

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 26 September 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In accordance with Security Council resolution [2628 \(2022\)](#) and communiqué of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union PSC/PR/COMM.1173 (2023), I have the honour to forward herewith (see annex) a letter dated 22 September 2023 addressed to you from the Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council, Churchill Ewumbue-Monono, transmitting the above-mentioned communiqué and a joint technical assessment of the first phase of the drawdown of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, in accordance with Security Council resolution [2687 \(2023\)](#).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Pedro Comissário Afonso
Permanent Representative
Coordinator of the African members of the Security Council



Annex to the letter dated 26 September 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, I have the honour to convey herewith communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.1173 (2023), adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 1173rd meeting, held on 14 September 2023, on the situation in Somalia and the operations of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (see enclosure I), and the joint technical assessment of the first phase of the drawdown (see enclosure II).

The joint technical assessment was conducted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2687 \(2023\)](#) to evaluate the first phase of the drawdown and set out criteria for the second phase.

Thus, through you, I am pleased to transmit the two documents mentioned above for the consideration of the Security Council.

(Signed) Churchill **Ewumbue-Monono**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cameroon to the
African Union Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council
of the African Union for September 2023

Enclosure I

[Original: English and French]

PSC/PR/COMM.1173 (2023)

COMMUNIQUÉ

Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1173rd meeting, held on 14 September 2023, on the Situation in Somalia and the Operations of the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS):

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling all its previous decisions and pronouncements on the situation in Somalia and on ATMIS, in particular, Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1143 (2023)] adopted at its 1043rd meeting, held on 7 March 2023, Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1123 (2023)] adopted at its 1023rd meeting held on 30 November 2022 and Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1068 (2021)], adopted at its 1068th meeting held on 8 March 2022; as well as the UN Security Council Resolution 2628 (2022) which authorised the reconfiguration of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) into ATMIS and UN Security Council Resolution 2687(2023);

Reaffirming the AU's solidarity with the people and the Federal Government of Somalia in their aspirations for durable peace, security, stability, and prosperity, which will benefit the Horn of Africa region and the Continent as a whole; **also reaffirming** the unwavering commitment of the AU to respect the territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity of Somalia;

Noting the opening remarks by H.E. Ambassador Churchill Ewumbue Monono, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Cameroon to the AU and Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) for September 2023, the remarks by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, as well as the briefing by H.E. Ambassador Souef Mohamed El-Amine, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Somalia and Head of ATMIS; **also noting** the statements by the representatives of the Federal Government of Somalia, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the United Nations (UN);

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council,

1. **Commends** the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) for its continued initiative to take full ownership and leadership of Somalia's stabilisation and reconciliation processes, particularly in the liberated areas and **welcomes** the sustained cooperation between the FGS and the Federal Member States marked by the regular meetings of the National Consultative Council (NCC), chaired by H.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia;
2. **Applauds** H.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, President of the Federal Republic of Somali, for his sustained efforts and support towards the African Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and the AU Commission, broadly to continue contributing towards the stabilisation and protection of the territorial integrity of the country against the onslaught by al-Shabaab; **appeals** to the FGS to consult with the AU Commission on any domestic decision that has any bearing to ATMIS personnel;
3. **Welcomes** the Report of the Joint Technical Assessment (JTA), outlining the impact assessment of phase I drawdown, including threat assessment, ATMIS performance, Lessons Learned, funding requirements and the detailed plan and timeline for the phase 2 drawdown, including implications of the drawdown of 3,000 ATMIS troops by 30 September 2023; **and commends** the Federal Government of

Somalia (FGS) and ATMIS for the successful conduct of the JTA, in collaboration with other partners and stakeholders.

4. **Further welcomes** the Outcomes of the Somalia Operations Coordination Committee (SOCC) meeting held on 6 September 2023 regarding the modalities for the completion of the phase 2 drawdown process;

5. **Underlines** that the threat assessment recognises that al-Shabaab remains the major threat to peace and security in Somalia; and **expresses concern** that al-Shabaab retains influence on some Main Supply Routes, enabling them to extort money from the public through illegal taxation;

6. **Further reiterates** the importance of consolidating the peace and security gains in Somalia and **decides**, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution [2628 \(2022\)](#) and UN Security Council Resolution [2687 \(2023\)](#), to withdraw, without any conditions, 3,000 ATMIS troops by 30 September 2023 in an equitable manner to prevent any security gap; **further decides** to withdraw 851 ATMIS police personnel as per the directives of the FGS;

7. **Emphasises** the imperative of ensuring that the withdrawal of troops is undertaken in a manner that does not leave ATMIS vulnerable to attacks and that all efforts are directed towards enhanced ATMIS force protection during and following the drawdown as well as protection of the population within ATMIS Area of Operations;

8. **Pays tribute** to the AU Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) for their sacrifices, contribution and dedication throughout the years to date, towards peace in Somalia; **further pays tribute** to all those who have paid the ultimate price in the country in service to humanity;

9. **Expresses deep concern** over the recent attacks by Al-Shabaab, leading to several deaths and destruction of key facilities and infrastructure, which underlines the reality that Al-Shabaab still remain a significant threat to peace and stability in Somalia; **expresses concern** that Al-Shabaab may exploit any gaps during or following the drawdown of the 3000 ATMIS troops if not done equitably;

10. **Commends** ATMIS for its contribution to the degradation of Al-Shabaab, reducing its threat and protection of Main Supply Routes, population centres and crucial infrastructures, including the airports and seaports;

11. **Condemns in the strongest terms** Al-Shabaab's terror attacks on civilians, ATMIS, Somali Security Forces and members of the FGS as well as infrastructure in the country;

12. **Reiterates** the FGS's request for the lifting of the arms embargo on Somalia and that the Somalia Security Forces (SSF) should be provided with adequate firepower and resources to enable them to reduce the threats posed by Al-Shabaab;

