



Security Council

Distr.: General
13 May 2019

Original: English

Letter dated 10 May 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolution [2431 \(2018\)](#), by which the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was authorized until 31 May 2019. In the resolution, the Council welcomed the conduct of a technical assessment of AMISOM by the United Nations, working closely with the African Union, the Federal Government of Somalia and key international stakeholders, to review the reconfiguration of AMISOM in support of the Somali transition plan, the progress made towards achieving its strategic objectives and its ability to conduct its priority tasks, and to provide recommendations on the progressive transition from AMISOM to Somali security responsibility, taking into account the capacities of the Somali security forces.

Pursuant to resolution [2431 \(2018\)](#) and communiqués of the African Union Peace and Security Council, the fifth joint African Union-United Nations review of AMISOM was carried out from 4 to 19 March 2019, jointly led by the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations of the United Nations and the Peace Support Operations Division of the African Union, with the participation of the Department of Operational Support of the United Nations, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and the United Nations Office to the African Union, as well as key international partners on security in Somalia.

On 4 and 5 March 2019, the review team held meetings in Addis Ababa with AMISOM police- and troop-contributing countries and members of the international community. Those meetings were followed by a visit to Somalia from 6 to 16 March, for consultations with the Federal Government of Somalia and AMISOM. The review team visited all AMISOM sector headquarters (Mogadishu, Baidoa, Kismaayo, Beledweyne and Jawhar) and presented its findings and recommendations to the African Union Commission and international partners in Addis Ababa, on 18 and 19 March 2019. The findings and recommendations of the joint review team were considered by the Peace and Security Council on 9 May 2019, at its 848th meeting.

Political and security situation

The Federal Government of Somalia continues to advance towards building an inclusive, federal Somali State. There has been steady technical progress on the review of the Provisional Federal Constitution, and planning for universal elections in 2020/21 has begun. Notably, the Federal Government's economic reforms are starting to bear fruit. The World Bank unlocked exceptional financing through



pre-arrears clearance grants for strengthening basic service delivery, improving financial management capabilities and restoring economic resilience and opportunities. Progress on economic reforms was recognized at the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, held in Washington, D.C., on 12 April 2019, where it was noted that arrears clearance and debt relief under the Fund's Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative were in sight. Transformative dynamics in the Horn of Africa are improving prospects for greater regional cooperation between Somalia and its neighbours, with growing opportunities for partnership.

Nevertheless, challenges remain. The impact of the Gulf crisis on the country is still being felt, and the unresolved maritime boundary dispute between Somalia and Kenya could affect the security and stability of Somalia. A political stalemate between the Federal Government and some of the federal member states impedes further progress, including, importantly, on the implementation of the national security architecture, agreed among Federal Government and federal member state leaders in 2017, to build a viable federal Somali security sector under appropriate governance and financial mechanisms.

The security situation remains volatile, complex and difficult to predict. The main security threat still comes from Al-Shabaab, in particular in southern and central Somalia, where the group controls large parts of rural areas. Al-Shabaab operates under a well-organized structure, capable of effectively generating revenue through the taxation of businesses and local communities and through tolls at checkpoints along main supply routes, among other revenue streams. The group continues to successfully recruit new fighters into its ranks, including children and foreign fighters.

Of particular concern is the increase in the number and frequency of Al-Shabaab attacks in Mogadishu. The group has increased its capability and its use of mortars, as evidenced by the mortar attack carried out on 1 January 2019 on the United Nations compound and subsequent mortar attacks on the Federal Government's executive compound at Villa Somalia and on AMISOM and Somalia National Army bases. In the month of March alone, Al-Shabaab carried out two complex attacks and a total of 28 improvised explosive device attacks in Mogadishu. The Federal Government has developed a comprehensive plan, supported by AMISOM and international partners, in response to the need to secure the city and its boundaries and to establish more robust and effective checkpoints at city entry points and strategic locations.

The existence of elements affiliated with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in Mogadishu, Puntland and other areas further complicates the security situation, including by creating competition and conflict with Al-Shabaab over extortion networks and revenue streams.

Progress and prospects for the Somali transition plan

In the transition plan, developed by the Federal Government in consultation with federal member states in March 2018 and endorsed by the international community, conditions and milestones are set out until 2021 for the progressive transfer of security responsibility to Somali security institutions. The plan is comprehensive and has three areas of activities: operational, supporting and institution-building. Under the supporting and institution-building pillars, the Federal Government is taking commendable steps towards institutional reform and capacity-building in the security sector. It recently completed a two-year biometric registration process of national army troops, which would assist the Government in rightsizing national army forces by retiring veterans and enabling the recruitment of new personnel. Biometric registration of personnel in other security services, including the Somali Police Force

and the National Intelligence and Security Agency is ongoing. Notwithstanding the challenges, the Federal Government is also taking steps to ensure payment of security personnel salaries.

