s cause which increased the likelihood of attracting sympathisers and new members. Additionally, this strategy increases the likelihood that a group will increase the number and lethality of attacks in the name of revenge or radicalisation.<sup>292</sup> Spencer adds that use of decapitation may lead to the decentralisation of the group which are generally harder to counter than hierarchical groups. This strategy could make the group become more resilience.<sup>293</sup> Robert Pape believes that the use of decapitation on groups that frequently use suicide campaigns can temporarily disrupt their activity, but it will not have a long-term effect.<sup>294</sup> Dongen and Spencer argue that the mass arrest of members might

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<sup>288</sup> Eliot Cohen et al., ‘Principles, Imperatives and Paradoxes of Counter Insurgency’, *Military Review* 86, no. 2 (2006): 51.

<sup>289</sup> Kilcullen, ‘Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency’.

<sup>290</sup> Kilcullen.

<sup>291</sup> Ucko, ‘Beyond Clear-Hold-Build: Rethinking Local-Level Counterinsurgency after Afghanistan’, 532–33.

<sup>292</sup> Audrey Cronin, ‘How Al-Qaida Ends’, 22; Dongen, ‘Break It Down: An Alternative Approach to Measuring Effectiveness in Counterterrorism’, 6–7; Jenna Jordan, ‘When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation’, 723.

<sup>293</sup> Spencer, ‘The Problems of Evaluating Counter-Terrorism’, 186.

<sup>294</sup> Robert Pape, ‘Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism’, *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 3 (2003): 356.

be counterproductive since they can be easily replaced, especially in large organisations.<sup>295</sup> Jordan, Cronin, and Dongen warn of the unintended consequences of decapitation. For one, decapitation can lead to the splintering of a group like in the case of Baader-Meinhof transforming to the Red Army Faction after the arrest and suicides of its two founders.<sup>296</sup> Jones, Liepman and Chandler conclude that this strategy is not sufficient by itself to defeat most terrorist and insurgent group but should be an element of the broader strategy.<sup>297</sup> Therefore, moving forward, AMISOM must re-consider whether they should dedicate their resources to a strategy that has been deemed ineffective or counterproductive by scholars. Hussien Solomon agrees, adding that the counterterrorism strategy in Somalia has proven to be counterproductive as it has not reduced the threat of al-Shabaab.<sup>298</sup>

#### **4.3.3.3: The over-militarization of CT and COIN operations**

This paper maintains that it is imperative that AMISOM re-evaluates the over-militarization of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. Although the original AMISOM mandate created three equal components (military, civilian and police), the military component is the biggest and most utilised. The most logical assumption for the prevalence of the military strategy is that the guiding hypothesis is that the military is the best solution or most effective solution to defeat al-Shabaab. This assumption is problematic since military-focused operations go against the guiding assumption of counterinsurgency operations which is that military alone cannot defeat the intended threat. Military-focused COIN operations tend to enemy-centric. As stated earlier, an enemy-centric approach, seen used by AMISOM, focuses on the destruction of military capability and killing and arresting of members of a terrorist or insurgent group. Additionally, enemy-centric approach leads to the assumption that the strategy can eliminate terrorism as a whole which is impossible; terrorism is a tactic that cannot be eradicated.<sup>299</sup> Statistically, military-focused operations do not have a high success rate. Jones and Libiski's research concludes that military force does not have a high rate of success. In fact, the strategy has a seven-percent and twenty-five percent success rate against terrorist and insurgent groups respectively.<sup>300</sup> Collin et al. concur with the study adding, insurgents have a higher chance of prevailing when pursued with an "iron fist" or enemy-centric approach rather than a motive-focused or a population-centric approach.<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Dongen, 'Break It Down: An Alternative Approach to Measuring Effectiveness in Counterterrorism', 6–7; Spencer, 'The Problems of Evaluating Counter-Terrorism', 186.

<sup>296</sup> Jenna Jordan, 'When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation', 732.

<sup>297</sup> Jones, Liepman, and Chandler, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency in Somalia', 50.

