

**Forum:** Security Council  
**Issue:** The issue of terrorism in Somalia  
**Student Officer:** Danae E. Zolota  
**Position:** Deputy President

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## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Danae Zolota and I am an 11th grader at the German School of Athens. It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to this year's PSMUN as the deputy president of the security council.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on being part of PSMUN, as well as on deciding to participate in the Security Council; a committee with special rules and procedures, which, while tackling especially intriguing topics, also requires extensive research on challenging topics, as well as a refinement regarding the political sphere and the essence of international relations. I can be certain that you will find this committee to be fascinating regarding the topics you are called upon to resolve, while simultaneously challenging enough to keep you on your toes and maintain interest throughout the conference.

Throughout the conference, not only will you have to come up with feasible and well thought solutions to this matter, but you will also have to face the challenges that make MUN so special. You will have to cooperate with others, debate in a foreign (for most) language and pass your ideas. Most importantly, the ideas and philosophy you will be representing will not be yours, but your delegation's, which is the most challenging part of MUN, especially if it goes against your own beliefs. Furthermore, you are required to do extensive research on topics that people your age would otherwise never be called upon researching. However, that is what makes you stand out, so I rest assured that you will all give your best effort to rise to the occasion.

Remember, the study guide should only be a starting point, an introduction, to your research. You should however not solely base your resolutions and preparation on the study guide.

I would, however, be very happy to answer any questions you may have or make any clarifications you may need. You can contact me on my email: [danizolot@gmail.com](mailto:danizolot@gmail.com) or my messenger: Danae Zolota

I wish you the best of luck and look forward to working with you in March.

## INTRODUCING TOPIC

Somalia is the country on the easternmost part of the African continent, and a country which places 2<sup>nd</sup> in the fragile states index<sup>1</sup>. It has suffered from long political instability, while remaining without an official, democratically elected government from 1991 to 2017, as well as an ongoing civil war ever since the Siad Barre regime was overthrown in 1991. Furthermore, a famine and drought plagued Somalia multiple times, including the ongoing one since 2017, which is described as the worst in Somali history<sup>2</sup>.

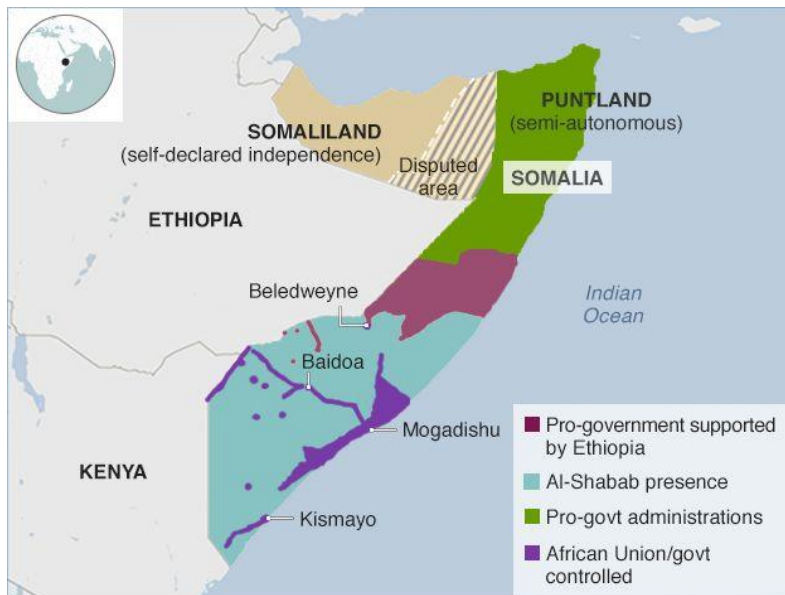


Figure 1: Map of Somalia, showing which areas are controlled by whom

As if all those problems were not enough, one of the severest issues Somalia has to face since its creation around 2006 is the extremist Islamic terrorist organization al-Shabab, an organization affiliated to al-Qaeda and deemed as one of the deadliest terrorist organizations worldwide. Al-Shabab's aim is to establish an Islamic government ruled by the Sharia Law, and they consider it their duty to execute and attack anyone who does not fit the standards they have set, especially individuals advocating a western secular ideology. Al-Shabab is not only active in Somalia, but they also have some active departments in Kenya and Ethiopia, along their borders with Somalia.