Over the past year, control of two locations, the national stadium and the Jaalle Siyaad Military Academy in Mogadishu, were transferred from AMISOM to Somali authorities and security services. Progress on the implementation of the transition plan outside Mogadishu was limited, however, and it is expected that the first phase will not be completed in June 2019 as envisaged. The Federal Government redirected focus from initially expected priorities towards offensive operations against Al-Shabaab in Shabelle Hoose and Shabelle Dhexe, to reinforce security in the Mogadishu area as a basis for further operations. With support from AMISOM and international partners, the Federal Government has begun operations on the Mogadishu–Afgooye main supply route. The Government also plans to take over responsibility for security at 12 forward operating bases from AMISOM by December 2019 and complete operational planning in 2019 for securing the Mogadishu–Baidoa main supply route and other priorities set out in the first phase of the transition plan. Political dynamics, including upcoming regional electoral processes in Jubbaland and Galmudug, may continue to affect timelines.

After some initial progress, momentum on integrated planning between the Federal Government, AMISOM and international partners has slowed. The number of joint targeted offensive operations between AMISOM and Somali security forces in the previous year was limited, and there was insufficient comprehensive planning and inclusion of international partners to ensure that non-military aspects, such as community recovery and rule of law, were integrated into transition activities, which is necessary for achieving sustainable gains in the medium and long terms. In certain sectors, both the national army and AMISOM adopted a largely defensive posture, with AMISOM awaiting appropriate alignment with the Federal Government's priorities and timelines for the implementation of the transition plan.

Instances of some AMISOM troop-contributing countries vacating forward operating bases without adequate joint planning with Somali security forces resulted in Al-Shabaab reoccupying locations. Unplanned or uncoordinated withdrawal of troops has often led to increased vulnerability and the forced displacement of local populations, due to threats of retaliation by Al-Shabaab for collaboration and impediments to delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance. It has also resulted in harm to or abductions of humanitarian workers. There is a need to improve coordination in Mogadishu between the Federal Government and AMISOM headquarters, and between the respective headquarters and sectors of both AMISOM and the national army, and to relaunch broader integrated planning with the various security, stabilization and humanitarian partners.

During the review, the Federal Government reiterated its request for the lifting of the arms embargo, in order to enable its access to weapons and ammunition needed for the security effort.

Capacities of Somali security forces

Strengthening Somali security capacity in a sustainable way requires progress to be made on the implementation of the national security architecture, in particular by agreeing on and establishing governance structures, delineating the roles and responsibilities of the various security services and integrating regional forces. That progress will depend in large part on the resumption of political dialogue between the Federal Government and the federal member states, leading to necessary political decisions and agreements, and on progress made on reconciliation processes at the federal, state, regional and clan levels. Through an assessment of regional forces in

Somalia currently not part of a federated security sector was completed in February 2019, some 20,000 regional forces were recorded from across the federal member states.

The Federal Government has indicated that there are currently 47 national army battalions organized under five brigades, including the 14 October brigade consisting of 1,300 troops, named after the date of the deadliest terrorist attack in Somali history, carried out in 2017. There are plans under the National Integration Commission to generate a total of four integrated battalions in 2019 and 2020, of which two will be new and two created by rebalancing existing forces from all 47 existing national army battalions. The Federal Government also presented plans to rightsize existing national army forces to 10,000 and to recruit an additional 8,000 troops, up to a total of 18,000, as specified in the national security architecture. The Government has also recruited new, younger officers among the top management ranks of the national army to professionalize the institution. Similar reforms will be extended to the police force.

National army training is provided by bilateral partners, including the European Union, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. On the basis of figures provided, it is considered that a total of 11,400 national army troops will be bilaterally trained by 2021. Nevertheless, better coordination of training and capacity-building of national army forces by international partners remains a critical need. Further joint planning is required to determine how troops being trained by other bilateral partners are used to directly support the implementation of the transition plan.

The Federal Government presented plans to generate over 7,500 new police personnel by December 2021, in coordination with the federal member states. They will supplement the existing 7,700 federal police personnel, the majority of whom are deployed in Mogadishu, and 1,260 state police personnel in Kismaayo (Jubbaland), Baidoa (South West State) and Jawhar and Beledweyne (HirShabelle). Currently, the strength and capabilities of state police vary widely across federal member states. Under current projections, the rate of generating new police personnel may not meet the goal set out under the national security architecture of a total of 32,000 federal and state police force personnel by 2027.

