

## VOJENSKÁ INTERVENCE KENI V SOMÁLSKU: Deset let přeshraničních střetů a vzájemných bilaterálních vztahů

### KENYA'S MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA: Ten Years of Cross-Border Security Issues and Bilateral Relations

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#### Abstrakt

Případová studie se soustředí na posledních deset let vojenského angažmá Keni v Somálsku. Studie vychází z literatury a expertních rozhovorů s terénními výzkumníky a členy ozbrojených sil, které byly sesbírány přímo autorem. Analyzuje motivy pro intervenci, úspěchy a přešlapy, z nichž vyvozuje lekce, které intervence přinesla. Dekádu trvající intervence Keni se přetvořila do jednoho z pilířů posilování stability v regionu Afrického rohu. Vzhledem ke snižující se stabilitě regionu se nyní Keňa nachází v pozici, kdy je zodpovědná za budoucí stabilizační snahy, jakožto v současné době jediná stabilní země v regionu Rohu Afriky.

#### Abstract

The case study is focused on the last ten years of Kenyan military involvement in Somalia. It is based on literature review and expert interviews with field researchers and military members, which were conducted by the author. Through the analysis of motives for intervention, achievements, and mishaps, it examines lessons learned from the intervention. The decade long Kenya's intervention has evolved into one of the pillars of fostering the stability in the Horn of Africa. Located in this region, which is unstable, Kenya finds itself being responsible for future stabilizing efforts, as it is the only stable state left in the Horn of Africa at present days.

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### **Klíčová slova**

Roh Afriky; národní bezpečnost; protiteroristické operace; AMISOM; ATMIS; Keňa; Somálsko.

### **Keywords**

Horn of Africa; national security; counter-terrorist operations; AMISOM; ATMIS; Kenya; Somalia.

## INTRODUCTION: INTERVENTION WHICH LASTS MORE THAN TEN YEARS

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2011, Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) commenced *Operation Linda Nchi*,<sup>1</sup> thus intervening in neighbouring Somalia. Following July 2012, Kenya joined the ongoing African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM), where it was still active even ten years later from the beginning of *Operation Linda Nchi* until the mission's transformation into the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). KDF remains a part of ATMIS and there are no signs that KDF would withdraw its participation.

Somalia as a state has been in disarray since the fall of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. Fragmentated territory without central authority created opportunity for various malicious actors ranging from warlords and their militias, through pirate groups to Jihadi fighters, who successfully exploited the power vacuum in Somalia.

The situation became even worse due to drought-induced famine which forced many Somali citizens to flee the country. At the peak of this emigration, around 1,300 Somalis were crossing border into Kenya on daily basis, exceeding the designed capacity of the already established refugee camps.<sup>2</sup> The influx of refugees, instability (particularly in southern Somalia) and growing number of abduction cases of Kenyans and foreign nationals in near-border region by Al-Shabaab were amongst trigger points which led to *Operation Linda Nchi* on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2011.<sup>3</sup>

The Kenyan intervention was announced to Somali Transitional Federal Government (TGF) as well as to UN Security Council and is deemed just through the prism of right to self-defence by international law.<sup>4</sup> *Operation Linda Nchi* had clear military goals from the start, which had to be achieved, such as to reduce Al-Shabaab's capability to conduct strikes at Kenyan territory. KDF with support from Kenyan-trained Somali militias successfully seized the strategic port town of Kismayo, thus dealt a blow to Al-Shabaab's economic income from trade taxation.<sup>5</sup> Despite accomplishing the primary objective, Al-Shabaab was pushed out from Kismayo and its capability and income greatly reduced. Nevertheless, this was not a mortal blow for the Jihadi group, but a mere setback. Al-Shabaab adapted new strategies and continued to attack its perceived enemies. This is the new security reality that regional allies fighting Al-Shabaab have to contend with. Therefore, the armed group remains a relevant actor in the contemporary security conundrum in the Horn of Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> Meaning Protect the Nation in Swahili.

<sup>2</sup> WARNER, L. A. In Somalia, Kenya Risks Death by a Thousand Cuts. *PRISM* [online]. 2012, 3(3), 105-18 [cit. 2022-01-07]. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26469749>

<sup>3</sup> The 14<sup>th</sup> of October is the date when military operation begun. Kenyan public and international community were informed two days later on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October. ICHANI, Xavier Francis. *KENYA DEFENCE FORCES AND MILITARIZATION OF INTERNAL DISPUTES, 1963-2013*. 2019. Dissertation theses. Egerton University.