13. **Encourages** the SSF to further enhance its efforts to hold Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and secure areas where ATMIS troops will withdraw; in this regard, **Requests** partners to increase their support to the SSF, including in enhancing force generation, with attendant capabilities and structures, particularly Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and aviation, including casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) to increase its performance;

14. **Expresses concern over** the dire humanitarian challenges and **encourages** the SSF to create safe corridors for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and to ensure that essential services like food, medical aid, and life-saving support are not negatively affected;

15. **Underscores** the crucial need for the integration of regional security forces into the Somali Security Forces and Institutions and **acknowledges** the importance of involving FMS in the entire drawdown process and the continued implementation of the National Security Architecture;
16. **Further reiterates** its decision on the need to organise a pledging conference to support the FGS in its force generation efforts, stabilising the country and addressing the humanitarian challenges brought about by both insecurity and climate change-related shocks; **calls** on bilateral and international partners to redouble their efforts in financially supporting the FGS in its national efforts;
17. **Requests** the AU Commission, in collaboration with the FGS, to undertake a Study to evaluate the progress made by the FGS in reforms, force generation, and readiness to stabilise the country, as well as a needs assessment to determine the support required to accompany the FGS in its aspiration for degrading al-Shabaab and protecting the territorial integrity in the country;
18. **Also requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to work out a viable ATMIS exit strategy, which should include proposals on AU's continued engagement with and support to Somalia post 31 December 2024;
19. **Further requests** the AU Commission to expedite the operationalisation of the AU Ministerial Committee on Counter-Terrorism as decided by the 16th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, held on 28 May 2022, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea;
20. **Directs** the AU Commission to transmit this communique to the UNSC in compliance with UNSC Resolution [2628 \(2022\)](#); and
21. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.

Enclosure II

[Original: English and French]

THE JOINT TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT**SEPTEMBER 2023****TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AS	Al-Shabaab
ATMIS	African Union Transition Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
C2	Command and Control
CAS	Close Air Support
CASEVAC/MEDEVAC	Casualty evacuation/Medical evacuation
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CONOPs	Concept of Operations
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member States
FOB	Forward Operating Bases
HOTO	Handover/Takeover
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IEDs	Improvised Explosive Devices
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
JOC	Joint Operations Centres
JTA	Joint Technical Assessment
MSRs	Main Supply Routes
NSArch	National Security Architecture
SNAF	Somali National Armed Forces
SSF	Somali Security Forces
TCCs	Troop Contributing Countries
UN	United Nations
UNSOS	United Nations Support Office in Somalia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: JOINT TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

This executive summary encapsulates the findings and recommendations of the Joint Technical Assessment Report, which comprehensively examines the ongoing security transition in Somalia. This report delves into the phased withdrawal of African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) uniformed personnel and the transfer of security responsibilities to the Somali Security Forces (SSF), offering an intricate analysis of the existing and evolving threats, assessment of ATMIS performance, Forward Operating Basis (FOB) functionality and drawdown implications, lessons learned, and critical funding requirements.

Security Landscape and Persistent Threats:

The assessment begins by shedding light on the complex security dynamics within Somalia. It underscores the formidable threats posed by extremist groups, notably Al-Shabaab (AS) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Somalia. AS continues to be a dominant threat, employing asymmetric tactics, extortion, and intricate attacks. The pervasive use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) underscores the pressing need for continuous support to the SSF in terms of counter-IED equipment and training.

Humanitarian Dimensions:

Amid these security challenges, Somalia grapples with a dire humanitarian crisis. The report acknowledges the relentless efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and international humanitarian organisations in tackling these challenges. Despite the enormity of the crisis, the FGS remains unwavering in its commitment to safeguarding the welfare of its citizens and averting a famine. However, the drawdown of ATMIS personnel raises concerns about the continued provision of essential services to vulnerable populations.

Assessment of ATMIS:

The report conducts a thorough assessment of ATMIS, accentuating its pivotal role in establishing an enabling environment for political processes and executing successful operations against AS. It underscores the significance of collaborative operations, mentorship, and the safeguarding of critical infrastructure. The report also highlights coordination issues between ATMIS and SSF, emphasising the urgency of enhancing intelligence sharing, conducting joint operations and command and control mechanisms.

Functionality of FOBs and Associated Challenges:

The assessment delves into the operations of Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) and their critical role in Somalia's security infrastructure. It scrutinises the repercussions of FOB transitions on community resources and underscores the responsibility thrust upon local authorities when FOBs are shuttered. The geographical positioning of FOBs and their relationship with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is explored, revealing a clustering of IDP sites around areas secured by government forces.

Lessons Learned from Phase 1 Drawdown:

The report distils valuable lessons from Phase 1 of the drawdown, underscoring the imperative of Force Generation and the continued implementation of the National Security Architecture. It points out the delays in strategic decision-making, the prevalence of competing security priorities, and the vital role of comprehensive security planning.

Logistics and Funding Imperatives:

The assessment underscores the criticality of funding and logistical support for the SSF as they take on increased security responsibilities. It accentuates the necessity to reassess operational needs, bolster force protection measures, and re-evaluate the cooperation framework between ATMIS, UNSOS, and the SSF. A joint review of planned activities and associated financial requirements is considered paramount to ensure the successful transition of the SSF.

In conclusion, this executive summary summarises the substance of the Joint Technical Assessment Report on Somalia's security transition. It addresses the security landscape, humanitarian concerns, lessons learned, and the essential logistical and financial prerequisites. It underscores the multifaceted challenges confronting Somalia and emphasises the pivotal role of collaborative efforts between national and international stakeholders in steering Somalia towards a stable and secure future.