Mandate implementation and reconfiguration

AMISOM continues to play a critical role in securing main population centres within its area of responsibility; protecting key installations and government facilities; assisting Somali security forces in protecting the Somali authorities and their efforts towards stabilization, reconciliation and peacebuilding; and enabling the international presence in the country. It continues to provide combat mentoring to Somali military forces and mentoring and training to Somali police, in collaboration with UNSOM. AMISOM experiences challenges in the priority tasks of conducting targeted offensive operations against Al-Shabaab (including jointly with Somali security forces) and securing main supply routes. Over the past year, no major offensive operations were carried out, although there were limited operations in some sectors, and AMISOM supported some national army operations against Al-Shabaab, including through combat mentoring. Towards the end of March 2019, AMISOM and national army commenced joint operations in Shabelle Hoose. Despite serious security and other challenges, AMISOM facilitated and implemented quick-impact projects and peace-strengthening projects as part of its support for stabilization efforts. AMISOM continues to enable and support the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including relief and food aid, through coordination with humanitarian actors and local leaders.

On the basis of the recommendations of the joint review conducted in 2018, the Security Council, in its resolution 2431 (2018), requested the reconfiguration of AMISOM in support of the implementation of the transition plan. AMISOM has undertaken a number of steps towards that goal, with further planning and implementation ongoing. An operational readiness assessment of AMISOM was completed in September 2018, through which capacities and areas requiring additional support were identified, as were ways in which AMISOM resources could be better allocated to support its functions. That assessment was followed by the development of a revised concept of operations in November 2018, in which the strategic-level tasks for the transfer of security responsibility from AMISOM to the Somalis are set out, in three phases, over the period from June 2018 to December 2021, aligned with phases of the transition plan.

At a conference of AMISOM and national army sector commanders held from 11 to 14 February 2019, AMISOM and the national army jointly developed detailed operational plans for each phase, including joint operations, locations for handover, planning for the clearance of main supply routes and timelines. At the time of the review, a technical committee was assessing those plans for subsequent endorsement by AMISOM force and sector commanders and Mission leadership.

Each AMISOM sector has a dedicated concept of operations implementation plan under which forces will be realigned, involving the collapse of some positions and forward operating bases and the transfer of others to Somali security forces, beginning largely in the second phase, between July 2019 and December 2020. AMISOM intends to use some of the troops released as a result to create mobile forces in each sector and a quick reaction force under the force commander. It is important that the plans for and implementation of the handover of positions be aligned between AMISOM and Somali security forces, including coordination with UNSOS on support requirements, to avoid outcomes where Al-Shabaab or other non-state armed groups are able to take over locations vacated by AMISOM.

As AMISOM is reconfigured, it will be important for the force commander to have effective operational command over all troops, so as to have the flexibility needed to redeploy troops and assets as the situation demands. The review team was informed that the African Union has approved a new structure for AMISOM force headquarters that places military air assets under the force commander's control, including armed helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles and systems, and that will strengthen force-level command and control in the sectors and enable closer coordination both among the sectors and between force headquarters and the sectors. Recent deployments of a new AMISOM force commander, deputy force commander and several new sector commanders provide an opportunity to improve command and control arrangements and intra-AMISOM coordination.

AMISOM is also reconfiguring its police and civilian components to support the transition. AMISOM police are currently deployed in Mogadishu, Baidoa, Kismaayo, Jawhar and Beledweyne, and plans to expand its presence to Dhooble and other major population centres beyond federal member state capitals, with mandated tasks to train and mentor federal and state police personnel in collaboration with UNSOM under the joint police programme. Of the minimum 1,040 authorized AMISOM police strength, AMISOM currently has 718 police officers deployed, comprising three formed police units of 160 personnel each and 238 individual police officers. Two additional formed police units (320 personnel) are expected to deploy over the second and third quarters of 2019.

AMISOM has recently begun to deploy civilian staff to each federal member state to support its military and police presence in the implementation of the transition plan in the sectors. AMISOM civilian sector teams and UNSOM regional presences

can complement each other's work within their respective mandates, with the former potentially able to have greater access to remote areas, alongside AMISOM military forces, to engage in the areas of civil affairs and community engagement, humanitarian affairs and human rights. In Mogadishu, the AMISOM civilian component provides political analysis and support to AMISOM leadership; facilitates humanitarian support; conducts human rights monitoring and investigations; and supports the work carried out by AMISOM jointly with the United Nations, the Federal Government and partners. AMISOM civilian staff also perform administrative and support functions. The review team was informed of plans to revive a tripartite memorandum of understanding between the African Union, the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which should ensure that all three organizations work in Somalia in a coordinated and complementary manner, in support of agreed and joint political strategies.