For the purpose of this article the beginning of intervention is the 14<sup>th</sup> of October.

<sup>4</sup> BIRKETT, D. J. The Legality of the 2011 Kenyan Invasion of Somalia and its Implications for the Jus Ad Bellum. *Journal of Conflict and Security Law* [online]. 2013, 18(3), 427-451 [cit. 2022-01-07]. ISSN 1467-7954. Available at: doi:10.1093/jcsl/krt014.

<sup>5</sup> ANDERSON, D. M. and J. MCKNIGHT. Kenya at war: Al-Shabaab and its enemies in Eastern Africa. *African Affairs* [online]. 2015, 114(454), 1-27 [cit. 2022-01-07]. ISSN 0001-9909. Available at: doi:10.1093/afraf/adu082.

Foreign interventions tend to have quick military achievements followed by continuous presence of the intervening forces shifting their activity toward more police roles and focus on CIMIC, which is also the case with KDF's presence in Somalia which lasts now for more than ten years. The first aim of this article is to examine more closely the variety of reasons behind Kenya's sole decision to intervene in Somalia unilaterally and then transform Kenyan engagement into a more multilateral approach under AMISOM. The second goal is to present examples of good and unsuccessful practices and thus outline lessons learned in this case. The third and final purpose of the article is to draw implication for further course of action taking into consideration the regional security situation, the external donor's fatigue in involving itself in prolonged conflicts and coming election in both Kenya and Somalia as well as current maritime dispute between those two countries.

The presented case study is focused on Kenya-Somali relations for the past ten years regarding security issues connected to Al-Shabaab's activities, which had a direct impact on Kenya. The researched timeframe is set from the beginning of *Operation Linda Nchi* until the AMISOM's transformation into ATMIS. Kenya's position is viewed through the prism of defensive realism.<sup>6</sup> This theory emphasizes not only state's survival as the ultimate goal but also underlines the importance of security. The state is bound to seek security in order to prosper. This also drives the state into competition with other entities. Worsened security situation in Kenya before the intervention was directly influencing the state's well-being and its ability to prosper. Defensive realism provides us with the means for interpreting the Kenya's behaviour in 2011.

Information sources are based on literature review and expert interviews, which were conducted in person (3) and via e-mail (3). Interviews were structured around open questions regarding the topic of Kenyan intervention into Somalia and following years of participation in AMISOM and bilateral relations with Somalia, e.g., cross-border security issues, maritime dispute, view of KDF in Somalia. This particular method of data collection was chosen because the author was situated in the country and with the help of Dr. Ichani was able to conduct the interviews with KDF officers. The gained information is thus a valuable source, especially due to respondent's personal experience from the field. Added value is also in the respondent's regional perspective, which may significantly differ from perspective of previously published texts regarding this matter. The choice of respondents was based on their record in researching this topic or their direct participation in the field. Those who were willing to participate are analysts from think-tanks in Nairobi and serving members of Kenya's armed forces.

## REASONS BEHIND KENYA'S INVOLVEMENT IN SOMALIA

Since 1991, the instability in Somalia has had a spill-over effect on the neighbouring countries in the Horn of Africa. The Kenyan military intervention was aimed at stopping this spill-over and to contain the instability in Somalia by setting up a buffer zone in southern Somalia - Jubaland. The drivers of the foreign intervention can be divided into three categories, yet they may overlap in some cases.

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<sup>6</sup> MEARSHEIMER, J. J. *Tragedy of great power politics*. W. W. Norton & Company. 2001. ISBN 9780393323962.

The first, and the most obvious, category is the security reasons. North-eastern Kenya and southern Somalia can be portrayed as a micro-region with a huge cultural and economic exchange, inhabited mostly by ethnic Somalis. As such, there are historical ties and cross-border exchange of goods and flow of people. Hundreds of thousands of Somalis fled Somalia due to the instability and took refuge in the Dadaab refugee camp. Located in northern Kenya, the Dadaab refugee camp was by the sheer number of its inhabitants the third biggest settlement in Kenya in 2010.<sup>7</sup> Many Somalis sought refuge also in the cities of Nairobi and Mombasa and in other urban centres where they established Somali suburbs. In 2010, there were about 500,000 Somali refugees in Kenya, many of them blended amongst Kenyan citizens by obtaining their documents illegally.<sup>8</sup> Somali refugee mixing with Somali residents significantly increased the general Somali population in Kenya cumulatively to around 2.4 and 2.8 million according to the 2009 and 2019 census, respectively.<sup>9</sup> Continuous influx of refugees from Somalia was viewed as a security threat mainly due to the increasing numbers of Somalis in Kenyan population, inability to security-check all the refugees and to keep control on their whereabouts and fear that many Somalis would choose to participate in criminal activities as the way to secure their livelihood.