INTRODUCTION

1. The transition of security responsibilities from the African Union Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) to the Somali Security Forces (SSF) marks a pivotal moment in Somalia's path towards sustainable peace and security. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2687 [2023] requests a phased drawdown of ATMIS, starting with Phase 1 and progressing towards Phase 2, as part of this transition process. The end-state for Somalia remains to bring about greater security through delivering a phased, conditions-based, and sustainable transition of security responsibilities from ATMIS to the SSF through the development of an affordable, accountable and capable SSF.

2. This report presents the Joint Technical Assessment (JTA, also referred to as 'the report') of the Phase 1 drawdown. The assessment draws on a broad range of sources, including UN Security Council reports, National Security Architecture Agreement of March 2023, ATMIS mandate, field assessments, the joint technical assessment benchmarks report for security transition in Somalia and operational assessments, in order to develop a comprehensive conception of the Phase 1 drawdown process.

3. The key objective of the JTA report is to take stock of the progress made, highlight the challenges, and take stock of the lessons learned from Phase 1. This assessment will serve to identify the desired way forward and highlight areas of improvement that can further shape the planning and implementation of the upcoming Phase 2 drawdown. Furthermore, the JTA delineates the various functions and roles of ATMIS within the sectors, including logistical support, training and capacity building of the SSF. It seeks to determine the impact further drawdown would have on these functions and roles and the implications thereof for the overall security landscape in Somalia.

4. This assessment also aligns with the mandate provided under Part VI, paragraph 40 of UN Security Council Resolution 2687 [2023] which stipulates, *'The Security Council requests the Government of Somalia and the Africa Union in consultation with the United Nations and international partners to conduct a joint technical assessment by 31 August 2023 to evaluate Phase 1 drawdown, taking into account the lessons identified from Phase 1, and setting out a clear plan and timescale for Phase 2 drawdown.'* The assessment also addresses paragraph 41 of the UN Security Council Resolution 2687 [2023] which states the *Security Council Requests an update by 15 September 2023 from the African Union and the Government of Somalia on the preparations for Phase 2 drawdown, taking into account the lessons identified in Phase 1, and setting a clear plan and timetable for Phase 2 drawdown.*

5. The JTA report was guided by the Terms of Reference which was endorsed by the FGS, AU and Partners which limited the scope of the JTA to provide a comprehensive assessment of Phase 1 drawdown including the lessons learnt, challenges and best practices as well as a detailed plan and timeline for Phase 2. Due to time constraints and the limitations provided by the JTA, the FGS and AU aim to plan for the assessment of the remaining phases at a later stage.

6. The purpose of the JTA report is to inform and guide the critical transition towards a Somalia that is secure and stable.

METHODOLOGY

7. The methodology of this report is divided into two parts corresponding to the two distinct phases of the evaluation:

- a. Impact assessment of Phase 1 drawdown

- b. Detailed Planning and Timeline for Phase 2 drawdown
8. This report includes a comprehensive assessment for the Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) that were handed over, focusing on the following criterion:
- a. Functionality of the FOB including the maintenance, equipment status and logistical support.
 - b. Security in the surrounding area, with a particular focus on the activities and intent of Al-Shabaab since the FOB handovers.
 - c. Operational Readiness Assessment of the SSF, using a comprehensive questionnaire that focuses on the SSF's current capacities and operational effectiveness but also their adaptability and future planning.
9. The second part of the methodology involved developing a detailed plan and timeline for Phase 2 drawdown. This was conducted through a comprehensive assessment on the threat posed by Al-Shabaab. The lessons learned of Phase 1 and the progress made by ATMIS and the SSF informed the planning for Phase 2. Furthermore, considerations were made on the logistical and resource requirements, including stipends, the UNSOS trust fund and UNSOS assessed contributions.
10. The proposed plan outlines the FOB closures and handover, along with recommended timelines for this process. As part of this assessment, several approaches were suggested in order to maintain the gains made so far by the SSF and ATMIS.
11. Throughout the assessment, a consultative approach was taken which involved all stakeholders including Somalia's international partners, relevant Federal Government of Somalia institutions and agencies as well as ATMIS and the SSF. This approach ensured an inclusive perspective, incorporating the insights and lessons learned of those directly involved in the drawdown and transition process.

PART 1: IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF PHASE 1 DRAWDOWN

12. The purpose of the Impact Assessment is to provide a comprehensive review of the first phase of drawdown to determine a clear plan and timescale for the Phase 2 drawdown of ATMIS Uniformed Personnel that is positioned within the wider overall security transition to a sustainable end state, as envisaged under the FGS National Security Architecture (NSArch).
13. This part of the JTA report is structured into several distinct sections, ensuring a comprehensive examination of the security transition process and its multifaceted implications. The approach of the JTA report is as follows:
- a. Threat Assessment
 - b. Assessment of ATMIS Performance
 - c. FOB Functionality and Drawdown Implications
 - d. Lessons Learned
 - e. Funding Requirements

1.1. Threat Assessment

14. The objective of the Phase 1 drawdown and handover was to facilitate the SSF's ability to maintain security independently, a task critical to Somalia's long-term stability. However, this new responsibility was undertaken under multifaceted threats undermining Somalia's security, primarily from groups such as Al-Shabaab (AS) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in Somalia. Nonetheless, challenges

manifest in various forms, such as persistent humanitarian crisis and the capacity and capabilities of the SSF to deal with the existing threats.

1.1.a Security threats

15. AS, despite the significant degradation of its capabilities due to the ongoing sustained counter-terrorism operations, remains the most substantial threat to peace and security in Somalia and the wider Horn of Africa region.

16. Al-Shabaab's (AS) strategic intent remains to establish a caliphate in Somalia, through the spread of violent extremism and other non-violent means including persuasion to expand its influence through the provision of services, justice, and propaganda.