Joint planning and coordination

The review team identified a strong need for improved and regular coordination and information-sharing between the Federal Government and AMISOM, to enable appropriate and effective joint planning, the effective conduct of operations and monitoring of the implementation of the transition plan. A robust joint planning mechanism is needed to ensure an integrated approach to the planning process, covering operational, supporting and institution-building activities, with a Federal Government lead in consultation with AMISOM and in coordination with all relevant actors, including national army, police, federal member state authorities, UNSOM, UNSOS and other support elements, and partners. Without such a mechanism, the implementation of the transition plan will not be appropriately aligned with AMISOM support, likely resulting in further delays. The mechanism would also enable the Federal Government and AMISOM to adjust implementation priorities and timelines through mutual consultation, on the basis of ground realities and progress, and would engage all actors concerned on stabilization activities. More broadly, the joint planning and coordination mechanism would update and revise the transition plan as needed between now and 2021, in line with the overall objective of seeing Somali security forces take the lead responsibility for security by that time. Importantly, the mechanism would enable Somalia to ensure closer alignment of security personnel generation with transition priorities, thus allowing for anticipated dividends in terms of AMISOM human resources.

The review team also recommends regular consultation between the mechanism and humanitarian actors, to provide appropriate information on the humanitarian impacts and risks of the reconfiguration and transition, including AMISOM withdrawal from anticipated locations. Such consultation would enable implementation and handover to be carried out in a manner that adequately considers the needs and vulnerabilities of the populations that would be affected.

The concept of reconfiguration as proposed by the 2018 joint review included a "fusion cell", or combined joint operations and information cell, as a format for coordinating, sharing information and deconflicting with all relevant security actors in Somalia, especially national army and other security forces. The 2019 review team was informed by AMISOM that conditions for creating that type of cell did not yet exist, but that there was movement towards improved coordination between AMISOM and the national army at both force headquarters and in the sectors, as seen in recent joint operations by the national army and AMISOM in Shabelle Hoose that were conducted after the review.

Support implications for Mission and Somali security forces

Al-Shabaab has adapted, conducting mobile and asymmetric warfare, which requires AMISOM to adopt a more agile posture and enhance its mobility to be able to implement the tasks outlined in the transition plan, mitigate the risk of attacks and undertake both offensive operations and the clearing and securing of main supply routes. The review team took note of the need to strengthen AMISOM operational capacity and capability, including by addressing shortfalls in logistics and equipment and by deploying additional enablers and multipliers such as equipment to counter the threat posed by improvised explosive devices and effective intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities and unmanned aerial vehicles and systems.

To achieve that goal, the review team recommends an approach favouring the optimization of AMISOM equipment, which would include a comprehensive line-by-line equipment review by June 2019, conducted jointly by the African Union, AMISOM and UNSOS, to examine whether AMISOM logistical and equipment capabilities and capacities are aligned with the tasks ahead. Based on a defined statement of unit requirements, the outcome of that review would include recommendations on detailed equipment adjustments and the identification of opportunities for resources that could be made available to support the deployment of specific capabilities to address critical gaps and enhance AMISOM operational capacity and safety and security.

UNSOS is currently mandated, pursuant to resolutions [2431 \(2018\)](#) and [2245 \(2015\)](#), to provide logistical support in eight categories (food, water, fuel, tentage, transportation, in-theatre medical evacuation, interoperable communications and field defence stores) for up to 10,900 Somali security force personnel, subject to the following criteria: (a) that those forces are formally part of the national security architecture, deployed on joint operations with AMISOM and part of the Mission's overall strategic concept in line with the transition plan; and (b) that support is provided in compliance with the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces. Support is financed through a trust fund. While the intention of the Security Council in extending support to Somali security forces (from national army forces previously) was seen as a means of encouraging the integration of regional forces into the federal Somali security sector, the recipients of UNSOS logistical support have yet to extend beyond the national army, owing to delays in integration and to donor conditions stipulating the use of trust fund contributions for the national army only. A shift to having UNSOS support regional forces can take place only after they have been integrated into Somali security forces, on the basis of clear mechanisms and decisions of the Somali authorities.

During the review, the Federal Government requested that the possibility be explored of extending UNSOS support to the entire national army, up to 18,000 soldiers when its formation is complete. The review team considers that the question of support to Somali security forces should be addressed in a comprehensive manner, together with coordination of support for training, equipment and sustainment, under the leadership of the Federal Government. Such support should also include a capacity-building element to facilitate the eventual handover of those functions to Somali institutions.

Consequently, UNSOS would not be best placed to provide support to Somali security forces beyond the current Security Council-mandated eligibility requirements, in areas outside the AMISOM area of responsibility (such as Puntland and Galmudug) and over the long term. Challenges relating to the provision of UNSOS support through a trust fund would remain, including a lack of predictability

and sustainability, donor caveats and insufficient resources or capacities to manage, oversee or monitor the delivery of support. In addition, as the transition progresses, the provision of non-lethal support to the Somali security forces by UNSOS will decrease as AMISOM draws down. It is therefore critical that other long-term solutions are identified, with partner support, to meet the needs and requests of the Federal Government in terms of non-lethal support for the national army, as it gradually increases to its full strength of 18,000 troops.