Another security issue consisted in Al-Shabaab's terror activities in Kenya. Prior to the decision to intervene in Somalia, Kenya experienced a series of cross-border attacks conducted by Al-Shabaab's militants. Terror attacks targeted both civilian and security installations. KDF and other security services were directly targeted through hit and run tactics, for which militants exploited the porousness of Kenya-Somali border in their malicious activities. Al-Shabaab also took part in a series of kidnappings of both Kenyan and foreign nationals. Yet, for different reasons, abducting both targeted groups posed a serious concern for the Kenyan internal security.

The second category behind the reasons for the intervention were the economic ones.<sup>10</sup> Worsening of the internal security situation had negative influence on the country's economy. The Al-Shabaab threat affected Kenya-Somalia bilateral trade. It also encouraged tax evasion. Moreover, the tourism sector was seriously affected by travel advisory warning issued by Western countries not to visit Kenya, especially when the foreigners were abducted.<sup>11</sup> Tourism contributes considerably to the national economy, and it is a major source of foreign exchange. Not only from World Bank data it is clearly

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<sup>7</sup> THE KENYAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA: Africa Report N° 184. *International Crisis Group* [online]. 2012, 1-19 [cit. 2022-01-07]. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep31529>

WARNER, L. A. 2012.

<sup>8</sup> THE KENYAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA: Africa Report N° 184. 2012.

SINGO, M. Deputy Director of the Security Research & Information Centre. Interview, Nairobi 2021.

KHANNENJE. H. Director of the HORN Institute. Interview, Nairobi, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> THE KENYAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA: Africa Report N° 184. 2012.

*2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census: VOLUME IV DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS* [online]. Nairobi: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019 [cit. 2022-01-07]. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2p85udnp>

<sup>10</sup> M. M., major KDF, Defense Staff College, Interview, Nairobi, 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Following the worsened security situation, many countries issued official warning to its citizen against going to Kenya.

visible that revenue from tourism in 2011 was the lowest<sup>12</sup> from the past ten years, but also based on conducted interviews, all respondents agreed that in 2010 and 2011 this issue was even easily visible as beaches on the coast were empty and hotels and restaurants were going out of business.<sup>13</sup>

Stability is the key for economic development of Kenyan northern regions, especially for the development of the Lamu Port - South Sudan - Ethiopia Transport corridor (LAPSSET) This gigantic infrastructure project is set to connect the port town Lamu with Ethiopia, South Sudan and Uganda via highways, railroads, optic fibre, and even pipeline and it should also develop local airfields, hotels and other supporting infrastructure including power plants.<sup>14</sup> As Watkins stated,<sup>15</sup> instability caused by Al-Shabaab's activities in the region was amongst the factors that hastened the Kenyan decision to intervene in Somalia in 2011. Unfortunately, despite Kenyan counter-terrorism activities, Al-Shabaab managed to pose itself as a relevant threat to this project. The urge for stabilizing the cross-border region was in this case not only the reason for intervention itself but also for continuous presence, including proposal to build a wall on the Kenya-Somali border.<sup>16</sup>

When looking at this period through the perspective of defensive realism, we can point out the third category of reasons for intervening to be power reasons. Kenya is an independent sovereign country and major economy in East Africa and Horn of Africa region. Even as such, it was a victim to attacks from a violent non-state actor harboured in the neighbouring country. In that time, there was an international coalition under African Union in Somalia combating these malicious elements with support from international powers, yet, not by Kenya. In this situation, the prestige of Kenya and its position was undermined and we can safely assume that effort to strengthen its own position as a sovereign country was amongst the reasons for intervention. And as Kenyan citizens were harmed and abducted, Kenya exercised its right for self-defence.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The contribution to the national economy was around 3.6 billion USD in 2011 and it started to grow again after the intervention peaking in 2019 around 8.1 billion. For a comparison, contemporary fall in revenue caused by global pandemic situation brought still bigger revenue (4.2 billion USD) than in the year 2011. "Contribution of travel and tourism to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Kenya from 2009 to 2020." *Statista* [online]. 2021. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1219642/contribution-of-travel-and-tourism-to-gdp-in-kenya/>

<sup>13</sup> SINGO, M. Deputy Director of the Security Research & Information Centre. Interview, Nairobi, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> GOLDSMITH, P. The Death of LAPSSET and Kenya's Poverty of Imagination. *The Elephant* [online]. 11. 6. 2020 [cit. 2021-12-30]. Available at: <https://www.theelephant.info/ideas/2020/11/06/the-death-of-lapsset-and-kenyas-poverty-of-imagination/>

<sup>15</sup> WATKINS, E. LAPSSET: Terrorism in the Pipeline? *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*. 2015, 7(8), 4-9. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26351379>

<sup>16</sup> WATKINS, E. Al-Shabaab Militancy Undermines Kenya's LAPSSET. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*. 2016, 8(6), 9-13. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26351425>

<sup>17</sup> BIRKETT, D. J. 2013.

