

AMISOM



REVIEW

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Celebrating Progress

At 53, Somalia Flexes Her Economic Muscle

CELEBRATING *50 Years* OF AFRICAN UNITY



Message from the SRCC

Editorial by Special Representative, Ambassador Mahamat Saleh Annadif

Welcome to the 12th edition of the AMISOM Review.

This year, the African Union marks its golden jubilee. 50 years ago, the countries of the continent came together to form what was then known as the Organisation of African Unity, a forum for continental cooperation and unity against common threats. In her remarks during the Handover Ceremony of the 50th Anniversary Torches to the Member States, the Chairperson of the AU Commission noted that “the convening of thirty-two independent states in the Conference of Independent African States in May 1963, remains perhaps one of the most important statements undertaken by Africans towards self determination and prosperity.”

It is a point of pride that the first country in which the jubilee celebrations were held was Somalia. For Somalia is a premier example of what the ideals of Pan-Africanism can achieve put into action. Here, the African Union Mission in Somalia, which is composed of individuals, teams and contingents from across the entire continent, is helping the Somali people restore peace and stability to their nation and confronting those that would keep a fellow African country from a future of stability and prosperity.

Somalia is also apt because of its own history of Pan Africanism. This year, as the country marks 53 years of

independence, we remember the historic role it played in the cause of peace and liberation on the continent. After all, it was Somalia that most prominently supported anti-colonial and anti-apartheid campaigns and even brokered a ceasefire between Uganda and Tanzania in 1971, at a moment when the two countries were on the brink of war.

So, in a sense, the continent, in helping to restore peace and stability in Somalia, is repaying a debt of gratitude. There are few more inspiring examples of this than the deployment of a contingent of Sierra Leonean troops under AMISOM. Sierra Leone is the

nation and its transformed military can be a force for democracy, peace, and reconciliation.”

Indeed, within AMISOM, thousands of individuals are exhibiting the very principles for which the African Union stands: unity, Pan-Africanism, brotherhood. The AMISOM Humanitarian Affairs Unit exemplifies all these in its day to day work helping the Somali government and the international community address the dire humanitarian situation in the country. Though much has been achieved in providing safe access to humanitarian workers, providing basic

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first country outside the East African region to send a contingent to Somalia. Given its own troubled history and the assistance it received from the international community, including many African countries that contributed to the UN peacekeeping force there, Sierra Leone stands out as an example of how, in the words of President Ernest BaiKoroma, “a transformed

equipment and supplies to hospital and beginning to rebuild the shattered social services infrastructure, much more needs to be done. We, in AMISOM, remain committed to doing our part, for as long as the Somali people need us, and to helping them take their rightful place at the continental table and join the rest of the continent in attaining the vision of a united and prosperous Africa.

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News Roundup

RSLAF Troops Move to New Base



The Sierra Leonean contingent settled into its new base camp at the Old Kismayo Airport but the Sierra Leoneans are also deployed in Tabda and Dhobley where they carry out joint security patrols and operations alongside their Kenyan counterparts.

The West African troops become the latest to join the African Union Mission in Somalia and joined the Kenyan contingent in Southern Somalia supporting the Somali National Army as joint forces that continue with the stabilization and pacification of their area of responsibility.

The last batch of the RSLAF troops arrived at the Mission Headquarters in Mogadishu in June and was received by the Force Commander Lt General Andrew Gutti before heading to Kismayo.

Ethiopians Hand Over Security to Gov't and AMISOM

In July, Ethiopian National Defense Forces officially handed over responsibility for the security of several parts of Bay, Bakol and Gedo regions to the Somali National Army and AMISOM. In a handover ceremony held at Villa Baidoa, both SNA and AMISOM officials applauded the Ethiopian troops for their efforts in maintaining peace in the region.

Somalia Chief of General Staff, General Abdirizak Khalif Elmi commended ENDF and the Ethiopian government for their support in liberating many Somali towns, helping to train Somali soldiers and working with the local administrations in liberated areas.

AMISOM Sector 3 commander Colonel John Luc Habarugira thanked the Ethiopian troops for their continued support and for working closely with AMISOM and Somali National Army in protecting the Somali people.

The Ethiopian troops have withdrawn from Baidoa town but remain on its outskirts.



AMISOM Donates Medicines to Baidoa Hospital

On July 16th, the African Union peacekeepers in Baidoa donated a range of medical supplies to the Baidoa regional hospital following requests by the local population and administration to support the town's health facility.



The hospital director, Dr. Abdallah Mohamed Bule, who received the donation from a joint AMISOM and United Nations Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) delegation thanked them noting the facility faced many challenges including lack of surgical equipment, drugs, fuel to power the generators and shortage of staff.

AMISOM's Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) donated 8 boxes of drugs containing antibiotics and other drugs, antiseptic detergents, gloves, sterile gauzes and surgical ward clothes and materials.

"We are proud and happy to support the welfare of the civilian community in this region," said AMISOM Baidoa CIMIC officer captain Fred Nuwagaba.

The Baidoa general hospital has a capacity of 140 beds and, constructed in 1937 by the Italians, is one of the oldest medical facilities in Somalia.

Engendering Equality



Somalia began formulating and drafting its first National Gender Policy with a workshop aimed at exploring and developing gender-sensitive policy and providing a framework for gender equality.