For the above reasons, the review team recommends that the support provided by UNSOS to the national army be maintained under the existing criteria, without prejudice to the possibility of increasing, over the transition period, the ceiling of troops that receive UNSOS support beyond 10,900. Any increase in the ceiling should be used as an incentive for accelerated progress on implementing the national security architecture and on measures to rightsize the national army and integrate additional forces under the federal Somali security forces umbrella. Any additional support beyond the current ceiling would require, in addition to adequate donor commitment, an increase in UNSOS capacity to manage and provide the necessary support, including through robust human rights due diligence policy implementation mechanisms, in particular in relation to the integration of regional forces into the national army.

The review team also considered the question of logistical support to the national army once it takes over forward operating bases from AMISOM. It was clarified that the current support items can be delivered to national army forces taking over forward operating bases, as long as those troops meet the eligibility criteria for joint operations with AMISOM, are within the Council-approved ceiling and have met the risk mitigation requirements of the human rights due diligence policy, and as long as sufficient financing is available in the supporting trust fund.

Accountability and compliance

The review team examined the status of the implementation of key prevention and response measures with regard to violations identified in the human rights due diligence policy framework since the 2018 review. Those measures include boards of inquiry, human rights training, the dissemination of and adherence to AMISOM rules of engagement and the Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis and Response Cell. The review team took note of improvements in AMISOM sectors reporting to the Cell, which continues to be used to track civilian casualties carried out by all actors and which AMISOM agreed to continue to strengthen in order to ensure the uniformity of reporting across all sectors. African Union-funded ex gratia or amends payments for civilian harm caused by AMISOM are being implemented, starting with victims of incidents that occurred in 2018. AMISOM has also translated its rules of engagement into the languages of the troop-contributing countries and disseminated them to the troops on the ground.

Training on human rights and international humanitarian law was provided to both AMISOM troops and Somali security forces, to ensure compliance and accountability. AMISOM continues to monitor the status of the implementation of prevention measures for air assets, on the basis of letters of assist and risk assessments for armed air assets. While steps to ensure that mitigation measures are largely in place and that progress is being made, sustained coordination with UNSOS to ensure enhanced visibility on their deployment and use will continue to be necessary throughout the transition period.

The review team took note of a reduction in civilian casualties documented since the 2018 joint review and an improved response to concerns about allegations of violations by AMISOM raised by the United Nations. Improved collaboration at both

the strategic and technical levels between AMISOM and United Nations entities, through the working groups on the human rights due diligence policy and on children and armed conflict and the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, has facilitated constructive engagement on violations-related issues.

Ongoing strengthening and harmonization of AMISOM procedures with UNSOM, including through agreement on harmonized standard operating procedures, especially for its boards of inquiry, is a necessary part of efforts by the African Union to enhance its accountability mechanisms on human rights issues. There are challenges to the implementation of AMISOM standard operating procedures on the treatment and handling of disengaged combatants at the reception stage, such as a lack of facilities at the front line to sustain defectors until they are handed over to Federal Government authorities within 72 hours, as required, subject to the principle of non-refoulement. There is also a need to strengthen follow-up mechanisms after the handing over of disengaged fighters to local authorities.

The review team also took note of challenges in tracking civilian casualties arising from air strikes conducted by actors other than AMISOM, as well as issues in identifying relevant levels of command and control of AMISOM current military air assets. That is a particularly important concern because, as more military air assets are being considered for AMISOM, requiring enhanced preventive and civilian casualty tracking, analysis and response measures to be applied, tracking devices for UNSOS-supported military aircraft will be required to aid in investigating any reported civilian casualties by AMISOM air assets, or to confirm whether or not they were involved, and to enable more effective prevention and response processes and approaches overall.

AMISOM should continue to ensure, including through the comprehensive implementation of the table of AMISOM human rights due diligence policy risk mitigation measures, that human rights issues are considered, applied and reviewed across the preparatory, conduct and review phases of operations. Beyond training, those activities should continue to include selection and screening, the integration of human rights into planning, the continued tailoring and application of standard operating procedures and force commander directives and other operational orders to the current operational context, the consolidation of practices on civilian casualty tracking and efforts to ensure accountability should violations occur.