KAGWANJA, P. and S. JAMES, ed. *War For Peace: Kenya's Military in the African Mission in Somalia, 2012-2020*. 2020. ISBN 978 9966 130 88 4.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

KDF commenced *Operation Linda Nchi* on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October. Despite ongoing rain season, which made KDF's advance much harder, Kenya pushed onward to Somalia. The main military goals were to destroy known Al-Shabaab's training sites, disrupt their revenue stream, establish buffer zone, and to seize the port town Kismayo, which was viewed as the most important source of financial and material income for Al-Shabaab. Amongst political goals, there was the need for securing the international support for Kenyan intervention. As it often goes, accomplishing military goals is in the short-term outlook much easier than accomplishing the political ones. This was also the case of *Operation Linda Nchi*. Securing Jubaland militarily was much easier than combating Al-Shabaab by winning hearts and minds of the population.

Kenya does not possess such hard power to enforce its will over whole Somalia, or soft power to be engaged in Somalia through its institutions without international support. International support for Kenyan actions came nine months later, when Kenya changed its approach from unilateral intervention by the decision to become a part of multilateral effort under African Union and United Nations patronage. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2012, KDF in Somalia came under the AMISOM command, under which they stayed until AMISOM's transformation into ATMIS on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2022. The following paragraphs will sum up the lessons learned from past ten years, especially picking up examples of good practice and actions which were better to be avoided.

### Examples of good practice

Intervening in a neighbouring country without international support may sound completely ill-advised and it is. However, it does not mean that Kenya was unprepared. With the worsened security situation in the cross-border region, the probability of self-defence motivated intervention was high. Kenya was preparing for this option by training local Somali militias, mainly the Ogadeni militias and the so-called Ras Kambooni Brigade, which was led by M. Madobe.<sup>18</sup> Those militias proved to be vital in achieving military goals, especially in securing southern Somalia - Jubaland as the buffer zone. Kenyan soldiers are not foreigners when it comes to cultural aspects,<sup>19</sup> but still the use of local militias proved successful in gaining control in areas previously controlled by Al-Shabaab. It was not, of course, without issues and in some cases, militias clashed between one another or with the forces of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia,<sup>20</sup> but in the end, this approach was successful from the Kenyan point of view. From the defensive realism perspective, Kenya reacted to the worsened security situation inside its own country and took steps in order to bolster its own security.

The whole idea of creating a buffer zone by promoting stability in Jubaland proved successful over the years. Despite this being a successful story, Jubaland highly supported from Kenya has strengthened its relative power in relation to TFG, thus, we could say

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<sup>18</sup> Improper Command and Control over allied militias and clashes between them were reasons behind slow advance in operations leading to port-town Kismayo seizure. "THE KENYAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA: Africa Report N° 184." 2012

<sup>19</sup> Contrary to potential out-of-the-region troops.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

that Kenya drove a wedge to inter-Somali cohesion as a federation. Through the lenses of defensive realism, this approach makes sense from the Kenyan perspective, and it proved itself very well. On the other hand, from the perspective of Somalia as a federation, Jubaland supported by Kenya changes the balance of power in internal Somali politics.

Apart from the accomplishment, which can be attributed solely to Kenya, there is a need to acknowledge that despite international powers supporting various federal and state security forces with training, the majority of “boots on the ground” - the AMISOM forces - are provided by regional countries, thus putting the responsibility for regional security in the hands of regional actors.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, this KDF operation was viewed by some as going against the letter and spirit of the Djibouti Peace Agreement.<sup>22</sup> In the Accord, the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) and the opposition Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS), in August 2008, prohibited countries neighbouring Somalia to send or contribute troops to the Somalia peace process. The interpretation of this agreement implied that Kenya and Ethiopia were not to intervene or send peacekeeping troops to Somalia.<sup>23</sup>