<sup>298</sup> Solomon, *Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Africa: Fighting Insurgencies from Al-Shabaab, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram*, 130.

<sup>299</sup> Jason Rineheart, 'Counterterrorism and Counterinsurgency', 40.

<sup>300</sup> Jones and Libiski, 'How Terrorist Groups End', 30–31.

<sup>301</sup> Christopher Paul et al., 'Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies' (Santa Monica: RAND, 2013).

As stated earlier, AMISOM was intended to be a population-centric multidimensional force balanced by three equal components, military, police, and civilian. As demonstrated in the previous sub-sections, the police and civilian components are still in their infancy stages, ten years later. They remain understaffed and underrepresented in the mission. In fact, AMISOM claims to have delayed the deployment of the police component to Mogadishu due to insecurity yet the military component had been operating in the capital city from the very beginning.<sup>302</sup> This example shows that the AMISOM's priority was the military over the other elements. Additionally, AMISOM reports stress the need to increase the military troop strength but not on the deployment of police officers and civilian personnel. Regarding the civilian component, the specifics regarding what the component is involved in still uncertain. An AMISOM report states that "there is little done to track and assess the contribution of the civilian component of mission goals."<sup>303</sup>

The concerns over the over-militarisation of AMISOM is addressed in a report detailing the lessons learnt in the past decade.<sup>304</sup> The report argues that the over-militarisation of AMISOM is a result of a lack of understanding and limited guidance on the multidimensional nature of the mission. AMISOM acknowledges the need to improve the military-police-civilian partnership.<sup>305</sup> This report exemplifies that the AMISOM does not regularly reflect on and evaluate the progress of the mission. The lack of evaluation and the modifying the strategy is critical to the growth of both COIN and CT operations, as this paper argues. Paul et al.'s research conclude that COIN operations that fail to adapt to the ever-changing conflict environment have a success rate of 28.2 percent.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> 'Report of the Secretary General on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1872 (2009) Dated 2nd October 2009', 10; 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Somalia Dated 8 January 2010', 11.

<sup>303</sup> 'Report on the Ten-Year AMISOM Lessons Learned Conference' (Nairobi: Peace Support Operations Division, Peace and Security Department African Union Commission, 9 March 2017), 17.

<sup>304</sup> 'Report on the Ten-Year AMISOM Lessons Learned Conference', 10.

<sup>305</sup> 'Report on the Ten-Year AMISOM Lessons Learned Conference', 10–11.

<sup>306</sup> Paul et al., 'Paths to Victory: Lessons from Modern Insurgencies', 135–36.

## **Chapter Five: Conclusion**

2017 marked the ten-year anniversary of the deployment of AMISOM troops to Somalia. As stated in the original mandate, the mission aimed to reduce the threat of insurgent and terrorist groups in the country who made it impossible for the TFG to operate. The mission was deemed important since past efforts, which began after the fall of Said Barre regime in 1991, to create a strong federal government had failed. At the inception of the mission in 2007, al-Shabaab had not gained the military significance it has today. To stop the rapid growth of al-Shabaab, a mandate change at the beginning of the second phase allowed AMISOM troops to conduct offensive CT and COIN operations. Before this, the coalition forces carried out defensive measures such as protection of key installations and government officials. The military offensives aimed to “liberate cities and towns” from al-Shabaab and decapitate or kill or capture top leadership.

Throughout the ten-year mission, AMISOM officials, TCCS and donor countries praise AMISOM troop successes in Somalia. The main objective of this study was to challenge the notion of success described in many official reports and communiques from the AU and UN. Although the reports do not specifically detail how they measure AMISOM’s success, an analysis of such reports indicate that the AU and UN use the body-count approach to determine the success rate of CT and COIN operations. The body-count approach calls for the statistical analysis of CT indicators (number of incidents and casualties suffered, plots foiled, destruction of safe havens and training camps, leaders and members killed or arrested, disruption of recruitment flow or the amount of terrorist funding seized) and COIN indicators (territorial gains). Some scholars have indicated that this approach is used alone as it is done by the AU and UN, does not accurately reflect the success or failure of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations.