The workshop was facilitated by the AMISOM civilian component and brought together politicians, the Somali Federal Government, Somali women's rights activists and NGOs. Female peacekeepers from the AMISOM military and police components as well as the African Union Gender Directorate also participated.

During the four day workshop, participants worked to identify key issues, challenges and strengths and to develop a deeper understanding of gender issues and equality all the while learning from the experiences and gender policies of AMISOM contributing nations. They also mapped out the process for formulating Somalia's National Gender Policy to be approved by the Federal Government of Somalia.

AMISOM Police TRAIN 100 SPF Trainers

100 trainers from the Somali Police Force (SPF) in June participated in a 13-day training course organised by the AMISOM Police Component at the Police Transport Centre in Mogadishu. The course aimed at equipping them with the skills to manage future SPF trainings and capacity building exercises.

The trainers were introduced to facilitation skills, management of training environments and other concepts central to their work.

AMISOM's Police Training Coordinator Dr. Benjamin Agordzo commended the commitment displayed by the Somali Police Force officers and affirmed AMISOM's continued support and partnership with the force.

"We are here as partners, ready to work side by side with members of the Somali Police Force with whom we share common goals and objectives," he said.

The training is part of a long-term plan to engrain a robust training element in the local police force through the training of its own members as facilitators and trainers.



AMISOM Political UNIT Visits Baidoa

The AMISOM Political Unit in June visited Baidoa, the capital of Bay region and held talks with government officials.

The AMISOM Senior Political Affairs Officer, Mr. Ssebirumbi Kisinziggo, toured the town and held a series of assessments and engagements with different stakeholders in the region.

He met the Deputy Governor Osman Maalim, regional and district officials as well as AMISOM personnel on the ground.

During the meeting, Mr. Ssebirumbi discussed with the different stakeholders the establishment and capacity building of local administration, the enhancement of security and reconciliation initiatives; all with a view to supporting the gains made by SNSF and AMISOM.

They focused on bringing communities together, the establishment of outreach programmes and building people's livelihoods in the community.

Having strengthened relationships and communications with the regional representatives; the Political Unit will now be better able to provide the resources and support the local authority and commanders need to maintain stability and encourage further progress across Baidoa's communities.

AMISOM Holds Workshop for Somali MPs



A 4-day capacity building workshop for members of the Somali Parliamentary Committee on National Security, Interior and Governance was held in Mogadishu in June.

The workshop which brought together the legislators, parliamentary staff, regional experts and AMISOM civilian members sought to equip the MPs with an understanding of key concepts in parliamentary oversight and security.

In a message read on his behalf by Amb. Basile Garetsete, the AU Special Representative for Somalia, Ambassador Mahamat Saleh Annadif praised the legislators for their show of commitment and effort and reiterated AMISOM's pledge to work closely with Parliament.

"Our efforts and initiatives are aimed at supporting the government institutions actively engaged in the consolidation of the peace and stability achieved so far," said Ambassador Annadif. "Parliament has the backing of the people and it's important that we transform this show of faith into tangible benefits for the Somali people," he concluded.

"We recognize the efforts of AMISOM and we regard this workshop as the foundation of an enduring partnership between the Somali Parliament and the African Union Mission in Somalia," said the committee's chair, Hon. Fauzia Mohamed Sheikh.

AMISOM will handover equipment consisting of laptops, desktop computers and printers to be used for the functions of the committee as it prepares for parliamentary dialogue on the country's security and administration.



Laying the Bricks for Africa's Total Unity

This year, Africa has been celebrating 50 years of the Organisation of African Union (OAU), the continental organization that gave birth to the African Union (AU) in 2001. At the occasion to mark the celebrations in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's prime minister, Hailemariam Desalegn summarized the event's importance: "While our founders met for the formation of the OAU at the dawn of the independence period 50 years ago, it is fitting that we are meeting here today at a time when Africa is rising."

When the OAU was set up on 25 May 1963, only 32 states were politically independent. All of Southern Africa, for instance, was still under colonial rule: Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe (then known as Rhodesia), Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Malawi, Comoros and Zambia, while South Africa was still under apartheid rule. The biggest challenge for the African continent at that time, therefore, was the achievement of political independence for all the African states.

Africa's independence movement was

intimately linked to African independence activists such as Kwame Nkrumah, Sékou Ahmed Touré, Ahmed Ben Bella, Julius Nyerere, Jomo Kenyatta, Amílcar Cabral, and Patrice Lumumba, among others. The movement was a child of the Pan Africanist movement whose origins can be traced to the experiences and writings of eighteenth century ex African slaves such as Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cugoana who had recounted their tortuous road to freedom. A century later, the theme of freedom was popularized by forerunners of Pan Africanism such as James Africanus, Beale Horton, and further energised by African independence movement advocates of the twentieth century. In all, a long three-century journey.

The independence movement gained momentum at the 1945 Fifth Pan African Congress, its proponents progressively coalescing around a campaign for unity as the only viable means of eliminating colonialism, ensuring political independence and liberating entire continent. When Nkrumah penned his famous book *Africa Must Unite*, he was articulating the growing belief that the surest engine for achieving these monumental tasks was the unity of all the African people.

Nkrumah used Ghana's independence in 1957 to bring together African liberation movements at the 1958 All African People's Conference (AAPC) which sought to synthesize Africa's strategy for the liberation of the whole continent. From there, the African people's demand for independence became even more poignant, resulting into the political independence of a string of African states by the end of 1968 (seventeen states gained independence in 1960 alone). However, by 1963, many African

weakness, but until we unite, we cannot even begin to end that weakness.'