Lillian Wamuyu argued<sup>24</sup> that by involving the regional countries, there is enhanced possibility that they will meddle with the local political conundrum in order to promote their own political goals, which is no doubt happening in some cases. Focusing on counterinsurgency, the deployment of local, culturally similar forces is beneficial in gaining hearts and minds of the local population. At the same time, absence of culturally different and “more foreign” forces is reducing the ability of the insurgent to portray the intervening forces as imperialistic occupants in their propaganda outlets.<sup>25</sup> However, there is an ongoing discussion about other African countries such as Egypt, Rwanda and Tunisia joining ATMIS.<sup>26</sup>

### Mistakes were made

One of the military goals in opening *Operation Linda Nchi* was the seizure of the port town Kismayo, at that time a valuable source of income for Al-Shabaab. Despite accomplishing this goal and giving the control of Kismayo in the hands of friendly militias, the original aim was not met. Al-Shabaab smoothly adapted its taxation methods compensating the revenue loss and even exceeding the total revenue from the time when Al-Shabaab controlled Kismayo. This can be interpreted as underestimating the Jihadi group ability to adapt. Based on the recent report from Hiraal institute,<sup>27</sup> Al-Shabaab is

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<sup>21</sup> I. A., major KDF, 17th Battalion, Interview, Nairobi, 2021.

<sup>22</sup> Agreement between the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) (Djibouti Agreement). *United Nations Peacemaker* [online]. 19. 08. 2008 [cit. 2022-01-07]. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8h7fch>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> WAMUYU, L. Director of the Horn Centre for Security Analysis. Interview, Nairobi, 2021.

<sup>25</sup> KHANNENJE, H. Director of the HORN Institute. Interview, Nairobi, 2021.

<sup>26</sup> ROBINSON, C. New Name, but Little Sign of Change: The Revised Agreement on the African Union Mission in Somalia. *Global Observatory*. 27. 01. 2022. [cit. 2022-05-13]. Available at: <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2022/01/revised-agreement-on-african-union-mission-in-somalia/>

<sup>27</sup> A Losing Game: Countering Al-Shabaab's Financial System. *Hiraal Institute* [online]. 2020, 1-11 [cit. 2022-01-07]. Available at: <https://hiraal institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/A-Losing-Game.pdf>

capable of collecting around 15 mil. USD per month in taxes, which also equals the tax revenue of the federal government. These numbers clearly state, that despite continuous efforts in fighting against Al-Shabaab, the Jihadi group is capable of generating substantial amount of money.

The absence of international support in the time when Kenya launched *Operation Linda Nchi* could be viewed as a mistake, because it bears additional necessity to justify the Kenyan decision. Further, Kenya was on its own in terms of material, financial and intelligence support. From the whole ten years perspective, it was a mere setback in the beginning. The problem of international support is, however, deeper. AMISOM's activities and now activities of ATMIS depend heavily on international funding, mostly from the EU, and gaining political support is the most vital for the future of promoting stability in Somalia.

As in many other similar peace operations, there were cases<sup>28</sup> of civilian casualties, which could have been avoided and which fuelled dissent with AMISOM forces between Somalis both in Somalia and in the diaspora in the neighbouring countries. There were also allegations of military members from the contributing countries taking part in smuggling goods in and out of Somalia. Many of those allegations were connected to KDF officers involved in sugar and charcoal smuggling.<sup>29</sup> The negative factors accompanying a military intervention in a foreign country can often project themselves into domestic security situation inside the intervening country. That was also the case of Kenya when Al-Shabaab tried to hit back Kenya on its own soil, and it was successful. The most notable case was the terror attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2013 and the slaughter in Mpekoni village on the 15<sup>th</sup> of June 2014, with many other attacks on the Kenyan soil smaller in scale.<sup>30</sup> The whole situation was poor-handled by Kenyan security forces by inflicting some of the casualties in the Westgate siege by friendly-fire in the chaotic situation on the site. After the Westgate attacks, Kenyan security forces made several raids aimed at cracking down on the network of radical Islamists amongst the Somali population in Kenya, which backfired in further alienating Muslims and Somalis from the Kenyan Government. A good example of such action is operation Usalama Watch in the Somali neighbourhood Eastleigh in Nairobi on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2014.<sup>31</sup>

Collateral damage, smuggling allegations, ill-will against Somalis living in Kenya, all those cases bear one common issue which is the lack of strategic communication and ineffective command and control of own forces. All interviewed individuals agreed that the strategic communication should have been better throughout the whole period when Kenya was

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<sup>28</sup> Amongst the first civilian casualties, there were five kids killed by Kenyan airstrike on Jilib in the first months of the intervention. This tragic incident caused uproar and official apology from Kenyan prime minister was issued. "THE KENYA MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA: *Africa Report N° 184.*" 2012.