The need to focus attention on strengthening the capacity of Somali security forces to comply with human rights standards and international humanitarian law in the context of the transition is integral to ensuring a sustainably secure environment for the population. With AMISOM providing mentoring or training for Somali security forces, the example shown and role played by AMISOM will be crucial in order to support the professionalization and institutionalization of prevention and response mechanisms within Somali security forces. A draft tripartite memorandum of understanding between the United Nations, the African Union and the Federal Government of Somalia has been prepared to provide the legal framework for to the provision of logistical support by UNSOS to the national army, including provisions to strengthen the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy and the application of risk mitigation measures. In its mentoring of and engagement with Somali security forces, and together with UNSOM, UNSOS and international partners, AMISOM should continue to promote its experience and activities, to ensure compliance and accountability and the operational dividends that can be drawn from strong compliance mechanisms.

Securing elections in 2020/21

A key indicator of progress on the country's path towards becoming a fully functioning federal State will be its preparations and readiness for one-person, one-vote elections in 2020/21. AMISOM is expected to play a key role in support of Somali security services to secure the electoral exercises. According to the National Independent Electoral Commission, the process of selecting registration sites will commence in June 2019, with voter registration to be carried out in early 2020 and polling to take place in the last quarter of 2020. In the draft electoral bill, it is stipulated that elections should take place "where possible". Given the security situation, it is expected that voter registration and the polling exercise will be concentrated in population centres secured by AMISOM and Somali security forces and other designated locations that are assessed as being securable.

Preparations for electoral security are in the early stages. The review team was briefed on Federal Government plans to establish a federal electoral security task force as the national coordination body for electoral security, consisting of the Federal Government, the National Independent Electoral Commission, AMISOM, the national army and all federal and state police and other security services, as well as the UNSOM-United Nations Development Programme Integrated Electoral Support Group, taking lessons from a similar body created to oversee security plans for the 2016 electoral process. The task force will develop and oversee the implementation of an election security plan covering the various electoral operations, including voter registration, polling operations and related activities. The Electoral Commission has currently identified some 1,780 potential sites for voter registration, following advice from security forces, with final numbers and locations to be determined closer to the start of voter registration. The establishment of the task force is especially urgent, given that the process for confirming and securing voter registration sites should begin in the coming months.

It is also important that the electoral security plan and designated locations are consistent with the implementation of AMISOM priority tasks and the transition plan, including through regular consultations between the joint planning and coordination mechanism advocated by the review team and the federal electoral security task force, to ensure that the reconfiguration and the transition are aligned with electoral security planning. It is expected that Somali police will play a prominent role in providing security for the elections, which might entail additional support from AMISOM police and, in turn, require an increase in the numbers and support needs of the AMISOM police component. Support provided by UNSOS to AMISOM to enable the conduct of any additional tasks the latter is expected to perform in support of the electoral process is also likely to require additional resources under the UNSOS budget, as well as early joint planning and prioritization.

Implications for the Mission's mandate

The review team considers that the Mission's strategic objectives and priority tasks, as set out in resolution 2431 (2018), remain valid, but should primarily be seen in the context of the transition to Somali security responsibility. Notably, the Mission's role in degrading Al-Shabaab should be understood within the context of the progressive implementation of the transition plan and the strategic end goal of a full handover of security responsibility to ready and capable Somali security forces and institutions by 2021. AMISOM should continue to carry out targeted offensive operations against Al-Shabaab, including jointly with Somali security forces, within the overall concept of supporting the implementation of the transition plan. At the same time, it should be emphasized that significantly reducing the threat from Al-Shabaab is not a purely military task. It requires a comprehensive effort towards

the extension of State authority, the provision of rule of law, including policing and justice, and addressing the ideological, clan-based and socioeconomic reasons explaining why Al-Shabaab and other non-state armed groups continue to thrive in Somalia. All those efforts require continued support from the international community, under the leadership and priorities of the Federal Government. Similarly, the Mission's priority task of securing main supply routes requires a combination of military presence, policing, civilian engagement and the support of local populations, and cannot be achieved without adequate involvement by Somali security and civilian actors. Stabilization and reconciliation efforts led by Somali federal, state and local authorities, with international support, are critical to the transition and to ensuring that areas recovered by AMISOM and Somali security forces do not return to Al-Shabaab control when AMISOM is no longer present.

In response to the Security Council's intention to consider further uniformed personnel reductions as security conditions and Somali capabilities and capacities allow (resolution 2431 (2018), para. 24), progress on the transition, specifically on generating Somali security forces and building Somali institutional capacity, and a constant assessment of the threat environment, should be the driving parameters in determining AMISOM uniformed personnel levels until after the elections in 2020/21. In the light of the prevailing security situation and the status of and prospects for both the transition and the federal Somali security sector, the review team identified the options outlined below for AMISOM uniformed personnel levels until after the elections.