17. AS' tactics increasingly favour complex, asymmetric attacks, including ambushes, small-scale raids and assassinations against government personnel and civilians, effectively undermining the efforts to extend state authority and government functions. Beyond these immediate security threats, on the economic front, AS' influence over the Main Supply Routes (MSRs) enables the group to extort significant amounts of money from the public, creating an illicit revenue stream that further bolsters their operational capabilities.

18. For its sustainment and to fund its military operations, AS relies primarily on extortion in Somalia under the pretext of "*Zakawaat*". Through extortion, AS enforces a 2.5 per cent monetary charge on businesses and collects non-monetary items from various clans for its fighters. AS also imposes payments on clans, communities, and businesses in AS area of influence. SNAF and ATMIS units overrun by AS also provide opportunities for resupply of weapons and ammunition.

19. As a direct result of the IED threats, there is a pressing need for continued support to the SSF with counter-IED equipment and training, a necessity that becomes more acute with each subsequent phase of the drawdown.

1.1.b Humanitarian threats

20. In addition to the dire humanitarian situation in Somalia, it is important to note that the Federal Government of Somalia has taken significant measures to avert a famine and provide crucial resources and support to address the ongoing crisis.

21. The Federal Government of Somalia, in collaboration with international humanitarian organizations and partners, has been actively working to address these challenges.

22. Efforts have been made to provide essential resources, including food, clean water, healthcare, and shelter, to those affected by the crisis. Additionally, the government has been working on conflict resolution initiatives to mitigate the root causes of displacement and foster peace and stability in affected regions.

23. Despite the immense challenges posed by the ongoing humanitarian crisis and displacement, the Federal Government of Somalia remains committed to safeguarding the well-being of its citizens and has been working diligently to avert a famine and provide vital support during this critical time.

24. The drawdown of ATMIS personnel will necessitate that the SSF takes over the security responsibilities with sufficient planning and logistics capabilities, as the SSF may currently find it challenging to manage both the operations against AS strongholds and ensuring security in areas under government control. Furthermore, the already restricted access to the most vulnerable populations may be further limited. The drawdown could disrupt the delivery of essential services like food, medical aid and other lifesaving support.

25. On the Protection of Civilians, the FOBs that have been handed over so far have not experienced a return of displaced populations. However, any sudden change in the security dynamics due to the drawdown could cause a surge in displacement or prevent the safe return of displaced persons. Trust between the local communities and Somali authorities and security forces may be affected if security gains are not sustained. This will particularly be the case if communities perceive being at risk of increased retaliatory attacks as a result of Al-Shabaab activity (e.g., damage to water points) or other non-state armed actors e.g., in the event of increased inter and intra clan violence (e.g., Al-Shabaab attacks on Gerilley FOB following the handover).

26. To mitigate this risk, it is important that the FGS enhances engagement with protection actors as part of future ATMIS/FGS/SSF planning processes surrounding the closure and handover of FOBs, thereby ensuring early information to inform planning. The capacity of the SSF and local authorities to take over the responsibilities currently fulfilled by ATMIS needs to be strengthened to avoid a security vacuum. Moreover, measures should be put in place to ensure that the delivery of humanitarian aid is not disrupted due to the drawdown. ATMIS and FGS to address POC concerns and ensure such concerns are effectively taken into account in time for phase 2 drawdown.

27. In addition, it is equally essential that the FGS Initiates monitoring and analysis of the impact of the anticipated closures/handovers on local populations for Phase 2 drawdown and handover. Indeed, this will require dedicated resources and time to develop and conduct tailored assessments.

28. These factors underscore the urgent need for additional resources and support to the SSF and FGS's path to self-sufficiency in the context of security transition. A significant increase in logistical and financial support from UNSOS is essential to enabling the SSF to fully assume and manage its security responsibilities and to maintain the gains achieved through the Phase 1 drawdown.

29. The threats addressed in this assessment, including the security threats from Al-Shabaab and ongoing humanitarian crises may significantly impact future drawdowns if not appropriately addressed or mitigated. An uncoordinated withdrawal could potentially create a security vacuum, disrupt humanitarian aid, exacerbate conflicts, undermine government authority, and increase civilian casualties. The threat assessment inferred that a comprehensive approach is required, one that strengthens the capacity of the SSF, ensures humanitarian aid delivery, enhances governance, and extends state authority to ensure a successful and stable transition during the drawdown process.

1.2. Assessment Of ATMIS

30. Despite the significant security challenges ATMIS has been able to provide an enabling environment for the political processes to take place through the provision of election security support jointly with the SSF.

31. Furthermore, ATMIS successfully conducted independent and joint operations with the SNAF, to degrade AS across sectors in areas of Hiran, Middle Shabelle and Galgaduud, Lower Juba and Gedo Regions.

32. ATMIS forces successfully maintained a presence in the sectors, jointly holding priority population centres and providing protection for the local communities as well as UN personnel, continuing to secure the key supply routes, including areas recovered from AS.

33. Mentoring and assisting SSF has been maintained and effected through joint operations planning and coordination as well as colocation. Overall, partly owing to this mentoring, the SSF have, to an extent, improved on their professionalism and

ability to plan and conduct major operations independently. This has been demonstrated in the successful offensive operations carried out by the SNAF DANAAB forces as well as the Gorgor and other SNAF units in Hiran region, Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle and Galmudug. The silver lining, is the joint patrolling at ground level, indicates a willingness from both sides to work together.

34. The FOBs that were handed over to the SSF by ATMIS play a critical role in the overall security infrastructure of Somalia. Due to the time limitations and lack of qualified technicians, training provided to the SSF personnel has been conducted in an ad-hoc nature. This has the potential to compromise the operational integrity of the FOBs. With SSF personnel not uniformly trained, there is a heightened risk of operational lapses at these bases. Therefore, it is suggested that training is pre-empted and uniformly conducted well in advance.