Though it did not secure full political unity for the continent, the summit that gave birth to the OAU nevertheless planted the seed for that unity. In following years, it became clear that the objective of ultimate African unity would be a process rather than an event, to be achieved step by step, building block by building block.

The transformation of the OAU into the African Union was essentially a further step in the road to unity, a recognition that the OAU had delivered the key mission of continental liberation. The new organisation was tasked in a different set of circumstances. As the obstacles to independence and liberation were cleared,

Unity will not end our weakness, but until we unite, we cannot even begin to end that weakness

leaders were of the view that political independence, critical as it was, was not enough to propel Africa to its rightful place on the world scene. Julius Nyerere, who acknowledged that Africa was weak, cautioned: "Unity will not end our

a new set of challenges was emerging that needed to be tackled with new strategies and a fresher mandate, albeit still within the framework of unity. Just as the independence movement was a natural child of the Pan African

movement, the AU was the natural child of the OAU, the reason why African people are celebrating 50 years of OAU and AU.

Today, the AU is central to cementing regional peace and security. It is engaged in vital work to resolve conflicts -such as in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, and Mali- and is advancing development and democratic norms across the continent, empowering women and youth, expanding trade and investment, and creating broad-based prosperity for people across the African continent.

In Somalia, in particular, the AU Mission is helping the society recover from over two decades of conflict and has been critical in preventing the country becoming a bastion for international terrorism. Though serious challenges remain, it is clear that Somalia is slowly getting back on its feet.

As prime minister Desalegn said, "Africa is rising." If history has taught us a lesson, it is that we must keep on confronting the challenges facing us, however long it takes, always bearing in mind the Pan African motto: Don't agonise. Organise!

Somalia Marks of 53 Years of Independence

Somalia celebrated the 53rd anniversary of its independence in July with large crowds attending a colourful event at the Konis Stadium in Mogadishu presided over by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon.

The event was the culmination of week-long festivities held across the country commemorating the liberation of its northern and southern territories from British and Italian rule. Aired live on Somali National TV, it included performances by the Somali National Band and Somali singers as well as a marching parade by the Somali National Army.

The assembled citizens were urged to take lessons from the nation's history as the country rebuilds its institutions and governments.

“Many youths gave their lives, young

women sold their gold, many others gave their freedom as they were jailed in their quest for independence,” Mohamud said in his speech. “It was not up to one group [to carry the burden], but up to all citizens, and if success was achieved, everyone would thrive and flourish. That is what our fathers and mothers understood and that is why they succeeded.”

This year's celebrations coincide with great strides made in the political and security sectors in Somalia. Earlier, the president and prime minister laid wreaths at the restored Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Mogadishu's Bondhere district, the first such ceremony in over two decades.

The African Union Special Representative for Somalia, Ambassador Mahamat Saleh Annadif,

sent his hearty congratulations on behalf of the AU and AMISOM.

“On this day, 53 years ago, proud Somalis stood side by side as they witnessed the historic birth of their nation built on the ideals of justice, social cohesion and above all, unity with their African brothers and sisters,” he said, noting that after its Independence, Somalia had supported the cause of liberty for many of the African countries while championing African unity through the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

“The Somali people have demonstrated their resolve to take charge of their country's destiny. Despite all the challenges facing the country, recent developments are encouraging,” said Ambassador Annadif promising AMISOM's unwavering commitment to the welfare of the Somali people.



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World Rediscovered Somalia as **Economy** Recovers



Confidence is returning to Somalia's war-ravaged economy following in the wake of its widely hailed elections and peaceful transfer of power. After a 22 year break, the International Monetary Fund has recognized the Federal Government of Somalia paving the way for it to provide technical assistance and policy advice though it is for now precluded from providing new loans pending clearance of the country's arrears of about \$353 million. However, a fact-finding mission found "an active resurgence of the private sector in the services industry, namely in the communications, construction, and money transfer sectors." It also welcomed the federal government's commitment to work towards restoring

peace and security, implement good governance and the rule of law, rebuild the economy, reform the financial sector, and orderly address the challenges posed by the possible introduction of a new currency to replace the many official and non-official currencies in circulation.

The IMF has promised to support the finance ministry and the central bank and help them manage budget functions, license and supervise commercial banks, oversee basic monetary and foreign exchange transactions and establish systems to collect and process vital economic data.

And it is help Somalia will need as its economy rebounds. A good indicator of this recovery can be found at the Aden Abdulle International Airport

in the capital, Mogadishu which is recording a sharp increase in travellers and air traffic. An average of 17 flights land there each day and in March they brought over 33,000 people to Mogadishu, a nearly 100% increase in incoming passenger numbers over the previous six months. It is a veritable sign of confidence in the security and economy of the city. "There are more people coming in than are going out," Satmo Musoke, the senior air traffic management officer at Aden Abdulle airport told Business Daily.

Somalia's Minister of Information recently announced that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) had removed the airport from the 'Zone 5' list of



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airports 'deemed to pose a security risk to aircraft, crew and passengers'. Several private airlines based in East Africa, including Kenya's African Express and SAX, as well as Somali-owned private carriers like Jubba Airways and Daallo Airlines, already fly into Mogadishu and in July, Air Uganda became the second national carrier, after Turkish Airlines, to add Mogadishu to its list of destinations.