<sup>29</sup> ALLISON, S. *THINK AGAIN: Who profits from Kenya's war in Somalia? A new report alleges that the Kenyan army is involved in sugar and charcoal smuggling, colluding with the same terrorists it ought to be fighting.* [online]. 7. 12. 2015 [cit. 2021-12-30]. Available at: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/think-again-who-profits-from-kenyas-war-in-somalia>  
KAGWANJA, P. and S. JAMES. 2020.

<sup>30</sup> ANDERSON, D. M. and J. MCKNIGHT. Kenya at war: Al-Shabaab and its enemies in Eastern Africa. *African Affairs* [online]. 2015, 114(454), 1-27 [cit. 2022-01-07]. ISSN 0001-9909. Available at: doi:10.1093/afraf/adu082

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

actively participating in Somalia. This lack of proper strategic communication is given by the lack of political attention to Somalia, which became a prolonged intervention viewed by some as the African Afghanistan.

It is an absolute must to mention that the listed cases are attributed to Kenya. Kenya solely on its own is not able to successfully bring Somalia to stability and integrate the country to the regional structures. Root causes of the set instability are deeper and the AMISOM mandate addressed only the symptoms and only in some areas. In order to uplift Somalia, much broader coalition of international actors is needed as well seeking partners inside Somalia.

## **FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION**

The current situation in Somalia is far from resolved, however, from the Kenyan perspective, the harmful activities of Al-Shabaab are contained on the Somali territory. The AMISOM mandate was extended from its original end date and eventually AMISOM transformed into ATMIS. The future course of action will be shaped with both external and internal factors, which will be examined closely in this chapter.

### **Contemporary maritime dispute**

Kenya-Somali relations are stained by a maritime dispute at the moment. Kenya and Somalia have had a disagreement on their maritime border since the 1970s. In 2014, Somalia filed this issue as a case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) because it lost hope that bilateral agreement is possible, and this dispute got a new traction. In September 2021, ICJ announced that it would deliver its ruling in October later that year. After this announcement, Kenya decided to withdraw from the court and claimed that it would not respect any ruling, pointing out that Judge Abdulqawi Yusuf, Somali citizen, is on the bench.<sup>32</sup> On the 12<sup>th</sup> of October, the ICJ ruled mostly in favour of Somalia with only a small adjustment in the Somali-proposed boundary.<sup>33</sup> The ruling caused uproar in Kenya but due to the country's withdrawal earlier, Kenya's position was not to respect the ruling, thus aiming for out-of-the-court settlement.

The disputed area was surveyed at some extend and it is believed that there are some fossil resources, which could be beneficial for the economy of whomever is able to exploit these areas. Taking into consideration the whole security situation at the coast, need of massive investments due to non-existent infrastructure for exploitation of these resources and contemporary global position towards fossil fuels, the energy resources in the disputed area come second after the seafood. Seafood, especially tuna fish, could improve the economic situation of the coastal communities in both Kenya and Somalia as well as become an additional food source.

In order to exploit resources in the disputed areas, the settlement between Kenya and Somalia is crucial. It is in the national interest of both countries to settle the dispute and

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<sup>32</sup> SABALA, K. Kenya v. Somalia Maritime Dispute: ICJ Judgement and Implications for Kenya - Somalia Relations. *The HORN Bulletin*. 2021, IV(VI), 1-10.

<sup>33</sup> Maritime Delimitation in the Indian Ocean (Somalia v. Kenya): The Court determines the course of the maritime boundary between the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Republic of Kenya. Hague: International Court of Justice, 2021.

exploit these areas. Therefore, settling this issue will become part of the Kenya-Somali relations agenda in the coming years.

### Upcoming elections

Both Kenyan and Somali political representations will be subject to election in the near future. Kenya will hold its general elections on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2022, when citizens will elect the president, members of National Assembly and Senate. Current president Uhuru Kenyatta is serving his second term, which is the maximum given by the constitution, therefore, Kenya will be electing a new president, who will be responsible for its foreign policy. The fore runners poised to win the forthcoming election are current Deputy President William Ruto and former Prime Minister Raila Odinga. Although Odinga indicated the need to pull out troops from Somalia in his 2017 presidential campaign, the continued presence of troops in Somalia is no longer contentious. The Uhuru regime has vowed that troops will be in Somalia until all the stated goals of the AU mission are achieved. Based on the conducted interviews, the most probable outcome regarding foreign policy will be only in the realm of cosmetic changes. The current foreign policy towards Somalia is determined by the security situation rather than by the president's individual vision and as such it is believed to be continued in the next term no matter who wins the elections.