Option 1

Maintain current troop ceiling, while allowing for reductions based on progress on the ground

Option 1 is based on the assessment that the threat level in Somalia remains high and that the lack of progress made in the implementation of the transition plan in the past year, in particular the slow pace of generating capable Somali security forces, does not allow for a clear determination of uniformed personnel reductions at the present stage, especially considering the upcoming voter registration and electoral exercises. Implementation of the agreed collapse or handover to Somali authorities of a number of AMISOM locations would present opportunities to release AMISOM forces, as long as there is adequate and clan-balanced generation of security personnel under the national security architecture, with coordinated training and capacity-building by international partners. Nevertheless, decisions on reductions and adjustments should be made in the field, in accordance with the pace and success of the implementation of the transition plan. Further reductions would be encouraged over the next two years, based on conditions on the ground.

This option would allow AMISOM, the Federal Government and relevant partners to assess and recommend appropriate AMISOM uniformed personnel levels required to support the electoral cycle until its completion at the end of 2020 or the beginning of 2021, including any reductions, possibly through the revived joint planning and coordination mechanism intended to implement the transition plan. Recommendations on rebalancing military and police activities, including increasing AMISOM police personnel within the mandated uniformed personnel ceiling, could also be made through the mechanism, if and as the security situation and operational demands allow. It should be noted that the handover of AMISOM locations to Somali authorities should continue even if troop levels are maintained, which would release AMISOM forces to undertake more mobile operations.

The review notes, however, that avoiding further prescribed reductions may increase the likelihood of continued insufficient progress on the implementation of the transition plan and on building Somali security capacity within projected

timelines. Without mandated reductions, there is a risk that the transition would not make sufficient progress in the coming years and AMISOM troop reductions after the elections would not be set along a momentum of transition.

Option 2

Progressive reduction of the Mission's uniformed personnel ceiling with timelines

As part of the implementation of the transition plan, and in the light of the Federal Government's plans for taking over security responsibility and building capable Somali security forces in 2019 and 2020, a continuation of the trajectory of reductions in AMISOM troop numbers that began in December 2017 would maintain the momentum towards Somali security ownership and leadership. Further mandated reductions could serve as an impetus for accelerated implementation of the national security architecture, including the generation of security personnel, and for adequate planning and implementation of transition and other security sector objectives that would need to be achieved in time for the reductions to take place.

The next reduction in AMISOM uniformed personnel numbers could be mandated to take place by the end of February 2020. That timing would avoid affecting voter registration, scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2020, while also allowing AMISOM time to plan and carry out operations, secure main supply routes, collapse or hand over forward operating bases and complete other reconfiguration tasks in the implementation of its concept of operations and in support of the transition.

The Federal Government's proposal and plans to take over 12 forward operating bases by the end of 2019 are likely to release approximately 2,000 AMISOM troops, which presents two possibilities for reductions by the end of February 2020. The first is to reduce the uniformed personnel ceiling by 1,000 troops, following the precedent of the previous troop reductions and in line with AMISOM plans to create mobile forces and a quick reaction force with some of the troops made available from the collapse or handover of forward operating bases and other locations. If, however, the objectives laid out by the Federal Government and AMISOM are not effectively planned and achieved, there is a risk that the withdrawal of those troops would result in exposing civilian populations to Al-Shabaab reprisal attacks or negatively affect the reconfiguration of AMISOM by preventing the creation of mobile forces.

The second possibility is to reduce the current level of uniformed personnel by 2,000 troops, likely encompassing all of the troops that would be made available by the collapse or handover of forward operating bases, if that occurs on time. While that reduction could provide an opportunity for accelerated generation of Somali capabilities to assume security responsibility, it entails considerable risks. It would likely preclude the Mission's ability for further reconfiguration and would prevent the creation of mobile forces. If delays in transition plan implementation continue, AMISOM may be forced to vacate key positions without Somali security forces being ready to take over, leaving populations in those areas exposed and vulnerable to Al-Shabaab and increasing the likelihood of forced internal displacement. Alternatively, AMISOM could continue to hold those key positions, but at the risk of reducing the implementation of a number of its mandated tasks, potentially negatively affecting overall security, including for voter registration and elections.

Mission police

In the long term, internal security in Somalia should progressively become a police responsibility, especially in population centres. With a view to facilitating the successful transition of such responsibilities, and considering the critical role that

Somali and AMISOM police will likely play in securing the 2020/21 elections, an increase in AMISOM police personnel could also be considered, within the overall uniformed personnel ceiling and in line with the Security Council's request for AMISOM to reconfigure in favour of police. The review team suggests that the AMISOM police component could be augmented through the deployment of up to two additional formed police units of 160 personnel each and up to 67 individual police officers by 2020. Any increase in AMISOM police numbers would be matched by a commensurate reduction of AMISOM military personnel.