The casualties caused by al-Shabab are ever-growing, judging by the fact that their deadliest attack yet was one in 2017, with 500 casualties. Although a coalition of the African Union and US forces, as well as Somali government troops are at play fending off al-Shabab, their efforts have not yet been met with success.

A major problem with the situation in Somalia is the fact that due to the government's instability and the multiple areas controlled by al-Shabab is the fact that Somalia could easily become a terrorist haven, which is one of the main factors the US was to led to intervening in the situation first in the 1992 and then in 2013.

<sup>1</sup> <http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/20/weve-never-seen-this-drought-this-disease-famine-looms-in-somalia>

In conclusion, the issue of terrorism in Somalia is one of utmost importance, because of its views to establishing a fundamentalist Islamic state in the horn of Africa, as well the power its actions provide to further terrorist groups, like the al-Shabab-affiliated al-Qaeda. Most importantly, however, it is essential for Somalia to reach a safe and stable period, in which social and economic growth can provide a higher living standard to its citizens, who are constantly threatened by the terrorist attacks, as well as their recruiting which mostly aims children and adolescents.

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### Terrorism

Terrorism, as defined by Britannica is: “[...] the systematic use of violence to create a general climate of fear in a population and thereby to bring about a particular political objective”.<sup>3</sup> Thus, it is clear that terrorist groups can use multiple methods and techniques to cause terror, which often leads to injuries or casualties, in order to establish a specific political regime.

### Al Qaeda

Al-Qaeda is an international terrorist network, which operates in multiple bases. It was founded in Afghanistan by Osama Bin-Laden, who intended to have the organization continue spreading the jihadist ideology around the world with the aim of eliminating the secular Western influence in the world (especially Muslim countries) and establish fundamentalist Islamic regimes. It is responsible for some of the worst terrorist attacks, including for example the 9/11 attack.

### Sharia Law<sup>4</sup>

The Sharia Law is the Islamic religious behavioral code, based on the Quran. It includes guidance regarding religious, legal and social or familial matters.

### Warlord

According to the free dictionary, a warlord is a “military commander exercising civil power in a region, whether in nominal allegiance to the national government or in defiance of it”<sup>5</sup>.

### Horn of Africa

The horn of Africa in the easternmost peninsula of the African continent, which includes the following



<sup>3</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/terrorism>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/explainer-what-is-sharia-law>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/warlord>

countries: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia, and sometimes Sudan and Kenya as well.

## HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### Background Information

Somalia was a country that until 1960 was partly an Italian colony and partly a British protectorate. After it declared its independence in 1960, it fell under the control of dictator Siad Barre in 1969. However, he was overthrown in 1991 by an organization under the name Al Ittihad Al Islamiyah (“The unity of Islam”, AIAI) whose main objective was establishing an Islamic fundamentalist state in Somalia.

Soon, the country fell into anarchy, with different warlords starting a vicious civil war over regions they wished to control, which resulted in regions like Somaliland and Puntland to proclaim themselves as independent.

As a response to the chaos and the civil war in Somalia, a new institution arose in the 90s (its exact formation date is not known), which became known in 2000 as the “Islamic Courts Union”.

### The Islamic Courts

The Islamic Courts’ main aim was to bring about order in Somalia via ruling specific areas. The actual governors were warlords, and the courts were not linked to each other initially, contending themselves to ruling a region each.