The Somali case is much more complicated due to the current state of affairs in Somalia. The sitting Somali president Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo had his presidency expired in February 2021 without new presidential elections even being planned. After seeking a two-year extension of his own presidency by unilaterally declaring so, he has been faced with a strong opposition. The elections to the lower house of the Somali parliament began on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2021 and should have ended on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, which did not happen.<sup>34</sup> The 275 new members of the lower house, which are voted by 30,000 clan delegates, and 54 members of the upper house elected by five Somali states, voted for the next president.<sup>35</sup>

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, new Somali president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was elected to the office in the third election round.<sup>36</sup> Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was the Somali president in 2012 - 2017, he was succeeded by Farmaajo and now he was elected back mainly due to deep discontent with president Farmaajo's politics.

Due to the turbulent state of Somali internal politics, it is hard to determine the future course of action in this case. Despite that, it is important to remind that further instability in Somalia is not good for Somalia itself nor the Horn of Africa region. The only beneficiary

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<sup>34</sup> One of the newly elected MPs said, that by the set end-date, only 24 of 275 MPs have been elected. Somali President, PM trade accusations over delays to ongoing elections. *Reuters* [online]. 2021 [cit. 2021-12-30]. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/somali-president-pm-trade-accusations-over-delays-ongoing-elections-2021-12-26/>

<sup>35</sup> Somalia kicks off next stage of long-delayed elections. *Africa News* [online]. 2021 [cit. 2021-12-30]. Available at: <https://www.africanews.com/2021/11/01/somalia-kicks-off-next-stage-of-long-delayed-elections/>

<sup>36</sup> Somalia Elects New President after Long Overdue Elections. News | Al Jazeera. *Al Jazeera* [online], May 16, 2022. [cit. 2022-05-16]. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/15/somalia-elects-hassan-sheikh-mohamud-as-president>

here is Al-Shabaab, especially in the end of 2021, when forces loyal to the president engaged in skirmishes with forces of individual Somali states,<sup>37</sup> which were not supporting former president Farmaajo. This Jihadi group even managed to strike targets close to Mogadishu during the last crisis between former President Farmaajo and the Prime Minister.<sup>38</sup>

### **Afghanization of Somalia**

The current withdrawal of US forces and coalition troops from Afghanistan will influence the situation in the Horn of Africa. The sheer example of Taliban keeping the conflict alive, albeit on a very low intensity, for such a long period proved that the strategy of attrition can be inflicted successfully even against international coalition led by the United States of America and is a huge moral boost for Al-Shabaab.

On a similar level, Somalia is not a homogenous country but rather a union of regional states being aligned more with tribal interests rather than the interest of the federal government. As such, it is more vulnerable to the influence of foreign powers such as the Gulf States, Turkey, China, USA and even its neighbours like Kenya and Ethiopia.

The example of Afghanistan should be viewed as a warning of what could happen if AMISOM (now ATMIS) loses support of international powers, which is mostly financial and allows ATMIS to continue. In fighting Al-Shabaab, the US should also make Taliban keep its promise not to support international Jihadi groups.

Unpopular, unimaginable yet not completely unreasonable should be the commencing of political talks with Al-Shabaab representatives in order to bring the conflict closer to its resolution. As Khannenje stated,<sup>39</sup> Al-Shabaab is a Somali jihadi group, which is fuelled with international elements, however, the Somalis in Al-Shabaab are not that radical and they are moderate rather than zealous. Negotiations with the moderates could be the key in isolating the international elements, thus starting the potential peace process.

### **Regional turmoil**

The whole Horn of Africa region is experiencing a myriad of internal issues, such as internal political struggle or border disputes amongst neighbours, especially, the ongoing civil war in Ethiopia, which sprung up in November 2020, when Tigrayan paramilitaries assisted by federal military officers of Tigrayan ethnicity took over federal military installations in the Tigray region.<sup>40</sup> To this day, the conflict has involved other ethnic groups such as Oromo and other nation states, either directly in combat operations

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<sup>37</sup> Ending the Dangerous Standoff in Southern Somalia: Crisis Group Africa Briefing N° 158. *International Crisis Group* [online]. 2020, 1-15 [cit. 2022-01-07]. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep31529>

<sup>38</sup> Somalia's al Shabaab fighters kill at least 7 in attack near capital. *Reuters* [online]. 30. 12. 2021 [cit. 2021-12-30]. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/2p945emy>.