35. As a result, the ad-hoc training might have unintentionally created a dependency loop where the SSF, upon facing challenges at the FOBs, might continuously seek support in the maintenance of the equipment and training in utilising the equipment. This counters the primary goal of handing over the FOBs, which is to make the SSF self-reliant.

36. This experience can serve as a precedent for future handovers. It is crucial for both ATMIS, UNSOS and the SSF to revisit the training procedures, ensuring that personnel stationed at FOBs are adequately equipped, both in terms of skills and functional equipment, to handle the security challenges they face at the FOBs.

37. Nonetheless, ATMIS has provided critical protection of infrastructures such as the airports and seaports. This has ensured safety and the facilitation of the movement of goods, services, and people, both which are important to stability and promoting economic growth.

38. In light of the ongoing transition activities, the SNAF is conducting both defensive and offensive operations which indicates that their capacity is over stretched. However, it also points to their capability to adapt and take on varied roles. While ATMIS primary objective is to execute the UNSC mandate, the FGSs primary concern to conduct both independent offensive and defensive operations has resulted in competing priorities. The original intent of the UNSC mandate and the joint FGS-AU Concept of Operations (CONOPs) of ATMIS jointly conducting clearance and shaping operations might be compromised if the competing priorities persist.

39. Lastly, enhancing the operational capacities of SNAF has been a focus for ATMIS. Working in unison with partners, the SNAF have bolstered its ability to conduct Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) activities and Counter IED operations, further solidifying the region's security apparatus.

40. This assessment also underlines coordination challenges at multiple levels between ATMIS and the SSF. While Joint Operations Centres (JOC) exist in sectors, their inclusion of SNAF at crucial stages with regard to information sharing and joint operational planning seems to be limited. A similar overarching concern is the evident lack of Command and Control (C2) mechanisms between ATMIS and SSF.

41. Two primary reasons have been cited as driving the lack of coordination between the SSF and ATMIS on intelligence sharing. First, the re-deployment of significant number of SNAF personnel from Sector 5 to the Galmudug region for the Al-Shabaab offensive has underscored the issue of conflicting priorities as the result of the ongoing AS offensive operations and thus causing modest persistence on part of the SSF. Second, various contingents within ATMIS raising concerns of the appropriate security clearances of SNAF personnel.

42. In addition, a mismatch in risk appetites between ATMIS and SSF could be due to differing operational experiences, strategic objectives, and perceptions of threat levels. This is largely attributed to the competing priorities of the SSF and ATMIS regarding the CONOPs and the FGS core operational objectives. This discord, if not resolved, could lead to inconsistent operational strategies and even potential security lapses for phase 2 planning.

43. In order to enhance effective coordination mechanisms, ATMIS and the SSF can address the outlined issues by conducting the following:

- a. **Strengthen the coordination of JOCs:** JOCs to be more inclusive, with clear protocols for information sharing, decision-making, and operations.
- b. **Joint Training:** Instituting joint training sessions can help in building trust and understanding between the forces. Such sessions can also familiarise both sides with their respective operational protocols and capabilities.

1.3. Functioning of FOBs and Challenges

1.3.a The Function of the FOBs

44. Following the successful drawdown of 2,000 ATMIS Uniformed Personnel, six Forward Operating Basis (FOB)s- namely, Xaaji Cali, Mirtaqwo, Cadaale, Arbaco, Geriley, and Al-Jazeera-1 were handed over to the SSF. The process of handing over these FOBs required meticulous planning and in-depth assessments to ensure that the SSF would be adequately equipped to manage the new responsibilities and challenges that accompanies this transition.

45. In addition, one FOB, Marka Ayub was collapsed. The decision to collapse this FOB was guided by a strategic analysis of the overall security assessments of the SNAF's capabilities and operational efficiency.

46. The unaltered state of security threats post-handover of the FOBs to the SSF suggests that the SSF has at least been capable of holding its position against pre-existing threats. Despite potential resource and training constraints, the SSF has managed to keep adversaries at bay, which is commendable. The SSF's ability to maintain the same level of security showcases their capacity to withstand the existing threats.

47. However, the assessment has revealed that there needs to be a clear identification, hierarchy, and structure of military forces, detailing both the units in place and their capabilities. Currently, the capabilities of the SNAF units deployed across Somalia and in particular around the vicinity of the Forward Operating Bases do not have a complete and up to date organisational structure that highlights the existing capability gaps in each FOB, which has serious implications.

48. An updated organisational structure will help the SNAF make informed decisions during operations. The lack of data around the existing capabilities can lead to flawed tactical decisions, potentially resulting in mission failure or unnecessary casualties. At a strategic level, this can impair the ability to formulate coherent long-term defence and security policies, allocate resources efficiently, and establish robust military doctrines. Furthermore, without a clear understanding of the units and capabilities in place, there might be redundant acquisitions or, conversely, critical gaps in equipment, training, or manpower. Therefore, an accurate and up to date organisational structure will help in logistical planning, ensuring that units are resupplied and reinforced as necessary. Without it, there might be mismatches between what units need and what they receive. More importantly, it is challenging to ascertain the actual fighting capability of a force and this can lead to overconfidence or underestimation of the SNAF's capabilities.

49. Furthermore, the lack of Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) and aviation capability in the SNAF has considerable implications. ISR capabilities play a vital role in providing a real-time understanding of the operational environment in the areas of operation. Without effective ISR, the SNAF may struggle to gain timely intelligence on enemy movements, strengths, or intentions, putting them at a strategic disadvantage. In addition, it is currently challenging for the SNAF to detect and counter threats early, leading to ambush attacks by adversaries such as Al-Shabaab. This has resulted in higher casualties relative to those of ATMIS.