The government has recently announced plans to revive Somalia's own national carrier, Somali Airlines, which was grounded during the civil war. The void was however filled by private air operators and today, the private airline business is thriving. The carriers offer competitively priced tickets and are crucial to Somalia's recovering economy. As AMISOM and the Somali national forces have secured more areas of the country, the industry has followed suit and now there are regular flights from Mogadishu to Kismayo and Beletweyne.

The passengers arriving in Mogadishu can take advantage of any of the two new taxi companies that have recently began operating in Mogadishu, offering a safer and more reliable way to get around town. One is Mogadishu Taxi which has more than 100 vehicles and charges a third the cost of independent taxis. The other, City Taxi, has a fleet of 10 and rolled onto local roads in April.

Signs of Somalia's economic recovery are also visible at the Mogadishu seaport, which is nowadays teeming with activity. The busy port was closed for much of the last 20 years but today employs 5,500 people. Last year 222 vessels and 248 dhows docked there bringing with them 1.2 million metric tonnes of goods.

International companies are also eyeing opportunities in Somalia. At the end of July, Jordan-based AAIB Insurance Brokers became the first foreign insurance company to receive a permit to operate in the country. Its CEO, William Wakeham called the permit "an important stepping stone" in Somalia's development and reconstruction. Late last year, the country also caught the attention of foreign oil companies by announcing it intended to auction some of 308 newly delineated oil blocks this year. And the Somali government has already started discussions with two previous concession holders – Eni and Shell – that want to reclaim their pre-1991 blocks and enter into production sharing agreements.

The traffic is not all one way. In the town of Afgooye, 30kms from the capital, farmers were once charged for using the river's water to water their fields by the Al Shabaab terror group

which also confiscated up to half of their harvest, contributing to the 2011 famine that claimed, according to the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization, a quarter of a million lives.

Today, a year after the area was liberated by AMISOM and the Somali National Army, the farmers are back to work. Production has soared. At the local market, the stalls are overflowing. AMISOM has helped repair sections of the road to the Mogadishu markets which today is full of trucks laden with fruits and other agricultural produce both for local consumption and for export to the Gulf states.

The Mogadishu seaport this year also resumed the export of livestock after a 22-year hiatus. Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt are main buyers and the animals are kept at the Jazeera pre-export livestock facility for up to 45 days for veterinary health screening and treatment ahead of export. Companies like the Indian Ocean Livestock Co. are said to be flocking back to the capital. "I want to tell all Somalis and businessmen that we are going to open an animal market in south Somalia, this will be an opportunity for them to have a place to sell their animals to exporters so that we can get more animals for export," says company representative Abdulkadir Mohamud Elmi.



Somali Doctor Follows in Mandela's Footsteps

She followed her dreams and beat all odds and obstacles in her journey of life. Her work has won her awards. Early this month, Dr. Asha Omar a Somali gynecologist and obstetrician became only the second African after Nelson Mandela and the fourth woman to be awarded the international prize of the Golden Doves for Peace Award.

Established in 1986, the international year of peace, by Archivio Disarmo, an Italian peace institute, the prize is awarded to journalists and an international personage who has contributed significantly to the cause of peace. It consists of a golden sculpture designed by the late renowned Italian artist, Pericle Fazzini. Previous winners also include the former Swedish Prime Minister, Olaf Palme, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Perez de Cuellar and former Soviet Union leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. This year, in memory of Rita Levi Montalcini, who chaired the jury of the Awards for 16 years, it was given to four women.

14 years after leaving Somali soil, Asha returned in 2006. It was here that she carried out her doctorate in women in pregnancy and environment. Somalia was still in turmoil and she was reminded of the difficulties of living in her home country. With restriction of movement and Somali people fearful of speaking openly on issues and to persons from the diaspora, it was difficult for her to carry out her research. Despite the impediments, Asha completed her research in 2008 at the top of her class. But even to get that far Asha's journey had been fraught with obstacles.

In 1991 she had enrolled into the Somalia National University to study medicine, but by 1992, with a civil war ravaging the country, she was forced to relocate to Egypt with her family. It looked like her dream was never going to come true. Determined to follow her heart's desire, Asha informed her family that she would not be accompanying them to the UK and instead would go to Rome to continue with her degree in medicine. Being the last born of six sisters, it was a battle to convince her family to let her go, but she eventually succeeded and was on her way to Rome. This was a leap of faith for Asha. Separated from her family, with no funds for her tuition, she had a struggle ahead. But thanks to the help of her old professors from Somalia, her first glimmer of hope: a scholarship to study medicine at Sapienza University of Rome. Shortly after completing her bachelor of medicine in 1997, she became a member of the medical board.