<sup>39</sup> KHANNENJE, H. Director of the HORN Institute. Interview, Nairobi, 2021.

<sup>40</sup> Finding a Path to Peace in Ethiopia's Tigray Region: *Crisis Group Africa Briefing N° 167*. International Crisis Group [online]. 2021, 1-18 [cit. 2022-01-07]. Available at: <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/b167-ethiopia-tigray-region.pdf>

(Eritrea<sup>41</sup>), or indirectly through military equipment sales as (Turkey<sup>42</sup>). The Ethiopian civil war has affected AMISOM forces in Somalia as well by expelling the Ethiopian armed forces officers of Tigrayan ethnicity from service.<sup>43</sup> Sudan experienced a coup and cross-border skirmishes with war-weakened Ethiopia.<sup>44</sup> All of these events make Kenya the anchor of stability in the Horn, not by choice or ambitions of its own foreign policy, but thanks to its internal stability. The near future of the Horn will be largely determined by the Kenyan approach towards this newly found responsibility.

## CONCLUSIONS

Born out of necessity to protect the nation, Kenya intervened in Somalia in 2011 and has vowed to stay until peace is realized. It is now more than a decade since the intervention. The military intervention opened a new chapter in Kenya-Somali relations, and at the same time the new chapter in Kenyan modern history as a sovereign state. Intervening in foreign country proved to be costly and unbearable doing so alone. Rehatting Kenyan troops under AMISOM helped the collective effort of African Union in Somalia but from the long-time perspective did not resolve the issue of instability. Funding is a major issue in stabilizing Somalia and AU as the neighbouring countries of Somalia are not able to fund the effort on their own. Foreign contributors, mainly the European Union,<sup>45</sup> are fatigued with funding a mission with only small track record of success.

When we look at the future of Kenya-Somali relations, the outcome of the presidential election in Somalia will be the key determinant. Future political representation in both Kenya and Somalia will need to settle the maritime dispute in order to exploit the resources in the sea for the benefit of both countries. The outcome of presidential elections is also crucial for internal security dynamics in Somalia, when current political turmoil drove a greater wedge between the federal government and each Somali state. All that chaos was only further exploited by Al-Shabaab. Electing a leader in Somalia who will focus on strengthening the cohesion between federal states as well as between clans should be the key for the near future.

Deploying regional security forces for a peace mission proved to be successful due to cultural similarities and helped find an African solution to an African problem.

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41 Ibid.

42 COSKUN, Orhan, Jonathan SPICER, and Ece TOKSABAY. Turkey expands armed drone sales to Ethiopia and Morocco - sources. *Reuters* [online]. 14. 10. 2021 [cit. 2022-01-10]. Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/33ejd9w6>.

43 HOURELD, K. Exclusive: Ethiopia says disarms Tigrayan peacekeepers in Somalia over security. *Reuters* [online]. 18. 11. 2020 [cit. 2021-12-30]. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-conflict-somalia-exclusive-idINKBN27Y1HF>.

44 ALAMIN, M. Ethiopia Border Clash Leaves 20 Sudan Troops Dead, Official Says. *Bloomberg* [online]. 28. 11. 2021 [cit. 2021-12-30]. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-11-28/ethiopia-border-clash-leaves-20-sudan-troops-dead-official-says>

WOLDEMICHAEL, S. Ethiopia-Sudan border tensions must be de-escalated: With both countries facing grave internal challenges, resolving the century-old border dispute won't be easy. *Institute for Security Studies* [online]. 10. 5. 2021 [cit. 2021-12-30]. Available at: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/ethiopia-sudan-border-tensions-must-be-de-escalated>

45 S. G., colonel KDF, Audit Section DHQ, Interview, Nairobi, 2021.

Nonetheless, the international community should reflect the current state of the affairs in Afghanistan and not repeat the same steps in Somalia, which could have a grave impact on whole Africa. Afghanistan's example is the most important one in the discussion about the future of the ATMIS mandate.

Taking into consideration the ongoing civil war in Ethiopia, where Eritrea is taking part as well, current election issues in Somalia and coup in Sudan, the role of Kenya as an anchor of stability in the Horn of Africa is rising. In the current set up, Kenya bears a huge share of responsibility for the future of the region. Despite having its own internal problems, bringing stability to neighbouring Somalia as well as to Ethiopia should be amongst the top priorities of Kenyan foreign policy in years to come.