The above recommendations for AMISOM are intended to cover the period until the completion of the elections cycle, at the end of 2020 or the beginning of 2021, although that does not preclude a review of AMISOM and the security transition before that date, if required. After that period, which should coincide with the implementation of third phase of the transition plan and the AMISOM concept of operations, a strategic review should be undertaken to assess the prospects for a full handover to Somali security forces.

Observations

I thank the African Union Commission for its strong collaboration with the United Nations in conducting the 2019 joint review of AMISOM. The active participation of representatives of the Federal Government of Somalia in the review is equally commendable and an indication of the country's commitment to taking full responsibility for its security. I also thank the European Union, the members of the Security Council, AMISOM police- and troop-contributing countries and other international partners for their engagement with the review team. I commend AMISOM, UNSOM, UNSOS and the United Nations Office to the African Union for facilitating the joint review exercise and for their continuing efforts to make the security transition in Somalia a reality. I endorse the recommendations of the joint review team as outlined above and urge the Council to consider them in a positive light.

With respect to options for AMISOM uniformed personnel levels, I urge the Security Council to make its decision on the basis of the opportunities and risks outlined above. I concur with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in his recommendation to the Peace and Security Council that AMISOM troop numbers be maintained at this stage, in consideration of the security situation in Somalia and the delays in implementing the transition plan. Any decision on uniformed personnel levels should ensure that existing gains are preserved, in particular on the protection of civilian populations, that electoral security is not compromised and that humanitarian access is safeguarded. The availability of predictable and sustainable financing of AMISOM will remain a key factor in determining the troop levels that AMISOM will be able to sustain after 2020. Avenues for financing AMISOM beyond that period should continue to be explored jointly with the African Union, and I call on the international community to extend its support in that regard.

In 2019, Somalia is taking steps to overcome existing internal political divisions, further advance political, security and economic reforms and regain momentum for sustained progress. Prospects for the creation of a viable security sector with the inclusion of regional forces from all federal member states depend in large part on progress made in political and reconciliation processes at the federal, state, regional and clan levels. I urge the leaders of Somalia to redouble their efforts to resume their political dialogue under a common vision for a federal Somali State, which will translate into sustained and regular cooperation to resolve all outstanding issues and enable accelerated progress on building a federal security sector in accordance with the agreed national security architecture.

The Somali transition plan provides the framework for a holistic, conditions-based transition from AMISOM to Somali security responsibility. I am confident of the Mission's commitment to supporting the transition and commend the steps it is taking to reconfigure itself for that purpose. I welcome the conduct of the AMISOM operational readiness assessment and the development of the strategic concept of operations and urge the finalization of detailed joint AMISOM and national army implementation plans. AMISOM efforts to deploy the full police component and a portion of the civilian component in sector headquarters demonstrates the clear commitment of the Mission's engagement in Somalia. I believe that a strong partnership between the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the United Nations, leveraging the strengths of each organization, can be a potent vehicle for support for the political process in Somalia.

It is important to revive and improve effective joint planning and coordination between AMISOM, Somali authorities and security institutions and relevant international partners. The successful implementation of the transition plan depends on progress in generating able, acceptable, accountable and affordable Somali security forces that should progressively take over from AMISOM. As AMISOM is reconfigured, whether by vacating positions or handing them over to Somali security forces, the risk of Al-Shabaab returning to those areas is high, leaving populations exposed and vulnerable to reprisal. It is critical that the impacts of the reconfiguration on communities is understood and mitigated. To ensure human security, transition planning and implementation must be comprehensive, conducted in compliance with human rights standards and international humanitarian law and encompass non-military aspects, including through the provision of rule of law, basic services and the establishment of local administrations. At the same time, the country's international partners on security should strengthen their efforts to coordinate on supporting training and capacity-building of the Somali security forces, with the aim of creating federal security institutions, in accordance with the national security architecture, that are essential to the effort to implement the transition plan supported by AMISOM. Those efforts are all the more urgent, given the deeply concerning security trends in Somalia, in particular in Mogadishu.

A key indicator of progress on the country's path towards becoming a fully functioning federal State will be its preparations and readiness for one-person, one-vote elections in 2020/21. I commend the work of the National Independent Electoral Commission in that regard and look forward to the adoption of the electoral bill by Parliament, to provide the necessary legislative framework. I encourage the Federal Government to establish a federal electoral security task force, including all relevant entities, as soon as possible, to ensure adequate security planning and readiness, and I call on the international community to provide the additional support needed to ensure a secure and credible electoral exercise.

I pay tribute to the brave men and women of AMISOM and of the Somali security forces for their efforts and sacrifices towards achieving security and peace for millions of Somalis.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) António **Guterres**