Asha's choice of specialisation was no coincidence. Hypertension is the most common medical problem encountered in pregnancy in Somalia, and a condition that had blighted women in Asha's family. In 2009 Dr. Asha decided she could do more to support her own people and permanently relocated to Somalia. Asha's passion to improve the care of pregnant women in Somalia led to her volunteering her services at the AMISOM level two hospital as a gynecologist and obstetrician. For the last 17 years Dr. Asha has not asked for financial remuneration. She has focused her work on strengthening education and training in the care given to child-bearing women before and after



pregnancy and has developed research and treatment for obstetric fistula. Due to early childhood marriage the child bearing age is estimated to be 14 to 16 years. There is also great pressure on women to bear as many children as possible, enhancing their status in society. The lack of access for many women to hospitals has also contributed to the rise in cases of fistula in Somalia. Dr. Asha thus joined the campaign

the Italian government and AMISOM the hospital completed the first phase of refurbishment. Now, Dr. Asha splits her time between Martini hospital and the AMISOM level-two hospital. She acknowledges the great help she receives from the AMISOM medical practitioners and soldiers who would carry out rotations with her at both facilities. Dr. Asha will not stop there; she plans to push her care and training well beyond the

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against fistula alongside AMISOM. With the help of AMISOM doctors she has been able to train 12 traditional birth attendants from the rural areas of Mogadishu and 21 members of the Somali police force on safe delivery. Dr. Asha works at SOS and lectures on gynecology operations at Banadir University. She has also published a pictorial book written in Somali on safe delivery.

In 2010 Dr. Asha took on another challenge – that of heading up Martini hospital. A challenge because this was a hospital in name only. There was no medical equipment, medical staff or structures. With the help of

capital. In collaboration with Hormuud, a local mobile phone company, she is looking to go into the regions of Baidoa and Beletweyne to carry out a campaign on mammograms, ultrasound and to train another 21 traditional birth attendants based in Baidoa and Beletweyne.

Dr. Asha's heart is with the Somali people. She is alone in Somalia, choosing her pioneering work over a comfortable life in the UK with her family. Her work in Somalia does not end at Martini or AMISOM level-two hospital. Dr. Asha continues to change the course of hundreds of young Somali women and mothers and is paving the way for future generation women in her field.

The Opportunity to Make a Difference



Abdul Diabagate has seen it all. He has been ambushed by armed militia and has witnessed firsthand the terrible consequences of Somalia's humanitarian catastrophe. The former substitute teacher and adjunct university professor has for the last five years been at the frontline of assisting the Somali people cope with the effects of 20 years of conflict, displacement, drought and famine.

The 47 year old from Ivory Coast heads the AMISOM Humanitarian Affairs unit, and is charged with monitoring the implementation of the mission's humanitarian mandate and influencing the evolution of the AU's overall approach to humanitarian affairs.

AMISOM's humanitarian role is limited by its UN Security Council mandate to contributing to "the creation of the necessary security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance."

The humanitarian unit thus works closely with the AMISOM military and police components, the Federal Government of Somalia, as well as local and international agencies, to ensure humanitarian workers can access the worst-affected populations across the country and for Somali refugees in the wider region. In areas where humanitarian agencies cannot yet reach, the unit, with the support of the military component, provides life-saving interventions especially in the areas of water supply, health services and social services infrastructural development.

"When I first came to Mogadishu in 2008, I was given a city tour by

AMISOM Forces to Villa Somalia, Sea Port, Parliament, Stadium and the peripheries of Bakara Market as well as few IDP settlements. It was a city where gunfire, hunger and sickness were part of everyday life and I felt I had an opportunity to make a difference," says Abdul. And make a difference he has.

Under Abdul's leadership, the unit has mapped out concentrations of internally displaced persons and carried out assessments of their needs as well as those of returning refugees. It has coordinated the distribution of humanitarian supplies to hundreds of thousands of needy Somalis, as well as donor support for hospitals such

as a donation of generators for the Banadir Hospital in Mogadishu, and of medicines and medical supplies to the Hawa Abdi Hospital in the Afgooye Corridor. The unit has also trained Somali government officials in humanitarian principles, supported a project to sustain improvements in the health of Somali mothers and children as well as psychological support for civilians affected by the war at AMISOM Field Hospitals in Mogadishu.

Currently the unit is supporting the nearly \$250,000 Mogadishu City Clean Water Project which is rehabilitating and modifying four water wells in Wadajir, Hamarweyne, Hamarjajab and Dharkenly districts of the capital including supply and installation of brackish water treatment plants, generators, construction of water tanks, fountains, laying of pipes and fencing. The project, which is due to

be completed soon, will provide safe drinking water to 216,000 families.

In the course of his work, Abdul interacts closely with the people he is trying to help. "I have had many occasions to visit with the local communities and most of the hospitals in Mogadishu," he says noting that the humanitarian situation in the city remained dire despite marked improvements in security. "The Somali people are living with the legacy of over two decades of conflict which destroyed infrastructure for basic services and led to widespread poverty and left them vulnerable to extreme weather hazards. The result is high rates of death, disease, starvation, forced displacement and destitution."

It is clear that he cares deeply for them. One the experiences that moved him most, he says, was the death from measles of a three-year old

girl during an assessment visit he made to a Mogadishu IDP camp in 2010. He also treasures the memory of a grateful old lady praying for him following donation of food as well as the death of Dr. Mohamoud Ibrahim, former Somali Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Resettlement, whom he got to know at a personal level. "These were very emotive events for me," he says. "They made me even more determined to do what I could to help ease the suffering in Somalia."

Abdul's work involves long hours and travels throughout the Horn of Africa Region. Based in Mogadishu, he is away from his family for long periods. "I miss them very much and wish I could be home more often, especially during the holy month of Ramadan," he says. "But they understand that we have an obligation to help those less fortunate than ourselves and I hope I am setting an example that they will be proud of."