50. As the SNAF takes on additional security responsibilities, aviation capability is essential not only for offensive operations but also for rapid troop deployment, CASEVAC/MEDEVAC, and resupply missions. Currently, the SNAF's ability to respond quickly to emerging threats or shift forces to different fronts has been significantly hampered.

51. Furthermore, the SNAF currently strongly relies on UNSOS to provide logistics support via helicopters. While such support has been beneficial, over-reliance can lead to operational constraints and can be politically sensitive. Moreover, lack of ISR and aviation assets means that the SSF lacks the strategic depth to project power beyond their immediate areas of control or to pursue retreating enemies effectively. Without integrated ISR and aviation support, ground forces might operate with a lack of air cover, real-time intelligence, or the ability to exploit aerial assets for tactical advantages.

52. However, it is worth noting that even if the SNAF were to acquire ISR and aviation assets in the future, they would face challenges in training personnel to operate and maintain these systems. This would also require infrastructure investments in airbases, maintenance facilities, and communication systems. The fixed costs/investment required is capital intensive. The FGS would need significant financial resources, which might be challenging given the State's current budget projections. The FGS would likely need to rely on international aid, donations, or purchase agreements.

53. To mitigate these challenges, it is crucial for the FGS to focus on building partnerships that can temporarily fill these capability gaps while also investing in the long-term development of its ISR and aviation infrastructure and personnel training. This includes leveraging international military training programs, exploring cost-effective ISR solutions (like commercial drones), and seeking international partnerships for joint ISR and aviation operations.

54. The simultaneous drawdown of ATMIS uniformed personnel and the SSF's offensive operations introduce several significant implications for the SSF. The dual demands of adjusting to newly handed-over territories while managing the complexities will strain the SSF's resources and command capabilities. The FGS must ensure that the SSF have the manpower and capabilities to fill the vacuum left by the departing ATMIS troops. With the ongoing operations and the need to simultaneously secure newly handed-over areas, the SSF might find itself spread thin. Over-extension could lead to a decrease in response capabilities, leaving certain areas vulnerable.

55. Lack of coordination in some sectors during the operations could be exploited by adversaries. Insurgent groups like Al-Shabaab may perceive these transitional periods as opportune moments to stage attacks, capitalizing on possible lapses in security or confusion. However, it is worth noting that efforts have been made to address these challenges.

56. Managing operations demands a well-organised logistical framework. The SSF must ensure that supplies, equipment, and reinforcements can be swiftly moved to

where they are needed, especially if ATMIS's drawdown impacts existing logistical chains.

57. Moreover, in the event of an unexpected threat or a breach, undermanned FOBs might not have the required rapid reaction forces to counteract swiftly, leading to prolonged engagements or, in worst cases, loss of control over parts of the FOB. It is worth noting that the tactical posture of the SNAF varies significantly to that of ATMIS, as the SNAF is more mobile and agile in nature. Adequately supplying large FOBs with the necessary provisions, ammunition, and equipment becomes a challenge, especially if there are not sufficiently available personnel and if primary logistical routes are under threat. Furthermore, with the SNAF concentrating on offensives against Al-Shabaab, the required resources, such as logistics, supplies, and communication equipment, might be strained, further compromising the FOBs' effective functioning.

58. The SNAF has maintained the FOBs which were handed over with success. However, it is worth noting that future FOBs may not be peripheral in nature. In addition, the relative success in these regions may have also been due to the proximity of the ATMIS near the FOBs that were handed over, which possibly acted as a deterrent. This might not be replicable in more remote areas where the ATMIS or allied-forces latent threat does not exist. Therefore, for phase 2 planning, it is essential that a threat assessment is conducted which takes into consideration the relative remoteness of the FOBs, reinforcing support that exists in FOBS that are to be handed over or collapsed.

59. Given these challenges, it is imperative for the FGS to re-evaluate the strategic necessity of maintaining large FOBs, especially if they cannot be manned adequately. Considerations could be given to:

- a. **Operational Prioritisation:** If the offensive against Al-Shabaab is deemed a higher priority, then it is essential to ensure that the FOBs do not become a vulnerability. This might mean temporarily withdrawing from or consolidating certain FOBs. The SNAF should identify and plan to hold a limited number of FOBs that make strategic and operational sense.
- b. **Resizing or Relocating FOBs:** Depending on the strategic importance, some FOBs could be resized to be more manageable.
- c. **Force Multipliers:** Leveraging force multipliers like drones for surveillance, early warning systems, or even local militia integration to augment security.

60. Therefore, it is crucial for the FGS to maintain a balance between offensive operations and ensuring the security and functionality of the FOBs.

1.3.b Drawdown and the Impact on Civilian Population

61. During the drawdown process, FOBs typically undergo one of two major transitions. Firstly, an FOB can be handed over to the SNAF. Secondly, an FOB might be closed entirely. The FOB placements are strategic. Some are in close proximity to district centres, while others are situated in more rural regions, predominantly along the main routes that connect district centres.

62. The role of ATMIS FOBs in these regions is not to provide service directly to the civilian population. Instead, their presence, combined with that of the SSF, creates a secured environment. This stability is essential for the effective extension of State authority, as well as for partners engaged in stabilisation and humanitarian initiatives. Notably, most of these FOBs are equipped with their own dedicated water sources, such as boreholes. This approach ensures they are not depleting community resources.

Beyond their self-reliance, it is worth noting that both ATMIS FOBs and SNAF have a history of sharing their water supplies with nearby communities. However, a limitation is evident when considering their energy capacity. Given their locations, often on the peripheries, these FOBs generally cannot supply electricity to adjacent communities or district centres.