Therefore, this dissertation aimed to fill the knowledge gap regarding the evaluation and analysis of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency policies in the African continent by analysing AMISOM’s ability to reduce the threat of al-Shabaab. This paper uses the contextualization of the body-count approach to analysing the CT and COIN operations. This approach calls for the factoring of operations and tactics employed by both the counterinsurgents and the threat (insurgents or terrorists) as reasoning for the decrease or increase of numbers. Body-count approach does not account for the actions of terrorists or insurgents as factors that contribute to the decrease or increase in numbers. As the paper has demonstrated, the conceptualisation of the body-count approach is the best approach to determine the factors that have contributed to the limited success by AMISOM in Somalia.

This dissertation asserts that by the time AMISOM evaluated their strategy and changed their mandate to allow for military CT and COIN operations at the beginning of the second phase, al-Shabaab had made significant progress to solidify their presence in Somalia. During the first phase when AMISOM was considered a peace-support mission, the militant group became a fully-fledged insurgent

organisation equipped with a mighty cause that incorporated the anti-Ethiopian sentiment, which was prevalent in Somalia prior to the deployment of AMISOM troops, and radical Islamic thought. Additionally, the militants made significant territorial gains which were either captured through conquest or negotiations with clans and sub-clans. In other words, this paper argues that the weak mandate and inadequate troop strength during the first phase provided the necessary environment for al-Shabaab to thrive in the organisation it is today.

With the ability to conduct military operations at the beginning of the second phase, AMISOM strategy emphasised the “liberation of cities and towns”, the cornerstone of their COIN operations, and decapitation, the cornerstone of their CT operations. By the end of this phase, AMISOM claimed to have “liberated” Mogadishu and other smaller cities and towns. A major mistake that AMISOM made going into the third phase was not realising the tactical changes made by al-Shabaab. The intense military pressure during the second phase forced the militant group to move away from direct confrontation with AMISOM troops to waging a guerrilla war. A major element of this new strategy called for the relinquishing of territorial gains when confronted by AMISOM. The implementation of this strategy was seen during the last few weeks of the final Battle for Mogadishu in 2011 when al-Shabaab fighters retreated from battles. Instead of controlling cities and towns, the extremist group focused on increasing the number and lethality of attacks. The intensified terror campaign allowed the group to continue to cause havoc and chaos in the newly “liberated cities and towns” without dedicating their limited resources to defend the city from AMISOM troops. The use of terrorism used by al-Shabaab after retreating from Mogadishu in 2011 is similar to how terrorist organisations operate. The change in the use of terrorism is not unique to the Somali extremist organisation but has been seen in Iraq and Afghanistan as well.

Ten years after the deployment of the first AMISOM troops to Somalia, AMISOM needs to re-evaluate the implementation and understanding of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations. As discussed in the fourth chapter, AMISOM must move away from an over-militarised, enemy-centric CT and COIN operations to a population-centric approach that seeks to assist the FGS to address root causes and grievances that allow for groups such as al-Shabaab to exist. Secondly, AMISOM must re-evaluate their conceptualisation of clearing cities of insurgent activities. As chapter four has demonstrated, the mere fact that al-Shabaab fighters have vacated from towns and cities does not mean that the city is cleared of insurgent activities. al-Shabaab made the tactical decision to increase the use of terrorism to supplement their inability to hold captured cities. The use of terrorism in “liberated towns and cities” allows al-Shabaab to; 1) spread fear and chaos, 2) illustrate the government and AMISOM’s inability to protect civilians from attacks and 3) their military strength. Like with most insurgencies, al-Shabaab is incorporating strategies that will ensure their survival. The group’s inability to modify their formula to reflect the ever-changing conflict environment handicaps not only AMISOM’s ability to implement “Hold and Build” operations but also undermines the legitimacy of the FGS and AMISOM. Thirdly, AMISOM must re-consider the use of decapitation since, despite the deaths of many top

leaders, the strategy has not shown to be successful. In conclusion, AMISOM and the Somali government must understand without a sense of security, it is close to impossible to sustain and implement lasting solutions in Somalia.

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