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Somalia: Here to Help Here to Stay

Listening to a group of youth leaders, in a circle of plastic chairs under an anaemic fan, Kay was responding to their issues: jobs, corruption, education, human rights, political inclusion and insecurity.

When Al-Jazeera correspondent and Somalia-watcher Peter Greste came up with soubriquet “the toughest job in diplomacy”, he wasn’t trying to flatter.

On June 3, Nick Kay did take up a job few would relish: as Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia -- at a time of high hopes but roiling uncertainty.

Long notorious for violent anarchy, famine and intractable political wrangling, Somalia is less than a year into its rebirth as an internationally-recognized member of the family of nations.

Islamist insurgents have been pushed back by African Union forces, relative stability has returned to a large proportion of the country, foreign investment is starting to take an interest, and Somalis from all over the world are coming back; the diaspora are visiting, working, investing, testing the waters – sometimes literally, at the beach.

Construction and property prices are booming in Mogadishu, while foreign embassies and airlines are cautiously opening up.

On the other side of the scales are the remnants of the Al-Shabaab insurgents, cut off from their major sources of income, confined mainly to rural areas in the centre and south but with the capacity to plant roadside bombs, and organize murderous attacks, even in the capital, where over 30 people recently died in an attack on the fledgling judiciary. Al-Shabaab, though fragmenting, still extort ruinous dues from communities under their control, terrorise local people and disrupt trade and transport.

The Federal Government meanwhile is weak, has only a trickle of its own revenue, and faces a formidable set of problems: a political landscape ruined by 22 years of conflict and riven by ingrained corruption, intimidation and extortion, clan-based



militia and criminality. The few relatively stable regional administrations take a wary view of the resurgent central government. A provisional constitution leaves many big questions unanswered and the leaders of the self-declared state of Somaliland remain adamant that it will go its own way.

The Security Council created the new UN assistance mission in Somalia (UNSOM) on 2 May 2013, with SRSG Kay at its head, and expects results in the rule of law, building the institutions of government, protecting human rights, preventing piracy at sea and helping the government coordinate aid. Elections are slated for 2016. UNSOM is also to put itself at the service of political mediation efforts

is building up in sometimes spartan accommodation at the sprawling airport complex, living alongside African Union troops, civilian staff and contractors.

On June 19, the schedule of hugs and handshakes, introductions, visits -- in Mogadishu, Nairobi, Hargeisa and Djibouti -- briefings and interviews took the new SRSG Kay to a small eating place just a few hundred metres from the gates of Mogadishu airport base. Listening to a group of youth leaders, in a circle of plastic chairs under an anaemic fan, Kay was responding to their issues: jobs, corruption, education, human rights, political inclusion and insecurity. He told them he was just into his third week, “meeting people and

When dealing with conflict Kay continued, “it’s not easy, you have to fight hard, it’s very complicated, it can take a long time... but it can be done. You can see many countries that have come out of 20 years of conflict, or less, and are successful democratic economies that are developing.” We started to hear occasional gunshots, but the new SRSG continued: “This is a once in a generation opportunity, and it is your generation”.

As the conversation turned to security and politics, the tempo of nearby gunfire increased and it was reported that what we’d heard was a suicide bomb, probably at the UN Common Compound, a few hundred metres up the road.

The rest of the day’s tragic and sobering events unfolded, the UNSOM team learning in shock and disbelief of the loss of a much-loved United Nations colleague and seven others working with the UN. The heroism of the Somali guards, and the passing of four of them was cause for gratitude and sorrow. Innocent Somali passers-by also were the victims. Our colleagues had been the victim of a planned attack which was directly aimed at destroying, not building the new beginnings in Somalia. The UN team, gathered at the airport later that day, marked a moment’s silence with bowed heads.

Speaking later to the media, SRSG Kay said the UN team grieved for their colleagues but were undeterred: “We’re here to help, and here to stay.”

This is a once in a generation opportunity, and it is your generation

to defuse crises, balancing the UN mission’s role and relationships between federal and regional administrations, multiple international players, including the African Union, neighbouring states and regional grouping, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

The new UNSOM is based in Mogadishu, where a new UN team

learning”. Although once a British diplomat, he said he wasn’t the cocktail party kind, but had most recently been in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Continuing, he said “I’m familiar, very familiar, with countries affected by conflict.”

We all heard a bang – it could have been an explosion, or something like a big metal gate slamming.



UNSOM and AMISOM: United for Peace

I urge colleagues in all fields to join their efforts, be it on human rights, political affairs, stabilisation, governance issues, strategic communications, analysis etc. Somalis need and deserve our collective effort.

It is an enormous pleasure and honour to be invited to write for the AMISOM magazine. After just eight weeks in Somalia I am already deeply conscious of the immense contribution being made by the men and women of AMISOM to building peace in Somalia. You, and your brothers and sisters before you, are heroes. You have suffered significant losses. Your sacrifices will not be in vain.

One of my highest priorities as the new UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General is to deepen and strengthen on the ground the partnership between the UN and the AU. Ambassador Annadif (SRCC) and I are determined that our teams should work hand in hand on the full range of tasks in our mandates. The challenges in Somalia are so extensive that we shall only succeed if we share rather than divide the labour. We have already started regular meetings of our senior leadership teams. I urge colleagues in all fields to join their efforts, be it on human rights, political affairs, stabilisation, governance issues, strategic communications, analysis etc. Somalis need and deserve our collective effort.