In 2000, however, they all formed the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), uniting their militias as well, and started claiming actual power over Somalia, while forming institutions like hospitals and schools around 2004, even though a Transitional National Government had been put into place, in order to diminish the ICU’s power (at which it mostly did not succeed)

At the same time, as it is well-known, the US was actually carrying out investigations regarding al-Qaeda, which led them to Somalia, a country widely feared to be a safe haven for terrorists, because of its lack of government. The US supported the creation of the so-called “Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism” (ARPCT), a coalition of warlords in Mogadishu, which aimed at locating al-Qaeda’s headquarters.

Soon enough the ICU came in conflict with ARPCT, and the latter was defeated, leading to the ICU domination of Mogadishu, Somalia’s capital city.

All the while, in 2004 a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) had been formed in Kenya in support of the actual Somali government, which was started collecting military forces against the ICU.

After the assassination of TFG’s president, negotiations between TFG and ICU did not come into question, and the now backed by Ethiopia TFG continued military preparations, until the UN Security Council authorized a military intervention in Somalia in the form of African Union peacekeeping troops. Soon after, ICU was successfully defeated by Ethiopian and TFG troops and resigned from office. What remained, however, was its military branch, which broke away and renamed itself al-Shabab, “The Youth”.

### Al Shabab

Al Shabab seemed furious at the Ethiopian-TFG intervention and started off using mainly guerilla tactics to attack Ethiopian forces. According to most analysts, it was during that time period that al-Shabab became a full-fledged insurgency.

The al-Shabab mandate soon became one aiming at the establishment of an Islamic State, under Sharia law. Al-Shabab militants established bases in Somalia and in small regions in the borderlines of Somalia and Ethiopia or Kenya respectively.

In 2007, the UN deployed an African Union peacekeeping operation under the name “African Union Mission in Somalia-AMISOM”, which was supposed to have a peacekeeping mandate during the still ongoing civil war in Somalia.

Soon, al-Shabab made AMISOM and the TNG into its main targets. The first al-Shabab attack outside of Somalia was in Kampala, Uganda, with 74 casualties. Uganda had been the first state in the African Union to send troops to Somalia, and the attack was a clear message that al-Shabab was willing to attack any forces, national or foreign, that come between them and the realization of their goal. Another shocking example of the al-Shabab ruthlessness not only towards Somali civilians but also towards anyone interfering via sending troops to Somalia was the Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi, Kenya in 2013, which is known as the worst and bloodiest attack of the country’s history, and which left 67 people dead more than 175 people injured, and multiple people take hostage after the mass shooting. It was said to be retaliation for the Kenyan troops sent as part of AMISOM.

The attacks of al-Shabab focus otherwise on anyone with secular, western views or views opposed to an Islamic State, which means that they have also attacked western humanitarian aid forces.

The main opposition of al-Shabab right now would be AMISOM and the Somali government. AMISOM is a force to be reckoned with, seeing as it has often victories, with first and foremost forcing al-Shabab out of Mogadishu in 2011, probably.

The Somali president, on the other hand, who was democratically elected and put into office in February 2017 declared war on al-Shabab as one of his first actions. Before



Figure 3: The jihad symbol  
(Al-Shabaab: Kata'ib Media)

however partaking in violence against the terrorist organization, he gave them 60 days of amnesty, in which any member of al-Shabab wishing to surrender would be offered employment, education and training. Al-Shabab, nevertheless, turned down the offer immediately, and no one from the group actually surrendered.



Figure 4: A possible connection of Yemen al-Qaeda and Somali al-Shabab

### Al Shabab and Al Qaeda

Al-Shabab formally declared its alliance to al-Qaeda in February 2012, even though judging from the praise al-Shabab received from al-Qaeda after their attacks in Ethiopia, it is clear that there already were existing ties between the two terrorist organizations.

Al-Qaeda plays an important role in al-Shabab organization. After the latter pledged their allegiance, al-Qaeda troops from Afghanistan reportedly joined al-Shabab forces in Somalia, with views to training them. The forms of attack al-Shabab uses are, after all, very similar to those of al-Qaeda.

In addition, the largest part of al-Shabab leadership roles are taken up by al-Qaeda fighters, with more than half of the executive board being comprised by al-Qaeda members.