63. The ramifications of an FOB's transition on community resources are multifaceted. If an ATMIS FOB is handed over to SNAF, it is generally expected that the borehole or well associated with that FOB will also be transferred. Conversely, when an FOB is closed, the typical procedure involves dismantling any associated borehole equipment. This action then places the responsibility on local communities or district authorities to identify alternative solutions, such as procuring and installing pumps or generators.

64. The impact on IDPs due to FOB transitions varies based on the FOB's geographical location. In situations where the SSF secures a district centre, it's observed that there is a minimal impact on the IDP locations and their service delivery. A testament to this is evident in regions like Beledweyne. However, the dynamics shift slightly in more rural areas. Locations such as Qorilow or Mirtaqwo in Hirshabelle might be home to a limited number of IDP settlements. Yet, it's crucial to acknowledge that a vast majority of IDP sites are primarily located within district centres.

65. To provide a broader context of the FOB and IDP relationship: out of the current 67 FOBs that are under ATMIS's purview, there are hundreds of IDP sites in the surrounding areas. The strategic placement of these IDP sites is evident, with many clustered around secure and protected regions, especially state capitals and district centres. The task of maintaining security and ensuring access to these IDP sites falls predominantly on the shoulders of government security forces. One can observe this dynamic in places like Beledweyne. Numerous IDP sites surround the town. However, the ATMIS base at the airport does not have the mandate to protect or oversee these IDP camps. Their placement around Beledweyne is primarily due to the overarching security infrastructure of the town.

1.4. Lessons Learnt from Phase 1 Drawdown

66. Despite the challenges, the Tripartite Technical Committee comprised of representatives from FGS, ATMIS and UNSOS worked to ensure Phase 1 drawdown of 2,000 troops out of the mission area was achieved within the set timelines of 30 June 2023. Some of the critical lessons learned include but not limited to the following:

a. Strategic Lessons Learned

- (1) Integration of FGS and FMS security forces is critical for a cohesive and sustainable takeover and holding of the FOBs and protection of the population.
- (2) Involvement of FMS authorities on issues of drawdown in line with the National Security Architecture is critical.
- (3) Delays in decision making at the strategic level hindered timely implementation of the drawdown.

b. Security Related Lessons Learned

- (1) Competing security priorities between FGS and ATMIS forces. The Tripartite Technical Committee has been informed that the priority requirement of FGS is to conduct offensive operations and not the takeover

of FOBs. ATMIS mandate includes the protection of key population centres and ensures forces protection.

- (2) Avail FGS/SNAF CONOPs regarding subsequent drawdown phases well ahead of time for proper and timely planning.
- (3) The need for enhanced and continued force protection demanded some TCCs to retain forces earmarked for drawdown at own cost.
- (4) Lack of comprehensive security planning of the population centres surrounding FOBs.

c. Administrative Lessons Learned

- (1) Timelines for Handover/Takeover (HOTO) have not been supportive of timely implementation of the drawdown operation, including orientation of SNAF troops in preparation for takeover of security responsibilities.
- (2) Utilisation of local contractors should be encouraged with sourcing from Mogadishu as a last resort due to time limitations in order to facilitate the timely lift of troops and equipment.
- (3) To handover functioning equipment at the FOBs to the SNAF.
- (4) There is a need to increase the capacity and capabilities of SNAF in particular; aviation, logistics and ISR.

1.5. Funding Requirements

67. The funding requirements for the SSF to continue assuming security responsibilities from ATMIS are crucial for the successful implementation of the National Security Architecture. Such requirements are critical in the contributions to the UNSOS trust fund and UNSOS assessed contributions.

68. The SSF-UNSOS trust fund remains a vital financial mechanism that supports the SSFs offensive operations. It provides resources for non-lethal support such as logistical support and capacity building. Contributions to this fund are critical for the continued provision of these services, which are essential for the successful implementation of security transition. Due to the shift in the operational tempo of the offensive against Al-Shabaab coupled with the development of the SSF as a professional and capable force, the current logistics support is deemed insufficient. As a result of the increased demand in logistics supposed, the operational needs of the SSF ought to be reassessed as the SSF assumes further responsibilities from ATMIS and the costs of planned transition activities. This will ensure that the SSF has the necessary financial resources to continue the transition activities and achieve the desired end-state by the end of 2024.

69. Therefore, it is necessary for the FGS and UN to jointly conduct a review of the planned activities and their associated costs to estimate the contributions needed for the UNSOS trust fund, as the transitions activities including the drawdown are underway.

70. Under the increasing responsibility borne by the SSF following the Phase 1 drawdown of ATMIS personnel, the SSF has demonstrated commendable operational and fiscal competencies. The SSF has demonstrated a commitment to accountability, showing exemplary fiscal responsibility. The reliable management of funds, coupled with evidence of operational competence, underscores the SSF's readiness to effectively manage and use any additional support provided by UNSOS as underlined in the joint technical assessment benchmarks report for security transition in Somalia. The FGS underscores the criticality of UNSOS to enhance its logistical support to the SSF as they assume more responsibilities from ATMIS.

71. These challenges highlight the need for an in-depth review and perhaps a re-evaluation of the current cooperation structure between ATMIS, UNSOS, and SSF. As ATMIS continues its drawdown, the SSF's ability to operate independently, with full functionality, becomes even more critical. Addressing these logistical and operational shortcomings is paramount for the stability and security of Somalia.

PART 2: DETAILED PLAN AND TIMELINE FOR DRAWDOWN OF ATMIS

Drawdown Plan of Potential FOBs to Collapse/Handover

72. The Tripartite Committee was formed in April of this year between FGS, ATMIS and UNSOS to coordinate Phase 1 drawdown of 2000 troops. The same committee was retained to coordinate Phase 2 drawdown of 3000 troops and accordingly, work commenced in early July 2023. During the committee's work, ATMIS presented a proposal of 15 FOBs based on pro-rata arrangement at 30 percent across all TCCs deployed strength. The proposal wasn't agreed upon by the FGS on account of what they referred to as tactical, operational and security priorities. Between ATMIS, FGS and UNSOS, a decision was taken to come up with a hybrid proposal that culminated in the following troop numbers with 10 FOBs as shown in the table below.