To help us become even closer partners, it may help if I explain a little about my mission. Security Council Resolution 2093, which mandates AMISOM, also sets out the rationale for the new UN Assistance Mission for Somalia (UNSOM). Resolution 2102 gives its precise mandate. In brief some of its defining characteristics are that this is a mission designed for a new phase in Somalia, which has moved from state failure, through a transition last year to a phase now of state building. UNSOM is configured to meet the needs of this new phase. We are mandated to support peace-building and reconciliation through using my "good offices"; help build a Federal state through support for the Constitutional review process, good governance and capacity building; assist the Federal Government in coordinating international assistance, particularly in the security sector; and help Somalia protect and respect

human rights, including by monitoring and reporting on the situation across the country.

UNSOM's mandate is new and so is our way of working. Other than a commitment to joint working with AMISOM, we are also breaking new ground by being more present across Somalia (with plans to be in Mogadishu, Hargeisa, Garowe, Baidoa and Kismayo this year); by being an "integrated mission" (i.e. with UNSOA and all parts of the UN family working closely towards common goals); and by working even more closely with international partners in support of the Federal Government of Somalia. I attach great importance to listening and responding to all member states and organisations (especially the African Union, Intergovernmental Authority on Development - IGAD, European Union and the League of Arab States). Working on the ground in Somalia is not easy. Many are rising to the challenge. But inevitably much work is still done in Nairobi. So UNSOM is also present there.

Another new aspect of UNSOM's mandate is our relationship to the UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA). You are already very familiar with UNSOA and the logistical support they provide. I am delighted that as a part of our integrated approach, the very able Director of UNSOA, Amadu Kamara, is now a member of my senior management team. Once again by working together I am sure we can achieve much more.

Predicting the future is never wise. But I feel confident that Somalia is on the path to peace and prosperity and that we all have a historic opportunity in the coming months and years to make our own personal contribution to helping Somalis enjoy a brighter future. We should aim high in our efforts. Somalia, Africa and the wider region deserve nothing less. Together UNSOM and AMISOM can and will achieve great things. Thank you for your support and I look forward to our joint endeavour. You can count on me as a true friend and champion of AMISOM.

Nicholas Kay is the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Somalia

A Year in Somalia: A Peacekeeper's Tale

By Cpt. Ernest Nimubona



The four hour flight to an unknown land was a time of deep meditation for everybody sitting silently on board the Jordan Airways plane. June 3, 2012 was the unforgettable day when I first arrived in Mogadishu as part of the 5th contingent that Burundi had sent to Somalia.

An old African adage warns that when the neighbor's house burns, yours is next implying that you have to help extinguish the fire before it reaches your own. In line with this, Burundi was the second country to answer the call of African Union and the International Community to contribute troops to the African Mission in Somalia which is helping extinguish the two-decade old conflict that has ravaged the country.

Having ourselves recently emerged out of civil conflict with the help of friends, neighbors and the International Community, we viewed this as an opportunity to demonstrate our gratitude by assisting a sister country. Since 2007 thousands of our soldiers have taken the same journey I was on.

Coming in to land, we all felt apprehensive. The uncertainty grew when

BELOW:

Cpt. Ernest Nimubona (right) author of the article pictured during his deployment to Somalia.



we got off the plane and were instructed to run to the parking lot in single file. Meeting our countrymen there was a great relief. We immediately boarded armoured trucks that carried us to the headquarters of the Burundi contingent located at the National University.

Peering through the windows as we rumbled across the city in the sweltering

Going out of the base was fun, though one had to be on the lookout for ambushes and improvised explosive devices.

vehicles, I could see some Somalis standing on the road side and waving hands on our passage. This was another reassuring sign. Though I could not go out and shake their hands, it was my first introduction to the people I would be serving as an AMISOM peacekeeper.

At the time, AMISOM was expanding out of Mogadishu in support of the political roadmap which called for Somalia to complete the transition to permanent government within the year. The concept of operations required the capture of key towns like Kismayo, Baidoa, Marka and Beletweyn from the al Shabaab terror group. Burundi took the lead in the south-west and was also helping the Ugandan contingent in Middle and Lower Shabelle.

Marka was taken in August. I was with the vanguard elements and was pleasantly surprised by the warm welcome accorded to AMISOM by the population. There were no camps for the internally displaced like you find in Mogadishu and after just an hour, I was surrounded by a crowd of curious and friendly young people. I felt safe and comfortable as I attempted to teach them some English.

Watching soldiers shovel sand into bags to build a defense wall in a strange place transported me back to the time during the Burundi civil war, when I would stay in a bunker for days. The life of a soldier is not easy and one at times has to spend the night in the company of dangerous snakes; even they feel sorry for the sorry fellow sometimes and keep their poison to themselves.

The diet out in the bush consists of dry rations. Before deploying to Baidoa, the Burundi Contingent Commander, Col. Bigirimana Geard, told his troops to behave like men of heart. "Think of your duty, not your stomach." He knew that they would spend almost a year on a dry rations but supporting peace was the

priority, the reason for their presence.

Twelve months in Somalia felt like a decade. But days were moving smoothly and each was inaugurated by a prayer for God's protection and a safe return to my family.

Going out of the base was fun, though one had to be on the lookout for ambushes and improvised explosive devices. In my job as the contingent's public information

officer, I would escort international journalists visiting the mission. Many of them wondered how an under-resourced AMISOM had succeeded where more powerful and better equipped armies had failed. "Because they fought without Africans," I would respond. "Today, with our committed and brave soldiers and help with logistics, how can we be defeated?"