Furthermore, there have been reports about Yemen al-Qaeda fighters being exchanged with Somali al-Shabab fighters; an exchange which would geographically be entirely possible overseas. Hence, the US's fear that Somalia might become a terrorist haven might not be a distant possibility.

### Al-Shabab further tactics

Al-Shabab, faithful to its name "The Youth", mostly recruits young children and teenagers, to whom they offer training, education and food. It is obvious that many young Somalis are tempted to join such an organization in a period of great instability and famine. Moreover, they are given a cause to work towards. As stated by a former recruit, "(they) used to tell us: 'Instead of sitting in the slum doing nothing, it's better to go to Somalia and fight for your religion, you'll go straight to heaven.'"<sup>6</sup> Girls are reportedly also recruited, but with the sole purpose of marrying al-Shabab fighters. Other girls kidnapped by al-Shabab might not get married to a member, but raped.

The training lasts six months and recruits are taught "reading and interpreting the Koran, physical exercise, and weapons handling.", according to the FBI<sup>7</sup>. Afterwards

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-24263357>.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.channel4.com/news/al-shabaab-somalia-kenya-westgate-al-qaeda>.

they get to choose in which department they wish to be involved, be it infantry, creating bombs or the suicide brigade.

Recruitment does not only take place in Somalia, but also Kenya, Ethiopia, and even the US, in the states with the highest Somali populations. The media al-Shabab uses for promotion and recruitment purposes is considerably widespread, and methods such as videos and even rapping are employed to advocate for the group. One of the most popular verses was the following: “Mortar by mortar, shell by shell, only going to stop when they go to hell.”<sup>8</sup>

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
2001	Formation of Islamic Courts Union (ICU)
June 2006	ICU defeats ARPCT and gains control of Mogadishu
27 December 2006	ICU leaders resign, ICU as an organization is demolished, Al Shabab breaks away as an independent military group
2011	Severe drought and famine in Somalia, al Shabab rejects Western humanitarian aid
2013	Somalia and EU endorse the Somali Compact
August 2011	Al Shabab is forced out of Mogadishu by African Union troops
February 2012	Ahmed Abdi Godane, and al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri announce the alliance of the two groups
February 2017	Election of Somali president Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed
March 2017	US President Donald Trump approves Pentagon plan to escalate operations against al-Shabab
October 2017	Deadliest truck attack by al Shabab in Mogadishu

## COUNTRIES INVOLVED IN THE ISSUE

### United States of America

The US had decided not to get involved in Somali affairs after the casualties of US troops in 1993, when the US tried to put an end to the Somali civil war (the failed attempt remained in history as the “Black Hawk Down”). However, the 2006 Ethiopia

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2014/09/02/world/africa/somalia-al-shabaab-explainer/>.