SER	SECTOR	TCC	QUOTA FOR DRAWDOWN	FOBs TO HOTO/CLOSE	REMARKS
1.	1	UPDF	734	STATE HOUSE	HOTO BY SNAF
				PARLIAMENT	HOTO BY SNAF
2.	2/6	KDF	754	BUUR XAAJI	CLOSE
				SARILEEY	CLOSE
				KISMAYO OLD AIRPORT 2	HOTO BY JSF
3.	3	ENDF	507	KISMAYO OLD AIRPORT 1	HOTO BY JSF
4.	4	DNDF	271	DHUSAMAREEB	HOTO BY SNAF
				BIYO-CADDE	HOTO BY SNAF
5.	5	BNDF	734	RAAGA-CEELE	HOTO BY SNAF
				QORILOW	HOTO BY SNAF
	TOTAL		3,000		

Timelines For Phase 2 Drawdown of 3,000 Troops

Sr	Activities in line with UNSOS SOP/ Guidelines	Date
1.	Recce of FOBs	31 Aug – 10 Sep 23
2.	Handover of Priority I FOBs	10-12 Sep 23
	c. Handover Kismayo Old Airport 1 in Sector 6 for KDF	12 Sep 23
	d. Handover Kismayo Old Airport 2 in Sector 6 for ENDF	12 Sep 23
3.	Handover of Priority II FOB	14 Sep 23
	a. Handover Biyo-cadde in Sector 5 for BNDF	14 Sep 23
4.	Handover /Closure of Priority III FOBs	21-27 Sep 23
	a. Close Buur xaaji in Sector 2 for KDF	21 Sep 23
	b. Close Serileey in Sector 2 for KDF for closure.	22 Sep 23
	c. Handover Dhuusamareeb in Sector 4 for DNDF	24 Sep 23
	d. Handover Parliament House in Sector 1 for UPDF	25 Sep 23
	e. Handover State House in Sector 1 for UPDF	25 Sep 23
	f. Close Raaga Ceele in Sector 5 for BNDF	26 Sep 23
	g. Close Qorilow in Sector 5 for BNDF	27 Sep 23
5.	Hand over documentations completed	28 Sep 23
6.	Official handover ceremony	29 Sep 23

Innovative approaches to safeguard the gains made on the ground by FGS

73. SNAF should continue with Force generation integrating FMS security forces and local militias to support SNAF in offensive operations. UNSOS is requested to extend support to those FMS forces.

74. ATMIS will conduct mobile offensive operations in support of SNAF and at the same time secure vital installations of government, the UN and its affiliate agencies, international partners, populated centers, MSRs and support to humanitarian assistance operations that shall be within their AOR.

75. We expect force multipliers like helicopters to deploy by October to insert and extract troops and provide Close Air Support (CAS) in support of joint offensive operations.

76. Partners' support with capabilities for CAS like armed drones and intelligence gathering in support of joint operations.

77. Measures should be put in place to hold liberated areas whether with local or SSF forces to safeguard gains made.

RECOMMENDATIONS

78. The Joint Technical Assessment (JTA) Report has provided a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities surrounding the lessons learned from Phase 1 drawdown as well as the planning for Phase 2. Building upon the insights and findings of the report, the following recommendations are proposed to guide the stakeholders involved in this critical transition:

a. Strategic and Security Recommendations:

(1) **Enhance Integration:** Foster greater integration and cooperation between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Federal Member States (FMS) security forces. This synergy is pivotal for a cohesive and sustainable transfer of security responsibilities.

(2) **Continued implementation of the NSArch:** Involve FMS authorities proactively in the decision-making processes related to the security transition. Align these processes with the National Security Architecture to ensure regional perspectives and priorities are considered.

(3) **Harmonise Security Priorities:** Resolve competing security priorities between FGS and African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Ensure clear alignment between the objectives of ATMIS's mandate and the FGS's security goals, particularly regarding offensive operations and the takeover of Forward Operating Bases (FOBs).

(4) **Comprehensive Security Planning:** Develop and implement comprehensive security planning for population centres surrounding FOBs. This planning should account for the unique security dynamics of each area and ensure seamless transitions.

b. Administrative and Coordination Recommendations

(1) **Build and Enhance the SSF Capacities and Capabilities:** Invest in the capacity and capabilities of SNAF, particularly in aviation, logistics, and Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. These enhancements are vital for the SSF's ability to operate effectively and independently.

(2) **Ensure Effective Equipment Handover:** Prioritise the handover of functioning equipment at the FOBs to the SNAF to maintain operational integrity.

(3) **Optimise HOTO Timelines:** Revise Handover/Takeover (HOTO) timelines to be more supportive of the drawdown operation's timely execution. Allow sufficient time for orientation of SNAF troops in preparation for taking over security responsibilities.

c. Funding and Resource Recommendations

(1) **Review Funding Requirements:** Jointly conduct a comprehensive review of the planned activities and associated costs to estimate the contributions needed for the UNSOS trust fund. Reassess the logistics support requirements as the SSF assumes additional responsibilities from ATMIS.

(2) **Enhanced UNSOS Support:** Recognise the commendable fiscal competence demonstrated by the SSF in managing funds and operations. In light of this, enhance logistical support provided by the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) to the SSF to further strengthen their transition capabilities.

(3) **Cooperation Structure Review:** Undertake an in-depth review of the cooperation structure between ATMIS, UNSOS, and the SSF. Ensure that the SSF's ability to operate independently with full functionality is paramount. Address logistical and operational shortcomings to ensure stability and security in Somalia.