The Somalis I met were very friendly. I had the most memorable time during a basketball match with Somali soldiers. It was a world away from the Somalia of our imagination, where explosions are never far away. Our soldiers were touched by the friendliness of the open-hearted Somalis. Cheering ladies waited impatiently for the end of the game before invading the court in their colorful dresses to dribble the ball and then joining the rest in the reception hall. Food, drink and conversation enlivened the occasion followed by dancing to Somali and Burundi folk songs.

In the contingent are former belligerents who fought on opposite sides of the Burundian civil war. It is amazing that today, they are part of one body under the command of one man. They fight together and for each other. It is a lesson that I think we can teach our Somali brothers.

Every farmer assesses his work by the volume of the harvest. After more than six years in the mission, the soldiers of the Burundi contingent are extremely proud of having contributed to helping give Somalia its best chance for peace in a generation. Our success, alongside fellow Africans and the international community has proven that if humanity stands together, nothing is impossible under the sky.

Cpt. Ernest Nimubona was the Burundi Contingent's Public Information Officer. He has since completed his tour of duty and returned to Bujumbura.



Slam Dunk: Basketball

Makes a Comeback in Somalia



Food, Dance, Basketball:

A Game in Mogadishu

Until a few years ago, with the Al Qaeda linked al Shabaab terror group controlling large sections of Somalia, sports and other forms of entertainment were forbidden. However, since the Somali national security forces, with the support of AMISOM forced the extremists out of most major population centres, sport has been making a comeback.

Today, 16-year-old Hamsa Abdullahi Hussein is not only free to walk the streets of Mogadishu in relative safety, but also dreams of becoming a professional athlete.

"[Previously] I didn't have anything to do and I was very depressed. When I started playing basketball, I really liked it. It makes me happy."

The court in the Abdi Aziz district of the Somali capital Mogadishu, belongs to Mogadishu's Dekkeda basketball club, which runs free clinics every day for the likes of Hamsa and her friends, and other local youth who wish to learn the game. Dekkeda is the top team in the city's 13 -member association, which is fully

recognised by the Ministry of Sports and funded by the private sector.

Said Mohammed Sheikh and several other Dekkeda players are regularly called up to the country's national team. He says the sport can help heal the country. "Basketball has a role in building peace. Our country has been through a lot, and it is better that the youth stay busy with things like basketball. It helps us to forget. Many of our friends are into smoking and are in militias. We can use basketball to get them out," he says.

"Somalia used to be one of the leading teams in Africa," says Dekkeda's coach, Hassan Ahmed Gelleh, who played for the

national team in the 70's and tried to keep the sport alive after the outbreak of civil war.

"We've come through very difficult times. Al Shabaab wanted people to participate in Jihad rather than play or even wear shorts but we still managed to hold some competitions. Girls, however, weren't even allowed to come to the court. We've had a lot of problems, but there's a huge change now. Both men and women can come and play."

And with peace returning, Somalia is re-establishing its continental pre-eminence in the sport. Earlier this year, its national team participated in a regional tournament and beat Kenya and Burundi.

Friends, a game of basketball, plenty of food and good music. This could be a party anywhere but it was June in Mogadishu. Once the scene of daily gun battles, the seaside city is enjoying its longest period of relative peace in over two decades. True, dangers still abound. But the routing of Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Shabaab militants from fixed positions within the Somali capital two years ago has heralded a new sense of hope among Somalis and spurred an economic boom as many return to rebuild.

Anyway, back to the game. It's at the Jalle Siyad military academy, currently used as a base for Burundian peacekeepers. It's the second friendly match pitting between them and a team from the Somali National Army. Played under the soaring Mogadishu midday sun, the tight contest is over in an hour with the Burundians winning by 56 baskets to 47. It is sweet revenge. The

Somali team, locally known as Horseed, had won the first game a month prior with a score of 63-53. But there are no hard feelings here.

"It is so nice playing with our Burundian brothers. The game is a source of relaxation and fitness for us. It has also given us the opportunity to make friends with the Burundian peacekeepers and share a light moment with them, we are so grateful for their hospitality and support," Hussein Mohamed Ahmed, one of the Horseed players said after the game.

"Somalia and Burundi share a long history. They helped train for us 12 air force pilots in 1974 and we are now peacekeepers here. We organized these games in order to strengthen the friendship between our two countries and forces," said Major Nimubona Ernest, the Burundian Public Information Officer. "After the games we eat lunch, dance to Somali

and Burundian songs and simply have a good time! We have a hard time battling the Al-Shabaab threat together so why can't we enjoy together?" he quips.

The game has attracted a good number of fans with the Somali army even bringing a girls cheerleading team that roars and claps whenever they made a fancy move or scored a basket.

Not to be outdone, the Burundian basketball team also has its supporters drawn from their fellow soldiers urging them forward. The mood is festive.

Afterwards, both sets of players embrace and together with their fans sit down for a sumptuous lunch.

"This is my eighth day in Mogadishu and I can already see how great this country used to be," Colonel Sosthene Ndereyimana says wistfully as he bids farewell to the Somalis. "It is a real privilege to play a part in helping such a wonderful people," he adds as he waves to the Somali players and their fans.

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