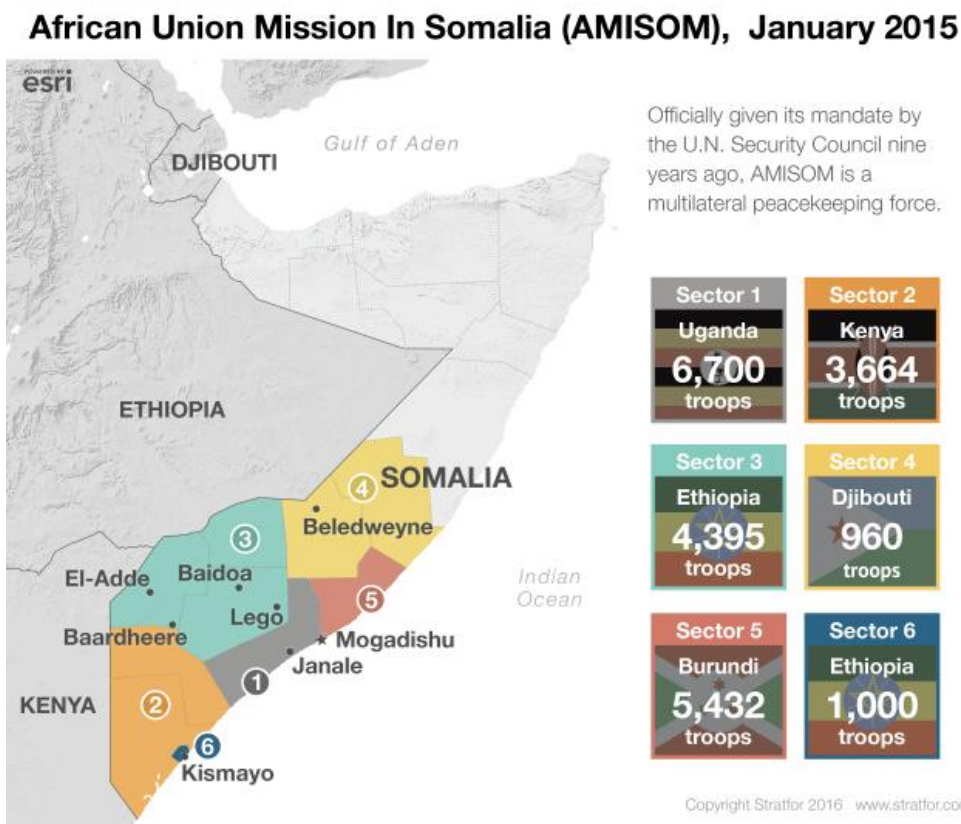
intervention against ICU was US-backed, with support both for the decision and in the form of training and funding.

The US maintained this form of support with funding, providing weapons and training later on, when the AMISOM troops took over peacekeeping operation in Somalia in 2007. Since then, the US intervention in Somalia has been more active, in the form of airstrikes, with important results, like the assassination of the former leader of al-Shabab, Aden Hashi Ayro.

Mr. Trump however has decided for the US to play a more active role in Somalia, sending the first US intervention on ground since 1995 in 2017. This happened after he approved a Pentagon plan to escalate operations against al-Shabab.

African Union (AU)

The role of the African Union and its respective members has already been made quite clear throughout this study guide. Although Kenya and Ethiopia have been main actors from the beginning of the Somali conflict with al-Shabab, it is currently the collective forces of the AU that play the most crucial role in fending off al-Shabab in Somalia, in the form of the UN-approved AMISOM. The AMISOM missions are multiple and include both victories with al-Shabab retreating from specific cities and also many casualties and attacks aimed at the AU troops. One still cannot say however that the odds are favorable for either party.<sup>9</sup>



<sup>9</sup> Figure 5: AMISOM troops per region and AU country



## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The issue of terrorism in Somalia is an issue the international community has been facing for over a decade now, and its resolution is complicated and not easy. There however specific actions that need to be taken, in order to even approach a future with a Somalia free of al-Shabab or any other source of terrorism.

First and foremost, it is essential for Somalis, especially the younger population, to be educated properly, so that they do not fall prey to the al-Shabab propaganda. This is crucial in order to hit the problem at its root and prevent the recruitment of so many young people. The former Somali president of the Transitional National Government stated himself that education is key to the resolution of the terrorism issue in Somalia.

In addition, it is very important that international cooperation continues to exist throughout the fight against al-Shabab. It is the responsibility of the international community to protect the civilians of a state, whose government does not have the means to do it on its own.

This brings me to my next point, which is material means. Somalia needs to improve its economy, if it is to be able to employ competent military forces so as to create a genuine security force. Such an effort to improve Somali economy could either aim at international support, or the Somali resources themselves, including the people and its natural resources.

It is obvious, lastly, that investigations regarding the funding of al-Shabab would also be necessary, in order to stop the terrorist group, whose funding reaches hundreds of millions according to the latest reports.

In conclusion, military solutions are of course part of the bigger picture, however it is also very important to aim at the roots of the problem, in order to eradicate it effectively.

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## FIGURES

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3. <http://jihadintel.meforum.org/group/36/al-shabaab>
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## MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kG2ptCcOTiQ>